

Lesson 1: Getting Started



Overview

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has made available a career exploration system for students that connects them to their interests and career goals. The online system is very diverse and has multiple tools and access points for students to explore. Students can begin by registering and creating an account that is uniquely theirs and can be updated as often as needed. An account also gives students the ability to save occupations and jobs they find, as well as research education programs that align with their career interests.

Once students have completed the registration process, they can complete the Career Exploration Worksheet, which is a baseline self-assessment tool. The self-assessment tool can be completed as an offline project, but is best completed online once a student has registered.

This lesson contains....

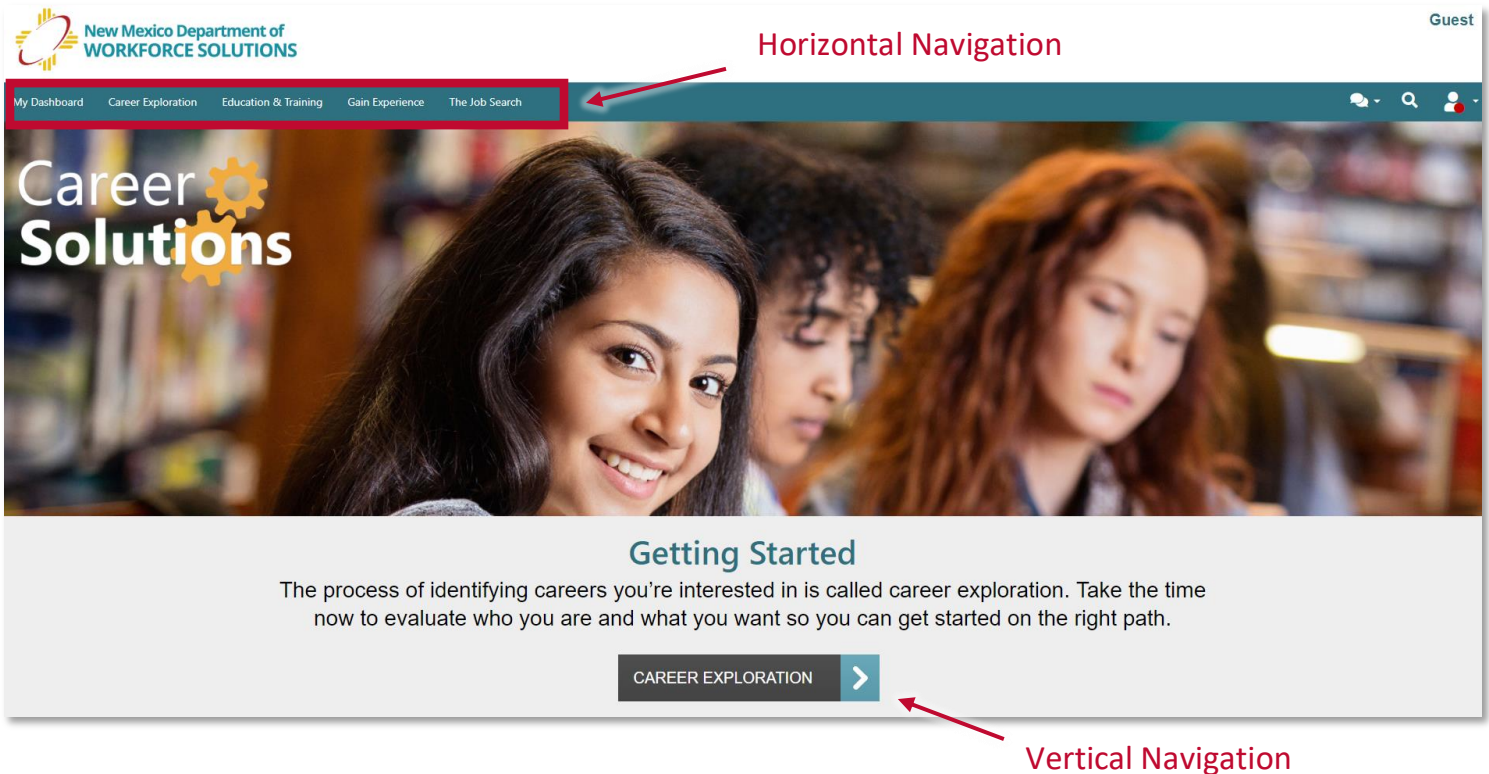
- A brief overview of the Career Solutions site.
- Information on how to set up student accounts.
- Strategies for helping students get started and navigate basic site features.
- Information on how to interpret results from the Career Exploration Worksheet.
- A review of next steps for students using insights gained from this lesson.

How to Use This Tool

Basic Overview

The Career Solutions site can be accessed at nmcareersolutions.com. The homepage should look similar to the image below, with tabs appearing at the top of the page, as well as several links that appear as you scroll down the page.

In general, the site provides both horizontal and vertical navigation, meaning that you can explore main features of the site by accessing tabs across the top of the screen (horizontal navigation) or scrolling down and clicking on links as they appear down the page (vertical navigation).



Horizontal Navigation – Tabs across Top of Screen

My Dashboard

- This is a personalized area of the system that tracks student progress and saves information as each student moves through the career exploration process. This allows students to determine which activities they have completed and examine information they have saved related to their interests, career goals, education opportunities, jobs, and more. It is recommended that students review this information frequently to maintain a global picture of their career exploration progress.

Career Exploration

- This is the heart of the system that walks students through various steps of the career exploration process, beginning with tools to explore their personal interests and values and ending with tools that guide students through occupations and the job market. A majority of this guide will focus on the use of this section of the system in supporting career exploration activities.

Education and Training

- This area connects students with a variety of tools and resources that assist them in making education decisions and developing plans for completing education requirements. Tips and checklists are available, along with links to information pages and online forms that help simplify the education process. Students are guided through the various steps needed to identify, plan, select, apply, and finance their education journey.

Gain Experience

- Within the Gain Experience section, various opportunities are displayed for students to acquire work experience through volunteer, apprenticeship, internship, and other types of programs. This section is useful for students seeking to learn more about various occupations and gain job experience that can increase their employability. Because experience is often cited as a requirement for employment in a variety of professions, it is highly recommended that students take advantage of opportunities to gain skills and build familiarity with their desired field of work.

The Job Search

- This area is most useful when students are ready to apply for a job. Students are presented with tips and tools related to locating jobs and connecting with employers. Specific activities are available that help students build resumes, write professional letters, engage in effective networking, and prepare for interviews. Students should be encouraged to access this section when they are ready to engage in the job search process.

Vertical Navigation – Moving Down the Page

Career Exploration

- This link is the same as what is provided in the tabs across the top of the screen. A description of this area of the system is provided above.

Why I Work

- Clicking on this link takes students to a financial tool that helps determine how much money they will need to support future lifestyle needs and goals. It works like a basic budget, where students identify their needs/wants and review the cost for each item. When students are done, an estimated minimum annual salary is calculated that students can use when selecting a career pathway.

Internships

- This link directs students to a page from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions that connects students with local internships and student work opportunities. Information is provided on the value of internships as well as methods for locating and applying for internships. Students can browse internships in their area and apply online.

Learn More

- Clicking here displays a helpful graphic that describes the differences between jobs, occupations, and careers.

For Parents and Educators

- This section of the site provides detailed information on parents' and educators' role in the career exploration process. It also outlines key features of the site and provides links to additional resources.

Into the Future: Middle School Students

- This provides a very brief introduction to career exploration for middle school students. Here students learn about the differences between jobs, occupations, and careers. They are encouraged to work through the career exploration activities and begin planning high school course selections.

Quick Links

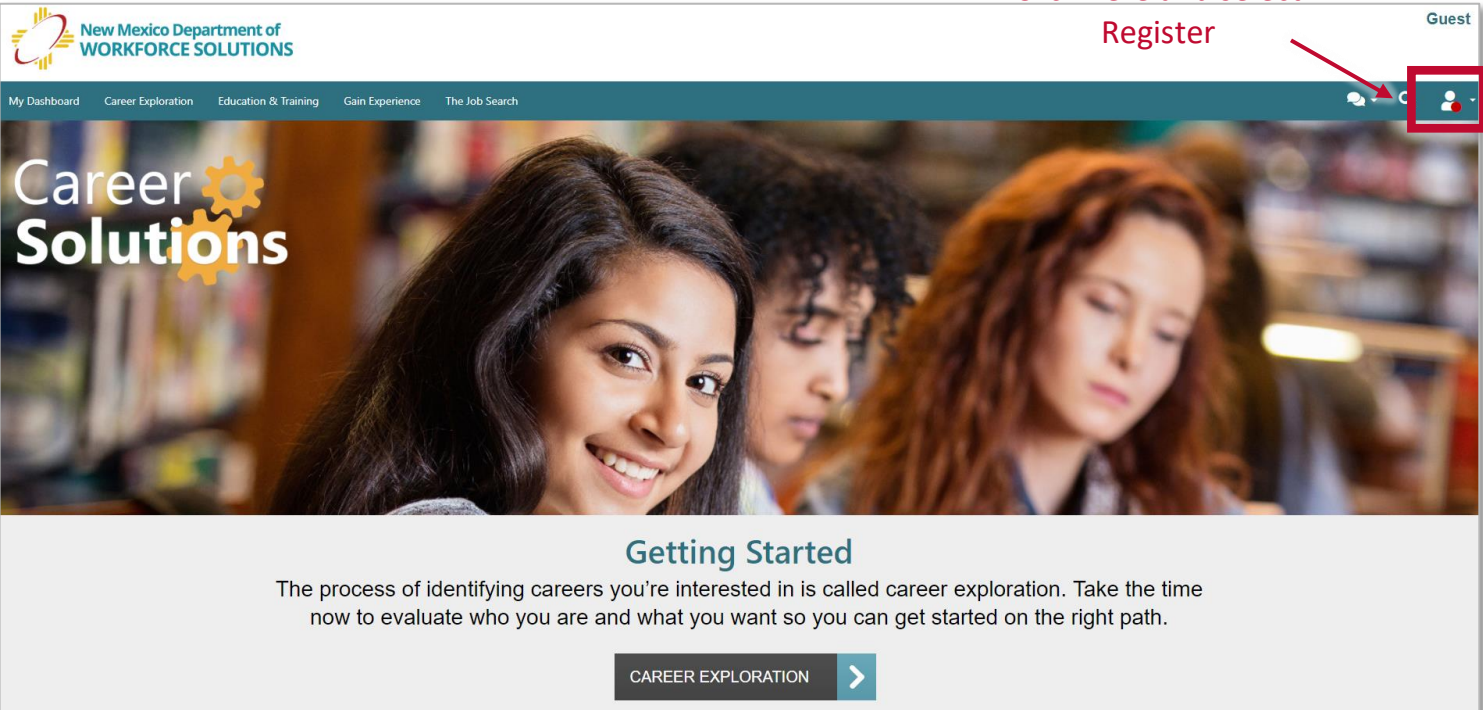
- Additional resources are presented under Quick Links that can be useful in the career exploration process. These include the New Mexico Career Guide and the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook. In addition, information on job fairs and work permits can be accessed here.

How to Register

Although students are not required to create an account, there are several advantages to registering as a user on the Career Solutions site. The primary advantage is that student activity and information can be saved, allowing for students to return to the site at any time and pick up where they left off.

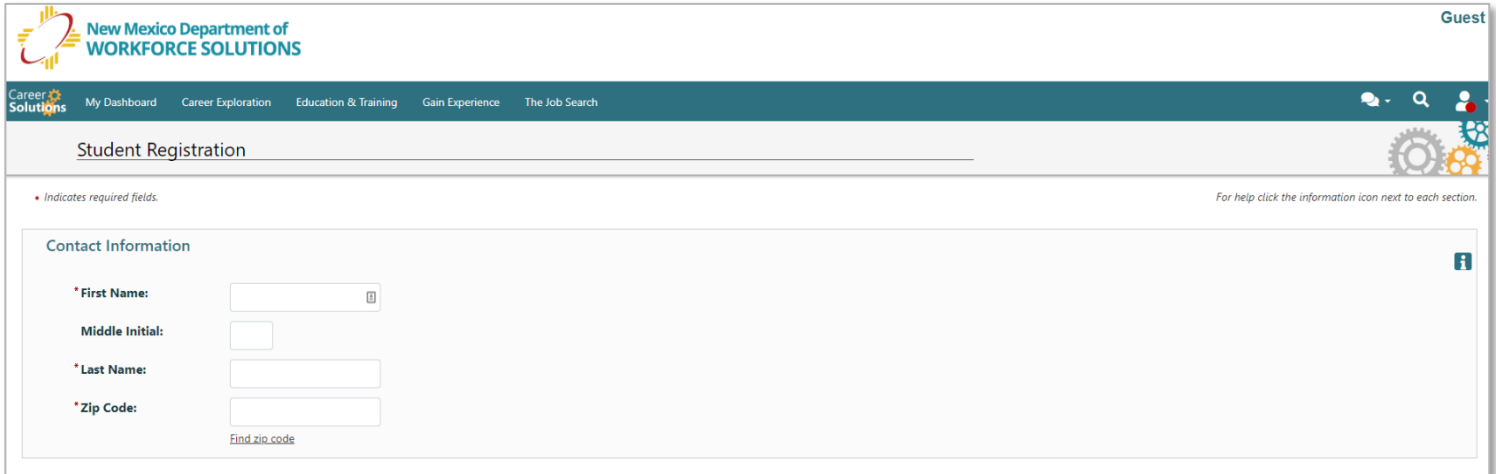
It is important to communicate to students that the information entered on the site is completely private. Their personal information is not shared with or made available to others. Accounts are for students' benefit, allowing them to save progress and revisit information they have gathered during previous sessions.

Click here and select Register



Follow these steps to register.

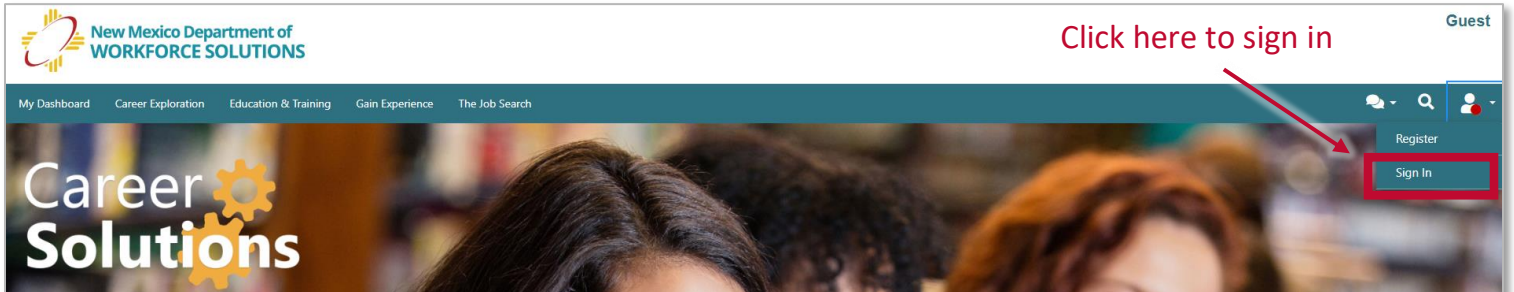
- Click on the person icon in the top right-hand corner of the screen.
- A page similar to the one below will appear.
- Complete the form. Information with a red asterisk (*) is required.
- Select a secure username and password that can be easily remembered.



The screenshot shows the 'Student Registration' page. At the top is the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions logo and a navigation bar with links: My Dashboard, Career Exploration, Education & Training, Gain Experience, and The Job Search. Below the navigation bar is a 'Student Registration' header. A note indicates that fields with an asterisk (*) are required. The 'Contact Information' section contains the following fields: *First Name, Middle Initial, *Last Name, and *Zip Code. A 'Find zip code' link is located below the Zip Code field. A person icon in the top right corner of the page indicates the user is a 'Guest'.

How to Sign In

To sign into the system, click on the person icon and select Sign In. From here, students can enter their username and password they created during the registration process.



This screenshot shows the top of the website with the 'Career Solutions' banner. A red arrow points from the text 'Click here to sign in' to the 'Sign In' button in the top right corner, which is highlighted with a red box. The 'Register' button is also visible next to it. The user is identified as a 'Guest'.

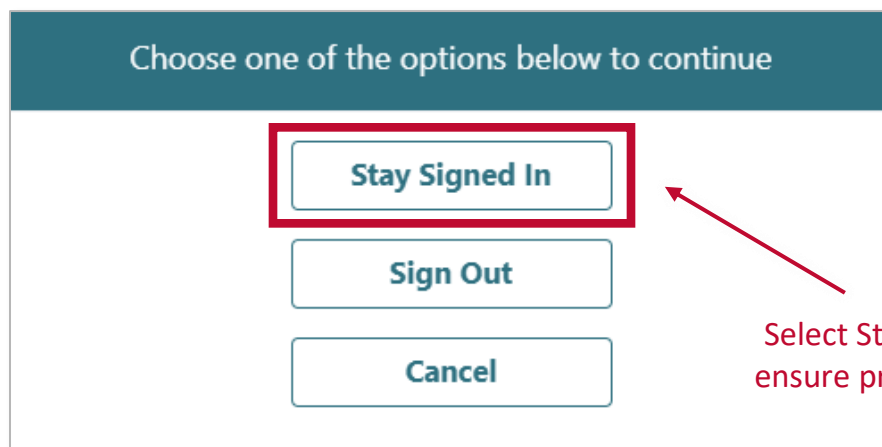
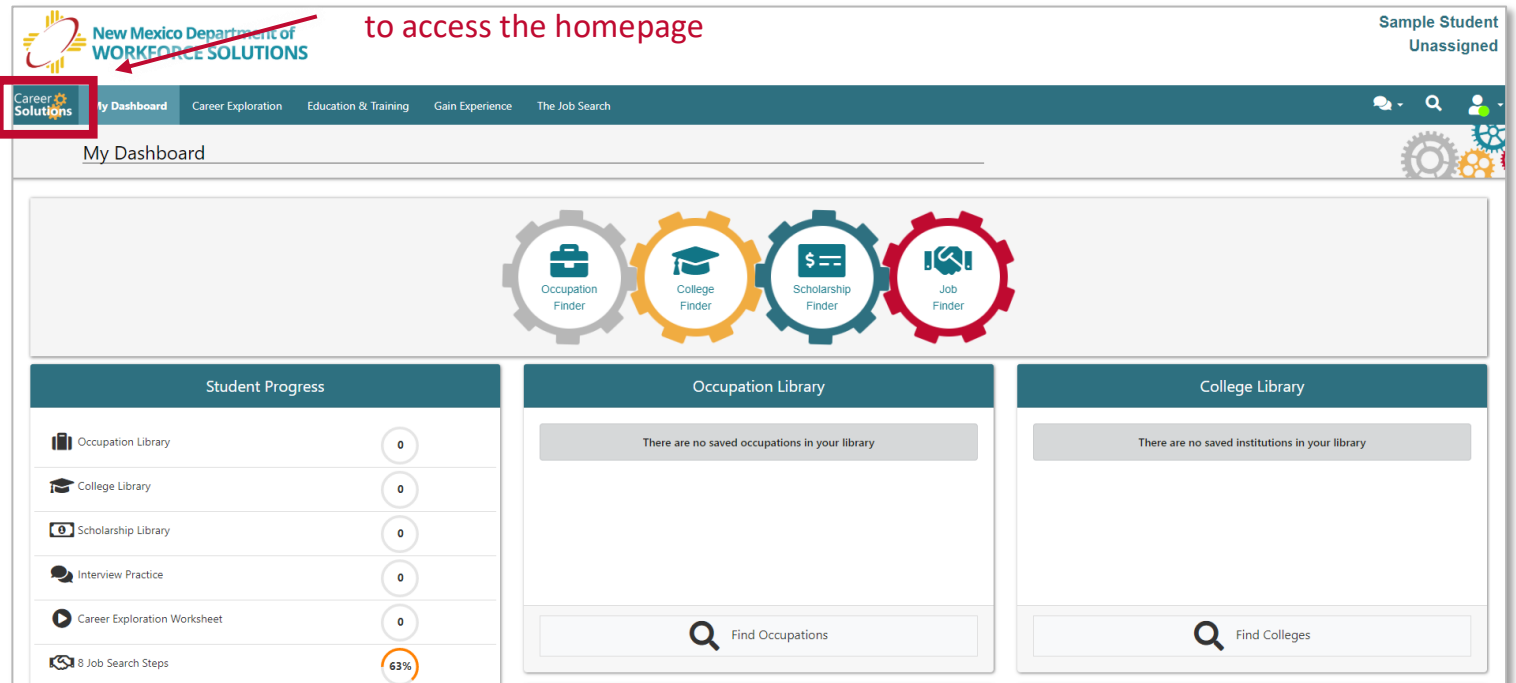


The screenshot shows the 'Option 1 - Already Registered' sign-in page. It features two input fields: 'User Name:' and 'Password:'. Both fields are highlighted with a red box. A red arrow points from the text 'Enter username and password' to the red box. Below the fields is a 'Sign In' button. A person icon in the top right corner indicates the user is a 'Guest'.

After signing in, students are directed to the Dashboard that provides an overview of their progress and saved information. To get back to the homepage, they can simply click on the Career Solutions tab at the top left-hand corner of the screen.

Before returning to the homepage, a box may appear asking if the user wants to remain signed in. Select Stay Signed In to be sure progress and activities are saved within the profile.

Click on the Career Solutions
to access the homepage



Select Stay Signed In to
ensure progress is saved

Accessing the Career Exploration Worksheet

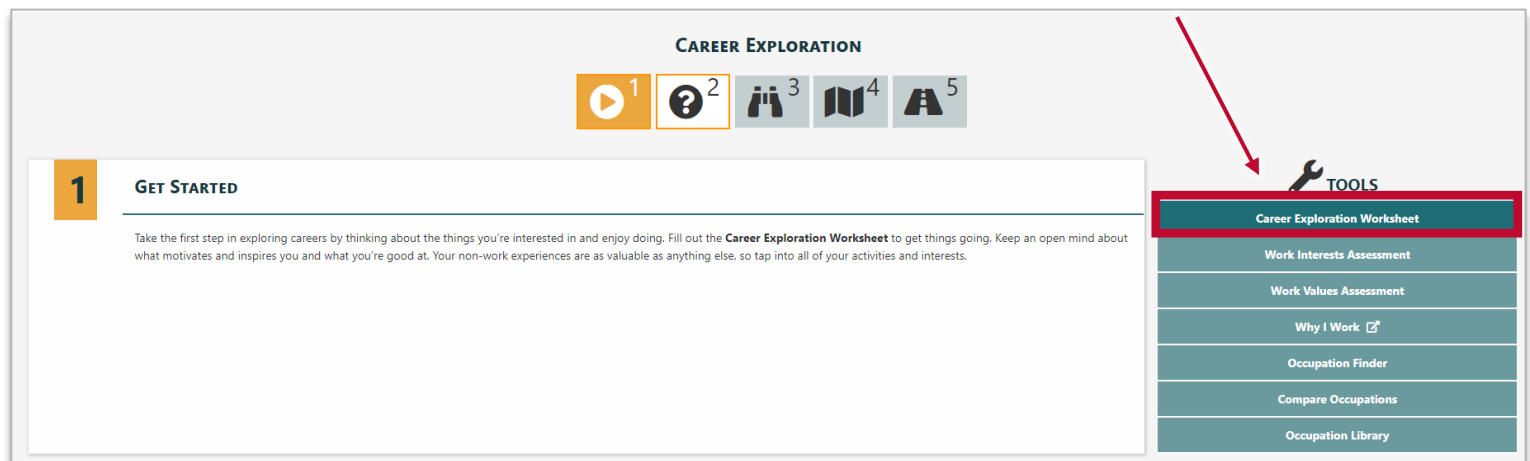
The Career Exploration Worksheet is a self-assessment tool designed to get the student thinking through their interests. There are no right or wrong answers. Some students may have a variety of interests, while others may be limited in their understanding of careers. The worksheet can be completed as an online or offline activity. Additional information on how to implement this worksheet in the classroom is provided in the Connecting with Students section below.


Follow these steps to access the Career Exploration Worksheet.

- Sign into Career Solutions.
- Click on Career Exploration at the top of the screen.
- Click on the Career Exploration Worksheet in the list of tools to the right of the screen.
- A screen will appear with a series of career related questions.
- Provide answers to the questions and click Save and Print.



Click on Career Exploration Worksheet



 **New Mexico Department of WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**

Sample Student
Unassigned

Career Solutions My Dashboard Career Exploration Education & Training Gain Experience The Job Search

Career Exploration Worksheet

Take the first step in exploring careers by thinking about the things you're interested in and enjoy doing. Fill out the Career Exploration Worksheet to get things going. Keep an open mind about what motivates and inspires you, including your strengths. Your non-work experiences are as valuable as anything else, so tap into all of your activities and interests.

Getting Started with Career Exploration: Your Interests Worksheet

About You

1. What activities/hobbies have you done that were easy to learn and that you were good at? (e.g., cooking, sports, caring for siblings, arts and/or crafts, organizing events, etc.)

2. What about these activities do you like? (e.g., working with tools, leading a group, making decisions, interacting with others, working with numbers, developing new ideas, selling things, etc.)

10. List any volunteering you've done. Which volunteer position(s) did you like best and why?

11. List three occupations you have thought about doing. Describe why you're interested in them.

Click on Save or Print

Save Print

Return to Career Exploration

Connecting with Students

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will be given the opportunity to...

- Discuss the importance of career exploration.
- Identify the main features of the Career Solutions system.
- Recognize the advantages of registering as a user in the Career Solutions system.
- Complete the Career Exploration Worksheet.
- Evaluate personal abilities, interests, and needs as they apply to the selection of a career.
- Determine next steps in exploring career opportunities and developing a career plan.

Classroom Discussions and Presentations

Introduction

Career exploration can be an exciting, but also stressful activity for students. To introduce this lesson, take a moment to engage in a brief discussion about the purpose of career exploration. Below are some helpful talking points and questions to share with students.

Talking Points

Below are some helpful comments to share with students.

- Choosing a career is an important decision that can affect job satisfaction and the ability to achieve lifestyle goals. Taking time now to make an informed career choice can payoff in the long-run.
- No matter who you are or what skills you think you do or do not possess, you have the opportunity to make a good career choice. Hundreds of good jobs are out there in multiple career fields.
- Career exploration is important for everyone, no matter where you plan to go next – college, trade school, career, and so on. Ultimately, everyone eventually enters into a career.
- The goal of career exploration is to gain a thorough understanding of personal factors, such as your work interests and values, as well as external factors, such as the job market and availability of jobs, to make an informed decision on the career(s) that will be right for you.

Discussion Questions

As a class or in small groups, have students reflect on the following questions. Help students talk about and work through their positive and negative feelings regarding career exploration.

- What are some benefits of exploring careers options now?
- What do you find exciting about exploring career possibilities?
- Do you believe career exploration is a useful activity for you? Why or why not?
- What are some examples of good jobs that do not require a four-year degree?
- What are some concerns you have about choosing a career?

Exploring the System

After discussing the importance of career exploration and helping students work through both positive and negative perspectives on the process, students can be introduced to the Career Solutions system.

The “How to Use this Tool” section above provides a summary of useful information to share with students.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Communicate the purpose of the system as a career exploration site that can help students connect interests to career goals and develop effective career plans.
- Help students locate the site at nmcareersolutions.com.
- Review features available through both vertical and horizontal navigation.
- Review the advantages of registration and help students register as a user.
- Assist students in signing into the system for the first time.
- Direct students to the Career Exploration Worksheet.

Classroom Activity

Career Exploration Worksheet

The Career Exploration Worksheet (available within the Career Solutions system) can help students begin the process of exploring their interests and connecting these interests to careers. As a basic self-assessment tool, the worksheet provides insight into students’ likes, dislikes, strengths, needs, education goals, and work interests. Students can use this information to learn more about themselves and determine occupations that may align better with their personal attributes, needs, and wants.

To locate the worksheet, review the “How to Use this Tool” section above.

It is recommended that teachers and instructors...

- Print a copy of the worksheet and/or provide electronic access to the worksheet for each student.
- Introduce the worksheet to students as a self-assessment tool that helps them learn about themselves
- Provide assurances to students that their answers are private and will not be shared with others.
- Encourage students to complete the worksheet in the classroom or at home.
- Assist students in interpreting and using the information in the career exploration process.

Exploring the Results

Because there is no right or wrong way to complete the worksheet, there is also no right or wrong way to interpret the results. Students should be encouraged to reflect on what their responses mean to them and how their answers might relate to their career selection. For each section (About You, Your Education Interests, and Your Work Interests), ask students to think about what their responses say about the types of jobs that would be a good fit for them. It may be helpful for them to review the worksheet and start envisioning what their future job might look like and why. Placing students into small groups to share these visions could be helpful.

Career Exploration Worksheet

Take the first step in exploring careers by thinking about the things you're interested in and enjoy doing. Fill out the Career Exploration Worksheet to get things going. Keep an open mind about what motivates and inspires you, including your strengths. Your non-work experiences are as valuable as anything else, so tap into all of your activities and interests.

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About You

1. What activities/hobbies have you done that were easy to learn and that you were good at? (e.g., cooking, sports, caring for siblings, arts and/or crafts, organizing events, etc.)
2. What about these activities do you like? (e.g., working with tools, leading a group, making decisions, interacting with others, working with numbers, developing new ideas, selling things, etc.)
3. What activities do you dislike and why do you dislike them?
4. How much money do you want to earn? How much money do you think you need to earn to live comfortably?
5. Do you want to stay in the same city or town you're living in now, or would you like to live and work somewhere else in the state or country?

Your Education Interests

6. List some school subjects you've done well in. Did you enjoy these subjects? (e.g., geometry, language arts, physics, art, etc.)

7. If you could learn something new right now, what would it be? Why?

8. Are you interested in or considering continuing your education after high school? If so, have you thought about what type of education you'd pursue? (e.g., university, apprenticeship, training)

Your Work Interests

9. List any jobs you've had. Which job(s) did you like the best and why?

10. List any volunteering you've done. Which volunteer position(s) did you like best and why?

11. List three occupations you have thought about doing. Describe why you're interested in them.

Next Steps

At the end of the lesson, take a moment to review and assess the learning objectives. Engage students in a brief discussion of the learning opportunities that were made available in the classroom.

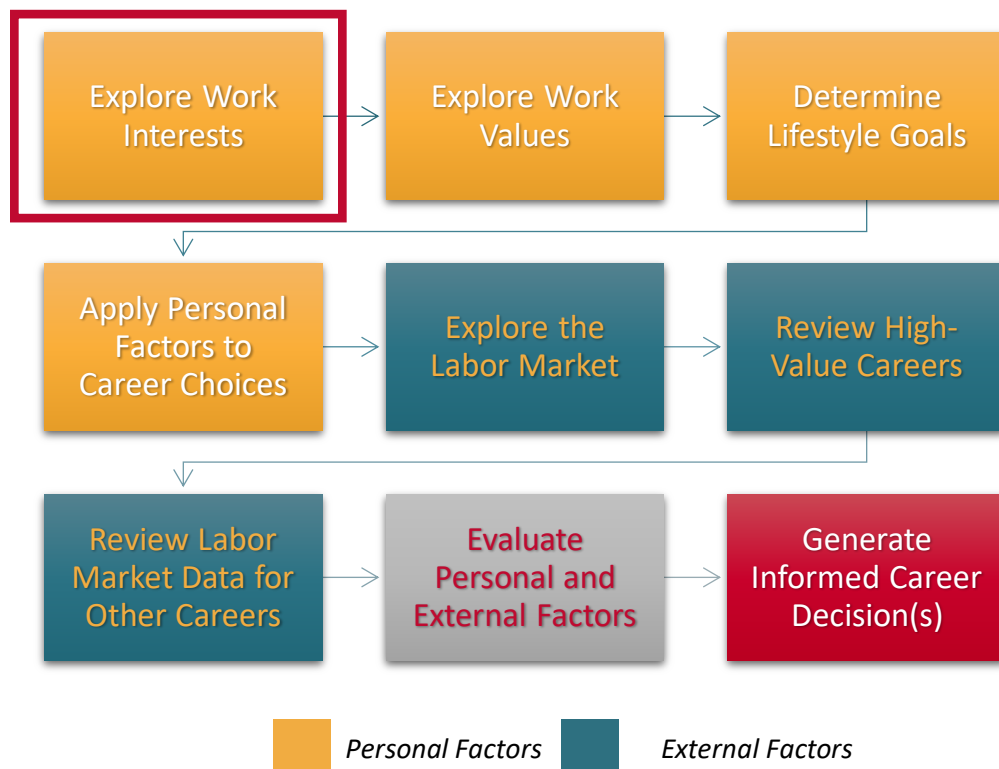
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- Complete the Career Exploration Worksheet.
- Evaluate personal abilities, interests, and needs as they apply to the selection of a career.

After providing a brief overview, encourage students to...

- Continue the self-reflection process.
- Think about their personal attributes and what they want/need from a career.
- Determine how they might use this information in selecting a career.
- Prepare for future lessons that will involve additional self-discovery activities.

The Career Exploration Process



Helpful Tip: This diagram will be presented at the end of each lesson to identify the next step in the career exploration process.