

Activity #82: Improving Reading and Building Vocabulary (continued)

Finding the Right Dictionary for Your Student

Teaching your student how to use a dictionary is a great way to encourage him/her to build a larger vocabulary.

- The right dictionary for your student is one he/she will use and be able to *understand*.
- Every student should carry a pocket dictionary, but such dictionaries may be incomplete and not have all the learning components necessary to increase comprehension.
- One of the best dictionaries for elementary and early middle school students is the Dorling Kindersley edition of Merriam-Webster's Children's Dictionary. This dictionary has many learning components that help students understand words:
 - Many pictures to illustrate nouns and verbs
 - A "How to Use the Dictionary" Section. This is a fabulous learning tool. You can teach your student how to get the most out of a dictionary by working through this section.

Ways to Use the Dictionary

- Your student should carry a dictionary at all times and have it handy when he/she reads.
- Have students bring in ten new words each week. Show them how to use the words.
- Keep a *journal* listing the words you have learned.
- Have a *purpose*: Link the new words to course topics and projects, such as: "new words about history," etc.
- Use your student's *textbook* as a source of words. Try to identify and define the key words using the dictionary.
- This is a powerful learning tool if you use it consistently.
- **Looking up just ten new words a day for a year will cost you about 5 minutes of your student's time per day, while increasing his/her vocabulary by 3,650 words!**
- Have your student write *poetry* or a *short story* using his/her new words.
- Have your student link new words to his/her own life.

CAREER PLANNING AND PREPARATION



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INTRODUCTION

The Rewards of Career Exploration

Talking about careers can be a very rewarding experience for you and your student. Using the career exploration tools in these modules is a good way for mentors to get young people excited about the future and help them recognize education as a pathway to their personal success. Students will like these activities because they are fun to do and allow them the freedom to make their own decisions.

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions a young person will have to make. Unfortunately, young people are urged to decide what they want to do for the rest of their lives before they have finished high school, even though they may not have the information, maturity, or experience necessary to make a good decision.

The goal of these activities is to provide students with as much information about careers and career requirements as they need to choose and plan for a career; however, we must remember that young people often change their minds. Students should try to plan for a career as early as possible in high school, but also continue to explore new career options as they mature. It is therefore very important that students return to the module activities several times during their high school years because their interests will almost certainly change as they get older.

What can you do to help your student choose a career? Students explore careers online using these tools, but mentors can add a key ingredient: real world experience. What practical information can you provide your student about working in the community? Does your student know what employers expect from employees? There are many, many topics you can discuss to prepare your mentee for a career: the importance of a good work ethic, being punctual, having a positive attitude, etc. You understand what it takes to be successful in the world of work—share this knowledge with your student!

Take Stock in Children has designed these career exploration resources to provide students with the information they need to make sound career decisions, yet the real key to successful career planning is the guidance offered by a caring adult.

Activities Make Career Counseling Easy and Enjoyable

Take Stock in Children has developed these tools to make counseling your student easy and enjoyable. The module activities can assist your student in all phases of career decision-making. The activities contained in the modules will help your student to:

- make **sound** career decisions
- establish **realistic** career and life goals
- devise **practical** career plans
- construct **effective** career tools
- acquire **actual** work experience

Another advantage of these activities is that they are self-directed. Students can work at their own pace, make their own decisions, and complete as many of the activities as they want. The modules are intended to complement each other, but do not feel pressured to complete every module activity or to follow a strict schedule. Let your student decide how fast and how far to go.

Career development activities are great learning experiences that will make your mentoring sessions both productive and satisfying.

How to Get Started

You and your student will work together on a computer in your school's media center to utilize the resources of some of the best career development sites on the Internet, such as Florida eCHOICES and Career Key. Students can work through each module in order or randomly. Students will use these sites to create their own customized set of career tools and planning guides. All they have to do is complete the activities online, print out the results, and place them in their career portfolios!

Take Stock in Children has designed four modules that correspond to the four stages of career development: self-assessment, exploration, planning, and preparation.

MODULE 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT (ACTIVITIES 83-92)

In this module, students can utilize entertaining, interactive sites to understand themselves better in order to identify careers that are best suited for them. Because young people change as they mature, they should be encouraged to use this module more than once.

This module contains activities that allow young people to:

- Discover their values, attitudes, and personality types
- Evaluate their skills, learning styles, and interests
- Match their personal characteristics to appropriate careers

Of all the modules in this toolkit, this one is undoubtedly the most enjoyable. Students will like these activities because they will learn new things about themselves. As a mentor, your main job here is just to work on these modules with your student and have fun.

MODULE 2: CAREER EXPLORATION (ACTIVITIES 93-97)

The second module assists students in exploring careers and gathering concrete information in order to make an informed career choice. This module offers students a host of sites containing up-to-date information about

their possible career choices. Once students have compiled a list of possible career choices, they can use the websites in this module to:

- Research occupations and career paths
- Assess career choices using personalized criteria
- Determine their main career paths

Mentors can help guide students in the right direction by making certain they understand all the factors that should be taken into consideration when making a career choice. The tools in this module make it easy for students to search a wide range of possible occupations.

MODULE 3: CAREER PLANNING (ACTIVITIES 98-103)

The third module will enable students to establish realistic plans for achieving their career goals. Exploring possible career choices can be lots of fun. At some point, however, your student should decide which careers he/she will seriously pursue. After they have chosen their principal career path(s), students can then begin to plan. In the third module, they will use planning guides to:

- Understand the career decision-making process
- Prioritize career goals
- Devise realistic and practical career plans

As a mentor, you have a number of key objectives in this module. First, you should try to make certain that your student's career plans are realistic. Second, encourage your student to have several career plans in case his/her first choice changes. Third, try to get your student to understand the requirements needed to enter his/her particular career field.

MODULE 4: CAREER PREPARATION (ACTIVITIES 104-109)

The last set of activities in the toolkit enables students to actually build their own career tools. Preparing for a career involves building the tools and gaining the experience necessary to enter one's career field. In the last module, students will learn how to implement their career plans by:

- Building effective career tools
- Acquiring necessary work experience
- Developing important job skills

After completing this module, your student will possess a comprehensive career portfolio he/she can build on through college or vocational school. This portfolio will contain the results of all the module activities that your student has completed as well as other important career information that will be his/her passport to success.

MODULE 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-Assessment is the First Step of Career Planning

Students who truly understand themselves—their interests, values, personality, and skills—are better able to make important career decisions! Proper self-assessment enables students to match their personal characteristics with appropriate career paths. The primary goal of this module is to help your student create a list of career choices and focus occupations to explore and research later, in Module 2.

These tools can and should be used many times by students. This module contains many innovative web sites that students can visit to learn more about themselves in order to narrow their career focus to occupations that correspond with their interests and skills.

Instructions for Using Module 1

STUDENTS

1. Complete as many of the tests as you wish.
2. Print out the results of these tests and place in a Personal Profile folder.
3. The materials in this profile will serve as the basis for the "Personal Information" section of a Career Portfolio.
4. **The list of career paths and focus occupations can serve as the starting-point for career investigation and research in Module 2.**

MENTORS

1. Schedule mentoring sessions in your school's media center.
2. Ask for assistance if you are not familiar with computers or the internet.
3. Go to the websites listed for each module activity.
4. Follow directions provided for each activity.
5. Each module activity is designed to occupy a session, but students can work through them at their own pace.
6. **The goal of this module is to generate a comprehensive list of "focus occupations."**

Activity #83: Using the Career Key

Description: This is a quick and easy way for students to **use their personality types to target possible career choices**. Students answer questions which identify their personalities in terms of six major types. Their top three types are then automatically linked to career information found in the Occupational Handbook.

Site: www.careerkey.org

STEP	CLICK	TASKS
1	"You" then select "Take the Career Key"	Student should fill out information and continue
2		Student should answer questions
3		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print out the names and descriptions of the top three personality types your student has identified 2. Follow directions to create a job list for each personality type 3. Print out job lists 4. Follow directions to get Occupational Handbook descriptions of each job listed 5. Print out job descriptions 6. Put all materials in student's personal profile folder
<p>Results: Students should have the following in their Personal Profile notebooks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Names of their top three personality types 2. Descriptions of their top three personality types 3. A list of jobs corresponding to each type 4. Occupational Handbook descriptions of all jobs 		
<p>Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the identified jobs match your student's interests? • Does your student agree with the results of the test? • Does the test indicate a college or vocational career? (This is a key decision our students have to make.) 		