

Lesson 2.5: Dreams and Plans

Standards and Benchmarks

See page 4.

Lesson Description

Students research and compare potential careers, organize key career information, and use a PACED decision-making grid to select a career based on their personal priorities. Students then interview a family member or another trusted adult about their career journey and reflect on how the interview influenced or reinforced their own career plans. To obtain answer keys for the handouts and assessment in this lesson, create an account on FederalReserveEducation.org.

Concepts

Careers

Decision-Making

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- make an informed decision on their future career using a process and a decision-making grid.
- research possible career choices.

Compelling Question

How can you make a sound career choice that supports your future goals?

Time Required

60 minutes

Materials

- Handout 2.4.1: O*NET Online Research , two copies for each student (Students completed this handout in Lesson 2.4. Completed copies of this handout should be in their portfolios.)
 - Handout 2.5.1: Final Career Choice – Research Summary , one copy for each student
 - Handout 2.5.2: Keys Career Decision-Making Grid , one copy for each student
 - Handout 2.5.3: Assessment, one copy for each student
-  = Portfolio Item

Procedure

1. If you used Lesson 2.4 in the Keys to Financial Success Curriculum, students have already conducted research on two potential careers using Handout 2.4.1: O*NET Online Research. Instruct students to take out both completed copies of Handout 2.4.1.
2. If students do not have prior research available, introduce O*NET Online (www.onetonline.org) as a free career information database sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. Explain that students can search for careers and find information such as job duties, education and training requirements, skills, wages, employment outlook, and work environment. Instruct students to use the database to research and select two careers of interest before continuing this lesson.
3. Distribute a copy of Handout 2.5.1: Final Career Choice–Research Summary to each student. Have each student complete the handout using the information they have either collected from Handout 2.4.1 and/or from the O*NET Online website.
4. After the students have completed Handout 2.5.1, distribute Handout 2.5.2: Keys Career Decision-Making Grid and explain to them that they should choose one career from their two initial choices using the Career Decision-Making Grid.
5. If needed, remind students of the PACED decision-making steps:
 - a. Step 1: State the **P**roblem: Identify the problem you are trying to solve or the decision you are trying to make.
 - b. STEP 2: List **A**lternatives: Create a list of the alternatives that could solve the problem, satisfy the want/need, or be an outcome of the decision.
 - c. STEP 3: Identify **C**riteria: Establish the important factors on which you will judge your alternatives.
 - d. STEP 4: **E**valuate the Alternatives: Consider your alternatives based on your established criteria.
 - e. STEP 5: Make a **D**ecision: Make a decision based on your evaluation.
6. Tell the students to list their two career choices under the column labeled “Alternatives”. Instruct students to develop a list of criteria they believe are important when choosing a career. Tell the students to select five to seven criteria from the list and write them across the top of the grid, beginning with the most important criterion on the left side to the least important on the right side.
7. Next, have students assign a weight to each criterion, beginning with five, six, or seven (most important) down to one (least important). The highest weight will depend on the number of criteria selected.
8. In the column under each criteria, have students rate each of the career alternatives on a scale of zero to two with two being the highest. Each number (0, 1, 2) can be used only once in each column. Then ask the students to multiply each number by the weight assigned to that column, total the number of points for each career alternative, and then circle the career with the highest total. This alternative is the career the student will use throughout the rest of the course.

Closure

9. Review the important points of the lesson by asking students:
 - a. Why is it important to consider multiple factors (not just salary) when choosing a career? (*Interests, skills, education requirements, work environment, job outlook, work-life balance, and other factors all contribute to making a good career choice.*)
 - b. How did using a decision-making process help you choose between your career options? (*Comparing alternatives using criteria helps with making a more thoughtful, informed decision rather than choosing based on a single factor.*)

Assessment

10. Provide each student a copy of Handout 2.5.3: Assessment. Tell students they should interview a family member or another trusted adult (such as a teacher, coach, school staff member, neighbor, mentor, or family friend) about their career journey using the interview questions provided in Part 1. In Part 2, they should write a two- to three- paragraph reflection that answers the following questions: (*Answers will vary, but a grading rubric is available with the provided answer keys.*)
 - a. What did you learn from your interview?
 - b. How did the interview reinforce or change your thinking about your career choice?
 - c. What steps do you plan to take after high school to help you achieve your career goal?

Standards and Benchmarks

National Standards for Personal Financial Education

Standard 1: Earning Income

Most people earn wage and salary income in return for working, and they can also earn income from interest, dividends, rents, entrepreneurship, business profits, or increases in the value of investments. Employee compensation may also include access to employee benefits such as retirement plans and health insurance. Employers generally pay higher wages and salaries to more educated, skilled, and productive workers. The decision to invest in additional education or training can be made by weighing the benefit of increased income-earning and career potential against the opportunity costs in the form of time, effort, and money. Spendable income is lower than gross income due to taxes assessed on income by federal, state, and local governments.

Benchmarks: Grade 12

1. Compensation for a job or career can be in the form of wages, salaries, commissions, tips, or bonuses, and may also include contributions to employee benefits, such as health insurance, retirement savings plans, and education reimbursement programs.
2. In addition to wages and paid benefits, employees may also value intangible (non-cash) benefits, such as good working conditions, flexible work hours, telecommuting privileges, and career advancement potential.
3. People vary in their opportunity and willingness to incur the present costs of additional training and education in exchange for future benefits, such as earning potential.

Handout 2.5.1: Final Career Choice – Research Summary

1. List two careers you researched.

a.

b.

2. How much time must you invest in order to complete the training required?

a.

b.

3. What is the salary range (entry level - highest salary level) for each career?

a.

b.

4. What do you think the demand for the job will be? (Less than average, greater than average, provide specific numbers if available.)

a.

b.

Handout 2.5.2: Career Decision-Making Grid

Alternatives Criteria								Total
Career #1								
Career #2								

Which career alternative scored the highest point total? _____

Enter the entry-level salary of your highest scoring career _____

Handout 2.5.3: Assessment (page 1 of 2)

Part 1: Interview

Instructions: Interview a family member or another trusted adult (such as a teacher, coach, school staff member, neighbor, mentor, or family friend) about their career journey. Ask the questions below and take notes on their responses.

Name of person interviewed:

Relationship to you:

1. What career did you choose?

2. How did you decide this was the right career for you?

3. What resources or experiences helped you make your career decisions?

Handout 2.5.3: Assessment (page 2 of 2)

4. What steps did you take to prepare for and achieve your career goals?

5. What advice would you give someone who is choosing a career today?

Part 2: Reflection

Instructions: Write a two- to three- paragraph reflection that addresses the questions below:

- What did you learn from your interview?
- How did the interview reinforce or change your thinking about your career choice?
- What steps do you plan to take after high school to help you achieve your career goal?