

“Major Issues”: College Majors and Career Choices

Courtesy of NCTC’s Counseling and Testing Center

Top Reasons Students Attend College

- “To Make More Money”
- “To Get A Better Job”
- “My Parents Told Me To Go”

Choosing a Major

Don’t know what to major in? Don’t panic! Choosing a major, thinking about a career, getting an education-these are the things college is all about. Nearly 3 out of 4 students change majors at least once before they graduate (average is between 3 and 8 times). Therefore, not knowing what you want to study is not something to stress about!

Who Can Give You Assistance in Choosing Your Major or Career Path?

- Counselors or Academic Advisors
- Current Instructors or Former Teachers
- Parents/Grandparents/Siblings/Friends
- Local Business Owners/Chamber of Commerce Members

Factors in Choosing a Major

Availability of the Major at the Institution You Are:

- *Planning on Attending*
All institutions offer different majors and all school departments are different. Make sure you visit the institutions’ staff and faculty departments to ask questions and learn more about the different majors.
- *Currently Attending*
Aside from your core classes dare to take other courses that you may find interesting so that you can keep an open mind for a major.
- *Planning to Transfer Into*
Make sure your classes are transferrable. Most NCTC core classes transfer to all Texas universities.

Facts to Connect Your Major to a Career

Personal Interest and Personality

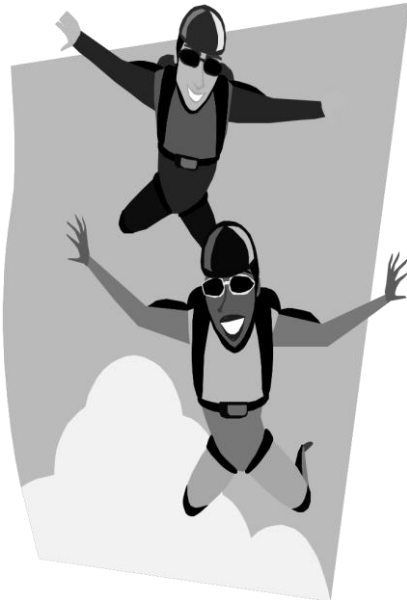
What interests you?

- *Begin brainstorming your interests by jotting down some answers to the following questions:*
 - What activities do like to participate in? What are your hobbies?
 - Do you enjoy spending your time outdoors or indoors?
 - Would you rather work alone or as part of a team?
 - What were your favorite high school courses?
 - What types of jobs appeal to you?
 - What is your dream job?



What are your strengths and abilities?

- Review these suggestions and questions to help you determine your strongest abilities:
 - Is there a pattern in your high school courses that you did well in and the courses you struggled with?
 - What type of extracurricular activities did you take part in during high school?
 - What have you learned from part-time or summer employment?
 - Have you received awards or recognition in certain areas?
 - How would you assess your study skills and work ethic?



What motivates you?

- Now consider what might be driving you towards a particular major
 - Take a look at your interests and abilities examined above to discover where your strongest motivations stem from

Here are some questions to help you decide:

- Is your decision being influenced by outside factors - family, peers or the job market?
- Are you considering a particular major because you believe it will help you secure a great job and a large salary?
- Is the workload you associate with a particular major influencing your decision?

What are the realities?

- What requirements must be satisfied and what obstacles can you foresee having to overcome with your choice of major?
 - How do your grades rank against those required to succeed in a certain major?
 - What are the course requirements you will have to satisfy for a particular major?
 - Will the number of years you spend at university be extended with your choice of major?
 - Will you be able to satisfy the financial requirements of an extended university career?

Give it a try!

- There are many ways to get experience and find out what you like! For example: internships, jobs, volunteer work, meeting with professors, talking to your parents, and speaking with people that are in a career you are interested in (informational interviewing).
- Remember, it's never too early to start thinking about what you want to be when you grow up!

Helpful Links

What Can I Do with This Major?	http://www.depts.ttu.edu/careercenter/PHP/majors/default.html
Myers Briggs Personality Assessment	http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp
Occupational Outlook Handbook	http://www.bls.gov/oco/
Keirsey Temperament Sorter	http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/instruments2.aspx?partid=o