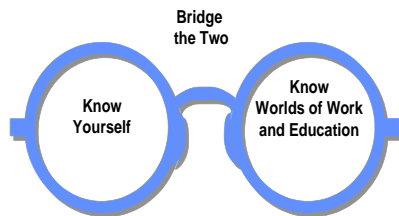


PREPARING TO USE SKILLS: OVERVIEW

SKILLS is a career assessment. Career assessment instruments are used to help people understand a particular aspect of themselves that is important in making work and school decisions. Some instruments look at interests, aptitudes, values, personality type, career beliefs, and career maturity. **SKILLS** looks at your **skills preferences**.

What you learn from formal assessment instruments should be **added to what you already know about yourself informally** and learn daily in school, at home, and in leisure activities. Think of this self-awareness process as creating a self-portrait. Over your lifetime you will be painting this portrait. The **SKILLS** program will provide one color of paint for that portrait. If you are thoughtful in the process, you will glean some important information that you can use in your life and career plans.

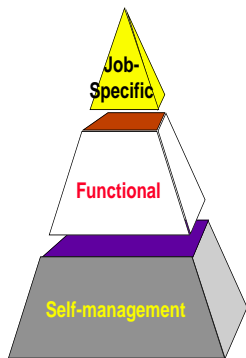


Here is a simple metaphor for what you are doing when you plan for your career -- your education and life beyond high school: Think about a pair of eye glasses. One lens represents your self-awareness -- knowing who you are, what you like, what you aspire to. The other lens represents what you know about the world of work and education. Over your lifetime,

you will learn more about yourself and you will grow and change. You will also develop a greater understanding of the world of work and your educational options, and these external environments will change continuously and dramatically. The bridge between the two lenses represents the decisions you will make -- bridging your self-knowledge and your understanding of the world to create your life story. By using **SKILLS**, you will be engaging in self-awareness and in learning about the world or work, both through a skills lens. You will also be bridging these two types of information toward your personal goals and aspirations.

SKILLS is based upon a body of research that was conducted at the University of Washington and later adapted by Richard Bolles in *What Color is Your Parachute?* (This is the most popular career book ever written.) The skills analysis process you'll use works at various stages of your career. By introducing it now, you will learn a process you will be able to use over and over again throughout your life.

SKILLS will also help you envision an aspect of yourself that employers are most concerned about -- your skills. (Employers are asking, "What can you do for me and my company? How can you contribute?") The most important skills for employers are in the self-management and functional skills. These are the building block skills. They are also called transferable because you can use them in many occupations.



SKILLS identifies 72 of these building block skills. (It does not include the top section of the skills pyramid, the job-specific skills, which are also important in the labor market.) You will learn about these skills that are fundamental to work and school and see that you already possess many of them. You will learn how they are used in the world of work and be able to connect them to things you do now in school, at home, and in your community. You will develop a vocabulary of skill words that you can use as you apply for college, look for part-time work, or develop a plan for a personal endeavor.

We have used the word "skills" over and over, but what are skills? Skills are behaviors that are directed toward a goal **and** that can be learned. If you want to, you can become better at a skill; you can develop that skill by practicing it. Skills we are good at are generally skills we like using; or, conversely, we usually enjoy using skills we do well. When we use skills we like, we are happy in what we are doing. The **SKILLS** program helps you identify skills you like to use and then matches these to the world of work.

Thus, as you think about the types of work you would like to pursue, and the kind of education you will need to pursue these, knowledge of the skills required will help you in two important ways. First, you will better understand whether you will enjoy a certain type of work. Second, you will learn what parts of the work may present special challenges.

THE PROCESS

Using a set of 72 skill words, you are going to select those skills that you would enjoy using in your work. You will then use the computer to see how your skill preferences match occupations in the labor market. You can also analyze how well the skills you selected match the skills required to achieve career aspirations you may already have. Finally, you can use the information to help you set some educational and occupational goals.

Look at step #1 of your worksheet. In order to select skills you like, it is helpful to first identify several achievements or accomplishments you are proud of. These achievements can help you determine how you have used skills in the past and whether you actually liked using them. Everyone has achievements. If you are having trouble identifying some to use, talk with your peers at your table about the kinds of projects and activities they consider achievements. Be as specific as you can be.

Once you have several achievements listed (three to seven), complete steps #2 through #4 on the worksheet.

REMINDERS FOR COMPLETING THE PROCESS

Make sure you record the skills you have selected on the back page of your worksheet. Bring your worksheet to class; we will go to the computer lab to use the **SKILLS** computer program and you will need your skills preferences. At this time, you will be able to generate some comparisons between your preferred skills and skill requirements of occupations, so you will be able to compare how the skills you selected fit with your current career goals.

PRESENTING SKILLS TO STUDENTS: USING THE SKILLS WORKSHEET

USING THE RESULTS OF SKILLS

INTERPRET THE RESULTS

You should have at least four types of printouts from the SKILLS program. The first is a summary of the skills you selected -- skills you like and are (or can be) good at. Use these skills words in writing your college application essays, in resumes, and during interviews. You may want to look at your list of skills again in a year or so to see how you have changed.

On your Holland Codes printout find your top three scores. Using the first letter of each type, list your three highest codes in order on *the Interpreting the Results of SKILLS* insert in the worksheet:



1st 2nd 3rd

This is your Holland Personality Type based on the skills you selected. You can diagram your type on the hexagram by forming a triangle that connects your three types. The smaller your triangle, the easier it will be to find occupations and work environments that match your personality type. The larger your triangle, the more diverse are your interests and skills; and the more difficult it will be for you to use these interests and skills in a single occupation or work environment.

Your Occs Cluster and Top 30 Occs lists match your preferred skills to the skill requirements of the occupations in the SKILLS database. These lists do not tell you what you should become; they are designed to provide ideas for further exploration. The higher your score, the more skills that you find satisfying are also used in the occupation.

The Career Learning Areas printout gives you a way to view your results organized by the programs of study in your high school. One way to use this printout is to highlight your “favorite” occupations and see which career path fits most of them or the field you are most interested in.

You will also want to study any VIEW printouts for occupations that interest you, regardless of their SKILLS score. Look at the matches and mismatches between the occupation's requirements and your skills preferences.

RESEARCH OPTIONS AND FORMULATE YOUR GOALS

After discussing your SKILLS results, you are ready to research your options further. Use the CIS to learn more about your occupational options, the programs of study that you may want to pursue after high school, and the many postsecondary institutions around the state and nation that offer these programs. Review in particular:

Occupation Clusters
Occupations

High School Courses topic
Preparation topic

Many students feel that they are not ready to set "Career Goals" in high school. However, career goals do not have to answer the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Career goals can take the form of an exploration ("I will explore career possibilities in science and math during the next two years"), educational attainment ("I will graduate from high school with at least a 3.0 GPA"), and even a leisure pursuit ("I will climb Mt. Hood to improve my self-confidence"). Setting goals based upon what you know about yourself, and regularly evaluating how you are doing with regard to these goals, sets you on a constructive career path.

Discuss your ideas with people knowledgeable about your interest areas. These discussions are called "Informational Interviews." They can provide enlightening information about fields of work and study.

Having no goals may result in inappropriate decisions, like selecting a high school course of study that limits your options after high school or selecting a college based upon your friends' plans rather than on criteria reflecting your needs. Setting goals allows you to analyze barriers that you may need to overcome and develop a step-by-step approach to reaching the objective. Having clear goals also helps you respond to college application and job interview questions. Write down at least one career goal now:

Destiny is no matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved. William Jennings Bryant