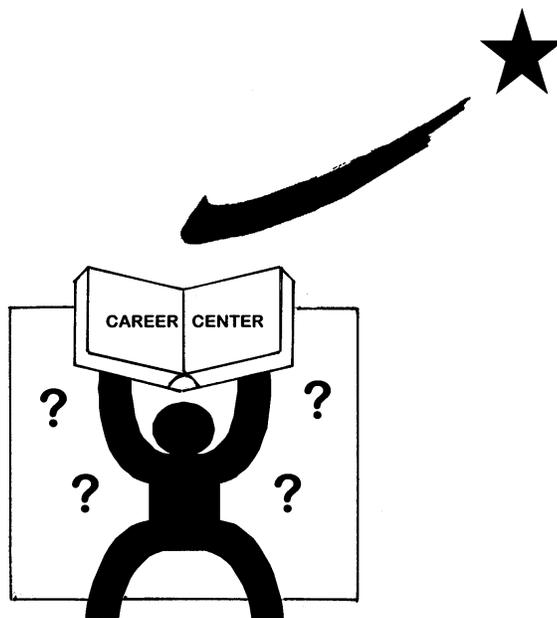


**Fresno City College
CAREER CENTER**

**SELF-DIRECTED
CAREER PLANNING GUIDE**

**A Step-By-Step Guide to Career Planning
and Online Services and Resources**



October 2011

Fresno City College Career Center ~ 2nd Floor Student Services Building, ST-200 ~ (559) 442-8291

Fresno City College
Career Center

SELF-DIRECTED CAREER PLANNING GUIDE

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

If you are confused or undecided about your career goal, it is time to do some career planning. This guide will take you through a step-by-step career planning process, with suggestions about online services and resources that will help you as you engage in this process.

NOTE: If you are a Fresno City College student, currently in attendance, and need one-on-one assistance with career planning, contact the FCC Career Center. We offer a guided career planning process involving 4 or 5 sessions in the Career Center.

Why Plan?

Engaging in career planning is smart because it:

- Helps you learn about yourself.
- Is useful in picking your major.
- Gets you thinking about how to spend your college years.
- Puts you in a good position to make good choices about internships and jobs.
- Allows you to focus your energy on identifying a career pathway that is right for you.

Some Things to Keep in Mind

- There is no one, perfect career for anyone. There may be a number of career fields which will fit you and which you will find satisfying.
- In any job, there will be aspects of the work that you like and some aspects that you don't like. No job is perfect.
- People can shape their own careers. Think not only about what careers might fit who you are, but how you can mold your job or work environment to fit your personal style and utilize your particular skills and strengths most productively.
- Career planning is a lifelong process. Most people change careers a number of times throughout their lives. Therefore, it is important to learn what is involved in an effective career planning process. You may find yourself using this process again and again throughout your lifetime. Look at the picture of the *Stages of the Career Planning Process* on page 4.
- Career planning is part “happenstance.” Planning will get you started and keep you going, but unplanned events and other life experiences will also play a role in the direction your career path takes. Be prepared to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. (Remember, opportunities are sometimes disguised as setbacks. Keep a positive attitude.) Make the most of unexpected events; keep your career options open; make mistakes and learn from them; and continue to learn and build your skills as long as you live!

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Your Career Planning Portfolio

As you move through the career planning process, it is a good idea to maintain a “YOU” portfolio for future reference. This is a file folder or notebook (or even a box) where you can gather and keep the results of your career assessments and information about career fields of interest to you. Your portfolio is also a good place to keep college records and transcripts, examples of your accomplishments and achievements and other items that represent YOU and what you have to offer prospective employers and the world. Because career planning is a lifelong process, many people maintain a career planning portfolio throughout their work lives.

An Overview: Steps to Career Planning

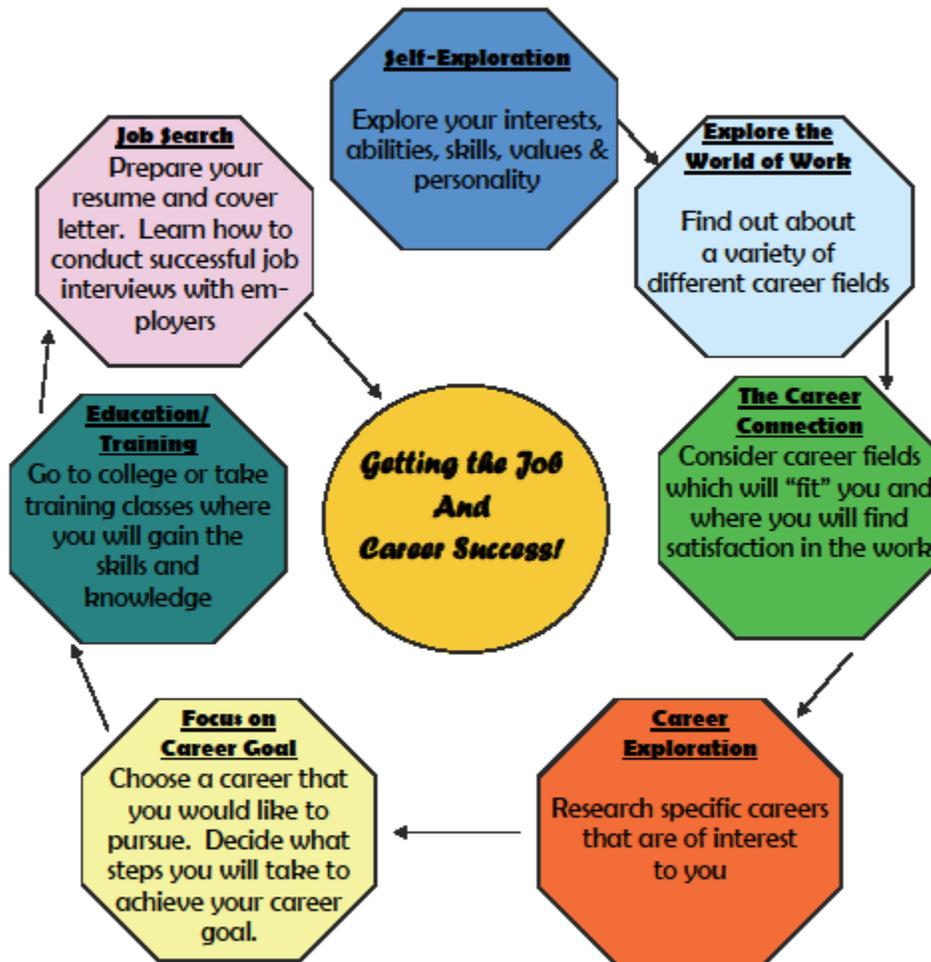
1. Self Exploration
2. Exploration of the World of Work
3. The Career Connection (You and Work)
4. Career Exploration
5. Decision Making

For more information about career planning steps, go on to Section II on page 4. →

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Stages of the CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

★ *It starts with you!* ★



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SECTION II: STEPS TO CAREER PLANNING

Career planning is a process that includes the steps or stages described below. These steps don't necessarily need to be done in order. It's likely that you'll sometimes engage in activities within these steps at different times and in a different sequence. The important thing is that you are thorough in your exploration activities and utilize the resources available to you. Review these steps; then begin your career journey.

1. Self Exploration

Career planning starts with YOU! Who are you? What do you want? What do you have to offer the world? Career self-assessments will help you identify and explore your natural strengths and talents, interests, abilities, skills, values and personality. They will give you ideas about what careers might fit you.

2. Explore the World of Work

What is there to do out there in the wide world of work? Investigate options and possibilities before narrowing down your choices.

3. Make the Career Connection

Some careers will match your personal profile and preferences better than others. Your career assessment results will give suggestions and provide clues about occupations that might fit you best. Refer to the results of your assessments (Step 1) to help you make the career connection. What occupations are suggested by the different assessments you have completed? Is there a pattern emerging? Which fields would you like to explore and consider further?

4. Career Exploration

Once you've narrowed down your choices and identified some career fields that might suit you, investigate them closely. Gather information about the careers that you are considering.

5. Decision Making

Now it's time to make a choice and make a plan. Choose a direction that will get you started on a program of study that will prepare you for a future career. Use a decision-making strategy that will help you weigh the facts, think about the pro's and con's and reach a thoughtful career choice that will satisfy you. What actions will you take to reach your goal?

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SECTION III: SELF EXPLORATION

Career planning begins with YOU! What kind of a person are you? What is meaningful to you? Career self-assessments will help you explore who you are and suggest career options that might be fulfilling for you. Links to various online career assessments are shown on the following pages. Complete several of these assessments to get a well-rounded picture of your qualities and preferences. Before you begin, here are some things to keep in mind....

Eight Tips about Taking Career Assessments

1. These assessments are about exploring who YOU are. There are no right or wrong answers. You will not be graded. These are simply tools that give you a way to look at YOURSELF.
2. Assessments can help you explore who you are and get ideas about career options that might fit you. They may be able to open your mind to possibilities that you hadn't considered. They can even help you clarify what you want and give focus to your career planning. HOWEVER, career assessments cannot tell you what to do or what to be. ONLY you can choose your career pathway.
3. It is a good idea to take several of the following assessments, rather than just one. This will help you look at yourself in different ways. Compare the results of different assessments. Look for patterns and themes. For example, do several assessments suggest the same or similar career fields?
4. Not every assessment suggested will appeal to you. Take a variety of assessments to increase your chances of engaging in a process of self exploration that will fit you.
5. As you do an assessment, be honest with yourself. Respond according to how you *really* are, not how you think you should be or how others think you should be. Don't try to predetermine the results of the test. Genuine responses that fit YOU will give more accurate recommendations and results. And if your assessment results seem inaccurate, listen to yourself. Answering even a few questions inaccurately may give inaccurate recommendations.
6. Notice that assessments do not measure future skills or knowledge. Nor do they measure attitude or motivation. Only YOU can make the effort to pursue and reach your career goals. Remember: "What you believe, you can achieve."
7. You are unique! Assessments will give a broad idea of your qualities and preferences, but no test can capture the essence of who you are as a whole, complex, absolutely unique and special human being.

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8. Taking assessments is just the first step. You're not finished with the self-exploration process until you've taken the time do some serious thinking and reflecting about yourself. What makes you like no one else? What special contributions do you have to give to the world? What is most meaningful to you?

Take Several Types of Assessments

Listed below are some assessments to help you with Self Exploration. Try to choose one or two assessments in EACH of these categories:

- Personality Assessments**
- Interest Assessments**
- Abilities Assessments**
- Values Assessments**
- Skills Assessments**

REMINDER: For future reference, remember to print and keep the results of your assessments in your Career Planning Portfolio (see Section I). When you have finished all of your assessments, you can compare the results and see if there are certain career themes or patterns that keep emerging. These recurring themes can suggest career pathways that might fit you.

Personality Assessments

Career planning is essentially a search for self. Personality assessments can help you become more self aware. They also offer insights into how you relate to the world and to other people. The results of some of these assessments may not point directly to career choices that might fit you, but they will give you ideas about what work environments might be most compatible with your personality.

- A. **Identify your Holland Personality Type**, also called your RIASEC type code, to find out how your personality preferences relate to interests and career fields.
 1. Go to the website shown below.
 2. Next click on Assess Yourself.
 3. Select the **Quick Assessment**.
 4. Complete the assessment and View Jobs that match your 3-letter RIASEC code. Remember to print your results for future reference!

www.cacareerzone.org

- A. Go to this website for more information about **Holland types**:

www.californiacolleges.edu/career/careercenter/career_holland.asp.

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- B. Take the free **KTS-II Temperament Sorter** at www.keirsey.com .
- C. This website offers a free, informal personality quiz to introduce the popular MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator) concepts of personality: www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes1.htm
- D. Are you an **Introvert or an Extravert?** Take the Free Assessment at this website: <http://www.typefocus.com/>
- E. Take the free **True Colors** personality test: www.truecolorscareer.com/quiz.asp .

Interest Assessments

The things you like to do can help you identify career fields to explore. As you do an interest assessment, think about what you like or dislike doing, not about your ability to do it. Interest assessments help you identify preferences based on your likes and dislikes.

After you have completed an assessment, be sure to *make the Career Connection!* Find out what career fields might match your interests. Print out the results for future reference. It will be helpful to compare the results of different interest assessments and see if there is a pattern as to what occupations are suggested.

Notice that most interest-assessment surveys indicate your Holland type. Go to this website for more information about **Holland types**:

www.californiacolleges.edu/career/careercenter/career_holland.asp .

A. **Interest Profiler** at California Career Zone

1. Go to the website shown below.
2. Click on Assess Yourself.
3. Select the Interest Profiler.

www.cacareerzone.org

B. **My Interest Finder**

This is an alternative to the Interest Profiler. Go to My Interest Finder at www.californiacolleges.edu/career/OnetInterestSurvey/default.asp .

C. **Career Interest Profiler** at <http://hotjobs.careerid.com/articles.html> .

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Values Assessments

Values are guiding principles or motivators that indicate what you consider most important in your life. Your most important values are those that you prize the most, affirm publicly, choose freely after careful consideration and act upon consistently. Identifying your most important values will help you choose a career that will fulfill and be compatible with these values.

A. To identify the characteristics of a job which are important to you...

1. Go to the website shown below.
2. Click on Assess Yourself.
3. Then click on the **Work Importance Profiler**.

www.cacareerzone.org

B. To help you identify and prioritize values that are important to you, complete the **Values Test** at:

www.stewartcoopercoon.com/jobsearch/career-values .

C. You can go to this site's **Values Assessment** to rate your values:

<http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/OCAvaluesassessment.shtml> .

Abilities Assessment

Abilities are those things that you do well naturally. They are hard-wired, innate aptitudes. Print out and complete the **Assessment of Work-Related Abilities** on the next page. In this exercise you will rate yourself on 16 abilities important to career planning.

Skills Assessments

A skill is an activity that you have learned to do well or that you can improve upon through training and practice. What skills do you find most satisfying and enjoyable? These are the ones that you may wish to use in future work.

A. To identify the skills that you have acquired ...

1. Go to the website shown below.
2. Click on Assess Yourself.
3. Then click on the **Skills Profiler**.

www.cacareerzone.org

A. You can find a **Job Skills Checklist** at this site. Which skills do you have?

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/626/01>

The **Career and Life Skills Inventory** at this website may also be helpful: <http://www4.uwm.edu/>

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ASSESSMENT OF WORK-RELATED ABILITIES

Abilities are those things that you do well naturally. They are hard-wired, innate aptitudes. In this exercise you will rate yourself on 16 abilities important to career planning.

For each ability, rate yourself as you really think you are compared with persons of your own age. Give the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself. NOTE: In order to get an accurate assessment of your abilities, avoid rating yourself the same in each ability. Think twice if you rate yourself "high" or "average" on nearly every item. Few people are good at everything or average in all areas.

For each ability on the left, circle the one rating on the right that you think applies to your ability level.
 1 = Low 2 = Below average 3 = Average 4 = Above Average 5 = High

ABILITY	YOUR SELF RATINGS				
	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High
1. Social Ability – Being able to meet and talk with others easily and help them feel at ease; getting along well with others; understanding others	1	2	3	4	5
2. Helping Others - Caring for or teaching others; helping people with problems; helping them feel better	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sales Ability – Influencing others to buy a product or service or to take a suggested course of action; your ability to persuade others or change someone’s mind	1	2	3	4	5
4. Leadership Ability – Leading and managing people to work toward a common goal; ability to motivate others and provide direction	1	2	3	4	5
5. Organizational Ability - Keeping track of tasks, details and materials in an orderly way; doing things systematically	1	2	3	4	5
6. Clerical Ability – Ability to quickly and accurately do such tasks as filing, sorting, recording information, handling paperwork, completing forms, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Mechanical Ability – Understanding mechanical laws and figuring out how things work; being able to fix things	1	2	3	4	5
8. Manual Dexterity – Making or handling things easily and quickly with your hands using coordination	1	2	3	4	5
9. Numerical/Math Ability - Doing arithmetic quickly and accurately; consider how well you did in math classes	1	2	3	4	5
10. Scientific Ability – Understanding laws of science and scientific subjects; consider how well you did in science classes (chemistry, biology, physics, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Creative /Artistic Ability – Expressing ideas, feelings or moods through one or more of the performing arts like drawing or painting, acting, dancing or playing a musical instrument	1	2	3	4	5
12. Creative/ Literary Ability – Expressing ideas or feelings through writing	1	2	3	4	5
13. Reading Ability – Reading and understanding factual material like textbooks or manuals	1	2	3	4	5
14. Language Usage Ability – Your ability to write and speak correctly, use correct grammar and punctuation; and present your thoughts in an organized way	1	2	3	4	5
15. Spatial Perception – Looking at a drawing of an object and being able to picture in your mind how it would actually look; being able to read blueprints, patterns, floor plans, etc. and see how things would fit in an available space	1	2	3	4	5

Now highlight the abilities that you have rated high or above average. These may be the abilities that you will want to use most often in your future work. When you research career fields, find out what abilities are called for. Do your abilities match these requirements?

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SECTION IV: EXPLORE THE WORLD OF WORK

What is there for you to do out there in the wide world of work? Explore options and possibilities before narrowing your choices. You may find a field that you hadn't even considered that may be a good fit for you.

Explore Industry Sectors by going to the website shown below. Then go to Explore Industry Sectors.

www.cacareerzone.org

Research **Fastest Growing Careers in California** at:

www.californiacolleges.edu/career/fastest-growing-careers.asp .

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SECTION V: CAREER EXPLORATION

Once you've identified career fields that might be of interest to you, investigate them closely. Find out more about occupations suggested by your career self assessments. There are many ways to gather information about career fields.

1. Surf the Internet.

Go online to gather information about the careers you are considering. Here are some helpful websites:

Career Stories: Read first-person articles written by professionals in a variety of careers at www.citytowninfo.com/career-stories .

Occupational Outlook Handbook: This is a nationally recognized source of career information published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.bls.gov/oco .

O*Net Online: This huge database, developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with thousands of occupations. Go to: <http://online.onetcenter.org/> .

California's labor market information at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov . Click on *Career Information* or on *California Occupational Guides*.

2. Go to the Career Center.

If you are a student at Fresno City College, go to your campus Career Center, 2nd Floor Student Services Building, in Counseling, ST-202. The main branch of the Fresno County Library also maintains a career center and offers occupational information and materials.

3. Do Informational Interviewing.

To gather real-life information, interview people who work in fields that are of special interest to you. Here are some tips for doing informational interviewing:

Read the **Informational Interviewing** tips on pages 13 and 14.

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You may also go to this website for more suggestions about **Conducting an Information Interview**:

www.career.fsu.edu/experience/information-interviews-guide.html

Road Trip Nation: Go to this website to watch interviews with real people working in a wide variety of jobs: www.roadtripnation.com .

4. Read About Professions

Read professional and trade journals or go online to professional association websites. You will find professional journals in the Fresno City College Library and in public libraries. **Weddles Association Directory** at

www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm includes links to numerous professional associations in the United States.

5. Volunteer

Gain work experience and learn new skills by helping others. Go to Get Experience, then, click on volunteer section of this website:

www.cacareercafe.com

6. Serve an Internship or Work Part-Time

Intern or work part-time in your prospective field. For more information, go to www.cacareercafe.com Go to Get Experience, then, click on get an internship.

Looking for a job? If you are an FCC student or alumnus, contact the Fresno City College **Employment Resource Center** at:

www.jobs.fresnocitycollege.edu/cm_content.aspx?cpid=89

Now that you have done both self and career exploration, go to Section VI on page 15 for DECISION MAKING suggestions to help you tie it all together and decide on the next steps in your career plan.

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Informational Interviewing

is an important step in doing career research and making career decisions. There is no better way to discover first-hand the positives and negatives of any career than from an individual who is working in that field. In addition, you gain valuable up-to-date career information, and improve your verbal skills by communicating with professionals.

Listed below are steps to guide you through the informational interviewing process.

1. ***Focus*** on the career field(s) that most interest you. It will be important for you to prepare yourself by completing career assessments and gathering information on the occupation(s) PRIOR to setting up the interviews.
2. ***Identify*** people to interview. Some important sources of information will be friends, family, the phone book, co-workers, and your college campus career center. (Large public libraries sometimes also maintain career centers.)
3. ***Arrange*** the interview. Contact the person by phone, letter or email. Mention how you got their name, that you are only seeking information (not a job) and that you will only take 20 –30 minutes of their time. A sample script for this contact is located below.

Hello. My name is Jane Smith and I'm a sophomore majoring in Liberal Studies at Fresno City College. You were recommended to me by Mr. Jerry Jones, the principal of Western Elementary School, as a great educator and a good person to talk to concerning the field of education. Although I am not currently looking for a job, I have become very interested in education and would like to find out as much as I can about the field. Would it be possible to schedule 20 to 30 minutes with you at your convenience to ask you a few questions and get your advice on how best to prepare to enter this field?

4. ***Conduct*** the informational interview. Dress neatly and appropriately, arrive on time and be polite and professional. Have a list of prepared questions to ask and paper to jot down brief notes to refer to later. A list of potential questions is included on the next page for your convenience. Respect the person's time by keeping the appointment length within the time span you requested. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful with your career research.
5. ***Follow-up***. Immediately following the interview, record the information and send a thank-you note. This is a step that many people leave out, yet a prompt thank you is invaluable in demonstrating follow-through and professionalism.
6. ***Evaluate***. Try to schedule more than one interview for each career to receive a more complete overview. Personalities, opinions and position titles may differ in each person interviewed and each organization researched.

For your informational interview, you may choose from the following questions:

1. Help me understand a little more about what you actually do.
2. How did you happen to get involved in this kind of work? *OR:* Why did you decide to go into this particular profession?
3. What training, experience, or other qualifications are required in what you do?
4. What kind of formal education and college majors are most useful in preparation for this kind of work?
5. What is the salary range for someone in this field?
6. What would a typical day be like for you? *OR:* Please describe/talk me through a typical day.
7. What do you especially enjoy about your work?
8. What about your work is less enjoyable? *OR:* What are the best and worst things about this career? *OR:* Why do some people leave this field?
9. What is necessary for a person to be successful in this profession? *OR:* What is the smartest way to prepare for this career?
10. Why did you choose to work for the employer or organization you are currently working for?
11. What personal qualities do you feel are most important in your work and why?
12. How does this profession fit with family life?
13. What seems to be on the "cutting edge" in this profession? *OR:* How is the field changing?
14. What are the professional networks or organizations that are related to this profession? Are there meetings or conferences I could attend? Websites I should visit? Anything I should read?
15. Is the field expanding or taking any new directions?
16. What other professions are related?
17. What advice do you have for a person who is interested in doing this kind of work?
18. Would you be willing to give me names of other professionals I might talk with?

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SECTION VI: DECISION MAKING

Now it's time to make a choice and make a plan. This is the point where you focus on a prospective career pathway, identify the related program of study or major and develop an educational plan that will get you started toward a fulfilling career.

If you are not yet ready to engage in the following decision-making steps, you may need to go back to earlier sections of this guide and do some additional self assessment and career exploration. Be sure to give yourself time to review, compare assessment results and reflect upon the information you have gathered about yourself and potential career fields.

Steps in Decision Making

There are many effective ways to make a decision. (And some that are not so effective!) Here is a decision-making strategy that may help you ...

1. Define your goal.
2. Identify options and possible choices
3. Gather information about each option and think about the facts.
4. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each choice.
5. Reach a thoughtful choice that will satisfy both your head and your heart.
6. Establish a plan of action. Decide what steps you will take, both short and long term, to reach your career goal.
7. Re-evaluate your plan as needed. Your plan will evolve and change as opportunities arise and as things change in your life.

Remember! Career planning is a lifelong process. You may need to go through some or all of the steps in this process again in the future, as you change or the world around you changes. Also keep in mind that career planning is part planning and part opportunity. Planning prepares you to take advantage of unexpected opportunities as they arise. So be flexible and ready for changes. See page 17 for information about career planning and happenstance.

Educational Planning Assistance

What education or training will you need to prepare for your career? What colleges or programs offer the preparation you need? If you need help planning a program of study at Fresno City College, schedule an appointment with an academic counselor in the Counseling Department. You may also use the FCC Career Center's many educational planning resources to research colleges and find out about programs of study and where they are offered.

Tips for Reaching Your Goals

Below are some websites that will provide you with tips on making good decisions:

Seven Steps to Reaching Your Goals:

<http://drphil.com/articles/article/45>

Goal Setting Guide:

<http://www.goal-setting-guide.com/goal-setting-tutorials/smart-goal-setting>

Congratulations! You have finished your career journey ... until next time!

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Your Career Might Not Go According to Plan

*"There's the life you planned ...and there's what comes **Next.**"*

After completion of career assessments and self exploration, investigating the world of work, gathering information about career fields, and choosing an initial direction, it is important to remember that our lives can be unpredictable. However, your career can be within your control when you take advantage of unforeseen encounters and events. Hopefully, the skills, knowledge, and personal insight obtained through the career planning process has equipped you to make good choices and better prepared you for when the unexpected occurs.

Krumboltz and Levin, authors of the book, ***Luck is No Accident: Making the Most of Happenstance in Your Life and Career***, feel that students should recognize that you can't plan your whole life in advance.

They believe that unplanned events more often determine your life and career choices than all the careful planning you do. A chance meeting, a broken appointment, a temporary or "fill-in" job, a newly discovered hobby, these are the kinds of experiences, called "happenstance", that lead to unexpected life directions and career choices.

"How you react to positive and negative experiences are powerful factors in determining the directions your life takes," Drs. Krumboltz and Levin emphasize. "Satisfaction is found through actively creating your own luck and making the most of new and unforeseen experiences."

Krumboltz and Levin encourage students to take such actions as:

- Make the most of unplanned events,
- Always keep your career options open,
- Go ahead and make mistakes; it is a good way of learning,
- Enjoy yourself – a good life is a balanced life,
- Continue learning as long as you live,
- Take actions to discover their outcomes,
- Accept jobs knowing you can learn new skills,
- Overcome self-sabotage, and
- **"Remember that luck is no accident!"**

With these thoughts in mind, the FCC Career Center team will not wish you good luck with your career, but encourage you to take control of opportunities, take advantage of chance events, keep your options open, and make the most of what life offers.