Module 7

Duration: 55 minutes

Using Guideposts to Direct Your Journey

This module helps middle school students understand that jobs have certain characteristics that influence the satisfaction level of the worker. High school students will become aware of some of these important work-related values, discuss the results of Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised, and use high-priority values as a framework for collecting occupational information and refining a list of occupational options.

Objectives

At the end of this module, middle school students will be able to:

• State three job characteristics that are important to them.
• Understand the relationship of job characteristics to job satisfaction.
• Understand changing male and female roles.

In addition, high school students will be able to:

• List and define 12 work-related values.
• List those that are of high importance to them in a career choice.
Module 7: Overview

Components: Middle School Students

- **Introduction and Activity:** Traditional Male/Female Jobs
  20 minutes
- **Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests**
  15 minutes
- **Activity: Visit the Library or Career Center**
  20 minutes

Components: High School Students

- **Mini-Lecture on Work-Related Values**
  15 minutes
- **Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests**
  10 minutes
- **Interpretation of Super's Work Values Inventory-revised**
  30 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

- Read the lesson plan and resource material.
- Bring sheets of paper for the middle school activity on male/female roles.
- For middle school students, duplicate materials for Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests.
- For high school students, duplicate materials for Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests and Handout 5: Work-Related Values.
- Make arrangements with the library, guidance office, or career center, so that middle school students can have a brief orientation about available career information.
- Arrange for a computer and display device to show the PowerPoint® presentation. This presentation can be accessed online from the Kuder® Administrative Database Management System.

Homework Assignment

Have students talk with two adults who have full-time jobs – perhaps their parents – about their work. For each, find out what the job duties are each day, how much education was required, and how the job fits with the characteristics chosen in Activity 13: Your Dream Job, or in Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests.

National Career Development Guidelines Addressed

- Indicator CM3.A6: Make decisions for yourself about being employed in a nontraditional occupation.
- Indicator CM3.K5: Identify occupations that you might consider without regard to your gender, race, culture, or ability.
- Indicator PS1.K4: Identify your work values/needs.

ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs Addressed

- Indicator C:B1.6: Learn to use the Internet to access career planning information.
- Indicator PS:A1.2: Identify values, attitudes, and beliefs.
Module 7: Lesson Plan

Introduction and Activity: Traditional Male/Female Jobs
(20 minutes)

Start out your middle school students by leading them into a discussion surrounding Activity 13: Your Dream Job they completed as homework.

Do you remember when we played The Dictator Game and you were assigned an occupation? Some of you liked the occupation given to you, and some of you thought you would really hate to have to go to work every day in that job. Yet, every day thousands of people do the jobs you were assigned. Like you, some like their jobs and some do not. Considering that you will be spending almost half of each day for 40 years or more working, it is very important that your job be satisfying to you.

Like people, jobs have characteristics. Some require workers to sit at a desk or work station all day. Others require workers to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. Some jobs require workers to come to a city building, while others may work from home or in a rural setting. The kind of work you choose will influence the lifestyle you lead – where you live, what you wear, what kind of transportation you use. Therefore, it is important to consider not only your interests, but also the job characteristics of the occupation you choose.

Engage students in discussion with questions and comments such as the following:

• What job characteristics were important to you in Activity 13: Your Dream Job?
• What would your life be like if you had that job?
• Think about the job you were assigned in The Dictator Game. What did you like or dislike about it?
• What would your life be like if you had that job?

After discussion, begin to engage students in Activity: Traditional Male/Female Jobs by splitting the students up into groups of four with an appointed leader.

Some jobs are considered traditionally female or male jobs because the majority of workers in that occupation are of one gender. Can you think of a job that might be considered traditionally female? Male? I would now like for you to divide into groups of four and appoint a leader. I will give the leader two sheets of paper. Please make two lists: traditional female jobs and traditional male jobs.
After 5 minutes, ask the groups to go back over the lists and cross out any jobs that could be done by the opposite gender. For example, if “nurse” is on their traditional female list, ask if a man can be a nurse. After a few minutes, ask each group to report on the occupations still on their lists. Have the class as a whole decide whether the occupations listed can be done by the opposite gender.

Summarize by saying the following: Most jobs can be done by either males or females. There is no reason why you cannot consider any kind of work that interests you and for which you have the skills. You will also want your job to have characteristics that relate to your interests and lifestyle. We will think about how jobs differ in their characteristics now.

Mini-Lecture on Work-Related Values

(20 minutes)

High school students will be ready for an in-depth discussion regarding job characteristics – called work-related values at this stage – that are important to a successful career and lifestyle. Distribute Handout 5: Work-Related Values for this discussion.

Values are different from interests and skills. Interests suggest what we might like to do. Skills indicate what we might have the knowledge to do. Values suggest what we think is important.

Interests are formed in childhood and adolescence as we have a wide variety of experiences, some of which we view as positive and others as negative. So, for most of you, the interests identified through the interest inventory you have taken are quite valid and stable. Skills are gained as we learn through experience and coursework. Work values are formed later than interests – usually in adolescence and throughout adulthood. Like interests, values may change, and as they do we may make changes in our life choices. You are probably just beginning to become aware of your values, and their development will go on throughout your life. They will serve as guideposts for many life decisions, screening some options out and leaving others.

A value is defined as something we believe in strongly enough that it affects our behavior. If you see a student making fun of another because he is disabled and you intervene and ask him to stop, your value of respect for others has caused you to take a difficult action – one that may cause others to taunt you. If you choose to become a teacher, knowing that you will make less income than if you were an accountant or computer programmer, because you place high value on helping others, your behavior has been affected by your values.
One purpose of this lesson is to make you aware of some of the values that should affect your choice of an occupation. What do you think some of those values are?

Accept student suggestions, perhaps writing them on the board or a flipchart.

I am going to define 12 important work values for you, the ones you considered when you took Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised. These definitions are also provided on Handout 5: Work-Related Values.

- **Achievement** – Having a job where you can know or see that you have accomplished something. Having a feeling of success in the workplace.
- **Co-worker** – Having a job that involves co-workers who are helpful and trustworthy and whom you enjoy working with. These are people who you could possibly be friends with outside of the workplace.
- **Creativity** – Involves a job where you know you will be called on to come up with fresh ideas or where you are able to be resourceful and inventive in your work.
- **Income** – Involves a job that will pay you a top wage and allow you to live the way you want.
- **Independence** – Having a job where you might be your own boss, or where you are trusted to make decisions on your own and not have to report to someone on a regular basis.
- **Lifestyle** – Having a job that allows you to have time for family or friends, and provides enough time off for leisure activities and does not compete with your personal time.
- **Mental Challenge** – Having a job that tests what you already know and keeps you learning. This is a job that is not routine and keeps you mentally sharp.
- **Prestige** – Involves a job where you are looked up to whether in the workplace or in a social setting. This is a job that is important and people respect you.
- **Security** – Having a job that you will be able to keep, and where you won’t have to worry about getting laid off because you are working for a company that is stable.
- **Supervision** – Having a job where your supervisor is fair and recognizes your value; this supervisor is concerned about you, easy to talk to, and respectful of your opinions.
- **Variety** – Involves a job that is not routine and allows you to do many different things and have a wide range of duties.
- **Work Environment** – Being able to have a job where your safety is not a concern and you can work in a clean and comfortable setting.
Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests
(15 minutes)

Distribute Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests to middle school students or high school students.

The things we have been discussing are called job characteristics, or work-related values. Each of you will have a unique profile of job characteristics that are important to you. To help you develop your profile, mark your preference for each pair of job characteristics on this worksheet.

After 5 minutes, involve students in discussion by using questions such as the following:

- What were the characteristics that you chose?
- Can anyone think of a job that has these characteristics?
- Are any of the characteristics you chose likely to conflict with each other? Which ones?

There are no right or wrong characteristics in jobs. The characteristics are just different from each other, and the satisfaction that we get from work relates to the ones that we think are important.

Activity: Visit the Library or Career Center
(20 minutes)

Since middle school students will research occupations in the next session using Kuder® Navigator, it would be valuable for them to know what other types of resources exist in the school. If possible, take them to the school library, guidance office, or career center to learn about printed material, videos, or other resources that they can use to get information about occupations on their list.

Interpreting Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised Report
(20 minutes)

Ask your high school students if there are any questions about the 12 work values and answer them. Afterward, ask students to find their reports from Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised and project a sample report. Indicate that:

- The titles of the work values are listed in rank order according to the way in which each student rated them, from most important to least important.
- The numbers are percentiles, comparing one student’s ratings with those of a large norm group.
- The general shape of the profile (i.e., noting the work values that are higher than others) is more important than looking at the percentile scores.
Some work values (such as creativity, independence, achievement, mental challenge, prestige, variety, and income) may help students to shorten their lists of possible occupations when they do occupational research in Module 9.

Other work values (such as work environment, supervision, and co-workers) can assist students to select work settings when they are ready to get a job.

Lead a discussion of the assessment report for the Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised, using questions such as the following:

- Who would be willing to tell the class three of the values that you would rate as crucial?
- Can you think of any occupation(s) that would allow you to use those three important values at work?
- Which occupations were suggested for your three highest values by Kuder Navigator?
- Are your values compatible with each other (such as Income and Prestige) or potentially incompatible (such as Helping Others and High Income)?
- If you could use only one of those values in your work, how could you attain others in some other life role – such as a citizen, leisurite, or homemaker?
- What other important values, not included in Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised, would you like to add to your personal list?
- Are there some occupations suggested by Kuder Navigator that relate to your interests, skills, and values?
- Which values might you be able to attain if you work for yourself? Independence, Variety, and Work Environment.
- Which of your important values might you be able to attain if you complete many years of education? Variety, Income, Independence, Achievement, and Prestige.
- If you do not work regular hours, or if you have to do long-distance travel in your work, which value might be challenged? Lifestyle.
- Which value might be challenged if you choose to help other people through your work? Income.

Homework Assignment

Talk with two adults who have full-time jobs – perhaps your parents – about their work. For each, find out what the job duties are each day, how much education was required, and how the job fits with the characteristics that you chose in Activity 13: Your Dream Job, or in Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests.
Job Characteristics

Many factors need to be considered as one engages in the career decision-making process. For middle school students who are exploring many different options, one of the principal factors to consider is interests. This is an area that students at this level can easily understand and relate to. In fact, of all the factors, interests are the most stabilized by this age. That is why the Kuder® Career Search with Person Match can be especially helpful in narrowing the occupational areas to be considered. It should also be noted that interests can be satisfied outside the working role. For example, someone with artistic ability may paint as a hobby or for relaxation.

A second factor in career planning is ability, talent, or acquired skills. Most middle school students are already aware of special talents or abilities they have. For example, a student may have a knack toward scientific inquiry or artistic creation. Areas of ability or talent are usually easier for the student, and thus skills in these areas have become more highly developed. At this stage, skill development should be secondary to interests as motivation to obtain the appropriate education or training can help the student to learn the needed skills. For gifted students who may have abilities in many areas, interests play an even more important role in career decision making.

A third factor to consider is the labor market, in other words, the kinds of jobs that are most likely to be available. The U.S. Department of Labor publishes a forecast that lists the fastest growing jobs by the anticipated number of workers needed and the percentage of anticipated growth in that area. This forecast is included in the Occupational Outlook Handbook and on its web site as well as in Kuder® Navigator. At the middle school level, these statistics should be considered, but should not be the primary consideration in the exploration stage of decision making.

In this module, students are asked to consider job characteristics that are closely related to work values. Our values are demonstrated in our goals, interests, feelings, attitudes, and behavior.
Values give meaning to our lives and are often the deciding factor in what we will or will not do. Each of us has developed a unique system of values which determines how we feel about our work. If we pursue a career that is congruent with our work values, we will most likely be satisfied with the work. Middle school students are just beginning to develop values that may be a deciding factor in career choice at a later point. For example, most middle school students would probably choose monetary rewards over helping others as motivation for a career choice. However, as they mature, they may realize that helping others is important to them as they choose their life work. At this stage, we have chosen job characteristics that relate to personal preference, such as working indoors or outdoors, working alone or with others, etc., but do not ask students to make premature work value decisions. These are lifestyle issues that do make a difference in job satisfaction. For now, middle school students need to know that there are characteristics inherent in jobs that fulfill our desire to lead a satisfying life, and that these job satisfiers should be considered in career decision making.

In this module, the lesson plan for middle school students also included an activity on male/female stereotyping in occupational choice. Traditional male/female jobs are those in which 75 percent or more of those employed in the field represent one gender. Although this may not be the inhibitor to career choice that it once was, it is still important to bring to the attention of middle school students that gender should not be a factor in career choice. This is especially important for girls because the traditional female jobs – such as secretary, teacher, or librarian – have also been the lowest paying for the amount of education or training needed. Of course, these occupations should be options for both males and females but should not be selected because “that is what girls or boys do.”

**Values and Occupations**

When we help young people to consider their career options, we typically address their interests, abilities or skills, and work-related values. The theories of career development (Super, 1957; Holland, 1997) propose that interests, skills, and work values are formed in the following sequence and way:

- The crystallization of interests begins in the middle school years, and these become increasingly more consistent and stable with age. This is not to say that the interests of individuals cannot change significantly because of having new influences and experiences, but typically they do not. Interests appear to be formed through the power of positive and negative reinforcement. It is useful to benchmark students’ interests over time related to the 16 occupational clusters described in Modules 5 and 6, and this is possible by viewing their electronic portfolios if they have taken the *Kuder Career Search with Person Match* more than once. For many students, the top one or two groups identified by a high school interest inventory will remain dominant
throughout life and serve as a framework in which school subjects, postsecondary majors, and occupations are selected. Two or more of these 16 areas were identified for students in this curriculum in Module 6.

- Young people are often motivated to gain knowledge and skill to support their interests, or they can be guided to do so. Ideally, the same clusters we used for occupations in Module 6 would be used to organize high school curricular choices and postsecondary majors. Such an approach will assist students to take courses that lay the foundation of knowledge and skills needed to support their interests. This skill development occurs through taking a supportive high school curriculum followed by postsecondary education at the vocational-technical, community college, or four-year college level.

- A third personal variable that should impact career choices is values. A value may be defined as a belief that is held strongly enough that it guides behavior. In this lesson, we will deal only with work-related values — that is, those that can be related directly to the choice or rejection of a given occupation or job. Using interests to identify possible occupations typically expands exploration while values serve as filters to screen occupations, facilitating a decision to either keep a specific occupation on the tentative list or to discard it. Values are typically crystallized later in the life cycle than interests or skills. Their beginning formation is evident in the high school years, but their formation continues throughout the adult years. As values change, individuals are likely to consider changing occupations or jobs.

**Values and Life Roles**

There is a relationship between life roles and all three of these major building blocks of career choice — interests, skills, and work values. For example, a person may have great skill in music but choose to use it in the role of citizen (community activities) because of the value of job security. Similarly, a person may have high value on helping others but choose to attain this value by volunteering time (citizen role) in hospice work or tutoring children with reading deficits because of a competing value of income.

For high school students, this lesson presents 12 work values of which students should become aware. Though the importance they give to each may be imprecise at this age, knowledge of them may enhance their development. The students’ ratings of each are as follows:

1. **Not important at all.** Not a factor in my job selection.
2. **Somewhat important.** I would take this into account, but could do without it.
3. **Important.** I would like it, but other things are more important.
4. **Very important.** Need to have it, but not the most important.
5. **Crucial.** I would not consider a job without it.
These ratings can provide information for reducing the list of occupations being considered by high school students as they engage in occupational research in Module 8. They will be asked to consider each occupation within the context of their values ratings.

The following are titles, descriptions, student indicators, and occupational indicators for the values included in the high school lesson.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Student Indicators</th>
<th>Occupation Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong> – feeling that one has accomplished a great deal of work.</td>
<td>Is probably an outstanding student who attempts to perform well in all activities.</td>
<td>Offers a career path with upward mobility or with specialty within the occupation.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Co-workers</strong> – having a job that allows you to work with agreeable people.</td>
<td>Values relationships with others.</td>
<td>Is performed in a setting that supports the interaction of employees and the formation of relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong> – having a job that allows you to express your artistic talent and be creative.</td>
<td>Has ability in one or more of the arts; greater love for an art form than for income and job security.</td>
<td>Offers work tasks in designing, creating, and performing; spontaneity, resourcefulness, and idea generation are valued.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong> – having a job in which you can plan when, where, and how you do your work and set your own priorities.</td>
<td>Likes to work alone, has the ability to assume responsibility, and is able to be self-motivated.</td>
<td>Tasks do not require group consensus or collaboration; work can be done alone by a responsible person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong> – having a job that pays a salary that is in six digits (that is, more than $100,000 per year); providing enough money to meet needs and have a lot left for a very comfortable lifestyle.</td>
<td>Material possessions are important; wants to have a better-than-average lifestyle and may want a large family.</td>
<td>Potential for a salary in excess of $100,000 within first 10 years in the occupation; reward system may be based on achievement.</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Lifestyle</strong> – having a job that allows you to have time for friends, family, and leisure.</td>
<td>Places higher value on family and/or leisure than on work; seeks role balance.</td>
<td>Does not demand overtime, irregular hours, or long distance travel.</td>
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<td><strong>Mental Challenge</strong> – having a job that requires problem solving and learning new things often.</td>
<td>Likes to problem solve and learn new things; has high intellectual curiosity.</td>
<td>Offers great variety of work tasks in an environment in which problems need to be solved and new learning acquired.</td>
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<td><strong>Prestige</strong> – being looked up to because of one’s occupation.</td>
<td>Willing to complete postsecondary education and to focus attention on the worker role.</td>
<td>Is one of those occupations that society views as important work and is respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong> – having a job that you are not likely to lose due to economic changes.</td>
<td>Does not like change; willing to have fewer benefits in return for stability.</td>
<td>Is an occupation that cannot be easily replaced by technology and is essential to society’s functioning – performed in a stable organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision</strong> – having a supervisor who values you and treats you fairly.</td>
<td>Respects authority and values a positive relationship with those who exercise it.</td>
<td>Unrelated to a specific occupation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variety</strong> – Having a job that offers many different kinds of work tasks and does not require the same routine every day.</td>
<td>Does not like routine; enjoys being in different places and challenged by new things.</td>
<td>Has many varied, nonroutine work tasks; may involve work in different places with different people.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work Environment</strong> – having a job that can be done in a clean, comfortable setting without risks.</td>
<td>Values cleanliness, orderliness, safety, and aesthetics.</td>
<td>Can be performed in clean, noise-free, pleasant, and safe places.</td>
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This module concludes the inward analysis of interests, skills, and job characteristics or work-related values. The following modules will help students relate these factors to the other half of the career planning equation – the world of work.

**References**


Activity 14: Mapping Your Interests

For each pair of job characteristics, check the box next to the one you think you would prefer in your work.

Need high school education only. □ □ Need advanced education.

Work regular day hours. □ □ Work nights and weekends at times.

Work indoors. □ □ Work outdoors.

Be my own boss. □ □ Work for someone else.

Be in a traditional male/female job. □ □ Be in a nontraditional job.

Do routine tasks each day. □ □ Do a variety of tasks.

Be closely supervised. □ □ Work independently.

Work with machines. □ □ Work with people.

Work with others. □ □ Work alone.

Have a fast-paced job (pressure). □ □ Have a slow-paced job (low-key).

Earn an average salary. □ □ Earn an above-average salary.

Travel a lot (away from home). □ □ Travel little or not at all.

Have high-level responsibility (make key decisions). □ □ Have low-level responsibility (no critical decisions).
Handout 5: Work-Related Values

- **Co-worker** – Having a job that involves co-workers who are helpful and trustworthy and whom you enjoy working with. These are people who you could possibly be friends with outside of the workplace.

- **Creativity** – Involves a job where you know you will be called on to come up with fresh ideas or where you are able to be resourceful and inventive in your work.

- **Income** – Involves a job that will pay you a top wage and allow you to live the way you want.

- **Independence** – Having a job where you might be your own boss, or where you are trusted to make decisions on your own and not have to report to someone on a regular basis.

- **Lifestyle** – Having a job that allows you to have time for family or friends, and provides enough time off for leisure activities and does not compete with your personal time.

- **Mental Challenge** – Having a job that tests what you already know and keeps you learning. This is a job that is not routine and keeps you mentally sharp.

- **Prestige** – Involves a job where you are looked up to whether in the work place or in a social setting. This is a job that is important and people respect you.

- **Security** – Having a job that you will be able to keep, and where you won’t have to worry about getting laid off because you are working for a company that is stable.

- **Supervision** – Having a job where your supervisor is fair and recognizes your value; this supervisor is concerned about you, easy to talk to, and respectful of your opinions.

- **Variety** – Involves a job that is not routine and allows you to do many different things and have a wide range of duties.

- **Work Environment** – Being able to have a job where your safety is not a concern and you can work in a clean and comfortable setting.