My Career Research

The **BIG** Idea

- How do I know if I'm on a good career path, and how can I overcome obstacles that may stand in my way?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

I. Warm Up: Career Choice Reflection (5 minutes)

II. Aligning Career Choices with Skills (10 minutes)

III. Education Research (10 minutes)

IV. Investigating Career Outlook (10 minutes)

V. Wrap Up (10 minutes)

MATERIALS

❑ **PORTFOLIO PAGES:**

- Portfolio page 1, Interest Profiler and Basic Skills Survey Results (from Careeers 1)

- Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices

- Portfolio page 3, Career Summary & Tasks

- Portfolio pages 4-5, Education Requirements

❑ **STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**

- Student Handbook page 89, Career Inspirations & Obstacles

❑ **FACILITATOR PAGES:**

- Facilitator Resource 1, RUReadyND.com Directions

- Facilitator Resource 2, Identify that Education

❑ Overhead projector

❑ Laptop

❑ LCD projector

❑ Facilitator-created list of local career opportunities, one per student (See **Preparation** for details.)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Investigate job description, education, and career outlook for a chosen career.

- Devise strategies to overcome career obstacles.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson and the one that follows, students consider potential career goal obstacles and possible solutions. This week they evaluate their top career choice according to two considerations: 1) their enjoyment of the type of tasks required by the job, and 2) the local job outlook and their willingness to work in a highly competitive market and/or relocate to pursue a career. The lesson concludes with students sharing their obstacles and possible solutions with their classmates.

PREPARATION

❑ Arrange for the class to use the computer lab, and make sure the RUReadyND.com is accessible from students' computers.

❑ List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.

❑ Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.

❑ Write the web address RUReadyND.com on the board.

❑ For instructions on accessing and using the RUReadyND.com website, see the previous lesson, **Careers 1, Interest Inventory.**

❑ The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:

  • **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices**
  • **Facilitator Resource 1, RUReadyND.com Directions**
  • **Facilitator Resource 2, Identify that Education**

❑ Create a list of 20-30 jobs that are in high demand in your students' area, using the website below. Each career on the list must require one of the following postsecondary education options: tech/trade school, apprenticeships, community college, four-year college, or graduate school. Make a copy for each student.

  To find employment projections for your state, go to **http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm**. Choose your state and sort by % change.

❑ Provide extra copies of **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices** and **Portfolio page 3, Career Summary & Tasks,** for students who wish to consider a second career.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As students begin their junior year of high school, they need to begin thinking about steps to take towards pursuing careers that interest them, and possible obstacles they may encounter along the way. Identifying a career is an important first step. Recognizing challenges to reaching their goals is essential, too. Knowing in advance what obstacles they will face (e.g., skills, career outlook, cost, etc.), can help students be better prepared to solve these problems, and ultimately find a career that best suits their skills, interests, and needs.

VOCABULARY

Career Outlook: Expectations for an occupation's salary, job openings, and employment changes in the future.

Annual Job Openings: The number of available positions filled within a particular career in a given year.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:
If you prefer, you may choose to use **Student Handbook page 89, Career Inspirations & Obstacles** as a DO NOW. Once students complete the page, continue with the discussion in the **Warm Up**.

If time allows, you may choose to have some students investigate two top choice careers, rather than one. In this case, have students complete two evaluations, one for each career.

If your students are comfortable with RUReadyND.com, feel free to reduce the amount of modeling you do.

In **Activity III, Education Research,** if you think students will run short on time have them record only the suggested courses they have not already taken.

ACTIVITY STEPS ···

I. WARM UP: Career Choice Reflection (5 minutes)

1. As students enter the classroom, direct them to their completed **Portfolio page 1, Interest Profiler and Basic Skills Survey Results** from last week's lesson, "RUReadyND.com Interest Inventory."

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Over the last couple of years, you have been investigating and learning about different careers. Maybe you even found a career field that you hope to work in one day. Today, you will take a look at your top career choice and think about ways in which it's a good fit (or not). You'll also consider obstacles you might face in reaching your goal, and explore ideas for getting around them.

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** First, I'd like you to review **Portfolio page 1, Interest Profiler and Basic Skills Survey Results,** which you completed last week. Please select one career that you are most interested in pursuing. Open to **Student Handbook page 89, Career Inspirations and Obstacles**. Write the career at the top of the page. Then answer the question about why you find this career inspiring, and list at least two obstacles you might face as you pursue this career.

4. Allow students three minutes to respond to the prompts.

II. Aligning Career Choices with Skills (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Most of your junior and senior years in Roads to Success will be spent working through the specific steps you need to take to find a job or apply for education after high school. Let's look at careers you're considering and obstacles to obtaining them. Being realistic can help you figure out the steps required to reach your goal.

2. Have students turn to **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices,** and project a copy on the LCD panel or overhead projector. Review the questions listed in the left column with students. Say that today they will investigate the first two potential career obstacles listed: skills and career outlook. Explain that next week they will compare their academic performance with the education requirements for their career. If financing their education is a concern, explain that you'll talk more about that next week as well. Instruct students to put this page aside for later use.

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The first step in evaluating a career is to review what the job

is and find out what tasks people in the job do day-to-day. Open to **Portfolio page 3, Career Summary & Tasks.** You will use RUReadyND.com to find the career profile related to your career and read the **What They Do** page. Then you will summarize what you read on this page. You will identify at least three tasks related to this career and list them on this page, too. To find three things a professional in your career does in his or her job, you need to read the entire **What They Do** page.

4. Use the LCD projector to display RUReadyND.com. Remind students how to navigate to a particular career profile by typing in the name of the career in the **Search** box at the top right of the page. As an example, type in "Librarian" and click *Go!* When the link appears, click it to access the career profile. The first page of the career profile is the **What They Do** page. Remind students they can also search for careers alphabetically by clicking a letter on the **Explore Careers** page in the **Career Planning** section.

5. When students complete the handout, instruct them to return their attention to **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices.**

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Now that you know what your career involves, answer the first question on the chart: Do I use and/or enjoy the skills needed in this career in my day-to-day life? If your answer is "Yes," use the middle column to give evidence of how you use the skills in your daily life. If your answer is "No," use the middle column to explain why, or identify the obstacle. For example, if you want to be a librarian, what are some things you probably already enjoy? [Students respond.]

   In some cases, the obstacle will simply be a lack of training. For example, if you want to be a surgeon, you obviously haven't had a chance to operate. But if you hate the sight of blood, or were grossed out when your biology teacher dissected a frog, this might be a clue that your interests lie elsewhere. If you answered no, use the third column, "Solutions," to provide possible ways to overcome this obstacle. In our surgeon example, one solution might be to get more exposure to your field — work in a hospital or doctor's office, or take more biology courses. These experiences might give you more information.

III. Education Requirements (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Different kinds of careers require different types of education and academic strengths. Some jobs, such as editor, require strong writing skills, while others, such as computer programmer, may involve more math. In a few minutes, you will return to RUReadyND.com to see what type of education and courses are required for your top career choice. But before we begin our research let's review the different

types of postsecondary education you learned about last year.

[Display **Facilitator Resource 2, Identify that Education,** on an overhead projector. As a class, match each type of postsecondary education to its correct description. Make sure students understand the number of years required for each type of education listed. Here are the correct answers in consecutive order for **Facilitator Resource 2, Identify that Education: C, B, A, D, E.**]

2. Instruct students to turn to **Portfolio pages 4-5, Education Requirements**. Explain that they will use these portfolio pages to record their education research. At the top of the first page they will write a summary detailing the required and recommended levels of education. Then they will list suggested high school courses for their career.

   Use the LCD projector to display the RUReadyND.com website. Model how to navigate to a particular career's education prerequisites by typing in the name of the career in the **Search** box at the top right of the page. As an example, type in "Computer Programmer" and click *Go!* When the link appears, click it. Then click the **What to Learn** button.

   As a class, briefly read the paragraphs under the title **"Education Level."** Then discuss the required versus recommended level of education needed for a computer programmer. Make sure students understand the amount of years needed for the recommended level of education. Once the discussion is complete, scroll to the top of the page to the first section, titled "High School" and click on the link for the **Information Technology Cluster** to view a sample High School Program of Study. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Some of the courses suggested are requirements for graduating from high school and for admittance to college, such as English/Language Arts, math, and social studies. When you develop your high school plan of study, you should select career and technical or electives courses that support your future career goals.

4. As a class, discuss any trends in the recommended courses from Grades 9 to 12. Ask students what courses are recommended in all four grades. Then ask for a volunteer to explain how this information could be useful to them as high school students. Explain that next week they will be comparing their academic performance with the career education requirements.

5. Have students go online to RUReadyND.com to review the recommended course plans for the cluster that their chosen career is a part of. Then write their summaries and generate a list of suggested courses for the career of their choice. Students should print out the suggested courses, or record them on **Portfolio pages 4-5, Education Requirements**.

IV. Investigating Career Outlook (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As you plan for your future, it is important to consider the outlook for the careers you are considering. A **career outlook** refers to the anticipated job openings, or the number of positions expected to be available in a specific career. It also refers to the general trend in job openings, whether they are are expected to increase or decrease in the future. [Point to the definitions on the chalkboard and have a volunteer read them aloud.]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** What do you think you could do if you find out that there are very few openings in the career field that interests you the most? [Give students a chance to respond. Be sure they note solutions such as: consider other options within the same general career field, consider living somewhere where there are more job openings in the field, work very hard and really distinguish themselves in the field.]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now let's check RUReadyND.com to see how to find career outlook information.

   [Model how to navigate to **Money and Outlook** for a sample career. Type in the name of the career in the **Search** box. As an example, type in "Pilot" and click **Go!** When the link appears, click it. Then, click the **Money and Outlook** tab and scroll to the bottom of the page to see the career outlook information for Aircraft Pilot/Flight Engineer.]

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: How many commercial pilots are employed in our state ? How many openings are there on average each year? What does this tell you about this career? Is the outlook promising, or will there be tough competition for a few jobs? [Allow students to respond.]
   Just a note here – if you find that information for a particular career is not available for your state, don't assume that there are no jobs. Information is limited for some careers. It's worth checking the outlook in neighboring states to see if more information is available.

Students can also access career outlook information from this site:
- **http://www.projectionscentral.com/Projections/LongTerm**
- Select your state using the drop-down box.
- The jobs are listed alphabetically; scroll down to find the one you're looking for.

4. Distribute the list of "high-demand jobs" that you created for your state.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Here's a list of jobs that are currently in demand in our state. If your career is here, you're in luck! This is also good information to have if you're undecided, or if job security is very important to you. As you complete your RUReadyND.com research, you may find that your career has limited opportunities. Earlier we discussed some of the solutions to this obstacle. One option is to consider similar careers that have stronger outlooks. Take a look at the list of high-demand jobs in our state. Do you see any that are similar to your career choice?

5. Have students research the career outlook for their top choice career. Then instruct them to return their attention to **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices**.

   SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Now that you know the career outlook for your career, answer the last question on the chart: Will jobs be available when I graduate? If your answer is "Yes," use the middle column to give evidence, such as average annual openings. If the local career outlook concerns you, use the middle column to note your concerns, including the average annual openings. If you do not think there will be enough jobs available when you graduate, provide possible ways to overcome this obstacle, in the column titled "Solutions." Remember to look at the list of high-demand jobs in our state when thinking about solutions.

V. Wrap Up (10 minutes)

1. Conclude the lesson by having students share the obstacles and solutions they identified during the lesson. Encourage other students in the group to contribute solutions to their classmates' obstacles.

2. Wrap up class by reminding students that today's work is just one step in the lifelong process of finding satisfying work. Their career goals may be different tomorrow, next week, or next year. It's never too late to gather additional information and make a different choice.

RUReadyND.com Directions

1. **Connecting to RUReadyND.com:**
   - Turn on the computer.
   - Click on the icon that connects to the Internet (Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Firefox, etc.).
   - Type the web address into the dialog box (RUReadyND.com).
   - When the RUReadyND.com home page appears enter your account name and password.

2. **What They Do**
   - Type in the name of the career you want to search for in the **Search** box at the top right of the page and click **Go!**
   - As an example, type in "Librarian" and click **Go!**
   - When the link to the career appears in the results list, click it.
   - Remember, you can also search for careers alphabetically by clicking a letter on the **Explore Careers** page in the **Career Planning** section.

3. **What to Learn**
   - Type in the name of the career you want to search for in the **Search** box at the top right of the page and click **Go!**
   - As an example, type in **Computer Programmer**, and click **Go!**
   - When the link appears in the results list, click it.
   - Then click the **What to Learn** button on the left-hand side of the screen.
   - Read the section titled "Education Level." Then scroll to the top of the page and find the section titled "High School." Click the link for the **Career Pathway** that this career is a part of in order to view the sample **High School Program of Study**. The **High School Program of Study** will give you a list of suggested courses.

4. **Money and Outlook**
   - Type the name of the career you want to search for in the **Search for Careers** box at the top right of the page and click **Go!**
   - As an example, type in **Pilot,** and click **Go!**
   - When the link appears, click it.
   - Then click the **Money and Outlook** button on the left-hand side of the screen.
   - Scroll down to the bottom of the page to see the **Employment and Outlook** information for that career.
     - If there is no information for your state, select another nearby state from the pull-down menu at the top right corner of the page that says, "To view earnings and outlook for another state, select it from the following list."

This page intentionally blank.

Identify that Education!

Directions: Below you will see six categories of education. Match the type of education to its description below by writing the letter (A, B, C, D, E) next to each one.

A.   Apprenticeship
B.   Technical/trade program
C.   Community college
D.   Four-year college
E.   Graduate school

_____ a postsecondary school that offers career training, or preparation for a four-year college.

_____ a postsecondary school that offers instruction and training in a variety of skills and trades.

_____ a position in which a recent graduate receives on-the-job training and classroom instruction, sometimes with pay.

_____ a postsecondary school that provides four years of study. Upon graduating, students receive a bachelor's degree.

_____ a school offering courses leading to degrees more advanced than the bachelor's degree. A person needs to graduate from a four-year college before this step.

Career Inspirations and Obstacles

REFLECTION: Write the name of your top career choice. Then answer both questions below.

Career: _____

1. Why is this career inspiring to you, or why do you find it interesting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What obstacles do you predict you will face as you pursue this career? (List at least two obstacles.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluating Top Career Choices

Directions: Answer each question. For "Yes" answers, provide evidence. For "No" answers, use the middle column to explain what obstacle is standing in your way, then describe a possible solution in the last column.

Question	Answer/Evidence	Solution
Skills: Do I practice/enjoy the skills I need for this career in my day-to-day life?		
Career Outlook: Will jobs be available when I graduate?		
Academic preparation: Am I academically prepared for the education I will need after high school?		

Career Summary & Tasks

Directions: Write a brief summary of the job description for your career choice. Then list at least three day-to-day tasks the job requires.

Career Choice:_____

Job Description Summary:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Tasks:

1. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Education Requirements

Directions: Write a brief summary of the required and recommended level of education for your career choice. Make sure to include the number of years needed for each level. Then list the suggested subjects for each grade. Note that these are only suggestions; courses offered at your high school will vary.

Name of Career: _____

Education Summary:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Suggested High School Subjects

Grade 9

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Grade 10

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Grade 11

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Grade 12

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____