

# The Connection Between College Majors and Careers

**SUBMITTED BY:** WGYP Summer 2011 Instructor

**SUBJECT(S):** Personal Finance

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9, 10, 11, 12

## ≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will go through the career decision-making process. They will start to see the connections between picking a major for college and the possibilities that this major will offer for post-bachelor's degree jobs. Also, by thinking about majors before potential colleges, students can think about picking colleges in later lessons that are based on their interests, as well as other criteria.

## ≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Personal Finance, II. Earning and Reporting Income

## ≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- ["You Must Be Joking? From Physics at Harvard to Comedy Writing for The Simpsons"](#)
- ["The Search Is On: How to Pick the Right College"](#)
- ["The Rising Costs of a U.S. College Education"](#)
- ["The College Investment: Will It Pay Off?"](#)
- ["Sam Cox Spends Her Sunday Mornings with High-Tech Mummies"](#)
- ["One House, Three Seniors and Lots of College Essays"](#)
- ["From Bioscience to Haute Couture: Tony Wang's Wide-Ranging World"](#)
- ["Drone Technology: Exploring the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Industry"](#)
- ["Differentiating Yourself in the College Admission Process"](#)

- “CEO Katlyn Grasso Connects Young Women with Executive Role Models”
- “Career Spotlight: The Future of Journalism”
- “Career Spotlight: Studying to Be a Veterinary Technician”
- “Career Spotlight: Motion Capture Is an Industry on the Move”
- “Career Insight: CFO Lloyd Howell Jr. on Being Prepared for Anything”
- “Anthony David Williams Was President of His College Freshman Class — Why Did He Transfer?”
- “3 Financial Priorities to Get You Ready for College”
- “‘Creating a Fair Playing Field’: What’s Behind the SAT Redesign”

**Common Core Standard(s):**

- Reading Informational Text—RI.9-10.1.; RI.9-10.2.
- Speaking and Listening—SL.9-10.1.

**Purposes:**

- They will be able to talk about the 7 steps to career decision making in thinking about college majors and associated careers.
- They will also develop their comprehension and critical thinking skills in this lesson.

**Other Resources/Materials:**

- Internet; projector; Penn College Handbook (any other college handbook works too)
- [Worksheet 1: Seven steps to Decide on a College Major](#)

**Activity:***1. Introduction (10 mins)*

Introduce the day’s lesson and talk to students about the seven steps of the career decision-making process, as it has been adapted for the college major decision-making. Walk through the process giving model answers. The teacher can talk about this process from an autobiographical perspective.

**Seven steps:**

1. Identifying the decision to be made. *You want to choose a college major(s) or minor(s)*
2. Know yourself-self assessment including one's own weaknesses, strengths, values, long-term objectives, etc.
3. Begin identifying options-what fields are interesting? What are possible jobs that one can do with this major? A way to go about this is think what jobs are not possible. Example: If you major in medicine, you cannot practice law. However if you want to focus on legalities surrounding hospitals and patient's rights, it may be important to have some degree of medical knowledge in addition to a law degree.
4. Gather information and data-examine the resources and information available and seek out new information that may be helpful.  
For this step, students can think of where they would go for resources and list these resources for a later date.
5. Evaluate options that will solve the problem — identify the pros, cons and risks of each possible option.  
Come up with at least three potential majors and address the pros, cons and risks for each.
6. Select one of the options-based on all the information gathered and analyzed.
7. Design a course of action to implement the decision-create a timeline and allocate the appropriate resources. [Students will be working on this last step in the next few lessons of the unit.]

## 2. Film Screening (12 mins)

Watch the film on Tony Wang. Discuss as a class how he has intersected multiple industries and majors. Wang is pursuing a double major. Ask students to talk about the ways he has been able to merge his interests into his current projects.

## 3. Small Group Work (15 mins)

- Have the students break up into small groups and work through the handout together.
- Every 5 minutes, take a minute to find out where the students are and ask them to share the answers they have put down so far.
- If students seem to be focusing on more traditional disciplines, refer them to the college handbook and majors list for ideas on special majors. If the room has access to a computer, the teacher can refer to [the following Wharton page for examples of interdisciplinary majors](#).

#### 4. Presentation (5 mins)

Ask a few students to share what they discovered through this process. What are the options that students selected for Step 6? Were there any similarities across students? Differences? Spend some time wrapping up the exercise.

#### **Tying It All Together:**

In this lesson, students use the career decision-making process to think about college majors. The students should in the end have learned something new about the variety of college majors and what their own strengths and weaknesses are as they make decisions in the future. The teacher should emphasize that their answers to these questions will mostly likely change over time. Also, I highly recommend that teachers and students research the [“Life After High School”](#) tab on the Wharton Global Youth Program portal, which features countless articles on various careers and college-related issues.

5