

My future My choice

Assisting young people prepare for
employment

This program has been developed by the University of Southern
Queensland funded by the Queensland Government.

My Future, My Choice program

The My Future, My Choice program is comprised of a facilitator's workbook and a series of four videos which trace the stages of preparing for employment.

The four modules can be viewed separately or as a set.

The facilitator's workbook includes suggested learning activities participants can complete to further their understanding and preparation for gaining meaningful employment.

Video modules

Module one: Preparing for an interview.

In this module we meet Jack, a year 11 student who has accidentally managed to win himself an interview for a position as a junior storeperson with Red Earth Energy. Aided by two friends who act as personal inner coaches and who play the roles of friends, family and community members, Jack progresses through the various stages of preparing himself for a job interview.

Module two: Negotiating the job interview

In this module Jack arrives for his interview. He learns to present himself to reception and to his interviewer, to appropriately share aspects of his values, family background and skills set, and to communicate openly and responsibly with the interviewer. Jack also learns that getting a job does not just mean turning up for the interview.

Module three: Learning the job landscape

This module follows Jack through his first week of employment as a junior storeperson for Red Earth Energy. Jack confronts his anxiety about being job ready. Once at work, he is encouraged to learn about the operational structures and scope of the company for which he now works and not simply be a mindless drone within a large and busy organisation. Jack learns to take responsibility for his actions, both in his achievements and his mistakes – and learns that honest mistakes make good lessons. Finally, in a time-leap twist, Jack meets a version of himself, five years on. From this encounter, Jack begins to understand the importance of talking to his employer and planning skills acquisition and job progression.

Module four: From little things...

Module four sees Jack five years on from his first week of employment. He is now Regional Stores Manager for Red Earth Energy. On a trip out West Jack has a chance encounter with a young girl, Bridie Mac, who reminds him of himself when he was at high school. Jack teaches Bridie to recognise how social, family and cultural influences impact our sense of self and the future we can imagine for ourselves. Jack teaches Bridie to identify the things in her life which act as obstacles for her to achieve her dreams, and how to make a plan for taking steps toward positive changes wherever she is capable.

Module one

Workshop one: researching a company

Learning objectives

This workshop aims to:

- provide participants with a methodology to investigate the purpose of a business, its structure and operational activities
- introduce the concept of a business as a place where people learn how to do their jobs better as they interact with others
- foster a spirit of inquiry so participants can research a business to find out what their broader goals (vision/mission) are and what they do to achieve them (business activities).

Workshop activity:

In small groups, participants investigate the values, breadth of business activities and goals of selected businesses who have an online presence.

Alternatively, research could also be undertaken through a hands-on approach, inviting representatives of local business(es) to the workshop to discuss their business history, business goals, range of business activities and employment opportunities.

Participants report back to the class on their findings.

Workshop two: skills and responsibilities

Learning objectives

This workshop aims to:

- teach participants to begin thinking objectively and strategically about skills acquisition and application
- identify skills obtained on-the-job and through experience
- recognise the gap between skills required for a job and skills currently acquired
- investigate options for developing skills they lack for an identified job.

Workshop activity

Working in small groups or pairs, participants research the skills and responsibilities required to fulfil selected job roles.

Participants may conduct their search online or interview local business owners or employees. Participants are encouraged to differentiate between entry-level capabilities and skills which require advanced training.

Participants investigate options for acquiring entry-level skills (e.g. online courses, work experience etc).

Participants share their ideas by reporting their findings to the class.

Workshop three: a skills audit

Learning objectives

This workshop aims to:

- introduce the concept of skills as capabilities evidenced by actions and behaviours which can be acquired and developed
- encourage a sense of purpose in planning for skills development.

Workshop activity

Working in pairs or small groups, participants make a list of the skills and qualities they currently possess. These skills and qualities could range from basic to more advanced in nature. Skills and qualities may have been acquired through a range of experiences including cultural, family, community, sport, and online as well as more traditionally recognised job-related capabilities.

Participants can also identify skills they aspire to obtain/develop and formulate a plan to acquire those skills.

In the final component of this workshop, participants write their resume. Participants may also wish to ask a family/community member for a letter of reference to support their resume.

Module two

Workshop one: yes but....dealing with anxiety

Learning objectives

This workshop aims to:

- introduce a mechanism for dealing with anxiety and inner voices of self-sabotage
- foster resilience by introducing a simple mindful way of reversing negative thoughts and anxieties.

Learning activity

Working in pairs or small groups, participants take turns to offer a negative thought to the group, e.g. "You always drop the ball!"

Other participants offer ways of turning that statement into a positive with the beginning, "Yes, but...", e.g. "Yes, but, every time I drop it, I am learning a little bit more about how to catch", or "Yes, but, every time I drop it, it doesn't hurt so much, so I am starting to lose my nervousness and pretty soon, I'm going catch it."

Participants encounter how difficult it can be to find a positive response to negative thoughts. But through this process, they learn to look at problems from multiple points of view and discover options for resolution.

The effort of looking for a 'Yes, but' – involves a commitment to a positive outlook. "It's another terrible day without rain!" "Yes, but when it finally comes, the country and me are going to relish it so much more."

Workshop two: the job interview

Learning objectives

The aim of this workshop is to:

- analyse different approaches to prepare for a job interview, identifying what works and what doesn't
- teach participants appropriate approaches and behaviours for presenting at a job interview.

Learning activity

Working in small groups, participants are allocated 10-15 minutes to plan their 'disastrous' interview preparation.

In a role play, participants 'present' at a job interview committing as many disastrous acts as possible. This could be turned into a friendly competition between class groups to encourage detailed investigation of job interview protocol.

In their groups, participants develop an interview plan that uses appropriate approaches and behaviours for a successful /positive experience.

Participants share their ideas by discussing their interview plans with the class.

Workshop three: what do we need to know

Learning objectives

The aim of this workshop is to:

- introduce the concept that interview questions are designed to discover aspects and qualities of the interviewee that indicate their suitability for a job
- foster an objective understanding of the question and answer process and how both parties can gain a working knowledge of each other
- encourage participants to view the interview as an information sharing process and reduce nervousness and anxiety.

Learning activity

Working in small groups, participants create a list of criteria/qualities/experience they would want to ascertain if they were interviewing someone for a job.

Participants formulate a set of questions designed to assist the interviewee in sharing that information.

This exercise can take on a game or discovery quality by having Group A formulate questions and then Group B, on hearing the question, must work out what the question is purposed to reveal (and vice versa).

Participants discuss their ideas with the class, describing how the questions they ask will prompt the interviewee to provide the information they are seeking.

Module three

Workshop one: how did you get there?

Learning objective

- This aim of this workshop is to foster a capability for planning career advancement.

Learning activity

Participants can work individually or in groups, using online or real-world research methods, participants choose a person who has progressed their career to a level of some advancement or identifiable success.

This person could be a local tradesperson or professional or it could be a well-known sports person or celebrity. Participants research the origins and stages of development their subject negotiated to progress their career to its current state. This could include classes taken, licences attained, equipment acquired and learned, associates and colleagues engaged with, as well as pitfalls and failures.

Participants should research and investigate each of the factors identified so they can develop a career progression plan.

Participants share their findings with the class.

Workshop two: how does this place work?

Learning objective

This workshop aims to:

- introduce the concept of how different units within a business work together to achieve their goals
- gain an understanding of how an individual's work meets the needs of the business and supports the achievement of business goals.

Learning activity

Working in small groups, participants research a local business or organisation (e.g. their school, sports club, café, fashion store etc.) to determine the organisational structure; where decision-making occurs; what levels and roles exist for operational outcomes and the diversity of people and roles that make-up the organisation.

Participants select a role and map how opportunities for increased levels of responsibility could be achieved and/or professional development needed to be ready for promotional opportunities.

Workshop three: mapping a pathway

Learning objective

This workshop aims to:

- introduce the concept of self-directed advancement in a current role.

Learning activity

Working in small groups or pairs, participants identify a current skill or capability they have achieved and determine the stages, experiences, successes and obstacles they have negotiated to achieve their skill/capability. Also consider advice and/or other influences.

Reflecting on this experience, participants create a plan to develop or achieve a desired skill or capability.

Participants share their ideas by discussing their skills development plans with the class.

Module four

Workshop one: what's holding me back and what can I change?

Learning objective

This workshop aims to:

- examine how cultural influences impact our lives and our ability /capacity to attain our goals.

Learning activity

Working in small groups, participants identify a particular group or area within their region or community. With this group or community in mind, participants make a list of the 'typical' family, education, networking and community experiences a person growing up in that area would have experienced e.g. how do they dress? how do they talk? what friends do they have? what are their support networks? what resources do they have access to? what experiences would have influenced them? what values do they hold? what beliefs do they live by? what shows do they watch on tv? what music do they listen to?

In groups, discuss how these things might affect the future they see for this person? What obstacles to reaching their goals might this person face because of their background?

Participants place themselves in the role of life coach for this person, discuss what you might advise them to change so they can achieve their life dreams? What steps could they take to go about that change?

Workshop two: it's all in the translation

Learning objective

This workshop aims to:

- explain the importance of using communication styles and modes to suit the circumstance or environment.

Learning activity

Working in small groups and taking turns, participants introduce colloquial spoken or texted terms, to the group. Remaining participants 'translate' these words or statements into more appropriate business language. For example: "CUL8R" may be translated as "I look forward to us meeting again", or "I will see you soon".

Participants discuss the issues they can see of using inappropriate styles of communication in identified situations e.g. using 'homie' lingo or swearing in the office.

Workshop three: looking for opportunity

Learning objective

This workshop aims to:

- investigate how passions and talents can be aligned to occupations and careers
- develop a plan to work toward developing talents, skills and passions into a job/career of choice.

Learning activity

Watch video module four where Bridie Mac eventually gets a job packing shelves at the local service-station/store. This helps Bridie:

- a) earn some money toward her upkeep
- b) develop some confidence in fulfilling tasks that are appreciated by her employer and the community
- c) helps her feel like she is progressing towards a larger ambition.

Working in small groups, participants identify their talents, passions, interests, hobbies and past times and investigate the skills and activities that are essential to those pursuits. Participants then match those attributes with possible jobs/roles that would also rely on those attributes and qualities.

Participants research their local community for possible work-related opportunities that might help to grow and foster those skills and interests.

The scenes depicted in the My Future, My Choice videos and the accompanying facilitator's workbook were written and produced by Scott Alderdice and funded by the Queensland Government.

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