

Take Hold of Your Future

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: Career Planning in the 21st Century

The process and context of career planning is evolving at a rapid pace. This chapter explores the meaning of work, then focuses on the changes that are occurring in the 21st century, including trends that we can expect to see in the workplace and how these changes may affect personal career planning. Activities within this chapter include identifying news items related to 21st century work trends and interviewing a member of the local business community.

Chapter 2: Personal Skills for the 21st Century

Soft skills refer to a person's Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EIQ) – a combination of personality traits, social graces, and communication skills. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job. Recent studies indicate that employees are more likely to lose their jobs because they lack soft skills than because they lack the technical skills or knowledge required to perform acceptably in their jobs. This chapter defines four areas of soft skills: self-management, communication, sensitivity to diversity, and leadership and decision making. Activities within this chapter prompt readers to explore soft skills in both personal and professional contexts.

Chapter 3: Life Goals and Roles

Our relationships with others and the activities we pursue define the parts we play in life such as spouse/partner, parent, or retiree. These are our life roles. This chapter defines the roles and the contexts in which they are played – such as the home, the community, and the workplace. An activity in this chapter gives readers the opportunity to keep a weeklong diary to help illustrate their current life roles, and the activities and time spent on each one.

Chapter 4: Environment and Self

Self-concept is the integrating life force of each individual. One's vocational self-concept, which includes the parts of the self-concept that apply to the Worker role, has a powerful effect on career development and occupation selection. This chapter provides information on the impact of positive and negative reinforcement on self-concept and how self-concept is implemented in many roles throughout life. The chapter also discusses how internal and external forces combine to support career development. An activity gives readers the opportunity to explore their own self-concepts.

Chapter 5: The Career Decision-Making Process

Effective decision making is a skill that prepares us for coping with constant change and allows us to manage our careers. This chapter defines the types of decisions and describes common decision-making strategies. Readers are introduced to a six-step process for decision making, which is explained in further detail in subsequent chapters. This chapter's activities prompt readers to evaluate the steps they take to make decisions in their own lives.

Chapter 6: Take Assessments

This chapter defines the first step of the Planful Career Decision-Making Process. In order to understand our interests and the role they play in career decision making, it is important to know more about how interests are formed and measured. Finally, the chapter discusses how abilities and skills relate to career choices. In this chapter's activity, readers are directed to take the interest assessment in *Kuder® Journey – Kuder® Career Interests Assessment* – along with the *Kuder® Skills Confidence Assessment*. The textbook includes graphical examples of sample assessment results.

Chapter 7: Take Assessments, Cont'd

Continuing the process of self-assessment, this chapter focuses on work values. The concept of value is defined as a belief that is strong enough to influence behavior and decisions. This chapter explores the influence of values on career decisions and how they can help shorten a long list of occupational possibilities. By taking Super's Work Values Inventory-revised in *Kuder Journey*, readers will rate the importance they place on 12 work-related values. An activity asks readers to compare their assessment results to the information they discovered about themselves in the life roles activity in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8: Make a List of Occupations

After readers have learned about themselves, they are ready to continue to Step 2 of the Planful Career Decision-Making Process. Step 2, or making a list of occupations, is a process of converting self-information into occupational alternatives. Using *Kuder Journey* in conjunction with this book allows readers to easily identify occupations based on their assessment results. This chapter helps readers identify occupations that relate to their personal interests, skills, values, and other factors. It includes a description of the system for classifying occupations that is used in *Kuder Journey* and on interest and skills assessment score reports. The activity for this chapter directs readers to *Kuder Journey* so they can view occupations and sort them by assessment results, clusters and pathways, and keywords.

Chapter 9: Make a List of Occupations, Cont'd

By this point, readers have assessed their interests, skills, and work values and have identified and researched several or many occupations. In these steps of the decision-making process, readers have been considering their options. They have not yet taken life-altering action steps – such as committing to a major, choosing a place for further education, quitting a job, or searching for a new job. For these reasons, this chapter is the bridge between the reader's inner thought process and taking committed action steps in the real world. This chapter provides additional activities designed to help make to a commitment to specific occupations and a major.

Chapter 10: Make a List of Majors

This chapter begins at the point where readers have developed a short list of the occupations of interest, and have a good understanding of the educational requirements for each of those occupations. Readers are given an overview on the many methods available to them to assist with their selection of a postsecondary major. In this chapter's activity, readers are directed to visit *Kuder Journey* to develop a list of possible majors of interest, compare them, and learn more about the offerings at their current institution.

Chapter 11: Consider Education and Financial Aid

This chapter explains the many types of postsecondary education and training available, including apprenticeships, vocational-technical schools, two-year and community colleges, four-year colleges, military service, web-based courses and degrees, and graduate school. Readers are guided on the process of choosing among educational options by major, size of the institution, location, cost and financial aid, and other factors. This chapter's activity helps readers evaluate the education options most suited to their needs.

Chapter 12: Develop Job Search Skills

In this step of the career decision-making process, readers learn about the tools they will need in order to get a part-time job, summer job, internship, or full-time job. This chapter provides guidance on the basic tools required – a résumé, a cover letter, a list of well-selected references, and knowledge about job interviewing. Activities in this chapter integrate *Kuder Journey*, prompting the reader to seek additional job search resources, craft a résumé and cover letter, and participate in a mock job interview.

Chapter 13: Get a Job

This chapter discusses the transition to or within the workforce and lists items that should be considered at this step of the career decision-making process. Some common ways of finding jobs are described and online resources are provided to help identify job openings that satisfy interests, skills, and work values. This chapter's activities prompt readers to visit *Kuder Journey* to research job listings.

Chapter 14: Transitions

Finding and getting settled into a good job is an accomplishment, but many events will occur in life that bring on transitions. This chapter describes the nature of transitions and how to cope with them. Also in this chapter, the six steps of the Planful Decision-Making Process are reviewed. This chapter's activities focus on transitions. Readers are asked to analyze the ways in which they have managed their own life transitions.