

## Lesson 4

### Which job suits me?

#### My criteria for choosing a job

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

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|-------------------------|--|
| Competence training     | Identifying, balancing and prioritising criteria for a decision.   |
| Learning objective      | Key criteria for choosing a job are, "Which job corresponds to my interests and strengths?"  |
| Student tasks           | The students choose or refuse a job and give reasons for their choice.   |
| Materials and resources | <p>✍ Student handout 1.3.</p> <p>📄 Materials for teachers 1.2 (cut up into a set of job cards, with approx. 10 more cards than students in class).</p> |
| Method                  | <p>Individual work with a handout.</p> <p>Plenary discussion.</p>  |
| Time budget             | 1. The students accept or refuse a job offer. <span style="float: right;">20 min</span>  |
|                         | 2. The students share their criteria for choosing a job. <span style="float: right;">20 min</span>   |

#### Information box

In lesson 1.3, the students addressed three key questions that will profoundly affect their future lives – making choices concerning their jobs, partnership, and family (parenthood). In this lesson, the students explore the criteria involved in one of these choices – choosing a job – in somewhat more depth.

Two criteria are of outstanding importance: which job interests me? Which job can I do best?

The relevance of these questions is obvious, but so are the difficulties in answering them, particularly the second one. Concrete information is necessary; the job-shadowing project is suggested to enable the students to overcome this problem.

## Lesson description

### 1. The students accept or refuse a job offer

#### The teacher introduces the topic

The teacher introduces the topic, referring to the flipchart showing the triangle of key choices. Last lesson, the students discussed the complexity involved in making three key choices concerning their jobs, partnership and family.

In this lesson, the students will focus on one of these three choices – their future jobs.

The teacher explains that to get started, the students should simply imagine that they will now be offered a job. The teacher will present them their job offer on a card. They are free to decide whether to accept this offer or not.

#### The teacher introduces the method – a simple simulation of the job market

The teacher distributes *sc* student handout 1.3 and asks the students to fill in the first line: do they already have a job of their choice, or have they made their choice? If not, they wait for the next step.

The teacher explains the rules. When the students receive their job offer on a card, they decide whether to accept it or not. They note down their reasons in the handout.

Then they may look for another job. The students can swap their jobs with each other, or exchange their cards for one of the cards on the teacher's desk. They record all the jobs offered to them, and give their reasons for accepting or refusing them.

If they find a job that they like, then they just keep the job card. If they just put their card down without taking another, then they are unemployed.

Before the simulation of the job market begins, the students should have a clear idea of the rules and their roles.

The teacher distributes a job card to each student. Many will probably protest, and may wish to get rid of their job offers immediately. If necessary, the teacher reminds them of their task – to record in the handout their reasons for not wanting a particular job.

#### The students participate in the job market simulation – looking for a job

Once the students have been given the job cards, they are left to themselves. The teacher observes how many students accept their job offers, and reminds students to make short notes before swapping jobs.

### 2. The students share their criteria for choosing a job

#### The students identify key criteria for their job choices

The students are seated in an open square or a circle so as to support communication.

The teacher asks for a show of hands. Who has accepted a job offer? Who hasn't?

In a second step, the teacher asks the students to form groups of four to six and share their criteria. Their task is to present a list of three key criteria that they all agree on.

After five minutes, the group speakers present their results and a second team member notes their points on the blackboard or flipchart. Points that are addressed by successive groups are marked accordingly to emphasise their importance. The result may look like this:

**Which job suits me? Criteria for choosing a job**

Personal interests

Qualifications – job requirements

Good income

Working hours

Flexibility

Job security

...

### **The students identify key criteria for choosing a job**

If the groups have repeatedly mentioned certain criteria for choosing a job, the students now consider whether these are particularly important. They share their opinions and give reasons.

On the one hand, the students are free to follow their personal preferences, so it is not necessary for them to agree. For example, a high income may be more important for one student, while another insists on free weekends and flexible working hours. There is one point, however, that the teacher should make the students aware of.

We all want to avoid being unemployed, so quite understandably, job security is often a top priority. However, business developments are hardly predictable, and the students will meet competition everywhere. Students must choose a job, or at least a job category (“law” – “doctor of medicine”) when they leave school, and they will apply for this job after having finished their studies or training. No one can reliably predict what their chances will be like in four or five years’ time.

Therefore the students should include two criteria:

1. What interests me, and what would I enjoy doing?
2. What am I good at? Where are my strengths? What can I do best when facing competition?

The teacher gives the students some time to think about these points and to respond.

### **The students problematise the application of the criteria**

When reflecting on how to apply these two key criteria for choosing a job, the students will probably become aware of the difficulties involved. The second question above is the easier one for them to answer. With the help of their parents and friends, and also their teachers, they can explore their specific profile of competences.

The first question poses more problems, as the students need information on job requirements and job developments. Teachers are not professional career experts, so school is at its limits here, and the students must find information for themselves. They now experience liberty of choice and identity building as a demanding business indeed.

In many countries, schools support their students through job-shadowing schemes. This model is suggested as an extension that students, parents, and business managers will appreciate and support.

## **Extension: job-shadowing project**

### **The problems that students face, and how job-shadowing projects can help**

The students know how important their choice of a suitable job is for their future lives. They have understood what criteria are crucial when making their choices, but they have also realised that they cannot judge which job requirements meet their talents, competences and interests without reliable, up-to-date information. A job-shadowing project can give the students valuable support in obtaining that information.

### **The students' task**

The students research a job that they believe meets their criteria. They spend several working days with a professional. They watch what he/she does and with whom they co-operate. Guided by a questionnaire (see *≈* student handout 1.4) they interview their job partner. If possible, they perform tasks to acquire first-hand experience (such as in an internship). The school schedule is replaced by the working hours of the job. So if a surgeon begins to operate at 6 a.m., the student should be next to him in the operating theatre (to find out, for example, if he/she can bear to watch an operation).

The students write a report, based on the questionnaire. The report can be handed in and marked, which creates a further incentive for the students to undertake their task properly. The students are advised to take notes daily and write their report during their week of work rather than later – an exercise in efficient time management.

The report should be a systematic account rather than a personal diary, to ensure that the students focus on the key criteria for their choice of a job.

The students must find their job partners themselves, with support from their parents, families and friends of the family. Ideally, they should not visit their parents or relatives at their workplace.

### **Support by the school and teachers**

The student performs the main role, and is responsible for the result. The school provides the opportunity, sets the framework, authorises the project and clarifies legal matters (consent by a relevant ministry, insurances). At an early stage, the school also contacts the parents, who have an important role to play (see below).

On request, the students can be given a letter of authorisation when applying for a job-shadowing opportunity. After the project has ended, the principal writes a letter of thanks to all the partners that hosted their students.

If possible, the teacher should visit the students during their project. During the whole project, a teacher must be available on the phone to react quickly in case of an emergency.

### **Follow-up work**

We recommend marking the reports to emphasise their importance. The teacher should treat the reports respectfully, as they are personal documents. He/she should realise that he/she was not present during the project and the interviews, so the students are experts here rather than the teacher. So assessment should focus on aspects such as clarity, coherence, care and completeness. From the student's point of view, this kind of task is much more rewarding than any test paper, and the teacher should be prepared to award more grades at the top of the scale than usual.

The students should have the opportunity to share their experiences. This requires more time than can be provided within regular EDC or social studies lessons. A useful platform is a job-shadowing event within the school. This is of particular interest for younger students who will carry out this project a year later, as well as their parents. The job partners or the local press, and local business representatives could also be invited.

## Support by parents

First, parents can support their children in finding out what their strengths and interests are. Parents know their children from their very first day, and can recall their development from a perspective that differs from that of a professional at school. Parents generally welcome this kind of project, as they appreciate any kind of support for their children in finding a job. For very understandable reasons, parents tend to overemphasise job security. In a rapidly changing economy, parents are therefore less suitable as advisors in career planning.

## How to find a job partner for the students

Usually the students are required to find a mentor for their job-shadowing project. Their parents, and in some cases other relatives or friends, can provide valuable help by providing links to potential partners. The students should not compromise too soon if the search proves difficult. They are looking for a job-shadowing opportunity, not a job. If no one who performs a particular job can be found, e.g. a broadcasting journalist, then a compromise would be to look for an alternative within the same job category, for instance a journalist working for the local newspaper.

## Support by local businesses and institutions

For any professional, hosting a student for a working week takes a lot of effort, and this should be appreciated. However, many employers are interested in attracting qualified and well-informed job applicants, and from their point of view, job shadowing is an opportunity to test the students and perhaps even approach them with a follow-up offer.

The students need a mentor or supervisor. This could be their job partner, or someone else. The students have been given leave from school, so they must not be paid while carrying out their project. They are not there to do regular work, but to follow their own agenda, as outlined by the questionnaire (see student handout 1.4).

## Long-term learning effects for the students

Experience has shown that this project will help many students to adopt a more serious, more mature approach to their final years at school. They have become aware of their interests, and can appreciate certain subjects more now that they can link them to their future after school. It also makes a difference if someone outside school has told them that “spelling and handwriting *do* matter.” And it is a rewarding and thrilling experience if students discover that they can actually already cope with quite a lot of tasks in the professional world.

The students may come back to school with a clear answer. Perhaps they now know what their job will be, and they can take the next steps in planning their studies or training after leaving school. On the other hand, if their project has showed them that they must look for a different job, this is also a valuable step forward, as they have got rid of some illusions and can now ask more precisely what kind of job would suit them.

## Information on job-shadowing schemes

United Kingdom: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

Baden-Württemberg, Germany: [www.schule-bw.de/schularten/gymnasium/bogy](http://www.schule-bw.de/schularten/gymnasium/bogy)