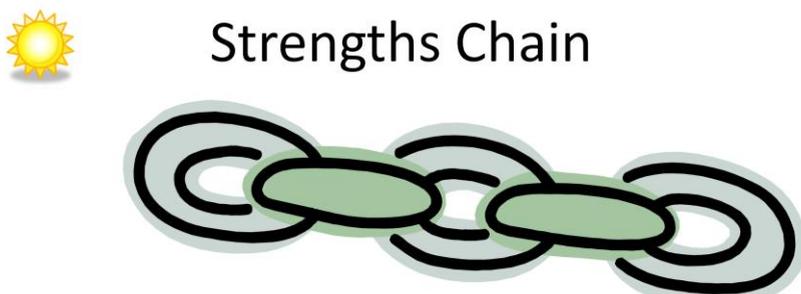


Transition Career Exploration Workshop

Strengths and Aptitudes



The Transition Career Exploration Workshop is a product of the Maine Department of Labor. The ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has permission to add the ND DVR brand to all information.



The diagram shows a chain of four interlocking links. The second and third links from the left are highlighted in a light green color. Below the chain, the words "Organized" and "Mechanical" are written, corresponding to the second and third links respectively.

Strengths Chain

Organized Mechanical

 What did I learn from this activity?

2

Facilitator Notes:

Projected Time: 20 - 25 minutes

Learning Objective: Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of identifying strengths of all kinds and the synergy of strengths as a group or team (could relate to team work in a work environment).

Materials Needed: strips of paper, staplers

Each participant lists his/her strengths on strips of paper and makes a chain of strengths. Goal is to get at least 10 links in your chain.

The goal of this game is to see how many strengths you can identify about yourself - One strength per piece of paper.

Reminder: Strengths can be skills, abilities, personal characteristics, experience, etc.

Time the group for one minute and say - stop!

Have everyone staple their links together to see who has the most links (most strengths). Then staple the groups' links together to see how many strengths the group has as a whole!

It is very important that you focus on your strengths when exploring careers and job

opportunities as this is what employers will focus on to see if your strengths match the tasks of the job.

Remember to **write your strengths in the workbook section** under strengths.



How do I know what my interests, strengths and values are?

- **Exercises – pick one!**
 - Create Your Own Coat of Arms
 - www.imaginon.org/fun/whippingboy/createcoatofarms.asp
 - Coat of Arms – paper version in Workbook

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Facilitator's Notes:

Now that the group has learned about their Learning Style preference, it is time to move on to another important aspect of who they are – what their strengths are, what they are interested in, and what they value in their lives.

You will want to decide beforehand which exercise you'll want to use – either the Coat of Arms or the Values Card Game, which comes later in the workbook. You, of course, can do both as each has its importance for different activities.

If you choose one of the internet-based exercises, you should preview it before the session.

The participants could do either version of the Coat of Arms exercise. A paper version of "The Coat of Arms" exercise is in the facilitator manual and in the participant workbook, as the internet may not be available during class time.

During this exercise, the participants will be able to look at what interests them, what some of their abilities are, as well as what they value. The Coat of Arms exercise is next.

Coat of Arms

- What is a Coat of Arms?
- What is the purpose of a Coat of Arms?
- Do you know the history of a Coat of Arms?

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Facilitator Notes:

Projected time – 20 - 30 minutes

Materials Needed: Coat of Arms handout (in participant workbook), color pencils, magic markers, stickers, crayons, pencils, pens.

- Ask them if they know what a Coat of Arms is and what the purpose of it is?
- What is the history of the Coat of Arms?

(A coat of arms is a symbol or collection of symbols, usually represented on a shield, that indicates the traits of a particular family or more currently for an individual. It is part of a practice called [heraldry](#), which includes researching and describing traits of coats of arms, and recording them for future reference. Contrary to popular belief, a coat of arms is not awarded to an entire family, but rather to a particular individual within the family who has been deemed worthy of the honor of displaying the coat of arms. Traditionally, it has been awarded to royalty, but not exclusively. While the origins of the coat of arms are unknown, it became a representation for military means throughout the years and is still used in certain situations today.)

Encourage them to be creative.

- Read the directions with the class to make sure they understand the goal of the exercise. You will find them on the next page.
- When finished discuss their Coat of Arms, could be in small groups or the entire class. They could show them to the class if they would like.

Be sure they record their results in the participant workbook in the SODA grid.

World of Work Inventory (WOWi)

The World of Work Inventory – what was that about?

- Next , you will learn about the 3 vital areas of information from taking the WOWi
 1. Abilities and Aptitudes
 2. Interest
 3. Values

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Facilitator Notes:

To connect this to the previous exercise - To help you understand your strengths - abilities, values and interests.

VR participants will have either already completed or will be completing the World of Work Inventory. If not, arrangements will need to be made for the VR participants to take the WOWi Inventory which will probably vary from site to site and group to group. Contact the VR counselor for this area, and they can be helpful in setting up this assessment.

- Depending on the situation, sometimes students will be asked to go to the Career Centers, where the VR offices are located, to take both the ERS (Employment Readiness Scale) and the WOWi (World of Work Inventory) with VR staff, or they may take it at the school, depending upon the facilitator and accessibility to the internet and laptops.

Explain that we will be looking at each type of information separately through exercises and activities, which will help participants to understand the actual WOWi results. This is all about finding their strengths and understanding who they are as an “employee.”

To the Facilitator:

You may not be using this curriculum with VR clients, or you may have a mixture of students who are and are not. As explained in the introduction, only VR clients will have access to the World of Work Inventory (WOWi). There are resources listed in the introduction for you to substitute for this assessment.

World of Work Inventory (WOWi)

- Two Reports:
 - Profile Report – includes a Summary or Overview
 - Interpretive Report – includes the “Details”
- At the end, you will find employment options that match your responses.

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Facilitator Directions:

- Distribute WOWi assessment results, the Summary Page and Interpretive reports (**not the graphs**), to participants.
- Instruct them to take 10 minutes to review their results and have them write down any questions they have about their results.
 - (this will prevent individuals from asking questions and expecting answers while others are reading their reports and not listening.)
- Explain the Summary report as an overview of their responses.
- Explain the Interpretive report as providing definition for each of their aptitudes and abilities and their results as providing information about themselves in relation to their total work environment (and their life).
- At the end of the Interpretive report, they will find career options for different educational levels that match their person-job fit.
- After they have finished reviewing their results, inform them that we will take a closer look at the Profile Report Summary.

WOWi – Profile Report

- **Summary Page** – has 4 boxes
 - High Measured Career Training Potential
 - High Measured Job Satisfaction Indicators
 - Self Selected Choices
 - High Measured Career Interest Activities

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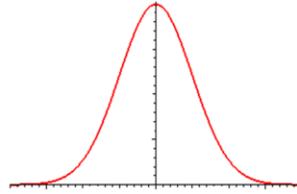
Facilitator Directions:

Explain that the Profile Report Summary contains assessment information in four boxes.

- **High Measured Career Training Potential** – aptitude for educational options or type of training that is best for that person; some people want to get training and get to work and others have the propensity for more.
- **High Measured Job Satisfaction Indicators** – include 12 temperaments related to the work/job environment.
- **Self Selected Choices** - come from what they choose in the beginning of the assessment.
- **High Measured Career Interest Activities** – explores the individual's preference for specific job-relevant tasks and activities.

What does “Average” Mean?

- **An average** is the sum of scores divided by the number of scores. Example: 18 scores = 1404; then take 1404 divided by 18 = 78; the average score = 78
- In other words, average means: usual, ordinary, normal, typical or regular.



How does this apply to you?

Most of your scores will fall within the range from low average to high average. Or, as with the WOWi, a score on either side of the line can indicate like, dislike or neutral.

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Facilitator Notes:

To help participants to understand a little bit about the statistics, the following is an explanation of how their scores are dispersed and what that means for them.

Many times the average is represented by a Bell Curve (because of its shape). Most everyone's scores fall within this curve. Where do you think the average scores fall? Answer (right in the middle).

Emphasize that most of our scores fall within the range from low average to high average – or on whatever scale is being measured – i.e. like, dislike or neutral.

That's what average means - in the middle!

Now that we have an idea of the statistics or arithmetic, let's talk about what your results are telling you. These results are always framed from a positive, strength-based perspective.

Abilities and Aptitudes

- “What am I good at doing?”
- Ability - a measure of your “**potential to learn**” in different areas, which is your aptitude
 - Abilities are **unique** to each individual.
- Aptitude – a natural ability or talent in a specific area; i.e. a talent for art; also a quickness for learning
- WOWi measures individual results in six ability areas
- You get a “**Snapshot**” of your abilities – strengths and preferred workplace abilities

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Facilitator Directions:

Learning Objective: We want to relate the importance of ability and aptitude in determining an employment goal.

Ask the group for different words or definitions for the words Ability and Aptitude. It’s important for them to define and understand what has been measured.

- Highlight the fact that we all have strengths and weaknesses, in terms of abilities.
- Remind them that this inventory will give them a comparative score - by age and level of education.
- What the participants will be looking for is how these aptitudes and abilities relate to work. What would they be good at? What is best for them?

6 Ability Areas of the WOWi

<u>Aptitude</u>	<u>Measured How?</u>
Verbal	English Vocabulary
Numerical	Basic Math Skills
Abstractions (Algebra)	Problem-Solving
Spatial – Form	Visualizing 3- dimensional Objects
Mechanical/Electrical	Mechanical Reasoning
Organizing Skill	Organizing Information

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Facilitator Directions:

Remind them that this inventory/assessment measures 6 different types of abilities and measures them in different ways:

- **Verbal** – Measures through English vocabulary, using similar words and exercises;
- **Numerical** - Measures through Basic Math exercises, such as adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing;
- **Abstractions** – Measures through Problem-Solving, through algebra and through completing sequences;
- **Spatial – Form** – Measures by predicting what 2-dimensional diagrams would look like if folded, etc. ;
- **Mechanical/Electrical** - Measures by looking at gears and indicating which one would turn faster, etc.;
- **Organizing Skill** – Measures by grouping similar things together, ability to strategize steps in a plan or process, coordinate, combine, and to provide a system and structure, to name features of what it means to have these skills.

6 Kinds of Abilities

- **Verbal** – how well you learn words



- **Numerical** – how well you learn math



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Facilitator Notes:

Understanding the six kinds of abilities/aptitudes

Take some time to discuss each of the different types of abilities; emphasize that each participant has unique combinations of abilities. Each person has some ability strengths, some not so strong areas.

Are you strong with words or numbers or both?

6 Kinds of Abilities

- **Abstractions** – how well you solve problems



- **Spatial-Form** –

– how well you can think in dimensions



(think of a box in 3 dimensions)

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Facilitator Notes:

Remind them that we will be looking at their ability strengths as indicated on their Profile/Summary sheet.

6 Kinds of Abilities

- **Mechanical/Electrical** – how well you can think & work mechanically



- **Organizing Skill** – how well you can organize information



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Facilitator Notes:

Now that you have learned and discussed the six ability types, can each one of you see which are your strongest abilities?

What are you “good at doing?”



Understanding My Aptitudes

The following Activity will help you understand more about Aptitude and Ability.

- How would you describe or define your Aptitude?
- What does it mean for your work life?

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Facilitator Notes:

Understanding Aptitudes Activity

Materials Needed:

Pencils/Pens

Paper

For this activity, the class should be separated into either six different groups or into a formation that works for the size of the group.

Each group is assigned one of the aptitudes (Verbal, Numerical, Abstractions, Spatial-Form, Organizing, Mechanical/Electrical).

Within their groups, students are asked to come up with a definition of their aptitude, what it would mean for their work life if that was their strongest aptitude, and some jobs that would be good for a person with that aptitude.

When they are finished, each group could share their findings with the entire class.

Ability and Aptitude Results

- **Use ability results carefully**
 - **Look** at your individual ability scores.
 - For example, “My verbal ability is higher than my math ability, or I learn easier with words than I do with numbers.”
 - **NOT** an either/or situation
 - It’s not “I can do this, but I can’t do that.”
 - We all have preferences around the kinds of tasks, activities and work we like to do.
 - We are all different and learn differently and have different strengths - aptitudes.

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Facilitator Directions:

There is a simple caution to explaining about how aptitudes/abilities are interpreted. They can be misunderstood as “I got a low score so I am not good at that.” which is not accurate. It is just that some people have stronger tendencies, natural talent, in one area than another.

- Have them look at their scores as areas of **strengths and not weaknesses** – only preferences.
- The fact is that each person has an aptitude to perform certain tasks or learn certain subjects easier than others – you could use your own abilities as examples.
- **It’s important for them to know this information when they are considering the type of work that they would like to pursue.**
- They need to go into new jobs with their eyes wide open. They need to learn to ask the question - is this job a good match for my skills/strengths, abilities and aptitude?

WOWi – Interpretive Report Abilities

- **Training Potential**

- Detailed report of your ability scores which are areas for growth

- Review statements 1, 2 and 3
- Starting with Verbal Aptitude, report defines the aptitude and lists a brief interpretation of your aptitude in each area

- Do your high ability scores make sense to you?

***Participant Workbook** : list your highest aptitudes (by education level) next to the “WOWi Abilities” section.*



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Facilitator Directions:

- Direct them to look at their Interpretive Report, and give them some time to read just the section called “Training Potentials.” Explain that the Interpretive Report is their aptitude scores, noted as training potential, in narrative form.

- Read statements numbered 1, 2 and 3. These are important assumptions for people to consider.

- Direct them to the bottom of page 1, where each ability /aptitude is listed in **BOLD**, defined and followed by a paragraph discussing whether this is an area that they would excel in.

- Ask for questions related to their report. If you do not know the answers, tell them to talk with their VR counselor about it.

- Call attention to the statement near the bottom of page 2:

“Your skills are the single most powerful predictor of success.”

Have them list their highest aptitude scores by **education** in the **Participant Handbook** because employers will be comparing their skills with other job applicants.

Next, we are going to talk about the Job Satisfaction Indicators.