

Job Explorer: My Dream Job-Lesson 3

Topic: Skills/Talents and Careers

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify personal skills and talents
- Discuss which skills and talents employers find most useful
- Examine how talents/skills may be improved

Materials:

- Worksheets #3A, 3B, and 3C

Focus Question: What role does one's skills/talents play in helping workers succeed in their careers?

Teaching Strategies:

Introduction:

- Ask students to make a list in their notebooks of up to 3-5 special talents/skills they possess. Then, have the class explain their answers to the following:
 - What are some of the talents/skills that you put on your lists?
 - Explain how one of these talents or skills might be useful in a career?

Body of the lesson:

Tell the class that today they will be discussing how a person's talents/skills may be helpful in developing a career.

- Distribute Worksheet # 3A, "Skills/Talents Survey." Have students follow the directions for the exercise on the worksheet. Then, have them explain their answers to the following:
 - What did you learn from this survey about the skills, talents, and personal qualities that employers find most useful?
 - What are some of the most important skills, talents, and personal qualities that you have that are on this list?
 - What does the author of this worksheet mean by saying, "Employers value people who, metaphorically, dig a well before they're thirsty."
 - Do you think individuals are born with the skills/talents/personal qualities on this list, or can they be developed throughout one's life?
- Distribute Worksheet #3B, "Reading." Have students follow the directions to complete the exercises on this worksheet. Then, have them explain their answers to the following:
 - What is this reading about?
 - What title would you give to this reading?
 - What does the author of this passage mean by saying having "varied talents is better" than having a singular talent?
 - In what ways can worker's careers be hurt by having too many talents or skills?

- Distribute Worksheet #3C, “Increasing Talent.” Have students follow the directions to complete the exercises on this worksheet. Then, have them explain their answers to the following:
 - What is this reading about?
 - How does igniting the spark of inspiration lead to growing one’s talents?
 - How does practicing lead to growing one’s talents?
 - How does having the right coach lead to growing one’s skills.
 - Which of the three ingredients is most important in growing one’s skills related to his/her career?

Summary/Assessment:

- Have students explain their answers to the following:
 - You have now learned about the roles one’s interests and talents play in the search for a career. Which is more important in getting a job having a special interest (as discussed in the previous lesson) or having special talents?

Worksheet 3A, “Skills Survey”

Exercise: On the list below, make a check mark next to any of the talents or skills that appear that you believe you possess.

I. Popular skills that employers want

A roundup of several surveys suggests the employers most admire employees who possess the following skills:

_____1.	Effective communication skills: Employers seek candidates who can listen to instructions and act on those instructions with minimal guidance. They want employees who speak, write, and listen effectively, organize their thoughts logically, and explain everything clearly
_____2.	Computer and technical literacy: Almost all jobs now require an understanding, ranging from basic to advanced, of computer software, word processing, e-mail, spreadsheets, and Internet navigation.
_____3.	Problem-solving/Creativity: Employers always want people who can get them out of a pickle. Problem-solving abilities can aid you with making transactions, processing data, formulating a vision, and reaching a resolution. Employers need the assurance that you can conquer job challenges by thinking critically and creatively.
_____4.	Interpersonal abilities: Relationship-building and relationship-management are high priorities with many employers. These skills confirm that a candidate can relate well to others, both co-workers and customers.
_____5.	Teamwork skills: The ability to work well with others while pursuing a common goal is a long-running favorite of employers. But so is the ability to work with minimum supervision.
_____6.	Diversity sensitivity: In today's world, cultural sensitivity and ability to build rapport with others in a multicultural environment is highly valued by employers.
_____7.	Planning and organizing: Workplace life requires prioritizing and organizing information. Employers value people who, metaphorically, dig a well before they're thirsty.
_____8.	Leadership and management: Leadership consists of a strong sense of self, confidence, and a comprehensive knowledge of company goals. These are qualities that motivate and inspire, providing a solid foundation for teamwork.

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/skills-and-personal-qualities-that-employers-want.navid-397846.html?print=true>

II. Personal qualities that employers want

Exercise: On the list below, make a check mark next to the personal quality that you believe you have

Here is a list of some of the personal qualities that employers typically rate highly:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1.	Adaptability and flexibility: Nearly half of employers in a recent survey gave a high rating to “openness to new ideas and concepts.” They also like candidates who can work independently or as part of a team, changing gears when required, whether multitasking or adapting working hours and locale.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2.	Professionalism and work ethic: Employers seek productive workers with positive work ethics who stick with challenges until they meet them.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3.	Positive attitude and energy: The last to be picked and promoted are candidates who show gloomy outlooks and emotional immaturity. Exhibit a sunny outlook and energetic, organized behavior.

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/skills-and-personal-qualities-that-employers-want.navld-397846.html?print=true>

Worksheet 3B, “Reading”

Exercise: At the bottom of this worksheet, create an outline for 2-3 minute talk you would give based on the reading below. Your talk should have an introduction, body, and conclusion.

If You Want a Good Job, You Need More Than One Talent

Varied Talent Is Better

You might not expect that jobs for a medieval art lawyer, a French-Canadian copywriter specializing in nutrition, or a customer support representative with experience in film contract administration actually exist, but they do. Specific jobs that require (or, at least, prefer) the mixing of often unrelated skills show up in job listings regularly. They may not be a dime a dozen, but they're far from non-existent. Even when you apply to a job that appears standard, your additional talents—no matter how irrelevant they may seem—can offer you an advantage.

While common advice may dictate that passion and focus on the one thing that you love in life will help you become significantly more employable in that field, they actually lower your chance for a job. Highly talented, ambitious lawyers make a lot of money—but most lawyers don't. When you try to be the best at one broad thing, you open yourself up to an incredibly large amount of competition where only a small percentage of people find significant success. When you apply to specific jobs that center around not only your primary talent, but other talents you've never sought to fully promote, you're suddenly a big fish swimming in a small pond. When applying for work, that's the ideal situation. As humans, we have difficulty making decisions when we have too much information. When competing for a job, you could very well be the best fit but when a hiring manager needs to make a decision he or she may not choose you due to information overload. When you have to interview many candidates, it's very easy to only get a small picture of each one. When you have multiple relevant talents, you'll rise to the top and set yourself apart.

Grow the Talents You Already Have

People who've focused on a singular goal their entire life often believe they have a single talent. Most of us, however, have hobbies and other interests. While we might not have the polished skill set required for professional work, growing such an interest to that point is not only easy but something we enjoy doing.

Let's pretend you're a lawyer and you have a few hobbies: cooking, cars, and television dramas. While you can't grill a steak during a deposition, you can cater your services towards restaurants, bakeries, and other food-related establishments, as well as seek out work related to food issues. If you love cars and know plenty about them, that puts you at an advantage when applying for legal jobs at car manufacturers. Auto shows require lawyers as well. Several companies create gadgets for cars, or even the technology behind self-driving cars, and lawyers are certainly needed for that. Lawyers are also consulted on television dramas frequently, and Hollywood loves employing lawyers to fight their many legal battles. While these are just a handful of examples, most career paths have various places where your interests can help you get a job if you grow them into skills you can promote in a job interview and on your resume. Sometimes,

these skills can even help you get work when you have no relevant experience.

Companies Like to Take Advantage of Multi-Talented Workers

People who can do more than one thing, whether it's in their job description or not, offer added value to a company. You may have a primary task, like sales, but if you also have design skills you could potentially help the company with promotions. If you work as an assistant but know how to code, you can write an app to automate a lot of your work so you have time to get more things done. When you have an extra skill and you find a way to bring it to the table, you exceed the value of a traditional employee.

This reality has the potential to put you in a bad situation. Multiple talents make it seem like you're capable of doing the job of multiple people. As you're only one person, you'll burn out working two jobs for the cost of one. That aside, it's simply not fair to you or to the person who might be employed if you didn't take on their job as well. While the intersection of talents can help get you hired, it's important to set boundaries in the beginning. Don't take on more work than you can handle, and identify sources of burnout before they can affect you.

Stay Patient

Like with any job search, finding specific work takes time. Use that time to grow your skills and continue to seek out positions that are most relevant to your interests. Generic employees with one great skill, however talented, aren't as attractive in a poor economy because they don't offer a company as much bang for their buck. If you can offer more, you'll improve your chances.

<http://lifehacker.com/5978452/if-you-want-a-good-job-you-need-more-than-one-talent>

Exercise: Outline for a 2-3 minute talk

Title: If you want a good job, you need more than one talent

I. Introduction:

A.

B.

C.

II. Body of the talk:

A.

B.

C.

III. Conclusion:

A.

B.

Worksheet #3C, “Increasing Talent”

Exercise: Three ingredients for increasing talent are mentioned on this worksheet. Select the one ingredient mentioned below that you believe is most important in increasing talent and circle it.

How to Increase Talent

What is the secret of talent? How do we unlock it? Journalist and *New York Times* bestselling author Daniel Coyle visited nine of the world's greatest talent hotbeds — tiny places that produce huge amounts of talent, from a small music camp in upstate New York to an elementary school in California to the baseball fields of the Caribbean.

He found that there's a pattern common to all of them — certain methods of training, motivation, and coaching. This pattern, which has to do with the fundamental mechanisms through which the brain acquires skill, gives us a new way to think about talent — as well as new tools with which we can unlock our own talents and those of our kids.

There seems to be three keys for unlocking, reshaping, and improving existing talents.

(1) **The first key ingredient is igniting “the spark” of inspiration.** This “spark” is what begins a huge, deep transformation. It's the beginning of unlocking talent. Something has to ignite desire. That spark for Coyle was ignited in 1970 when he met a famous writer and said, “if he could be a writer so could I.” Coyle then put himself through a self-study program that contained well more than 10,000 hours of writing, reading, writing and more reading; of being rejected for years, and yet trying again and again (and again and again). Finally, his first book was published in 1984.

(2) **The second key ingredient is engaging in a particular kind of practice.** When Coyle was learning how to play the harmonica some thirty years ago, he nearly threw the instrument against the wall. While it's easy to just blow through a harmonica and get some music out of it, learning how to blow through single holes, bend notes, and control your breathing and the resulting music is a challenge. But he kept practicing. He practiced every day at 7 pm on the front porch of an abandoned house. After an entire year, he could play like a relatively good blues harmonica player. But it took practice that involved struggle, errors, correction, and more practice. That's part of the secret to increasing talent.

(3) **The third secret ingredient is great coaching.** While one can refer to books, courses, CDs and more on how to do something, there's nothing like having a personal coach there to guide one's learning. Coyle describes the experience of having failed geometry the first time he took the course, but excelling at it the second time, attributing his success to a better coach. He learned to pilot a plane in a short amount of time again due to a great teacher.

Adapted from: <http://blog.mrfire.com/how-to-increase-talent/>