# HANDS ON YOUR FUTURE: SKILLS 101 LESSON PLAN

### THE CHALLENGE:

Old ways of working and living are being swept away in exchange for an increasingly uncertain future. Chances are you'll be working in fifteen different jobs in your lifetime, some that don't even exist yet. How's that for stressful?

# YOUR MISSION:

To not panic! And to start thinking proactively about your future to lay the groundwork for success.

# THE QUESTION:

What's the most important thing to know right now that will really help you going forward?

# YOUR SOLUTION:

Discovering and delving into your strengths and skills. This lesson plan will help you to do so, as well as giving you a better understanding of the importance of "soft" skills, and how your skills and strengths can transfer across roles and industries. It will also help you discover your core motivation when it comes to what you do – or don't – like.



# <u>FYI:</u>

#### Strengths vs. Skills

• A strength is something you are naturally good at, and didn't have to learn.

• A skill is something you can learn (and master) through repetition.

#### Transferable or "Soft" Skills vs. Technical or "Hard" Skills

• "Soft" Skills refer to personality traits such as leadership, good communication, persuasion, empathy etc.

• "Hard" Skills refer to technical knowledge and training.

# DON'T PANIC!

• We all have inherent strengths and "soft" skills that can help us become more agile: all we need to do is to start honing these tools; developing our existing strengths and skills and learning new ones as we go.

• Humans are endlessly curious and have the capacity to never stop learning – and yes, this will be crucial to surviving in the future world of work. You need to love learning and continue to do it all your life. The benefits of constant learning include becoming more adaptable and able to master new tasks – and it keeps your brain healthy, too.



## DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

#### Activity 1a:

Write down three things that you like to do (whether you're good at it or not), and three things you know you're good at (but don't necessarily enjoy doing):

#### Activity 1b:

Write down three reasons WHY you like the things you like, and three reasons WHY you enjoy or dislike the things you are already good at.

#### Questions to get you thinking:

- Does it satisfy a need for order/ creativity?
- Do you like the feel of working with your hands/ working outdoors?
- Do you like the way it makes you feel?
- Does colour and shape make you happy?
- Do you enjoy doing good things for people/ animals?
- Do you get a sense of accomplishment in finishing a task?
- Do you like how people react to you when you do something well?

# SKILLSROAD CAREER QUIZ

#### Activity 2a:

Complete the Skillsroad Career Quiz on the Skillsroad website (remember to create an account if you don't have one already):

www.skillsroad.com.au/my-account/my-careers-quiz

When you're done, download a copy of your results.

#### Activity 2b:

Take some time to think about these questions:

- Are your results what you expected?
- How do your results make you feel?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Do your results cross over with the skills and motivations you wrote down/talked about earlier?



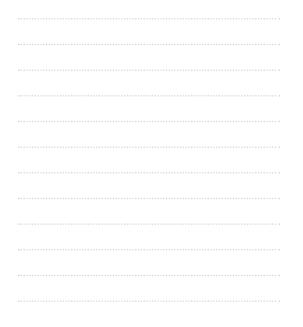
# <u>SOFT SKILLS:</u> DO THEY MATTER?

There are certain universal skills that will be very important for success in future work. These are the so-called "soft" skills, and they include:

- Complex problem solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Creativity and innovation
- People management
- Coordinating with others
- Emotional Intelligence
- Reasoning, analytical thinking and decision making
- Service orientation
- Negotiation
- Cognitive flexibility
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Leadership and social influence
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- The importance of reading widely, and being able to analyse and interpret what you read

#### Activity 3a:

Write down any "soft" skills you think you may have.





#### Activity 3b:

Write down how your "soft" skills may help you to transfer your primary skill set (as identified in the Skillsroad Career Quiz) to a different industry or role than the one you've been considering. Try to come up with three very different roles that all use your "soft" skills and your primary skill set. The goal is to think out of the box when it comes to using your natural strengths and skills.

### THE HAYSTACK METHOD

Innovation and marketing expert and founder of the Non-Obvious Company Rohit Bhargava's Haystack Method is a trend-curation tool that can be repurposed to help you discover more about what career or role may suit you in the future.

Your job is to gather the "hay" – information about your strengths and skills, available career paths and information, ideas, articles, interviews, experiences, hobbies and behaviour that appeal to you. Then, you'll use what you've gathered to define a "needle": your core motivation or the "why" of why you do what you do. This needle can be a golden thread and gives meaning to all the information you've gathered.

Using the five steps of the Haystack Method below, you can try to answer the following question: "What kind of career will I be happiest in?"

#### **1.** GATHERING

Important information, stories and interesting ideas related to different career paths found while reading, listening, seeing and experiencing, which you then make note of and save or collect somewhere. The results of Career Quizzes and chats with industry experts or family members can form part of "gathering the hay".



#### **2.** AGGREGATING

Take individual ideas and disconnected thoughts you discovered really appeal or "speak" to you, or really repel you, and group them together to identify a broader theme or possibilities. What underlying need of yours do these themes or ideas speak to? Is there a vague trend towards liking outdoor work, or wanting to work with animals? Are you attracted to stories or ideas about making a difference? Do you have a bias against working with your hands?

### **4.** NAMING

Describe a collection of your powerful ideas in a memorable way to make it easy to understand. This could be condensing each "idea collection" into a "role name": "Creative Director at World Wildlife Fund", or "Fire Station Chief", or "Sustainable city planner and architect", or "Surf Instructor working with people with a disability" – try to describe what is core to you in a few actionable words.

#### **3.** ELEVATING:

Identify underlying themes that align a group of ideas to describe a single bigger concept. This is the tricky part: condensing all you've learnt so far to find a key, non-obvious insight into something: the specific industries that might suit you best, for example. Does it look like working for a nonprofit might be your thing? Or do you want to be an entrepreneur?

### **5.** PROVING

Validate your ideas. Think about the roles you "named" – what speaks to you? What doesn't? Do you need more information? "Test" your ideas by talking to friends, family, career advisors, thinking about pros and cons – and if you're unsure, do more research (start gathering the hay again!)

Once you've run through this process, it's time to apply the ideas, or make the decisions. In your case, you can use it to help you decide which Year 12 subjects to choose, which training pathways to follow towards your end goal, what kind of industries you want to work in and even what your dream role may be.

