



HANDS ON YOUR FUTURE: SKILLS 101 LESSON PLAN

THE CHALLENGE:

Your students are seeing old ways of working and living swept away in exchange for an increasingly uncertain future. They're stressed, anxious and unsure of themselves.

YOUR MISSION:

You only have one hour to cut through the noise and start a proactive career conversation to help your students lay the groundwork for successfully getting hands on with their future.

THE QUESTION:

What do your students need to know first and foremost?

YOUR SOLUTION:

SkillsRoad's Hands on your future: Skills 101 Power Hour lesson plan will help you guide your students to delve into their strengths and skills; understand the importance of transferable or "soft" skills and how skills and strengths can transfer across a myriad of roles and industries; and find their "needle" (their core motivation) when it comes to choosing a career path.

This lesson plan is aimed at year 9, 10 and 11 students.

GET THINGS STARTED

Kick off a few minutes of discussion by asking questions to determine your students' awareness of the future world of work, as well as the importance of skills and strengths. Encourage freeform answers.

Duration: 5 minutes

- Do you think jobs in the future will change? Why/why not?
- Do you think you'll be able to work in your "dream job" one day? Why/why not?
- Do you know the difference between "hard" and "soft" skills?
- Are soft skills important? Why/why not?
- Do you think skills are transferable? Why/why not? For example: if you're good at music, can you only be a musician? If you're good with your hands, can you only be a carpenter? If you're creative, can you ever work in IT?
- Do you know what your strengths are?
- Are strengths and skills the same thing?

DEFINITIONS:

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.

Introduction

So, we’ve all heard that the future world of work is changing – chances are, some of you will end up doing jobs that don’t even exist yet! That’s an interesting idea, but also kind of worrying: how does one prepare for a future career if you don’t even know what it is, yet? A good starting point is to keep in mind two key human features:

- 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:

Ask your students to write down three things that they like to do (whether they’re good at it or not), as well as three things they know they’re good at (but don’t necessarily enjoy doing)

Duration: 3 minutes

Activity 1b:

Ask your students to think about WHY they like the things they like, and WHY they dislike/like the things they’re good at. Encourage them to write down their top three WHYS.

Questions to get them 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 feel 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?

Duration: 5 minutes

Activity 1c: Discuss their results. Did any key motivations or reasons jump out at them? Do they feel that they have any strengths or skills? Why/ why not?

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal and Discussion Points:

The goal of these three exercises is to help your students get into the right mindset to start thinking about their skills and strengths. We all have innate strengths as well as primary and secondary skill sets: some of these may already be strong and well-developed (their “natural” or primary strengths/skill sets), while other strengths/skills might be

undeveloped and seen as “weak” points; but only need some honing. The process of engaging with their strengths and skills will also help them to identify their core motivations when it comes to what they like or dislike: sometimes, WHY we think we enjoy something isn’t the real reason at all.

SKILLSROAD CAREER QUIZ

Activity 2a:

Ask your students to complete the Skillsroad Career Quiz on the Skillsroad website:
www.skillsroad.com.au/my-account/my-careers-quiz

Duration: 5 minutes

Activity 2b:

Once they’re done, take 5 minutes to discuss their results.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION POINTS:

- 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 they wrote down/talked about earlier?

SOFT SKILLS: DO THEY MATTER?

Introduction discussion duration: 5 minutes

There are certain universal skills that will be very important for success in future work. These are the so-called “soft” skills. According to the World Economic Forum’s latest “The Future of Jobs” report, some of the most important skills needed to thrive in the future 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

Avil Beckford (The Invisible Mentor) adds two more to the list:

- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- The importance of reading widely, and being able to analyse and interpret what you read

Activity 3a:

Ask your students to write down any “soft” skills they think they may have.

Duration: 3 minutes

Activity 3b:

Once they’re done, ask them to write down how their “soft” skills might help them to transfer their primary skill set as identified in the Skillsroad Career Quiz to a different industry or role than the one they’ve been considering. Encourage them to come up with three very diverse roles that all make use of their “soft” skills and their primary skills set.

Duration: 5 minutes

Goal: This is a mental/intellectual exercise to encourage your students to think out of the box when it comes to using their natural strengths and skills.

Activity 3c:

Discuss the results.

Discussion duration: 10 minutes

- Did they understand how soft skills and hard skills can complement each other?
- Can they see that their skills are more versatile than they may think, and that if you focus on skills, not roles, you have more options and flexibility?
- Do they think this information might be valuable to help them choose their subjects for Year 12?

Examples of some career pivots and skills transfers to use during discussion:

Melanie Perkins, Canva

Melanie Perkins, is the CEO and co-founder of Canva (an online design tool for everything from birthday invites to social media posts). She is one of the youngest female CEOs to head a tech start-up, and she's also Australia's youngest billionaire. Melanie started out by teaching design to fellow students at uni. After seeing them struggle, she decided to drop out of uni and develop her own company, 'Fusion Books', designing yearbooks. This became the basis for Canva.

Juliette Wright. GIVIT

Juliette Wright used her IT skills to develop online platform GIVIT, designed to alleviate the effects of poverty. GIVIT connects those who have with those in need. Juliette was awarded an Australian of the Year Award in 2015 for channelling her love and passion for IT in a way that helps to make the world a little better.

Bernie Shakeshaft, BackTrack Youth Works Program

Bernie Shakeshaft, a recipient of the 2020 Australian of the Year Award, changes lives with his BackTrack Youth Works Program. He used the skills he developed while growing up as a jackaroo in the Northern Territory to create a program that uses animal-assisted learning and agriculture to transform the lives of young people.

Sara Blakely, Spanx

Imagine getting to work in a role where you could use your natural people skills to succeed and sell your own product... Sara Blakely went from selling office supplies door-to-door for seven years to spotting a gap in the market and launching her own line of slimming undergarments, Spanx. They've become a household name – even Richard Branson has a pair!

Eddie Woo, Maths Education

Secondary School teacher and 2018 Australian of the Year recipient Eddie Woo started creating educational videos for one of his students who fell ill

with cancer and started missing school. Eddie now has a YouTube channel that's attracted more than 8 million views and makes mathematical education accessible for all.

Dr Karl Kruszelnicki

Imagine living every day being able to use your passion for science and how things work... That's what Dr Karl Kruszelnicki does. You might have heard him before on Triple J, answering callers' science-related questions: it's a cool job, right? However, it's important to know that Dr Karl has been through a long journey to get to this point in his life. Dr Karl and his parents came to Australia as refugees, and they lived in a refugee camp for two years. In his life so far, he has worked as a physicist, a car mechanic, an underground filmmaker and a taxi driver (among many other things). Dr Karl says that he wanted to understand everything about everything and then be able to communicate that to other people. This curiosity, love of science and thirst to understand "how and why" has landed him his dream role.

Imagine being able to use your knack for 'hands on' work to create an invention that cleans up the oceans! Andrew Turton and Pete Ceglinski are Australians and avid surfers who were shocked by the amount of rubbish they saw in the ocean. Turton is a boat builder and Ceglinski works in the yacht industry. Together they came up with an idea for the 'Seabin', which basically works like a pool skimmer box but is used in places like marinas, inland waterways, lakes and harbours. The product has gained worldwide attention. an awesome way to use your skill set to do something you are passionate about and that gets results!

WAYS TO HONE YOUR SKILLS

Encourage students to throw their nets wide when considering the different training and experience pathways they can take to hone and develop both soft and hard skills:

- Online courses
- SBATs
- Apprenticeships/Traineeships
- Part-time work
- Casual work

- Volunteering
- Taking part in school activities such as debating, project organisation, leadership development
- Pursuing new hobbies

DISCOVERING THE HAYSTACK METHOD

It's not enough to encourage young people to be curious and discover widely: they should also be taught how to effectively analyse and synthesise information to proactively help them to make better decisions about their future.

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 youth discover more about their future career pathway (their "needle in the haystack").

Students will gather the "hay" – information about their strengths and skills, available career paths they're considering and information, ideas, articles, interviews, experiences, hobbies and behaviour that appeal to them – and then use what they've gathered to define a "needle": their core motivation or "why" that would make them happy and successful in a career, regardless of industry or role. This needle provides a collective golden thread and gives meaning to all the information they've gathered.

The model has five components. If time permits, guide them through the basics of each component to help them broadly answer the question: **"What kind of career will you be happiest in?"** This could also be set as an additional homework assignment.

In-class duration: 9 minutes

THE FIVE STEPS OF THE HAYSTACK METHOD

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 the idea of working with animals? Are you attracted to stories or ideas about making a difference? Do you have a bias against working with your hands?

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 non-profit might be your thing? Or do you want to be an entrepreneur?

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.

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 this case, you'll be deciding which Year 12 subjects to choose or which training pathways to follow towards your end goal.