

# Career Scope Feedback

## Submitted by

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## Program Description:

*Skills Link - 20 week government funded youth employment program including 8 weeks of career-oriented workshops, 10 weeks of work experience and 2 weeks of guided job search (30 hours/week). Participant's ages range from 16-27, with an average age of 18 years. Participants were at-risk youth, who primarily had not completed high school.*

## CareerScope Overall:

In this context, CareerScope was overall an excellent resource to have in the classroom. The process from start to finish was useful, and although challenging resulted in a clearer career direction for most of the youth in the Skills Link Program.

Working with at risk youth, there did tend to be a large amount of reading and writing required which seemed to be quite difficult for some youth due to low literacy levels. I noticed also, while working with these participants, that they really seemed to enjoy doing the career wheel the most, particularly when short answers or checklists were all that was required of them. The little amount of writing yet still effective results were the most useful and enjoyable activities for these youth. It seemed that most of the youth participating in this program found the career wheel to give them the most concrete information, and also particularly enjoyed the S.T.A.R activity (activity 7) as an effective approach to interview techniques. The program participants seemed to have the most difficult time in exercises where creative thinking and longer responses to questions was required. These types of activities seemed to require a far greater amount of prompting and one-on-one assistance.

CareerScope was an extremely useful tool to have. Many workshops were based on exercises in CareerScope, but often more activities and hands-on work needed to be done alongside these activities in order to effectively assist the youth with learning and career exploration.

## CAREERSCOPE ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

### My Personal Wheel – Activity 1

- This was the most successful activity in CareerScope with these youth, they enjoyed the simplicity of the checklists to go through, as most had difficulty with either ESL, or literacy challenges.
- Upon completion of the wheel, youth were given collage materials and were instructed to create their own wheel based on the wheel they had developed in the workbook. Some found this successful, whereas some youth had difficulty expressing themselves creatively.

## **My Career Beliefs - Activity 2**

- Used this activity on the second day, discussed change, did activity demonstrating change.
- This activity went well, fairly quick, began discussion/debates, based on their experiences in job search.

## **Portfolio Warm-Up 1: Who Am I? - Activity 3**

- Followed up Career Beliefs with Who Am I activity
- Youth had a difficult time sharing with others, preferred to just think about answers to self.
- This activity took longer than I expected due to the level of literacy and English of the group.
- Many of the youth had a difficult time answering some of the questions, some did not have hobbies, didn't know what they were interested in, didn't know what they were good at, etc.

## **Portfolio Warm-Up 2: The Portfolio Timeline - Activity 4**

- Introduced this activity with group brainstorming: what is a portfolio?
- Youth had a difficult time understanding concept of Where have I been? Where am I now? Where am I going?
- Some had a difficult time saying where they had been, said they have been nowhere. Took some extra time working with each youth one on one.
- Upon completion, youth presented to each other in pairs their timeline, and worked in pairs to come up with more ideas.

## **Portfolio Uses – p. 16**

- Asked students to rate the various uses of a portfolio from 1-6 based on how they plan to use their portfolio 1=most useful.
- Used this as introduction to Artifacts

## **My Artifact Ideas – Activity 5 (Things I want to demonstrate)**

- Youth had a difficult time grasping this concept, did a few examples, and required lots of one-on-one attention. Once concept was understood, this exercise went well.
- This exercise tied in with resume writing, served as a good introduction to writing resumes.
- Once youth understood the concept, they were able to think more creatively about skills they have and ways to demonstrate their skills.

## **My Artifact Ideas – Activity 5 (Things I want to demonstrate)**

- This activity did not go over as well, after writing about the above activity, youth got tired and frustrated with the amount of writing required of them.
- Participants had a difficult time coming up with their own ideas of life experiences and making connections to what those experiences show. Needed lots of prompting, and this exercise was done half-heartedly.

### **My Artifact Ideas – Activity 5 (Possible Artifacts to Get)**

- This activity worked well, youth tended to like checklists in particular, had an extremely difficult time actually getting the artifacts brought in to class to add to portfolio. Youth had ideas of what they would add, but after many reminders, few actually brought in portfolio pieces.

### **Unpacking an Artifact – Activity 6**

- Spent little time on this, youth had a difficult time with the writing involved. Discussed accomplishments related to artifacts in a communication workshop, youth shared with each other an accomplishment while practicing listening skills. Assisted with understanding why artifacts that have nothing to do with a job are used to demonstrate skills.
- Again, youth did not like the writing portion of this activity.

### **S.T.A.R. – Activity 7**

- Used this activity in interview workshop, activity went well, difficult to understand at first, once concept was understood, youth found this to be quite helpful.
- Followed this activity with interview workshop including how to answer some questions that may come up, illegal questions, body language, and general interview techniques.
- Youth found this to be quite useful, enjoyed learning this practical skill to help in an interview setting.

### **My Best Artifacts – Activity 8**

- Youth did not like this activity, they felt that this exercise was too similar to previous exercises and was quite boring. They also did not like the amount of writing involved. Did not like having to continually come up with their own ideas for artifacts.

### **My Accomplishments – Activity 9**

- This activity was integrated into a communications workshop involving listening skills. This worked for some of the youth, but some found it difficult to make the connections between an accomplishment and some of the skills involved.
- This exercise was done in groups of three, one person sharing, one practicing listening skills and feedback, and the other observing and assisting with mining the accomplishments upon completion of the exercise.
- After completing this in small groups, there were some individuals who were struggling with drawing connections to skills. We then worked with some individuals in a larger group with myself (instructor) doing the interviewing and the class listening and giving feedback. The class then broke up back into their smaller groups to continue discussion.

### **My Transferable Skills – Activity 10**

- This exercise went well, the class enjoyed having a checklist to go through, and there were some difficulties with the meanings of some words. Would be useful to have a dictionary available to students to assist with definitions.

### **My Personal Wheel: Skills – Activity 11**

- Went well, fairly straight forward and easy to understand.
- Participants were eager to continue, started on next page before instructions given.

### **My Personal Characteristics & My Personal Wheel: Personal Style – Activity 12, 13**

- Again, the youth liked having a checklist to go through, found this format of understanding their career wheel to be straight forward and easy to understand.

### **My Interests & My Personal Wheel: Interests – Activity 14, 15**

- Most of the youth were unable to complete all sections of this grid, often had no volunteer experience, and the majority of their dreams were to have lots of money.
- Some found it difficult to determine likes about learning experiences they have had, as most had dropped out of school, or completed high school but not liked it.
- Although difficult to complete and required a lot of prodding, the participants were able to determine some interests from this exercise and overall this ended up being successful. Most did not have 5 interests to put in their wheel.

### **My Work Values & My Personal Wheel: Values – Activity 16, 17**

- This exercise was very successful for the youth, they liked rating the values on levels of importance, and found determining their top 5 values challenging.

### **My Significant Others – Activity 18**

- This exercise was somewhat successful, most of the youth had extremely limited significant others to draw from. This provided me with some interesting insight into the family situation. It became quite apparent that there was not a lot of support from family for these youth.

### **Personal Insights for Career Exploration – Activity 19**

- This activity did not work at all, the youth had difficulty thinking of significant others who would be willing to fill out forms for them or who they would be willing to ask. Met quite a bit of resistance around the idea of asking someone to fill a form out for them.

- After giving the assignment, I asked the forms be returned in one week at the latest and reminded students daily to bring in completed forms. Only one student brought one significant others worksheet in filled out.
- Attempted to then fill them out in class with classmates, this was also unsuccessful; youth were very short in answering and general. Information retrieved in this way was for the most part unusable.

### **My Personal Wheel: Significant Others – Activity 20**

- It became quite apparent based on the previous exercise that the youth were not concerned about feedback from significant others, and as information was unusable, this section was not completed.

### **Unpacking a Learning Experience & My Personal Wheel : Learning Experiences – Act. 21, 22 Unpacking a Work/Life Experience & My Personal Wheel: Work/Life Experiences – Act. 23, 24**

- These exercises were difficult for some due to the amount of writing involved. For some I selected certain questions for them to complete rather than all of the questions as they were getting visibly frustrated.
- It would be useful to have more than one instructor in the class for this exercise, and so youth could receive more assistance. I found it useful to interview the youth and do these exercises verbally.

### **Potential Career Opportunities, My Personal Wheel: Career Opportunities – Activity 25, 26**

- We began doing Activity 25, but most youth had very few opportunities (less than 5) that they could think of, even after brainstorming, so they moved directly to Activity 26.

### **My Top 10 Factors for Career Planning – Activity 27**

- This exercise was fairly straightforward, easy to do, although most of the youth were unable to determine 10 career factors, on average had approximately 5-7.

### **Career Alternatives – Activity 28**

- The youth enjoyed this activity, asked them not only to check off jobs they would like, but also put x's beside jobs they would definitely not like.
- Had some questions about definitions of positions, it would again, be useful to have some resource materials available to determine meanings and descriptions of jobs in question.
- Upon completion of checking, crossing off and placing question marks, went over positions with question marks as a group, discussing definitions.

## **Mapping Career Alternatives – Activity 29**

- This activity proved to be successful. Provided youth with Labour Market Information and various resources including Occupational Outlooks, Work Futures, Employment Newspapers, School Calendars, etc. This allowed the youth to research and become familiar with the materials while exploring their career.
- It would be useful to pair youth together with others interested in jobs in similar areas to assist with the brainstorming process.
- Had the participants then circle jobs that they thought may be particularly interesting.

## **Informational Interviewing (Education) & Educational Information – Activity 30,31 Informational Interviewing (Career) & Career Information – Activity 32, 33**

- Discussed informational interviews earlier in the workshops, youth developed their own questions first, and then looked at Informational Interviewing worksheets to assist with developing further questions.
- Youth mainly focused on Career based informational interviewing, as most were not at this point interested in returning to school, and to find employment was the primary goal.
- Not many of the youth actually completed this exercise and performed informational interviews. Upon further probing and discussion, there seemed to be a common feeling of fear among the youth in speaking with others they don't know, especially when asking information or something that may be seen as an inconvenience to another.

## **Comparing Career Wheels – Activity 34**

- This exercise was used as an introduction to the Career Wheel. The class went to the Library for a workshop on Researching the Job Market. This workshop was followed by an assignment using *Quick Trip* to create a career wheel for a job they find interesting & want to learn more about.
- Upon completion, each youth presented their findings to their classmates.
- This activity seemed to be quite effective as an introduction to career exploration, and the idea of looking at all aspects of careers.

## **Evaluating My Career Alternatives - Activity 35**

- This activity went very well. After going through an example with them, the concept of the activity was understood immediately. Students were able to do this assignment on their own with little direction.
- Most of the youth were not able to complete 10 factors, but had approximately 5-7. They enjoyed being able to look back in their books and copy down results from earlier activities.

## **Comparing Advantages and Disadvantages - Activity 36**

- This exercise was quickly done and went well. It was fairly straightforward and easy for the youth.

### **Overcoming My Barriers - Activity 37**

- This activity went well, youth had a fairly easy time coming up with barriers they may face

### **Setting My Long-Term Career Goals - Activity 38**

- Did this exercise verbally in groups, assisting each other to determine various solutions to their problems.
- Youth seemed to have a far more difficult time to think creatively and solve problems they may face. This activity required a lot of prompting and assistance, even while working in groups.

### **Setting My Next Step - Activity 39**

- Did a revised version of this worksheet, not focused on after graduation, but rather upon completion of the Employment Program.
- Some youth had a difficult time planning ahead for their future, mostly set goals as 'get a job' but could not see beyond this step.
- Youth set a timeline, and several weeks later when youth were working and doing work experience, revisited this exercise and created a new timeline.
- When creating timelines, I noticed that most of the steps in the timelines were very general, so I gave the youth large sheets of paper to work on, and once their timelines were laid out, asked them to then break down each step in their timeline into smaller steps and circle the steps they could do immediately.

### **Feedback on my Wheel and Plans - Activity 40**

- Again, this was a difficult exercise to complete with the youth as many of them had little support from their parents or guardians, and many of them also had dropped out of school and had little regard for any feedback received from teachers or counselors.
- This exercise was also difficult to complete with this group in particular, as assignments were rarely returned or completed.

### **Action Contract for My Next Step – Activity 41**

- This was an effective activity to complete with the youth. This action Plan was used alongside creating a timeline, as well as part of a workshop for overcoming barriers.
- Throughout this program, youth had been also receiving one-to-one counseling from me, the Employment Consultant (facilitator) or the Program Manager. Had youth obtain signatures from whomever they had been doing individual counseling with.