

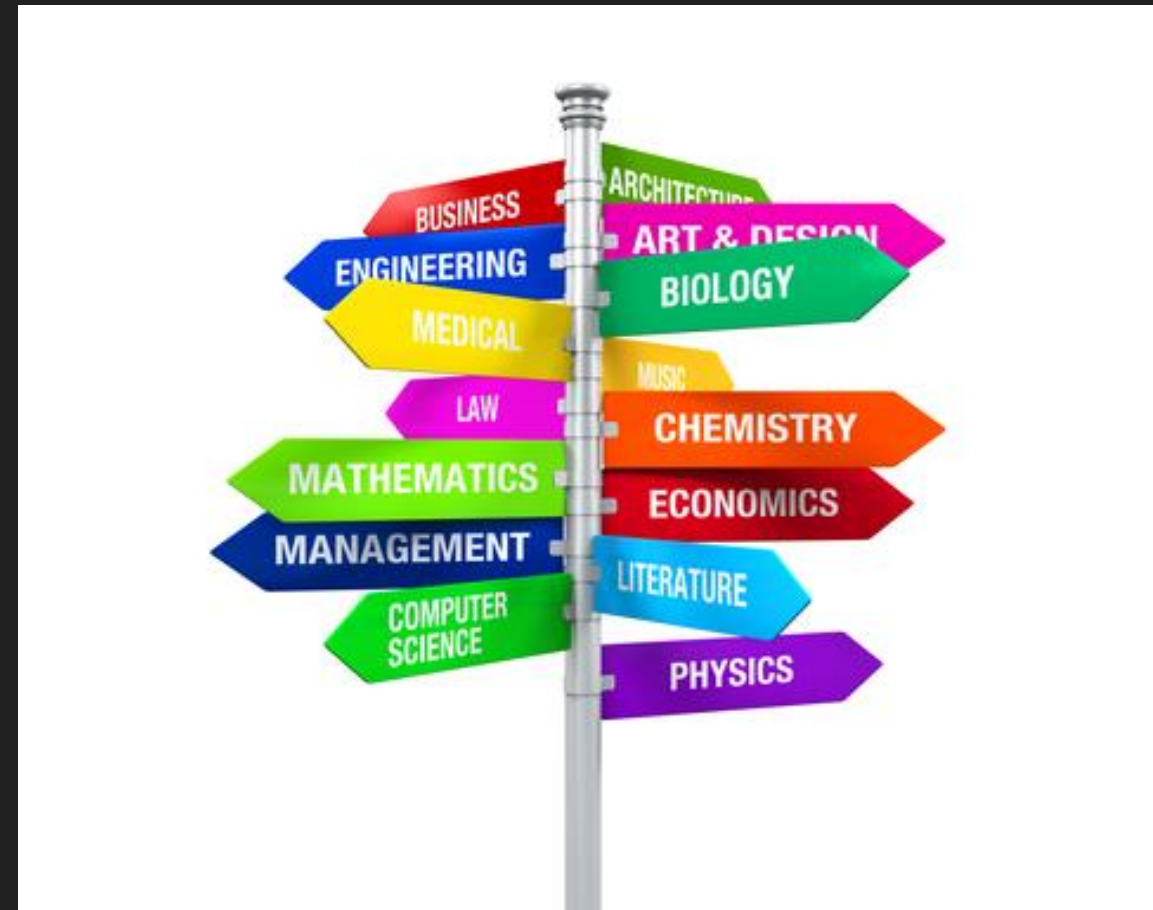
Choosing a Major



Presented by Monterey Peninsula College
Counseling &
Career & Transfer Resource Center

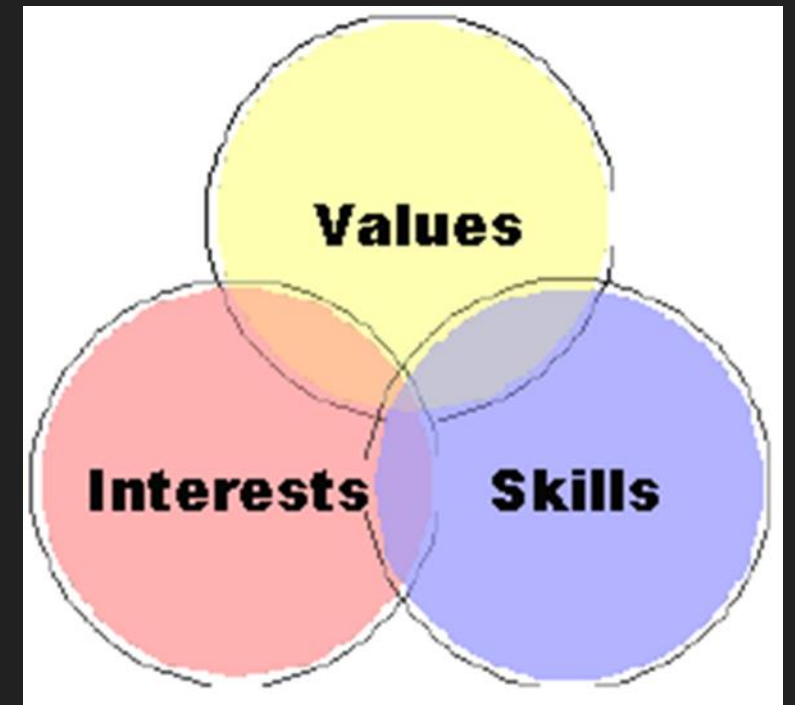
What is a major?

- A program of study which leads to a degree.
- Major can also be defined as the subject area in which a student chooses to focus their education to gain the greatest depth of knowledge.



Getting Started

- What do you think is important to consider when choosing a major or a career?
 - Are you already considering a major or a career path?
 - What led you to consider those?
 - Think of your past successes, talents, values, skills, and interests



Considerations

When choosing a major you should consider your:

○ Interests

- If you will be studying a subject in depth, you should be interested in it.

○ Abilities

- Set yourself up for success.

○ Values

- Financial security, desire to help others, community of classmates vs independent work, prestige, recognition, etc. are all values to take into consideration when choosing a major; especially if that major leads to a specific career.

○ Motivations

- What truly motivates you to choose the major? Others' expectations? To earn money? Consider your motivations carefully.

○ Options

- You have more options available than you can imagine. Start by picking a broad area of interest, then see if you are interested in more specific subjects within that area. Use the resources in the Transfer and Career Center to learn of the plethora of options available to you.

○ And the realities

- Do you have interest **and** ability in your chosen field? Where can you study the major? If you have been in school a while, how many extra classes might you need to take to pursue that major? Will you be able to meet pre-major requirements?

3 Essential Steps to Choose a Major or Career

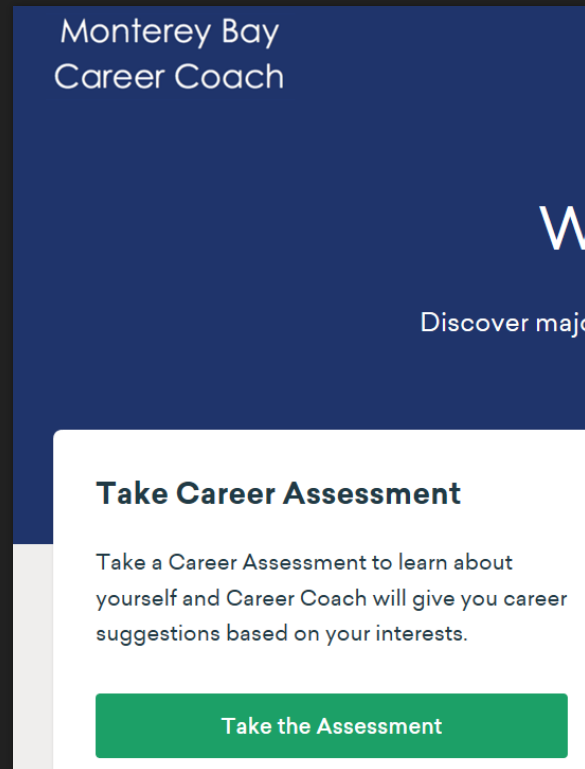
Assess

Explore

Decide

Take Self-Assessments

[Monterey Bay Career Coach
mbcareerconnect.org](http://mbcareerconnect.org)



Monterey Bay
Career Coach

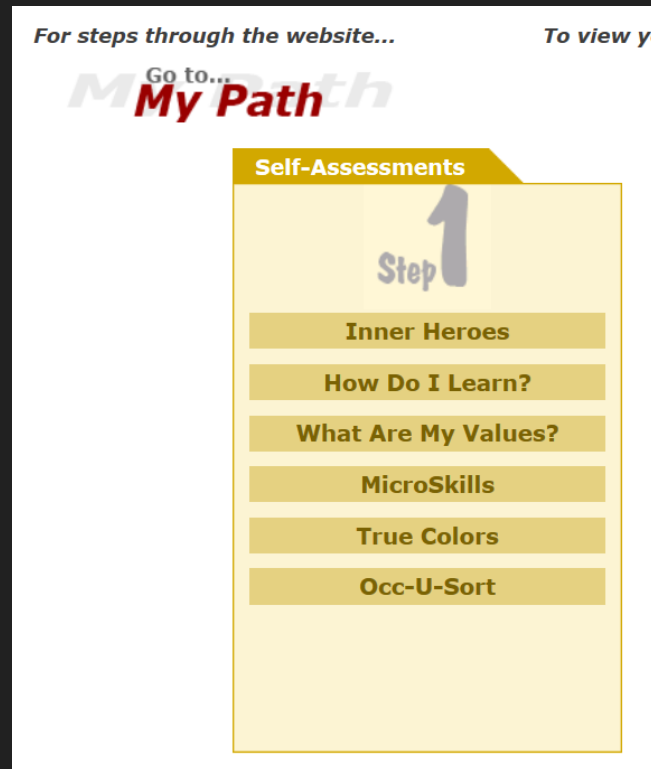
Discover major

Take Career Assessment

Take a Career Assessment to learn about yourself and Career Coach will give you career suggestions based on your interests.

[Take the Assessment](#)

Eureka.org



For steps through the website... To view yo

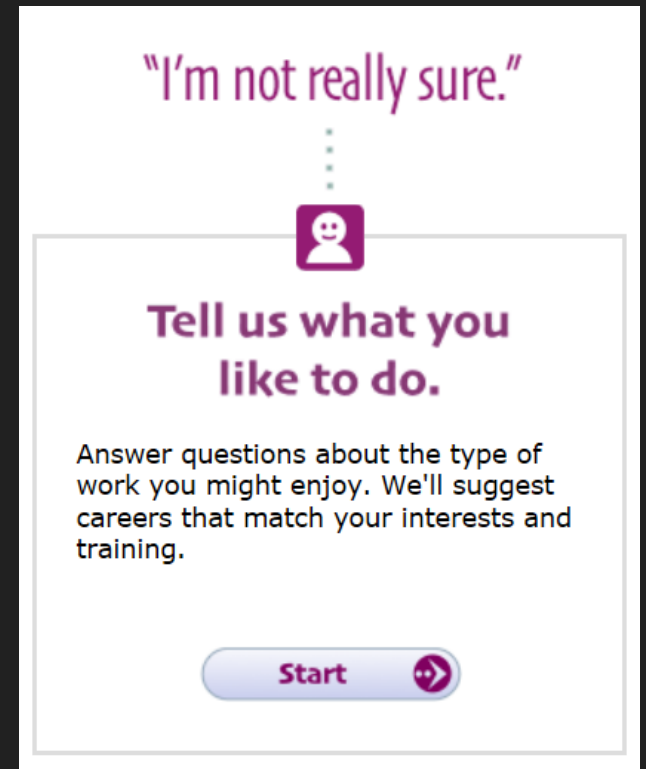
Go to... **My Path**

Self-Assessments


Step 1

- Inner Heroes
- How Do I Learn?
- What Are My Values?
- MicroSkills
- True Colors
- Occ-U-Sort

MyNextMove.org



"I'm not really sure."



Tell us what you like to do.

Answer questions about the type of work you might enjoy. We'll suggest careers that match your interests and training.

[Start](#)

About Eureka

- You will need a site code to access all feature of the Eureka site, including taking self-assessments
- Site codes are available for free to Monterey Peninsula College students
- Contact the Career and Transfer Resource Center to request a site code
 - 831-645-1336
 - careertransfer@mpc.edu

Explore – Surface level

- Online Resources:
 - [Monterey Bay Career Coach](#)
 - [CollegeMajors101.com](#)
 - [mynextmove.org](#)
 - [assist.org](#)
- “The Book of Majors” in the Career & Transfer Resource Center
- PERS 71: Foundations of Career Choice
- Visit Career & Transfer Resource Center
- Make a counseling appointment
- Read the major descriptions in university catalogs and online
- Visit with major departments at local universities, be prepared to ask questions
- If a career track major, research more about that career: review detailed information on [onetonline.org](#), related professional organizations, and more.

Explore Further

Research your major or career options more by:

- Taking a class in the subject
- Informational interviews
 - Talk to your professors during their office hours
 - Ask them why they chose the major and why they like it. What type of person is successful in that major.
 - Don't know anyone in the field/major? Use roadtripnation.com to watch informational interviews
- Internship or related employment



Decide

- Tips on how to make your final choice:
 - Investigate several ideas before making your decision
 - Be independent in your thinking and don't be easily swayed by others
 - Have a clear idea of your goals and how your decisions affect them
 - Weigh the pros and cons
 - Talk with a counselor to get help in clarifying your goals and making sure your expectations are realistic
 - Have realistic expectations of the career exploration process
 - You might change your mind, that's ok
 - Understand that there may not be one major that fits you perfectly. The goal is to make the best, most well-informed decision you can, and to enjoy the exploration process.
- Check and recheck information to be sure it is accurate
 - Conduct informational interviews with experts - talk to people who have studied that major, like your professors
 - Be aware of some common misconceptions and myths about choosing a major

Deciding can be scary, but why?

- Your major determines your career path
- What you major in determines how much money you can make
- You have to pick the right major to lead to the exact career you want
- Choosing a major will be the most important decision and will set my path for the rest of my life

Debunking myths

- Your major determines your career path
 - Picking a major and picking a career are NOT the same thing and the major you pick now may have little to do with your future career (that's not a bad thing).



Debunking myths

- Your major determines your career path

That being said, there are some majors that do set people up for very specific careers. Examples include:

- Nursing
- Accounting
- Engineering

To work in those professions without majoring in them may prove to be very difficult.

So, if you know you want to be a nurse, you really should study nursing.

Debunking myths

- What you major in determines how much money you can make

Marketable skills learned from liberal arts majors are extremely important and desired by employers.

- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Critical thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Research and investigation
- Design and planning skills
- Project Management skills



Debunking myths

- I know I want to be a doctor, so I have to major in biology.
- Or, I know I want to be a lawyer, so I have to major in political science.
- Or, I know I want to be a social worker, so I have to major in social work.

While some professional schools require or recommend the completion of certain academic prerequisites, in most cases no specific major is required.

In fact, in some medical schools, humanities majors have higher acceptance rates than do Biology majors!

Debunking myths

- Choosing a major will be the most important decision and will set my path for the rest of my life
 - It may be a big decision, but it will not fully determine your life's course.
 - The world is an ever evolving place, and we must change with it. Your professional life will involve career changes.
 - The vast majority of people will change careers at least once before retirement. You are not locked in to a choice.

What do you want to do with the rest of your life?

- What will you major in? What do you want your future career to be?
 - Very difficult questions.
 - Instead, reframe it and think, what problem do I want to solve?
 - Will be easier to pinpoint your “passion”



Case study one

- Low income student
- Lived in crowded housing
- Wants to create low income housing and space efficient housing that can fit more people comfortably
- **Architecture major**



Case study two

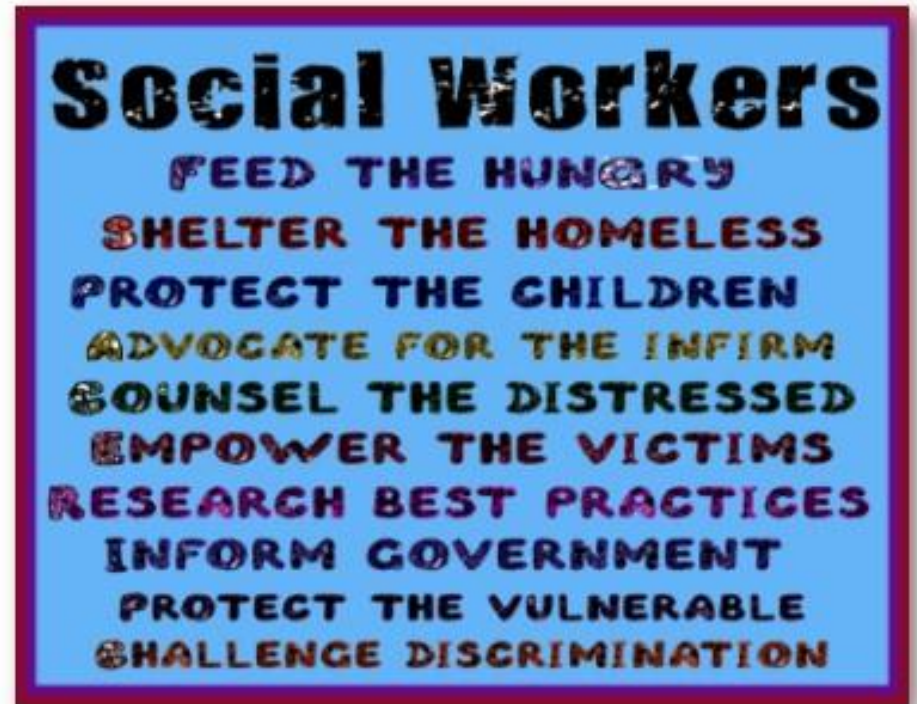
- Grew up in China and saw people live in squalor ten years after a devastating earth quake
- Witnessed pollution and other problems related to ever growing populations
- Wanted to solve societal problems by building things
- **Engineering Major**
- Practiced engineering in college to make sure it was a good fit:
 - Built vertical gardens
 - Engineering new ways for people to grow food and live in crowded areas – and be safe!



Case study three

- Lost her father due to cancer during her senior year of high school – very traumatic event in her life
- Went through counseling services with her family

- **Social Work major – now works as a Hospice Social Worker**



Case study four

- Too many interests, had a lot of trouble picking just one to major in
- Drawn to the arts, environment, and humanitarian work
- **Created own major, often called interdisciplinary studies or self-designed major**
- **Common at many universities**

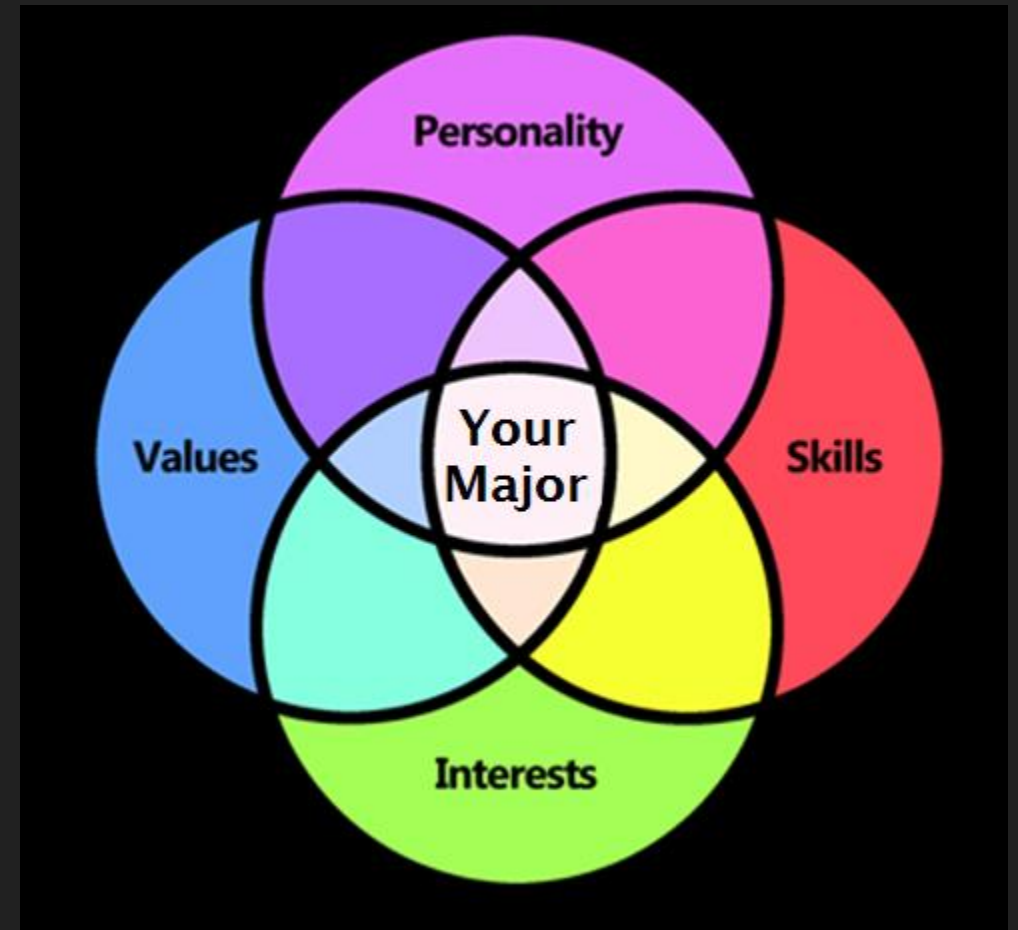


Overarching theme?

- LIFE EXPERIENCES HELP YOU CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO!!
- Look for opportunities to volunteer, get involved, intern, DO SOMETHING!
- Benefits:
 - Can become passionate about something
 - May learn that the field is not for you
 - Better to find out now rather than after 4 years of studying it!
 - Expand your world view
 - Gain confidence
 - Will be needed to make the “Major” decision
- Concerned about not having enough time?
 - Job Shadow
 - Conduct informational interviews

Resources to help you explore

- [Career & Transfer Resource Center](#)
- [MPC Counseling](#)
 - Update ed plan to match goal
- PERS 71: Foundations of Career Choice
- Conduct Informational Interviews
- [Assist.org](#)
- [Mbcareerconnect.org](#)
- [MyNextMove.org](#)
- [CollegeMajors101.com](#)
- [RoadTripNation.com](#)
- COOP classes
- Service Learning Classes



Let's Begin

- Complete an assessment
 - Eureka.org
 - True Colors, Inner Heroes, or both for Combined Results
 - Will provide you with career and major results
 - If you know you need/want to stay in the Monterey area, use Mbcareerconnect.org
- Choose a career or major recommended to you from the assessment
- Research: complete the worksheet (major or career)
- Conduct Informational Interviews



Tips to complete assessments

- Take assessment when in a neutral mood
- Answer honestly
 - Think only of how much you would like to do the task; not how much money you will make or if you can find a job doing that task
- Don't overthink responses
- Goal: Get results that are true to **you**. Do not skew them by taking other factors into consideration.