


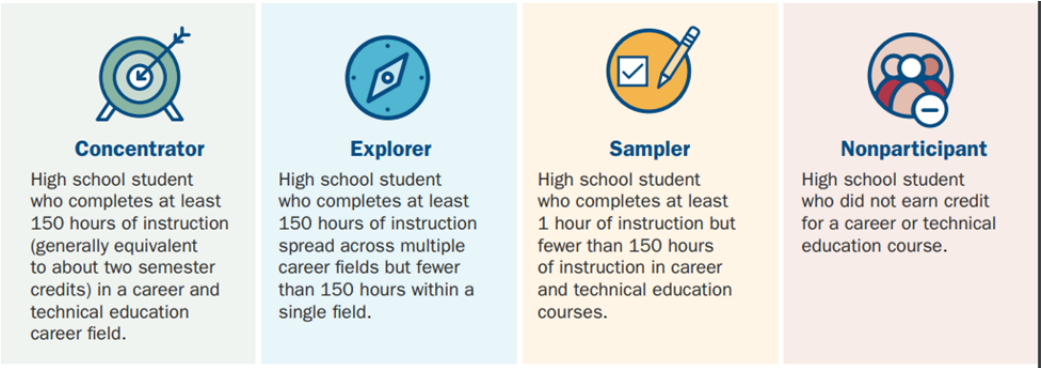
Overview

	<p>During the Spring 2022 semester, I had the privilege to interview numerous teachers, administrators, and students at my college (<a href="#">RCTC</a>) and our local public high schools (<a href="#">RPS</a>) about developing a career exploration curriculum for undecided high school students. Based on these interviews, I have developed a set of curricular resources that encourages student exploration and planning. If you have any questions, or just want to connect, please email me at &lt;mike.mutschelknaus@rtc.edu&gt; I look forward to hearing from you.</p>
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# What type of student would benefit most from this curriculum?

Figure 1, from a statistical analysis of Indiana and Minnesota high school students, shows the four types of high school students out there. Think of the nonparticipants as those high school students who are in college track courses and who definitely plan to go to a four-year college. Think of the concentrators as those high school students who are in career track programs like auto mechanics and who definitely plan to get a job very soon after high school. The curriculum I've developed is for the explorers and samplers: those students who just don't know what they want to do yet.

Figure 1: From <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Resource/40014>



## What is the curriculum?

Figure 2 shows the broad outlines of the curriculum. Students explore their inner motivations, their options out in the real world, make plans, and then get engaged with others to make their plans a reality.

Figure 2: "Getting Ready" curriculum overview



## What is the starting point for this course?

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The unique part of the course is that there are several different starting points. A teacher could even set the course up so that each student chose their own pathway through the course.

### The “exploring what’s out there” path

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- Explore the world
- Explore yourself
- Make a plan
- Find your people

### The “exploring what’s inside me” path

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- Explore yourself
- Explore the world
- Make a plan
- Find your people

### The “I know what I want to do already” path

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- Make a plan
- Find your people
- Explore yourself
- Explore the world

# Explore yourself

This set of resources helps students to gain the active self-knowledge they can use to plan for their futures.

- [Reality Check](#): This tool is a down-to-earth questionnaire that allows students to figure out how much money they will need to have in order to live the lifestyle they want.
- [The Good Project](#): Lesson plans and resources from Howard Gardner (yes, the multiple intelligences theory) on how to do good work.
- [Minnesota State CAREERwise](#): The "Assess Yourself" section of this web site has several career self assessments and skills assessments that students can use to discover their interests.
- [Authentic Happiness questionnaires](#): These University of Pennsylvania researchers started the field of positive psychology. These questionnaires are statistically valid and reliable. Students can take these to find out more about their own happiness. Happiness, after all is what we all seek.
- [Harvard's Project Implicit](#): We all need to learn more about our biases. These questionnaires will help students to realize that they are biased. We all are. In order to succeed in the future, we need to work on overcoming our biases.

Emotional intelligence (EI): In order to succeed, students are going to have to understand their emotions and those of others. The resources here provide an overview of EI, and some questionnaires for students to understand their own EI.

- EI Questionnaires: There are two self-assessments in this module. One self-assessment is not enough. Students should take both in order to see if they get similar results on both tests.
- EI content. There are two basic summaries and handouts in this module. These explain the principles of EI.
- EI videos from Daniel Goleman. Goleman is the founder of the EI field.
  - Secret to high performance and fulfilment: <https://youtu.be/HTfYv3IEQqM>
  - Why aren't we more compassionate: <https://youtu.be/mefC12rQovI>
- EI Videos from Brene Brown. Brown is an expert on empathy.
  - Power of vulnerability: <https://youtu.be/iCvmsMzIF7o>
  - <https://youtu.be/1Evwgu369Jw>

## Related resources

### EI questionnaire 1

DOCX  
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### EI questionnaire 2

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### EI explanation 1

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[Download](#)

### EI explanation 2

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## Explore the world

These resources allow students to check out the different options available to them after high school. A teacher could create lessons, and assignments, for example, that make students explore each of these areas. The college track kids should find out about careers. The technical/trades kids should find out about college. The "I don't know what I want to do" kids should find out about volunteering, etc.

## Careers

- [Career Wise "Careers in Demand" section](#): This provides information on the fastest growing careers in Minnesota.
- [Career Wise "Research Careers" section](#): This is a good place to go for students who want to know more about what certain types of careers entail.
- [Centers of excellence for Minnesota State](#): Each center of excellence listed on this web site (agriculture, energy, engineering, healthforce, IT, advanced manufacturing and transportation) has a detailed web page that explains the career and provides links for students to get started on their training.
- [Find a job](#): This Minnesota State site provides a wealth of resources about how to explore the job market, write a resume, and develop job search skills.
- [The Game of Careers](#): So, it's not like an Xbox video game, but it's still more fun than reading a textbook. Definitely worth checking out.
- [Interest Assessment at Career One Stop](#): For those students who don't know where to start, this might be the place.
- [Minnesota government portal](#): This lists every state job in Minnesota, and also provides a great set of resources for several types of job seekers.
- [My Next Move Interest Profiler](#): This self-assessment is popular, but two careers it recommended for me were dental hygienist and dancer. So, I'm not so sure about it.
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#): The Department of Labor's OOH provides a wealth of career information. It's useful for comparing careers in different states. How much do nurses make in California, for example, compared to nurses in Wyoming. Students might need to be educated, though, on cost of living disparities.

## College

- [Peterson's College Guide](#): A good place for students to do some dreaming. If they want to move to Texas and go to vet school, Peterson's can help them figure that out.
- [Minnesota State](#): All the public college campuses, all the public college programs, right here in one place. This does not include the University of Minnesota.
- [University of Minnesota system](#): Access to all of the University of Minnesota campuses
- [Rochester Community and Technical College](#): There are lots of opportunities for higher education, right here in Rochester.

## Volunteering

Community service is often overlooked as a path after high school graduation. It should not be. Young adults have three attributes that every community needs: Energy, enthusiasm, and time. Here are some volunteer for recent high school graduates around Rochester, Minnesota.

- [Volunteer Match](#): This is a great way to find volunteer opportunities near you. When I used this to do a search for Winona, I found numerous open positions, from full-time Americorps positions right down to part-time bingo calling at a nearby nursing home.
- [Mayo Clinic Volunteer Home](#): If a student is interested in a health care career, volunteering at Mayo would be a good place to start.
- [Americorps](#): High school students need to know that there are full time volunteer positions available for them. Americorps is not just for college graduates. For example, I found a fulltime volunteer opportunity at a school in northern Minnesota that pays \$1630 a month. The education requirement was a high school diploma or GED.
- [Red Cross](#): The Red Cross always needs volunteers.
- [United Way](#): An excellent site for finding local volunteer opportunities.

## Military service

Students should be aware of their options in the military. Here's the official government web site that explains all of their options: Army, National Guard, Marine, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy, and Space Force: [Today's Military](#).

## Starting your own business

Many of the young people I know don't want to work for others. They want to be entrepreneurs. Here are some ways to help them get started.

[Minnesota State college programs](#): Do a search for "entrepreneur". Most community colleges have courses or programs to help students learn how to get started.

The screenshot shows the Minnesota State website's search interface. On the left, there are three search filters: 'Search Campuses', 'Search Programs' (circled in red), and 'Search Courses'. The 'Search Programs' filter is active, showing a dropdown menu with 'Entrepreneurship' selected. Below this, there are checkboxes for 'Construction Management' and 'Sheet Metal'. The 'Business and Management' section is also circled in red, showing a list of programs including 'Entrepreneurship', 'Fashion Merchandising', 'Human Resources Management', 'Insurance', 'International Business', 'Marketing and Sales', 'Meeting and Event Management', 'Project Management', 'Quality Improvement', 'Real Estate/Property Management', 'Small Business Management', 'Sports Management', and 'Travel Planner/Tourism'.

[State of Minnesota business portal](#): Here is where you go to officially incorporate a business in Minnesota. There are many helpful resources on this web site.

[Rochester Small Business Development Center](#): People can get local help planning their businesses here.

[Rochester, Minnesota, Chamber of Commerce](#): Recent high school graduates probably wouldn't join the Chamber, but there are good resources

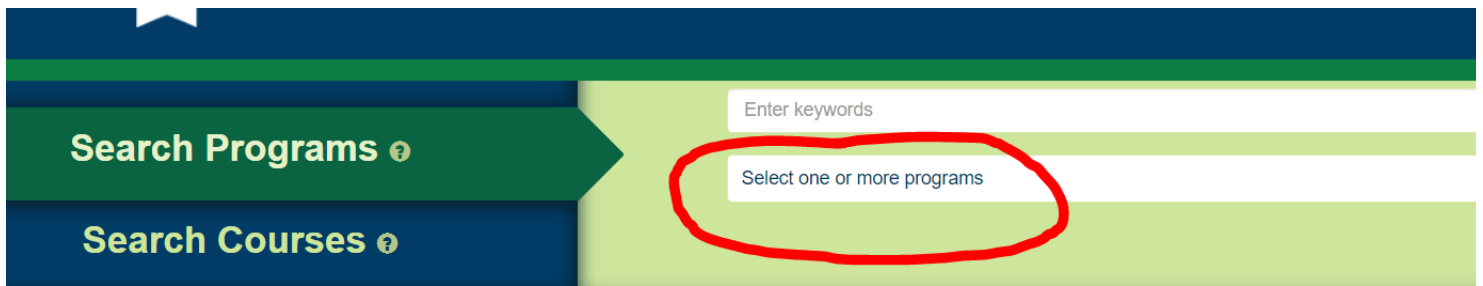
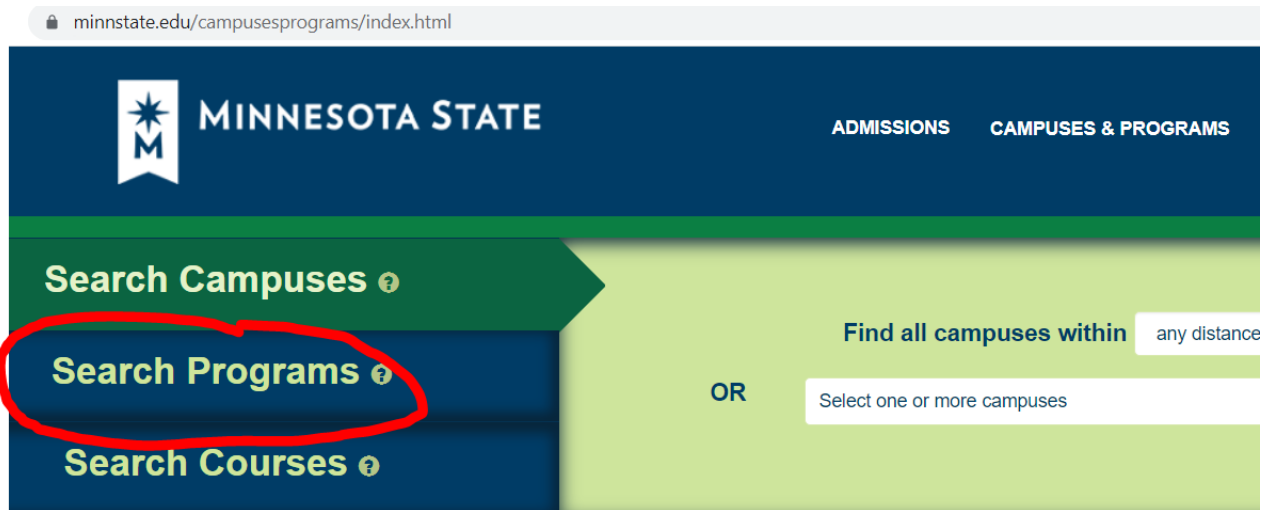
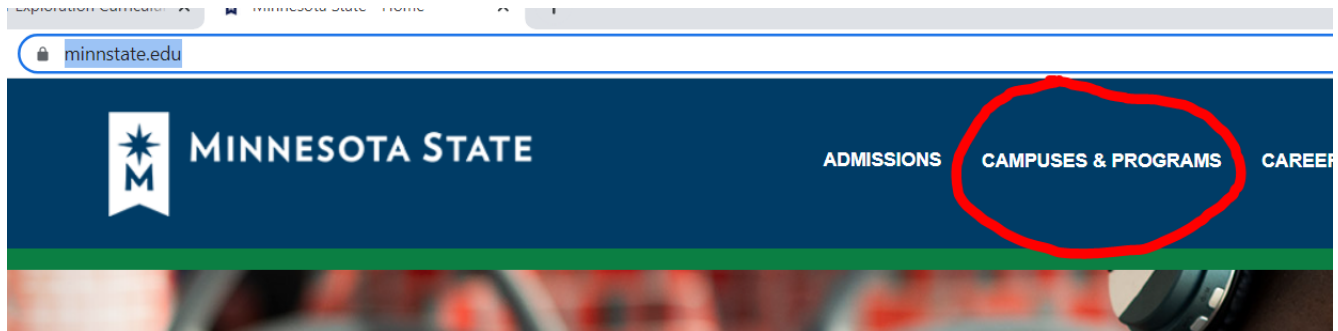
here.

[Small Business Administration--Plan your Business](#): Helpful competitor analysis and business plan templates are available here.

## Make a plan

So, students have found some possibilities for their futures. They now need to take concrete action. They need to do something! Here are resources to help them do that.

- [Setting goals](#): Check out the "Setting Goals" section in this web site. Also, the attached SMART goal and hope templates should help students get started.
- [Rochester Community and Technical College guided pathways](#): This will show students where to go and how to get started at RCTC.
- [LinkedIn](#): Students should use LinkedIn, in my opinion, to start creating their career portfolio.
- [Indeed](#): Students can also create a profile on Indeed.
- [Find a job](#): This Minnesota State site provides a wealth of resources about how to explore the job market, write a resume, and develop job search skills.
- [Minnesota State workforce development scholarships](#): For high-demand careers in Minnesota, there is considerable financial help available.
- [Skill up](#): If students discover they need to develop certain skills in order to get the careers they want, this Minnesota State site will help them make plans for developing those skills.
- [Career exploration](#): This Minnesota State site helps students move from finding a career to making career plans.
- [Minnesota state online programs](#): Follow these screen shots to find entirely online programs at Minnesota State colleges and universities



## Ordinary Education

Minnesota State consists of 26 colleges and 7



**Filter Results**

**Degree/Award**  
> ☐ Undergraduate ?  
> ☐ Graduate ?

**Delivery**  
☐ On Campus with Online Options  
☐ Online Only

**Campus type**  
☐ Community & Technical Colleges  
☐ Universities

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**Related resources****SMARTgoals**

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**SMART-Goal-Template**

[PDF](#)  
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**Goals Worksheet**

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**Hope\_Worksheet**

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## Find your people

I think this might be the most important section of the course, and the most difficult for young adults striving to be independent. They need to find the people who can help them and, equally important, identify the gatekeepers. If they don't do that, they'll will not make very much progress.

The original idea for the advice below came from Monica Schuschu's excellent blog post, which I have included as an attachment.

## Start where you are

Before students are able to talk to people in the professional world and at college, they need lots of practice describing their goals and plans out loud to people they feel comfortable with. Teachers should set up classroom discussion circles so students can share with their peers. Students should also be encouraged to discuss their goals with their families, relatives, and family friends.

## Find your five

Students should find five people who they can go to for help as they plan their futures. These should be people they trust, people they have relationships with. It could be a family friend. It could be a custodian at the school. It could be a parent, a pastor, or many others. Whoever it is, students need to have a close circle of adults they feel comfortable talking with about their futures.

## Network

Too often, students think networking is about creating an online profile and sending out messages. Teachers need to help students realize that networking is most effective when it is face-to-face. Students should ask questions like these:

- Who is in my high school that can help me?
- Who is in my community that can help me?
- Are there any volunteer opportunities I should be doing that will bring me into contact with the people I want to be round?
- Who is at [Rochester Community and Technical College](#) (If they are in the Rochester area) that can help me?
- Who is already doing what I want to do? Where are they working at?

Once these people are identified, teachers should help students make two appointments and follow through with those appointments. Teachers should help students prepare their pitch about their future goals and also a set of questions they can ask the person. Think of these sessions as informational interviews.

## Approach the gatekeepers

Once students feel comfortable talking about their future plans, they need to take action. They need to find, and work with, the gatekeepers who can help them get to the opportunities they need. Sooner or later, they will need to talk to their high school guidance counselors, their teachers who write recommendations, hiring managers, college admissions officers, and people like that. Teachers should help students set up one appointment, with one gatekeeper, and help the student follow through.

## Follow the guru

If a student has some good fortune, they will find one person through their efforts that they really feel a close connection with. This guru usually does not provide specific "do this next" advice. Instead, he or she is an inspiration to the student, a role model for what they want to achieve, a person to talk to, a mentor, an elder. Like the Chinese proverb asserts: "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." If your students do find gurus, that's great. Encourage them to maintain those relationships. If your students do not find gurus during your time with them, reassure them that it often does take some time.

### Related resources

#### Introvert guide to networking in high school

[PDF](#)  
[Download](#) [View](#)

## Additional curriculum

- [Supervised Agricultural Experiences](#): This is a nationally recognized complete curriculum from the Future Farmers of America (FFA) with a high school student target audience. It is thorough and complete. With minimal adaptation, you could use this curriculum in any career exploration course.
- [Foodtrepreneurship](#): This 2022 free textbook explains the basics of starting your own food business, such as a restaurant or a food truck.
- [On Course Workshop](#): Curated by master educator Skip Downing, this collection of free teacher resources can be used to enhance or develop career exploration courses.
  - Go to "Educator Resources" and then the "Best Practices" link to register and get your password. It's free, and you won't get any junk emails.
  - The other educator resources are also quite helpful.
- [The Good Project](#): Overseen by Howard Gardner, the developer of multiple intelligence theory, this collection of lesson plans and resources aims at helping teachers do more good in the world. Howard Gardner is from Harvard University. You can trust his stuff.
- [Skip Downings "On Course" Youtube site](#): You don't need to use Skip's book in order to avail yourself of several useful videos on topics like self-responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, lifelong learning, emotional intelligence, and believing in yourself.
- [Minnesota State Career Exploration Tools](#): Everything a teacher needs for a career exploration course is right here in this web site, from self-assessments and career paths right through resume building, job interviewing and entrepreneurship
- <https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/>

# Resource Library

[<RelatedResource: EI explanation 1>, <RelatedResource: EI explanation 2>, <RelatedResource: EI questionnaire 1>, <RelatedResource: EI questionnaire 2>, <RelatedResource: Goals Worksheet>, <RelatedResource: Hope\_ Worksheet>, <RelatedResource: Introvert guide to networking in high school>, <RelatedResource: SMARTgoals>, <RelatedResource: SMART-Goal-Template>]

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