

GRADE 9 Subject Selection

It's that time of year when Grade 9s are required to choose the subjects with which they would like to continue for the rest of their time at high school. A rather big decision for a 14 year old to have to make! There is no perfect formula for subject choice and no single set of subject options that are perfect for each learner. However, it's critical to invest time and energy into making a decision that is thoroughly researched and informed. Here are a few simple and practical tips and tools to help you to facilitate the process!

Some tips and tools

• SELF-AWARENESS

Before thinking about selecting their subjects, learners need to boost their levels of self-awareness. Understanding factors such as their strengths, weaknesses, interests, passions, motivators etc., are integral to start to gain an idea of the nature of careers that interest them.

To do in class: Take a look at last month's edition of SA Career Focus Magazine. The Teaching Space article was devoted to the topic of self-awareness and has several tips and ideas to enhance learners' levels of self-awareness that you can incorporate into class activities.

• BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

While learners should not be expected to know exactly what career or industry they would like to work in one day, it is useful for them to start to gain an idea of the nature of career fields that appeal to them. This follows on logically and sequentially from self-awareness exercises. For example, someone who enjoys and is good at activities that involve high levels of attention to detail and numeracy may start to research careers that make use of these strengths.

To do in class: Learners can use the insight gained from self-awareness exercises to start to research related careers. The PACE Careers questionnaire (a free online resource, found at www.pacecareers.com) provides a good starting point. Learners can use this as a platform to identify potentially interesting careers, particularly if they are at a loss as to where to start.

• TERTIARY EDUCATION

One of the major concerns of subject selection is linked to tertiary education. If learners want to study further after school, they need to take the university requirements into consideration. Universities each have their own set of acceptance criteria and on the whole, they tend to be rather stringent. As a result, learners considering this route need to select subjects that they will do well at, in order to meet the (typically challenging) points requirements. Secondly, certain qualifications and fields of study require learners to

have taken specific subjects - especially when it comes to Mathematics or Maths Literacy, and Physical or Life Sciences.

To do in class: Set a task where learners are asked to research a university and qualification that they would potentially find interesting. Ask them to answer questions such as: 'Are there any compulsory subjects required? If so, what are they?' and 'What marks would you need to achieve in this subject in order to be accepted?'

• MATHEMATICS AND MATHS LITERACY

A key part of the decision is whether to take Mathematics or Maths Literacy. When making this decision, learners need to be aware of tertiary education options that require Mathematics. This is typically the case for qualifications relating to commerce, engineering, the built environment, IT, health sciences and science, while Maths Literacy is typically accepted for fields such as humanities/arts and education (depending on your specialisation).

To do in class: Each learner should consult with the Mathematics educator and seek his or her advice on the subject. Many learners struggle with Mathematics and it may be a good idea to get some extra assistance, as the content gets harder from Grade 10 onwards.

• INVOLVE THE PARENTS

To avoid having panic-stricken parents at your door the day before the subject choice deadline, make sure that they are aware of and understand the process.

To do in class: Involve parents in the process by making your LO-initiatives and efforts transparent to them. Ask learners to take home the subject selection exercises and discuss them with their parents. Many schools host a subject selection information evening for parents and Grade 9 learners, where they are provided with details such as compulsory subjects, deadlines, optional subjects and an overview of some typical tertiary institution requirements. The feedback on this initiative has been overwhelmingly positive! ■

TO SUMMARISE

Subject selection can be a daunting process, particularly if learners have no idea regarding their career or study interests. As an LO educator, your role is to provide them with information, structured tools and exercises that will assist them in making an informed decision, while ensuring that they take accountability for their own decision at the end of the day.



To find out about Achieve Careers' CV Workshops for LO teachers, please contact Joanne on joanne@achievcareers.co.za. If you are using the Achieve Careers' Careers manuals, please note that there is a step-by-step CV Writing Guide in the Grade 10 and 11 manuals.

Download full lesson plans and activity pages from www.sacareerfocus.co.za

