

Make an intelligent choice!

- Srividya Mahadevan

Rohan marched downstairs, picked up his bag and hollered a “bye” on his way to his tuitions. His mom ran out to wave him goodbye, but he had already vanished round the corner of the street. “Nowadays Kids are so much in a hurry. In our times we were so much more relaxed. When is he going to start thinking about his future?” thought Rohan’s mom to herself.

A student of Std. X., Rohan is typically overburdened with schoolwork, tuitions, assignments etc. **How will Rohan get time to think about his future choices, plan his career, and enhance his skills?**

Rohan is one of the many students looking forward to a great future with dreams and visions of a prestigious International Degree.

The choice of one’s career is the most important decision one takes in life. We all intend to go for career options that bring us satisfaction, happiness and financial freedom. However, the current educational scenario has opened up a plethora of options for students today. This, in combination with a number of other external societal factors makes the decision making process difficult for today’s youth. However, the process of successful career planning involves certain critical aspects that need to be taken into consideration for a more enjoyable and satisfying journey down one’s career path. **Lets take a glimpse at the aspects involved in successful career planning!**

As Eleanor Roosevelt rightly said

“ The Future belongs to those who believe in their dreams”

Dreams are nothing but a vision that one can nurture and work towards achieving. However apart from the belief in one’s dreams one also needs to take certain steps in order to make those dreams/visions come true. The journey begins with the process of **Career exploration**. Career exploration process essentially involves developing self-awareness.

As a student, one is often unaware of the potential lying untapped... unexplored within oneself. Knowing ones interests, inclinations, talents, potential is one aspect of self-awareness. Also at the same time it involves making attempts to develop these hidden strengths that will go a long way in boosting one’s self-confidence. Therefore enhancing self-awareness is the current need among today’s youth.

This could be done in various ways as:

- ▶ Identifying one’s favourite subject of study.
- ▶ Keeping in touch with one’s hobbies, interests and extracurricular activities
- ▶ Developing good reading habits
- ▶ Going on Field- Visits
- ▶ Internship programs
- ▶ Professional Career Guidance

Each of these activities in its own way contributes to enhancing the process of career exploration.



However, in recent years, professional Career Guidance has gained a lot of popularity by helping students with various career related queries. Psychometric Tests are conducted by which one is made aware about oneself.

Let us have a peek at what these tests are and how they help us make an informed career choice?

As it has been rightly said,

“The individual who knows his aptitudes, and their relative strengths, chooses more intelligently among the world’s host of opportunities.”

The whole area of psychological testing began with the study of individual differences in intelligence (I.Q). The concept of intelligence largely stresses on:

- 1) The ability of the individual to adapt
- 2) The ability to learn
- 3) The ability of the individual for abstract thinking

Although IQ tests were intended to measure a wide variety of abilities, psychologists realised that many of them were restricted in their content coverage. Thus, Aptitude Tests were gradually developed from intelligence tests. Apart from verbal and numerical ability, aptitudes also refer to specific aspects of intelligence like an aptitude for reasoning, word fluency, space perception etc.

Aptitude rightly includes the word APT, indicating what you are most suitable for.

Often students realize that they have been trying to excel in a field that is not suitable for them and experience a sense of inadequacy in the process. Aptitude assessment is used to find out what their aptitudes are and provide appropriate guidance to them. These tests highlight strengths and weaknesses, and can be used to select applicants for training programs or guide individuals in making career decisions.

Awareness of one’s aptitudes can help one plan one’s education, free-time pursuits and retirement activities as well as career. Assessment of aptitudes helps in streamlining one’s choices and providing a guideline for selecting suitable career options.

Another process that helps in making career decisions is finding out one’s interest through testing one’s personality. People tend to be more satisfied and successful in occupations that challenge their aptitudes without demanding the skills they lack. These tests will help you understand why certain courses of study and occupations are likely to be more satisfying or rewarding than others.

So if you have decided to study abroad to enhance your career, consider these steps in the following areas:

- ▶ Define your academic goals
- ▶ Check the subject combinations offered & learn more

about these subjects. Appear for career guidance programs described above which would help you choose the course most suited for you.

- ▶ Arrive at a consensus regarding a certain preference for a location, a campus environment and a programme content.
- ▶ Find out details regarding the admission procedure including requirement for work experience, if any.
- ▶ Get details on Finances. Obtain details on Financial aids/ loans
- ▶ Checkout whether the short listed Universities are well recognised.
- ▶ Assess your cost Benefit Ratio.
- ▶ Learn more about the place you will be going to.
- ▶ Spend some time learning the local language
- ▶ Get acquainted with friends & relatives in that part of the country
- ▶ Learn more about the college / school you have selected. E.g. various curricular activities that are offered, projects, kind of assignment given & so on.

All these activities will help you to adapt faster to your new environment. Pay attention to enhancing critical skills as also presentation skills, communication skills, and effective time management and also develop a sense of focus and commitment. Attend programs that will help you enhance your personality on the whole.

This effort will definitely enable you to adjust better to your new environment and emerge successful.

Going abroad for further studies has always been regarded as an enriching and rewarding experience. To conclude, 'with knowledge begins realization' – realization of what you ought to do & where you ought to go. ■