Purpose:

The purpose of this Action Guide is to help you identify your own current set of skills as well as the skills required for various professions.

Description:

Many students are unaware of, or underestimate, their skills. Students also are often unsure of the skills required for various academic majors or career paths. The word “skill” is defined as “a learned power of doing something competently: a developed aptitude or ability” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010). A skill (also known as a competency) can be learned, and is different from a personality trait or innate quality.

You may have heard of soft versus hard skills. Soft skills refer to general interpersonal skills; hard skills refer to technical competencies or expertise related to a specific job requirement.

In contrast to a skill, an interest is generally thought of as a natural curiosity or concern about something. It can be helpful to understand both your interests and skills, along with your values, when making career or major decisions.

Remember that skills can be developed in many different ways: from classes, extracurricular activities, work experiences, and other activities. To learn more about skills, check out the CAREERwise|Skills page.

Directions:

Please complete the following exercise(s).

Exercise 1: Complete the Skills Card Sort (identify your skills)

2) Go to Card Sort and follow the directions.

3) Rate each card by dragging and dropping it to the appropriate column. Click 'Create a New Card' if you want to create your own skill card.

4) Rank-order your cards in the first column (limit of 5). Print out a copy of your completed card sort. (There is no option to save).

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1http://www.careerwise.mnsu.edu/careers/skills.html
2http://assets.cce.umn.edu/cardsort/skills/
Exercise 2: Complete the O*net Skills Search (Identify skills for various professions)

1) Go to O*net³ and complete the skills search by selecting from the list, all of the skills you have or plan to acquire. (If you completed the Card Sort, consider using the Top 5 you identified.)

2) After making your selections, click “Go.” You will find a list of occupations on this page, ordered from highest to lowest match with your selection of skills.

3) For each occupation that you would like to look into further, click “skills matched.” This will show the importance of the skill for the specific occupation, as well as the level of the skill needed.

4) For the top match occupation, read its “Career Profile” page and write down 4-5 Job Title examples or Similar Careers for this occupation. (Click “See More Job Titles” for a list of Similar Careers.) Use the space below to take notes.

Reflection Prompts:

• What are your top skills?
• What did you learn about yourself by completing the card sort and/or the Skills Search?
• Do your skills match your interests or the majors you want to explore?
• Name develop the skills you will need?
• Are you willing to consider additional careers or majors that match your skills?

³ http://www.onetonline.org/skills