

# Making the Most of Your Abilities Facilitator's Guide

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based on the work of Joan and Thomas Harrington

This facilitator's guide is intended for use with the DVD, *Making the Most of Your Abilities*, a tool designed to help individuals realize the impact their abilities have on their career choices and satisfaction. This guide can help teachers, coaches, and other administrators use the DVD and the assessment it is based on—the *Ability Explorer*—in a classroom, workshop, or counseling setting. The guide is composed of the following sections:

- A. Quickly explains the *Ability Explorer* system (*Ability Explorer* assessment booklet and *Making the Most of Your Abilities* DVD)
- B. Explains the DVD's 3 components
- C. Explains the DVD's menu-driven program
- D. Includes a suggested lesson plan for use with classrooms or groups
- E. Includes a suggested lesson plan for use with individuals
- F. Provides follow-up and facilitation questions
- G. Provides key review points about abilities
- H. Provides a list of additional resources

## **A. Quick Explanation of the *Ability Explorer* System**

The *Ability Explorer* system helps users explore 14 work-related abilities important in today's workplace. It helps them discover their best abilities and presents a methodology to develop individual abilities through activities and coursework. Users self-rate 140 statements within the *Ability Explorer* assessment booklet and compare their scores with others who took the assessment. They also self-rate "out of school" activities and school courses which can help develop their abilities. The assessment takes approximately 30 minutes to complete and is available from JIST Publishing.

After creating an Ability Profile, users connect their two highest abilities to careers. Within the "Exploring Abilities Video Library" on this DVD, 14 individual videos include heart-felt interviews of workers using their best abilities. Users view video segments of their highest ability areas to make connections between abilities, their development, and career fulfillment. Page 16 of the *Ability Explorer* assessment booklet leads users to complete the "next steps" for exploring specific careers they want to explore further.

The "Score Interpretation" video segment (6:40 min) deepens the users' understanding of their scores. It visually reinforces the importance of identifying one's best abilities and making a commitment to continued development. Understanding one's abilities is essential when selecting courses, making postsecondary plans, and making career transitions.

## B. The DVD's 3 Components

1. **Overview Video:** The “Overview” video segment (5 min.) is suggested as an orientation prior to distributing and administering the *Ability Explorer* assessment. For facilitators, it deepens their understanding of the *Ability Explorer* as they study the assessment booklet and the accompanying administrator’s guide. For users, it explains the beliefs behind the *Ability Explorer*, and motivates users to consider the connections between abilities, careers, and satisfaction. It helps prepare users to complete the *Ability Explorer* assessment, and explains how to use the “Exploring Abilities Video Library” and the “Score Interpretation” video segments.
2. **Exploring Abilities Video Library:** The “Exploring Abilities Video Library” (26 min.) consists of 14 short stand-alone video segments—one for each of the ability areas described on page 9 of the *Ability Explorer* assessment booklet. Users select video segments to learn more from fulfilled workers who have developed their abilities through coursework and “out of school” experiences and then applied those abilities to their careers. The videos teach the 14 abilities most important in today’s workplace.
3. **Ability Explorer Score Interpretation Video:** The “Score Interpretation” video segment (6:40 min.) helps explain the *Ability Explorer* assessment scores. By observing a group of students evaluating their results, users see how their scores can lead to further exploring career possibilities.

### STOP the Score Interpretation Video

Facilitators are encouraged to stop the “Score Interpretation” video at any point. It’s suggested that you pause the video to provide review, check for understanding, and individualize the process at the following four STOP points.

1. **STOP video at 1:05:** Review that at the completion of the survey, users will have their Ability Profile (page 14). It connects their two highest rated abilities to career possibilities. They will also find the tools needed to take next steps on page 15.
2. **STOP video at 1:18:** Review that once the two highest rated abilities are identified (on page 8), it is important to evaluate the descriptions (on page 9) to compare with their experience. Since users will be interested in other abilities, encouraging them to explore the descriptions on page 9 is important.
3. **STOP video at 1:46:** Review so that users understand that their abilities can change as a result of more experience and additional coursework.
4. **STOP video at 2:28:** Have users turn to page 7 to see how the scores for the illustrated ability Numerical/Mathematical come from answers recorded in sections 3 column H (page 5) and section 4 column H (page 6). For ability scores that appear lower than users expect, be sure to review their answers to the questions that determine those ability scores.

### C. The DVD's Menu-Driven Program

To maximize the *Making the Most of Your Abilities DVD*, users can click on any of the following components within the DVD's menu according to their goal:

- Overview
- Exploring Abilities Video Library
- Score Interpretation

### D. Suggested Lesson Plan for Use with Classrooms or Groups

The following suggested lesson plan illustrates one way to integrate the “Overview,” “Exploring Abilities Video Library,” and “Score Interpretation” components with the *Ability Explorer* assessment.

#### Instructional Objectives

1. Help users identify, evaluate, and explore their strongest abilities and those abilities' relationship to career satisfaction.
2. Help users make connections among abilities, out of school activities, and courses so that they commit to develop their strengths.

User Outcomes	Resources	Facilitator–Group Interaction	Facilitation Questions and Follow-up
Motivated to explore abilities and ready to complete the <i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment	“Overview” clip	Post questions	What are abilities and how do they differ from interests? How are abilities developed?
Correctly complete the <i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment booklet Steps 1-3	Copies of <i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment booklet	Read instructions listed in the administrator's guide that accompanies packages of the <i>Ability Explorer</i>	
Tabulate their 14 ability scores (p. 7) and identify 2 highest-rated abilities (p. 8)		Monitor process of circling range scores	
Identify activities that develop two highest-rated abilities (p. 10)		Monitor completion of page 11	Can you think of other activities or experiences to develop abilities?
Identify courses that develop one's abilities (p. 12)		Monitor completion of page 13	Can you think of other courses to develop abilities?
Create ability profile (p. 14)		Monitor completion of page 14	
Connect their abilities to careers (p. 14-15)		Assist with the matching of abilities to career possibilities on page 15	

User Outcomes	Resources	Facilitator–Group Interaction	Facilitation Questions and Follow-up
Identify 4 careers they want to explore (p. 16)		Assist with the page 16 transfer of career possibilities to be explored	Are there careers not listed on page 15 which include your highest abilities?
Explore highest ability areas	“Exploring Abilities Video Library”	Show 2-4 contrasting ability video segments as examples. (e.g. Artistic, Manual, and Scientific OR Clerical, Musical/Dramatic, and Technical/Mechanical). Facilitate which other ability video segments are of most interest to the classroom or group as time permits	Are there new careers to be added to the “Four Careers You Want to Explore” list on page 16?
Evaluate role models’ use of abilities tied to viewer interest		Start and stop video clips to discuss interesting role models within the ability video segments	What relationships do you see among abilities, courses, and careers within selected ability segments?
Explore the “Four Careers You Want to Explore” (p. 16) using the <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i>	Copies of the <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i> or access to <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco/">www.bls.gov/oco/</a>	Facilitate exploration, anticipating that some of the users’ career titles may need to be clarified and refined	What job tasks are involved in this career? What does a person need to learn to enter the career? How long does it take to prepare for this career? What are the prospects for employment in this career? What are the expected earnings in this career?
Synthesize what they’ve learned about their two strongest abilities			How important are your two strongest abilities to you and others? How might you go about developing your two strongest abilities in your present situation?

## E. Suggested Lesson Plan for Use with Individuals

The following suggested lesson plan illustrates one way to integrate the “Overview,” “Exploring Abilities Video Library,” and “Score Interpretation” components with the *Ability Explorer* assessment.

### Instructional Objectives

1. Help users identify, evaluate, and explore their strongest abilities and those abilities' relationship to career satisfaction.
2. Help users make connections among abilities, out of school activities, and courses so that they commit to develop their strengths

Individual User Outcomes	Resources	Facilitator–User Interaction	Facilitation Questions and Follow-up
Motivated to explore abilities and ready to complete the <i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment	Overview clip	Post questions	What are your strongest abilities and how do they differ from your interests? How have you developed your best abilities?
Correctly complete the <i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment booklet Steps 1-3	<i>Ability Explorer</i> assessment booklet	Read instructions listed in the administrator's guide that accompanies packages of the <i>Ability Explorer</i>	
Tabulate their 14 ability scores (p. 7) and identify 2 highest-rated abilities (p. 8)		Monitor process of circling range scores	
Identify activities that develop two highest-rated abilities (p. 10)		Monitor completion of page 11	Can you think of other activities or experiences to develop your abilities?
Identify courses that develop one's abilities (p. 12)		Monitor completion of page 13	Can you think of other courses to develop your abilities?
Create ability profile (p. 14)		Monitor completion of page 14	
Connect the individual's abilities to careers (p. 14-15)		Assist with the matching of abilities to career possibilities on page 15	
Identify 4 careers the individual wants to explore (p. 16)		Assist with the page 16 transfer of career possibilities to be explored	Are there careers not listed on page 15 which include your highest abilities?
Explore highest ability areas	"Exploring Abilities Video Library"	Show 2-4 contrasting ability video segments as examples (e.g. Artistic, Manual, and Scientific OR Clerical, Musical/Dramatic, and Technical/Mechanical)	Are there new careers to be added to the "Four Careers You Want to Explore" list on page 16?
Evaluate role models' use of abilities tied to viewer interest		Encourage users to view video clips of their highest ability areas, and any other areas well liked but not the highest scored	What relationships do you see among abilities, courses, and careers within selected ability segments?

Individual User Outcomes	Resources	Facilitator–User Interaction	Facilitation Questions and Follow-up
Explore the “Four Careers You Want to Explore” (p. 16) using the <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i>	Copy of the <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i> or access to <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco/">www.bls.gov/oco/</a>	Facilitate exploration, anticipating that some of the users’ career titles may need to be clarified and refined	<p>What job tasks are involved in this career?            What does a person need to learn to enter the career?            How long does it take to prepare for this career?            What are the prospects for employment in this career?            What are the expected earnings in this career?</p>
Synthesize what the individual has learned about his or her two strongest abilities			<p>How important are your two strongest abilities to you and others?            How might you go about developing your two strongest abilities in your present situation?</p>

## F. Follow-Up and Facilitation Questions

- Explain how different people develop different abilities.
- List three people you know well. Using the *Ability Explorer* booklet (p. 9), identify their 2–3 higher abilities.
- What is the relationship among coursework, activities, and developing abilities?
- Identify and explain your 2–3 lowest abilities. How satisfied would you be if your career demanded extensive use of these abilities everyday?
- What relationships exist among what you are good at, satisfaction, and potential to be fulfilled within your career?

## G. Key Review Points About Abilities

- Abilities are not fixed and can be developed through “out of school” activities, courses, and developmental experiences in the workplace.
- Most careers use more than one ability.
- Some abilities are related to each other:
  - Artistic and Spatial
  - Clerical and Language
  - Interpersonal and Social
  - Language and Interpersonal
  - Leadership and Organizational
  - Manual and Technical/Mechanical
  - Musical/Dramatic and Language
  - Numerical/Mathematical and Organizational or Scientific

- Organizational and Clerical
- Persuasive and Interpersonal
- Scientific and Technical/Mechanical
- Social and Language
- Spatial and Manual
- Technical/Mechanical and Numerical/Mathematical
- Work and life satisfaction depends in part on the extent to which people find adequate outlets for their abilities.
- The ability to self-evaluate is an important lifelong skill needed during career transitions.

## **H. Additional Resources (available at [www.jist.com](http://www.jist.com))**

### *Ability Explorer Professional Resources CD-ROM*

- Page 27—Using the *Ability Explorer* with an Interest Inventory
- Page 28—Using the *Ability Explorer* with a Career Portfolio
- Page 28—The *Ability Explorer* as a Tool for Writing Resumes and Personal Statements.
- Page 29—Using the *Ability Explorer* Results in Practice Interviews

*College Majors Handbook with Real Career Paths and Payoffs*, Neeta P. Fogg, Ph.D., Paul E. Harrington, Ed.D., Thomas F. Harrington, Ph.D.

*Getting the Job You Really Want: A Step-by-Step Guide to Finding a Good Job in Less Time*, Michael Farr

*Getting the Job You Really Want Video Series*

*Occupational Outlook Handbook*

*O\*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles*

*EZ Occupational Outlook Handbook*, The Editors at JIST