



NYU | WAGNER

CAREER PLANNING
& ASSESSMENT



CAREER PLANNING & ASSESSMENT GUIDE

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

The Puck Building

295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10012

212.998.7474 | Fax: 212.995.4165

wagner.ocss@nyu.edu | wagner.nyu.edu/careers

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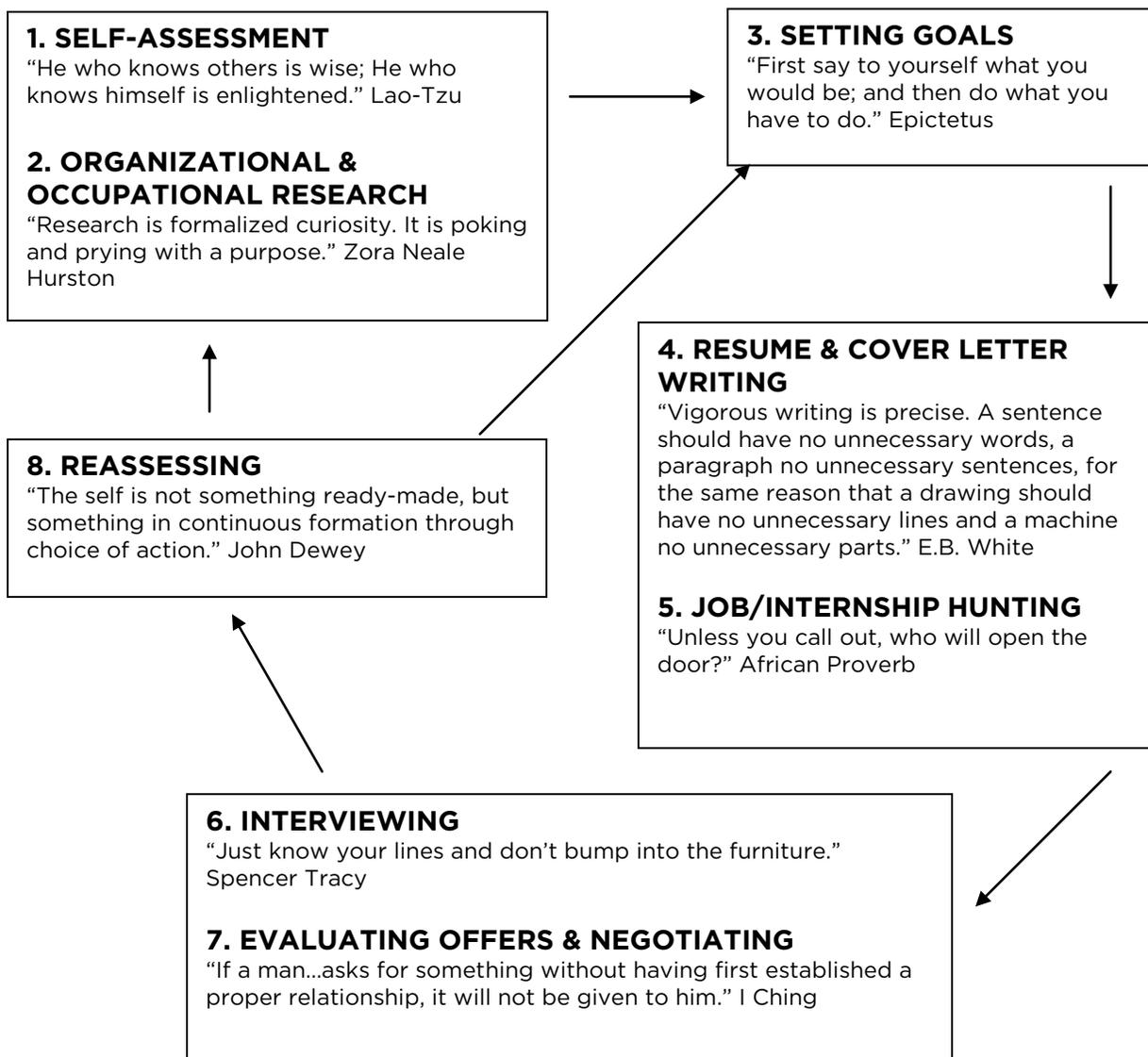
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INTRODUCTION: CAREER PLANNING

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions you'll have to make. You'll spend at least eight hours a day at work; therefore it is essential that you make a well-informed decision. Career planning is a **lifelong process** that can include identifying an issue area in which you are interested, choosing a role or function you want to perform, getting the knowledge and skills necessary for your career, preparing for and conducting a job search, getting a job, growing in your job, and even possibly reassessing your career choice.

This booklet, along with Wagner's *Composing Your Career* framework, will help you with career planning by exploring and identifying your skills and values, as well as your interests related to issue areas and job functions.

CAREER PLANNING OUTLINE



GUIDING QUESTIONS & RESOURCES FOR CAREER PLANNING

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT: The public service fields that attract you, the skills you have, and the values to which you subscribe provide the basis from which you will make career choices.

- What are my fields of interest? (e.g. children, hospital administration, housing, international development)
- What work values are important to me? (e.g. advancement, creativity, independence, recognition, stability)
- What skills do I have that I like to use? (e.g. analyzing, budgeting, motivating, researching, writing)
- How might my personality type and preferences affect my search? (e.g. extraversion v introversion)

Resources: Office of Career Services (OCS) career counseling appointment, Skills and Values Identification guide and exercises, Composing Your Career (CYC) Tracks exercise.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCH: Research can unlock hidden markets that could be a good fit for you based on your self-assessment.

- What kinds of organizations are out there doing the kinds of work I'm interested in?
- What kinds of jobs exist in those organizations?

Resources: OCS career counseling appointment, NYU Wagner Career Directory, CYC Tracks exercise, employer info sessions, OCS Resource Room Library, links from the OCS website "[Career Resources](#)" page, career panels, specialization sessions, faculty, classmates, Networking and Informational Interviews guide, conferences, networking events

3. SETTING GOALS: Think through the steps needed to get the job you want.

- Based on my self-assessment and organizational/occupational research, what are my possible career goals?
- What might a typical career track in this field look like?
- What will I do while at Wagner to help me get there?

Resources: OCS career counseling appointment, faculty, relevant coursework, group projects, student organizations, internships, professional association.

4. RESUME AND COVER LETTER WRITING: Resumes and cover letters should develop enough interest on the part of an employer to warrant an interview with you.

- How do my skill sets, work history, and academics meet the needs of a potential employer?
- How can I, in writing, convince an employer that I can do the job, will do the job, and fit into their world?

Resources: OCS Resume Writing and Cover Letter guides/workshops, OCS walk in hours and/or career counseling appointment.

5. JOB/INTERNSHIP HUNTING: The job search is an *active*, not a reactive, process.

- How do I find out who is hiring?
- How can I create my own opportunities?

Resources: NYU Wagner Career Directory, OCS listserv, "Jobs of the Day" email, website links, employer info/recruitment sessions, OCS Resource Room Library, career fairs, NYU Wasserman Center, WSA listserv, networking events, professional associations, classmates, and faculty.

6. INTERVIEWING: How you manage the interview process will determine whether or not you get an offer.

- How can I articulate that I can meet the employer's specific needs?
- What and how should I prepare for an interview?

Resources: OCS Interviewing Guide, Interviewing Workshop, OCS mock interview via career counseling appointment

7. EVALUATING OFFERS AND NEGOTIATING: Once you have proven your value to an employer, it is appropriate to evaluate whether the offer is a good fit for you.

- How do I decide if this is the right offer?
- What is negotiable?

Resources: OCS Salary Negotiation Guide, Salary Negotiation Workshop (typically held in spring semester), OCS career counseling appointment or walk-in hours, salary websites

8. REASSESSING: It's appropriate to periodically evaluate the worth and value of your choices.

- Am I still committed to my earlier goals?
- How can I take my career to the next level?

Resources: OCS career counseling appointment, internship or work supervisors, faculty, professional development workshops

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment is the process of gathering information about yourself in order to make an informed career decision. It is the first step of the career planning process. A self-assessment includes a look at your **interests, values, and skills**. It can reveal your strengths and help you to recognize your challenges.

In addition to determining what you are good at and value, an assessment helps you to find out what kind of activities and environments you enjoy. You can also use the results of a skills assessment to identify which skills you may need to develop for a particular career.

Finding a match between your values, skills, interests and personality and the work you are considering is at the essence of career planning. It not only increases the likelihood of job satisfaction, but it is one of the most important steps you can take before writing a resume or beginning your job search.

In this section you will find information to help you:

- identify potential career tracks
- identify your skills and values

CAREER TRACKS

Many people know that they are committed to a career in public service, but figuring out what that means can be difficult. This exercise (adapted from the non-credit workshop “Composing Your Career” taught at Wagner each semester) is great for people who are looking for a bit of focus. The exercise comes in three phases: Brainstorming, Analyzing, and Synthesizing.

I. Brainstorm

Download, print, or photocopy any job posting that appeals to you on one of two levels:

- You are drawn to this kind of an organization.* You like its mission. You would like your work to have an impact on this issue, population or area. You like the agency’s approach to the work. And you could see yourself, someday, working for an organization like this. Do not worry about where it is located or whether you like the job description that is attached to the organization. Just focus on the agency’s overall purpose. Circle the part you like and put it in a folder.
- You are drawn to this kind of job description.* You like the way the responsibilities are bundled. You like the skills needed to perform the function of the position, and you could see yourself, someday, doing something like this in your day-to-day. Do not worry about the agency the description is associated with or whether you have the skills to perform the job. Just focus on the actual job description. Circle the part you like and put it in your folder.

Do this until you have a bare minimum of 50 selected items. The more you collect the better. Remember, when brainstorming, don’t evaluate along the way, just collect ideas. Once you have at least 50, continue to the next phase.

II. Analysis

Take the selected items out of your folder and see if you can find any patterns or common themes. Some things to look for might include: issue, population to be served, approach to the work, geography, kind of organization, unit or department within an agency, and role.

III. Synthesis

Using the data gathered from your brainstorming and analysis phases create at least one and no more than five potential job tracks for yourself. A job track is a way to put parameters around and frame your potential career interests, and can include any of the following that have meaning for you: issue or field of interest; subcomponents of the issue that are of interest; approach to the work; kinds of organizations that do this work; where these organizations are located; size of the organizations; potential departments within organizations; roles that you aspire to play; and the requirement of skills, education, experience, and knowledge to fulfill those roles.

Take stock of your qualifications and experiences as they relate to your potential tracks. Your tracks should help you in composing your career and lead to a plan of action to maximize your time at Wagner. Your track should inform which courses you should take, the professors you should get to know, how you use your assignments, the events you go to, the groups you join, the people you seek out, the internship/job experiences you look for, and how you present yourself in a resume, cover letter, and an interview. Remember to reflect along the way to determine if this track feels like a good fit for you. If it does, continue on this path. If not, seek out additional tracks.

The OCS Staff would be happy to talk with you about the tracks you have developed, so that you can further refine your ideas, and determine additional ways to collect more information.

VALUES AND SKILLS IDENTIFICATION

The values to which you subscribe and the skills you have provide the basis from which you will make career choices. Skills and values are also important criteria for employee selection. They convey a great deal about how well you fit into and fulfill the needs of various employers and their organizations.

Everyone has a set of values and skills. These have been acquired through experiences at work, school, and through living. In these exercises, you will identify your skills and values and their meaning for the career decisions you will make. The goal is to assist you in becoming "skilled" in understanding your own abilities and how to further develop them in order to better compete in the job market.

VALUES IDENTIFICATION

Why is it important to understand your values?

Values indicate a strong personal preference for what is important to you. Values provide answers to important questions such as: What do I really care about? What kinds of activities, people, and environments do I most want in my work life? Understanding your values will help you to focus on career objectives that are important to both you and your employer, making for greater productivity and job satisfaction. Values are significant motivators that provide the drive to accomplish the important goals in your life. ***Conflict between the work we actually do and the work we value are often at the root of decisions to change careers.*** Knowing your values firsthand will ensure that your career is starting with the right focus.

Values and skills are intimately related.

If we value what we do, we engage more enthusiastically in developing the skills needed to establish meaningful and productive careers. For example, if you value working with people, you will want to develop the communication, leadership, and relationship building skills that will facilitate your professional growth in that kind of work.

Organizations also have values.

Organizations express their values in the type of businesses in which they are involved, the products or services they offer, and their work ethic. The term "organizational culture" presumes a body of values which drive an organization. The more you know about your own values, the better you will be at determining which work environment best fits your personal and professional needs and the skills you want to use and develop there.

Identifying your values will help you to:

- Identify the kinds of activities, people, and environments that you most desire in your work.
- Determine which work environments best fit your personal and professional needs and the skills you would like to develop there.
- Focus on career objectives that are important to both you and potential employers.
- Identify the motivators that provide the drive to accomplish the important goals in your life.

The Work Values Inventory

The Work Values Inventory is a list of 42 work values and lifestyle considerations that have been found to be important in work environments. To complete the inventory you should:

1. Read the list of values quickly but carefully.
2. Rank each of the 42 values in terms of how important they are to you. Use the following scale:

1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5
no importance average importance very important

For example, if “Advancement” is “very important” to you, then you would write a 5 in front of that value; if it is of “no importance” then write a 1 in front of the value, etc.

When you finish, you will fill these in on page 10.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ___ Advancement | The opportunity to take on additional responsibilities. |
| 2. ___ Aesthetics | Be involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of objects or ideas. |
| 3. ___ Achievement | Desire to produce results that are considered significant. |
| 4. ___ Assertiveness/
Aggressiveness | Demonstrate forceful energy and initiative; bold self-confidence. |
| 5. ___ Belonging | Have a sense of being a contributing part of an agency or group; a sense of affiliation. |
| 6. ___ Change/Variety | Ability to adjust to frequent changes in work content and setting; seldom do routine or predictable work. |
| 7. ___ Competition | Able to engage in activities where you must compete in order to excel or achieve a goal. |
| 8. ___ Creativity | Create new ideas, programs or structures departing from those ideas already in existence. |
| 9. ___ Excitement | Demonstrate a high degree of (or frequent) enthusiasm in the course of your work. |
| 10. ___ Fast Pace | Show you can work in circumstances where there is a high pace of activity, and show you can do work rapidly. |
| 11. ___ Flexibility | Can adapt readily to new and changing work requirements. |

12. ___ Friendships	Can develop close personal relationships with people as a result of your work relationships.
13. ___ Help Others	Desire to help other people in a direct way, either individually or in small groups.
14. ___ Help Society	Work toward the betterment of the world you live in.
15. ___ High Motivation	Show you have a strong desire to succeed.
16. ___ Independence	Be able to determine the nature of your work without significant direction from others; comfortable working alone.
17. ___ Influence People	Enjoy being in a position to influence the attitudes and opinions of people.
18. ___ Intellectual Status	Be regarded as a person of high intellectual prowess or as one who is an acknowledged expert in a given field.
19. ___ Knowledge	Your work environment values always learning more and increasing your knowledge base.
20. ___ Leisure	Work allows for significant time off to pursue non-work related activities.
21. ___ Location	Work in a place that provides excellent physical environment.
22. ___ Make Decisions	Have the power to decide courses of action, policies, etc.
23. ___ Mental Challenge	Show you can constantly face and resolve complex problems.
24. ___ Perseverance	Can persist in an undertaking despite opposition or discouragement.
25. ___ Physical Challenge	Ability to engage in physical demands of the job.
26. ___ Power and Authority	Demonstrate you can effectively control the work activities or the destinies of other people if required.
27. ___ Precision Work	Show you can work in situations where there is very little tolerance for error.
28. ___ Profit/Gain	Show you have a strong desire to accumulate a large amount of money or other material gain.

29. ___ Public Contact
Show you are comfortable with lots of day-to-day contact with people.
30. ___ Recognition
Want to be recognized for the quality of your work in some visible or public way.
31. ___ Risk Taker
Show you can assume duties that involve risk taking of some sort.
32. ___ Security
Show you want job security and you want reasonable financial rewards.
33. ___ Stability
Have work routines and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change over a long period to time.
34. ___ Status
Enjoy the respect and admiration of others because of the kind of work you do, and like having an important title or position within the agency.
35. ___ Strong Interest
The activities of the agency must be deeply engaging and intrinsically interesting.
36. ___ Supervision
Have a job in which you are directly responsible for the work done by others.
37. ___ Team Orientation
You work well with other people on shared tasks or projects.
38. ___ Tenacity
You show diligence to finish goals or tasks even in the face of obstacles.
39. ___ Time Freedom
Have work responsibilities where you can work according to your own time schedule; no specific working hours required.
40. ___ Willing to Travel Extensively
When necessary, you are willing to travel and live on the road.
41. ___ Work Under Pressure
Can work well under time pressures and in circumstances where the quality of your work may be judged critically by supervisors, customers or others.
42. ___ Work with Others
Can have close working relationships with a group, and work as a team member toward common goals.

List the top 10 values you have selected in the space provided below on the left.

To the right, please rank, in order of importance (1 = most important, 2 = next important, etc.) those 5 values most important to you in your work.

Summary of Values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Important Work Values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SKILLS IDENTIFICATION

Why is it important to understand your skills?

People vary in the types of skills they possess. Employers also differ in the kinds of skills they require. While people have many different kinds of skills, they usually take them for granted, and as a result have difficulty identifying and communicating them to others. This makes targeting a career more difficult than it really has to be and can negatively impact your ability to sell yourself in the job market because employers are interested in matching your skills with those required in the functional areas of their agencies.

Getting your career off the ground or changing the focus of your career will be greatly enhanced by understanding your skills. Knowing your skills will allow you to identify those you possess and those you will have to work toward developing in order to actualize your career goals and meet the needs of employers.

Identifying your skills will help you to:

- Create a sharper career focus through comparing your existing skills with those required in various areas of employment.
- Understand which skills need further development in order to successfully compete in the job market.
- Write a resume that advertises your skills.
- Articulate in an interview the skills that match those required by potential employers.

Skills Identification Exercise

There are 52 skills listed in the Skills Survey. The survey does not include technical skills such as computer or language skills.

How to complete the survey:

1. Read each skill quickly but carefully.
2. Enter a check next to the top 12 skills that you have developed through your work, education, etc. Check those skills which you feel you are competent in, whether you like using them or not.
3. Next, go through the list again and circle 5 additional skills that interest you and that you would like to develop at school and through work. These skills should not be in your first list of 12 skills.
4. On the last page of the skills identification survey (pg. 15), list the 12 "checked" skills under the heading "Existing Skills." Do not rank them.
5. List the 5 skills you have "circled" under "Skills to Develop."
6. From the "Existing Skills" list select up to 7 skills with which you feel you are competent and that you would like to continue to use in your work. List these 7 skills under the column "Work Skills." Rank your "Work Skills" in order of importance (1 = most important, 7 = least important).

After finishing this exercise you will have a profile of your skills. This includes those skills with which you already demonstrate competence and those you would like to develop. You can use this knowledge to determine how well you fit with the skill requirements of different functional areas and potential employers, or you can use this knowledge to further develop your interest in an area. You are now prepared to compare your Work Skills with those skills required by employers. If there is considerable overlap between your Work Skills and those listed by potential employment, it would be a good idea to incorporate them in your resume and be able to discuss them in an interview. If there is little overlap between your skills and a potential employer, you will need to take advantage of the opportunities to develop those skills while at Wagner, through other avenues, or through expressing a willingness to learn new skills.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. ___ Advocate | Represent and support goals of an organization or cause. |
| 2. ___ Analyze | Examine in detail; or separate data, an idea or an object into its parts. |
| 3. ___ Brainstorm | Generation of ideas or possibilities without value or judgment. |
| 4. ___ Budget | Plan or schedule expenses or operating costs. |
| 5. ___ Build Consensus | Express ideas or information in a way that appeals to the interests of others. |
| 6. ___ Calculate/Compute | Execute quantitative/mathematical operations. |
| 7. ___ Caretaking | Care about and take specific action to improve the well-being of others. |
| 8. ___ Categorize | Organize information or objects into groups or classifications. |
| 9. ___ Coach | Explain, guide, and encourage individuals to achieve goals. |
| 10. ___ Conceptualize | Form new or creative ideas, theories, or processes. |
| 11. ___ Consult | Provide a high level of expertise in the evaluation of needs and problems to recommend solutions and a plan of action. |
| 12. ___ Coordinate | Arrange the proper sequence of logistics of events or activities. |
| 13. ___ Counsel | Capacity to listen with objectivity; to facilitate client awareness of issues and provide guidance and advice in making decisions. |
| 14. ___ Decision Making | Identify and choose an option among alternatives. |
| 15. ___ Delegate | Assign tasks to others in order to achieve desired objectives. |
| 16. ___ Design | Present ideas and products in an aesthetically pleasing form or public display. |
| 17. ___ Determine Policy | Develop guidelines and strategies to carry out courses of action. |

18. ___ Edit	Revise and improve written material for final use.
19. ___ Evaluate and Assess	Determine the needs of a situation and/or determine value or quality of concepts or materials and propose solutions.
20. ___ Explain	Express or communicate a message, information, or an idea in a clear and understandable manner.
21. ___ Facilitate Groups	Support or ease interaction for purpose of reaching an agreement or common goals.
22. ___ Forecast	Ability to perceive and anticipate future trends or possibilities.
23. ___ Implement and Follow Up	Take necessary action to ensure the completion of a project.
24. ___ Improvise	Act and prepare on the spur of the moment, using information or materials at hand to fill an immediate need.
25. ___ Influence/Persuade	Convince others to adopt a belief, change an attitude, or take action.
26. ___ Initiate	Put an idea, plan, or task into action without direction from others.
27. ___ Interview	Elicit views or probe for information through verbal questioning.
28. ___ Invent	Originate or devise a new service or process through experimentation.
29. ___ Listen	Focus carefully on a speaker's verbal and behavioral communication to determine an authentic meaning.
30. ___ Manage Records	Collect, classify, and process data using records or a computerized information system.
31. ___ Mediate	Resolve or settle differences by acting as an intermediary between two or more conflicting parties.
32. ___ Monitor	Oversee and regulate flow of work assignments or projects.
33. ___ Motivate	Stimulate individuals or groups to take action for optimal results.
34. ___ Negotiate	Bring about a settlement or agreement by bargaining.
35. ___ Observe	Watch closely or be acutely aware of behavior, information, or objects.
36. ___ Organize	Pull together elements into an orderly, functional and structured whole.

37. ___ Outreach	Represent an employer to the public; receive or greet others; demonstrate a product or service to the public.
38. ___ Plan	Formulate a series of steps to meet goals and objectives.
39. ___ Problem Solve	Trace and identify the sources of a problem in a given situation.
40. ___ Produce Events	Plan, arrange, and carry out a project or event.
41. ___ Promote	Use of creative concepts to persuade through media, special events or personal involvement.
42. ___ Provide Hospitality	Welcome strangers or guests with warmth and generosity.
43. ___ Public Speaking	Deliver a message or point of view to an audience with the intent of informing or motivating.
44. ___ Research/Investigate	A systematic search using observation, comprehension of written resources, or interviewing key sources for discovery or application.
45. ___ Sell	Convince prospect to use services by describing features and benefits of a service or product to match the needs of a potential client.
46. ___ Serve as a Liaison	Act as a catalyst or connection between people or organizations to enhance communication.
47. ___ Strategize	Form a scheme or plan in the mind and carry it out into a written form, outline, service, or invention.
48. ___ Supervise	Direct the performance of workers and monitor work projects.
49. ___ Synthesize	Combine separate parts or elements to form a new whole, as in a concept or theory.
50. ___ Train/Instruct	Teach or explain specialized information to others by demonstration, explanation, or practice.
51. ___ Use of Memory	The power or process of recalling to mind facts, faces, or patterns from the past.
52. ___ Write	Compose written forms of communication demonstrating skill in the use of language, grammar, and punctuation.

List the 12 skills you have checked in the column EXISTING SKILLS below on the left. To the right, please list the 5 skills you have circled under SKILLS TO DEVELOP. Next, from the "Existing Skills" column, select the 7 skills you like to use and want to use in your work. List these 7 skills in order of importance (1 = most important, 2 = next most important, etc.) under the column "Work Skills."

EXISTING SKILLS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

SKILLS TO DEVELOP

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

WORK SKILLS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

How To Use the Results

First, remember to keep the lists of skills and values in these exercises for future reference. The skills listed here will help you identify some of the skills you may want to list when writing your resume or to articulate in the interview. The values list will assist you in keeping your most important goals in mind.

If you have a high degree of overlap with a work area of interest, you should be prepared to include mention of these skills and values in your letters, resumes, and informational interviews with potential employers. If you did not find much overlap you will want to take advantage of the many opportunities available to develop your skills while at Wagner. These include coursework, group projects, internships and part-time employment. If you are not yet sure of an area of interest and the relevant skills and values, there are other sources for further exploration. You can start by attending career related seminars at Wagner. Attending panel presentations and conducting informational interviews will help define the skills and "corporate culture" specific to many different functional areas of business. Take advantage of the opportunities at Wagner to build and acquire relevant work skills.

The OCS Staff would be happy to discuss your results with you during a career counseling appointment. Please bring your completed exercise with you, as well as any notes or questions you may have.