

Explore in addition to general education classes, take a class or two each semester in a subject that interests you or that you've always been curious about.

Experience join a student club that appeals to you, volunteer with an organization, or for a cause that you believe in; consider a field-experience class or a semester in another country.

Work if you need to work part time while you're in school, choose a job in an industry tied to majors that you're considering.

Intern internships can give you a preview of the job duties and environments.

WHAT
you
CAN
DO

Use PinPoint, a computerized career assessment located in the Career Center. PinPoint leads to job titles to explore.

Take Counseling 17, Career Exploration, and learn about your personality style, values, interests, motivated skills, and preferred environments.

Research your PCC Career Center (L 103) has information on majors and the careers they lead to. Find out about job duties, salaries, employment outlook, and a lot more. It's so much easier to make a decision when you have the facts.

Consult with a career counselor; call or stop by the Career Center to make an appointment for a personal consultation.

The Pasadena City College Career Center, L 103

Hours: M-Th 8a.m. to 6:30p.m. & F 8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

(626)585-3377 or (626)585-7381

www.pasadena.edu/careercenter

How *not* to Choose a Major

My friend likes (accounting, teaching...) and is majoring in it. I guess I'll just do what she's doing.
Would you order the same dinner that your friend ordered; choose the same mate? Probably not. A career is not a one-size-fits-all choice either; it needs to fit you. More importantly, by just following your friend you're not learning to make your own decisions, and decision making is a skill that's critical throughout life.

Which career makes the most money? I'll choose that one.
Two problems with this strategy. First, those people who make the most money do not just like making money – they're passionate about what they actually do to make the money. Also, those people who choose a career that they dislike or that doesn't fit them, tend to wind-up spending the "extra" money on medical care, therapy, or consolation purchases that do little to actually console.

I can't decide, so I may as well do what my (parents, friend...) say to do.
On the surface, this sounds like a reasonable option. But part of being an adult is deciding how much, if any, ownership of our own life we wish to transfer to others. This strategy also has a way of poisoning relationships with anger and resentment.

I have to have a major for transfer and I hate (architecture, business...) but I already have all these units in it, so I may as well finish it.
Mistakes are meant to be learned from, not continued. This bargain-shopping mentality leads to a bargain-basement life.

My (parents, husband, kids...) sacrificed so much for me. I owe them. Choosing X major will make them happy.
If this kind of thinking leads to choosing a career that doesn't fit, it's like saying, "To thank them for their sacrifice, I'll be miserable." Didn't they sacrifice for you to be happy?

I really want to be a (doctor, counselor...) but that will take too long, so I'll choose (accounting, teaching...) instead.
"Too long" can seem pretty short when it's compared to the length of a life spent saying "if only...". If money is the issue, why not first train for a lower-level career in your field, then after you're working, pursue what you really want part time?

My (mother, father, sister...) always wanted to be a (nurse, engineer...) and couldn't. I'm doing it for them.
It doesn't work that way. They aren't going to get the joy of doing the job through you, and they may eventually come to resent that you got what they wanted.

There are so many choices...
Once you begin to actually research the choices (Career Center L 103), your preferences will become clearer. And remember, the choice that you make now is not necessarily what you'll do for the rest of your life. It's just the first thing that you'll do.

Everything else keeps getting in the way...
Maybe the "everything else" is what you need to attend to first. Sometimes it feels easier to focus on finding a major, rather than dealing with the relationship conflicts or physical/emotional health issues that are the real, present, calls to growth.

I like to study (history, philosophy...) but I don't know what I can do with that major.
Again, research is the answer (Career Center L 103). It also helps to bear in mind that many people successfully work in areas not tied to their major. What your degree is IN is often less important than the fact that you have a degree.

I feel stuck because ...

Nothing brings me joy and I just can't seem to get anything done...
It's called depression, and it feels like being coated in lead. Be honest with yourself – if this is more than just a little upset, it may be time to seek help. You could start with the Psychological Services Office, L 108.

I'd really like to be an artist, but there's no money in art...
If you're an artist, you're an artist – and you're probably going to be miserable until you start **DOING** your art. So start doing it and decide later whether you'll pursue it as a career or keep it as a hobby. (And there are quite a few people who would dispute your belief that there's no money in it.)

I'm such a flake...
Well, maybe you are – but then again – maybe you aren't. If you can't seem to get your life organized, learning self-management skills may be the answer. Consider taking Counseling 11 or 12, or English 110. Also consider whether attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, depression, or mental/physical illness might be the cause. Help is available at Psychological Services, L 108.