

Future Directions

THE HIGHLANDS PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

What's Next?

Decisions regarding college and beyond are perhaps the most complex, confusing and often costly decision that parents and students have to face.

What is the best option? A large university? A small liberal arts school? A technical institute? Major in business, art, history, engineering – or what?



These life molding decisions are often made with little else to go on than “gut” feeling, grades and standardized scores. Decisions this important *should* take many relevant factors into account. What a student needs to know when considering his or her options should include:

- How do I learn best?
- What work/school environment is right for me?
- What is my preferred problem-solving style?
- How do I organize information?
- What are my natural, innate abilities?
- At what have I been successful?
- What do I enjoy doing? What interests me?
- What do I feel would be worth doing in life?
- What goals do I have already?

Following a vision and a plan is more predictive of both success and satisfaction in school and in life than any other factor including intelligence, socio-economic background and education.

The Highlands *Future Directions* Program helps students answer these questions so that they can make informed decisions about college and careers. They create a personal vision for themselves that can act as a flexible, practical blueprint to use in decision-making now and at the other Turning Points in their lives.

Students are likely to excel and find satisfaction in a course of study or job which taps both their abilities

and interests. The systematic Highlands *Future Directions* approach enables students to explore positive options and to make practical decisions about the future based on specific information about themselves.

Karen thought she knew exactly what she wanted to do about college. She had her eye on a couple of small liberal arts colleges in the northeast where some of her friends had gone. When she took the Ability Battery though, she found out some startling information about herself. Karen had strong abilities that had never been put to use in high school. These were abilities that she could use in a field like architecture or engineering – fields she had never considered before. What's more, during the *Future Directions* workshop, she realized that one of her continuing interests had been historical buildings. She loved to visit them, observe their decorations, and learn their history.

Karen became fascinated with the possibilities that her new-found possibilities offered her. She decided that when she got ready to apply for college, she would leave the door open to try out some of these new directions. She ended up going to a college that offered a strong architectural curriculum, as well as a strong liberal arts program, so that she could continue to explore her options.

Without this chance to learn about all of her abilities, Karen would not have had these choices. She would have continued in the path of her friends – and she would have missed the opportunities that helped to light up her life.

The decision to complete the Highlands *Future Directions* Program impacted not only her present education, but her future life choices. It made the difference between an exciting, fulfilling life and a life full of doubts and missteps.



How the Future Directions Program Works

The Highlands Ability Battery

3 hour test administration
2 hour individual feedback

The first part of The Highlands *Future Directions* Program is The Highlands Ability Battery. The Battery is the gold-standard among tools assessing human abilities or aptitudes. Developed from the pioneering clinical studies of Johnson O'Connor, it is a three-hour objective inquiry into human abilities and ability patterns. The Battery is available in paper and pencil format, in a CD or online.

The Battery consists of nineteen different worksamples. Each worksample is timed to measure the speed with which the student is able to do a particular series of tasks. The student's score on each worksample establishes whether a particular task is more or less easy for that student. Shown together on a personal profile and bar chart, the scores achieved by the student reveal patterns or "clusters" of abilities which require analysis by a skilled interpreter. Once these patterns or "clusters" are understood, the student is helped to direct his life and work into more productive and satisfying channels. After completion of the Battery, the student receives a 33-page Report explaining the results.

The student and his/her parents then discuss the results during a 2 hour feedback session with a Certified Highlands Affiliate. During the session, they receive an explanation of the student's abilities, a description of how the student processes information and learns most easily, how the student communicates and solves problems most effectively, and what type of work and/or school environment will be most conducive to the student's success. They will take home an audiotape of their feedback session and a comprehensive ability profile.

High school and part-time work demand the use of only a few of a student's natural abilities. Students often have strengths they are not aware of. When they know all their natural strengths, students are helped to look at a variety of options to guide them in pursuing their educational studies and careers.



Future Directions Workshop

1 workshop/week for 4 weeks
3 hours per workshop

Once you know them, your abilities will steer you toward academic paths that use your best talents and avoid educational directions that don't fit. Abilities alone, however, should never determine what career and life decisions you make. Instead, abilities should be considered a basic and important piece of a larger picture.

The Highlands *Future Directions* Workshop is designed to help you gain a positive vision for the future. Expanding your options, *Future Directions* helps you make choices based not only on your natural talents, but on your interests, values, skills, family, and personality as well. The workshop helps you systematically integrate all these factors into

your college and career search, and helps you develop a strategic planning tool for the rest of your life.

Future Directions is a highly structured Workshop. It includes special exercises developed by Highlands over many years to help you learn about yourself, articulate what you learn, and integrate it all into a Personal Vision. You can use this information to:

- Choose a college major or course of study that complements your strengths
- Understand and utilize your natural learning style
- Identify what you need and expect from your educational program
- Talk about and market your abilities, strengths and needs to admission committees and future employers
- Choose activities, internships and work experiences that relate positively to you and your goals.
- Give you the answers to that most basic of questions: "Where am I going in my life?"

For Information On Career Planning & The Highlands Ability Battery

Contact: Sally Curry - Executive Director, Career Pathways
Phone: (919) 790-9490
Email: sbcurry@CreateYourPathway.com

Jake really didn't have a clue about college. He had never done particularly well in school and never seemed interested. Jake took the Ability Battery because his parents made him do it, and he was surprised to discover some interesting things about himself.

First of all, Jake learned that part of the reason he had had difficulty in school was that it was hard for him to pick up information from written material. He did find out, though, that he had the ability to remember what he heard. Learning and reviewing material became easier for him when he began tape-recording classroom discussions and lectures.

Jake also learned that he had strong abilities and interests in visual design. He was delighted. Here was something he could really do. While he was still in high school, he began taking art and design courses. A passing interest in photography became a passion. Jake enrolled in a school of design, and by last reports, he was doing just fine.

Jake's mother had this say to say: "The *Future Directions* Workshop made all the difference in Jake's confidence. It seemed as though he just came out of his shell and was suddenly willing to try some things he had never done before. It was wonderful to see him stand so tall.