



From Monday 6th March 2023 we will be running a range of activities as part of the National Careers Week programme. There will be separate information circulated about plans, so for this bulletin I thought I would share some thoughts on career choice and raise a few points for consideration.

What are you going to do when you are older?

We all get asked this question as children, regardless of our backgrounds, our culture, our religion, our gender etc. I can say with some certainty that during your time at Shrewsbury School you will have been asked that question by someone, whether that's a friend, family member, or teacher. You will all have an answer, many of which will, quite rightly, start with don't and end with know and you may feel pressured as you are coming closer to the end of school that you should be able to answer this more confidently. But how do you find the answer to this question as pupils?

It is probably no surprise that we can be heavily influenced by our parent's or close family members choices and professions. Other research suggests that we can limit ourselves by 'opportunity availability', falling into jobs based on simply what is available at the time, as opposed to thinking more strategically about our ambitions. Many of us can and will be swayed by media and social trends; when I first started working in this field c2004, it felt like every other fifth form pupil I was seeing was intent on being a forensic scientist, due to the popularity of a programme called 'CSI: Crime Scene Investigation'. What all of these are examples of are external influences, where we are making choices dominated by what other people are doing, or are perceived to be doing, without necessarily thinking about what is best for us.

You can't be what you can't see

If we only make choices based on these factors, we are immediately limiting ourselves by our own networks, influences and knowledge base. Instead, I would encourage you to focus more on the following topics, as a combination, when considering your ideas.

- *Your personality.* This is often overlooked when people consider careers, but different personalities suit different professions, and the more you are aware of what you are like as a person, the more you can match that to the opportunities that exist.
- *Your interests.* What matters to you? You don't want to be bored at work, you want to be doing work that interests you and provides you with opportunity to learn more about areas you are passionate about.
- *Your work environment.* Increasingly important given the mobility of the global workforce. Do you want to be office based or working from home? Do you want to be working independently or prefer working with others? Would you be happy working different hours or prefer a set routine?
- *Your skills.* All of us have different skills and competencies, what are your main strengths? Do you enjoy and excel at leadership? Are you creative? Can you adapt well to different situations, or do you find change difficult?

The answers to these questions can all change over time, based on age, experience and circumstances, but these four areas are all about you, and what makes you unique. These are the areas you should be considering and revisiting. To help with this, spend a little time this term using the excellent quizzes on Unifrog which focus on these four subjects to help improve your knowledge, not only about yourself, but the careers you can do which make the most of your strengths.

For National Careers Week, set yourself the challenge of finding out about a career you know nothing about. It's interesting to observe when pupils do these quizzes that they are often immediately drawn to careers that they recognise as opposed to those they do not. As it says in the title, you can't be what you can't see and the whole purpose of these surveys is to open your eyes to new possibilities. Otherwise, you are in danger of letting other people's choices dictate yours....

Best wishes,

Mr Wain