Assess, articulate and develop your strengths, interests and values. Begin to explore options that are compatible with your strengths and interests.

Explore
Gather information on career areas of interest so that you can make informed decisions about your future. Intentionally involve yourself in activities that will allow you to explore and grow personally and professionally.

Experience
Enhance critical professional competencies in order to successfully connect your professional goals with real world opportunities. Take your experience to the next level by participating in meaningful opportunities that will differentiate you from the rest.

Transition
Begin to synthesize your collective experiences from your academics and out-of-class involvement. Begin to articulate a plan and take action to translate your skills and experiences into meaningful post-graduate opportunities.
Assess

Who am I & where am I going?
Gain insight into your unique strengths, interests and skills, particularly as they relate to your Education major and various career options. Identify resources from the list below to begin building this important foundation to decision making.

What resources are available?

- **Self-assessment inventories** are available through the Career Center to help you begin narrowing down your interests, strengths, and values.
- If you’re unsure if this major is a good fit for your strengths and interests, consult the **Choosing a Major** guide.
- Attend the **Career Center’s fall Open House** to learn about services and opportunities. You’re encouraged to schedule a “getting started” appointment with a career coach.

How can I learn about my options?

- Check out the **career planning resources for education majors** on the Career Center’s website. This includes information on possible career paths and a look into what Messiah alumni have done with their majors.
- Get to know the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** and **O*NET** for specific information on the teaching profession.
- Explore options for **involvement** outside of the classroom. Options are available through offices such as **Student Involvement & Leadership Programs**, the **Agapé Center for Service & Learning**, **Study Abroad**, **College Ministries**, **Residence Life** and much more. Consider choosing one area to get involved.

What resources should I access now?

- Visit the **Career Center** early, check out their website and start constructing a **customized career and professional development plan** with the help of a career coach.
- **Get to know your advisor and professors within the Education Department**, beyond the classroom. Take advantage of office hours and department activities.
- Create a first draft of your **resume**; what gaps exist? Use this as a guide to start constructing an **action plan** that includes relevant, sought-after experience.
- Become familiar with the “**transferable skills**” you are learning. These skills are very **marketable to employers** and graduate schools, so be intentional about developing them.

**Reflection Q’s**

- How would I describe my skills, interests, and values?
- Considering past and present experiences, what energizes me most? Be specific!
- How are these aspects of myself shaping my decisions about my major and potential career path?
- What options for involvement outside the classroom might allow me to gain experience while further developing my transferable skill sets?
Explore

Take your ideas for a test drive.

Gather information on specific career areas of interest within the field of education so that you can make informed decisions about your future. **Intentionally** choose activities that will allow you to explore and grow personally and professionally.

Where and how can I gather more info?

- Meet with a [career coach](#) to discuss resources and opportunities that will help you further explore your career-related interests. Brainstorm ideas for **complementing your classroom learning with relevant experience** to start filling the gaps in your [resume](#).

- Learn more about careers in education through the following ways:
  - **Job shadow** a Messiah alum or personal contact to get an insider’s view into teaching.
  - Conduct at least three [informational interviews](#) with teaching professionals in your field of interest.
  - Attend the Career Center’s [Pizza with Professionals](#) events and other workshops.
  - Attend the annual [Career & Graduate School Expo](#) to gather information and talk with recruiters.
  - Invest time in **building relationships** with educators on campus with whom you share specific interests/passions. Consider seeking a mentor with whom you can discuss your vocational path.

- Become familiar with [FalconJobs](#), a centralized database of part-time and full-time employment opportunities. Log-in with your Messiah email and ID number.

Reflection Q’s

- **What experiences might be valued by a prospective employer or grad school?**
- **How can I apply what I’m learning in the classroom through meaningful experience?**
- **Am I focusing on quality rather than quantity?**

How should I get involved?

- Consider the following activities/experiences as an education major:
  - Messiah College Education Association
  - Study abroad options for education majors
  - The Harrisburg Institute
  - Tutoring
  - Camp counseling

- Establish a profile on [LinkedIn](#). See what Messiah [alumni are doing](#) by joining the [Messiah College Professional Network](#) and by viewing [alumni profiles](#) on the department’s website.

- Begin thinking of how you will spend your summer. What experiences, paid and/or volunteer, will help you build on your experience and continue to develop marketable skill sets in your field of interest?

- Practice **articulating** the [transferable skills](#) you are developing – this will be important when articulating your qualifications to future employers or graduate schools.
Experience

How can I differentiate myself?

It’s time to take your experience to the next level! Increase your marketability and uniqueness through acquiring real world, relevant experience. This is also the time to develop and enhance your professional “brand.” In other words, what do YOU have to offer to a prospective employer or graduate school? If you’re not thinking of pursuing a career traditionally related to education, research the field(s) you’re considering. Think about how your background in education will prepare you for making unique contributions to your field of interest.

What constitutes “relevant experience?”

- A bulk of your professional experience will come from field experiences and student teaching. Learn more about this, as well as clearance and certification information from the Teacher Education Program website.

- Be intentional about identifying additional areas (outside of the requirements) for professional growth and development.

What professional competencies are important?

- Think creatively about how your experiences, major, and the skills you’re demonstrating might be transferable to your targeted field.

- Practice communicating your career brand in writing (resume) and verbally (mock interview) with a career coach.

- Utilize drop-in hours or schedule an appointment to receive personalized feedback.

- This is so important: expand your network and connections with professionals in your field, Messiah alumni, and at other campus and Career Center events. Continue doing informational interviews!

- Work on strengthening your education portfolio which should highlight accomplishments from your experiences.

What tools and resources will help me to get connected professionally?

- Attend job and graduate school fairs sponsored by the Career Center, such as Camp Days and Teacher Recruitment Day.

- Connect with professional associations and conferences in your field. Ask your faculty members for referrals.

- Develop “networking cards” with basic contact info and a summary of your goals and qualifications. Have these available as you meet new contacts who may serve as critical resources in the future.

- Start building your professional wardrobe!

- If you’re considering graduate school, read through the Grad School Planning Guide. Also, attend events such as the Personal Statement Workshop, Practice Admissions Exams, and Graduate School Luncheon.

- Stay on top of current events, trends, and hot topics in education through journals, magazines, and the news.

Reflection Q’s

- What specific experiences are highly desirable in my targeted field?

- Have I “tested out” my area of interest to know it’s a good fit?

- How am I practicing the skills that will be marketable to my target?

- What will set me apart from the average candidate in my chosen field?

- Have I considered stepping into a leadership position?
Transition

The next move is yours!

Transitioning to post-graduate life, whether that involves graduate school, employment, a gap year, or full-time service, includes many decisions. Keep in mind that career development is a lifetime process. That said, consider this your “first destination.” As a steward of your strengths, carefully consider what you have to contribute to your next step.

What are my transition goals?

- Research and clarify your top occupational and/or graduate school choices which are congruent with your skills and interests.
- Gather information on certification requirements and realistic salary expectations.
- Discuss your goals and ideas with and receive feedback from your faculty, mentors and a career coach (stop by to schedule an appointment).
- Work with a career coach to devise a job search or graduate school application strategy. Stay on track by developing a timeline.
- **Stay active in the process** by engaging your network of personal and professional contacts. Communicate your goals and ideas about what might be next for you. Reach out to additional contacts through the Messiah College Professional Network.

What do I have to offer?

- Reflect on the totality of your experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. What knowledge, skills, and abilities do you have to offer a prospective employer or graduate school? In what practical ways have you demonstrated these strengths? This is essential preparation for resume writing and interviewing.
- Refine and tailor your application or admissions materials, including your resume, cover letter, essays, LinkedIn profile, and interview responses to include specific examples and accomplishments from your experience.
- Secure employment or graduate school references from those who can speak to your proven strengths and potential. Don’t ask for recommendations at the last minute. Plan ahead and give adequate time.

Where can I find opportunities?

- Use an eclectic mix of resources in your job/grad school search strategy. Review the Job Search and Graduate School Guides. Check out job search resources specific to education majors, including PA Educator and other state-specific portals.
- View job opportunities posted to Messiah students and alumni through FalconJobs.
- Attend job and graduate school fairs, such as Teacher Recruitment Day, locally and in your geographic area of interest. Review a tip sheet!
- If you’re considering international teaching opportunities, review the resources available to you.
- Networking! Invest in relationship-building and connecting with professionals in your field of interest. The Messiah College Professional Network is a great place to start.
- Remember to follow up, say “thank you,” and track progress.

Reflection Q’s

- What are my top strengths I have to offer an employer or graduate school?
- Does my resume accurately reflect my transferable skills and experiences?
- How have I demonstrated the skills that will be marketable to my target?