



# No Regrets: Choosing the Right Major for You

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**Section: 816 / World Politics**

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## Topic: Picking a Major

This lesson focused on promoting self-reflection concerning one's strengths, passions, and purpose to consider what majors or career paths best align with those interests as well as what SUNY Cortland resources can support students' further exploration.



# Purpose of the Lesson

- My COR 101 class consists of pre-majors and, the week before the lesson, only about 1/4th had decided what to study
- Students were also surveyed on what they would like us to talk about at various times this semester and they consistently expressed interest in this topic
- I'm also very passionate about my major so expanding on the students perspective in major selection could be beneficial
- For these reasons, I chose to talk about this lesson in an effort to be responsive to my students needs



# Lesson Preparation

- To gather information for this lesson, I referenced a few different resources
  - I showed students the “What Can I Do with this Major?” tab on the Career Services website to explore different options
  - To promote self-reflection, I incorporated the “Three Steps to Choosing a Major That is Right for You!” page and Decision Making Tip handout from the Advisement and Transition Office
  - I also showed students Cortland Connect to provide another avenue to explore interests before committing to a major

**Sources:** “Career Services.” Career Services – SUNY Cortland. Accessed December 3, 2021. <https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/career-services/>.

“Choosing a Major.” Choosing a Major – SUNY Cortland. Accessed December 3, 2021. <https://www2.cortland.edu/offices/advisement-and-transition/advising/choosing-a-major.dot>.

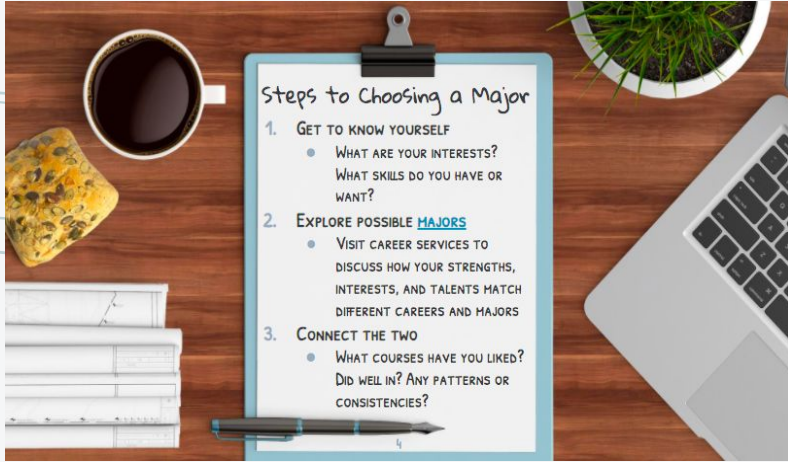
Cortland Connect. Accessed December 3, 2021. <https://cortland.campuslabs.com/engage/>.



## Why is This Important for First Year Students?

- Freshmen, and particularly with this group being pre-majors, many students come to college unsure of what they chose to study
  - Reflecting on this decision and other ways to pursue interests when we did, right before class registration, can save students time and money so they are not upperclassmen regretting their major who worry about being “too far along” to do anything about it
- Students who missed this lesson may have missed out on learning about a variety of resources to make or solidify their decision whether it be through self-reflection tools and activities or the promotion of ways to explore interests outside of classes

# Presentation Materials



- I also wrote a script to help pace myself during the introductory lecture and to prepare topics and supporting questions for the subsequent activity

- For my presentation, I put together a slideshow with specific steps to choose a major, links to relevant campus resources, tips to writing a professional email, and my perspective as a fellow student

## Activity

- Barometer Activity- to practice this self-reflection, we're going to do one of those activities where you move to one side of the room depending on how strongly you relate to something. If you're not sure, stand somewhere in the middle or at least closest to the side you're leaning toward
  1. **Move to the Window if you KNOW what you want to major in and move to the Door if you have NO CLUE what you want to major in**
    - a. What influenced that decision? What experiences do you have in that field? How did you go about committing to something? What was the process of selecting your major like? If you're still not sure, what are you trying to figure out?
  2. **Move to the Window if you consider yourself a TEAM PLAYER and move to the Door if you prefer working ALONE**

6. **Move to the Window if you want to be done with college asap and to the Door if you want to continue your ed past a bachelors**

a. Why is this something to keep in mind when picking a career? How important is this to your decision?

7. **Move to the Window if your past working experience has given you ideas for potential careers and move to the Door if your past work experience turned you completely off to those jobs**

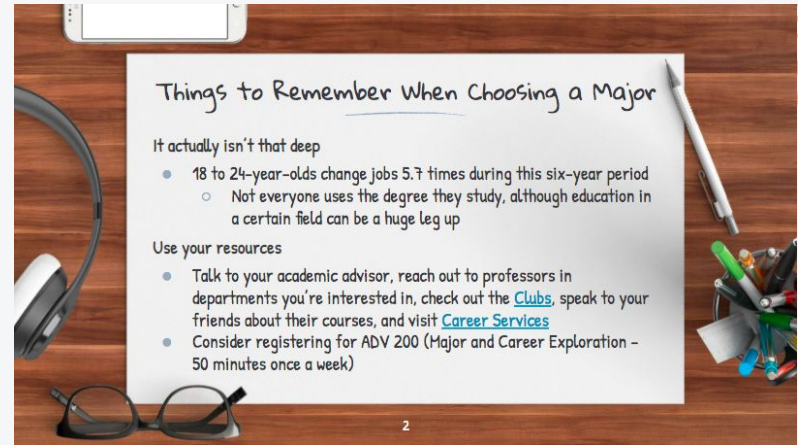
a. What valuable skills did you gain from those past experiences that you can apply to future work? What about those jobs did you love/hate? How could that play into a major you choose?

8. **Move to the window if you consider yourself more CREATIVE and to the door if you're more ANALYTICAL**

a. What kinds of majors/jobs utilize these skills? How might sticking with something that does not play to these strengths of yours lead to burnout?

## Methods

- I used a presentation to introduce the topic and purpose to students and show them how to access different resources



- We did a Barometer activity where students stood around the room depending on where they stood on a prompt to promote self-reflection and share their perspectives to benefit others in similar positions

- As a closing activity, students made a step-by-step plan for further exploring their interests and choosing a major to apply the strategies we learned in a practical way that they shared with the class
- This demonstrated that these methods were effective because students used their new knowledge about clubs, resources, and self-discovery to implement a course of action which was the ultimate goal with this lesson




# Learning Outcomes / Objectives

- I wanted students to learn that there are a variety of resources at their disposal on this campus and online to explore their interests and realize how they can apply their strengths and passions to a major or career
- My goals were that students will be able to:
  1. Identify their interests and strengths in the context of majors offered at SUNY Cortland or potential related career paths
  2. List available resources like clubs, Career Services, Advisement and Transition,
  3. Develop a plan to choose a major or solidify their interest in a selected major to take initiative in the process






# Assessment / Feedback



The last activity where students made a plan and shared it with the class not only allowed them to put a plan in motion and draw inspiration from others' ideas, but it also showed me that they met the learning objectives since they all incorporated a variety of resources into their steps. Reflecting on the lesson itself in a survey given after the class, all of the students who responded said that this lesson was helpful to them and even more informative than some other classes so I consider that a success!





## A Snip-It of the Survey:

What did you learn from this lesson? What do you remember?

I learned some of my interests

To think about the different things you can do with each major, and to take travel, pay, and time with your family into account when you think about jobs for your major.





## What I Learned

From presenting this lesson, I gained more hands-on experience applying what I learn as an education major to practical teaching. This gave me insight to my style (for instance, I very much prefer more active, student-led activities to lectures) which improved my preparedness as I enter this field in the Spring. Overall, being a Student Facilitator has confirmed that I am on the right career path myself since I gained so much fulfillment from helping others learn about theirs!

