SUBJECT SELECTION IN GRADE 9

The choice of subjects for grade 10 is a decision which can have a huge impact on your future career and tertiary study options. The process of choosing subjects is normally finalised before the end of the grade 9 year and you will have follow those subjects up to grade 12.

HOW DO I MAKE A CHOICE?

You may not have a clear idea in Grade 9 of what you wish to do after school. Your ideas may well change over the next few years. You are not alone, and this is normal, but it is important to start thinking about a broad career direction. Therefore it is essential to choose a variety of subjects that will present opportunities and open doors. Narrowing your selection to a specific field may limit your opportunities. It is advisable not to put all your eggs in one basket. You need to consider the following when making a choice of subjects:

**Firstly**, it is necessary to create a broad **interest** personal profile. What subjects and extra-curricular activities are you interested in? What are you passionate about? What do you really enjoy?

**Secondly**, your **aptitude** (ability) is ascertained using data such as school reports (marks) and aptitude tests. Focus on your strengths! Higher marks in many instances indicate that you are coping well and enjoying that subject. It is also vital that an assessment is made of subjects where you are scoring low marks. This usually shows that you are struggling and not coping. If marks are low in maths, be realistic about your potential. The work gets more difficult in the higher grades. If your Mathematics and Physical Science marks are weak now, careers that demand these will not be an option in the future. No matter how valuable it is to have the subject, lack of achievement would stop you from being accepted for a course of study which requires Mathematics as a prerequisite.

Ultimately, your ability will influence your career choice as well. It is, for example, not advisable to select Mathematics when you lack numerical ability and cannot cope with the subject. If you are really determined to take Mathematics even if you are weak, have an assessment of your potential done, and if it is positive discuss with your parents an investment in extra lessons. At the end of the day, you will have to put in real effort, extra work and practice to fulfil your own dreams.

Thirdly, your **personality** must be taken into consideration to establish what careers will best suit you. A person who squirms at the sight of blood will probably not be suitable for a career in the medical field or an introvert will possibly not enjoy being a public relations officer.

Finally, you need to establish what **motivates** you. Is it financial gain (being rich) or status (recognition from peers, climbing the corporate ladder), being able to help others, or changing the environment? Money should never be the only or even the main deciding factor in choosing a career path. Having job satisfaction and a sense of achievement are also important considerations!

Every subject has relevance for today. Each subject is important in its own right and has its own challenge and role to play in the development of knowledge and skills. Choose subjects that enable you to leave school with the necessary tertiary requirements to study further or equip you for a career eg. Computer Applications Technology is a skill that empowers you to enter the job market. Coping with a subject will allow you to feel confident and in control. Furthermore, you will experience the joy of achievement and develop a positive self-image which is vital in shaping a meaningful future for yourself.

WHO WILL HAVE TO COPE?

**YOU** are the one who will have to fulfil the requirements and demands of the subject and not your parents. YOU must therefore be the centre of the decision-making process.

Parents should not force their children to do subjects which they consider important or “better” than others. The best choice will always be the subjects with which you feel you can cope, and those that interest you the most.

SUBJECTS OFFER OPPORTUNITIES AND GIVE DIRECTION

We live in an age of incredible career choices and opportunities. In the past, many people believed that once they chose a career path, there was not much room to change or branch out in a different direction. These days we find that multi-skilled people are in demand in the job market. In fact, the more relevant skills you acquire - the more you will be in demand! Some of the world's most successful leaders and business people have had various jobs along their career paths. Nelson Mandela, Basetsana Khumalo and Richard Branson are good examples of successful people whose career paths have taken many interesting twists and turns.

GET PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

It is recommended that you research as many options as possible before making your final subject choices for grade 10. If you are uncertain, seek professional advice from a career counsellor or a psychologist. These professionals can guide and assist you in making the correct decision. This service includes a psychometric assessment of personality, aptitude and interests, an individual feedback session, as well as a written report which includes the results and recommendations. Suggestions are made in an objective and impartial manner and in line with your profile, as well as the school's subject choice package. You will also be made aware of the effect that your choices may have on your future study and career options.

WHAT IF I MAKE THE WRONG CHOICE

Departmental legislation allows you to change subjects in the first two weeks of the year. Thereafter, changes can be made at the end of the year, to be effected in the following year. This may not always be possible as some subjects are a three year programme in which each year depends on the previous. You can change from Mathematics to Mathematical Literacy but not the other way around.

Take into consideration that certain subjects are 10 credit subjects (eg. Tourism and Computer Applications Technology) and may impact on university entrance. Conduct research in your choice of subjects and intended career. Knowledge empowers you to make an informed decision. It would be a good idea to start developing your own career portfolio in which you keep everything you find which may be relevant to your final decisions.

TYPES OF PASSES IN GRADE 12

There are 3 types of National Senior Certificate passes at the end of grade 12.

* A Bachelor’s pass implies that you may study towards a degree. You need to attain a minimum of 50-59% in at least 4 subjects (20 credit subjects).
* A Diploma pass allows you to study towards a diploma. You need to achieve a minimum of 40-49% in at least 4 subjects (20 credit subjects).
* A Higher Certificate enables you to study for a certificate course. You need to attain the minimum requirements, namely 40% in the Home Language and 2 other subjects, and 30% in three of the remaining subjects.

When making a subject choice bear in mind the 20 and 10 credit subjects and how it can affect tertiary education.

The decision you make affects your future, so make a wise, informed choice that will unlock doors for you. Job shadowing can enlighten you regarding your preferred career. Volunteer your services at organisations so that you can “experience” your future career without the commitment. It can be very enlightening and will assist in making up your mind. Good luck with your choices!

Razia Osman

Educational Psychologist

084 395 1607