

**Requires: 30 minutes of class time to complete; 30 minutes of discussion.**

Students aren't always aware of the value of their major, particularly when they are enrolled in a general studies or liberal arts program. Sometimes they have selected a major only to find that they don't plan to pursue a career in that field. In these cases, Major Maps can help them identify the skills, knowledge, and talent they have acquired and convey this to an employer.

A major map is created in the same way the Wandering Map was created in the earlier unit. A sample major map can be found on pages 94-95 of "You Majored in What? Mapping Your Path from Chaos to Career" by Katherine Brooks.

**Approximate time to complete: 30 minutes**

You can ask students to create their own Major Map if they come from different majors. If you're running a program where the participants are all taking the same major, you can create the map on the board, and the students can copy what you write—or develop their own adaptation on paper. This is a particularly powerful use of the Major Map technique because it allows for group discussion and analysis. Students can help each other find the value in their major and can share what they like about their major.

To help students create a major map:

1. Start with a blank piece of paper. Have them put their name and major in the center and draw a circle or rectangle around that.
2. Write the following items randomly around the page and draw a circle or rectangle around each item:
  - a. **Classes**
  - b. **Related classes**
  - c. **Skills Acquired/Needed**
  - d. **Theories/Ideas**
  - e. **Key researchers/key experts in field**
  - f. **Internships/Work**
3. Encourage them to add any other categories they would like.
4. Have them start to draw lines from the main categories, jotting down related items. For instance, around the word "Classes" they might start to list the most relevant classes they took—or their favorite classes.
5. Around "skills acquired/needed" they might want to think about what skills one needs to be a successful major.
6. Once they have added all the information to their maps, have them start analyzing the map for any key strengths, skills, information, or knowledge they have acquired. What makes a "successful" \_\_\_\_\_ major? And why would an employer care? What will they tell the employer is particularly special about how they completed the major or what they learned from it?

Brooks, K. S. (2010-2011). *Connecting Students to Careers: Training and Instruction Guide*. Sacramento, CA: California Community College Chancellor's Office.