

Practical activities for creating directional clarity

1. The challenge-based approach

Young people sometimes struggle with finding their purpose. The challenge-based approach encourages students to:

- a) Look around them and spot challenges faced by the economy, business, politics, nature, society, their community, and family.
- b) Notice what matters to them and where they would like to make a difference (as with the student with the fuzzy goal of helping people learn from historical conflicts).

You can use card sorts such as JP Michel's challenge cards, the UN sustainable development goals, and/or ask questions such as:

- When has school, or something you do outside of school, felt most meaningful to you? What made that experience matter?
- What do you get annoyed about in the world?
- If you could wave a magic wand and make the world a better place, what would you change?

2. Energy audit

Have students track their energy over a week or two, noting when they feel most engaged and alive versus drained or disconnected.

Questions for reflection:

- Which subjects, activities, or conversations give you energy?
- When do you lose track of time in a good way?
- What do you do that others find difficult, but you find relatively easy or enjoyable?

This can be more useful than abstract personality tests, helping students recognise their directional pull.

3. The "Flexible vision board"

A twist on traditional vision boards. Instead of cutting out pictures of specific jobs or lifestyles, students create a collage around feelings, values, and ways of working.

Categories to include:

- How I want to feel when studying/working – creative, excited, stretched, in charge
- Environments where I do better – collaborative, quiet, fast-paced, outdoors
- Impact I want to make – big or small, direct or indirect, local or global
- Skills I want to use or develop

This creates a vision that can manifest in countless specific careers, maintaining flexibility while building clarity.