

Career Assessment

A CAR MUST HAVE a frame, wheels, an engine, and fuel to get you where you want to go and a top-shelf mechanic to make it run just right. Similarly, a career assessment must have multiple parts to be of value and a counselor to get you moving on the road to career success.



Objectives:



1. Identify various skills assessment tools.
2. Identify various values assessment tools.
3. Identify various career interest assessment tools.
4. Identify various personality assessment tools.
5. Interpret skills, values, career interest, and personality assessment results.

Key Terms:



abilities
assessment
career interest
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®)
personality
skills
temperament
values
work values

Comprehensive Career Assessment

You have just received an invitation to a party. Although the party is for Derek, an acquaintance you don't know really well, you would like to make a good impression by selecting a special gift. You have heard through some mutual friends that a Wii game would be well received. But which one will you choose?

You start thinking that in order to buy the right Wii game, you need to know more about the guest of honor. For example, what are Derek's interests? Would he like a Guitar Hero or a Yoga game? What is his personality? Would he like Mario Brothers or Black Ops? What are Derek's values? Would he like a sci-fi genre or action in a 3D platform? And finally, what is Derek's general gaming skill level and experience? Should you get something popular, or does he already have a flush inventory?

These are all questions to consider when trying to fit a gift to a person. They are also very similar to questions that must be considered when attempting to match a person with a career. And they are questions you should consider when thinking about future careers. You will be better able to select the right career when you consider and analyze the five components of a comprehensive career assessment. An **assessment** is an evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Typically, skills are the first area discussed by career assessment specialists. **Skills** as they relate to a career are behaviors required for successful performance of specific tasks in the chosen career. Skills are developed through paid and unpaid work experiences, volunteerism, hobbies, classroom experiences, and everyday living.

Skills are not to be confused with abilities. **Abilities** are enduring attributes of an individual that influence performance in a chosen career.

Online Skills Assessments and Information

There are many ways to learn about and assess your skills. The easiest method is to use an online tool. Many such tools exist. Some excellent recommendations are:

- ◆ ISeek at <http://www.iseek.org/careers/assessyourself.html>
- ◆ Skills Profiler at <http://www.careerinfonet.org/skills/default.aspx>
- ◆ O*NET® OnLine at <http://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Skills/>
- ◆ Job Discovery Wizard at <http://www.careerpath.com/career-tests/skills-assessment/>

Many other websites are available. Do some searching, and see what you can find.

Paper Skills Assessments

There are also some excellent traditional assessment tools that you can complete with a pencil. Some recommendations are:

- ◆ The STEPS Model—Self-Discovery: Skills Assessment at <http://career.asu.edu/S/careerplan/selfdiscovery/SkillsAssessment.htm>
- ◆ ACT WorkKeys® at <http://www.act.org/workkeys/>

Other fee-for-services tools exist. The fees are sometimes paid by a potential employer.

VALUES ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The best person to assess your values is you. **Values** are preferences regarding proper courses of action or outcomes. Values take a deeper look into who you are and what you believe is right and important. Values as they relate to a career are considered **work values** (global aspects of work composed of specific needs that are important to a person's satisfaction in a chosen career). When you assess your values, both personal and work preferences should be considered.

Online Values Assessments and Information

There are many easy ways to assess your values. Excellent resources include:

- ◆ Career Vision Work Values Survey at <http://wbs.careervision.org/PerspectiveValueSurvey.aspx>
- ◆ My Plan at <http://www.myplan.com/assess/values.php>
- ◆ “Career and Employment Guide for Job Seekers and Employees with Disabilities” and “Guide for Employers” at http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/career_self-assessments1.htm. This site is excellent for all students.

Many others are available. See what you can find.

Paper Values Assessments

As with skills assessment, there are also some more traditional methods of values assessment. You may want to try The STEPS Model—Self-Discovery: Values Assessment at <http://career.asu.edu/S/careerplan/selfdiscovery/ValuesAssessment.htm>. It can be printed and completed. You may also find some career exploration text resources. Check with your counselor or teacher.

CAREER INTEREST ASSESSMENT TOOLS

There are many career interest assessment tools from which to choose. **Career interest** is a preference for work environments that influences personal goals and a person's career choice. The majority of career assessment tools are interest surveys. Following are some first-rate interest assessment tools:

- ◆ Find Your Major! (interest assessment and college major selection) at <http://www.mymajors.com/>
- ◆ Get Ready for College at <http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/sPagesGR/interestAssessment.cfm>
- ◆ SDS (Self-Directed Search), developed by Dr. John Holland, at <http://www.self-directed-search.com/>

- ◆ The Strong Interest Inventory® / Skills Confidence Inventory® (SII/SCI). This provides information about both career interests (the best predictor of career satisfaction) and areas of skills confidence. Putting interest themes together with areas of skills confidence will help prioritize careers and majors for further exploration or development. More information is available at <https://www.cpp.com/en/strongproducts.aspx?pc=154>.
- ◆ Campbell™ Interest and Skill Survey (CISS®) is an excellent tool composed of 320 questions. The results are compared with the results of people who are successfully employed in the fields you are interested in pursuing. A fee of \$15 to \$35 is typical for this assessment. More information at <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/careers/cciss.htm>.
- ◆ Discover—a fee-for-service career exploration system at <http://www.act.org/discover/index.html>
- ◆ Career Cruising at <http://www.careercruising.com/Public/ProSchTour.aspx>

Special Resources

Local community college career resource centers often have assessment tools and systems that are available to the community at no charge, as well as a wealth of exploration resources and experts. They offer higher-end exploration services and result interpretations for nominal fees. These centers have cutting-edge information regarding employment opportunities and educational offerings. They know of other career assessment resources, such as local libraries, community agencies, and social service groups.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Personality is an individual's unique character as it influences job performance. **Temperament** is the aspects of an individual's personality, such as introversion or extroversion, which are often regarded as innate rather than learned. Your unique personality, along with your temperament, is a critical component in the comprehensive career assessment approach. There are several ways to measure or type your personality, including the following.

- ◆ The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®)** is a well-known assessment tool. The results are helpful in guiding career and educational decisions, as well as in helping understand and appreciate individual differences in personal and professional relationships. More information can be found at <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>.
- ◆ The Career Interest Game at the University of Missouri can be found at <http://career.missouri.edu/students/majors-careers/skills-interests/career-interest-game/>.
- ◆ The Work Personality Index Select (WPI Select) at <http://www.shrm.org/TemplatesTools/AssessmentResources/SHRMTTestingCenter/products/Psychometrics/Pages/wpi.aspx> can be a valuable tool.
- ◆ The Keirsey Temperament Sorter®-II (KTS®-II) at <http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/instruments2.aspx?partid=0> is the most widely used personality instrument in the

world. It is a powerful 70-question personality tool that helps individuals discover their personality type.

INTERPRETATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Once the data has been collected, it needs to be deciphered. The data from four different areas needs to be decoded, or translated, into helpful information so that it can be used to make decisions regarding your educational plans. These decisions are then recorded in your Individual Career Portfolio or Plan (ICP) or Senior Project folder.



FIGURE 1. The five components of career assessment.

Expert Interpretation and Feedback Necessary

While much of the data is easily interpreted by you, it is the accumulation or total data stock that requires the eyes of an expert. This expert is typically your counselor but can also be a teacher. This person will examine the data with you and challenge you to make future decisions based on the data. He or she may also recommend further assessment or workplace experiences to confirm your interests.

There are different ways to disseminate the career assessment data. Some counselors may choose to interpret data:

- ◆ One-on-one
- ◆ In small groups
- ◆ By results
 - Career cluster
 - Personality type
 - Value type
 - Pathway and program of study
 - Other result-oriented groupings

Regardless of the method of interpretation, this data translation is the final and most important piece of the career assessment puzzle. Without expert interpretation of results, you really just have information of questionable value. You need that expert view to help bridge you to the next career exploration level.

Summary:



A good career assessment is comprehensive and thorough and results in information you can immediately use to make career planning decisions. There are five components of a solid career assessment.

Typically skills are the first component discussed by career assessment specialists. Skills are not to be confused with abilities. There are many online and paper skill assessments.

The second component is values. The best person to assess your values is you. Values are preferences regarding proper courses of action or outcomes. Values take a deeper look into who you are and what you believe is right and important. When you assess your values, consider both work and personal preferences.

Career interests are the third component. A career interest is a preference for work environments that influences personal goals and a person's career choice. There are many career interest assessment tools or surveys from which to choose.

The fourth component to be measured is personality. Several tools and assessments are available to measure or type your personality.

Once the data has been collected, it needs to be deciphered. It is then that the fifth component, interpretation of results, comes into play. The data from the four other components must be decoded, or translated, into helpful information so that it can be used to make decisions regarding your educational plans. These decisions are then recorded in your Individual Career Portfolio or Plan (ICP) or Senior Project folder.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. List and describe the five components of a good career assessment.
2. Name three websites or resources to which you can turn for career assessment assistance.
3. How do skills differ from abilities?
4. What is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®), and what does it measure?
5. Why is expert interpretation of results so important?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Revisit your ICP or Senior Project folder, and review your history of career exploration. Review your completed lab sheet results. Discuss with your counselor a

workplace experience that would be appropriate for your level of preparedness and interest. This may be an interview, field trip, job shadow, or internship.

Web Links:



Seven Things to Tell an Interviewer

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-530-Getting-Hired-7-Things-to-Tell-an-Interviewer/>

Career Vision

http://www.careervision.org/Resources/Recommended_Reading.htm

How to Job Shadow

http://www.ehow.com/how_2290410_job-shadow.html

How to Nail an Interview (20 Tips)

<http://www.howtonailaninterview.com/>

Job Shadow for Your Career

<http://career-advice.monster.com/job-search/career-assessment/job-shadow-for-your-career/article.aspx>