



ASSESSMENTS P.I.C.

It is important to spend time preparing your students or clients for the use of career assessments in general and the use of each instrument in particular. Your guidance in interpreting results and connecting them to further career development is essential.

P Preparation

People using a career assessment instrument need to understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Here are some basic ideas to share:

- Career assessment instruments help you understand only one aspect of yourself; they help you paint your career self-portrait by adding one color or one component of the portrait. You need to consider all aspects of yourself, adding all of the colors to complete a portrait.
- You will use assessment results, **along with other information and ideas**, to make your career plans.
- Like all portraits, your career portrait will change over time. Save your assessment results in your CIS Portfolio.

When it is time to administer a particular instrument, explain the instrument you are using.

- What is its purpose?
- What will the student or client do?
- In general, what will the results mean?

For example, if you were using the IDEAS interest inventory, you might say:

"IDEAS helps you identify your interests and connect them to occupations. Your responses to the 128 questions in IDEAS will make up an individualized profile related to characteristics of hundreds of different occupations. It will help you explore career options and plan for your future."

Remember that an assessment does not tell you what you should or shouldn't do. A high score for an occupational area suggests that your interests are similar to those of people working in the occupation. A low score suggests a lack of similar interests. Using the results of this instrument may help you discover some new ideas about areas of career interest to you or may help you confirm an interest you already have."

The manuals in CIS Resources for each career assessment instrument will help you explain the purpose of the instrument to your students. The resources at the bottom of this page are also excellent references for assessment.

Interpretation

After students or clients receive the results of an assessment, they need an opportunity to discuss what these results mean to them. They also need a strategy for applying these results to their career planning. If they don't agree with a result, or can't understand it, they will need assistance in learning from that experience.

Career assessment should be a beginning point, not an ending point, for learning about oneself. If encouraged to probe questions such as: *Why did my results using this instrument indicate that I was more social than artistic in my personality? How did the interests I indicated lead to a high score in the management occupational group?*, students and clients can consider possibilities that may have seemed unrealistic; and they will gain insights about themselves. Sometimes the results of certain interest assessments, can point to areas in which students have little interest only because they have little experience.

Connection

The final and most essential step in using an assessment instrument is to connect its results to information about the occupations it suggests. Students and clients will need to conduct further research into the occupations they find interesting or appealing. They can do this by using CIS *Occupations* or a variety of other resources. In some cases, depending on the assessment instrument used, students and clients can use CIS *Assessment Link* to connect their results directly to CIS occupations.

ALWAYS save the results and thoughts about the assessment in the CIS Portfolio. This increases the usefulness of the assessment process, making it meaningful over time.

Edwin A. Whitfield, Rich Feller, and Chris Wood. A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments, Fifth Edition. National Career Development Association, Alexandria, VA, 2009.

Zunker, Vernon G. Using Assessment Results for Career Development, Fifth Edition. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Pacific Grove, CA. 2006.

*Adapted from "Setting the Stage for Career Information Using Formal Assessments"
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