Comprehensive List of Career Assessment Tools

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Abstract

As school counseling evolves, so does the type of assessments people use with career counseling in the schools. When working on career counseling, a person must first remember that career counseling and personal counseling work best together. Therefore, this paper is filled with different types of career assessments that look at a person’s aptitude, achievement, personal, and their interests. One must also remember to have a variety of both paper-and-pencil and online assessments since school counselors must evolve with the rest of society. This paper combines ten different assessment school and does its best to explain them in detail, who would use them, and my overall evaluation of them.

Comprehensive List of Career Assessment Tools

 One of the questions I was repeatedly asked throughout my first year as a school counseling graduate student was which level of schooling I wanted to work in. At first, I was positive that I wanted to work in elementary schools, but now I know I would prefer working in high schools or middle schools if necessary. One of the areas that each level of schooling needs is career assessments and curriculums. This paper aims to look at a variety of career assessment tools and how they are used.

 The first assessment that I would use with high school students is the Self-Directed Search (SDS), which identifies a person’s Holland’s Code. A person’s Holland’s Code is three letters (R, I, A, S, E, C) that tells them about where their skills, interests, and personality characteristics align. The R stands for realistic, I stands for investigative, A stands for artistic, S stands for social, E stands for enterprising, and C stands for conventional. The self-directed search consists of scale questions that ask how interested someone is in something or how able he or she thinks they are at accomplishing a task. Each answer has a point value and at the end the person tallies their points and finds their top three letters. These three letters then correlate with certain types of jobs that can be found in the occupational finder. Once a person knows their Holland’s Code, he or she can look at jobs that are more likely to fit into their code and their interests. This can be done using a paper-and-pencil format or online. The online version will normally cost money but it means that parents can access it with their students. This test is for older high school students and adults because it is more specific with what type of career a person may want to try. I feel that this assessment is strong and would use it with my students whenever needed. The assessment is used frequently throughout schools, especially colleges, and has been found to be accurate, reliable, and valid. The assessment is also very simple to use, with clear instructions and an ability to do it on paper or online.

The next assessment that I would use with high school students is the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS). This assessment is designed for high school students and older who are looking at their interests and abilities and what type of jobs fit into those. Similar to the SDS, the CISS asks a person a variety of scaled question about his or her ability and interest to work on a variety of types of jobs. The questions can be broad or very specific. The questions are based around seven orientations for types of jobs including influencing, organizing, helping, creating, analyzing, producing, and adventuring. The results from this tell a person if he or she should pursue, develop, explore, or avoid a variety of careers. The careers a person should pursue are ones that the person identified high skill and high interest. In contrast, the careers a person marked as low interest and low skill will say to avoid. For instance, most of the jobs I should pursue are found among the helping profession, which makes sense since I want to be a professional school counselor. Once again, this can be found in a paper-or-pencil format of can be found online. The only version costs money, about forty-five dollars on average from what I found. The assessment is used frequently among professionals and has found to be reliable and valid. The assessment is user-friendly and very simple with clear instructions and easy analysis. Also, once the person’s data is interpreted he or she can immediately see jobs that might interest them and fit them best.

The Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) is an aptitude test that identifies if a person would be good at a specific job or organizational setting. This basically means does this particular person have the assets needed to succeed in this particular setting. High school students would take the Level 2 version of the test. The test consists of questions that evaluate a person’s general cognitive abilities, perceptual abilities, and clerical and language skills. The test also narrows down a person’s specific abilities into nine subscales within those three larger scales. The test is administered by school officials and normally to large groups. The school counselor could tell a student where to take the test and what to expect. This test has been found to be both reliable and valid. The test cannot be found online so it is harder to get to than other tests.

One of my favorite online tools to use with students is [www.DriveOfYourLife.org](http://www.DriveOfYourLife.org). This is a website that specializes in students from late middle school to early high school who need some ideas of what they want to do with their life and how to get there. This website is interesting because students can do it at home by themselves or it can be something the school counselor does with entire classes. This website is also very interactive which keeps students invested in it and it is very user-friendly. Students create an account where they work through questions that help them create their car, while it actually is learning about their interests within jobs. The questions ask things like, would you be interested in teaching? The next step has them pick a job that matches the results they were given from the first section. Finally, the third section tells you specifics about the job you chose and how to earn money doing this job. The questions are easy to follow and simple enough for students. Plus, students do not have to do it all at once. I could not find any information on the validity and reliability of this website, but I think it is something that can be used when someone is exploring careers. I think using it to decide the next step when working with a student would be most effective.

One of the exclusively online tests I found was at [www.yourfreecareertest.com](http://www.yourfreecareertest.com). This career test can be found online for anyone to use and is specifically designed for high school students. The test is free and is similar to an interest survey to find out more of what a person would like to do in their future career. There are fifty-two questions that ask if you are 1) very interested, 2) interested, 3) slightly interested, or 4) not interested, in a variety of tasks. These tasks range from testing chemicals to learning what fruits are in season. The results of this test are given to the person via a PDF and the person does not have to type in any information. The results give you a list of career interests and a list of sub-interests. Then it gives you a percentage of how interested you are and identifies high school classes one should take and the careers that are in that area. My results showed that I should work in athletics, social sciences, and education as my top three. This is extremely accurate because I am very passionate about sports but my career interest ended up being school counseling. The results of this online test were very thorough and surprised me in how accurate of a portrayal they can give of someone’s interests. I would recommend using this assessment tool to parents and students who are trying to get an idea of what the student should do with their future since it is free and very easy to use.

 When one visits the website <http://www.onetcenter.org/IP.html> he or she will find the O\*NET Career Interests Profile. It is an online inventory to help people find work that would be interesting and exciting for them. It includes 180 activities that the person marks as liking, disliking, or being unsure. The questions would be similar to the ones a person would see if they took the SDS or the CISS. The results give a person their RIASEC code, which was discussed above with the SDS. After finding a person’s code, he or she will look through job types in their area of interest. These jobs will tell a person more specific details like type of schooling needed, classes one might need to take or be good at, and how long it might take to achieve goals within the job. This website is more exploratory for students because he or she can look through different jobs and get a feel for what might be best for them, while also having some help from the website in which directions to take. The website is very user-friendly, quick to access, and free to the public. The website can be used with students of all ages, but I would suggest using it from high school and throughout adulthood. O\*NET partners with the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration which makes it feel more reliable and valid than most websites one finds online involving careers.

 The California Psychological Inventory 434 (CPI 434) is a personality test that helps a person understand their personal and work-related characteristics, motivations, and thinking styles. It also looks at how a person works with others. This test is for people thirteen years and older, so it is good for high school students. The test consists of 434 true or false questions. The questions are very broad. For instance, one question could be asking if it is true or false that all food tastes the same while the next question may be asking if it is true or false that it is every American’s obligation to vote. The questions are broken down into 3 vector scales, 20 folk scales divided into four classes, and seven special purpose scales. Higher scores on the scales often mean higher functioning in that area of one’s life. This helps a person decide which area would be best for their future career. For instance, I scored high on my interpersonal style, which is no surprise since I want to go into a counseling field. The test has high reliability and high validity. The test is somewhat complicated since it has so many different scales for one to read, so professionals must read the results to students. It is also helpful to have extra materials that help one interpret the results. The test takes about an hour so it does not take much time. The cost of this test varies.

The Adolescent Personality Questionnaire is specifically designed for students that are ages 11-22. This is a self-report personality inventory that measures a person’s personal style, along with their problem-solving abilities and the work activities they would prefer. The reason I like this questionnaire is because it has an optional section called life’s difficulties, which addresses issues that cause problems for people in this age group. This questionnaire has between 100 and 200 questions depending on which version a professional chooses to use. The test can be done using paper-and-pencil or with computer assistance. This test can be used in career counseling because it helps identify the type of jobs, which will fit a person’s style and their interests. It also helps a person realize where they might struggle in the future if the person chooses to do the life’s difficulties section. This test is easy to do, can be found online, and can be found for free. This test is reliable and valid, but there are others that are more appropriate for high school students when working on career counseling. The results do not give the person taking it specific jobs suitable for them, so they will need to do some outside research.

 The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of my favorite personality indicators to use when working on career counseling with someone. This is a personality inventory that takes about thirty minutes and can be done online or with paper-and-pencil. High school students and adults can use this indicator. The test gives a person a series of questions, 93 total, that help score a person’s preference on four different dimensions. There are only two answer options for each question. These are E vs. I (Extraversion versus Introversion), S vs. N (Sensing versus Intuition), T vs. F (Thinking versus Feeling), and J. vs. P (Judging versus Perceiving). Each person is given his or her four-letter code. This code aligns with specific jobs or careers that match a person’s personality characteristics. The test is very complicated to scale, so a professional must read the results. The test gives specific information about your personality type and what type of worker that makes you. Online and free versions of this test can be found but they are not the actual version and will not be as reliable. The formal test given by professionals either via computer assistance or paper-and-pencil is both reliable and valid. The test is simple and the instructions are easy to follow.

The Career Development Inventory (High School Edition) is a career decision inventory that helps a person evaluate their progress towards their career goal or career path. This inventory is for high school students. There are multiple editions of this inventory and each one has a different amount of questions. Each person answers questions that are catered to a specific scale. Based off of the career information from Super, it consists of seven different scales that look at a person’s career plans, where they get their information, their overall awareness, and their attitudes towards career planning amongst other things. Most people score between the 40th and 60th percentile, which makes them average on their achievement towards their career path. Students who score above the average are more aware and tuned into their choices, where students who score below the average have deficits in some areas. The students with deficits would then need to do more work with the school counselor because they would be considered at risk. This test can be given free via paper-and-pencil, computer assistance, or online. I would recommend using this with students who are not as focused on their future and their career path. It could be used with parents to give them more information and have them try and help with their student’s future.

 There are many career assessment tools out there for counselors to use when working on career counseling. This is not a comprehensive list of them, but it gives a person a start at what might be useful. There are a variety of types of assessments that focus on different areas of a person’s life. There are also are a vast amount of assessment tools that can be found online for free, but these are not always reliable. My hope is to use this list in the future when I am in a hurry to remember which test is appropriate for what area of career counseling.