

Self Discovery: Assessing your Educational and Occupational Suitability

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Did you know that a survey of over 2100 Canadian youth found that 50% of these youth in the 15 to 19 age bracket were uncertain about their post secondary educational and career plans? (Posterski & Bibby, 1988)

It's not only youth that have difficulty sorting out what they want to do and where they want to do it. How many times have you heard from adults that they are unhappy in their current job but don't know what they would do instead?

Career Development as a field of interest began with Frank Parsons who launched the field by recommending to his clients that they keep a record of their interests and activities as well as family background. He then assembled statistics on current labour market data and compared this information with his clients' records in order to suggest possible career choices. His method was an interesting start, however it was time consuming and highly subjective.

During the 1900's attention around human behaviour measurement tools began to develop. The field of career counseling embraced these tools for they offered the ability to differentiate one individual's attributes from another on an objective basis. Career counseling researchers began to develop further assessments in order to determine a link between a person's traits and specific occupations. Over the years, psychometric assessments have been refined in order to meet reliability and validity criteria, providing insight into a person's individual characteristics and occupational suitability.

In order to determine the type of job that you would enjoy, it is necessary to do some exploration of your interests, skills, and personality type. In taking the first step towards discovering your interests you need to identify what you have been and currently are interested in. Are you interested in working outside, building, using your physical skills in your work? Do you like organization and working with numbers? Are you artistic...dancing, painting or actively seeking out opportunities for drama or choir experiences? Perhaps you have an inquisitive mind that seeks out knowledge and further investigation. Do you focus on social endeavours, perhaps working in a helping capacity? Are you great at persuading and marketing ideas?

Whatever your past and current experiences have been, there are common threads of interest that become apparent when you take the time to review what you have previously been successful with and have enjoyed. In recognizing your personality type, you are able to gain additional perspective on the type of environment that you wish to work in and focus your energy and attention.

In the self-discovery process you can also take note of your skills and the times when you felt proud of your accomplishments. Perhaps it was learning to ski, completing a difficult project or work task, finding the courage to step outside your area of comfort, winning that race or counseling a client that provided you with a sense of pride and personal fulfillment.

If you are to commit to your personal career development, you need to step back and review what you find personally rewarding, interesting, and worthy of your time. In identifying your interests and personality through the use of assessments, you can work towards finding your "best fit" occupational clusters. In identifying occupational areas of interests, you can move onto exploring your options and building your educational or career development plan through targeted goal setting.

What are your past and current interests? What about pride experiences? Do you focus your energy and attention inwardly or outwardly? Is your personal style reflected in your personal and work life?

Choices Career Consulting provides formal and informal career assessments as well as private counselling to individuals of all ages in order to assist them with their educational and career choices.