



CAREER EXPLORATION

LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES

TOPIC: ABILITIES AND INTERESTS & YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

Learning Objectives

*****Students need to take Focus 2 Assessment prior to this lesson*****

- **Abilities & Interests:**
 - Teach students more in-depth information about their Holland Code and help them to apply it to their decisions about majors and careers.
 - Help students understand the overall concept of person-environment-fit and how this relates to their career development.
- **Your Career Journey:**
 - Help students get a clear picture of how their background has shaped the way they feel about their future career opportunities.
 - Give students the chance to explore their current thoughts on the realities of their career journeys and how that compliments or opposes their dreams.

Core Concepts

Dysfunctional Belief: "I should know where I'm going."

Reframe: "I won't always know where I'm going but, I can always know whether I'm going in the right direction."

Dysfunctional Belief: Your degree determines your career.

Reframe: ¾ of all college grads don't end up working in a career related to their majors.

Instructor Resources

- Abbreviated Holland Code (see Student Handouts)
- Free write: Abilities and Interests
- Guide to Holland Code: <https://cdn.uconnectlabs.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/62/2019/11/Guide-to-Holland-Code-2019.pdf>
- O*Net: <https://www.onetonline.org/>
- Ted Talk clip/video

Instructor Notes

- Your students should have already taken FOCUS 2. Emphasize what the assessment is used for, and not just what the results mean. You may want to preview how their results may factor into other topics that will be covered over the course of the semester.
- Think about the ways your students will be most comfortable sharing: pairs, small groups, entire class discussion, or a combination of techniques. Do a quick icebreaker or two!
- Prior to instructing your class, read through the Guide to Holland Code to familiarize yourself with the Holland Theory and how it groups people and work environments into six different groups based on interests.

Suggested Agenda

- Have students complete Journal Prompt—Abilities and Interests (see below) and follow up the journal with a group discussion focusing on the following topics:
 - What is an interest?
 - Where do interests come from? How are they developed?
 - Do passions inform interests, or do interests inform passions? Which comes first?
- Holland Code activity
 - See list below for possibilities. This often helps students understand the relevance of the Holland Code to their own career development. Be sure to debrief and help explain how students can apply Holland Code in their lives academically and in terms of career.
- Discuss the individual experiences that may have impacted a student’s choice in occupation (e.g., growing up with parents who were nurses may contribute to a student’s interest in the healthcare field).

Journal Prompt

“What you study is not that important. Knowing how to find those things you are interested in is way, way more important...I’ve got this momentum, and the idea is to figure out what interesting opportunities there are around you and use them to get to the next point. It’s like how I would imagine navigating a satellite through space. You’re headed off with a velocity, and, oh, there’s a planet over there. I’m going to orbit it a couple of times, and then shoot off somewhere else. How to pick the things you are bouncing off of is really about integration—integration at a personal level. What do I like, what tools do I want to add to my toolbox, and how can I use my current velocity and heading to go in a new interesting direction.”

--Kirk Phelps, iPhone Developer

If you had to rephrase your Focus 2 assessment results using your own words, what would you say?

Possible Activities

- **Holland Code & FOCUS 2 discussion**
 - Explain Holland Theory and discuss FOCUS 2—emphasize person-environment fit.

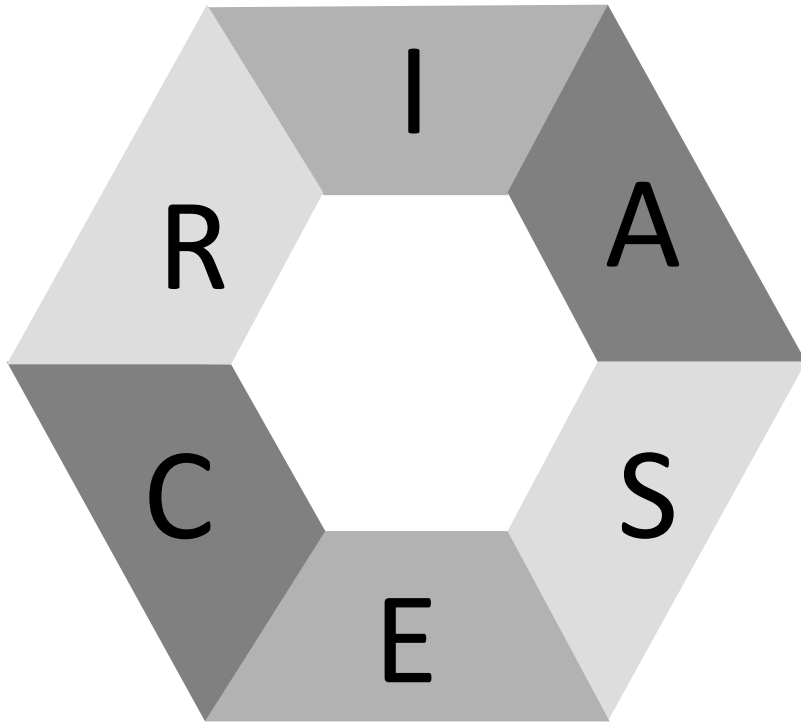
- Your code is not set in stone, and you do NOT have to pursue a career with your Holland Code. The results are only a tool to get you started.
- Further questions for discussion are listed below. Really prompt students to think about whether the FOCUS 2 results “fit” and how and why.
- **Holland Personal Ads**
 - Break students into groups of six and assign each a 3-letter Holland Code (e.g., SEC, AIS, RIA, etc.). Keep this a secret!
 - Have each group write a personal ad reflecting the personality of someone with that code. It helps to give students an example of a personal ad.
 - Have the other groups guess which letter is reflected. Ask them to explain why.
 - (Could be adapted to modern dating sites like Tinder or Bumble.)
- **Holland Drawings**
 - Break students into six groups and assign each a letter of the Holland Code.
 - Have each group draw a depiction of a person with that code. Ask the students to visualize what a person with a certain Holland code might look like, accessories they might carry with them, activities they might engage in, etc. Emphasize creativity!
- **Free Write Activity**
 - Have the students explore the following questions:
 - How does my Holland Code relate to me & my thoughts about career possibilities?
 - How does my Holland Code relate to the world of work, and where do I fit into it?
 - How might my Holland Code influence my major/career decisions?
 - What can I do with the information I acquired taking the FOCUS 2?
- **Pick the character’s Holland Code**
 - Break the students into groups and have each group identify a fictional character that has a career from a book, television show, or movie. Have each group try to identify the character’s Holland Code and then decide if that character’s career is well suited to her or him. The groups can then report their findings to the class.
- **Guess the celebrities’ Holland Code**
 - Before class, make a list of six current celebrities. Have students break into groups and guess what they think the celebrities’ Holland Codes would be. Have each group present their guess and justification for assigning that particular code to the celebrity.
- **Ted Talk.**
 - Show a Ted Talk video. (A good Ted Talk is titled [Designing Your Life](#) by Bill Burnett.) Have a group discussion about the student’s reactions to the video and what they may have learned about it. Discuss how this video fits in with the career exploration process and where it may tie in to future lessons planned for the semester.

Discussion Questions

- **Abilities & Interests:**
 - What did you like or dislike about taking FOCUS 2?
 - Is your code what you thought it would be? What surprised you?
 - What do you see as the pros and the cons of FOCUS 2?
 - How does FOCUS 2 fit in with major and career exploration?
 - Why do you think you had to write down your occupational daydreams?
 - What are some next steps now that you have a code?
- **Your Career Journey:**

- What was your biggest takeaway from today's class regarding your career interests?
- How have your perceptions changed regarding what your career journey might look like?
- What is one example you heard from a classmate today that challenged your previous thoughts regarding the value of work or dreams? One example you agreed with?

What Are Your Career Interests?



This is based on Dr. John Holland's theory that people and work environments can be loosely classified into six different groups. Each of the letters above corresponds to one of the six groups described in the following pages.

Different people's personalities may find different environments more to their liking. While you may have some interests in and similarities to several of the six groups, you may be attracted primarily to two or three of the areas. These two or three letters are your "Holland Code." For example, with a code of "RES" you would most resemble the Realistic type, somewhat less resemble the Enterprising type, and resemble the Social type even less. The types that are not in your code are the types you resemble least of all.

Most people, and most jobs, are best represented by some combination of two or three of the Holland interest areas. In addition, most people are most satisfied if there is some degree of fit between their personality and their work environment.

The next page explains each type and provide some examples of career possibilities, areas of study at MU, and co-curricular activities for each code. To take a more in-depth look at your Holland Code, take a self-assessment at the MU Career Center and discuss it with a Career Specialist.

Realistic (Doers) *People who have athletic ability, prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants or animals, or to be outdoors.*

Are you...

- practical
 - athletic
 - straightforward/frank
 - ambitious
 - a nature lover
 - thrifty
 - persistent
 - self-controlled
 - stable
 - concrete
 - reserved
 - systematic
-

Investigative (Thinkers) *People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems.*

Are you...

- inquisitive
 - analytical
 - scientific
 - observant/precise
 - scholarly
 - cautious
 - curious
 - independent
 - logical
 - complex
 - intellectually self-confident
-

Artistic (Creators) *People who have artistic, innovating, or intuitional abilities and like to work in unstructured situations using their imagination and creativity.*

Are you...

- creative
 - intuitive
 - imaginative
 - innovative
 - unconventional
 - emotional
 - independent
 - expressive
 - original
 - introspective
 - impulsive
 - sensitive
-

Social (Helpers) *People who like to work with people to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them, or are skilled with words.*

Are you...

- friendly
 - helpful
 - idealistic
 - insightful
 - outgoing
 - understanding
 - cooperative
 - generous
 - responsible
 - forgiving
 - patient
 - empathic
-

Enterprising (Persuaders) *People who like to work with people, influencing, persuading, leading or managing for organizational goals or economic gain.*

Are you...

- self-confident
 - assertive
 - sociable
 - persuasive
 - enthusiastic
 - energetic
 - adventurous
 - popular
 - impulsive
 - ambitious
 - inquisitive
 - agreeable
-

Conventional (Organizers) *People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, carry out tasks in detail, or follow through on others' instructions.*

Are you...

- well-organized
- accurate
- obedient
- methodical
- conscientious
- efficient
- conforming
- orderly