



Building Career Facilitation Skills

Module 3: Informal Career Assessments

Facilitator's Curriculum

Time Required: 1 hour

Summary and Rationale

This module introduces the use of informal career assessments and provides the student with an opportunity to use an interest and skills checklist.

Performance Objectives

At the end of this module, participants will be able to

- Identify three strengths of informal assessments
- Identify three weaknesses of informal assessments
- Identify three different types of informal assessments and explain their use
- Demonstrate the use of an interest and skills check list

Equipment

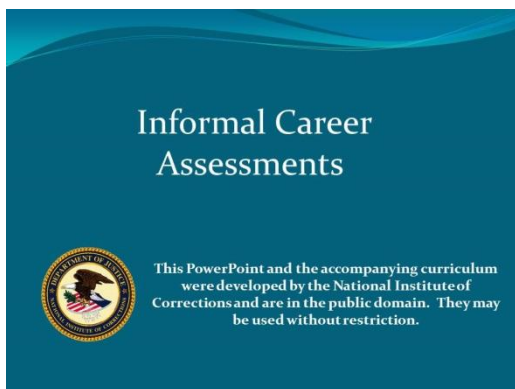
- Easel stand with chart pad
- Markers
- Computer and LCD
- Screen

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation for this module
- Flip chart paper
- Interest and skills checklist and related materials

CONTENT

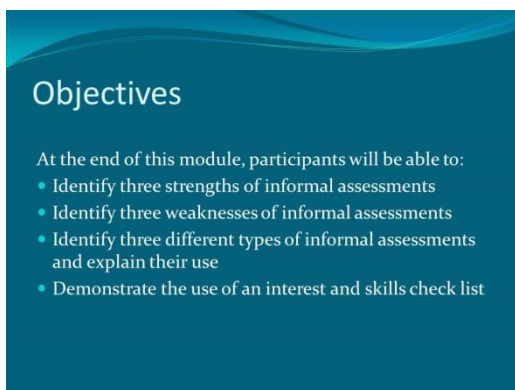
PowerPoint 1



An important step in the process of assisting an offender to select training programs or a job is *assessment* of interests and skills. Theory and research document the fact that individuals are likely to perform better and achieve satisfaction in work when they perform job duties that allow them to engage in activities in which they have interest and skill.

This module will teach you about informal career assessments and give you an opportunity to try out a method that you can use with offenders.

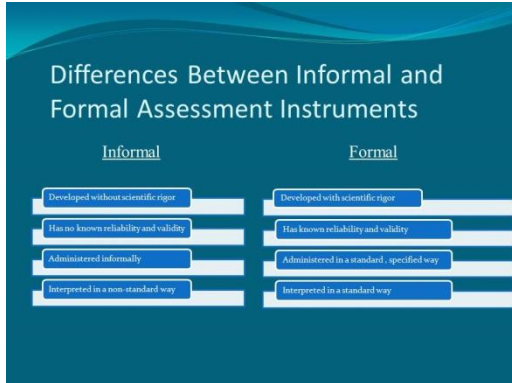
PowerPoint 2



At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify three strengths of informal assessments
- Identify three weaknesses of informal assessments
- Identify three different types of informal assessments and explain their use
- Demonstrate the use of an interest and skills check list

PowerPoint 3



An assessment is a way of gathering information about an individual or a group. It includes the use of interviews and other informal methods as well as more formal instruments.

There are two categories of assessment used in career planning: *informal* and *formal*. *Informal* assessments gather information about people through methods less structured than standardized tests.


Notice that:

- informal assessments have not been developed with scientific rigor while formal assessments have been.
- results from informal assessments are subjective and therefore open to different interpretations while those from formal assessments are objective and offer less opportunity for use of subjective judgment.
- informal assessments are likely to take more time to administer and/or to customize to a specific situation than formal assessments.
- there is no established validity or reliability for informal assessments. (These are measures of quality of assessment instruments that we will not study in this module.)

PowerPoint 4

Strengths of Informal Assessments

- Low cost
- Can be administered without ordering materials
- Can offer greater opportunity to learn about the person taking the assessment




Informal assessments have some definite strengths.

- First, as you will see from the activities in this lesson, they are very low cost.
- Second, they can be administered by duplicating materials like those included in this lesson, thus not requiring ordering materials from a publisher.
- Third, informal activities such as those included here can provide an opportunity to learn more about the persons involved than a more formal instrument does.

PowerPoint 5

Weaknesses of Informal Assessments

- Interpretation may be subjective
- Facilitators may interpret the same results differently
- Activities have not been subjected to scientific study



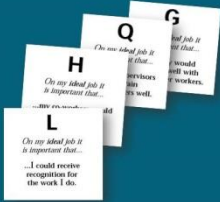
Of course, there are weaknesses as well. These include

- not having a defined method of interpretation
- that such activities have not been researched

PowerPoint 6

Types of Informal Assessments

- forced-choice activities
- card sorts
- checklists
- structured interviews
- simulations (games)



Informal assessments include the following:

- forced-choice activities
- card sorts
- checklists

- structured interviews
- simulations (games)

A forced-choice assessment is an activity or checklist that requires a person to choose between two alternatives or to rank-order three or more alternatives.

Some values checklists, for example, require you to select one of two values or to place three or more in rank order by importance.

Forced-choice items or activities are valuable because they require an individual to state a preference for one characteristic or concept over another, thus assisting in defining what is really important.

A card sort is a second kind of useful informal assessment. In this assessment activity, an individual (or a group of individuals) is given a stack of cards. Each card has the title and definition of some characteristic related to career choice.

Such characteristics may be work tasks, skills, or work values. You could make a card sort yourself or purchase one. An important criterion is that the stack of cards cover a quite complete range of the different kinds of work tasks, skills that people possess, or work values they could hold.

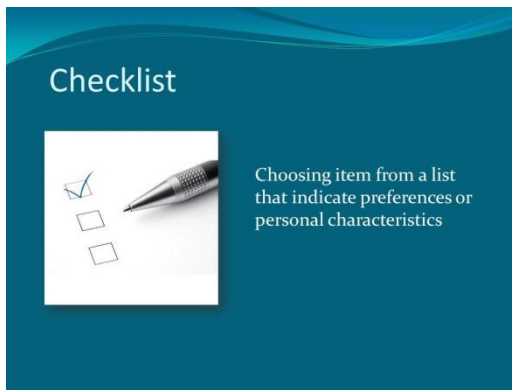
Typical instructions related to card sorts require participants to organize the cards into three stacks - those that represent a high level of something you possess or want to have, those that are at a medium level, and those that are at a low level.

In addition, the instructions may include placing the cards that are in the “most important” stack in priority order.

Additional important information can be gained if you ask offenders why they sorted the cards in the way that they did. This is an example of being able to obtain more information from an informal assessment than you could from a formal assessment.

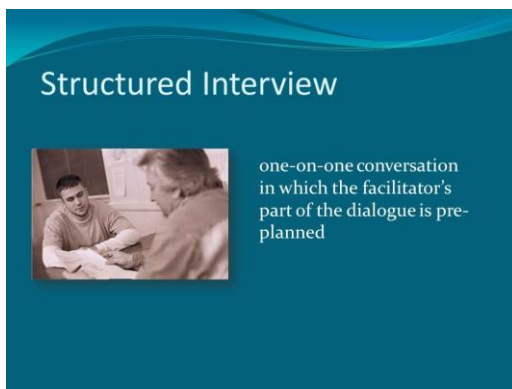
A card sort can be a very helpful and inexpensive activity to use with offenders. You could make sets of cards that represent desired job characteristics, work tasks, work-related values, or skills. The difficult part is making the bridge between items rated “very important” and jobs that have those characteristics.

PowerPoint 7



Another type of informal assessment is called a checklist. In this type of assessment, a person is asked to choose those items from a list of job characteristics or tasks, values, skills, or occupational titles that he or she prefers or has. The person may then be asked to prioritize those that are selected. Later in this lesson, you will have an opportunity to complete a checklist and evaluate its potential use with offenders.

PowerPoint 8




A structured interview is one of the techniques that you will use most. It is simply a one-on-one conversation for which you have designed your part of the dialogue. In other words, you have pre-determined the kind of information that you are seeking and have pre-planned questions that are designed to collect this information. For example, once you understand Holland's theory of vocational choice, you could interview a person about life experience related to each of the six Holland types. This can be a quite accurate way of assessing a Holland code.

PowerPoints 9 and 10

Game Simulations

Holland Party Game

Imagine that you walk into a party with six groups of people. The descriptions of the type of people in each group are in the boxes below. Choose the group you are most drawn to - the people you would most like to meet and talk with. After that, find the second group you are most interested in, and then the third group. Think about why you chose that group. Does the description of that group describe you? Can you give an example?



Game Simulations

Holland Party Game

Realistic	Investigative	Artistic	Social	Enterprising	Conventional
People who like to work with their hands, who enjoy working with tools, machines, objects, materials, or to be outdoors.	People who like to observe, learn, analyze, investigate, evaluate or solve problems.	People who have artistic, creative or dramatic abilities and like to work in artistic or dramatic situations using their imagination and creativity.	People who like to work with people in groups, teams, or are skilled with words.	People who like to work with numbers, facts, or managing for organizational goals or economic gain.	People who like to work with data, have interest in numerical ability, and are not afraid to follow others' instructions.
Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing puzzle/word games • Working with tools • Working with machines • Fixing household items • Doing craft projects 	Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing puzzle/word games • Studying • Learning technology • Doing a lab • Working in a lab • Creating a project for a science fair 	Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing clothes • Working to put on a play • Learning • Learning to dance • Drawing or painting • Writing stories or poetry • Playing music 	Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new friends • Working in a club • Teaching children • Teaching about other cultures • Solving people's problems 	Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading group activities • Working on a sales campaign • Buying clothes for a store • Talking to people at a party • Selling insurance 	Some activities they like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word processing or entering data • Keeping detailed records • Organizing paperwork • Working with a budget • Preparing reports

A game is a simulation of some kind that is designed to provide awareness of something in real life. There are several career games that can be used to teach concepts or provide awareness. For example, a game called The Real Game is a board game that makes adults aware of the chance events, planned events, and lifestyle implications related to career choice. Another game, called here the Holland Party Game, can be effectively used to assist offenders to identify their interests. This activity should be used with a group of at least 12 members.

PowerPoint 11

Interests and Skills Checklist

- Complete questionnaire about interests and work experiences
- Once completed, tally scores for all six categories
- Draw profile
- Join in group discussion

ACTIVITY: Take the Interests and Skills Checklist

Activity: Take the Interests and Skills Checklist

30 minutes

The Interests and Skills Checklist that I am giving to you now is an informal inventory. It lists activities, skills, and work experience by the six Holland types you have just learned. It encourages offenders to organize information about themselves in a way that can be used to identify training programs and jobs. I am going to give you instructions for taking it that you can model when you use it with offenders.

The instructor gives each participant a copy of the Interests and Skills Checklist and provides these instructions:

- This is a questionnaire that allows you to organize your interests, skills, and work experience into six different categories.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- The purpose of completing this activity is to attempt to identify some areas in which you might get additional training and/or get a job.
- Please complete the entire inventory carefully, placing a check mark to the left of each activity you really like or each skill you believe you have. Also write in any work experience you have had in this category. You need to complete all six categories.

The instructor walks around the room and assists anyone who does not understand the directions. The instructor continues to monitor in order to assure that participants are completing the items seriously. Persons who complete the inventory before most of the others should be asked to remain quiet, or to take a brief break until all have completed.

The instructor asks participants to tally their scores for each of the six categories. The instructor assures that participants have tallied their results correctly. Further, the instructor asks participants to plot their scores on the graph provided on page 32 and assures that they have done so correctly. The instructor assists individuals to complete their own profiles using the following instructions:

- Place a dot across from the numerical score that you had for each of the six types.
- Draw a line through each of the six dots.

- Look at the resultant profile.

The instructor asks:

- What is the code that you got by completing this informal activity?
- Does this code describe you reasonably well? How does it compare with your code and profile from the O*Net Interest Profiler you did earlier?
- What degree of consistency (relationship of the first two letters to each other on the hexagon) does your code have?
- What level of differentiation (the numerical difference between the highest and lowest scores) does your code have?
- How could you imagine using this inventory with offenders?

If training is available, use the Majors Chart (HANDOUT) to identify possible training programs that relate to the offender's code.

Administer the inventory in a classroom setting or in a one-on-one interview.

Use the Jobs Chart (HANDOUT) to identify possible jobs that relate to the offender's code.

If high interest is expressed in one or more areas, look at the skills in that category (Holland type) that the person believes he/she has and at the work experience. In other words, make a judgment about whether these interests are supported by skills.

- What problems might you have with its use?

Offenders may have low scores in all six areas, that is, a low, flat profile.

Offenders may not have skills to support interests.

Offenders may not have work experience, or if they do, may not be willing to write down what it is.

Offenders may need assistance in tallying the scores for each of the six types and in drawing the profile. In fact, you may want to do that task for them.

SUMMARY

In this session we have introduced you to informal assessments, discussed their strengths and weaknesses, and described a variety of informal assessment methods. You also have had the opportunity to assess yourself using an interest and skills checklist and learn how that method can be applied to your work with offenders.

TRAINING GRID for Module 3

Informal Career Assessments

Minutes	Agenda Item	Delivery	Slides	Worksheets
5	Introduction	Lecture/Discussion	1-2	
15	Informal and Formal	Lecture/Discussion	15-19	
35	Informal Assessments (Structured Interview / Checklists)	Activity	22-24	Interest and Skills Checklist
5	Summary	Lecture		
Total 60 min				