

Student Self-Assessment: Using Old Tools to Solve Modern Challenges



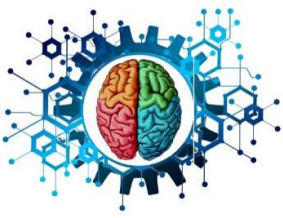
Attending the North Carolina CTE conference in July 2024 inspired me to share some insights through a series of posts. To kick things off, one clear takeaway from my conversations with CTE teachers, coordinators, and leaders was this: the self-assessment tools currently used in career exploration are outdated and inadequate for helping students make one of the most important decisions of their lives.

We are still using tools from the baby boomer era to prepare students for a world that is radically different from the one their grandparents knew. The most common self-assessment tools in public education today are interest surveys and personality assessments, many of which were developed long before modern technology. For instance, the Holland Code, a widely used tool, was created in 1959.

These tools were designed for a time when students were being prepared for an orderly world, predictable futures, and stable workplaces. To those reading this post, I ask: in your daily lives what activities have you undertaken using tools and thinking from 50 or 60 years ago? If you don't, why do we expect students to?

Many states now mandate career plans for 7th and 10th grade students. While well-intentioned, this approach can be counterproductive without the right tools. Planning for an uncertain future is inherently stressful, and using outdated tools only adds to this.

Today's job market is complex and fast-changing. The nature of work has transformed, with occupations within disciplines proliferating. A simple interest survey might indicate a match to IT, but which field in IT? The skills and ways of working vary greatly across the numerous high-tech jobs that have emerged in the last decade.



Advances in neuroscience have transformed our understanding of human behavior, providing insights that go far deeper than personality or interests. Much of who we are operates at the subconscious level, and bringing this into conscious awareness is what modern neuroscience can do.

Career exploration can now be precise, offering students evidence of a job match that replaces ambiguity with certainty and reduces stress. It is time to bring career exploration into the modern era with reliable, scientifically validated tools.

Mosaic Solutions: what we're about:

We work in the intersection of education and the workplace. Our formula is simple: the right pathway into the right job for the right student/candidate. We think and act holistically, recognizing that to make this formula a reality requires connectivity of the workforce ecosystem and all its stakeholders.

Practical neuroscience generates robust data about the two fundamental components that drive the workforce ecosystem: data about people and data about jobs.