

## WHAT IS YOUR PERSONALITY TYPE?

In the 1950s, psychologist John Holland devised a set of six personality types based on interests and work preferences: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (RIASEC). New Jersey-based author Laurence Shatkin uses these types in his books "10 Best College Majors for Your Personality" and "50 Best Jobs for Your Personality" to help people choose careers or fields of study in which they're likely to be happy and succeed. Most people are a mix of several personality types, but one or two tend to dominate, Shatkin said.

Here are the different personality types, and how they factor into the workforce and the classroom.

■ **Realistic:** Likes active, hands-on work in the physical world; suggested occupations and fields of study include electrical engineering, carpentry and landscape architecture.

■ **Investigative:** Likes intellectual work and problem-solving; suggested occupations and fields of study include medicine, computer engineering and biochemistry.

■ **Artistic:** Likes self-expression and working with forms, designs and patterns without strict confines or rules; suggested occupations and fields of study include advertising, theater arts, graphic design and creative writing.

■ **Social:** Likes working with and helping others; suggested occupations and fields of study include teaching, medical assisting and physical and occupational therapy.

■ **Enterprising:** Likes starting new projects and carrying them out, and deals well with risk and leadership roles; suggested occupations and fields of study include business, marketing, hospital administration and human resources management.

■ **Conventional:** Likes working with data and details, and does well with set procedures and routines; suggested occupations and fields of study include accounting, finance, public administration and pharmacy.

— Mary Ann Albright



Files/The Orange County Register

# A career crystal ball?

Assessing a young person's interests, personality can help shepherd them to a satisfying job

By MARY ANN ALBRIGHT  
Columbian staff writer

After a year of unfocused studies at Clark College, Sana Becker was tired of spending time and money on classes without a long-term plan in place. "I kind of spent an aimless year and realized I needed to figure out what I want to do," said Becker, 20, of Brush Prairie.

Enter Carole Mackewich, a professor and counselor in the Department of Human Development at Clark College.

Mackewich has taught career development courses at the college for 23 years. She helps students explore themselves and various occupations using personality and interest assessment tools such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which identifies people's preferences in the areas of social interactions, structure, decision-making and information-processing, and the Strong Interest Inventory, which measures people's interests and how they compare with those of individuals successfully employed in specific occupations.

Becker took Mackewich's class last fall, and of all the careers that the profiles suggested for her, merchandising caught her eye.

"I never thought before that with how much I love shopping, I could turn that into a career," said Becker, who since has decided she'd like to be a buyer for a boutique or own her own clothing shop. She graduates from Clark College this summer and plans to study fashion merchandising at Central Washington University beginning this fall.

In addition to introducing her to merchandising, the assessment tools Mackewich administered helped Becker steer clear of occupations that wouldn't be such a good fit for her outgoing nature.

"I had thought about going into accounting, but if I had it would have been a nightmare crunching numbers all day," she said.

Personality and interest assessments aren't crystal balls, but they can help guide students toward majors and careers they're likely to excel at and enjoy, according to local high school and college career counselors.

"It's a very rational way of making a career choice," said Mackewich. "You can plan your future rather than haphazardly fall into something that may not be a good fit."

Job availability, projected earn-

## RESOURCES

Several Web sites and community resources offer help matching careers and education tracks with personality types and interests.

■ The Clark College Counseling Center offers free career consultations for students and community members. To schedule an appointment, call 360-992-2345.

The college's Career Center administers the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a personality test, and the Strong Interest Inventory. The cost for each test is \$20. Other assessments can be taken for free online through the Washington Occupation Information System ([wois.org](http://wois.org)) and the

Oregon Career Information System ([oregoncis.uoregon.edu](http://oregoncis.uoregon.edu)).

These sites can be accessed by community members at the Clark College Career Center's computer lab in Gaiser Hall Room 108. Passwords are required to use the sites outside the lab.

Additionally, Clark College offers free one-hour workshops every quarter on choosing a major or career and using Career Center resources. No registration is required. For more information, call the Career Center at 360-992-2155 or see [clark.edu](http://clark.edu). From the main page, select Career & Workforce, then choose Career & Employment Services and click on Career Center.

For more in-depth exploration, Clark College offers career development courses. For Washington residents, the cost for the three-credit class with 30 hours of instruction is \$239.40, plus a \$22 testing fee, which includes all assessments. The two-credit class costs \$159.60 for 20 hours of instruction, plus the \$22 fee. The three-credit class is offered online for an additional \$30.

■ Washington State University Vancouver administers the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Strong Interest Inventory to WSU Vancouver students. The tests are paid for by student fees. For more information, contact the Student Resource Center at 360-546-9155 or visit [www.vancouver.wsu.edu/ss/career](http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/ss/career).

■ The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook offers information about the education and skills required for various jobs, as well as earning potential and projected growth. Visit [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco).

■ The O\*NET Resource Center offers free ability and interest profiles you can download at [onetcenter.org/CIP.html](http://onetcenter.org/CIP.html).

■ The Web site Goddess Flight offers a free Myers-Briggs Type Indicator-style personality test at [goddessflight.com/per](http://goddessflight.com/per).

■ My Future offers a free tool to help determine what types of work you might enjoy. Visit [myfuture.com](http://myfuture.com) and select Work Interest Quiz.



ing potential, educational requirements and work environment are all factors to consider when planning for the future, in addition to interests, values and abilities, Mackewich said.

It's not just college students taking these assessments and reflecting on who they are and where they want to go. High school counselors also use personality tests and interest inventories to help students choose classes and colleges and plan for the future.

Students are introduced to job exploration in middle school, but more structured career planning with formal assessments begins in high school, said Bobbi Arnold, career guidance specialist at Evergreen High School. The school subscribes to two programs, Bridges and Career Cruising, to help students discover their interests and aptitudes and research different careers. Career Cruising even offers "day in the life of" video segments where people in various occupations talk about their jobs, Arnold said.

The assessments are administered to freshmen to help them "pursue interest areas and develop skills that they can take to college or the workforce," she said.

The assessments aren't without caveats, however.

Though good tools, the tests aren't perfect and only provide a static snapshot, cautions Brian Rauscher, career counselor at Washington State University Vancouver.

"I don't think adolescence and young adulthood are the best times to read a lot into personality because it changes so much" during those years, he said.

Because personality and interests can evolve drastically during youth, high-schoolers revisit the results of their ninth-grade assessments with a counselor each year and retake them as needed, Arnold said.

The tests give students a framework for discussing their likes, dislikes and goals, and most find them empowering even if they don't agree with the suggested occupations, Arnold said.

Awareness of personality type and interests also makes one more competitive in the job market, Mackewich added. People who have taken assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Strong Interest Inventory know who they are, how their skills fit that job and why they're a good match, she said.

Candice Alvarez of Vancouver is hoping to parlay her newfound self-awareness into a second career.

Alvarez, a 47-year-old former Army helicopter pilot with a bachelor's degree in political science, recently decided she wanted to re-enter the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom for 18 years. She took Mackewich's career development course to get a better sense of what her options are.

Completing various personality and interest assessments helped her realize that her dream of starting a dinner theater isn't impossible and could be a good fit for her work style and talents.

"The tests said I'd be good as a business professional, a small-business owner or an entrepreneur," she said. "It really gave me confidence because I'd thought about starting a business of my own but wasn't sure I could do it."