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History:

FOCUS is an outgrowth of the IBM Corporation's pioneering work in the development of computer-based career and educational planning systems. Professor Donald E. Super of the Columbia University Teachers College and past President of the American Psychological Association Division of Counseling Psychology was the chief architect for the design of the career-planning model used in the IBM systems. Other key team members were Professor Roger A. Myers of the Columbia University Teachers College and past President of the American Psychological Association Division of Counseling Psychology, Professor David Tiedeman, then of Harvard University and Professor David Campbell, then of the University of Minnesota. Dr. Frank J. Minor was the IBM Corporation project director.

FOCUS is one of the top three career planning systems in the USA according to the National Association of Colleges And Employers, the FOCUS system is one of the three most widely used career-planning systems in the USA. (NACE, Summer 2000 Journal of Career Planning & Employment, Page 46).

The design of the Focus services and the occupational and training information are compatible with the U.S. Department of Labor's O-Net Online Website, America's Career-InfoNet and with the design standards of the National Career Development Association and the Association of Computer-Based Systems For Career Information (ACSCI). Focus is compliant with Level IV Comprehensive System Standards of ACSCI.

Product Overview: Assessments

Analyze Your Career Planning Status

The user answers questions about their career planning status. Based on their answers, FOCUS suggests how you can best use the system to satisfy their personal career planning needs.

Counselors' Notes: Design is based on (a) "Career Planning Maturity" theory and works of Columbia University Teachers College Professors D. E. Super, A. S. Thompson, R.A. Myers, and A.S. Lindeman. (b) Career Adaptability theories and works of D. E. Super

Assess Your Interests and Values

The user answers questions about their interests, and work values. FOCUS scores and summarizes their results in a personal profile that will be used for exploring occupations.

Counselors' Notes: Design based on J. H. Holland's 6-factor (RIASEC) theory of occupational categories based on self-assessment of interests and D. E. Super's work values inventory publications. The student's profile is rank ordered by top 3 Holland factors.

Explore and Analyze Occupations Based On Interests and Work Values

FOCUS identifies occupations that match the users interests and work value profiles created in Assessing Your Interests and Values. The user can analyze occupations that appeal to them and express their likes and dislikes about the critical aspects of each occupation. FOCUS summarizes their reactions for each occupation they analyze. Counselors' Notes: Student's occupation list based on his/her Holland interest profile. Occupations are listed in rank order from high to low based on work values matching with student's profile.

Explore and Analyze Occupations Based on Areas of Study and Education Level

In this module the user identifies the types of training programs that interest them. FOCUS then creates a list of occupations for them to explore that people with their educational interests typically enter. Counselors' Notes: Classification scheme for educational programs based on published works and Internet websites sponsored by U.S. Department of Labor (e.g. Career InfoNet, America's Learning Exchange, O'Net Online, Guide for Occupational Exploration, Dictionary of Occupation Titles, Occupational Outlook Handbook, NACE, etc. The list of occupations generated for the student is rank ordered from high to low based on the student's skills assessment (i.e., Data, People, Things)

Explore and Analyze Occupations Based On Personality and Life Values

The user answers questions that provide a picture of their personality type. They will also answer questions about their life values, that is, the things in life that are most important to them. FOCUS then creates a list of occupations that match both their personality and life values and helps them analyze critical features about the occupations. Counselors' Notes: Personality Inventory questions and scoring based on theories and works of C. G. Jung and theories and works on Life Values by D. E. Super. Results are not identical to Myers-Briggs Type Indicator because of differences in question design, scoring factors and the inclusion of Life Values questions in FOCUS.

Explore and Analyze Occupations Based On Leisure Activities

In this module the user answers questions about what kinds of activities they most enjoy doing in your spare time such as hobbies and recreation. FOCUS identifies occupations that match their leisure activities profile and helps them analyze critical features about the occupations. Counselors' Notes: Inventory and scoring based on the theories and works of C. McDaniels, D. E. Super, R. A. Myers and P. Cairo. Scoring profile created for student leisure time activities utilizes Holland's 6-factor typology model.

Search for and Analyze Occupations Based on Your Skills

In this module, the user will identify those skills in which they are most proficient or are currently developing. FOCUS then creates a list of occupations that match their skills and helps them analyze critical features about occupations that appeal to them. Counselors' Notes: Design is based upon the skills described in the U.S. Department of Labor's O'Net website. The skills used in FOCUS have been modified to improve user-friendliness and ease of interpretation.

Your Personal Development Needs

The user answers questions about how specific they are about their career plans and their personal development needs. Specific skill areas are identified which require further development. Counselors' Notes: Design is based on (a) "Career Planning Maturity" theory and works of Columbia University Teachers College Professors D. E. Super, A. S. Thompson, R.A. Myers, and A.S. Lindeman. (b) Career Adaptability theories and works of D. E. Super.

Product Overview: Tools and Resources

Find Information About Specific Occupations

The user can search for information for any occupation they wish. The user can type in the first few letters of the occupation or scan an alphabetical list. The information available includes a description of the occupation's duties, earnings, educational requirements, skills demands, work values satisfactions, outlook for job openings, amount of travel, opportunities for creativity, salaries, team work, etc.

Compare any two occupations side by side

The user can pick any two occupations from our FOCUS directory and compare all major features about the two occupations. The user scans through the alphabetic listings of titles. Each occupation is listed by a variety of commonly used alternative names.

Narrowing Down Their Options

As the user works through each of the assessments they are given the opportunity to flag specific occupations as having a high level of appeal to them. This tool helps them refine their occupational choices.

Personal Reports

Reports are generated for each of the assessments and presented in a straight forward easy to read format. Focus avoids the use of acronyms and other means that would attach labels to users in this set of reports. Diagnostic reports are available to counselors and other qualified professionals thru the administrators interface.

Resources

Career Dimensions offers a variety of their own publications to aid the user, or alternatively, any internet based resource can be accessed directly from the user main menu.