



A History of the World's

Most Accurate Career Assessments





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The Kuder assessments are among the rare online career guidance instruments that meet or exceed professional standards set forth by the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education.

Dr. Hoi Suen, Ed.D.

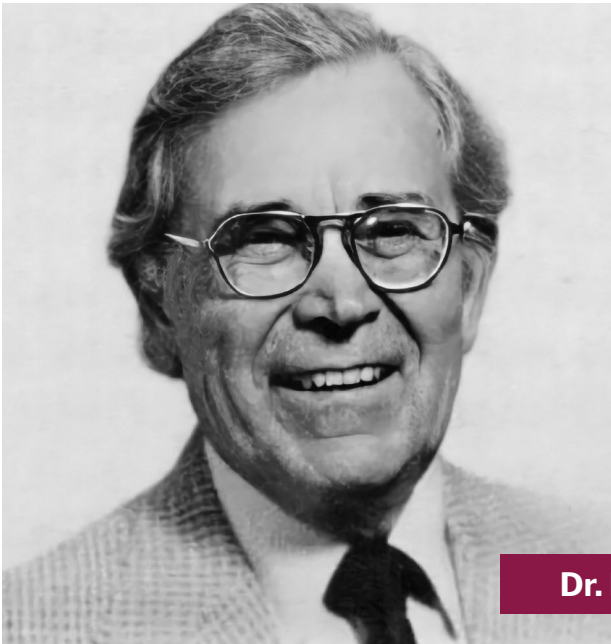
Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology
Penn State College of Education

OVERVIEW

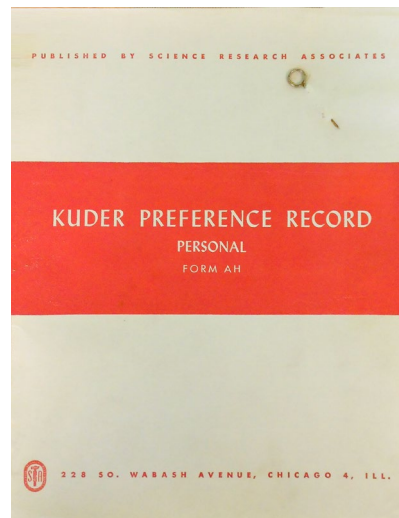
If you, like many others, have wondered where the Kuder company name comes from, the answer you're looking for is Dr. Frederic Kuder – world-renowned psychometrician and psychologist who released the Kuder Preference Record in 1938.

At the time, these career preference assessments were used primarily by students nearing graduation from high school or college as well as new veterans seeking appropriate placement in the U.S. workforce. Over the years, millions of students and adults have turned to career assessments and career counselors to help plan their future.

This preference record was the first step in the mission we at Kuder continue today as a global provider of college and career readiness services that utilize proven findings by Dr. Kuder to support our modern, online career assessments..



Dr. Frederic Kuder



THE HISTORY OF KUDER ASSESSMENTS

The field of vocational guidance was born in the late nineteenth century as the United States experienced an unprecedented amount of change to its social, political, and economic systems during the start of the industrial revolution. Urban areas were packed with newly immigrated people searching for work, and suddenly we needed a way to guide these workers toward a suitable career path (Wilson, 2013). Our story at Kuder began as Dr. Kuder sought a solution to this urgent need of our nation.

In addition to Dr. Kuder, many other prolific career guidance experts have had a hand in updating and refining our current career assessments to ensure their accuracy and reliability. Naturally, several changes to the original record have been made since 1938, but extraordinary care has been taken to prevent losing any of our foundational research or results in the process.



Dr. Donald G. Zytowski

Such experts include **Dr. Donald G. Zytowski**, a leading counseling psychologist who studied the predictive validity of the *Kuder Occupational Interest Survey* (Zytowski, 1976).

As well as **Dr. Donald Super**, who's holistic approach to career planning across a person's entire lifespan continues to be represented today in Kuder's use of Super's Work Values Inventory-revised. (Dumsch, 2016).



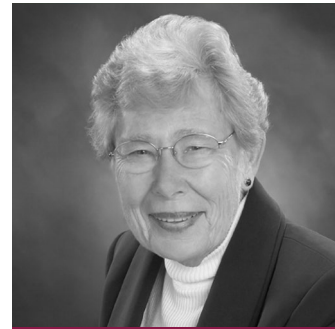
Dr. Donald Super



Dr. John Holland

The work of **Dr. John Holland** on his *Theory of Vocational Choice* is perhaps the most well-regarded in the career development industry for its empirical reliability in aligning an individual's personal interests to relative occupational pathways. Holland's theory happens to be based in part on the work of Dr. Kuder, as Holland and his team had relied on Kuder's career cluster profiles to conduct some of their early classifications of what would eventually become the six Holland personality types (Kuder, 2019). Holland's Theory is now fully integrated into Kuder's modern solutions to transform this hypothesis into proven results that thoughtfully guide students and adults throughout their career exploration journey.

The contributions of **Dr. JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey** to Kuder's ongoing legacy must also be recognized. She received international recognition for her decades of work in the field of career development. Her innovative conceptualization and development of career information systems serve as the foundation of the Kuder Career Planning System.



Dr. JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey

Kuder has a commitment to excellence in terms of the quality of the assessments that are contained within the system, as well as conducting ongoing research to look at what we can learn about system use and how we can use that learning to improve the systems that are delivered to our users.

Dr. Spencer Niles, Ed.D., LPC, NCC

Co-Director of the THRIVE Research and Intervention Center
for the College of William & Mary (Niles, 2016)

ASSESSMENT BENEFITS

So, why have all of these brilliant psychometricians and psychologists devoted their lives to the research of career assessment and planning? And why is our organization so dedicated to the subject? **For the same reason that teachers show up to school every day – because we want to help students succeed.**



We serve the needs of people miles and miles and miles away, and yet I always say when I have the opportunity... we share the same value about wanting better for our kids, for our community, and for ourselves. (Kuder, 2016)

Phil Harrington

Founder, Chairman & CEO of Kuder, Inc.

The evidence supporting the use of assessments to guide successful vocational decisions is overwhelming as countless scholars have conducted rigorous tests to prove their results again and again across a wide variety of subjects - from elementary students to working adults. These studies, many of which are noted in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* by **Dr. Margaret M. Nauta**, have concluded one clear outcome: **that there is an unquestionable connection between valid career assessments and their ability to predict a person's occupational preferences** (Nauta, 2009).

There are many ways to assess an individual to determine relevant occupational paths for their ongoing consideration. Our faculty of distinguished researchers have found that the best method lies in cross-examining **three key components:**

- What the person is genuinely interested in and passionate about.
- What they feel comfortable and confident doing.
- What they value most in a workplace environment.

Measuring any fewer than these three components results in an occupational analysis gap. After all, a person may be extraordinarily talented at something, but find that it is not very rewarding to them, which will eventually lead to disinterest and resentment of the activity. That finding is what shapes the three vital assessments within Kuder’s secondary and postsecondary platforms:



**Kuder
Career Interests
Assessment®**



**Kuder
Skills Confidence
Assessment®**



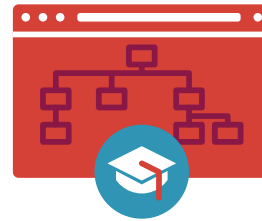
**Super's
Work Values
Inventory - Revised**

Research-based career assessments are absolutely still relevant. Their primary purpose is to give students and adults a focus for in-depth exploration.

The O*NET database provides extensive descriptions of approximately 1,000 occupations – more than any person would take time to learn about. The results of assessments of interests, skills, and work values narrow the field for career explorers to a list of manageable length that they can explore in depth. (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013)

Dr. JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey

ASSESSMENT APPLICATION



The Kuder assessments are a valuable tool to help spark new conversations between students and counselors, or with parents. While the career path recommendations provided by the Kuder Career Planning System offer an accurate representation of the student's current goals, they are not conclusive as to what career path a student must choose. Instead, the Kuder assessment outcomes should help guide individuals toward more thoughtful discussion and reflection to increase their self-awareness and empower them toward their next steps in life.

A lot of times, students or their parents think they know what they want their child to pursue, but it's not necessarily what the child is innately drawn to or passionate about. It can be really difficult for counselors to have that conversation with a parent, but when you have the Kuder assessment results right in front of you to validate the child's true interests, it makes their job much easier.

Dr. Therese Ellender

SLPSD STEAM Supervisor
Saint Landry Parish Schools

PROVEN ASSESSMENT IMPACT

The data and history of career development theory are extensive, but what about authentic results? What do these assessments mean to real people who have taken the tests and used them to make decisions about their career from 1938 to now?



Dorothy Fink
Kuder Preference Record

1945

Dorothy Fink completed the Kuder Preference Record in 1945 while at high school as she prepared for her next steps after graduation. Her results showed high marks in the categories of **Artistic, Social Service, and Persuasive**. Years later in 2023, her son, Rick Fink, discovered his mother's Kuder Profile Sheet among several more sentimental belongings in her home. Sadly, Dorothy had passed and was no longer able to discuss her assessment results or why she had held on to them for so many years, but her son has a few theories.

“My mother wasn’t the type of person to hang on to every scrap of paper she came across. She would save things that interested her so that she wouldn’t forget about them. Things that she wanted to come back to later to mull over some more. This record wouldn’t have been kept for so long if it wasn’t significant to her in some way.”

When asked if Dorothy's assessment results were indicative of her true self and interests, Rick responded with a resounding, **“Yes!”** He went on to describe how his mother had worked as a grade-school teacher in the years before meeting his father and starting their family together.

NAME Dorothy Winter Date of Test November 8, 1945
 Preliminary Profile Sheet for the KUDER PREFERENCE RECORD Form BB
 Scores: 1. MECHANICAL 55, 2. COMPUTATIONAL 16, 3. SCIENTIFIC 38, 4. PERSUASIVE 69, 5. ARTISTIC 88, 6. LITERARY 45, 7. MUSICAL 30, 8. SOCIAL SERVICE 75, 9. CLERICAL 38

Directions for Self-Scoring and Constructing a Profile
 Follow the directions below in order, placing a check in the box at the right of each step when you have completed that step:

- Look over the answer pad to make sure that you have answered every question.
- Take hold of the answer pad at the top toward the left side and lift upward, detaching the booklet from the binding.
- Turn the answer pad over to the last page which is marked with the figure 1. Count the number of circles in which holes are punched. Start at the arrow and follow the chain of circles over the page. Do not count the cases in which there are three punches in a circle, since these punches represent errors. In the space for score 1 on the cover of the answer pad record the number of holes you have counted.
- Follow the same procedure for each of the other scores. Note that scores 2 and 3 are obtained from the same page, and that scores 6 and 7 also come from one page.
- Obtain the count again for each score, recording your answers in the spaces provided on each page.
- Compare the scores on the cover with those entered on the inside pages. In cases of differences, make the counts over again until you are sure your scores are right. Then cross out the old score and write the correct score beside it.
- Enter the nine scores you have obtained in the spaces provided for them at the top of the chart on this sheet. Check the entries you have just made against the scores on the answer pad to be sure you have copied them correctly.
- Find the number in column 1 of the chart which corresponds to the score you have entered at the top of the column. Draw a circle around this number. Do this for each of the other columns. If your score is larger than any number in a column, draw your circle in that column at the level of the 100 percentile mark; if your score is smaller than any number in the column, draw your circle at the level of the 0 percentile mark.
- Draw a line from the circle in column 1 to the circle in column 2. Then draw a line from the circle in column 2 to the circle in column 3, and from the circle in column 3 to the circle in column 4. Continue this process across the chart to column 9. The result is your 'profile' on this test. Your adviser can tell you how to interpret it.

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 1707 MILWAUKEE AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Rick also said that, “She always had a love of art that had her making tons crafts over the years using all sorts of materials like fabrics, wood, and whatever else she could get her hands on to turn her idea into a creative gift for someone else.” This passion for art had a substantial impact on Rick, who pursued a bachelor’s degree on the subject when he chose to attend college after graduating high school.

As for Dorothy’s exceptional scores in social service and persuasiveness, Rick noted, “Have you ever known a mother of ten, or any mother for that matter, who wasn’t good at persuading her kids to get them to listen to her? It had to be like herding cats! But mom was great at it. She was very devoted to her family and community throughout her entire life. Once all of us kids had grown up and left home, she became even more involved as she helped run the town’s art co-op store for roughly 20 years.”

Rick continued to share “My mom never pushed me down a career path for art, but she definitely recognized and related to my interest in it. She was always very supportive of each of her children as she encouraged us to use our God-given talents throughout our lives whether that be as a full-time career or as a personal hobby.”



Monica Vest Wheeler Kuder Preference Record

1970^s

Similar revelations were made by Monica Vest Wheeler, who rediscovered the Kuder Preference Record that she had originally taken in the early 1970s, which was a time of rapid growth within the U.S. labor force as millions of baby-boomers graduated from high school and more than doubled the number of total college enrollments recorded in the previous decade (Wyatt, 2006).

Monica was thrilled to see how her scores were reflected in the career pathway she had followed over the last 50 years as her Profile Sheet displayed several scores within the high-ranking 75th percentile category, including a score of **99 in Literacy**.

*I guess that prediction came through as I've been a reporter, writer and book author all my adult life. My **Clerical score was 84**, which matches my writing and researching skills as I've written a dozen regional history books. An **Artistic score of 48** is not bad as I'm also a photographer!*

There were also several connections drawn based on areas where Monica had scored significantly lower, as she humorously stated, *"My husband will vouch that my scores of 37 in Mechanical, 39 in Computational, and 28 in Scientific are pretty spot on, too."*

Monica has utilized her vocational talents to bring awareness and enlightenment on complex health issues like cancer, Alzheimer's, traumatic brain injury, and more. Her passionate work continues with patients, families, and healthcare professionals across the country as Monica provides them with information and support to help them cope with everyday challenges, both physical and emotional (Vest Wheeler, 2023).

PROVEN ASSESSMENT IMPACT



I saw [Kuder's] motto and I was so influenced, because it says they help you to see who you can become and I truly know I've been helped and my eyes have been enlightened to the capabilities and potentials I possess... When I took the Kuder assessment it showed me three things: Social, Investigative, Enterprising. Well, when I was a kid I always aspired to be a doctor, coincidentally... When I explored the occupations, I found all of them were actually related to medicine; my field of work, my field where I have passion and I truly thank Kuder for this... I've learned to assess myself, I know my occupation, and I know where I'm going. This is Kuder.

There are these great ideas, these great innovations, these great discoveries which people never had the time, never had the capability, never had the motivation, never had the hope of pursuing. Why? They did not know they could do it. They did not have the push. They did not have the hope. They did not have Kuder.

I'm not going to wait until I finish high school to see what I'm going to do. I know it now. I'm not going to wait for the future like a probability. I know I can make it a possibility and plan for it and shape it. This is what Kuder has taught me.

David Kato

Former Lycee de Kigali Student
Rwanda



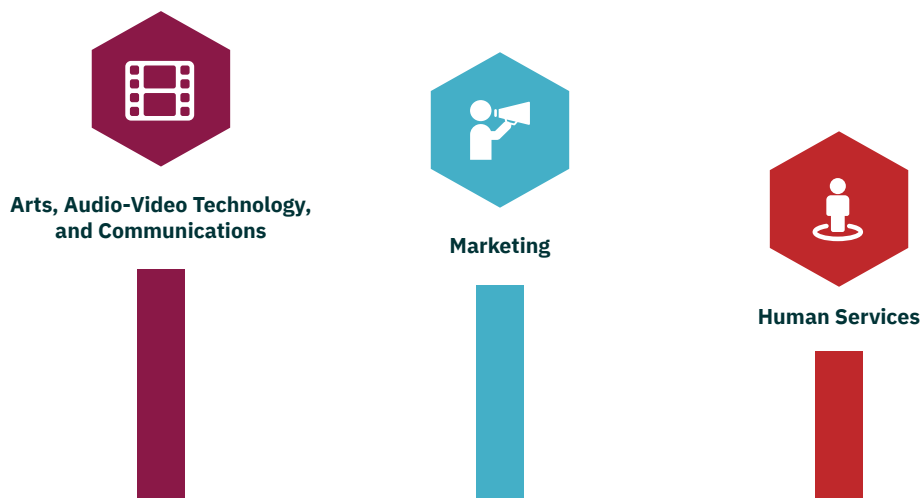
Sarah Wilson

Kuder Career Interest Assessment


2014

More recently in 2014, Sarah Wilson completed the Kuder Assessments via her Kuder Navigator® account while attending Waukee High School as a student in her junior class. There had been several significant changes made to the Kuder Preference Record by 2014, including its new format as it had been released in 2001 as the first-ever online career interests assessment. However, the accuracy of Sarah's results were still very much comparable to the experiences of Dorothy and Monica from decades earlier.

The Kuder Career Interests Assessment indicated that Sarah was drawn to occupations within the career cluster for **Arts, Audio-Video Technology, and Communications, Marketing, and Human Services**. These results remained fairly consistent in the following year when Sarah retook the test to find, again, that Arts, Audio-Video Technology, and Communications was her top-ranking cluster. So consistent, in fact, that Sarah secured an internship in the field of marketing and communications for none other than the leading career assessment company, Kuder, Inc.



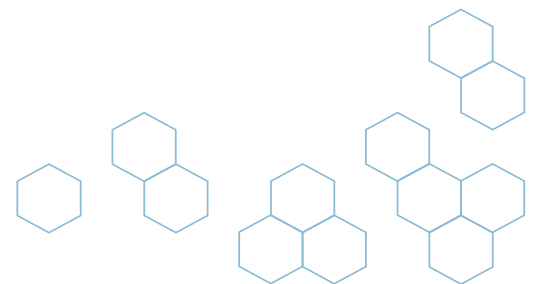
Sarah shared that *“From my middle school days to high school, I always enjoyed creative writing and thrived in my English classes compared to math and science. When I first took the Kuder assessments and saw Marketing in my results, I had a lightbulb moment envisioning that as a career path for myself. Once I got to choose more elective classes in high school, I tried out advertising, marketing, business law, and joined our school-to-work program, landing a marketing internship at Kuder.”* After high school, she was on the fast-track to attaining her degree in Marketing Management from the University of Iowa, and noted that this decision was largely a result of her initial assessment scores.



I attribute my ability to graduate college in three years to my self-awareness for which major path I wanted to pursue - thanks to my assessments and internships that reassured my choices along the way.

Following her graduation from college, Sarah held several marketing positions in organizations across the country until eventually coming home to Iowa to accept a full-time digital marketing specialist position with Kuder.

Sarah described this full-circle moment by saying, *“When I had the opportunity to rejoin the Kuder team in a professional capacity, I was thrilled! This role has given me the chance to promote the same assessments that were able to set me up for success with other students looking for their own lightbulb moment of career inspiration. I am excited to have a hand in furthering this company’s amazing legacy and show our partners how the Kuder Career Planning System can be used to guide students to see what they can be and make a plan to accomplish their goals - just like I was able to do!”*



CONCLUSION

Today we face a much different occupational landscape than what we saw during the introduction of the Kuder Preference Record. Students in this modern age are presented with a stunning number of postsecondary options as opposed to one or two clear pathways toward their expected lifelong career. Even the common route of attending a 4-year university that became the norm in the 1970s is now giving way to other career trends as 40% of students in 2022 noted they had no intention of attending college, but would instead be pursuing technical education degrees, entering the workforce right away, or enlisting in the military after graduation (Edge Research, 2022).

The challenge that students, along with their families and teachers, must address now is how to decide which path will lead them toward true success in a fulfilling career. As you may now be aware after reviewing the numerous credible sources highlighted thus far, the answer to that challenge begins with accurately assessing the student on what career interests, skills, and work values are most relevant to them.

The ongoing process of maintaining the validity of Kuder's assessments is stewarded by Dr. Hoi Suen, distinguished professor emeritus of educational psychology at The Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Suen and his team of psychometric, educational assessment, and evaluation specialists routinely review new research and studies to uphold the relevancy, diversity, and accuracy of the Kuder assessments in their measurements of modern students.

The culmination of research and personal testimonies to the long-lasting efficacy of the Kuder assessments cannot be understated. From their origin as the most widely used and trusted occupational preference record to their current implementation among millions of students and adults across the world seeking understanding and guidance along their career path, the Kuder assessments are regarded as the most valid, reliable, and accurate career assessments available from 1938 to now.

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Kuder is backed by 85 years of assessment history and research and has over 25 years of experience providing career and workforce development system for all ages for government and educational agencies including the U.S. military, departments of education, colleges, districts, and schools. Millions of people worldwide have relied on Kuder for high quality products backed by an unparalleled level of service.

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