



Counselor Handbook

A Counselor/Advisor's Guide for using TruTalent Skills
to understand, counsel and advise individuals

Contents

Background	3
Reading Level.....	3
Skills and Definitions.....	4
Conscientiousness.....	4
Creativity.....	4
Critical Thinking.....	4
Leadership.....	4
Social-Emotional.....	4
The Assessment.....	6
The Results.....	7
Introduction	7
Skill Sections.....	7
Skill definition.....	7
Skill and facet graphs	7
Developing your Skills.....	7
Careers and Pathways	8

Last revised September 18, 2020

Background

TruTalent® Skills is founded on the premise that individuals equipped with an understanding of their unique skillset and techniques for further skill development are in a better position to succeed at school and in the workplace. Drawn from a selection of capabilities identified by employers and educators as crucial for academic and employment success, the skills in *TruTalent Skills* are informally aligned with the HEXACO model, a trait-based taxonomy that assesses six personality factors (Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness).

In the past, skills have been narrowly defined and categorized under such labels as "soft", "employability", "21st century" and "transferable". *TruTalent Skills* aims to take a broader approach to characterizing skills so they can be applied effectively in a variety of circumstances. The skills in *TruTalent Skills* are not perfectly discrete from one another, but instead generally describe different areas of talent and ability.

Following many months of intensive research and analysis, five major skill areas were selected for development. The process involved examining two types of resources: the first consisted of data from research-based organizations such as the American Psychological Association, Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), the O*NET Resource Center and the U.S. Institute for Education Sciences; the second consisted of findings from large, in-the-field, survey-based organizations, such as LinkedIn, Monster, Indeed and Forbes. Our research team sifted through the literature to find similarities and agreement amongst all of the sources, eventually resulting in the development of a master list of 58 skills and traits deemed important for academic and workplace success. From that list the team worked to remove redundancy and overlap for a final refined list of the five skills described in *TruTalent Skills*.

Reading Level

The readability of the *TruTalent Skills* assessment questions and report content has been measured with the ReadablePro analysis tool, available online at readable.com. The tool provides scores for the following five recognized tools, each of which uses a unique formula to determine the readability of a piece of text:

- The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, which rates one's comprehension of the text on a U.S. school grade level
- The Gunning Fog Index, which estimates the years of formal education one requires to understand the text upon first reading it
- The Coleman-Liau Index, which provides an approximation of the U.S. grade level one requires to comprehend the text
- The SMOG Index, which estimates the years of education one requires to understand the text
- The Automated Readability Index, which produces an approximation of the U.S. grade level one needs to comprehend the text

Additionally, ReadablePro provides the "Readability Rating", a bespoke rating system that factors in all of the scores from the other algorithms to create an overall score, displayed as a letter grade.

Skills and Definitions

The skills in *TruTalent Skills* have been defined as follows:



Conscientiousness

Focus and organization, and completing tasks in a timely, thorough manner, are the hallmarks of this skill. It also involves self-regulation, allowing one to create and follow plans and accomplish specific goals. Guided by a sense of practicality, the conscientious individual makes efficient use of resources and exhibits modesty in valuing others' contributions.

While useful in all careers, this skill is especially important for those in finance, transportation, administration, security, technology and trades.



Creativity

Driven by a desire to explore different ideas and experiences, people with this skill seek new and original ways to express themselves. They tend to be more resilient and sincere as they present their unique ideas despite judgment or social expectations.

While useful in all careers, this skill is especially important for those in art, entertainment and design.



Critical Thinking

A knack for gathering, evaluating and understanding information is core to this skill, which is key to making rational decisions and creating solutions. Critical thinkers also require self-awareness, to recognize their biases and to be aware of their influence on people and situations.

While useful in all careers, this skill is especially important for those in science, medicine, law and ethics, and journalism.



Leadership

Inspiring others, managing people and projects, and building and maintaining a network of contacts are all aspects of this skill. It also includes decisiveness—and accepting any consequences that may result—along with a capacity to tolerate stress.

While useful in all careers, this skill is especially important for those in management, coaching, politics and entrepreneurship.



Social-Emotional

This skill is founded on the ability to work with others in a positive and productive manner. That includes connecting with people in a genuine and sincere way, being considerate of their needs and tolerant of differences. It also requires self-awareness, to understand how one's actions affect other people.

While useful in all careers, this skill is especially important for those in education, sales, communications and services.

Because the definitions are broad, the five skills cannot be measured directly. Instead they are derived from self-reported measures of 15 skill facets, selections of which are combined to comprise each skill. Skill facets are more narrowly defined constructs that are based on a specific behavior. The skill facets are, in part, informed by the natural disposition of the individual, but can be further developed through practice and coaching.

The relationship between each skill and its component skill facets is outlined in the table below.

Skill	Skill Facets	
Conscientiousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline • Modesty • Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicality • Thoroughness
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Innovation • Curiosity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Sincerity
Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Curiosity • Modesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicality • Self-Awareness
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement • Influence • Confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience • Sociability
Social-Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration • Resilience • Self-Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerity • Sociability

You will notice that some skill facets are part of more than one skill. What is not shown here is that facets are weighted differently within a skill and across different skills. It is the unique combination of facets and their weightings that form each skill.

Because some facets affect more than one skill, developing a single facet can enhance more than one skill.

The Assessment

The assessment should take only 10 to 20 minutes to complete. It contains two types of questions. First is a series of rating-style questions in which individuals are asked to rate a statement about themselves on a scale of zero to five, or "not at all" to "definitely." The second type of question presents two different words or phrases. Individuals must choose the word or phrase with which they most closely identify. In some cases, individuals will have to make a tough choice and select the response that matches *better*, even if neither response (or both) appears to match well.

The screenshot shows the TruTalent Skills interface with a rating-style question. The question is: "I don't concern myself with little details in my work." Below the question is a horizontal scale from 0 to 5. The scale is labeled "Not at all" at 0 and "Definitely" at 5. The scale has five orange circles representing the ratings. The circle for rating 4 is selected, indicated by a checkmark. The progress bar at the top right shows "16 of 69". Navigation buttons "BACK" and "NEXT" are at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the TruTalent Skills interface with a choice-style question. The question is: "Even if it is not ideal, choose the answer that better describes you." Below the question are two options: "Follow my hunches" and "Follow procedure". The "Follow procedure" option is selected, indicated by a checkmark. The progress bar at the top right shows "46 of 69". Navigation buttons "BACK" and "NEXT" are at the bottom.

It is crucial that individuals read the introduction to the assessment. It will assist them in providing the most accurate responses possible and, correspondingly, result in a more reliable evaluation of their skills. In brief, individuals are advised to:

- Relax. There are no right or wrong answers
- Be honest about their abilities
- Not be influenced by what others may expect of them

Prior to having them begin the assessment, you may find it useful to have a discussion with the participants about how we can be influenced by external factors such as friends, family, media and social expectations. Encourage participants to consider these factors and do their best to resist being swayed by those influences as they respond to the questions.

If you, as a professional, are monitoring individuals while they complete the assessment, try to keep any distractions to a minimum. Participants should not discuss questions or responses with each other.

If the individuals have difficulty reading or understanding the content of the assessment questions, professionals are encouraged to read the question out loud to them. If a person needs help with the definition of a word, provide one that is neutral: avoid any positive or negative connotation to words or phrases that may unduly influence the person's response.

The Results

Results are displayed in the TruTalent report format. The report is divided into sections to help individuals focus on specific areas one at a time. The contents are organized as follows:

Introduction

This is a brief overview of the key sections in the report, along with some important reminders for understanding and using the information contained in it.

Skill Sections

Each of the five skill sections contains:

Skill definition

This is a brief description of the skill, including reference to its constituent facets and most applicable career areas.

Skill and facet graphs

A graph for each skill and skill facet is displayed to represent the individual's current level. The level is a percentile comparison to a large sample of other individuals who have taken the same assessment. It is not a perfect measure of an individual's abilities. Certain factors can affect the score, such as the individual's confidence, honesty or even mood while taking the assessment.

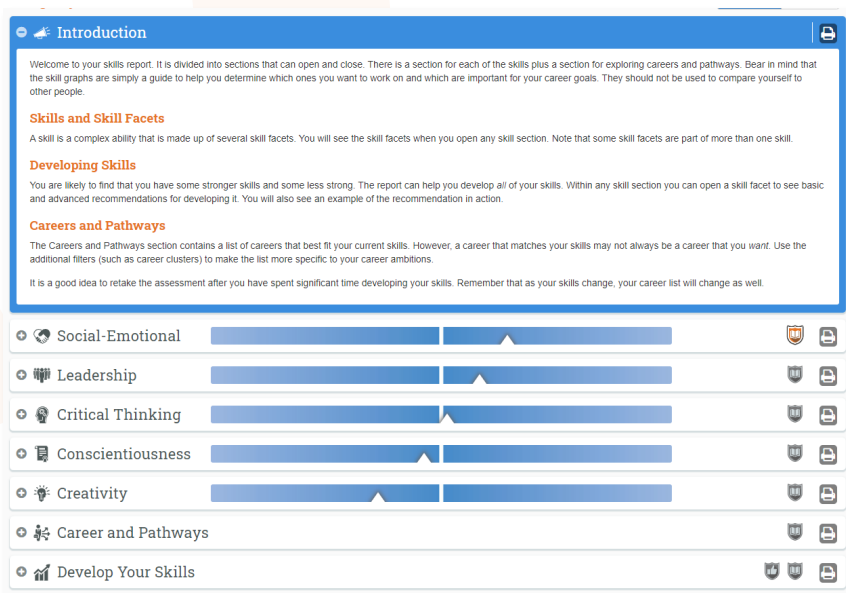
It is recommended that a professional who is well acquainted with the individual review and verify the results. If it is determined that the individual's responses were influenced by complicating factors, the assessment can be repeated to try and obtain more accurate results.

The graphs *are* a good indicator of the relative skill levels of the individual — in other words, the skills that are strengths versus challenges. The graphical levels are also a good indicator of how the individual might compare in each of the skills and skill facets relative to their peers.

Developing your Skills

Here the individual is provided with a definition of the 15 skill facets and recommendations for developing each facet respectively. Each recommendation includes at least one example to help individuals understand how the skill facet might be applied in various circumstances, such as academic, work and personal.

Recommendations are designated as either basic or advanced. Individuals can check a box next to a recommendation to indicate their interest in it or to show that it has been tried. Checking at least one basic and one advanced recommendation earns the *recommendation badge* for that skill facet.



Some of the examples include links to websites that provide complementary information on practicing and developing the particular skill facet. The websites provide good opportunities to generate skill development ideas beyond the scope of the recommendations in the *TruTalent Skills* report. In many cases, individuals may already be participating in activities for school or work that can help them develop certain skills. Individuals can reflect on and document activities that develop the skills described in their report and add that documentation to their portfolio.

Careers and Pathways

This is a list of careers, displayed in order of the level of match to the skills results. Individuals can use search filters on the page to further refine the career list. They can also select tabs to show career matches that incorporate their results from other TruTalent assessments, if applicable. For example, if *TruTalent Personality* has also been completed, the Combined Results option will display careers that match both the individual's skills and their personality.

Remember that the main list of careers in *TruTalent Skills* is matched to skills only. Skills indicate what people are capable of, but not necessarily what matches their interests. To better filter the list of careers, individuals can use the *Career Clusters* option to limit the display to careers in areas that also match their interests.

The screenshot shows the 'Career and Pathways' section of the TruTalent interface. The top navigation bar is set to 'Creativity'. Below it, the 'Career and Pathways' header is visible. A message states: 'The careers listed below are all linked to your assessment results, with the careers at the top being the best match for your profile.' There are filters for 'Career Clusters', 'Education', 'Outlook', 'Salary', and 'Rating'. A 'Keyword Search' box is also present. The main content area shows a table of careers with columns for Career Title, Career Cluster, Education, Outlook, Salary, Rating, and Jobs. The careers are listed in descending order of match to the user's skills.

Career Title	Career Cluster	Education	Outlook	Salary	Rating	Jobs
Park Naturalists	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	Graduate	Good	\$65,130	4 stars	Info
Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists	Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security	Graduate	Good	\$44,300	3 stars	Info
Forest and Conservation Technicians	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Graduate	Good	\$38,630	3 stars	Info
Range Managers	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	Graduate	Good	\$65,130	3 stars	Info
First-Line Supervisors of Aquacultural Workers	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Graduate	Good	\$48,820	3 stars	Info
Orthotists and Prosthetists	Health Science	Graduate	Good	\$69,920	3 stars	Info
Anesthesiologist Assistants	Health Science	Graduate	Good	\$102,090	3 stars	Info
Commercial Pilots	Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Graduate	Good	\$86,260	3 stars	Info
Aquacultural Managers	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	Graduate	Good	\$75,790	3 stars	Info
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	Health Science	Graduate	Good	\$69,240	3 stars	Info

At the bottom of the interface, there is a 'Develop Your Skills' section.