**Social Interest Inventory Exercise**

This Social Interest Inventory measures a student's level of interest in social issues and how willing they are to help people in need. This inventory is tied to research that shows that students with high social interest are more apt to have clear career objectives. Students who score lower on the inventory might benefit from social learning activities and volunteer/community service work.

Students will identify skills they have acquired in school, clubs, volunteering, from a part-time job or sports participation. These transferable skills will be compared with those that are necessary in the world of work. Students will learn that many skills obtained from daily life transfer to their first jobs.

The Social Interest Inventory will help students identify which values or ideals are most important to them and their first job. They will learn to identify, define, and rank what they must have from a job in order to feel fulfilled in work and at home.

In addition, this inventory will help students identify interests from hobbies, activities, personal passions, etc. and use them as a foundation for career development.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Ask students to choose ONE of the words in each pair below.

Give students 15 minutes to complete the exercise.

Help them define words that might be unfamiliar.

The word the student chooses should answer the question: *I would rather be…*

The word they choose does not have to be a trait they already possess. If it is a word that describes him/her at present, that is fine; but it can also be a word that might describe the student in the future.
"I would rather be ..."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imaginative - Rational</th>
<th>Neat - Logical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpful - Quick-Witted</td>
<td>Forgiving - Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neat - Sympathetic</td>
<td>Efficient - Respectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level-Headed - Efficient</td>
<td>Practical - Self-Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligent - Considerate</td>
<td>Capable - Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reliant - Ambitious</td>
<td>Alert - Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful - Original</td>
<td>Imaginative - Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative - Sensible</td>
<td>Realistic - Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generous - Individualistic</td>
<td>Considerate - Wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible - Original</td>
<td>Sympathetic - Individualistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable - Tolerant</td>
<td>Ambitious - Patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy - Wise</td>
<td>Reasonable - Quick-Witted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ANSWER KEY:** The **BOLD and UNDERLINED** words are the words that measure Social Interest. The other words do not indicate qualities of Social Interest or are filler words.

"I would rather be ..."

- imaginative - rational
- **helpful** - quick-witted
- neat - **sympathetic**
- level-headed - efficient
- intelligent - **considerate**
- self-reliant - ambitious
- **respectful** – original
- creative - sensible
- **generous** – individualistic
- responsible – original
- capable – **tolerant**
- **trustworthy** – wise
- neat - logical
- forgiving – gentle
- efficient - **respectful**
- practical - self-confident
- capable - independent
- alert - **cooperative**
- imaginative - **helpful**
- realistic - **moral**
- **considerate** - wise
- **sympathetic** - individualistic
- ambitious – **patient**
- reasonable - quick-witted
**Scoring:**

Collect each student’s answer sheet.

Count how many of the **BOLD and UNDERLINED** Social Interest (SI) words were circled for each student.

**Table of results**

- 0-1 Key Words Circled = LOW SI
- 2-3 Key Words Circled = AVERAGE SI
- 3-4 Key Words Circled = ABOVE AVERAGE SI
- 5-7 Key Words Circled = HIGH SI

**WHAT DO THE SCORES MEAN:**

LOW & AVERAGE SI scores mean students could benefit from learning how they can HELP others or become useful to others. Volunteering for those less fortunate is a good way of developing one’s SI skills. Doing a good deed for a stranger for no reason is another good way of strengthening one’s SI.

ABOVE AVERAGE & HIGH SI students should take time to teach other students how helping others builds a stronger sense of self-worth, as well as a better ability to identify useful skills.

**DISCUSS WITH YOUR STUDENTS:**

Students are continuously attempting to pass courses, fulfill degree requirements, and plan for their future careers. Career counselors who work in an academic setting often encounter students who are faced with a career-development impasse due to poor grades, indecision about which major to pursue, or an uncertainty about how to formulate long-term career goals. Psychologist Alfred Adler theorized that individuals who have high levels of social interest are most successful in achieving satisfaction in their career “life task” because their innate potentiality for “socially useful goal striving” has been realized.

Since Adler’s days of pioneering correlations between social growth and occupational self-actualization, other
psychologists and researchers have supported his belief that engaging in fulfilling work is one of the most fundamental requisites for a well-adjusted lifestyle. Child psychologist Rudolf Dreikurs believed the inability to successfully accomplish this work-related “life task” was a symptom of feeling without use to others. From his perception, one of the most successful means of alleviating this maladjustment is through the development of the client’s interest in social welfare, which also involves helping the client discover how she can become a successful contributor to the common good of society.