RIASEC Cards Sort – Brief User Guide

RIASEC – Cards Sort (© S. Rochat, 2019)
Printable version – Online version for Activities / Occupations

Purpose	Vocational interests are emotional states or traits that reflect a person's preferences for certain activities or work environments (Su et al., 2009). They are central to the choice of an educational program or occupation.
Background	The RIASEC instrument is based on Holland's (1959) RIASEC interest model, which distinguishes six broad interest categories: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional.
Rationale	The RIASEC instrument aims to support the career counseling process by helping participants to: • Describe their preferences for work activities and occupations in a flexible way. • Identify occupations or educational programs that may match these preferences. • Identify possible discrepancies between their perceptions of an occupation and the activities it actually involves. Vocational interests can also be explored using inventories, but sorting cards encourages dialogue, collaboration, and reflection rather than assessment.
Process	With reference to the 5As model of career counseling, the RIASEC instrument is particularly relevant during: • Activating the introspection: promoting self-awareness by exploring vocational preferences and opening up reflection on the fit between the person and the tasks performed in a particular work environment.
Content	The RIASEC instrument contains 120 cards: 60 Activity cards and 60 Occupation cards. Each RIASEC category is represented by 10 characteristic activities and 10 typical occupations.
Administration	1. Invite the participant to sort the Activity cards according to how much they would enjoy doing each activity. 2. Invite the participant to sort the Occupation cards according to how much they would enjoy working in each occupation. 3. Explore together the similarities and differences between the activity and occupation sorts, as well as the participant's career or educational aspirations.
Interpretation	The letters and pictograms on the cards can help identify patterns: R = Realistic; I = Investigative; A = Artistic; S = Social; E = Enterprising; C = Conventional.
Further Reading	• Mapping career counseling interventions (Chapter 5.1). • Les 5As du conseil en orientation (Chapter 4.1).
References	Holland, J. L. (1959). A theory of vocational choice. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *6*(1), 35–45. Su, R., Rounds, J., & Armstrong, P. I. (2009). Men and things, women and people: A meta-analysis of sex differences in interests. *Psychological Bulletin*, *135*(6), 859–884.