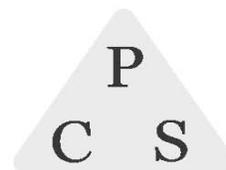


# Career Planning Scale™



**John J. Liptak, Ed.D**

## Administrator's Guide

Directions for Administering and Interpreting the *CPS*

### Introduction

This brief guide was written to provide additional information for professionals using the *Career Planning Scale (CPS)*. The *CPS* helps individuals identify, implement, and develop their career plan. It is designed to be self-scored and self-interpreted without the use of any other materials, thus providing immediate results for the respondent and/or counselor. It takes approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

### Theoretical Background

Career counselors are often challenged with the goals of exploring, defining, and nurturing career maturity with their clients and students. Career maturity has been defined as the ability to successfully negotiate the tasks and transitions inherent in the process of career development and the readiness to make age- and stage-appropriate career choices (Yost & Corbishly, 1987). Liptak (2001) suggested that career maturity is a hypothetical construct as well as a psychological one. He concluded that career maturity explores an individual's readiness to deal with the career planning process and his or her degree of success in coping with the current tasks involved in career planning, including learning about oneself, learning about the world of work, and making effective career decisions.

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Super (1983) was one of the first career development professionals to research and write about the concept of career maturity. He suggested that career maturity, or career adaptability, contains five distinct elements:

- **Planfulness:** Knowing how to effectively develop and implement a career plan
- **Exploration:** Asking questions and gathering information related to personal characteristics such as interests, skills, and personality; using occupational resources; and participating effectively in school, family, community, and the workplace
- **Information Gathering:** Gathering information about the world of work, occupational preferences, and work and other life roles
- **Decision-Making:** Making career choices based on sound principles of decision-making
- **Reality Orientation:** Developing self-knowledge and realistic career options; demonstrating consistency of preferences; having clear values, interests, and objectives; and developing work experiences

Gribbons and Lohnes (1968) studied aspects of career intelligence and readiness for career planning and found four distinct patterns of career maturity:

- **Constant Maturity:** Person shows a consistent pursuit of stated and realistic career goals.
- **Emerging Maturity:** Person begins the passage through the appropriate developmental career stages and completes appropriate developmental tasks.
- **Degeneration:** Person progressively loses sense of hope and accomplishment, accompanied by frustration and an eventual loss of career status.
- **Constant Immaturity:** Person consistently has unrealistic goals and makes no or limited progress toward reaching them.

Seligman (1994) suggested that positive career maturation can be generally characterized by several lifelong processes, including

- Increasing self-awareness
- Increasing knowledge of career options
- Increasing congruence between self-image (abilities, interests, values, personality) and career goals
- Increasing competence for career planning and success
- Improving career-related attitudes (achievement orientation, independence, planfulness, commitment, motivation, self-efficacy)
- Increasing success and satisfaction with one's life and career development

In short, career maturity is a concept that is used in career counseling to define a set of tasks or skills that individuals need to possess in order to make and implement effective career decisions. Some of the tasks involved in the career planning process include having knowledge about how the world of work operates, having knowledge about one's personal characteristics that are important in the making a career choice, having knowledge about occupations of

interest, knowing how to make effective career decisions, knowing how to develop a career plan after career decisions have been made, and understanding how to implement career decisions. These six important career maturity tasks represent the scales on the *CPS*.

## Super's Career Development Theory

The *CPS* is based on Super's (1980) Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development. Super felt that career development is a process that unfolds gradually over the life span, a process that includes work adjustment and multiple life roles, rather than the one-time choice of an occupation.

Super (1990) envisioned career maturity as the extent to which an individual has successfully completed the developmental tasks at his or her stage of career development. He (1980) identified the following developmental stages through which people pass during a career:

- **Growth** (birth to 14 or 15) is characterized by the development of capacity, attitudes, interests, and needs associated with self-concepts.
- **Exploration** (ages 15 to 24) is characterized by the development of a tentative plan in which choices are narrowed but not finalized.
- **Establishment** (ages 25 to 44) is characterized by trial and stabilization through experience in various occupations.
- **Maintenance** (ages 45 to 64) is characterized by a continual adjustment process to improve working position and situation.
- **Disengagement** (ages 64+) is characterized by pre-retirement considerations, reduced work output, and eventual engagement in leisure and other roles.

In conjunction with the stages of career development, Super (1980) identified the tasks to be accomplished in each stage for a person to move to the next one. In addition, he identified specific behaviors and attitudes that are required for people to achieve those developmental tasks. Super's developmental tasks include the following:

- **Growth** (ages 4 to 14): Person becomes concerned about the future and about acquiring competent work habits and attitudes.
- **Crystallization** (ages 14 to 18): Person formulates a general vocational goal through awareness of resources, interests, abilities, and values. He or she begins planning for a preferred occupation.
- **Specification** (ages 18 to 21): Person moves from tentative occupational interests toward a specific occupational preference.
- **Implementation** (ages 21 to 24): Person completes training in the area of vocational preference and begins employment.
- **Stabilization** (ages 24 to 35): Person confirms choice of a preferred career through actual work experience.
- **Consolidation** (ages 35+): Person becomes established in career through advancement, status, and seniority.

Super concluded that career maturity is necessary for people to make effective career decisions and develop a successful career plan. Super and Knasel (1979) later redefined the career maturity process as career *adaptability*. They suggested that career adaptability, or the attitudes and information needed to effectively cope with changing work situations, is the most important aspect in exploring, choosing, planning for, and implementing occupational choices.

### The Need for Career Planning

At one time, career planning was seen as a task that people did as adolescents that would be effective for the rest of their lives. Of course in today's working world, this is no longer possible. Most career counselors now agree that career development is a lifelong process of making small and large decisions about occupations, educational courses, and leisure activities. Therefore, the career planning process is an ongoing activity for people of all ages.

The career planning process often functions as a time to orient and organize your life and your career (Michelozzi, Surrell & Cobe, 2004). Thus it involves much more than simply figuring out which job is best; career planning is the process of exploring oneself and the world of work, making a decision, developing a plan based on that decision, and then implementing the plan. Michelozzi, Surrell, and Cobe concluded that the career planning process has several steps, including

- Articulating who you are and what you do well
- Exploring the world of work
- Seeing how your personal characteristics fit into the world of work
- Sharpening your career decision-making skills
- Implementing career decisions and enhancing job-hunting skills

Borchard, Kelly, and Weaver (1980) suggested that people need to develop a take-charge approach to planning their career. Unlike more traditional methods of career planning, they promoted the idea that because career choice and implementation are a lifelong process, people must develop the skills needed to continually update their career plan.

### The Need for the CPS

The *Career Planning Scale (CPS)* is designed to meet the need for a brief assessment instrument to help people identify, choose, plan for, and develop an effective career. It is based on the notion that as the world of work continues to change, people need to be skilled in the career planning process. Unfortunately, very few people understand or can implement that process (Liptak, 2001; Lock, 2005).

Many career counselors have described the career planning process and all suggest a similar model. Borchard, Kelly, and Weaver (1980) believed that because there are thousands of kinds of work to choose from, the key to success involves working through a series of steps leading to the implementation of an occupational choice. Similarly, Craddock (2004) suggested four stages that build the skills and understanding necessary for career planning. These stages include Awareness of personal characteristics, Exploring blocks to effective career decision-making, Making effective decisions, and Implementation.

The *CPS* mirrors the career planning process and allows career counselors to quickly and efficiently gather information about how prepared their clients are for developing a career plan. Based on the research related to career planning and career development, it was determined that the *CPS* should include six scales: Self-Knowledge, Knowledge of the World of Work, Knowledge of Occupations, Career Decision-Making, Career Planning, and Career Implementation.

The *CPS* is intended for use in comprehensive career guidance programs, employment counseling programs, rehabilitation counseling programs, college counseling centers, college career and placement offices, outplacement programs, military transition programs, school-to-work programs, welfare-to-work programs, employee development programs, or any agency that works with clients or students who are engaged in the career decision-making and planning process.

## Administration and Interpretation

The *CPS* is simple to take and can be easily scored and interpreted. Each *CPS* inventory contains 48 career planning skills statements divided into six scales: Knowledge of the World of Work, Self-Knowledge, Knowledge of Occupations, Career Decision-Making, Career Planning, and Career Implementation. Each assessment also includes scoring directions, an interpretation guide, suggestions for improvement, and a career planning worksheet.

The *CPS* can be administered to individuals or to groups. It is written for individuals at or above the eighth grade level. Since none of the items are gender specific, the *CPS* is appropriate for a variety of audiences and populations.

### Administering the CPS

The *CPS* can be self-administered and the inventory booklets are consumable. A pencil or pen is the only other item necessary for administering, scoring, and interpreting the assessment. The first page contains spaces for normative data including name, date, gender, and age. Instruct each respondent to fill in the necessary information. Then read the description and directions on the first page while all respondents follow along. Test administrators should ensure that each respondent clearly understands all of the instructions and the response format. Respondents should be instructed to mark all of their responses directly on the inventory booklet. The *CPS* requires approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

The *CPS* uses a series of steps to guide respondents. In Step 1, respondents are asked to read each statement and then circle the response that best represents where they stand on that career planning task. Respondents circle a 3 if the task statement is true for them, a 2 if it is somewhat true, and a 1 if it is not true. Each scale is made up of eight statements.

In Step 2, respondents add their scores for each section (the total of the numbers they circled for each of the six sections of items) and put that number in the designated space at the end of each row. For example, if the respondent marked a 2 for each of the eight statements of a given section, that person's total score for that section would be 16.

In Step 3, respondents transfer their scores for each of the eight sections to their corresponding scales in the *CPS* profile. This step then helps respondents better understand their scores in

relation to one another and provides a visual representation of the career planning steps they need to work on most.

Step 4 provides a description of the 6 scales. It then helps respondents reflect on their career development and implement strategies for exploring, identifying, choosing, and implementing a satisfying career. Respondents are encouraged to complete the strategies for each of the six sections on the *CPS* and to use the worksheet to help them further develop their career plan.

### Understanding and Interpreting *CPS* Scores

The *CPS* yields content-referenced scores in the form of raw scores. A raw score, in this case, is the total of the numbers circled for each of the eight task statements for the six scales. The performance of individual respondents or groups of respondents can only be evaluated in terms of the mean scores on each of the scales.

For each of the scales on the *CPS*:

**Scores from 8 to 13 are LOW** and suggest that the respondent needs to better develop that scale's skills in order to identify, explore, decide on, and implement his or her career choices.

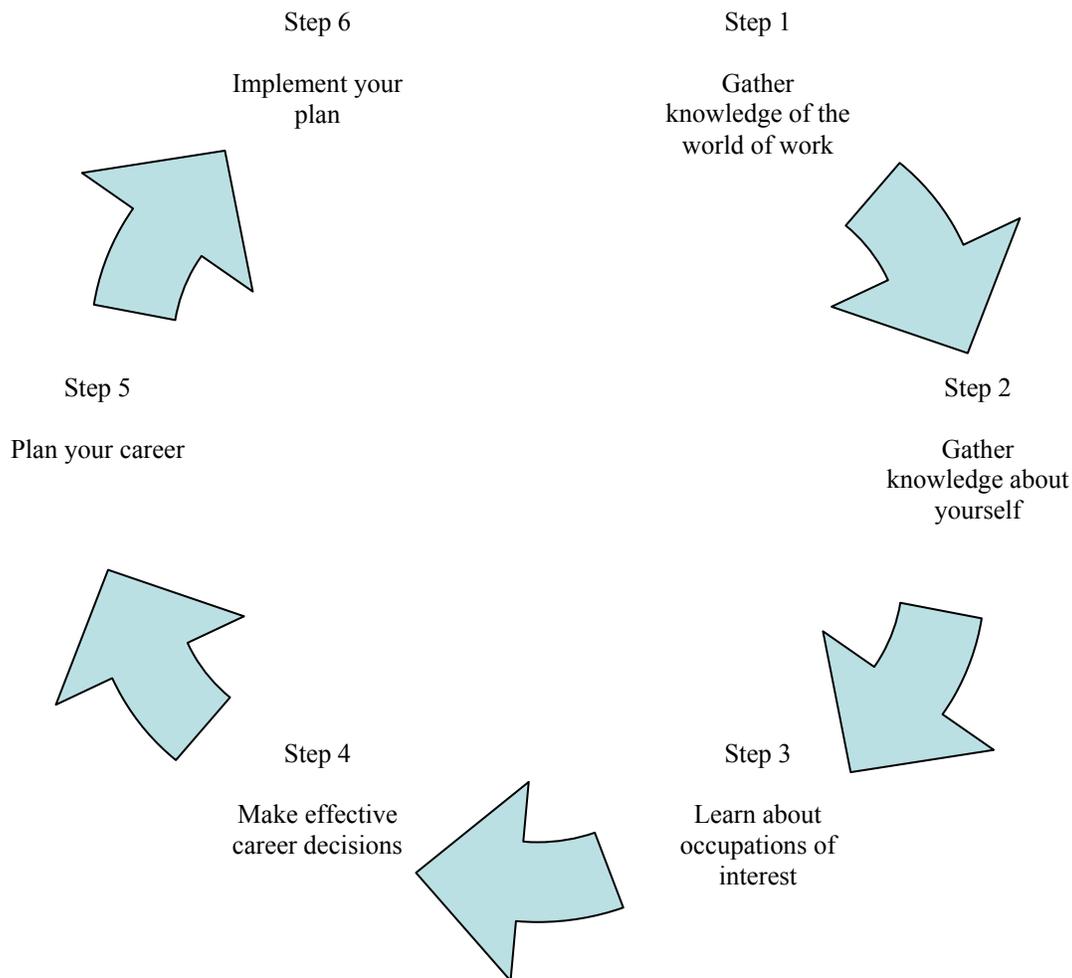
**Scores from 14 to 18 are AVERAGE** and indicate that the respondent has developed some of the skills necessary to identify, explore, decide on, and implement his or her career choices but should develop them further.

**Scores from 19 to 24 are HIGH** and indicate that the respondent has taken most of the steps and developed most of the skills necessary to identify, explore, decide on, and implement his or her career choices.

The *CPS* provides you with information about how skilled the person is in each step of the career planning process, and therefore how much time must be spent on each step. Therefore, if someone scored high on the Knowledge of the World of Work scale, he or she needs less instruction and counseling about the changes in the world of work than someone who scored in the low range on that scale. Respondents generally have one or more areas in which they score in the low or low-average categories. The respondent should concentrate on implementing strategies related to those career planning categories. Step 4 of the *CPS* provides a starting point for this exploration.

Also be aware that the scales on the *CPS* are arranged in stages, and that all people should work through these stages in order to effectively implement career choices (see Figure 1). Therefore, regardless of a person's scores on the *CPS*, you should start at the beginning of the process and work through each of the six steps, though you will still concentrate on those with the lowest scores.

**Figure 1: The Career Planning Process**



### Scales Used on the CPS

Because the primary objective of this instrument is to help people identify how skilled they are at planning their careers and where they currently stand in the planning process, the *CPS* is organized around six scales that represent the essential career maturity skills, themselves representative of six steps of the career planning and development process. These scales were chosen as representative based on a literature review related to skills and skills identification and include

- I. **Knowledge of the World of Work.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents are prepared for an uncertain occupational future. They understand how the global economy will affect their career. They have taken the time to explore employment issues in the workplace of tomorrow, and they are ready to take advantage of new technology and new career opportunities.
- II. **Self-Knowledge.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents know how their personal characteristics translate to the world of work. They know what their interests, skills, values, and personality characteristics are, and they have identified occupations to

match those characteristics. They know what they are looking for in a career and what they have to offer employers.

- III. Knowledge of Occupations.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents have spent time exploring occupations that interest them. They have searched the Internet, read books and other print materials, and talked to others about the occupations that interest them most.
- IV. Career Decision-Making.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents have a methodical approach to making career decisions. They collect the information that they need, weigh the costs and benefits of their choices, rank order possibilities based on probabilities of success, and make final decisions that fit their personal characteristics and overall life goals.
- V. Career Planning.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents have developed both short- and long-term goals for their career development. They have a specific timeline for accomplishing these goals and they know what steps they need to take to achieve them. They have successfully developed a career plan that will allow them to live a balanced lifestyle consisting of work, family, and leisure activities.
- VI. Career Implementation.** High scores on this scale indicate that respondents know how to implement occupational decisions once they make them. They know how to look for jobs in both the visible and hidden job markets. They also know how to run a successful job search campaign, including writing a powerful resume and cover letter, networking for job leads, and interviewing effectively.

### Illustrative Case Using the CPS

Jenny is a sophomore in a small college who cannot decide what she wants to be when she grows up (and she is almost there). She is fairly knowledgeable about the career planning process, but she has been unable to make specific career decisions. She has identified a list of courses that she has liked in the past and some that she definitely did not like. She is interested in criminal justice, journalism, teaching, and communications. She has gathered some occupational information, as can be seen from her high score on the Knowledge of Occupations scale. However she is uncertain of what criteria to base her career decision on. Her scores on the CPS are as follows:

<i>Knowledge of the World of Work</i>	14
<i>Self-Knowledge</i>	11
<i>Knowledge of Occupations</i>	20
<i>Career Decision-Making</i>	9
<i>Career Planning</i>	15
<i>Career Implementation</i>	19

As can be seen, Jenny scored highest on the Career Implementation and Knowledge of Occupations scales. A discussion of her results with a career counselor indicated that she knew how to locate and apply for jobs once she has made career decisions. She also had spent her first year in college gathering information about a variety of occupations. She has talked to counselors in the career center, talked to her professors about occupations in their discipline, and gathered information on the Internet. Her frustration comes from having too many interests and not being able to decide among them.

As can be seen from her profile, Jenny scored in the “average” range on the Knowledge of the World of Work and Career Planning scales. Therefore, she could use some assistance in developing a career plan and setting short- and long-term goals. This can be accomplished after she makes some effective career decisions.

Jenny scored the lowest on the Self-Knowledge and Career Decision-Making scales. These are the areas that need to be addressed if she is to identify occupations that match her personal characteristics. An ideal first step (based on her score of 11 on the Self-Knowledge scale) would be to gather some information about her interests, values, personality, and skills through the use of career assessments and an ensuing discussion of the results. It is also critical that she develop effective career decision-making strategies, suggesting a need for her counselor or administrator to teach her an effective career decision-making process.

## Research and Development

This section outlines the stages involved in the development of the *Career Planning Scale*. It includes guidelines for development, item construction, item selection, item standardization, and norm development and testing.

### Guidelines for Development

The *CPS* was developed to fill the need for a quick, reliable instrument to help people determine their strongest and weakest career maturity skills. It also provides counselors and job search specialists with information they can use to help their clients and students manage the career planning process, make effective career decisions, and implement those decisions. The *CPS* was developed to meet the following guidelines:

- **The instrument should measure a wide range of tasks needed for effective career planning.** To help people explore how effective they are in the career planning process, six scales were developed that were representative of the skills domains reviewed in the literature.
- **The instrument should be easy to take.** The *CPS* uses a three-point Likert question-answer format that allows respondents to quickly determine their strongest career planning skills.
- **The instrument should be easy to administer, score, and interpret.** The *CPS* utilizes a consumable format that guides the test taker through the four steps necessary to complete the assessment and develop a plan for enhancing their career maturity.
- **The instrument should help people understand the career exploration, decision-making, and planning process.** The *CPS* helps respondents identify their strengths and weaknesses in implementing an effective career plan.
- **The instrument should apply to both men and women.** Norms for the *CPS* have been developed for both men and women.
- **The instrument should contain items that are applicable to people of all ages.** Norms developed for the *CPS* show an age range of 18–59.

## Scale Development

In order to ensure that the inventory content was valid, the author conducted a thorough review of the literature related to the topics of career maturity, career developmental tasks, career adaptability, and developmental theories of career counseling. A variety of both academic and professional sources were used to identify the six areas that make up the scales on the *CPS*.

Each of the items on the assessment has been grouped into six scales that are representative of the most common career maturity skills identified in the literature. The six scales on the *CPS* also were grouped into the six scale categories based on Super and Knasel's (1979) Model of Adult Career Maturity and Career Adaptability (see Table 1).

<b>Table 1: Similarities Between Super and Knasel's Career Maturity Scales and <i>CPS</i> Scales</b>	
<b><i>CMI</i> Scales</b>	<b><i>CPS</i> Scales</b>
Self-Appraisal	Self-Knowledge
Occupational Information	Knowledge of Occupations Knowledge of the World of Work
Goal Setting	Career Decision-Making
Planning	Career Planning
Problem Solving	Career Implementation

Super and Knasel (1979) also developed a model of adult career adaptability that includes aspects of career maturity in adolescents. The six skills that comprise their Career Adaptability Model correlate to the six scales on the *CPS* as well (see Table 2).

<b>Table 2: Similarities Between Career Adaptability Model and <i>CPS</i> Scales</b>	
<b>Career Adaptability Model</b>	<b><i>CPS</i> Scales</b>
Planfulness	Career Planning
Exploration	Knowledge of the World of Work Self-Knowledge
Information	Knowledge of Occupations
Decision Making	Career Decision-Making
Reality Orientation	Career Implementation

## Item Selection

A large pool of items that were representative of the six major scales on the *CPS* was developed and later revised. This enabled the elimination of items that did not correlate well. In developing items for the *CPS*, the author used language that is currently being used in the career and job search literature, research, and employment counseling programs. After the items were developed, they were reviewed and edited for clarity, style, and appropriateness for

measuring the skills and knowledge needed for effective career development and planning. Items were additionally screened to eliminate any reference to sex, race, culture, or ethnic origin.

### Item Standardization

The author identified adolescent and adult populations to complete the *CPS*. These populations completed drafts of the *CPS* to gather data concerning the statistical characteristics on each of the items. From this research, a final pool of 48 career maturity developmental tasks was chosen that best represented the six scales on the *CPS*.

This initial research yielded information about the appropriateness of items for each of the *CPS* scales; reactions of respondents concerning the inventory format and content; and reactions of respondents concerning the ease of administration, scoring, and profiling of the *CPS*. Experts in the fields of career counseling and employment counseling were used to eliminate items that were too similar to one another. The data collected was then subjected to split-half correlation coefficients to identify the items that best represented the six scales on the *CPS*. The items accepted for the final form of the *CPS* were again reviewed for content, clarity, and style. Careful examination was conducted to eliminate any possible gender or race bias.

### Reliability

Reliability is often defined as the *consistency* with which a test measures what it purports to measure. Evidence of the reliability of a test may be presented in terms of reliability coefficients, test-retest correlations, and interscale correlations. Tables 3, 4, and 5 present this type of information. As can be seen from Table 3, the *CPS* showed very strong internal consistency validity with Split-Half Correlations ranging from .78 to .99. All of the internal consistency correlations were significant at the 0.01 confidence level in a two-tailed test. One month after the original testing, 89 people in the overall sample were retested using the *CPS*. As can be seen from Table 4, test-retest correlations ranged from .86 to .93. All of the test-retest correlations were significant at the 0.01 confidence level in a two-tailed test. Table 5 shows the correlations among the *CPS* individual scales. Generally, the intercorrelations among scales appear predictable from the scale names. For example, the two significant correlations were among the Knowledge of Occupations and Career Planning scales and the Career Planning and Career Implementation scales. All of the other scales had relatively low correlations, suggesting that the scale items do not overlap significantly.

### Validity

Validity is often defined as the *extent* to which a test measures what it purports to measure. Evidence of validity for the *CPS* is presented in the forms of means and standard deviations. Table 6 shows the scale means and standard deviations for men and women who took the *CPS*. As can be seen, women scored higher than men on all but two scales: the Knowledge of the World of Work and Knowledge of Occupations scales. Women tended to score in the high range on the Self-Knowledge ( $M = 21.80$ ) scale and the Knowledge of Occupations ( $M = 19.01$ ) scale. It appears from these scores that women engaged in the career planning process tend to have adequate knowledge about the personal characteristics that they can match to occupations and knowledge about specific occupations in the world of work. Women, however, scored lowest on the Knowledge of the World of Work ( $M = 16.26$ ) scale and the Career Planning ( $M = 16.59$ ) scale. This would suggest that women need assistance most with learning

about the changes that are taking place in the world of work and learning how to better develop a career plan.

Men also scored highest on the Self-Knowledge (M = 19.34) scale. All of the other scores for men were in the Average scoring range. Men tended to score lowest on the Career Planning (M = 15.04) scale and the Career Decision-Making (M = 15.23) scale. This suggests that men tend to need more assistance with career decision-making and planning than women.

Overall, people taking the *CPS* tend to score highest on the Self-Knowledge scale (M = 20.40). All of the other means on the *CPS* were in the average range, with Career Planning (M = 15.71) being the area in which people are the least career mature and need the most.

<b>Table 3: Internal Consistency (Split-Half Correlations) *</b>	
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Knowledge of the World of Work	.825**
Self-Knowledge	.781**
Knowledge of Occupations	.990**
Career Decision-Making	.849**
Career Planning	.980**
Career Implementation	.779**

\* N = 21

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

<b>Table 4: Stability (Test-Retest Correlations) * +</b>	
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Knowledge of the World of Work	.928**
Self-Knowledge	.867**
Knowledge of Occupations	.878**
Career Decision-Making	.909**
Career Planning	.863**
Career Implementation	.923**

\* N = 89

+ One month after original testing

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

	Knowledge of World of Work	Self-Knowledge	Knowledge of Occupations	Decision-Making	Career Planning	Career Implementation
Knowledge of World of Work	1	.065	.512	-.064	.605	.468
Self-Knowledge		1	.335	.467	.273	.181
Knowledge of Occupations			1	.502	.809**	.669
Decision-Making				1	.505	.481
Career Planning					1	.862**
Career Implementation						1

\*\* Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level

Scales	Total (N = 450)		Male (N = 256)		Female (N = 194)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Knowledge of World of Work	16.58	2.10	16.82	1.41	16.26	2.72
Self-Knowledge	20.40	2.58	19.34	2.43	21.80	2.05
Knowledge of Occupations	17.96	1.92	17.17	1.25	19.01	2.14
Decision-Making	16.64	2.62	15.23	2.04	18.48	2.11
Career Planning	15.71	2.33	15.04	1.98	16.59	2.47
Career Implementation	17.77	2.59	17.40	2.88	18.25	2.07

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## About the Author

John Liptak, Ed.D., is one of the leading developers of quantitative and qualitative assessments in the country. He is the Associate Director of the Experiential Learning and Career Development office at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. He provides career assessment and career counseling services for students and administers and interprets a variety of career assessments. Dr. Liptak focuses on helping students develop their careers by becoming engaged in a variety of learning, leisure, and work experiences. In addition to the CPS, Dr. Liptak has created the following assessments for JIST Publishing: *Interview Style Inventory (ISI)*, *Transferable Skills Scale (TSS)*, *Career Exploration Inventory (CEI)*, *Transition-to-Work Inventory (TWI)*, *Job Search Knowledge Scale (JSKS)*, *Job Survival and Success Scale (JSSS)*, *Barriers to Employment Success Inventory (BESI)*, *Job Search Attitude Inventory (JSAI)*, *Offender Reintegration Scale (ORS)*, and *College Survival and Success Scale (CSSS)*.