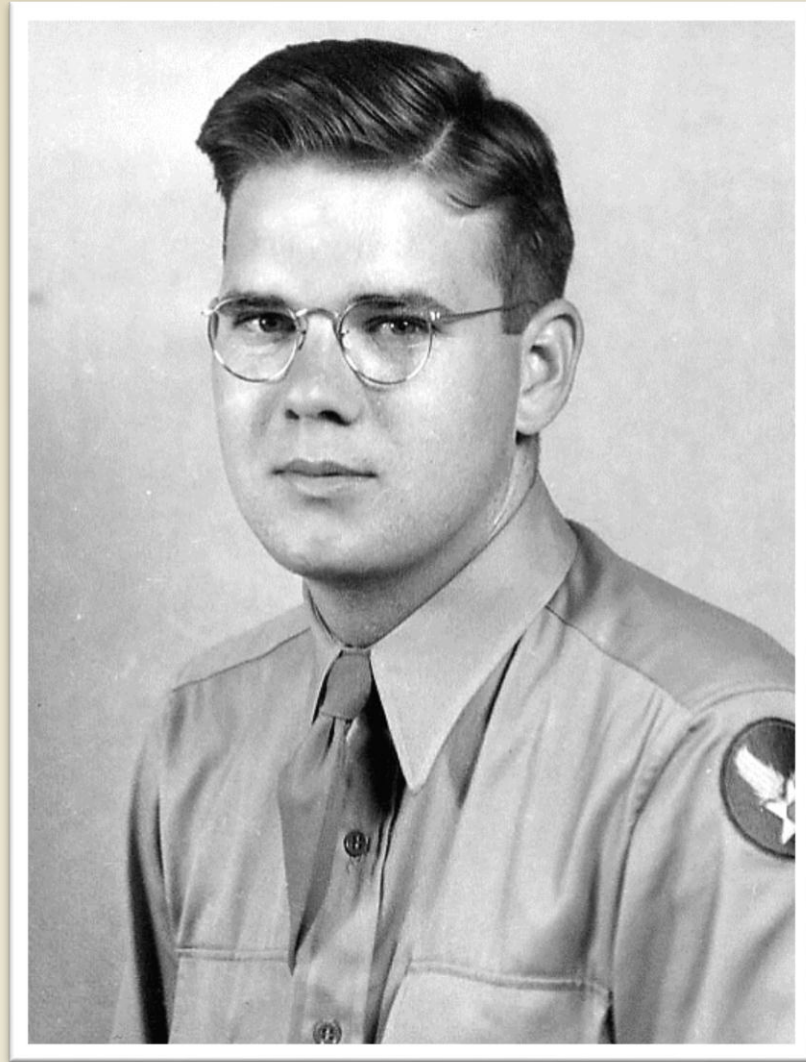


**John L. Holland:  
Perspectives on Theory, Research, and  
Practice**

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May 16, 2016

# John Lewis Holland, 1919-2008



# Reardon Channeling Holland

1. reading and rereading many of his publications.
2. reviewing my correspondence with him.
3. listening and viewing recordings of his numerous interviews and talks.
4. drawing upon materials in the book that Janet Lenz and I just wrote, (*Handbook for using the Self-Directed Search: Integrating RIASEC and CIP theories in practice*).
5. **visiting The State Historical Society of Missouri on the campus of the University of Missouri—Columbia and examining some of Holland’s papers and artifacts archived there.**
6. **reading and using Holland’s words from an unpublished autobiography, *My Life with a Theory* (Holland, 2004).**

# Holland Bibliography

Foutch, H., McHugh, E. R., Bertoch, S. C., & Reardon, R. C. (2014). Creating and using a database on Holland's theory and practical tools. *Journal of Career Assessment, 22*, 188-202. DOI:10.1177/1069072713492947

The Holland Bibliography database with 1,970 literature citations in 275 publications from 1953-2011 can be viewed at the RefShare website

<http://www.refworks.com/refshare2?site=020751135918800000/RWWEB1061316284/012991109946687000>

## Holland's Integration of TR&P

- “I don't think it is possible to provide an accurate and comprehensive account of the many interactions among the theory, its instrumentation, the research data, my colleagues' work and thinking, and my own. The only interpretation I feel confident about is that the main elements of the theory provided a rough framework for organizing our research that in turn led to the revised theory.” (Holland, 2004, p. 29)

# Challenges ☹️ & Opportunities 😊 in Integrating Holland's TR&P

- 1) Theory unprotected
- 2) Instruments protected
- 3) Theory changes
- 4) Environmental neglect
- 5) Linking theory & interventions
- 6) Massive literature
- 7) Myths & critics
- 8) Sustainability
- 9) Training
- 10) Contemporary presentations

# 1. RIASEC Theory Unprotected

- ☹️ Not all theory applications are accurate or true
  - ☹️ Occupational codes vary across classifications
  - ☹️ Codes from O\*NET, SII, and DHOC share 1<sup>st</sup> letter about 30% of the time
- 
- 😊 RIASEC hexagon is iconic in the field
  - 😊 Theory is ubiquitous worldwide
  - 😊 Theory applications remain robust today

## 2. Instruments Protected

The SDS is not free on the Internet

☺ Hexagon & tools are protected by <sup>TM</sup> and ©

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☺ Instruments are supported by the publisher,  
e.g., SDS Fifth Edition

☺ PAR provides grants and discounts for  
training and research



## 7. Myths and Critics 😐

“If there is one word that characterizes and summarizes the construction and development of the SDS it is ‘simplistic’” (Crites, 1978, p. 1611.)

“Practically, there is sufficient evidence to question seriously the ethics of indiscriminately making the SDS available to the public” (Crites, 1978, p. 1612).

“It’s just another gimmick.” [editors comment following an APA presentation] (Holland, 2004)

## 7. Myths and Critics (cont.) 😊

- Holland used a Q&A foil in the 1994 SDS Manual to respond to 39 “gotcha questions.”
- “I took most of these critical evaluations seriously and responded by thinking it over with friends, designing research to test a critical idea, making revisions in the theory or just worrying about potential remedies” (Holland, 2004, p. 86).
- “Her [Zener’s] work led to more than 22 studies of the effects of the SDS on test-takers. I was relieved to learn that taking the SDS had positive effects for men and women” (Holland, 2004, p. 28).

# 10. Contemporary Presentations

☹️ Holland-based TR&P not discussed at 2014 conferences (APA, ACA; 1.5% NCDA)

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😊 Conference program committees could specify TR&P in proposals

😊 Publishers could provide travel grants to those presenting on RIASEC topics

😊 Professionals report research and practice

# Recommendations for the Future

1. Costs for sustaining theory
2. Holland-based career tools
3. Research ideas
4. Recognizing limits & collaboration
5. Holland's theoretical estate
6. Personal reflection

# 1. Costs for Sustaining Theory

“The cost of writing a theory that is a literary venture is minimal, but the long-term cost of researching theoretical ideas for clarification, revision, or replication is great” (Holland, 1994, p. 46).

## 2. Holland-Based Career Tools

- Self-Directed Search Form R
- Occupations Finder—Revised*
- You and Your Career*
- My Vocational Situation (MVS)
- Self-Directed Search Form E
- SDS Career Explorer
- SDS Internet Version
- Position Classification Inventory
- Environmental Identity Scale (EIS)
- Career Attitudes & Strategies Inventory

## 5. Holland's Theoretical Estate

- Fund in Memory of John L. Holland established by Bruce and Jane Walsh, American Psychological Foundation
- PAR research support through grants and a 40% discount for graduate student research
- RefShare database (Foutch et al., 2014)
- Holland Archives at the State Historical Society of Missouri

# 6. A Personal Reflection

My first contact with Holland was in 1968 when he spoke here. Drawing upon what I know now:

1. I would understand that at age 25, I could build my career on RIASEC theory, practice, and research following the path that Holland blazed; and
2. I would know that such a career would include professional success, positive relationships, and the provision of vocational assistance to thousands of people worldwide.

Holland did it and perhaps you will too. Good wishes!



# John Lewis Holland, 1919-2008

