

The 7 Biggest Myths about Heading off to College



As high school graduation looms closer, you've made the decision to attend college. It's the first of many important decisions you'll make over the next few years—and beyond. What will you study? Where will you attend? Are you more likely to thrive at a smaller liberal arts college ... a four-year state university ... a two-year community college? Are you willing to travel out of state, or would you prefer to attend a local school?

Phew, that's a lot to consider. It's exciting! And maybe a little overwhelming.

Choosing a college and major course of study are high-stakes decisions. Missing the mark can lead to frustration, discouragement, and even despair.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

By considering several important factors *before* heading off to college, students can position themselves for academic—and career—success. Let's explore this proactive approach and debunk a few myths about heading off to college.



Save Time and Money with a Proactive Approach

Many graduating high school students—and their parents—buy into common myths about what to consider during this pivotal point in their lives. Buying into these myths can be costly, both financially and emotionally. The potential of wasted dollars, wasted time, and wasted efforts is astounding—but the good news is that it can be avoided.

Across the board, costs have risen for those seeking higher education. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics' [Fast Facts](#), tuition and fees have increased nearly 10 percent over the past decade for four-year institutions. Add to this the reality that about a third of students pursuing bachelor's degrees change their majors—sometimes [more than once!](#)

Not surprising. It's a lot to expect that young people know now what they will want to do over the long term, including which college, major or career path might be a good fit for them.

Or is it?

A variety of tools can help students hone in on their natural talents, abilities and personal style preferences, guiding them throughout the decision-making process. Chief among them is the [Highlands Ability Battery](#) (HAB), a standardized assessment in aptitude testing, which features the Highlands Career Exploration Report for Students. This report is generated by weaving the results of the HAB with Person-to-Occupation Fit Matching Technology. Equipped with the knowledge to make informed decisions, students can increase their chances of enjoying their college experience, doing well in school, and making prudent and proactive career decisions.



Debunked: The Truth behind the Myths

As the world of work continues to evolve, so does the entire college experience. Attending college isn't necessarily the right choice for every student—at least not immediately following high school graduation. For those who do decide to pursue higher education, it's critical to avoid buying into these common (often-outdated) myths and to turn facts into action. The Highlands Ability Battery can help.

Myth #1: “My parents, teachers, and college counselor can guide me through the college selection process.”

Fact: While all the people in your life want what's best for you, they are not you. Developing a strong sense of who you are—early in the process—will allow you to recognize what's most important to you and to choose a college and career path accordingly.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: [Research](#) has established that every individual is born with a unique pattern of innate abilities. Through objective measures, the HAB assessment will help to identify your natural abilities and will facilitate a greater understanding around your natural talents, strengths and style preferences. This is decision-making gold! After all, knowledge is power. Understanding the learning environment that will give you the most satisfaction and discovering the work you will enjoy most and be most successful in, based on your unique pattern of abilities—those that come **naturally** to you—is a major boon to future success.

Natural Abilities Focus



Myth #2: “I’ll just aim for the best school I can get into.”

Fact: The “best” school for other people—your parents, siblings, friends—isn’t necessarily the best school for you.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: Understanding your Personal Style will guide you in identifying which schools are the best match for *you*. Are you more likely to thrive at a large university or a smaller one? Will you learn best in a big lecture hall or in smaller classrooms? When you understand your **Personal Style** dimensions, you’ll have a clearer picture of your ideal school and work environment. Knowing what type of environment will be conducive to a positive college experience and applying these insights is critical to finding—and thriving at—*your* “best” college.



Myth #3: “It’s all up to my SAT/ACT score, GPA, essays and recommendations, and athletic/leadership/artistic talents. As long as I get into the ‘right’ school, everything else will fall into place.”

Fact: What you’ve accomplished, how well you do on standardized tests, and how well-rounded you are—these are all important. But your school grades, SAT scores, or athletic performance can’t always tell *who* you are.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: Through this multifaceted, in-depth aptitude assessment, you will learn about your all-important driving abilities, which *power everything you do*. Your [Driving Abilities](#) create a “push” in activity. When using your Driving Abilities, work can feel effortless. Conversely, if you are working in areas outside of your Driving Abilities, you may feel drained, frustrated, and stressed. By allowing your Driving Abilities to express themselves, you increase your chances of having greater satisfaction at school or work.

The HAB can help you gain insights into your best career and expand your vision of opportunities. Knowing what comes relatively effortlessly to you and how your natural talents will fit in the real world is significant in assessing academic and job fit.



Myth #4: “I don’t have to think about what to study in college now. I’ll figure it out when I get there.”

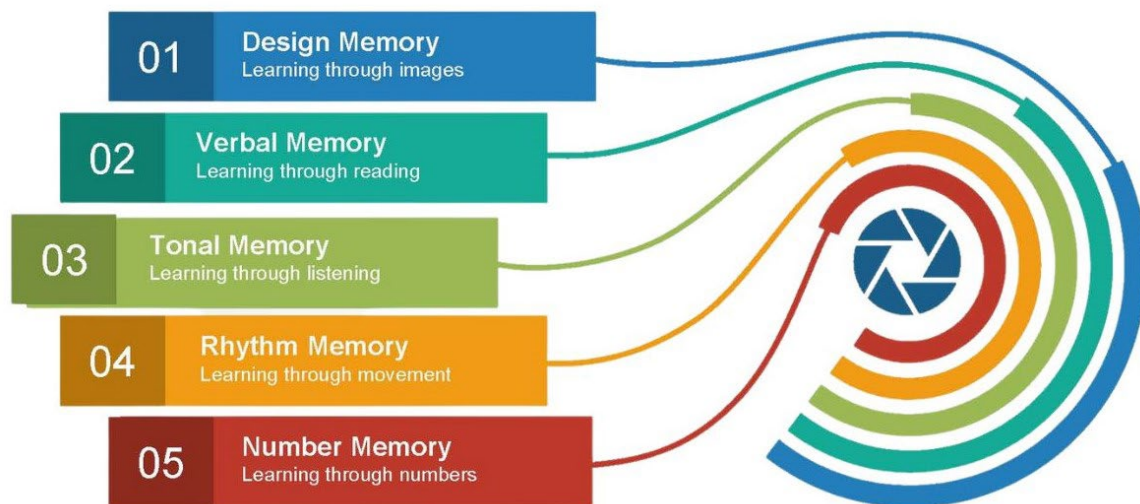
Fact: Understanding your natural abilities—from how you learn best to how you solve problems and communicate—will not only influence your academic performance but will also guide your decisions about the best career path to pursue.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: How do you learn best? The HAB can help you discover ways in which you take in—and recall—new information.

Students benefit from understanding the channels through which they learn best, whether it's by reading, drawing diagrams and charts or listening to recordings of lectures. The HAB measures five learning channels: Verbal Memory, Number Memory, Tonal Memory, Design Memory, and Rhythm Memory, which are detailed for the student in the [HAB Learning Strategies Report](#). Understanding your stronger versus less effective learning channels helps you identify what you need to do to facilitate learning.

Students who have identified their [Specialized Abilities](#) and personal learning styles are aware of how they access and process information, engage with content, and express what they know. These abilities determine how you approach problem solving, decision making and influence your style of communication. Once you discover how you learn best, you'll gain the confidence to navigate your academic environment—and to become a lifelong learner, which will serve you well throughout the transitions in your career.

Five Learning Channels



Myth #5: “I already know what I want to study in college. I don’t need to do any further exploration.”

Fact: The college application and selection process can be all-consuming. But making the decision about which school to attend shouldn’t be made in a vacuum. Choosing a college and planning for your career are inextricably tied. Attending a school with a stellar business school won’t do you any good if you’re attracted to an engineering career.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: Remember the NCES report statistics that 30% of college students change their majors at least once? It’s no wonder.

Although many students may think they have a strong sense of what they want to do after college (e.g., become an architect, lawyer, professional actor, teacher, and so on), it's important to consider what those occupations involve on a day-to-day basis. Do those activities (and work environments) align with your **natural abilities**?

The [Highlands Career Exploration Report for Students](#) (HCES) will guide career-related decisions. After completing the HAB assessment, you'll download your HCES, which includes a review of your results and considers how your abilities work together across your Personal Style, Driving and Specialized Abilities.

The HCES is equipped with leading-edge technology known as the HAB Person-to-Occupation Fit Matching tool which generates a list of 50 O*NET occupations most closely aligned with your *unique* profile of abilities. The connection to occupations is revealed in the list of top 50 career matches each of which is linked to the [O*NET](#) for detailed information pertaining to that occupation. The HCES will serve as your springboard for career exploration.

MY NEXT MOVE

HOME
SEARCH
INDUSTRIES
INTERESTS

School Psychologists

Also called: Bilingual School Psychologist, Consulting Psychologist, Psychologist, School Psychologist

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What they do:
Diagnose and implement individual or schoolwide interventions or strategies to address educational, behavioral, or developmental issues that adversely impact educational functioning in a school. May address student learning and behavioral problems and counsel students or families. May design and implement performance plans, and evaluate performance. May consult with other school-based personnel.

On the job, you would:

- Compile and interpret students' test results, along with information from teachers and parents, to diagnose conditions and to help assess eligibility for special services.
- Maintain student records, including special education reports, confidential records, records of services provided, and behavioral data.
- Report any pertinent information to the proper authorities in cases of child endangerment, neglect, or abuse.

KNOWLEDGE

Math and Science

- psychology
- sociology and anthropology

Health

- therapy and counseling

Education and Training

- teaching and course design

Business

- customer service

SKILLS

Basic Skills

- listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions
- reading work related information

Problem Solving

- noticing a problem and figuring out the best way to solve it

Social

- understanding people's reactions
- looking for ways to help people

ABILITIES

Verbal

- communicate by speaking
- listen and understand what people say

Ideas and Logic

- use rules to solve problems
- make general rules or come up with answers from lots of detailed information

PERSONALITY

People interested in this work like activities that include **ideas**, **thinking**, and figuring things out.

They do well at jobs that need:

- Dependability**
- Integrity**
- Cooperation**
- Persistence**
- Self Control**
- Social Orientation**

TECHNOLOGY

You might use software like this on the job:

Word processing software

- Ewing Solutions QuickWriter
- Microsoft Word

Video conferencing software

- Google Meet

Data base user interface and query software

- Centris Group IEP Direct
- Vision Management Consulting IEP PlaNET

Myth #6: “I’ll just select a college major and career based on my interests.”

Fact: It goes without saying that career exploration should be multidimensional. Making college and career decisions based solely on one factor, such as interests, ignores other important considerations, including natural abilities, skills, personality, values, and more.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: The knowledge of your natural abilities is foundational when identifying “best-fit” fields of study that will leverage your strengths to pursue a satisfying and fulfilling career. The [HAB Person-to-Occupation Fit Matching Technology](#) will overlay the top 50 occupations closest aligned with your ability profile with your key interests, helping to identify careers that maximize your natural abilities and incorporate your interests. Based on these recommendations, you can explore these careers on a deeper level to see which aligns with your values, goals, personality and other influencing factors.

Myth #7: “It’s too early to think about life after college.”

Fact: The transition from high school to college is typically the first [Turning Point](#) in one’s adult life. No plans are set in stone, and you can certainly make adjustments along the way, but the clearer the focus, the greater your ability to plan for your future. Heading off to college with two or three career goals in mind will significantly increase your chances of enjoying college and achieving success.

Bottom line: It’s never too early to start planning your future.

How the Highlands Ability Battery can help: With its robust assessment of all things *you*, the HAB offers a road map to help you chart your academic and professional course by making the right decisions—for yourself—every step of the way.



A special note to parents:

Understanding that your student’s journey is theirs—not yours—is critical. One of the best ways to support your child is to encourage them to learn about themselves so that they can make proactive, confident decisions now and into adulthood.

Imagine if you and your child could rely on dependable, scientific research when making these life-changing decisions. Proven results from the Highlands Ability Battery will provide you and your student with the launching point for college and career success.

The eye-opening debrief session that follows the completion of the HAB is conducted by [Highlands Certified Consultants](#) who have been trained in the interpretation of the results to provide meaning for occupational and academic application, with implications for life and career. Click here for more on [The Power of Feedback: Why the HAB Includes an In-depth Debrief Session](#).

Visit the [Highlands Company](#) today to explore the limitless benefits of taking the [Highlands Ability Battery](#) during the exploratory phase of college and course study decision making. Increase your chances of achieving lifelong success with an in-depth, personalized overview of all things *you*. The time to take charge of your future is now.