

# Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation, Inc.

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We asked Mary and David Reece, two educational counselors with whom we've worked for several years, to update us on some of our mutual clients. Each of the three profiles below serves to illustrate some of the challenges faced by high school students, as well as how aptitude testing made a positive difference, both then and now. Nate, Chelsey, and Anthony have graciously consented to letting us tell their stories.

## Setting Up Personal Goals

by Mary and David Reece

### Nate Neroni

Nate Neroni was referred to us in his junior year. Like some teenage boys, athletics—in this case, hockey—took precedence over academics. He was a classic “underachiever.” We earned Nate’s trust through working with him on the ice, and came to understand that he was not going to do anything until *he* was ready. He didn’t see much point in taking courses that he wasn’t interested in; hence his difficulties with the traditional high school curriculum. His parents’ concern was, “If only he would work as hard in the classroom as he does on the ice.”

Nate needed some insight into his future to provide him with the motivation to persevere through courses he did not like. “Although I had some idea about what career I might like, I needed to be pointed in the right direction by something more than just my hunch.” Nate was very willing to go through the aptitude testing, saying “I knew the reasons for taking the tests and what was to be gained; it made a lot of sense to me.” Upon completion of his testing he commented, “I was surprised about the types of individual activities, and how telling they were of my strengths and weaknesses. It was fascinating that an ordinary exercise could relate so unmistakably to my aptitude for a particular career.”

The test results were a turning point for Nate. He was finally motivated and “...it gave me a sense of confidence in my endeavors.” Although his high school transcript was less than stellar, Nate applied himself after graduation and attended community college, achieving straight As in all of his courses, including economics, statistics, and accounting. He is now attending the University of Southern California, majoring in economics with a social sciences concentration and a minor in business management. “I am having the greatest success in my business-related courses, and have actually chosen professors that teach to my strengths.” MaryGail and Richard Neroni commented that, “Prior to understanding the real benefits of the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation’s aptitude tests, \$600 seemed like a lot; however, the return on our investment has been enormous.” Much to his

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## Assisting With Goals

by Cindy Rosner

Mary and David Reece, educational consultants living in the Hanover, New Hampshire area, provide independent information to parents and students to help them make educated decisions regarding secondary school, college, and career opportunities. They have been advocates of the Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation’s aptitude testing for more than a decade. They say, “We feel strongly about administering the aptitude tests in high school because it helps students and parents focus on a career-driven curriculum with a new perspective for considering college choices.”

They typically work with student-athletes, mainly because of David’s background playing professional hockey for the Boston Bruins. “Student-athletes think in a particular way which we relate to well... they come to us thinking about one kind of goal (hockey), but we work with them to develop other kinds of goals—career and life.”

Their use of aptitude testing as part of their services comes from personal experience, having taken the tests themselves. As Mary told us, “It has been remarkably empowering to both of us and that is why we are so passionate about promoting its value to our clients.” After aptitude testing, David changed from graduate studies in business to the field he was truly meant for—guidance and counseling. His testing was, in fact, the turning point for him “... in getting on the right road going in the right direction.”

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parents' delight, Nate's priorities have shifted to a more academic focus, but he is still on the ice playing for USC's competitive club hockey team.

**A FEW OF NATE'S SCORES:** Nate's test results revealed that economics, management, and the social sciences were all appropriate paths to consider. He has numerical aptitudes, and his objective score on the Word Association test suggests working in a collaborative way, which is typical of managers.

Another high score for Nate was on the Rhythm Memory test. This seems to be important for rhythmic activities such as dancing and drumming—and perhaps contributes to his success in sports. So, although Nate never considered himself musical, he actually is using a musical aptitude, albeit in a less obvious way.

Nate also scored high on the vocabulary tests, both math and English. One characteristic of top managers, according to a Foundation study, is a large vocabulary. While not an aptitude, Nate's ability to communicate with others will be an asset, regardless of what his career or job might be.

### **Chelsey Hoh**

Chelsey Hoh came to us in the spring of her junior year. Like Nate, she was an average student but an accomplished three-sport athlete, participating in cross-country, ice hockey, and lacrosse. She knew that she wanted to go to college and was very motivated to that end, but worried that she had too many choices about what to pursue. "My high school experience did not provide me with definitive insight into my strengths and weaknesses as they relate to career choices."



Chelsey had lots of ideas and interests, but was reluctant to make a decision because she felt she lacked important information about herself. She needed to feel that she had sound reasons, not just inclinations, to attend a particular college and study something that would ultimately provide her with a successful and satisfying career. "The...aptitude tests made so much sense to me, and I was really excited about gaining the information that I needed to make an informed decision. I thought about the test results when choosing my major because they helped me determine how successful I might be in the associated career and the related courses."

Chelsey is pursuing her B.S. in Human Kinetics at St. Francis Xavier University. She is strongly considering a career in physiotherapy or a related field. She reports, "I am having the greatest success in courses specific to human kinetics, especially my exercise physiology course."

**A FEW OF CHELSEY'S SCORES:** One of Chelsey's key aptitudes is structural visualization (being able to think in three dimensions, or spatial thinking). Many medical and health fields provide an outlet for this aptitude, especially those dealing with anatomy and physiology—like human kinetics and physiotherapy. This kind of major also relates to Chelsey's interests in sports and physical activities. Interests, while not as stable as aptitudes, do play a part in how people decide what to do.

Another high score for Chelsey is in foresight, an aptitude for generating possibilities. Sometimes, though, there can be too many to consider, making it harder to choose the "right" pos-

sibilities. This aptitude perhaps contributed to Chelsey's feeling of anxiety about having too many options to investigate. We suggested she give a little thought to some long-term professional and personal goals. Goals, aptitudes, interests, and other criteria helped her narrow down all these possibilities so that she could start making some choices.

Chelsey also has art and design aptitudes that she was previously unaware of, having focused her energies on sports, not art. "There was not just one test that meant the most to me because it was when they were all put together that I learned the most about myself; however, the color sorting test was the most fun!" This is a good example of what an aptitude is—Chelsey wasn't using this ability, yet, there it is! We talked about trying some art or design courses while at school.

"Thanks to the aptitude tests, I am able to pursue something that I will be not only passionate about, but also successful in. It was really interesting to find out what my strengths were, and how well they fit with what I was considering as a major. The results helped me make an extremely important decision, and eliminated the anxiety created by the unknown. It was my 'crystal ball' of sorts."

### **Anthony Ciardelli**

Anthony Ciardelli was a very quiet, unassuming young man during his high school years. He came to us as a senior facing those all-important college decisions, "Where will I go?" and "What will I do when I get there?" We knew that he had some untapped, unidentified potential and needed a road map for his future. Anthony was a varsity hockey and baseball player who also liked film and writing. Like Chelsey, he didn't pursue those interests in high school, though, because of his focus on sports.

We felt he needed a postgraduate year at a competitive boarding school for growth and development as well as aptitude testing to identify his strengths. The testing ultimately provided him with the foundation for his current motivation and success. "The best part of the testing for me was the breakdown—how fascinating to have someone who doesn't really know me, tell me all about myself."

Anthony is studying film at Occidental College in Los Angeles, and plays on Occidental's baseball team. "My fears of attending



school so far from home were alleviated by the validation that aptitude testing provided me. The results... encouraged me to go to school in California and pursue some of my musical and filmmaking goals rather than the traditional pursuits of Eastern colleges like most of my friends. As Dave Reece always says, it's important to be on the right road going in the right direction."

**A FEW OF ANTHONY'S SCORES:** Anthony's significant aptitudes include ideaphoria (the ability to produce ideas rapidly), musical abilities, and analytical reasoning (the ability to organize information easily). While not the only career that fits this pattern, film is an excellent choice—it is very creative, so is an outlet for all of Anthony's ideas. In addition, music and sound are integral

"It was my 'crystal ball' of sorts."

to filmmaking, and the ability to organize is a common aptitude of editors.

Another key piece of information was his subjective score on the Word Association test, indicating that he would prefer a more individual and specialized approach to his work, as opposed to the objective person who prefers working in a team-oriented way. Subjective people think just a little differently from others, and that can produce its own challenges. “The most helpful piece of information was learning that I have a subjective personality...now that I understand this about myself, I use it to my advantage when working with others.

“I would highly recommend everyone to take the aptitude tests. The validation and confirmation I received about myself, which I did not get during my high school experience, was extremely motivational for me to work harder and extremely helpful for me to make important decisions.”



Mary and David would be happy to discuss aptitude testing and your student-athlete; you can contact them at (802) 295-1220.

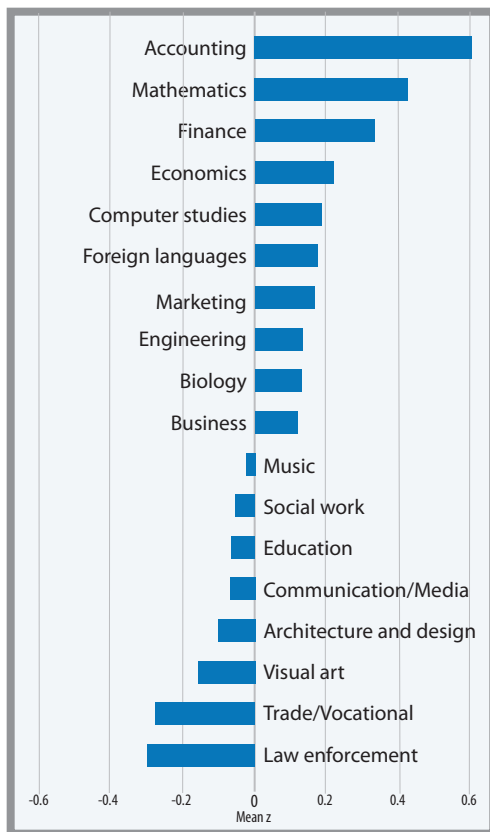
**Did your son or daughter take the tests while in school? If you would like to send an update on his or her progress, we love hearing about former clients. Please contact any of our offices.**

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Mary, on the other hand, pursued a career in accounting until David encouraged her to take the aptitude tests at age 40. While accounting uses her numerical aptitudes, she also discovered additional aptitudes that were unused in her position as a corporate controller. Mary’s testing helped her redirect her career focus to incorporate the missing teaching and consulting components. “If only I had known about the Johnson O’Connor Research Foundation in high school—I could have experienced a successful and satisfying career much, much sooner.”

Aptitude testing is the linchpin of Mary and David’s counsel. “Our advisement is predicated upon these results. We want our clients to attend a college that will provide the education for the right career. Additionally, parents come to understand their children better and that opens new channels for better dialogue regarding goals and expectations. Parents seeing their children come alive with self-motivation toward their own goals is priceless, and with college tuitions in the area of \$50,000 per year, isn’t it worth the investment in the aptitude testing prior to the college tuition investment? We firmly believe that students need a tool that speaks to them about their natural abilities and helps them understand themselves better, as it has helped us understand ourselves better.”

## Graphoria and Schooling



Note: A z-score of 0 corresponds to the population mean

A low score in graphoria, a measure of clerical speed and accuracy, can make some aspects of schooling, such as taking notes and timed tests or doing detailed homework assignments, more challenging for students. Learning that a student has scored low in clerical speed may help students and parents understand present or past frustrations in school. When working with clients scoring low in this area, we discuss strategies to make schooling a little less frustrating.

The graph on the left shows the mean scores on our graphoria test for examinees in various college majors. You can see that majors that lead to careers that involve a relatively large amount of paperwork attract students with above average scores in graphoria, while careers such as architecture or music, where clerical tasks are minimal, are often more appealing to the low-graphoria student.

We encourage students scoring low in graphoria to take their score into account when investigating occupations and choosing careers in which their low score will not be a disadvantage.

## Grip

As part of our standard battery of aptitude tests, we administer a test of grip strength. Earlier studies have shown that individuals with high grip strength are less prone to fatigue and tend to have a higher degree of nervous energy and drive than do those who score low. This led us to hypothesize that persons with a strong grip would be more inclined to pursue physically active hobbies. Two analyses were conducted to examine the differences between high-grip and low-grip examinees.



Samantha Gaies of our New York office conducted a research project to examine these differences. A



few highlights of the results showed that high-grip people were 2.4 times as likely to engage in fully active group sports such as

football, basketball, and soccer; they were less likely to list sedentary hobbies, such as musical activities or reading.

We plan to continue analyzing the data in order to uncover additional trends and tendencies that may prove helpful in further understanding the implications of the grip aptitude.

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### WORDBOOKS

for vocabulary development can be ordered. You may also request a free placement test to determine the first **WORDBOOK** that is appropriate. More information at [www.jocrf.org](http://www.jocrf.org) or see below to contact us.

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“Why do large vocabularies characterize executives and possibly outstanding men and women in other fields? The final answer seems to be that words are the instruments by means of which men and women grasp the thoughts of others and with which they do much of their own thinking. They are the tools of thought.”



### JOCRF in the Media

PUBLICATION	TITLE OF ARTICLE	AUTHOR	DATE
lawpeopleblog.com	<i>Testing for Law</i>	Ronda Muir, Esq.	April 2008
Stepping Stone	<i>Which Way to Go? Let Aptitudes Guide You</i>	Mary Pat Campbell	July 2008
ABA Journal News Now	<i>Midcareer Malaise: How to find a new path for your 40s</i>	Leslie A. Gordon	September 2008



**The Right Leader:**  
*Choosing Executives That Fit*

Nat Stoddard & Claire Wyckoff  
 February 2009

The Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Crenshaw Associates, a boutique executive coaching/outplacement/onboarding firm on Park Avenue South in New York City. They have sent many of their executive clients to us over the years for aptitude testing. Crenshaw's chairman, Nat Stoddard, has written a new book, co-authored by Claire Wyckoff, titled *The Right Leader: Selecting Executives That Fit*, in which the work of the Foundation is discussed on pages 59-60. It is expected to be published by John Wiley and Sons on February 9.