

MBTI AND VIRTUAL ACTION LEARNING

- **WHAT IS MBTI?**

- Jung's theory of psychological type
- Made accessible by Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers
- Asserts that we are all born with innate personality differences – 'gifts differing'
- MBTI helps us to understand personal strengths and blind spots, and appreciate difference between ourselves and others. It is a key 'learning styles' model
- Used inappropriately people can be pigeon holed.

- **FOUR PREFERENCES**

- Extraversion and Introversion – How we get our energy
- Sensing and Intuition – How we gather information
- Thinking and Feeling – How we make decisions
- Judging and Perceiving – How much structure and organisation we like.

- **SUMMARY OF DICHOTOMIES**

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| <p>Extraversion Energy from the Outer World</p> <p>Think by talking aloud Broad/many interests Do-think-do Initiative takers</p> <p>LEARN BEST BY DISCUSSING AND DOING</p> | <p>Introversion Energy from the inner world</p> <p>Think by reflecting Deep/selective interests Think-do-think Intense focus</p> <p>LEARN BEST BY BUILDING MENTAL MODEL</p> |
| <p>SENSING Information through the five senses</p> <p>Value the practical/realistic Concrete details Thinks step-by-step</p> <p>LEARN BEST FROM FACTUAL EXPERIENCES</p> | <p>INTUITION Information through relationships between things</p> <p>Value big picture Theory, concept, potential Thinks by jumping around</p> <p>LEARNS BEST BY ESTABLISHING MEANING</p> |
| <p>THINKING Makes decisions objectively – 'Observer'</p> <p>Values analytical reasoning Impersonal 'Justice'</p> <p>LEARNS BEST BY LOGICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING</p> | <p>FEELING Makes decisions subjectively – 'Participant'</p> <p>Values sympathetic approach Harmonising 'Compassionate'</p> <p>LEARNS BEST BY PERSON-CENTRED UNDERSTANDING</p> |
| <p>JUDGING Has structure in life</p> <p>Likes closure Dislikes last minute stressors</p> <p>LEARNS BEST BY STICKING TO A PLAN</p> | <p>PERCEIVING Is spontaneous</p> <p>Likes flexibility Energised by last minute pressure</p> <p>LEARNS BEST BY ADAPTING</p> |

- **Face to Face Action Learning Versus Virtual Action Learning**

- **What's the same?** – process, roles and principles
- Need for structure and good time management
- **What's different?**
- Fewer visual cues/no body language
- Participants might not meet F2F
- Sets meet for shorter time
- Depending on set purpose – more meeting in the virtual world?

- **MBTI and Virtual Learning in general – Points from Research**

- **Extroverts** can find it harder to stop talking than F2F – no visual cues
- Extroverts create 'high chat' environment that can lose Introverts
- Greater tendency for Extroverts to answer Introvert questions for them on line
- In particular, EFs and ES prefer F2F – EFs miss informal relationship building, and ES find communicating through computers less 'reality based'
- Es can be overwhelmed with intensity of dialogue – not enough breaks to 'do something else' and re-energise
- E facilitator can be unnerved by Introverts who participate by listening
- **Introverts** can 'forget' they are in a group and be overwhelmed by disclosure
- Can find it harder to break into conversation, as no visual cues
- Can find it easier to withdraw from discussion without detection
- IFs are likely to be most daunted by virtual learning, ISTs less so, as they focus less on the relational aspects of interaction
- I facilitator can be exhausted by E group - needs facilitator to talk more than inF2F
- **Sensing/Intuition** – there is less evidence to show that this dichotomy impacts on virtual learning to the same extent as others. However, the needs of these preferences are accentuated on line – too much abstraction and Sensors tune out. Too much detail and Intuitives get bored
- **Thinkers** – can seem insensitive F2F. This is accentuated without visual cues
- **Feelers** – find virtual learning cold and insensitive until they get to know people. Checking in is always important to them, even if it feels harder to do as facilitator if you have no verbal cues
- **Judgers** – need to feel in control of the learning environment. Keep to a clear structure and don't lose the agenda
- **Perceivers** – naturally want to 'go with the flow' and not be too structured. Emphasise the importance of structure whilst allowing some flexibility for new direction.

- **Conclusion**

- During contracting and review, use type to 'normalise' difference
- Think about your preferences as facilitator/participant – what can you learn through building your strengths and adapting to others?
- There will always be hidden psychological processes at work in a group. MBTI is one model for exploring these, but there are many more.