Paragon Learning Style Inventory

Research and Activities Related to Cognitive Preferences and Leadership

In this packet you are presented with a set of research findings, charts and activities that are intended to help you better recognize the relationship between innate cognitive type, leadership styles, and how to be more effective as a member of a group or as an individual asked to lead a group.

Activity #1: Take the PLSI and determine your cognitive/learning style.

Activity #2: Review the research below by Hummer and Huszcozo. Do any of their finding surprise you? What in your experience confirms or refutes these findings? Share your thoughts with your discussion group.

Leadership and Type Research Part #1

Hummer and Huszczo reported;

Teams with similar styles

- Performed their tasks more quickly
- Experienced less conflict
- Liked each other more
- Listened to one another more

Teams with Diverse styles

- Were more effective
- Produced better outcomes
- Took longer to complete their tasks

Activity #3: Survey the Research Below in the Type Comparison Charts. Can you see your own leadership preferences characterized here? Next, bring to mind someone that you have known in a leadership position. Do you recognize their leadership style as it relates to their cognitive preferences?

Four Type Dimension Comparisons		Combinations of Note
Introvert/Reflectives	**Extroverts/Experientials**	IT- most self-contained, least expressive
Low dominance	High Dominance	ES- most expressive.
Less "good impression"	High Sociability	IN- most reflective
Relies more on Written communication	High "good impression"	IJ- Highest self control
More comfortable behind the scenes	Uses face to face more	EJ- High, IP low perceived external confidence
	Comfortable in Meetings	
Sensates/Concretes	**Intuitives/Abstracts**	SJ- high institution maintaining
Present focus	Future focus	ESTJ- high achievement w/in system.
Speak in real/practical terms	Often speak in impressions	NP- high creativity and innovation
Value Experience	Value Soundness of Ideas	SJ- majority of school administrators
Quality is defined by efficiency and product quality	Quality is defined by the effectiveness of processes and organizational integrity	NP- least conventional
		IN – Achievement via independence
		SF- focus on the practical needs of others
		ST- focus on the technical efficiency and working order of the organization
		NF- Empathetic and driven by the feelings and relationships of the group
		NT- most analytical and critical
Thinkers	**Feelers**	TJ- most leaders and most decisive
High assertiveness	High Empathy	FP – most flexible
High Independence	High Interpersonal	TJ- scored as most responsible
Appear self-contained, low need for approval	High Social Responsible, high need for others to feel included	TJ- rigid thinking potential
Rely on logic to judge importance	Rely on feelings to judge importance	ET- most assertive
Appear cool and distant	Appear approachable & accepting	IF- least assertive
		IT- least expressive and readable
		EF- most expressive and readable

Judgers/Sequentials	Perceivers/Randoms	
Decisive Leadership	Flexible and Open minded Leadership	EFJ- harmonizers
Enjoy closure	Enjoy processing	IJ- most self-directed
Principle driven	Situational success driven	EP- most attuned to environment
Can make decisions in a hurry	Can seek out more information and avoid decision making	SJ- conservative by nature
Desire order and timeliness	Desire opportunities to grow and absence of constraints	NP- unconventional
Will tend to do things the same way as they always have	Is open to new ways of doing things	NJ- visionary and architect
Likes to have control and/or veto power over ideas	Look for input prior to decisions	SP – Action oriented
		NP – Adaptive and Innovative
		SJ – organized and efficient
		IJ – high structure, least flexible
		EP – low structure, least leader-directed

By John Shindler, February 2007 (adapted in part from research in Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. 1997)

Leadership Styles of 4 learning Style Combinations

	Intuitive/Abstract	Sensate/Practical
Judger/Sequential	**NJ** **Visionary Decision Makers** The NJ combination of Abstraction with Sequential thinking tendencies produces a leader who is comfortable looking at the big picture and confident in their assessment of how it could best be improved. The NJ is at ease designing programs and procedure, and setting out long range goals. They approach their goals with an inner vision and in most cases can present their vision in a compelling way to others. They can be highly determined when their goals are clear. They tend to dislike inconsistency and incongruity. **Strengths** • Visionary • Integration of big picture with daily practices • Analytical and Insightful • Innovation **Areas of Improvement** • Can be over confidence of ideas • Can put too much trust in long-term strategies • Can appear disrespectful of status quo • Can miss opportunities waiting for the perfect solution	**SJ** **Realistic Decision Makers** The SJ combination of Practical and Sequential thinking tendencies produces a leader who is comfortable with organization and managing institutions big or small. The SJ is at ease finding better ways to achieve practical goals, and create higher levels of efficiency. The SJ leader is most often dependable and well informed and bases their decisions on past experience. They tend to dislike ambiguity and disorganization. **Strengths** • Organization • Streamlining processes and operations • Team oriented • Institutional Respect **Areas of Improvement** • Can put too much faith in policy • Can be uneasy about changing status quo • Can rely too heavily on common sense • Can be perceived as controlling or inflexible
Perceiver/Random	**NP** **Adaptable innovators** The combination of Abstraction and Random thinking tendencies produces a leader who is motivated to explore new possibilities and challenges. The NP tends to be a less conventional type of leader who is uncomfortable being confined by existing structures or expectations. The NP will typically value innovation over maintenance and the status quo. **Strengths** • Change oriented • Connections and Ideas • Spontaneous action • Depth of analysis **Areas of Improvement** • Follow through and completion • Unrealistic goals • Comfort with Spontaneity and change in direction can appear capricious to others. • Can be seen as being too independent and not enough team-oriented	**SP** **Adaptable Realists** The combination of Practical and Random thinking tendencies produces a leader who is the most adaptable, in the moment, and hands on. The SP values data, information and experiences and makes decisions based on things that they have found to work for them. They tend to trust theoretical or less tangible solutions to problem less than other types. **Strengths** • Practical solutions and common sense • Trouble shooting • Grounded in reality • Flexible and Spontaneous **Areas of Improvement** • Can Lack global vision • Actions can appear disintegrated • Can miss deeper patterns • Can be slow in making larger decisions

Activity #4: Making Sense of Leadership and Effectiveness. Reflect on your experiences in schools and other organizations. What does it take to make change effective? What makes an organization work efficiently? What makes a leader effective? What needs to be present to produce efficacy?

Leadership Effectiveness and Cognitive Style

Understanding your cognitive style can be very useful in developing your leadership style. It may be helpful to use the conceptual framework illustrated in the diagram below to assist you in exploring effective leadership behavior within the demensions of cognitive preference.
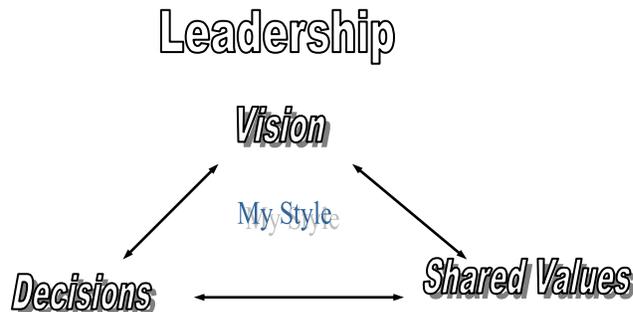
This diagram depicts the 3 critical and interrelated dimensions of effective leadership. First, a good leader needs to be able to develop and communicate a *collective vision* for the group as it moves toward its goals. Next, a leader needs to be able to make *decisions* based on good information and the will of the group. Finally, an effective leader is one who understands that no outcome will last unless it is grounded in *shared values* and has high levels of group ownership. It may be helpful to breakdown each of these areas of leadership within the cognitive dimensions that most define them. For example, the way one conceives a vision seems to be most dependent on a combination of the first two dimensions (E/I and S/N), shared values would be the middle two (S/N and T/F), and decisions would be the last two (T/F and J/P).

The following activities may helpful in the development of your leadership abilities. First, consider how the other type combinations are most comfortable operating, in each of the 3 areas, and then use the set of guiding questions to help you develop a more well-rounded approach to leading.

For each of the 4 type combinations, <u>VISION</u> is typically based in:

ES – shared action and experience

IS – tasks and accomplishments

EN – shared principles and action

IN – an internal interpretation of the big picture

Activity #5: If I were to have any of the other styles, what would be my approach to developing and communicating a vision for the group? What can I learn from the other approaches? What would be the various needs of the other members of my group when it came to feeling as though group action was a reflection of a collective emergent vision?

For each of the 4 type combinations, the priority <u>VALUES</u> are typically:

SF – people's feelings and getting practical needs met

ST – consistency and practical realities

NF – meaningful outcomes and emotional harmony

NT – logical consistency and relevancy

Activity #6: If I were to have any of the other styles, what would be the values I would use to assess if the group was functioning well? If I ignored these other ways of thinking, what important values might I be neglecting? Given the other types, what needs must I address to make the group members comfortable in the process?

For each of the 4 type combinations, the typical <u>DECISION</u>-Making style will look like this:

FP - flexible given the needs of people

FJ – principle-driven based on how things affect people

TP – logical but open to change

TJ – decisive and objective

Activity #7: If I were to have any of the other styles, what would I need to feel comfortable with any decision? If I am a very decisive "judger," what can I learn from the more measured and/or open-minded group members? If I have a strong "perceiving" preference, what could be accomplished by occasionally making decisions without complete assurance? As a feeler, am I willing to accept the need for logical outcomes? As a "thinker," am I willing to give in to the human needs even if they feel less objective?

Activity #8 Part 1: Consider the following situation. Teacher A (an ENFP) has been put in the role of a teacher leader. Their assignment is to mentor 2 other teachers in their school – both SJ's. What issues related to values do you see as potential areas of concern? What other issues do you see as potential areas to be attentive to?

Part 2: The administrator working with Teacher A is an ESTJ. What issues do you see related to either vision or decision making style that might pose a problem for them?

Activity #9: Examine the following Chart. Do you concur with the placement of your type on each of the 3 continuum?

Handbook of Leadership (Bass, 1990: 445),