



The annual *Journal of Psychological Type® - Research Digest* (JPT-RD) summarizes select research published in the previous calendar year on psychological type using the MBTI® instrument. The Research Summaries distill the studies into brief and readable form, bridging research and practice by indicating the relevance of the research for practitioners. The *Field Notes* section alerts readers to other type-related research activities and publications, such as theses and dissertations, relevant white papers and other summaries, as well as ongoing research activities of interest. [↻](#)

## Thomas Carskadon Award

Thomas Carskadon, Ph.D., was the founding editor of the *Journal of Psychological Type* in 1977, when he was a professor of psychology at Mississippi State University. This award recognizes thoughtful contributions to research to encourage publication of research on psychological type and the MBTI instrument. The Thomas Carskadon Award of \$500 is conferred by the JPT-RD editorial team to research—published or unpublished—that

reflects a considered, creative or new approach to the study of psychological type.

The 2016 Thomas Carskadon Award is awarded to: George J. Rashid and David K. Duys, University of Iowa, for their study on cognitive complexity and typological preferences published in the *Journal of Employment Counseling*. The summary of their study follows. [↻](#)

## Cognitive Complexity and Typological Preferences

Rashid, G. J., & Duys, D. K. (2015). Counselor cognitive complexity: correlating and comparing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator with the role category questionnaire. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 52, 77–86

**SUMMARY.** Cognitive complexity is the ability to differentiate and integrate multiple perspectives in a task. This skill is particularly important for counselors, as increased cognitive complexity provides the ability to see, incorporate, make sense of, and act on different points of view. This study asked if any of the MBTI preferences predicted cognitive complexity. In addition, researchers asked if the magnitude of clarity of

any preference predicted cognitive complexity. The study sample consisted of 74 master's counseling students who completed two assessments, the MBTI instrument and another for cognitive complexity. Only the Judging–Perceiving scale correlated with cognitive complexity, with a preference for Perceiving scoring higher. While the strength of any given preference did not correlate with cognitive complexity, the cumulative magnitude of clarity

of all four preferences did. On this last result, the preferences themselves didn't matter, only the strength of clarity of the preferences.

**IMPLICATIONS.** The correlation of Perceiving and higher cognitive complexity provides direction to career counselors with any client who is considering a career choice, such as counseling, that demands

cognitive complexity. One implication of the relationship between clarity of preference and cognitive complexity is that there is innate potential for cognitive complexity in any preference or combination of preferences—and that support of a student's type differentiation (whatever their preference) can be a route to increasing cognitive complexity. 

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## The Impact of Extroversion and Introversion on Writing Ability in Second Language Learners

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Boroujeni, A.A.J., Roohani, A., & Hasanimanesh, A. (2015). The impact of extroversion and introversion personality types on EFL learners' writing ability. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(10), 212–218

**SUMMARY.** Using type to understand learning styles and facilitate learning is a common practice in education. Several studies have demonstrated a difference between Extraverts and Introverts in both speaking and writing, with Extraverts typically more facile at the former and Introverts the latter. A team of researchers in Iran asked whether or not this would lead to a difference in proficiency in a second language. Their study measured the impact of Extroversion and Introversion, as measured by the MBTI instrument, on writing ability in college students who were second language learners of English. The study inquired into the difference, if any, between Extraverts and Introverts in their writing ability in categories of content, organization, vocabulary and mechanics. The Iranian student sample (N=50) were given three assessments: the Michigan Test of English Language

Proficiency (MTELP), the MBTI assessment, and a free writing test in which students were asked to write 250 words in response to the question, do you prefer team sports or individual sports? Introverts scored significantly higher than Extraverts in all categories—content, language, mechanics, and vocabulary—except for organization.

**IMPLICATIONS.** This study confirms previous research findings that Introverts tend to outperform Extraverts in language abilities as pertains to writing. This proficiency of Introverts also appears in second language learners of English. Findings from this study can assist practitioners and educators in facilitating language learning with students by understanding some typical strengths and weaknesses of Introverted and Extraverted learners. 

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## The Influence of Study Skills, Personality Traits, and Attitudes on Learning in a Team-based Environment

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Persky, A.M., Henry, T., & Campbell, A. (2015). An exploratory analysis of personality, attitude, and study skills on the learning curve within a team-based learning environment. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 79(2)

**SUMMARY.** Learning performance in students is influenced by several factors, including the learning environment, level of skill, attitudes, and personality traits. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill examined factors that determine variability of learning performance between students in a team-based learning environment. In the current study, researchers wanted to examine the influence of several factors in learning rates, including attitudes towards learning (e.g., whether ability is innate or impacted by effort), Extraversion and Introversion towards team-based learning, previous academic experience, and study skills. Students in a pharmacokinetics course (N=159) were given 4 cumulative assessments during the course and a final cumulative assessment. One objective of the study was to determine if Introversion, as measured by the MBTI instrument, impacts

performance in team-based learning environments. Results indicated that Extraversion and Introversion did not influence rates of learning, though Introverts rated team experience lower than Extraverts. The researchers noted that one reason performance in Introverts may not have been impacted was that the study's team-based format was a true cooperative learning environment that provided time for individual focus and reflection.

**IMPLICATIONS.** This study confirms and challenges some putative claims about Introverts' and Extraverts' attitudes towards group engagement. As expected, Introverts did not rate team-based learning as favorably as Extraverts. However, given a style of team-based learning that provides time for reflective focus, the natural aversion of Introverts towards groups does not need to impact learning performance. ?

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## Associations between Styles of Personality, Learning, and Cognition.

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Xie, Q. (2015). Intellectual styles: their associations and their relationships to ability and personality. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, 14, 63-76

**SUMMARY.** *Intellectual style* is a general term that captures a person's preferred process of taking in information and applying it to tasks. An intellectual style can be anchored in ability, personality, or cognitive processing. A person's relationship to context or environment ("field") is an intellectual ability applied in decision making. Specifically, a person who is field independent makes judgments based on one's own perceptions, whereas a person who is field

dependent relies on external clues for decision making. Psychological type, as measured by the MBTI instrument, is a personality style expressed in four preferences that govern how one receives information, makes decisions, and approaches learning. The learning approach theory utilized in the study has a binary classification of deep learning approaches and surface learning approaches; the former is characterized by a thorough

understanding of the information received as contrasted with the latter approach that refers to an inclination to learn through memory and repetition. This study investigated the associations between field dependence-independence (FDI), psychological types (MBTI), and learning approaches of deep or surface learning in 510 students who completed five assessments that measured FDI, psychological type, Big Five personality traits, learning approaches, and nonverbal reasoning ability.

In psychological type, a preference for Judging, and to a lesser degree a preference for Thinking, were correlated with deep learning approaches and strategies. In addition, both the Judging preference and the deep learning approach were associated with Conscientiousness in the Big Five. Interestingly, neither personality as measured by the Big Five, nor psychological type as

measured by the MBTI instrument, were related to nonverbal reasoning ability, also referred to as fluid intelligence. Rather, outcomes indicated that this ability for fluid intelligence was significantly correlated with a field independence intellectual style.

**IMPLICATIONS.** This study offers insight into distinctions between one's intellectual decision making style (FDI), how one learns, and psychological type. It appears these constructs are largely independent, yet how one learns and one's psychological preferences for Judging-Perceiving, in particular, are strongly related. From a practical perspective, this research also confirms that although there is a relationship between learning style and personality type, educators should not assume that personality and learning style provide the same information about learning needs. 🔄

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## Predicting Therapy Outcome with Myers-Briggs Type Preferences

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Jinkerson, J., Masilla, A. and Hawkins, R. C. (2015). Can Myers-Briggs dimensions predict therapy outcome? Differences in the thinking-feeling function pair in cognitive therapy for depression/anxiety. *Research in Psychotherapy: Psychopathology, Process and Outcome*, 18(1), 21-31

**SUMMARY.** Personality is often argued as a basis for determining selection of therapeutic modalities as well as a factor in predicting outcomes. However, little empirical evidence of these putative claims exists. The current study evaluated archival data to determine the efficacy of MBTI preferences in predicting therapeutic outcomes in a treatment of cognitive therapy. Clients were administered the MBTI instrument and a baseline rating on the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) was given before entering a series of three sessions of cognitive therapy. Researchers predicted

outcomes for each function pair; i.e., 1) that clients with a preference for Extraversion would have better outcomes than Introversion; 2) a preference for Intuition would show superior outcomes to Sensing; 3) a preference for Thinking would have better outcomes than Feeling; and 4) a preference for Perceiving would have superior outcomes compared to a preference for Judging. Researchers performed a number of statistical analyses on the data and found that overall, none of the preferences predicted psychotherapy outcome, except for the Thinking-Feeling preference pair under specific

conditions. When changes in GAF scores, rather than final GAF score, were analyzed, the Thinking–Feeling function pair was the only predictor of psychotherapy outcome, supporting the third prediction. In addition, when analyzed for a GAF change of 10 points or more, termed goodness of response, a preference for Thinking significantly predicted goodness of response. However, further analyses revealed that a client’s initial function level when entering therapy was a

greater predictor of therapy outcomes than the Thinking–Feeling function pair.

**IMPLICATIONS.** Results supported putative claims that clients with a preference for Thinking will have better outcomes in cognitive therapy than clients with a preference for Feeling. This study also highlights that finding a fit between psychological type and therapeutic modality can facilitate better outcomes. 

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## Sensing–Intuitive Differences in Use of Learning Objectives

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Holt, J. T., Ghormoz, J., Sung, Y., White, M. W., & Szarek, J. L. (2015). Medical student benefit from learning objectives correlates to specific Myers-Briggs Types. *Medical Science Education, 25*, 249–254

**SUMMARY.** Learning objectives are a common tool for medical students. Previous studies demonstrated that the use of learning objectives in medical students benefited men more than women. This study inquired further into the relationship between Myers-Briggs® type and the impact of learning objectives in medical students. A total of 61 second year medical students completed the MBTI assessment and were tracked through Blackboard, an online teaching tool, as to which students downloaded learning objectives and their scores on block exams and final comprehensive exams. All students, regardless of preferences, had higher exam scores if they downloaded learning objectives, except for those with a preference for Intuition, for whom downloading learning objectives or not did not impact exam scores. Further, the

impact of downloading objectives on exam scores was most significant for those students with a preference for Sensing. Interestingly, there was not a significant difference by type preference as to how many students downloaded the learning objectives.

**IMPLICATIONS.** This study reinforces our understanding that type preferences impact learning in educational settings. As different types learn in distinct ways, it benefits students and schools to offer learning processes that engage different type styles. This is especially apt considering that although students with a Sensing preference were not more likely to download learning objectives, they did in fact benefit more than others from downloading objectives. 

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## FIELD NOTES

There have been other notable research activities and publications in the field of psychological type.

- Ellis, K. (2015) *Exploring antecedents to work engagement and psychological well-being within a Canadian provincial ministry*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This doctoral dissertation combined quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the role of various factors in work engagement. The researcher found that a team's social construction of reality (e.g., accountability, trust/safety, sensitivity to other perspectives) impacted team engagement, whereas MBTI preferences did not directly impact individual sense of engagement. The author makes the point that by assuming individuals have unwavering traits and ignoring contextual factors, there may be a significant reason interventions targeted at sustaining work engagement fail. Additionally, team members believed that a leader's failure to address and hold accountable team members for their level of engagement was a cause of further member disengagement and sense of resignation. Ellis finds that successful team leaders require coaching skills to maintain and stimulate workplace engagement.

In summary, one should not presume type preferences reflect invariant behaviors or tell us directly about work engagement. Various measures such as social and emotional intelligence, awareness of group norms and mental models, appreciation of multiple perspectives, and the ability to engage in nonconfrontational dialogue, all form components of a group's ability to work constructively. Ellis supports the use of personality assessments as tools that

reflect a person's state-like attitudes and behaviors. Leaders should also be aware that team members perceive leadership as having a responsibility to address individual team members' engagement, and help build an environment where team engagement can be supported, reflecting their role as coach or mentor.

- Prideaux, D. L. (2015) *Exploring the value a psychological assessment brings to workplace coaching for the purpose of stress reduction and increased job satisfaction* (Unpublished master's thesis). Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

This master's thesis examined the impact of the MBTI assessment in workplace coaching as one possible tool to reduce stress and to increase job satisfaction and work engagement. Participants in the study were from a variety of occupations and were assigned to one of two conditions: (1) a four-session positive psychology coaching process, and (2) a four-session positive psychology coaching process plus MBTI assessment feedback. Stress and engagement data were gathered pre-coaching, at the conclusion of coaching, and at a two-month follow-up. Both groups reported reductions in stress (but no change in work engagement). There was no difference between the two groups in the degree of stress reduction. However, of the ten participants who failed to complete the research, all ten were in the non-MBTI instrument coaching group. Among other possible explanations, the author considers that this finding may reflect other research suggesting tangible take-aways are strongly valued by coaching clients.

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