

Such outcomes exemplify academic advising as a developmental process that enhances the quality of higher education.

*College Catalogue.* The single most important publication affecting the advising process is the college catalogue. Often considered "the bible," students and advisors are expected to read and understand the degree requirements and all other academic and institutional policies. Most catalogues emphasize the student's responsibility in meeting the requirements and policies of the institution, yet the advisor is often the interpreter and monitor of these policies.

The college catalogue, then, is one of the bonds of the advising relationship; it is a tool that both student and advisor should study and refer to frequently. This document could also serve as evidence in any litigation concerning academic policies. With such importance placed on this official publication, the need for clarity and accuracy is obvious. Institutions should review their catalogues frequently to insure that they accurately state the intentions and policies of the institution.

*Student Handbook.* The student handbook is another publication that enhances the advising process. Many handbooks restate in detail the important academic policies in the catalogue, and this restatement is always helpful. After the restatement of policies comes a description of student services and resources providing assistance with all kinds of matters, ranging from career indecision and poor study skills, to resolving roommate, alcohol, and financial problems. Student clubs and organizations are also described in this publication.

When advising students developmentally, the advisor may use the student handbook to identify other campus resources that will assist students to improve their decision making, studying, leadership, coping, and valuing abilities and skills.

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has provided a comprehensive set of advising materials and techniques that advisors might use in the developmental advising process. The advisor is the facilitator in this process and must select from these materials those elements that are most appropriate for the individual student and circumstance, in accordance with the overall student development process model.

To set goals, for example, two published instruments have been described; several instruments and strategies for self-assessment have also been enclosed. The various resource offices identified here offer continuous opportunities for the instruction and consultation phases of the process. Institutional publications, personnel, and perhaps a version of the student development transcript, are mechanisms for evaluation of the environment and the student.

In order to be able to select and use these materials effectively, an advisor training program is necessary. The training program enables the advisor to achieve the maximum potential use of the available advising tools and resources, and it must include techniques strategies for introducing them, especially for those advisors who are not familiar with student development literature. Participation in such a program is itself a developmental activity for the advisor. This awareness serves to insure the same kind of results with students who are seeking to attain specific educational and personal goals.

## The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: A Resource for Developmental Advising

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The two important functions of academic advising are to help students succeed in the college environment and to help them become aware of their unique approaches to academic and career decision making. Academic advisors employ various methods and techniques to help students accomplish these tasks. One seldom used method is to employ instruments that enhance students' self-awareness and aid advisors in establishing a rapport with students.

The importance of the interpersonal advising relationship should not be underestimated.<sup>1</sup> Academic advisors who recognize that students are different in how they understand the events in their lives, make judgements, and interact with others, will be more apt to communicate with them on an individualized and productive level. Students' positive evaluations of effective advisors have often centered on interpersonal and social dimensions as well as on technical competence or skill in dealing with academic problems.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this article is to describe an instrument which can be a valuable source of information for students and advisors; it is the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI), a practical tool for helping students understand some of the dynamics of how they communicate and approach the decision making process.<sup>3</sup> This article will explore the need for such a tool, give a brief overview of the instrument, and discuss specific outcomes and benefits for students and advisors.

Academic advising may be represented as a combination of information-giving and counseling to help students internalize and process academic information in a personal context.<sup>4</sup> Most advisors are comfortable with information dissemination since they often view

<sup>1</sup> J. Centra and D. Rock, "College Environments and Student Achievement," *American Educational Research Journal*, 8 (1971) 623-634; E. Pascarella and P. Terenzini, "Student-Faculty Informal Contact and College Persistence: A Further Investigation," *Journal of Educational Research*, 72 (1979) 214-218.

<sup>2</sup> D. Kegan, "The Quality of Student Life," *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 19 (1978), 55-58; I. Witters and H. Miller, "College Advising: An Analysis of Advisory and Advisee Roles," *Journal of Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education*, 9 (1971), 36-40.

<sup>3</sup> I. B. Myers, *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. (Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> H. Kramer, and R. Cochner, *Advising by Faculty*. (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association, 1983); T. Tronbley, "Analysis of the Complexity of Academic Advising Tasks," *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 31 (1984), 234-239.

this as their major responsibility.<sup>5</sup> Some advisors may not feel as comfortable or competent in the counseling aspects of the advising relationship. Students, however, perceive advising not only as a vehicle for acquiring relevant and accurate information, but also as a resource for receiving help with problems affecting their academic performance. The problems might include:

- inadequate study and test-taking skills;
- selecting or confirming a major choice, setting personal goals (e.g. creating an educational or graduation plan);
- learning about occupational relationships to majors; and
- how current academic decisions may affect their personal and working lives.<sup>6</sup>

Advising is increasingly being viewed from a developmental perspective.<sup>7</sup> This perspective means working with students as whole persons, acknowledging that personal and social concerns may influence their academic performance and progress. Therefore, advisors need training in student and career development concepts. They also need practical tools to help them work with students possessing individualized styles of communicating and decision making, and varied perceptions and interpretations of their college environments.

Existing student development theories such as Chickering's psychosocial and Perry's cognitive development are excellent tools for conceptualizing and designing advising interventions and approaches.<sup>8</sup> However, when these concepts are integrated into personality theory, a more complete picture of individual students' differences may be obtained. The actual practice of advising within a developmental framework has not been studied empirically or theoretically in relation to personality type. Murray suggests improving advising through the use of cognitive style but does not discuss how students derive meaning from their world or interpret the manner in which they process incoming information.<sup>9</sup> Murray recommends using the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) as a resource for helping advisors understand the different types of students with whom they work. This Jungian-based instrument indicates personality preferences and provides orderly reasons why people can experience the same event and yet come to different conclusions about it.<sup>10</sup>

1. Burkard, P. Hornbuckle, and J. Mahoney, "Faculty Perceptions of Academic Advising," *NACADA Journal*, 14 (1977), 4-10; T. J. Gates, *Academic Advising: Getting Us Through the Eighties* (Washington, D.C.: AAHE-ERIC Higher Education Research Report, No. 7, 1979); H. Kramer, and R. Gardner, *Advising by Faculty* (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association, 1983).

M.D. Eberly, *Faculty Advising in Colleges and Universities* (Washington, D.C.: American College Personnel Association, Student Personnel Series, No. 9, 1978); H. Kramer, and R. Gardner, "Evaluation of Academic Advisors: Administrator and Faculty Perceptions," *NACADA Journal*, 2 (1982), 30-36; S.S. McCallrey, and T.K. Miller, "Mentoring: An Approach to Academic Advising," in F.B. Newton and K.L. Funder Eds., *Student Development Practices: Strategies for Making a Difference* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1980).

R. Winston, S. Funder, and T. Miller Eds., *Developmental Approaches to Academic Advising* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982); D. Mash, "Academic Advising: Too Often Taken for Granted," *The College Board Review*, 107 (1978), 12-16.

A. Chickering, *Education and Identity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969); W. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970); N. Sanford, "Freshman Personality: A Stage in Human Development," in N. Sanford Ed., *College and Character* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963).

7. G. Murray, "Improving Advising Through the Use of Cognitive Style," *NACADA Journal*, 4 (1984), 17-22.

8. I.B. Myers, *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1962).

Instruments like the *MBTI* have not traditionally been used to understand the advisor-advisee relationship, to guide effective delivery models of advising services, or to provide practical tools for helping students make academic and career choices. Developmental advising advocates that students are unique and progress through cognitive and interpersonal development at different paces. Instruments like the *Myers-Briggs* can provide a starting place from which the developmental advising process may progress.

### *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*

Carl Jung's theory of psychological type was the basis for Isabel Myers-Briggs' research and subsequent development of the *MBTI*.<sup>11</sup> Jung theorized that there are four pairs of mental functions. The four pairs are polar in nature: Extraversion (E) - Introversion (I); Intuition (N) - Sensation (S); Feeling (F) - Thinking (T); and Perception (P) - Judgement (J). These four pairs result in sixteen different combinations or types. Different types of people differ in the priorities they place on each of the four mental processes.

The *MBTI* is a questionnaire developed by Isabel Myers-Briggs in 1962.<sup>12</sup> It is probably the simplest and most reliable method for determining a person's Jungian type. The *MBTI* generates preference scores that describe a person's interaction with his or her world on the following dimensions:

- *Focus of interest* — extraverted towards people and things versus introverted toward concepts and ideas.
- *Information gathering* — sensing of facts and data versus intuitive possibilities and guesses.
- *Involvement with information* — feeling of personal involvement versus thinking with logical analysis.
- *Disposition of information* — judging for decision making versus perceiving for spontaneous awareness.

The descriptions are value-free. The types are indicative of preferred ways of functioning and processing and are not based on ability. Students' preferences for one type over another do not preclude their using the opposite function in a variety of settings or situations.

The original *MBTI* questionnaire (Form G) contains 166 questions and requires approximately 40 minutes to complete.<sup>13</sup> There are several revisions, the most recent being an abbreviated version (Form AV) which contains 50 items and is self-scoring.<sup>14</sup> Form AV takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and score. Macdaid found that type preference scores remained identical in 73 percent of the cases when preference scores for Forms AV and G were compared.<sup>15</sup>

The *MBTI* may be administered and interpreted at many institutions through counseling centers, or faculty and staff trained in its use. *The Center for the Application of*

<sup>11</sup> I.B. Myers, *Gifts Differing* (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> I.B. Myers.

<sup>13</sup> I.B. Myers.

<sup>14</sup> I.B. Myers, *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator — Abbreviated Version* (Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1983).

<sup>15</sup> G. Macdaid, "A Comparison of Form G and Form H," Paper presented at APT-V, College Park, MD, 1983.

*Psychological Type* in Gainesville, Florida hosts workshops on campuses throughout the United States to explore educational uses of the *MBTI*. The *MBTI* manual lists data on occupation and type collected in a National Data Bank sponsored by the Center. For example, if an advisor who works with nursing students, knows that most practicing nurses are ESFJ or ISFJ types, this information might help students to confirm career decisions.<sup>16</sup>

*Myers-Briggs* types appear to relate to learning styles, teaching styles, and counseling relationships. In *Gifts Differing*, Myers outlines some practical implications for the use of *MBTI* types. These include type and early learning, type and occupation, and ways type relates to learning styles, marriage relationships, and interpersonal group dynamics. The *MBTI* also has been used extensively in career counseling and decision-making models.<sup>17</sup>

The *Center for the Application of Psychological Type* has collected research relating types of the majority of workers in specific occupations. Learning styles for each type and the kind of environment in which each type learns best are outlined in Lawrence's *People Types and Tiger Stripes*.<sup>18</sup> Educators can use this information to design classrooms, courses and instructional materials.

#### Benefits for Advisors

When interpreted properly, the *MBTI* can aid advisors in: 1) understanding students' views about their academic milieu, 2) how they gather and process information about course requirements and related areas, and 3) how they choose academic programs and careers. Advisors can adjust their advising style to meet the students' preferred mode of dealing with the college environment, processing information, and making decisions. Students will feel more comfortable and open in the advising relationship when they sense that advisors comprehend their ways of understanding and interpreting events.

The *MBTI* can serve as a guideline for advisors to ask questions which challenge the students' preferred way of acquiring and processing information. For example, highly intuitive students may need to be challenged on the realities of their decisions about major choice, course load, and study habits since they tend to be idealists without considering the practical implications of their decisions. On the other hand, sensing types need to develop the ability to generate possibilities and ingenious solutions to the problems and decisions they encounter in college.

Another example of using a student's *MBTI* preference appears in the extravert-introvert (EI) dimension. Since introverts are in the minority (30 percent) of the college population, they may need special attention and support from their academic advisor. The introverted college student may find public speaking classes, large social gatherings, or crowded residence halls threatening to their preferred nature. Although it is essential to develop social and interpersonal skills, introverts need to be reassured that their preferences for working or being alone are natural and acceptable. The extreme extravert, on the other hand, needs to develop abilities to work alone and to concentrate.

<sup>16</sup> M.H. McCauley, "The MBTI: Tool for Personal Development and Career Planning." Paper presented at the Annual APGA Convention, Detroit, Michigan, 1982.

<sup>17</sup> I.B. Myers, *Gifts Differing*. (Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1980).

<sup>18</sup> G.D. Lawrence, *People Types and Tiger Stripes*. (Gainesville, FL: Center for Application of Psychological Type, Inc., 1979).

On the perception-judgment (PJ) dimension, strong preferences may affect students' ability to perform academically, make decisions, and manage their environment. The procrastination of perceiving students could result in their not making a major choice or in neglecting to study until the night before an exam. The judging type also has its pitfalls. The uncertainty and relativity of some decisions which need to be made in college might result in frustration for some students. They may make a decision for the sake of making one rather than gathering and processing additional information to arrive at a proper decision.

The *MBTI* may be included in an advisor training or in-service program. Advisors could complete the instrument to determine their own preferences for type and then be instructed in how to interpret and apply the information to career advising; communicating; and understanding individual differences in students. Advisors interested in learning more about the use of this instrument could receive references for further study.

#### Benefits for Students

As students progress in their cognitive development, they move from a closed to a more open view of the world around them.<sup>19</sup> They may be helped to develop insights into their cognitive growth through an awareness and understanding of how they gather and analyze information. For example, two approaches to judging, according to the *MBTI*, occur through thinking and feeling. Thinking types approach the process logically and impersonally while feeling types approach it more subjectively and personally. Judgers are planners and want the essential information needed to choose in order to settle the decision quickly. The two approaches to perceiving, on the other hand, are through sensing and intuition. Perceptive types often have trouble making decisions and like to postpone unpleasant tasks. Perceivers don't mind leaving decisions open until new evidence is available. Students understanding these dimensions may want to strengthen the area they do *not* prefer in order to acquire a more balanced approach.

Nisbet, Ruble and Schurr have used the *MBTI* to diagnose learning styles and to help develop learning behaviors in high-risk students.<sup>20</sup> They view it as a significant addition to the traditional diagnostic tools for working with high-risk populations. According to Keirsey and Bates, the sensing-perceiving (SP) student is more attrition prone (with a potential attrition rate of 87 percent at the post-secondary level).<sup>21</sup> Advisors who understand this group of students would immediately sense the need for academic interventions which would take into account specific learning behaviors such as lack of patience with routing tasks, rejection of authorities and systems, and a strong focusing on self.<sup>22</sup> Helping students identify and interpret their academic needs and approaches to learning will provide an important insight into their behavior and preferences in certain situations.

<sup>19</sup> F. Kretfelkamp, C. Widick, and C. Parker Eds. *Applying New Developmental Findings*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978); W. Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970).

<sup>20</sup> J. Nisbet, V. Ruble, and T. Schurr, "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: A Key to Diagnosing Learning Styles and Developing Desirable Learning Behaviors in High-Risk College Students." In L. Noel and R. Levitz, Eds. *How to Succeed with Academically Underprepared Students*. (Iowa City, Iowa: The American College Testing Program, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> D. Keirsey and M. Bates, *Phase Understand Me: An Essay on Temperament Styles*. (Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Books, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> D. Keirsey and M. Bates.

One aspect of a comprehensive attempt to improve academic advising at the University of Florida incorporated an analysis of type differences among incoming freshmen and transfers with aptitude, achievement and plans for major field of study.<sup>23</sup> Comparing their *MBTI* type and major choice might provide additional information to students who need to confirm or question their decision, because there seems to be a similarity of type (as in occupational groups) among groups of students choosing certain majors.

The *MBTI* can also help with group advising. One example involved the administering of the *MBTI* to about 500 students in many sections of a freshman orientation course at The Ohio State University. A lecture interpreting the instrument was presented to the students, and when asked if the description of type fit them, the majority shook their heads "yes" in disbelief. The information provided on the *MBTI* offered practical knowledge in helping students understand who they were and how similar and dissimilar they were from their classmates and friends. The *MBTI* gave students a concrete tool to understand conflicts they may have encountered with their roommates, advisors, or parents. Students reported that the *MBTI* lecture provided them with fresh insights. "You mean not everyone thinks like me?" This awareness of self can provide the incentive for growth in low-preference areas. For instance, if students have a high preference for the thinking dimension and a low preference for the feeling dimension, they might realize that empathy, tact, and understanding must be used in certain situations to deal effectively with others.

Recent studies at Auburn University, Mercer University, and The Ohio State University, reveal that the *MBTI* was used to match roommates in residence halls. As a result, Schroeder suggests that students matched with similar personality types produced a supportive environment, while students with opposite type preferences produced a more challenging living environment.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the lifespan, people are encouraged to work towards "good type development" or a balance of preferences. When a situation, decision, or individuals calls for one preference over another, the person's type is developed enough to use either dimension competently. If students are aware of this needed balance, they can practice developing their 'types' weaknesses and strengths.

### Conclusion

Developmental advising focuses on meeting students "where they are" and helping them interact with their environment through the use of their unique capabilities. Chickering asserts that most students are in the process of forming their identity. They are interested in information about self and how they can integrate this information into career choice, interpersonal relationships, and negotiating the college environment.

A resource like the *MBTI* not only can help students understand their preferences and why they react in certain situations in almost predictable ways, but also can help advisors to be

<sup>23</sup> M.H. McAulley, "Type Differences in Career Choices." Paper presented at the Annual APGA Convention, Detroit, Michigan, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> C. Schroeder, "Designing College Environments for Students." In F. Newton and K. Ender Eds. *Student Development Practices: Strategies for Making a Difference*. (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1980); D. Kabbeck, R. Rodgers, J. Marshall, D. Denny, and G. Nichols, "Balancing Challenge and Support." *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 23 (1982) 434-442.

more understanding, more adept in communicating and more skilled in helping students select, explore, and confirm academic and career choices. This understanding can:

- lead students to an awareness of their cognitive development;
- help them more accurately perceive relationships with peers, family members and faculty;
- provide self-information at a time when they are involved in certain developmental tasks; and
- help them identify and explore academic and career alternatives.

The *MBTI* is an instrument which can provide information for use in practical applications in the advising setting, but additional research will be needed to help establish the effectiveness of instrumentation use for advising.

In the meantime, the *MBTI* can prove to be a valuable tool in helping advisors and students understand themselves and their mutual relationships.