

14 Understanding the Academic Needs of Minority Students at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa Campus

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The University of Hawaii, the only public institution of higher education in Hawaii, is a multi-campus system whose Manoa Campus with more than 18,000 students reflects the multi-cultural environment of a unique island state. However, certain ethnic groups are underrepresented in proportion to their representation in the total state population. In Hawaii ethnic groups such as Filipinos, Native Hawaiians (Hawaiians and Part-Hawaiians), Samoans, Southeast Asians, and African-Americans are underrepresented in post-secondary education.

Studies have shown that minority students in large college campuses often have needs which differ from those of the general population (Greene, 1989). The different personality types described by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator can be linked to unique learning styles and variations in learning related to teaching style. Much has been written that shows that MBTI types react differently to formal education, different instructional procedures, and study in different content areas (see below). Furthermore, the MBTI can yield predictive information about academic achievement of academically high-risk students (Myers & Myers, 1980).

Myers and McCaulley (1985) present strong evidence for relationships between type and performance on measures of academic achievement and aptitude. For both high school and college students, Ns score higher on various measures of academic achievement and performance, including the SAT-Verbal and the Davis Reading Test. Among college students, Myers and McCaulley found that Is score higher on measures of academic aptitude and that Ts may perform better on academic tasks requiring logical analysis.

Hester (1990) conducted a study which supports the finding that Ns excel in skills involving language manipulation. Other studies show that Ns demonstrate more competence in reading rate, retention, and total reading (Millot, 1975), and in vocabulary (Novak & Voss, 1981). Schurr, Ruble, and Henriksen (1989) provide support for the prediction that graduation rate would be higher for Js than for Ps. In contrast, Fourqurean, Meisgeier, Swank, and Murphy (1988) relate perception to academic ability in finding that there are a higher number of gifted students who are perceiving types.

Keirsey and Bates (1978) suggest that the sensing-perceiving (SP) individual operates from a core value system of love of action, spontaneity, and the freedom to act on impulse. Having a natural preference for sensation, they perceive their environment factually and so trust their experiences. Because SPs are described as behaving in ways that will satisfy their high valuation of action, stimulation, and impulsiveness in the moment, unlike other temperaments, they have the greatest difficulty adjusting to and accepting the structure of the traditional classroom setting.

Lawrence (1979) points out that typical instructional practices are generally biased toward introversion and intuition, and against extraversion and sensing. He believes that the ES does best work in situations which:

- produce practical results and useful products,
- involve other people and group effort,
- have goals set in advance which can be worked toward in an orderly manner,
- are real and not just dealing with theory,
- give a clear picture of what other people are doing and what they regard as important,
- have realistic schedules that don't expect too much too soon,
- allow first-hand experiences,
- use practical skills and known facts,
- involve a regular work schedule but include variety and socialization time, and
- allow thinking aloud with other people.

Schurr (1986) conducted a study which indicates that, to improve chances of success early in college, students should strive to avoid outside distractions, and to develop concentration, abstract reasoning skills, a tolerance for theory, and a systematic, organized, orderly approach to study.

Elliott (1988) associates collaborative and dependent types with E, S, and P. Collaborative types feel they can learn most by sharing ideas and talents, like to work with others, and cooperate with teachers and peers. They view the classroom as a place for social interaction as well as content learning. The dependent type shows little intellectual curiosity and typically learns only what is required. They view teachers and peers as sources of support, look to authority figures for guidelines, and need to be told what to do.

A study by Yeakley (1982) provides some support for the hypothesis that the more similar two people are in the ways in which their psychological types are reflected in communication style preference, the easier it will be to communicate effectively.

Barrett (1989) suggests that TJ teachers may convey some messages to students that may have a negative effect on classroom climate. Overall, E, S, F, and P preferences were more frequently linked to certain positive classroom environments, while I, N, T, and J preferences were less frequently linked to these environments.

The present study is an attempt to understand how to approach solving the unique academic problems which may be faced by minority students. Research designed to assess and clarify these special needs, and to generate effective intervention strategies is needed. By defining prevalent types in the minority population of interest, one can define the needs of minority students within the framework of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

METHOD

The sample population is composed of underrepresented minority students who participated in the College Opportunities Program, a six-week residential/ instructional summer program created in 1970 with the purpose of providing access to higher education for disadvantaged minority students from low income and high-risk areas. These students represent a diverse range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds with several common characteristics. They

- are public high school graduates,
- have earned average to above average grades in high school,
- rank in the middle of their graduating class or higher,
- have taken some college preparatory courses in high school,
- read at senior high school grade level,
- are the first in their family to attempt college,
- have a low or median level annual family income, and
- were denied admission to UHM.

The College Opportunities Program is a two-part educational program. Part one is a required residential summer instructional program on the University of Hawaii, Manoa campus. Selected students live on campus, attend classes, and participate in group activities to upgrade academic and social skills needed to succeed in college. All selected students must achieve a specific performance standard to gain entry to UHM. The major goal of the COP summer program is to prepare students academically for a successful freshman year as well as to develop personal awareness of each student's own ethnic identity.

Part two is the actual entry at the Manoa campus. COP students are classified as regular freshmen during the fall and spring semesters. Each student enters into a contract agreeing to live in the dormitories for the summer and one academic year. During the first academic year the program provides support services to facilitate academic and personal development.

The MBTI was administered to all students in the summer program in 1989 and 1990. The total sample population was 195 with an ethnic breakdown as follows:

Hawaiians, Part Hawaiians	82 (42.1%)
Filipinos, Part Filipinos	73 (37.4%)
Other	40 (20.5%)

RESULTS

Using the Selection Ratio Type Table (Moody, Granade, & Myers, 1993), the type distribution of the COP sample was compared to a norm group composed of freshmen in Franklin and Marshall College, Nicholls State University, St. Louis University, University of Maine, and University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point (Macdaid, McCaulley, & Kainz, 1986). In addition, the grade point average was examined for two subsets of Hawaiians/part Hawaiians and Filipinos/part Filipinos.

In the total COP population, there are significantly more ESTJs. In the Hawaiian subset there are significantly more ESTP, ESTJ, and ENTP types. In the Filipino subset there are significantly more preferences for I, J, and IJ.

Table 14.1
Significant Differences for Grade by Preference

	< 2.0			2.0 to 2.9			> 3.0		
	FALL	SPRING	CUM	FALL	SPRING	CUM	FALL	SPRING	CUM
E	+				-*			-	
I	-				+			+	
S		+					-	-	
N		-					+	+	
T									
F									
J			-						
P			+						

Note: *significance at .01, otherwise significance at .05

Table 14.1 shows that students who earn a GPA less than 2.0 tend to be E, S, and P, and those who earn a 2.0 GPA or better tend to be I, N, and J. Considering preference pairs, Table 14.2 shows that students who earn a GPA less than 2.0 tend to be ES, SP, and EP while IS, IJ, IN, NJ, NT, and ST tend to earn higher grades. For the sixteen types, Table 14.3 shows that ESTP, ENFP, and ISTP often have GPA of less than 2.0 while ENTJ, INFJ, and ISTJ do better.

Table 14.3
Significant Differences for Grade by Type

	Total	Hwn	< 2.0		2.0-2.9 Cum	> 2.9 Cum	< 2.0 Hwn	> 2.0 Fil
			Fall	Cum				
ISTJ								+
INFJ			-					
ISTP				+*	-*	-*	+	
ESTP		+**						
ENFP			+	+				
ENTP		+						
ESTJ	+*	+						
ENTJ			-					+

Note: Hwn = Hawaiian, Fil = Filipino, Cum = Cumulative grade point average.
** significance at .001, * significance at .01, otherwise significance at .05

DISCUSSION

Table 14.2
Significant Differences for Grade by Preference Pairs

	FALL	< 2.0		2.0 to 2.9			> 2.9		
		SPR	CUM	FALL	SPR	CUM	FALL	SPR	CUM
IJ	-			+					+**
EP	+		+						-
EJ				-					
ST									+
SF									
NF									
NT	-	-**	-*		+	+	+*	+	
SJ									
SP	+		+		-	-			
NJ	-	-	-*						
TJ									
TP									
FP			+						
FJ									
IN	-		-	+*		+*	+		
IS									+*
ES	+	+		-	-	--*	-		

Note: **significance at .001, *significance at .01, otherwise significance at .05

The data suggests that a large proportion of the students in the College Opportunities Program sample may experience some difficulty achieving success in the traditional college classroom setting. Fortunately, although ESFPs and ESTPs do not tend to achieve high grades, they appear to be practical enough to persist in studies even if they do not perform particularly well academically (Anchors, Robbins, & Gershman, 1989). Tobacyk, Hearn, and Wells (1990) taught reading, which appears to emphasize introverted and intuitive processes, to junior high students at high risk for dropout. Forty-six percent preferred ES. Utilizing ES modalities, these researchers emphasized reading as a social process with students reading aloud, writing together, and even writing and acting out scripts, while presenting concrete illustrations of the practical value of reading.

More research is needed to complete the picture of minority academic needs so that interventions designed to increase the effectiveness of learning and teaching by utilizing knowledge about type may increase academic retention in minority populations. Developing teaching interventions is not easy because the interaction between teacher and student can be extremely complex. A discussion of type dynamics would provide a clearer picture and a deeper appreciation for this complexity, however, this is not within the scope of this paper. Suffice to say that it is not a simple task for a professor with a preference for introversion and intuition to develop and sustain a teaching style which utilizes the opposite preferences. The ideal learning situation incorporates the strengths of both teacher and student in a process which attempts to integrate differences due to type within the natural sequence of type development.

More importantly, the research must be applied in proper perspective. One must not forget that each individual is unique, and there are potential problems in utilizing type in restrictive ways. Just as one can stereotype with ethnicity, one can overgeneralize with type. It would be ironic to lose the sensitivity to and awareness of differences which generated the MBTI. We must not stray too far from appreciating the differences in people, including the variations due to individual differences.

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