HOW DOES THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR® INSTRUMENT ENHANCE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM?

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CHAPTER ONE – STUDY BACKGROUND

The Issue

How does the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument enhance teaching and learning in the classroom?

As teachers and leaders we are exposed to many ideas, theories, models, and improvement strategies, some of which are not as simple, elegant, and effective in their use. Occasionally we are introduced to something that leads to a deep sense of recognition, a kind of rediscovery rather than learning something entirely new. An exposure to and understanding of the MBTI ® instrument has the potential of enhancing that journey of rediscovery which consequently leads to a deeper understanding of self and others.

Gregorc asserts that:

> "as we come to understand more about learning and teaching styles and how the mind operates, I believe we will improve mental health and self understanding as well as increase learning. Learning styles and teaching styles have already revealed much to us and continued research will undoubtedly reveal more. This trust can lead to the revitalization of the noblest of profession"(Butler, 1986, p.9).

Significance/Impact of the Issue

Learning is an individual experience. As teachers, many of us attempt to understand and apply a variety of techniques when teaching our students. The techniques we use are influenced by our preferred learning styles and personality Types. When we attempt to examine and interpret our learning style and the dynamism behind it, we explore our inner selves. Inquiry of the inner self must come before inquiry of the role-related self (Butler, 1986). In *Leadership From Within*, Bender (1997) supports Butler's view but adds that we have to be able to lead ourselves before we can lead others. While we try to make a difference in the lives of our students, weneedto explore new methods and techniques to produce a better sense of self and appreciation of others.

When reflecting on the use of resources to achieve the best learning outcomes for my Kindergarten students last year, it was the MBTI ® instrument that helped me make a dramatic difference in my classroom. The administration of the MBTI ® instrument took place during my first

residency as a Masters' student and I was so fascinated by my discoveries of self that I launched into an inquiry of role-related self once I returned to my place of work. Through my own applied exploration of the MBTI® instrument, a wealth of new insights were gained and a change ensued in my teaching style with respect to introverted-preferenced students.

Myers and Myers (1995) state that different personality Types affect teaching practices differently and the teacher's ability to reach their students. Given this, the more informed teachers are about their own personality Types, the more easily they recognize how their preferences affect their teaching practice and their ability to reach students effectively.

Parents and teachers exert the greatest influence on the ways in which children learn. Differences in psychological Type need to be recognized at home and at school (Meisgeier, Murphy, and Meisgeier, 1989). An understanding of children's learning styles and personality Types can contribute to better rearing, teaching, and counseling of those children. The MBTI® instrument has the potential of helping teachers better understand themselves and improve their relationships with students, colleagues, parents and friends. The information derived by such a tool creates a win-win situation for all parties who are willing to become involved.

The flip side of this coin is lack of communication and understanding between all stakeholders in the education system which has the potential of creating havoc and devastation as did WWII according to the inventors of the MBTI ® instrument.

> "Based on his clinical observations, Jung proposed that behavioral differences are caused by personality differences. In 1942, upset with the carnage of World War II and with the early reports of Nazi atrocities, and convinced that the war was largely caused by a failure to understand each others' differences, Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs developed an instrument to measure Jung's theory of behavior ..." (Coe, 1992, p. 511).

If war is a result of deficiencies in communication and understanding of people's differences then is it fair to say that the school shootings which took place in Littleton, Colorado and Taber, Alberta are the results of the same deficiencies? On April 20th, 1999, 14 students and one teacher died at Columbine High in Littleton at the hands of a 17 and an 18 year old boy who used shotguns, pistol blast and home made explosives to kill their victims before turning the weapons on themselves. It was the bloodiest school shooting spree in American history (http://www.doctorliberty.com/columbine.html). Less than a month later a 14 year old boy in Taber, Alberta, killed one student and wounded another (Marnie, 1999).

Why are more parents homeschooling or enrolling their kids into private schools? I was told by a few acquaintances and friends who have taken these routes that it was because teachers and the rest of the school system didn't understand their child. Senge asserts that "understanding a system means understanding the people who make up that system. And those people are all different" (Seagal & Horne, 1997, p. xiii). Joanne Hatton (1998) in her book review of Malkin Dare's book *How To Get The Right Education For Your Child* confirms the need to understand one another:

> "The author walks you through the maddeningly frustrating exercise of fixing a problem at school. You start with the teacher (Mrs. Enigma), then approach the principal (Mr. Political), proceed to the administrator (Dr. Hierarchy) and eventually try the trustee (Ms. Caring). Since this course will almost always fail, says Mrs. Dare, she then assesses the alternatives-which include paid tutors, switching schools, or homeschooling" (p.62).

When we don't listen to people and respect their diversity, as in the above example, we marginalize them. Marginalization of a group of people can sometimes evoke violent behaviour. Violence in our society and in our schools which is engendered by racism, sexism, gang behaviour, poverty, alcohol and substance abuse, abuse in the home, hopelessness about the future and homophobia is on the rise (Malcolmson, 1994). An awareness of the MBTI® instrument would assist teachers in truly understanding their students' needs and motivations.

We need to allow honest direct communication between staff and students so that all participants can reach mutual understanding. Not only must we learn to listen, we must understand that different personality Types have different needs.

"It's heartbreaking and unnecessary when a hidden obstacle keeps anyone from bringing her gifts to full flower... If you keep yourself free from hidden handicaps, you not only create happiness for yourself, you also do the right thing" (Sher & Smith, 1994, p. 98).

WWII prompted the MBTI® journey of rediscovery. The concealed war that takes place in our homes and in our society will exist as long as we ignore it. We can choose to repeat WWII in our classrooms or we can bring to full bloom the gifts of our students by applying the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument in our teaching practice.

Potential Causes of the Issue

If the MBTI® instrument has the potential of impacting the educational system in a substantial way then why isn't it being used more abundantly in our schools? Potential reasons include:

- Lack of awareness of the existence of the MBTI® instrument as a psychometric tool and its impact

- Limited time and resources of teachers

- No professional development activities offered for the MBTI® instrument in Rocky Mountain School District #6

- Few professionally certified MBTI® instructors to introduce and administer the MBTI® instrument as a tool

- Unethical practices in applying the principles of the MBTI® instrument (ie. stereotyping, labelling, etc.)

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Organizational Documents

The organization under study will be Rocky Mountain School District #6. This organization is freshly amalgamated with three school zones. They are the Invermere Zone, the Golden Zone, and the Kimberley Zone. Between these three Zones there are eighteen elementary schools, one middle school and four secondary schools. The focus of my study will take place in Golden, B.C. at Golden Secondary School (GSS) with participants from both GSS and Edelweiss elementary school.

In essence this particular amalgamation is like dealing with three different personality Types, each with their unique needs and potentials. By ignoring a zone's needs we minimize its potential thereby creating a power imbalance that leads to marginalization (ie.one zone cannot grow at the expense of the others). By knowing each zone "Type" and sharing common resources we can maximize the efficiency of the educational system and the application of the MBTI® instrument.

The process of addressing the collective personality Types of Rocky Mountain School District # 6 is reflected in the motto:

> # "Quest for Quality"
>
> **A Quest is a journey with the purpose of achieving a worthwhile objective.**
> **Quality is meeting or exceeding the continuously evolving expectations of those you serve.**

OUR MISSION

"The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy."

OUR VISION

"Our quest for quality in education will develop inquisitive, productive and responsible lifelong learners and leaders, and will build mutual respect and appreciation among students, staff and communities of Rocky Mountain School District" (http://www.sd6.bc.ca).

In order for teachers to attain this common mission and vision they need to identify and address the essence of what motivates people within the system that they operate in. The MBTI® instrument provides the means to identify personal motivation for both the teachers and their students. Identifying personal motivation is essential to motivating the educational system and to regenerating creative problem solving techniques incorporated in the MBTI® instrument.

To paraphrase Albert Einstein, in order to solve a problem we must rise to a level of competence above that which created the problem. Using the same old approach to education will not help us to solve newer problems. Society is a collection of personalities that drive a system. We need to educate ourselves about personalities and motivations for the system to grow into a cohesive whole.

Literature Review

The literature review for this major project will encompass three conceptual areas that are related to enhancing mutual communication and understanding between teachers and students.

Areas selected for a more detailed focus are:

- The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI® instrument)
- Adult learning
- Self-awareness in leadership

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument (MBTI®)

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument is a thirty minute self-reporting inventory and is one of many psychometric instruments being used world wide today to measure personality Types and preferences among all individuals. The Center for the Application of Psychological Type (1981) asserts that the MBTI® instrument has been utilized in over six hundred studies and dissertations. Coe (1992), Carlyn (1977), and Myers & McCaulley's (1985) research show that the MBTI® instrument is a reasonably valid instrument which has enormous potential in a variety of settings. It is used in
self-development, career development and exploration, relationship counseling, organization development, team building, problem solving, management and leadership training, education and curriculum development, and diversity and multicultural training (Myers, 1993)

The motivation for its invention came from the mother and daughter team of Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers who were convinced that Jung's theory of psychological Types was an accurate description of important aspects of human personality (Kirby, 1977). Jung was a Swiss psychologist who believed that we are born with a partiality to certain personality preferences. He also believed that working with these preferences instead of against them would lead us to happier and healthier lives (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988).

Myers & Myers (1995) share Jung's view of preferences and further describe them as:

> "a set of gifts, a set of mental tools that we have become comfortable using and thus reach for in the everyday business of living. Although we all have access to the same basic tools in our psychological toolbox, each of us is more comfortable with and thus prefers a particular tool (or set of tools) for a particular task. It is our unique set of these preferences that gives us our distinct personality and makes us appear similar or dissimilar to others" (p.xii).

In the 1920's and 30's, Katharine Myers and Isabel Briggs applied and extended Carl Jung's theory of psychological Types by observing family and friends. However, it was the outbreak of WWII that ignited them to develop their Indicator because they believed that future wars could

be prevented if people had a better understanding of each others' differences (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988). They were also interested in work applications that could improve productivity for the war effort because they observed that many people were working in tasks unsuited to their abilities. Ultimately Myers and Briggs wanted their invention of the MBTI® instrument to assist individuals in achieving their potential as human beings and to encourage the constructive use of differences in human interactions (Kirby, 1997).

The MBTI® instrument measures four dimensions of personality Type whereby each dimension consists of two opposite poles. The four dimensions are: Extraversion(E) or Introversion(I), Sensing(S) or Intuition(N), Thinking(T) or Feeling(F), and Judging(J) or Perceiving(P). Everyone has a natural preference for one of the two opposites and research suggests that you can use both preferences
at different times but not both at once, and not with equal confidence. An example of natural preference is the right hand, left hand scenario. Which hand do you use to sign your name? Can you use both hands with similar ease and confidence? It would probably be uncomfortable and unnatural for you to use your opposite hand on a regular basis.

Jung refers to a person's least preferred dimension as their shadow function. Grant, Thompson & Clarge (1983) report that most individuals begin making a conscious effort at addressing their shadow functions after the age of twenty. Kroeger and Thuesen (1988) assert that the more we mature the more our non-preferences add richness and dimension to our lives but they will never take the place of our original preferences. Therefore, Extravert-preferenced never become Introvert-preferenced and vice versa.

The MBTI® instrument indicates the differences in people that result from the way they prefer to interact with the world and the way they prefer to receive stimulation and energy (E) or (I); the way they prefer to gather data (S) or (N); the way they prefer to make decisions (T) or (F); and the way they prefer to orient their lives (J) or (P). Mathematically, if you calculate all the possible combinations of these eight preferences you will end up with sixteen possible Types and everyone fits into one of these sixteen Types (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

People who prefer Extraversion orient themselves by directing their energy and attention outward. They seek out other people and enjoy lots of interaction, whether one-on-one or in

groups. Extravert-preferenced individuals get their batteries charged up by being with others and usually know a lot of people. People who prefer Introversion focus their attention and energy on the world inside of themselves. They enjoy spending time alone and need this time to recharge their batteries. Introvert-preferenced individuals try to understand the world before they experience it, which means a lot of their activity is internalized.

People who prefer Sensing like to take in information through their five senses and they trust their own personal experience. They are oriented to the present and concentrate on whatever is happening at the moment. People who prefer Intuition like to take in information by seeing the big picture, focusing on the relationship and connections between facts. They value imagination and trust their inspirations and hunches. Intuitive-preferenced people are oriented toward the future.

People who prefer Thinking pride themselves on their ability to be objective and analytical in the decision-making process. They make decisions by analyzing and weighing the evidence, even if that means coming to unpleasant conclusions. They think it's more important to be right than liked and remember numbers and figures more readily than faces and names. Feeling-preferenced people make decisions based on their values and what they feel is right. They pride themselves on their ability to be empathetic and compassionate. They will overextend themselves to meet other people's needs even at the expense of their own comfort (ie. martyr). They prefer harmony over clarity.

People with a preference for Judging tend to live in an orderly way and are happiest when their lives are structured and matters are settled. They seek to regulate and control life and they like to make decisions, come to closure, and move on. People with a preference for Perceiving like to live in a spontaneous way and are happiest when their lives are flexible. They like to stay open to all kinds of possibilities and they seek to understand life rather than control it (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

Teachers' modes of instruction are usually consistent with their own psychological Type. Perhaps the best way for teachers to learn how to use Type in the classroom is to identify their own Type since their preferences will affect the way they react to their students.

"It all starts with greater self-awareness. By understanding what the Jung and Myers-Briggs classifications mean, you can then begin to identify your personal preferences and how you are similar to and different from those closest to you. You can identify where those similarities and differences make for harmony and where they cause discord" (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988, p.12).

Adult learning

In the beginning, when there were one room schoolhouses or classrooms with forty or more students, teachers were expected to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, impart some general knowledge, and reinforce the values of family, church, and community. In the high schools, teachers were expected to provide a second level of education above the basics that should have been mastered in the formative years. In those days the alternative to school was hard labour which is why students in general were more motivated to learn (Henchey, 1999).

Today, the context of learning is more complex as is the role of the teacher. Teachers are being asked to do more with fewer resources. The rate and nature of curriculum change are overwhelming and there is a demand for more paperwork. The advent of the Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs -"new" re-cycled curriculum) in British Columbia reflect this change. A teacher in Victoria, British Columbia described how the IRPs prescribe outcomes, list resources, and offer suggestions but leave the teacher with the responsibility to plan the units, design assessment, and find resources (McQuade, 1997). Values and attitudes that were formerly considered the domain of the family have become part of the curriculum. Krieger states that: "the four most important contextual influences on the work of teachers are:

- The growing diversity of the student population
- The tensions between the needs of the students and the needs of the system
- The conflict between professional and bureaucratic cultures in schools
- The intensification of teachers' work" (Knickerbocker, 1998, p. 25).

Teachers are expected to work with a greater number of adults too such as the learning assistance teacher, career-prep counselor and the community health nurse, to name a few. These contacts with varying individuals increase the complexity of demands on teachers' time. Many

researchers (Brookfield,1995, Palmer, 1998, Jacobs, 1998, Brookfield & Preskill, 1999) agree that teaching is labour intensive and has become more so because of the rapid pace of curriculum change, the advent of new technologies, and integration of students with special needs. In the past, a wide array of social problems were either ignored by schools or dealt with by other institutions. Today, teachers are on the front lines, dealing with poverty, violence, child abuse, sexism, racism, bullying, and homophobia. Yet schools and teachers are often held accountable as scapegoats for every societal problem (Poules, 1997).

Students' needs today are also more numerous and complex than they were years ago. Increasing poverty in our society means that many students are coming to school without proper nourishment, clothing, and in frequent cases, emotional support. Dr. Ashford asserts (1998) that the profound losses suffered by many citizens in contemporary society have had a dramatic effect on teachers' work. These include the loss of spirituality, of connectiveness, of love, of work, of hope, and of respect. The decline in the value which 15 and 16 year-olds place upon such qualities as honesty, respect, and politeness has only compounded the stresses a teacher faces on a daily basis.

Knickerbocker (1998) informs us that teachers today are better trained than ever but they face more external controls than their predecessors. Goodlad (1990) argues that there has been and commonly remains a disconnection between the preparation teachers receive and the circumstances they encounter in schools and classrooms. British philosopher of education Richard Peters (1967) adds that:

> "Today there are no set systems of teaching and no agreed aims of education; there is constant controversy about the curriculum and a welter of disagreement about how children ought to be treated. In more settled times only the very reflective teacher was led to probe behind tradition for a rationale of what he or she ought to do; nowadays it is only the lazy or dogmatic teacher who can avoid such probing. Neither can the modern teacher find in the appeal to authority much more than a temporary resting place; for authorities disagree, and on what grounds is the advice of one rather than another to be heeded? The unpalatable truth is that the modern teacher has no alternative to thinking out these matters for himself or herself. Teachers can no longer be merely trained; they have also to be educated" (p. 23).

It is evident that lifelong learning on the part of teachers in addition to initial training and preparation is pivotal for sustained growth and development in their ever-demanding profession. So how does a teacher respond to the diverse needs of students and the complexity of teaching? Perhaps by examining elements of their current practice, identifying methodologies and strategies that would bring their teaching more into line with the needs of their students, and reflecting on the impact of those changes on student learning. Through professional development and self-directed learning opportunities, teachers also have the ability to hone their skills, improve their practice, and keep current with changes in knowledge, technology, and the society it serves. But is this the answer to meeting students' needs? Columbia University education professor Ann Lieberman (1997) criticizes that professional knowledge about teaching is not developed by experts or presented in workshops. "Teachers can't just go to a canned workshop or course and return to the classroom better. Even great workshops don't matter greatly to best teaching practice" (p. 6). Although this may be the case with some teachers, the researcher believes that lifelong learning by way of exposure in any way, shape, or form is better than no exposure at all. We cannot discount the amazing potential of the planting of one seed.

What are, therefore, the best strategies and methodologies needed by teachers to effectively deliver their curriculums? Teaching styles and methods by which curriculum is delivered are as diverse as the students themselves. Due to the increased demands placed on teachers today, some are encouraged by limited time and resources to fulfill the bare necessities thus promoting an atmosphere of unfulfillment for both teachers and students. The role of teachers is becoming one of entertainers, that of drawing students' attention away from television, movies, video games, etc. As the demand for entertainment increases, teachers need to refine their delivery of curriculum in order to motivate students to learn. Without understanding the varying Types of personalities in their classrooms, teachers may not be able to convince their students that learning can be fun. John Dewey (1916) emphasized the importance of a teacher's responsibility to diverse learners when he stated that:

> "A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in educational measures" (p. 357).

As there are many "tools of the trade" in society, the profession of teaching is no exception. One such tool that is available universally is the Myers Briggs Type Inventory instrument (MBTI®). Can teacher effectiveness be enhanced by using the simple principles of the MBTI® instrument to curtail monotony in teaching styles in order to capture the interests of the different personality Types in the classroom? Teachers normally deliver the dialogue in the domain of their own personality which in effect has the potential to tune out the interests of other personality Types, effectively reducing the teacher's gift of teaching.

Teaching with personality Types in mind can be an uncomfortable strategy to use at first but if it has the capacity to increase rapport with students is it not a risk worth taking? Can using the MBTI® instrument in the classroom increase a sense of more one-on-one and greater self-esteem for both students and teachers? Applying the MBTI® theory to the classroom setting is a risk that also has the potential of creating a change in the teacher who implements it and in the student who partakes in it. Barger & Kirby (1995) point out that:

> "psychological type provides a useful tool for recognizing the impact of change on different kinds of people, the contributions of different types to the change process, points at which different types may experience difficulty, and what each type needs in order to deal effectively with change and transition" (p. xiii).

How change is experienced, embraced or rejected will therefore be dependent upon the personality Type of the individual teacher. Involvement in this change process may not necessarily take care of all the difficulties but it can make all stakeholders creative actors in the change instead of passive victims (Barger & Kirby, 1995).

Ultimately, change is unavoidable. "Life requires that we change. It cannot explore new possibilities otherwise" (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1996, p. 33). Yet by the same token while we seek change, we also fear it. Some believe that people and organizations change when a crisis erupts. "This leads to the mistaken belief that fundamental change requires a threat to survival" (Senge, 1990, p. 154). This is often evident in dysfunctional relationships whereby one partner expects the other one to change in order to achieve harmony in the relationship. So many people try to change each other yet no one can effectively force a sustained change upon anyone.

Lasting change has to come from within. This same analogy applies to teachers. Teachers can promote changes in their students by changing themselves. It is often said that people don't resist change, they resist being changed. **Examining new possibilities is the main focus of this project.**

While the Coquitlam and Okanagan School Districts believe that good teaching methods and techniques can be derived from grassroots, district-wide action research as a way to make a positive difference to student learning (Dockendorf, 1997), Palmer (1998) argues that:

> "as important as methods may be, the most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching – and living – becomes" (p. 5).

It is the researcher's belief that greater self-awareness will enhance the action research approach to teaching. How the MBTI® study increases self-awareness for teachers and students alike will become evident in the accounts given by the participants.

Self-awareness in leadership

Benjamin Franklin once said that there are three things that are extremely hard; steel, a diamond, and to know one's self (Bender, 1997). What is one's self or self-awareness? The World Book Dictionary (1979) defines self-awareness as "self realization" which in turn is defined as "the fulfillment of one's own efforts of the possibilities of development of the self" (p. 1880). Stephen Covey's (1989) view of self-awareness is that it is the ability to think about your very thought process. He claims it is the reason why man can make great advances from generation to generation, can evaluate and learn from others' experiences as well as his own, and can make and break his habits (p. 66).

As teachers, learning to know ourselves is of utmost importance if we are going to have a positive impact on our students. Self-awareness of ourselves means becoming more aware of how we go about organizing our teaching, the kinds of teaching tasks we are drawn to or resist, the teaching styles we find most congenial and those we find most difficult, the conditions that encourage us to take risks, the warning signals that indicate that we are about to hit an emotional

low, and the factors that tend to keep us going through the quitting times of low morale, depression, and loss of confidence (Brookfield, 1995). Furthermore, Brookfield (1995) states that our manner of teaching or our teaching style is directly related to how we were taught and to our autobiographical experiences of learning. As a result, if we never feel compelled to alter that style because it feels comfortable and familiar then we are seriously restricting our opportunities for growth and development in our classrooms.

Palmer (1998) equates self-awareness to the "inner landscape of the teaching self" (p. 4). He asserts that our intellectual, emotional, and spiritual selves have to be intertwined in order for educational institutions to sustain and deepen the "selfhood".

"Reduce teaching to intellect, and it becomes a cold abstraction; reduce it to emotions, and it becomes narcissistic; reduce it to the spiritual, and it loses its anchor to the world. Intellect, emotion, and spirit depend on one another for wholeness. They are interwoven in the human self and in education at its best...." (Palmer, 1998, p. 4)

Literature points out time and time again that everyone has the capacity to become more self-aware but how does one accomplish that deed and why would one bother? Ferrari & Sternberg (1998) in their book, *Self-Awareness: Its Nature and Development*, tell us that "the desire to improve one's intellectual functioning derives from the same group of basic instinctive impulses as do moral and spiritual purposes" (p. 25). Seagal & Horne (1997) concur and add that "the urge to pursue excellence and mastery is a fundamental impulse in the human psyche" (p. 11). Yet when it comes to mastery of ourselves as consciously evolving people we seem to have fallen short of the mark.

"We have placed spaceships on the moon, created the information superhighway, and produced countless supports for our physical comfort – yet in our collective endeavors and basic interactions with one another, we so often seem to fail" (Seagal & Horne, 1997, p. 11).

When it comes to leadership, self-awareness becomes even more important because powerful leadership whether it is at work, home, or play comes from knowing yourself. Leaders are found in every field of human endeavour and teachers are no exception. We are leading all the time, by

our words and by our examples. We even lead when we are by ourselves because leadership is not just a role; it is a way of thinking, a way of being, a way of life (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Bender (1997) informs us that we all possess the seeds of greatness in leadership and that there are skills we can learn to develop those seeds. It is the degree to which we do so that determines our success.

An important part of leadership is knowing what leads us and we have to be able to lead ourselves before we can lead others. There are many self help books out on the market as well as consultants, guest speakers, and organizations that can help us become more self-aware in our development of self but some of them are extremely time consuming and costly. One inexpensive and user friendly resource that can help us in our endeavours to master ourselves is the MBTI® instrument. It is a resource that can help us better understand ourselves and our students so that we can become effective leaders in the classroom because "knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject" (Palmer, 1998, p. 2).

Bender (1997) asserts that the most powerful leader is the one who leads from within (being pro-active) as opposed to leading from without (being reactive). Covey (1989) strongly depicts this view in his proactive model which informs us that the behaviour of highly proactive people is a product of their own choice based on values rather than a product of their conditions based on feeling. As teachers we need to be self-aware of the differences between the two in order to become the best we can be for our students and for ourselves.

The leader-from-without, according to Bender (1997), is driven by fears, pressures, and desires. Daily pressures include catering to demanding parents, fighting fires, and meeting deadlines. Negative desires include lying to justify our actions, putting others down to improve our own self-image, or sacrificing our values in order to get ahead. Leaders-from-without are actually out of control because they are being driven by these inner and outer forces. They do not respect or value themselves. They want to be accepted and are afraid of being wrong. So instead of doing what they think is best, they let others influence their decisions. They base their actions on public or media opinion. Being without security and confidence, they seek fulfillment in the external world. When this leader is directing your life, you are more prone to stress, anger, and conflict. You feel as if someone else is controlling you or trying to take over. There are constant battles over who is right or wrong. You feel the need to defend what you say and do. With this also

comes resistance to change, and mistrust of those who do or see things differently (Bender, 1997).

The leader-from-within, on the other hand, is moved by an inner direction and purpose. A desire to help, foster, and grow with a sense of flow or fire within is evident in this kind of leadership. Yet this passion is not out of control and it does not seem to expire. It is focused and harnessed. "It is a self-renewing and enthusiasm-creating power that comes from a well-spring within" (Bender, 1997, p. 19). The leader-from-within brings increased well-being to students, colleagues, the school, and to the organization as a whole. They are motivated by the desire to give, express, and serve. They have a certain confidence and security that guides their choices. When this leader is directing your life you smile more, have higher self-esteem, and actually enjoy learning more.

Leadership from within is more effective because it is whole. It combines head and heart, power and compassion, toughness with gentleness, and a commitment to succeed with forgiveness of failure. This wholeness is very important. Traditional leadership and success have been based on the head over heart approach. There has been no room for feelings. This has led to win-lose competition, office politics, and a higher degree of stress for those who were successful under the old leadership. Win-win situations cannot be firmly incorporated either when "it appears that the kind of learning that teachers most frequently engage in is concerned with researching and negotiating the politics of their institution" (Brookfield, 1995, p. 79).

> "Why do some leaders have loyal followers who are willing to sacrifice their lives, whereas other leaders are so despised that their followers conspire to murder them?"
> (Yukl, 1994, p.1)

The answer lies in leadership effectiveness and how well one understands one's self and others. If a teacher knows who, when, where and how to manipulate the various components of a classroom in order to attain a common goal then the students will likely commit themselves to carrying out the teacher's requests and consequently become loyal followers. On the other hand if the opposite occurs, then students will likely resist, ignore, or subvert the teacher's requests and conspire to rebel. It is in these situations that the MBTI® instrument becomes invaluable.

People oriented personality Types flourish in an environment of cooperation and appreciation. Their inspiration and motivation come from the synergy of the people that surround them. Since they make decisions based on feedback from other people they would be at a great disadvantage if their decision making process did not include dialogue with others. Such teachers are motivated to create a sense of harmony and would be unable to do so unless they were aware of how their decision was affecting others. Not only does leading-from-without ruffle less feathers, it also tends to create new leaders as a result of their extensive participation in the decision making process (Barger & Kirby, 1995).

On the other hand introverted-preferenced people tend to make decisions based on the leader from within. Much of their decision making process involves thought and reflection. Their process may also be based on their own values which may conflict with the status quo, creating change and stress. Although they have everyone's best interest at heart, their decisions may consequently ruffle many a feather in order to maintain an ethical or moral point of view or to explore new avenues. Such teachers would be more apt to attract a large number of followers because they remove the need for others to make their own decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences. These teachers have the genius of insight into how classrooms can function better but they often end up trying to climb a mountain by carrying everyone on their backs which is contrary to the laws of mountain climbing. Their power must be shared, not hoarded (Barger & Kirby, 1995).

Idealistically, the goal of leadership in the classroom is to bring out the best in everyone but not everyone responds the same to a particular style of leadership. One Type of leadership will not satisfy all personalities. The teacher constantly has to weigh the merits of leading from-within and leading-from-without. Too much of either or the wrong one at the wrong time can result in students losing faith in their teachers. Individuals have often had to become leaders by trial and error. The MBTI® instrument has the potential to help teachers recognize the mix of personalities that exist in their leadership and the kind of leadership that is required. In effect, the classroom is the environment that determines what kind of leadership is required. As the students benefit, so too, do the teachers.

Self-awareness of one-self determines how one will lead with others. Self-awareness of other personality Types can stimulate new growth in an ailing organization. People used to be leaders

because they were in the right place that suited their personality at the right time. With the advent of the MBTI® instrument, teachers can learn to meld their own leading styles with people in their organization and those they lead, the students. As these teachers cultivate leaders from amongst

their followers, these new leaders enter into the process of self-awareness in developing leadership skills that they can bring into the organization. Don McQuaig, President, MICA Management Resources, informs us that:

> "Leaders cast long shadows. If you don't like the results you are getting – look carefully in the mirror. Every time I have done so ... inevitably I have found I was the source of the problem. This is both the sobering reality – and a huge opportunity" (Bender, 1997 , p. 73).

Leadership is about managing people and that includes one's self.

Potential Solutions

The primary goal of teaching is to help students learn. While much advice about how to achieve this goal would require a complete revision of a teacher's current methods, the application of Type theory does not require such dramatic changes. Teachers will most often succeed when their teaching remains true to their own preferences. The goal of learning about Type is simply to expand one's repertoire (Meisgeier, Murphy & Meisgeier, 1989). Self-awareness of Type also has implications far beyond the classroom: it can improve personal relationships, strengthen self-esteem, and enhance personal growth.

Because teachers and parents exert the greatest influence on the ways in which students learn, it is important that differences in psychological type be recognized at school and at home. These differences have the likelihood of deeply affecting a student's learning style. By learning how to identify students' personality Types, teachers can contribute to the intelligent teaching, counseling, and overall understanding of their students (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988).

It is therefore the intent of this research project to:

◆ Expose the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator ® instrument to teachers in order to heighten their self-awareness and expand their repertoires of communication skills

◆ Maximize the efficiency while minimizing the time involvement by having teachers focus on two of the four personality dimensions in order to maximize their motivation to achieve results.

◆ Make the MBTI® workshop accessible for professional development days

◆ Make the MBTI® certification accessible

◆ Support ethical applications of the MBTI® instrument in the classroom

Solutions are expected to emerge once the research is completed. These solutions will form part of the final report as recommendations.

CHAPTER THREE – CONDUCT OF RESEARCH STUDY

Research Methodology

The methodology applied will be qualitative research using Appreciative Inquiry.

Creswell (1994) defines qualitative research as:

> "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (p. 1).

Since this research will "engage 'subjects' as equal and full participants in the research process" (Stringer, 1996, p. 9), Stringer's (1996) cyclical model of "look, think, act" will be used to reflect the qualitative approach of action research relative to teachers. To better understand students and make the teaching practice more just, action research identifies an area of concern or opportunity and creates a change in the teaching practice to address the issue or opportunity. The focus of this project is to explore the MBTI® instrument as the axis from which teachers perceive and interact with the world, permitting them to spend their time and energy more efficiently communicating lessons and more effectively interacting with their students in their classrooms.

"Action research offers an alternative to teachers who have been encouraged to look to others, rather than to themselves and their students, for ways to improve their teaching" (Rearick & Feldman, 1999, p.335). The MBTI® instrument establishes a link between how individual teachers perceive others and how the world perceives them.

This research project will address the MBTI® instrument and its impact on enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom which will require a humanistic approach such as Appreciative Inquiry.

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach that focuses on what is working rather than what is not working. The process involves appreciating and valuing the best of **what is,** then envisioning **what might be,** dialoguing **what should be,** and innovating **what will be** (Hammond, 1996).

Appreciative Inquiry will be used to test the validity of the MBTI® instrument by gathering a wide variety of anecdotals from participants. By building on what they already know participants will attempt to develop group solutions for difficult situations that haven't been resolved in the past. Participants will be as much a part of the process of developing self-awareness through the use of the MBTI® instrument as World War II was the catalyst for its invention. Appreciative Inquiry is democratic, equitable, and values individual differences thus allowing a greater base of knowledge to be gathered.

The proposed methodology for this major project will incorporate the following cycles:

LOOK (Initiation Phase)

♦ Review proposal with advisor
♦ Faculty advisor signs off proposal
♦ Review proposal with Sponsor
♦ Project sponsor Letter of Agreement sign-off

THINK (Conducting Phase)

♦ Soliciting research participants (minimum of 8) from local schools by introductory letter explaining the goals and objectives of the project including the importance of their involvement. A consent form will be included
♦ Administration of the MBTI® instrument in a workshop format to willing participants by Reverend Derrick Smith who has MBTI® certification.
♦ Constructing a self assessment tool after the MBTI® workshop with participants to create a sense of ownership of the research process (Appreciative Inquiry based)
♦ Completing the literature review
♦ Monthly focus group meetings and/or one-on-one interviews to gather data from participants
♦ Addressing and recording concerns, misunderstandings, "aha" moments, personal milestones and personal growth during these meetings and analyzing this data afterwards

- Encouraging reflection and journal writing of participants to intrinsically measure self improvement
- Documenting the role of the researcher throughout the process (ie.what worked, what didn't work, areas of improvement to enhance further research).
- Producing a draft report
- Discussing and reviewing the draft report
- Producing the final report

ACT (Closing Phase)

- Administer self assessment tool (constructed in the initiation phase) to measure the success/impact of the project
- Analyze data from this self assessment tool and sort into thematic categories for comparison
- Analyze other qualitative input (non self assessment based) from focus group gatherings and or one-on-one interviews
- Conduct briefings with Project Sponsor and other study participants about the findings, conclusions and recommendations described in the draft report
- Publish final project report
- Identify lessons learned
- Complete candidate final assessment process
- Apply for graduation

Within each of the individual "look-think-act" loops of the action learning cycle outlined above, there will be other action learning loops occurring continuously throughout this research project. Figure 1.on the following page demonstrates this continuous recycling of activities.

"As participants work through each of the major stages, they will explore the details of their activities through a constant process of observation, reflection, and action. At the completion of each set of activities, they will review (look again), reflect (re-analyze), and re-act (modify their actions)" (Stringer, 1996, p. 17).
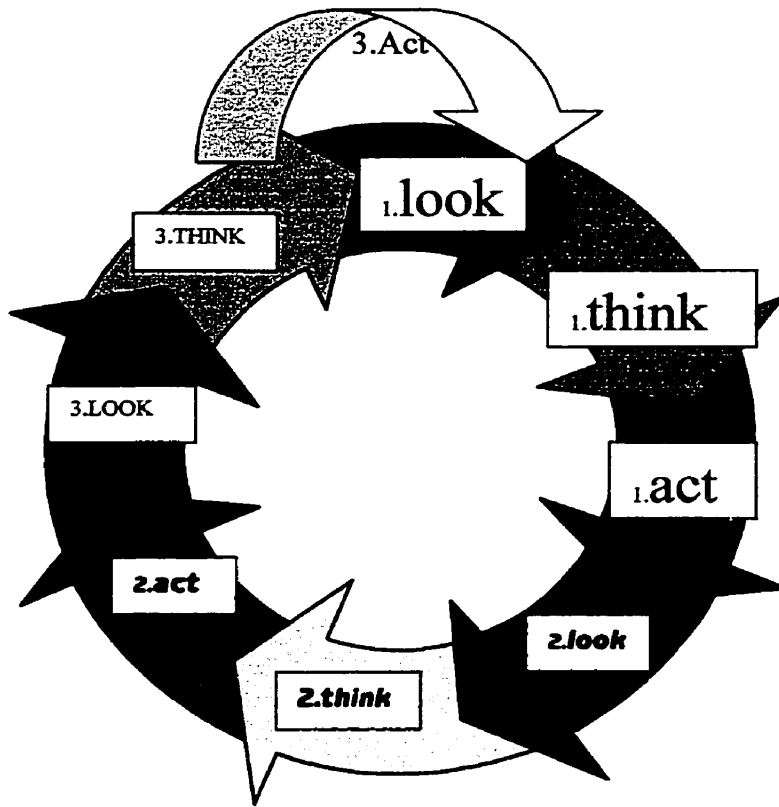
Figure 1. A Spiral of Continuous Activity

The "Garden Concept" in Figure 2 (on the following page) reflects one loop of the "look-think-act" cycle. Creating an opportunity by planting a seed (MBTI® instrument) and allowing all willing participants to grow their own gardens is the basis of this project. Gardeners will weed, water, and fertilize their own gardens by discarding irrelevant information (weeding), increasing their knowledge base and receiving support (watering) and sharing their rich experiences and growth with others (fertilizing).

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The Garden Concept   Vicky Minich ©

Figure 2

Look

Think

Act

The Teacher

"I don't get it. I treat this part of the garden exactly like the other parts of my garden but it just doesn't seem to want to grow. I think it has an attitude problem."

"Maybe different parts of the garden need different things."

The Seeds of Knowledge —MBTI®

Ahhh! Different personality types! Maybe I need to do something different to make them reproduce.
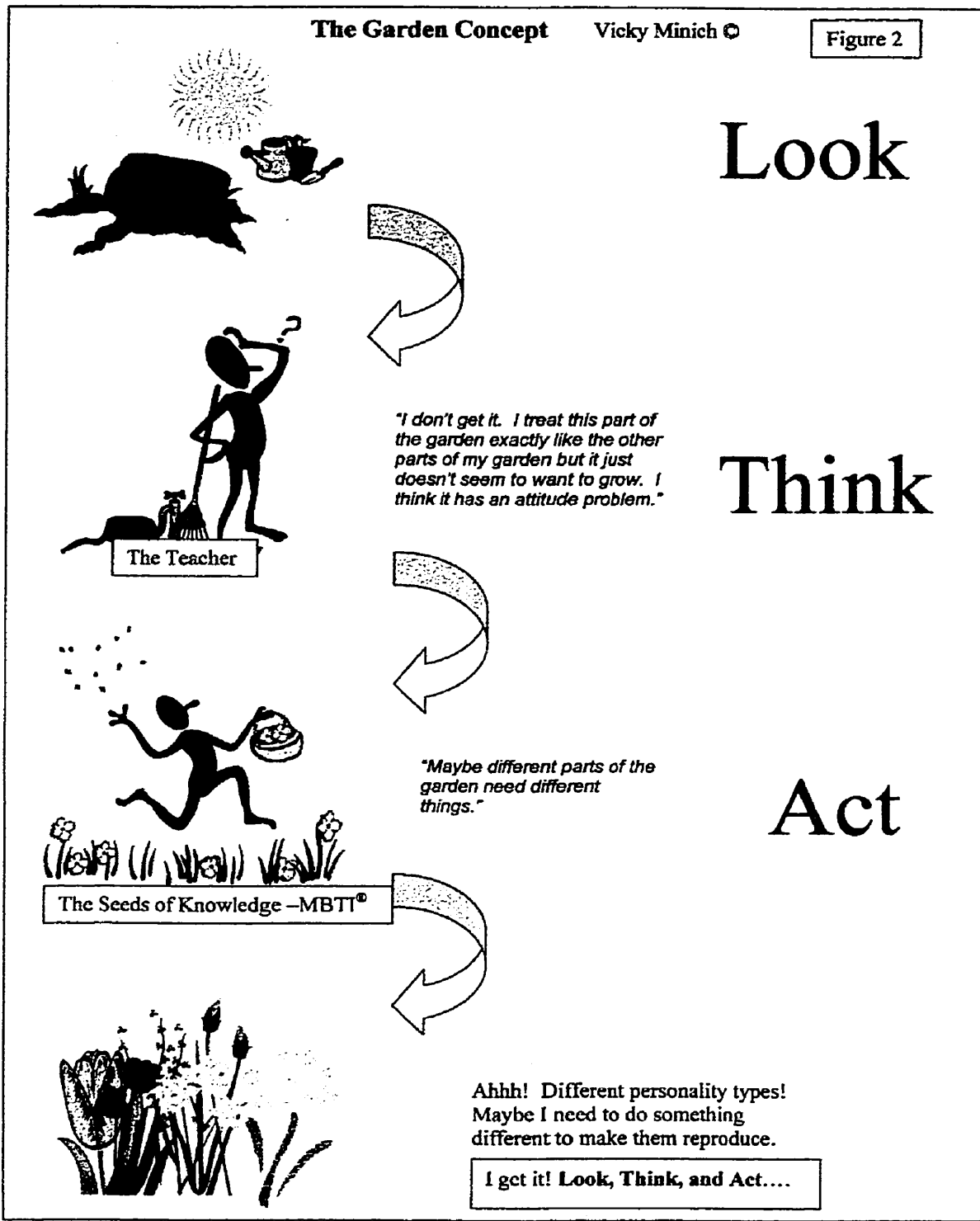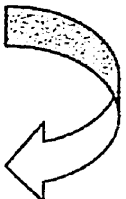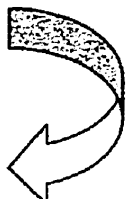
I get it! **Look, Think, and Act....**

Data Gathering Tools/Study Conduct

Forty invitations (on coloured fluorescent paper) and consent forms were sent out randomly via the school courier system in early October to teachers at various Golden schools in the Rocky Mountain School District #6 to seek participation in the researcher's major project (Appendix A-3). Follow up phone calls and informal discussions took place a week and a half later in order to confirm that invitations and consent forms were received, to answer questions about the project and to further market the benefits of involving oneself in this important action research.

Teachers were reminded that action research helps educators be more effective at what they care most about – their teaching and the development of their students. Seeing students flourish is probably the greatest reward that educators can experience. When teachers have convincing evidence that their work has made a real difference in their students' lives, the endless hours of this profession seem worthwhile (Sagor, 2000). Since the school year was already a month old, the researcher felt that many teachers at this point would be keen and eager to try something new as part of their professional growth and development for the year and/or as an addition to their professional portfolios.

Those who volunteered participated in a Friday evening and Saturday MBTI ® workshop lead by Reverend Derrick Smith, an MBTI® certified practitioner. The cost of $30.00 per person was reimbursable through Professional Development funds. Friday evening the consent form (Appendix B-1) was redistributed to participants prior to the commencement of the workshop. This form outlined the procedures, risks, and benefits of the research project. The MBTI® instrument was then administered and interpreted on an individual basis by the workshop leader to give participants a basic understanding of their scores and therefore a better understanding of self.

Participants were informed of the intended research and what would be done with the data gathered from the MBTI® profiles and all other relevant materials throughout the study. As well, participants were assured of the confidentiality of the research process in accordance with Royal Road University's ethical guidelines surrounding research.

The workshop leader spent the remainder of the evening informing and educating the participants in greater detail about the characteristics that make up the core dimensions of the MBTI® instrument; Extraversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling, and Judging/Perceiving. Before the evening concluded the volunteers who chose to participate in this research returned their individual MBTI® scores and profiles to the researcher for analysis along with the consent form. Those who chose not to participate in the research left with their MBTI® reports, their new MBTI® knowledge and their consent forms in hand.

The focus for Saturday's workshop was an in-depth study of the Extraversion/Introversion (E/I) and Judging/Perceiving (J/P) dimensions, known as **attitudes**. Extraversion and Introversion are the **attitudes** that describe an individual's preference when focusing their attention and energy; the Judging and Perceiving **attitudes** describe an individual's orientation toward the outer world. Sensing and Intuition, the two opposing ways of taking in information and Thinking and Feeling, the two opposite processes by which decisions are made are known as the **psychological functions** (Meisgeier, Murphy & Meisgeier, 1989). The major project focused on the **attitudes** because they were more easily recognizable for teachers than were the brain (mental) functions. Learning about personality Type requires time and a gestation period therefore it was important to start small and not overwhelm participants. As a result, participants would have a better grounding in two dimensions versus a brief introduction to four dimensions.

The final hour of the workshop was dedicated to clarifying the research concepts, answering questions, and setting the stage for the upcoming three months. A self-assessment tool that would be administered at the end of the project to measure its success/impact was also constructed by the participants (Appendix B-3).

The first month of the research would have an E/I focus, the second month of the research would have a J/P focus, and the third month of the research would focus on both combined **attitudes.** High school teachers were asked to choose one class or one grade to focus their observations on for the entire three-month period since they often taught many classes, grades, and subjects whereas elementary teachers focused their observations on only one class. Focus groups meetings were held in a mutually agreed location at the end of each month of action research and one-on-one interviews were available for those who preferred this method or who couldn't attend

the meetings. Both types of meetings were audio taped and the data was later transcribed and analyzed by the researcher. Many suggestions were offered throughout the one and one-half day workshop by Reverend Smith and by the researcher with regard to "Type" strategies that the teachers could use to enhance teaching and learning in their classroom. Participants were also cautioned during the workshop about stereotyping and labeling students with respect to "Type".

In order to facilitate the tracking of their "look, think, and act" experiences, teachers were asked to keep a reflective journal. They would need to spend fifteen to twenty minutes a week on writing detailed entries of particularly vivid events that were relevant to the study, their teaching practice, and to their self-development. This rich source of data would be shared and collected during the focus group meetings and/or during the one-on-one interviews.

The researcher also kept a reflective journal which provided another source of rich data and observations.

A few days before the focus group meetings took place, appreciative inquiry-type questions (Appendix B) were given/sent to participants on fluorescent coloured paper to allow time for reflection, especially for introverted-preferenced individuals. The purpose of the fluorescent paper was to capture teachers' attention. In the researcher's opinion, much of the mail teachers receive in their mail boxes risks being discarded if it is not made to stand out in some fashion.

Throughout the study the researcher engaged in pulse checks with the participants on a regular basis and offered assistance, clarification and support in their journey of lifelong learning. Reverend Derrick Smith was also available via phone to answer MBTI® related questions and concerns.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The main objective of this research project is to explore the application of the MBTI® theory in the classroom and its impact on participants and students. Participants included a sample of six teachers from the Rocky Mountain School District # 6 in Golden, B.C. The question being researched in this project is:

How does the MBTI® instrument enhance teaching and learning in the classroom?

Forty invitations were sent out, but only six teachers chose to participate in the major project due partly to increased demand on teachers' time as described in the Literature Review. The MBTI® one and a half-day weekend workshop was also a time commitment that many couldn't make. The minimal cost of $30 per participant (reimbursable through professional development funds) had not been a deterrent for participation. Many had expected to pay a higher fee for such an involved workshop but Reverent Derrick Smith had been very sensitive to the purpose of this non profit endeavour and the researcher's minimal budget. Despite the small sample Sagor (2000) asserts that whether educational action research is engaged in by a single teacher, by a group of colleagues who share an interest in a common problem, or by an entire school, action research will always be relevant to the participants. "Relevance is guaranteed because the focus of each research project is determined by the researchers, who are also the primary consumers of the findings" (p. 3).

Of the six participants, two had had some experience with the MBTI® instrument while the other four had never heard of it. Eighty-three percent of the sample were females and 17% were male. Eighty-three percent of the teachers taught at the high school level and 17% taught at the primary level. Thirty-three percent of the participants were first year teachers while 66% of the teachers had ten or more years of experience. The grades being observed were Kindergarten, grade eight, nine, ten, and grade eleven. The MBTI® results for the sample were as follows.

MBTI® Results	
Extraversion	33%
Introversion	67%
Sensing	67%
Intuition	33%
Thinking	50%
Feeling	50%
Judging	50%
Perceiving	50%

Administration of the MBTI® instrument revealed that the group was predominantly more introvert and sensing preferenced and equally divided in the other two dimensions. For the purpose of this study this sample offered a good variety of personality Types from which to draw conclusions based on the different experiences that occurred in the classroom.

Reactions of participants' MBTI® scores:

- "that's me to a tee"
- "I never found out so much about myself in a single weekend"
- "wow, this stuff is neat"
- "how revealing"
- "this new knowledge definitely has the potential of reducing our stress load"
- "now I understand why some people drive me crazy"
- "my marriage partner definitely complements my profile"

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivasta, 1987) is based on the presumption that groups, communities and organizations have the strengths and resources necessary and sufficient to the task of becoming healthy learning systems. Appreciative inquiries focus on strategic human resource issues like empowerment, teamwork, leadership, and customer service.

The use of appreciative inquiry in this action research project will seek to explore participants' learning experiences in the areas of leadership and customer service. Customer service in the context of this research means service to our students, customers of the education system. Hammond (1996) informs us that the basis of appreciative inquiry is also to pay attention to what is working well, focus on the qualities of leadership, customer service, or group process that you want to see more of, and then try to amplify them when you see them. It is that objective that was sought through the use of appreciative inquiry-type questions and interviews in this project.

Appreciative Inquiry-Type Questions (Extraversion/Introversion (E/I) focus)

Prior to the first focus group meeting and one-on-one interviews, participants were asked to reflect on qualitative questions and then be prepared to share their responses during the meeting or the interviews. Analysis of their responses revealed the following common theme for each question:

1. **What changes have you made in your classroom during the past month to accommodate the E/I students you teach?**

Theme: paradigm shift

- "Those students who have a preference for introversion needed me just as much as the extraverted-preferenced students but in a different way. I restructured some of my lessons to provide them with more one-on-one instruction and interaction."

- "I realize that the extraverted-preferenced students weren't driving me insane on purpose with their constant chatter. It's something they needed to do so I welcomed it more and often stopped myself from stifling their discussions (within reason of course). This was not an easy adjustment for me to make but I saw the value in making this shift."

- "I discussed the E/I dimension with one of my classes so that they could be more accepting of each other and their different needs as students. In particular I asked them to not blurt out answers to questions unless they were called upon and everyone would get equal opportunity.

This allowed introverted-preferenced students time to reflect on the answers. It worked many times and the respect created was refreshing."

- "I didn't change anything. I just carried on as usual but I observed my students a great deal to get more enlightened about Type theory. I was fascinated by the reality that the majority of my classes were comprised of extraverted-preferenced students. I'd sure like to be in the shoes of an introverted-preferenced student in a predominantly extraverted-preferenced classroom for a day to see what it's like."

- "I experimented with the seating plan more often than I usually do. Some of the introverted-preferenced students appreciated that they weren't surrounded by a majority of extraverted-preferenced students during a certain plan."

2. What did you observe in yourself and in your students with respect to E/I preferences?

Theme: self-awareness

- "I'm an introverted-preferenced individual and I really felt that I clashed with many of my extraverted-preferenced students. I became more aware of this as the month progressed and I realized that it wasn't personal."

- "I found that extraverted-preferenced students were more restless on Friday afternoons. They often told me that they were more interested in charging up for the social activities they had planned for the weekend. This gave me further insight into how and what I planned for Friday afternoons."

- "My increased awareness of the E/I dimension helped decrease the conflict that sometimes arose with some students, especially those who were opposite my preference. I developed more patience and understanding."

- "I found it uncomfortable to step out of my preference but I felt it was necessary to do so, in small doses, in order to maximize student learning. I wasn't confident that I had it in me but I pleasantly surprised myself."

- "I discovered that if I really listened carefully to introverted-preferenced students I would get a very good idea of their mind-set and perspective. I often misunderstood them as aloof, uninterested, and anxious but they are actually creating the time and space needed to respond to the experience they are having. How revealing!"

3. **What difficulties did you have in implementing the MBTI® theory with respect to the E/I dimension?**

Theme: fear

- "I found it a real challenge to widen my comfort zone. I was not afraid to try but I was afraid to fail."

- "Risk-taking is not usually part of my repertoire because it can lead to unfavourable results. So I didn't overextend myself this month but I did get a better feel for what lies ahead."

- "Of course I'm no expert yet as this kind of stuff takes time to gel. I would have been more reluctant to carry on if I hadn't had the support and wonderful suggestions from you the researcher."

- "I was sometimes disappointed by the results of new strategies I had tried. I thought I must be doing something wrong if student responses weren't positive. Then I tried them with a different class and the results were different. I then realized that I still had a lot to learn about the varying differences in my students."

- "Students in classes I wasn't observing commented on the difference they saw in my teaching style and wondered what was going on. I wasn't sure how to explain it for fear of confusing them. Eventually we had a brief discussion about it and they thought it was brave of me to try new things for their betterment."

4. What successes did you have?

Theme: satisfaction

- "less friction with students and more tolerance on my part and on theirs"

- "I took more interest in getting to know each student better which in turn led to better teaching."

- "Those students whose preferences were opposite my own were more challenging to reach but I welcomed the opportunity to exercise my shadow functions. It wasn't easy but it was very rewarding."

- "I altered one of my assessment methods which really helped the introverted-preferenced students reveal to me what they had learned. This information was easily shared with parents who were concerned that their children weren't learning anything."

- "I acquired a better sense of myself."

- "When we choose to learn about ourselves we are confronted with information about how our behaviour and ideas affect those around us. Sometimes we may not like what we discover; other times we are elated. This past month has been a bit of both for me."

- "My toolbox of ideas and strategies has remained status quo for quite some time now. It was nice to be able to add something new to it and use it."

The paradigm shift, which Covey (1989) describes as "a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms" (p. 29) that was experienced in this action research project affected both teachers and students. Both seemed to realize that developing their shadow functions by engaging in activities that their "Type" didn't prefer was important to create harmony and balance in their lives. What do we mean by shadow functions? In the literature review the analogy of left versus right handedness was used to explain this concept. If you are

left-handed, it doesn't mean you never use your right hand. You prefer your left hand because you are more comfortable with it but if you were to lose it temporarily, you would undoubtedly need to make the necessary adjustments and switch to your right hand. The same is true of our Type preferences. We make the necessary adjustments as they are warranted.

"If you are predisposed to a preference for Extraversion, you will, barring an environment that is utterly hostile to Extraverted behaviour, become an Extravert, but you still must translate that preference within the context of your particular situation in life. Birth order, the behaviour of other family members, and other environmental factors are all part of the life forces affecting that context. For example, if you are an Extravert in a family of Introverts, you may be different from how you would be if you grew up in a family of other Extraverts – where "survival of the loudest" was the rule. You'd be an Extravert in either case, but a different one. As you grow and develop, your Extraversion also develops and matures. Over the years it takes on many different forms; you may appear to be quite different from decade to decade. Though your preference will continue to be for Extraversion, its strength or quality may give it a very different "flavor" at different stages of life "(Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988, p. 13-14).

In essence, our shadow functions (dimensions) are always present but they are used with relative degrees of awareness and capacity.

"There is a kind of mental compensation that occurs to allow us to utilize those "understudy functions," which often don't get much time on center stage but nonetheless stand at the ready for the moment when the lead becomes tired or ineffectual" (Pearman & Albritton, 1997, p. 29).

As a result of this relativity we are not always conscious of when our shadow functions are at play which is why it takes a lot of hard work to develop them.

Teachers and students found it most comfortable to work within their preferences and had varied results when they focused on their shadow functions. It was to be expected that there would be difficulties adapting to one's shadow functions as predicted by the MBTI® instrument. Participants who practised their shadow functions noticed an improvement in communication

and a reduction of friction with their students. Participants were sometimes perplexed about what kind of success to expect but after the end of the first month it was apparent that their use of the MBTI® instrument generated varying degrees of impact. One participant noticed that some of her students became uncomfortable with her new behaviour until it was explained. Students were appreciative of this explanation, especially those who didn't react well to her normal behaviour. Introverted-preferenced teachers found it more difficult to deal with and relate to extraverted-preferenced students.

These results may provide important information for other teachers and administrators in the education system who may choose to explore the benefits of the MBTI® instrument for the betterment of their students, the school system, and themselves.

Appreciative Inquiry-Type Questions (Judging/Perceiving (J/P) focus)

Prior to the second focus group meeting and one-on-one interviews, participants were asked once again to reflect on qualitative questions and then be prepared to share their responses during the meeting or the interviews. Analysis of their responses revealed the following common theme for each question:

1. **What have you noticed in your J/P students?**

Theme: enlightenment

- "I noticed many qualities that we had talked about at the workshop such as J's preferring to be orderly, organized, and systematic and the P's preferring to procrastinate and letting work accumulate only to get most of it completed the night before it was due."

- "My judging-preferenced students lived by schedules and class procedures that were not easily altered. They became quite agitated and stressed when an alteration did occur. On the other hand the same alteration didn't seem to bother my perceiving-preferenced students."

- "I asked my students how many of them still had their course outlines that I had given them during the first week of school after questions arose at the end of a unit about what we would

be learning next. Most students who still had their outlines were **J-preferenced** students. **P-preferenced** students expressed to me that they didn't like to follow outlines so why bother keeping them. They preferred to go with the flow."

- "I can't sit at my desk for long periods of time because it stifles me. I often need to move around and circulate in the classroom, especially during assigned seatwork. I admire those students in my class who can sit still for a whole hour and never budge. Those who do need to move about constructively like myself, have my blessing."

- "After two terms of school I was astonished that it was practically the same students who repeatedly had NHI (not handed in) entries when I posted their current marks on the bulletin board. Many "I" (in progress) reports that I sent home were often of students who were **P-preferenced** too."

- "It was obvious to me that my **J-preferenced** students pushed towards decisions and my **P-preferenced** students pushed towards new information."

2. **What was it like working with the J/P dimension compared to the E/I dimension?**

Theme: adaptability of preferences

- "I found them equally intriguing and challenging to work with. They were definitely different so I didn't mistake one for the other."

- "The qualities of **J/P-preferenced** students were noticeable almost immediately and because of that they were often the first factors I used in valuing students' work style."

- "The **J/P** dimension was easier to work with for me because it revolved a lot around work habits."

- "I had to constantly remind myself that the **J** function designated a preference for order and structure. I sometimes misconstrued it as meaning judgmental and for that reason I found it more comfortable to work with the **E/I** dimension."

- "I found it easier to adapt myself and my teaching strategies to the E/I dimension rather than the J/P dimension. It just felt more comfortable."

- "I'm a judging-preferenced individual so it drove me crazy when assignments weren't handed in on time or even at all but I understood why in most cases. Therefore the individual adjustments I made in the short term gave me less grey hairs in the long run. There didn't seem to be anything major in the E/I dimension that gave me grief."

3. **What are your feelings about the project thus far?**

Theme: perseverance

- "As overwhelming as this has been for me I'm determined to see it through to the end because I really see the value of this project. I'm all for lifelong learning."

- "I'm feeling good and more in tune with myself and my students."

- "I'm not giving it the time it deserves but I am making some progress."

- "Even though I'm observing and adjusting my instruction for one grade level only, how does one accomplish such a task with 150 students per day? Is it possible?"

- "My involvement in this project has given me a pathway to explore human differences."

- "Although time consuming, this has certainly not been a waste of time."

- "Sharing our ideas and tried strategies is extremely helpful, and for those of us who teach the same students, it's a bonus."

- "Change has been inevitable and I resisted it at first but I'm on board now."

Participants were able to easily identify the differences between their judging-preferenced and perceiving-preferenced students. They felt that this dimension, unlike the E/I dimension, was more achievement oriented and as a result it was more difficult to encourage students to work outside of their preference. Those who tried working outside their preference ended up accomplishing very little so teachers needed to create two different assignments to serve both the needs of the judging and the perceiving-preferenced students. Students then chose the option they preferred. This strategy elevated students' motivation to complete their work but teachers couldn't prepare two different assignments for all classes because of the additional work load it created. Teachers and students found it more difficult to exercise their shadow function in the J/P dimension than their shadow function in the E/I dimension.

Participants found that using the MBTI® instrument was a refreshing change for them and not a waste of time. Their resistance to change had lessened and they believed that they were making progress. They appeared to be happy with their accomplishments even though it was trying for some of them. They were able to tap into their creative side as they set aside their preconceived beliefs about education and explored the unknown.

Appreciative Inquiry-Type Questions (Extraversion/Introversion (E/I) & Judging/Perceiving (J/P) focus)

Prior to the third focus group meeting and one-on-one interviews, participants were asked once again to reflect on qualitative questions and then be prepared to share their responses during the meeting or the interviews. Analysis of their responses revealed the following common theme for each question:

1. **What was your experience with combining both dimensions (E/I & J/P) for the last month of this project?**

Theme: refining the gold

- "We had laid the ground work during the first two months so it was easier to build on that in the final month."

- "It gave me the opportunity to refine what I had already tried and then some."

- "It was easier than I thought because I felt more comfortable with applying Type theory after two months of practice. Had we gone on to a new dimension I would have been lost."

- "I found it very confusing to distinguish between, and plan for E/J's and E/P's as well as I/J's and I/P's."

- "The insights of both dimensions combined informed me both of the ways we misunderstand and of the ways we can eventually communicate more constructively."

2. How did the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® instrument enhance teaching and learning in your classroom?

Theme: worthwhile endeavour

- "By having the students become aware of their own "Type" and my "Type" we were able to come to a better understanding of our behaviours."

- "It helped me to improve my one-on-one teaching, and to be more patient with some students. It also helped me to figure out the group dynamics in my class and adjust my teaching accordingly."

- "I had a better focus on students' needs. The introverted-preferenced students are often forgotten so they became stronger as I gave them more attention."

- "It gave me the opportunity to stop and reflect on the differences that existed in my class. It allowed me to better understand and help my students."

- "I was better equipped to teach my students to communicate more effectively, develop more completely, and value others."

- "I knew nothing about "Type" before this project began and I still have a lot to learn but the new insights I have gained about myself and my students is immeasurable."

- "Learning about 'Type' enabled me to promote goodwill and a general improvement in human relations."

- "A teacher's choice of classroom activities will naturally be biased by his or her own Type preferences. I didn't fully comprehend the negative impact that had on some of my students until I was exposed to the MBTI® instrument. Adjusting my instruction to accommodate the learning styles of different Types of students positively influenced both achievement and the enjoyment of learning in my students and in myself. After all, isn't that what leadership is all about?"

- "You **can** teach an old dog new tricks." Exposure to and use of psychological Type theory enabled me to better connect with my learners. Granted, changing some of my ways was challenging because of my reliance on experience but it was manageable."

The old cliché "practice makes perfect" was certainly applicable during the last month of the project. Most participants felt confident and comfortable combining the E/I and J/P dimensions. The process of combining was difficult for one participant because she felt she needed more practice with them separately before she could competently "mix them up."

Participants felt that they could level the playing field by giving equal time to the different Types in their classrooms in the manner that would nurture their nature.

Self-Assessment Tool Constructed after the MBTI® Workshop

Following the workshop in October, participants formulated three appreciative inquiry-type questions that they felt would be a good measure of the success and or impact of the project after it had been completed. Their three questions were:

1. What were your expectations of this project and were they met?
2. How did you benefit or not benefit from participating?

3. What do you think you could do to make the world a better place to live in as a result of your experience with this project?

Responses:

Question # 1 What were your expectations of this project and were they met?

- "to find what motivated people's behaviour and yes my expectations were met"
- "to acquire new strategies and ideas to help me become a more effective teacher and yes they were met., I am somewhat wiser"
- "to learn conflict management and yes my expectations were met from a new perspective"
- "to learn how to get through to those kids that have daunted me in the past and yes I got what I wanted"
- "to enhance my teaching skills – my expectations were met somewhat"
- "to satisfy my curiosity about the MBTI® instrument and use it to better understand my personality and indeed it happened"

Question # 2 How did you benefit or not benefit from participating?

- "it changed me"
- "it increased my awareness of other people's personality Types"
- "our busy schedules limit our time to collaborate with our colleagues and the focus group meetings gave us that opportunity, just as doctors often collaborate on difficult cases, teachers need time to do the same too"
- "it afforded me the luxury to recognize and exercise my shadow functions"
- "the knowledge gained has spilled into other facets of my life"
- "It would have been difficult to not benefit in any way from participating in this project. Like anything else, you reap what you sow. I must admit that I didn't sow as much as I would have liked to but I am planning to use this more extensively next year. At least I will be further ahead starting the new school year than I was last September."

Question # 3 What to you think you could do to make the world a better place to live in as a result of your experience with this project?

- "share the knowledge"

- "spread the good news"

- "encourage others to try the MBTI® instrument and see for themselves the potential it has"

- "help young people to better understand themselves and those that they interact with on a daily basis through information sharing and MBTI® instrument exposure"

- "become certified in the MBTI® instrument and increase its accessibility by possibly providing a workshop for colleagues district-wide during Pro-D"

- "being extra careful about not using psychological Type theory to justify prejudices"

- "continuously encourage tolerance and acceptance"

The feedback given by participants with respect to their participation in this research project was very positive. The researcher particularly liked the comment about it being impossible to not have benefited from the project in any way, shape, or form. Even a small difference in the life of a student is better than no difference at all.

These encouraging results can certainly be used as a springboard for others to try the MBTI® instrument and assess its viability for themselves.

Study Conclusions

The administration of the MBTI® instrument and subsequent Appreciative Inquiry–Type questions, focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews with participants in the Rocky Mountain School District # 6 revealed that:

- The education system is not a "one size fits all" organization.

- Learning about Type takes time and it involves many layers (like peeling an onion). Being competent in one layer before moving on to another is a sound approach. This research dealt with exploring two dimensions and participants felt that this first layer was more than adequate for the time frame they had to work within.

- Traditional school instruction provides an advantage to certain Types and handicaps other Types. Getting involved with Type theory provides some new insights into how to improve learning settings to serve all students better.

- Our most preferred ways of teaching are maybe the least preferred ways of learning for some students.

- Type is not stereotype. You have a preferred Type and it can help you identify who you are, what you do well, and what you might need to do differently. It is not meant to be a stereotype and to pigeonhole you into behaving only in certain ways. You need to have the flexibility to try out some of the perspectives and approaches of the other Types too.

- Learning about Type theory and applying it to your work environment has many benefits such as:

1. it increases your communication skills and your self-awareness
2. helps you to better adapt to change
3. cultivates self-improvement
4. fosters lifelong learning
5. aids in understanding what motivates people
6. teaches "people" management skills
7. fosters leadership from within
8. enhances problem solving skills
9. reduces conflict in the classroom thereby promoting greater tolerance

Lawrence (1996) asserts that:

> "whenever people differ, a knowledge of type helps to cut out irrelevant friction. No one man has to be good at everything. He only has to be good at his own stuff and decently appreciative of the other fellow's" (p. 86).

- This action research did not impact the female participants any differently than the males. Rookie and seasoned teachers were not impacted differently either. The degree in which they

were impacted rested on the seeds that they sowed and how well they nurtured their gardens (see Garden Metaphor on p. 25).

- Given the opportunity to collaborate more frequently with one another, teachers can become more effective in their classrooms.

- Fear is a natural byproduct of change. Kiyosaki (1997) states that fear actually means "false evidence appearing real" (p.147). Adopting this point of view could certainly help alleviate some of the fear and stress associated with change.

- Teachers at the primary level were able to give more attention to the individual "Types" of students. The aim of this method was to hone teaching skills to address particular personality Types.

- Those high school teachers who observed more than one class of students found it too cumbersome to keep track of the individual personality Type for each student. As a result, these teachers planned their lessons to address a wide range of personality Types. In effect they were planting a lot of different seeds with the knowledge that each plot of soil would grow the seed that was in harmony with its nature (personality Type).

- One can never have enough tools in one's toolbox to help deal effectively with varying situations and the MBTI® tool was a beneficial addition to the toolbox.

"We all can use help, practice and constructive feedback in tuning up our teaching techniques to do a better job with students whose types are most different from ours" (Lawrence, 1996, p. 79).

Study Recommendations

Based on both the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested. It is recommended that:

1. The MBTI® instrument be part of professional development for teachers of the Rocky Mountain School District # 6, starting with Golden.

The September Pro-D days, which occur approximately three weeks after the commencement of classes, would be an ideal time to host an MBTI® workshop for teachers. A proposal by the researcher would need to be made in advance to the Pro-D committee for a September 2001 session as September 2000 is spoken for. Many teachers go outside the district for their October Pro-D day therefore February Pro-D days would be the next best possibility. A certified instructor could implement an MBTI® Step II session. This involves doing a self-assessment first (prior to pro-d), receiving a 24 page report as pre-reading and then spending the session doing experiential learning and debriefing.

Once teachers have had the opportunity to digest the material following a September workshop, they would then have the next 9 months to apply their learning to their classrooms. The researcher would be more than happy to support and coach these teachers in their journey of lifelong learning with the MBTI® instrument. Participants who already took part in this research could also act as mentors for their "rookie" colleagues. It would be the researcher's hope that these new mentors also continue their ongoing learning through consistent use of the MBTI® instrument in their daily practice.

A February workshop would reduce the application of the MBTI® theory to four months but the lessons learned in that time frame could easily be carried over into the following September.

Not all teachers will be interested in further exploring the MBTI® instrument because that implies extra work in an already demanding profession, and change. The workload has the potential to actually decrease when one is really in tune with one's students because "the real virtuosity of teaching and the magic of a productive school are realized when mastery of pedagogy is combined with an artistic ability to connect with the learner" (Sagor, 2000 p. ix). Using the MBTI® instrument makes that connection possible. This research also showed that the benefits that can be reaped by using the MBTI® instrument are numerous.

The literature review also informed us that we cannot force change upon anyone. Lasting change has to come from within. Teachers can and will change if they are given a choice in how they will develop professionally. If the MBTI® instrument is of interest to them then the possibility that they will explore it and use it is heightened. However, like myself and so many others who knew nothing of the existence of the MBTI® instrument, exposure is essential. There is no harm in planting a seed.

2. Len Tallevi's (2000) vision of "Lighthouse Schools" eventually becomes a reality in one of the schools in Golden.

As there are "Multiple Intelligence" schools in North America, so too should there be MBTI® schools. In a "Multiple Intelligence" school, the entire staff is committed to applying and incorporating Howard Gardner's theory and new way of teaching into their every day practice. The same would apply to an MBTI® school.

Len Tallevi (2000), an educator, claims that we need "Lighthouse Schools" to demonstrate Type. He says that to make Type an effective agent of change in our schools we need to identify schools and districts where Type plays a central role in education and have them serve as "Lighthouses" for the rest of the country. These schools would show how Type has helped produce more effective teaching and learning environments.

3. A focus group of teachers be given a block of new time to discuss and debate questions about teaching and learning with the MBTI® instrument. This cannot be "leftover time" at the end of a long teaching day. It must be separate from the day-to-day realities of teaching.

Becoming a "Lighthouse" school is a huge undertaking, especially with a large staff. Reaching this goal is possible if small steps at a time are taken. The first step would be to choose a focus group of four or five teachers (mini lighthouse) the first year, who following the initial Pro-D day MBTI® workshop, would be given extra time during the week to collectively collaborate. During this collaboration time teachers would develop lesson plans to accommodate the learning style differences among students, and construct new models of assessment that clearly illustrate how students demonstrate their mastery of content and skills

required to meet curriculum outcomes. They would also develop strategies on how to use Type as part of the CAPP (Career and Personal Planning) program as well as how to improve communication among teachers, administrators, staff members, and parents. The results of these efforts could help initiate improvements in the quality of curriculum decisions so that all personality Types are considered.

The following year a new focus group of teachers would be formed and the process repeated until eventually everyone had had the opportunity to be a part of an MBTI® focus group. This is not to say that other teachers couldn't implement the theory on their own. They wouldn't have the support system of a focus group but it would make them more knowledgeable participants when their turn to be part of a focus group arrived. Once the whole school became literate in the use of the MBTI® instrument (over a 3-5 year span) it could then receive "Lighthouse" designation and possibly acquire assistance from recognized leaders of type through an organization such as the Center for Applications of Psychological Type (CAPT). The next step would be to spread the good news to other schools in the Rocky Mountain School District # 6 and assist them in becoming literate in the use of the MBTI® instrument..

4. All high school students take the Type Indicator, be given a full explanation of Type concepts and be coached in constructive, ethical uses of Type as part of the Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) curriculum.

Research results showed that students were very responsive to learning about Type. They were very appreciative when their teacher discussed his/her role in the research project with them. Participating teachers also noticed more tolerance and respect amongst classmates when Type concepts were explained.

All high school students could be given the same benefit of an MBTI® Type II session as the teachers but in a different time frame. The particulars would be discussed with the certified instructor, administration, and the teachers involved, including the focus group to insure the best possible learning situation.

For younger high school students (grade 8 & 9) the MBTI® instrument has the potential to help them focus towards a particular career direction and facilitate decisions regarding which courses to take as they progress through the grades. For senior students it may help solidify an already chosen career path. Both groups of students would also have a better understanding of the personalities of their teachers and their teaching styles. Consequently they would learn that some of the conflicts they encounter with teachers and other students lies heavily on their differences in Type. Understanding those differences lessens the conflict thus promoting harmony and balance.

"It is not too much to hope that wider and deeper understanding of the gifts of diversity may eventually reduce the misuse and non-use of those gifts. It should lessen the waste of potential, the loss of opportunity, and the number of dropouts and delinquents. It may even help with the prevention of mental illness. Whatever the circumstances of your life, whatever your personal ties, work, and responsibilities, the understanding of type can make your perceptions clearer, your judgments sounder, and your life closer to your heart's desires" (Myers & Myers, 1995, p. 201).

5. The MBTI® certification course be offered closer to rural communities through collaboration with Psychometrics Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE – RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Organizational Implementation

The Rocky Mountain School District # 6, specifically the Golden zone has been provided with five recommendations as a result of this research.

Reverend Derrick Smith, the MBTI® certified practitioner in this research commented to the researcher that since his arrival in Golden several years ago he has tried on numerous occasions to introduce the MBTI® instrument to the various schools in town but to no avail. As a teacher in this town it was easier for the researcher to accomplish Reverend Smith's goal. The results of the study were also favourable which can act as a good catalyst for a long term commitment to a worthwhile endeavour. Type is not meant to replace what already exists but to build on it and perhaps that point of view wasn't properly communicated or interpreted by Reverend Smith or school administrators.

It is the researcher's opinion that the more tools one has in one's toolbox, the better equipped one becomes to deal with the day-to-day realities of teaching. These include challenges, surprises, and the unexplainable to mention a few. It is common knowledge that

> "teaching has become progressively more difficult as our world has become more complex and the needs of our students have become more varied and demanding of our attention" (Hay, 2000, p.2).

The MBTI® instrument is one of those tools that teachers can use to address the increased variance amongst students.

Of all five recommendations proposed, number three – giving teachers an extra block of time during normal school hours to think and collaborate, leading to "Lighthouse" school designation - would be the most costly and time consuming. However, the benefits gained in the long run for all stakeholders in the Golden zone would be significant.

LeRoy Hay (2000) asserts that:

> "we should expect educators to be lifelong learners in their field, but that learning is more likely to make a difference in what we do day in and day out if we have processed the learning with others. Having time to think would encourage teachers to focus on their own learning once again – and this can only make them more successful. If you lose the passion for learning, you lose the passion for teaching" (p. 2).

What finer way to demonstrate leadership than to be "exemplars of best practice in the educational applications of Type"(Tallevi, 2000, p. 20).

The main cost would be attributed to substitute teachers who would provide the needed coverage while collaboration was occurring.

Support, positive attitudes, resources (human and material), and leadership will be the impetus needed to make all the recommendations a reality. All parents want what is best for their children and all teachers want what is best for their students. If the MBTI® instrument can help in accomplishing that goal then what have we got to lose? The energy required is in learning, applying, and working with the MBTI® instrument.

Future Research

Although much research has been done on the MBTI® instrument in the educational system, none has ever been done in Golden or in all of Rocky Mountain School District #6. This research project was a "snapshot" or a "swatch" of what is and what could be. Further queries include:

- Would a larger sampling of teachers in Golden across all the grades produce different results?
- Would results among gender be different if the sampling were larger?
- How are students' grades affected when their teachers use the MBTI®instrument?
- Would having exposure to the MBTI® instrument during teacher training have a different impact on first year teachers who begin using it in their own classrooms?

- What is the impact on MBTI® literate students with respect to their career choices after graduating from high school?

- How would the relationships between parents and their children and parents and the school system be different if parents became literate in the use of the MBTI® instrument?

CHAPTER SIX- LESSONS LEARNED

Research Project Lessons Learned

The purpose of action research is to "assist the 'actor' in improving and/or refining his or her actions" (Sagor, 2000, p.3) which is the goal this project achieved for me. Introducing, facilitating, and guiding a research project within one's organization is a challenging endeavour but one that was empowering for me as well.

It was very difficult to secure a large number of participants for this project because extra "time" is a rare occurrence for many teachers, especially giving up precious weekend time for an MBTI®workshop. The scenario could have been different had the MBTI® workshop been given during a pro-d day. However, that would have required planning a year in advance on the researcher's part. My suggestion is if you have a definite idea about carrying out a possible project in your workplace, plan to coordinate it with workshops and/or inservice sessions already being planned for by your employer. It's easier to piggy-back onto something that has already been set in motion.

I would have preferred more participants for this particular action research project but having less didn't take away from it either. Advertising your project to recruit more participants can be beneficial. One method of advertising would be to introduce and review your project at every school's first staff meeting in September which I didn't get the opportunity to do.

Creating a warm, safe, and caring environment during the workshop, focus group meetings, and 1:1 interviews was essential. Food was also an important part of that environment. Always having food and beverages available made the participants appreciative, especially at the end of the day when stomachs were growling.

Keeping a reflective journal was a proven asset for participants and the researcher. It demands time on a consistent basis to detail perceptions, interventions, and pertinent discussions held with students and colleagues, just like acquiring any other new habit. The time spent is well worth the

effort because it helps you develop insight into your own emotional and intellectual rhythms as a teacher.

The value of coaching is significant because without guidance and encouragement it's easy for participants to detract from the goal. However, there is a difference between coaching and guiding your participants and nagging or annoying them. You may not know you are doing the latter therefore keep the lines of communication open at all times so your intentions are clear and that there are never any misunderstandings about your intentions. Pearman and Albritton (1997) explain it in this manner:

> "A person gives us information, and we associate certain meanings to it depending on our own experience. Until we ask the person who sent the message, however, we cannot be sure what it really means. The swift and fluid interchange that we euphemistically call communication creates both the bridges and the chasms between human beings. The simple task of exchanging ideas, information, or experience so that each person knows what the other really means turns out to be a rather complex business" (p. 97).

I also needed to be constantly aware that I shared similar and dissimilar MBTI® dimensions with my participants when I communicated with them. My dealings with them had to be true to the MBTI® instrument.

As a researcher it was also important to be flexible and have patience especially when inconveniences occurred such as cancellation of focus group meetings or one-on-one interviews.

Involving participants in the construction of the self assessment tool was empowering for them. Don't assume that you have to have all the questions and the answers. You can present a framework for major components that need to be dealt with but allowing input from others to fill in the gaps creates a better sense of ownership.

Program Lessons Learned

The MALT program contains twenty-seven competencies. During the completion of the major project, MALT candidates are expected to demonstrate strength in five core competencies and in

five optional competencies. The following ten competencies have been demonstrated through the completion of this major project.

Competency 1c) Provide leadership.

This competency was demonstrated by my excellent contribution to a positive group ethos during the MBTI® workshop, the focus group meetings, and one-on-one interviews. I was the glue that bound everyone together. I was never reluctant to approach a participant in conflict or in a bad mood. My jovial ways often changed the mood of the individual or group. I broke out in song if it made the difference. I acted as a conduit between participants when it was necessary. I employed different leadership styles and behaviours appropriate to situational contexts. I was personally committed to the successful completion of the project and I set an example of role modeling for others to follow. I was more than happy to plant the MBTI® seed and observe the process of its germination and growth.

Competency 1e) Recognize ethical considerations and values and take account of them in making decisions.

Throughout the major project I have complied with the guidelines related to ethical research using human subjects. I solicited and received informed consent from all human subjects involved in the research process. I protected and respected the confidentiality of all participants involved in the completion of the major project. I also displayed relevant values and ethical standards in interaction with participants and other stakeholders of the education system.

Competency 2b) Apply systems thinking to the solution of leadership and learning problems.

I analyzed the current system and identified a long term problem that needed attention. Consequently I chose a research topic that would help bring the system more in alignment with the needs of the consumers of the system, the students. I applied current systems theories by assisting with knowledge, insight, and practical experience with solving problems. I contributed to the identification of a problem's nature and suggested strategies for a resolution.

The focus group meetings became a "learning organizational system" because they were a vehicle teachers used to cooperatively learn together. They worked simultaneously to create a different environment in the classroom, in the school, in the school system, and eventually in the community. I was delighted to be a part of that system.

Competency 4c) Create learning opportunities in the workplace.

I enhanced the learning culture in my organization by exposing teachers to the MBTI® instrument which they found very revealing for themselves and their students. I had them apply the theory in their every day practice. I always actively contributed to group discussions and shared knowledge recently gained across focus groups and 1:1 meetings. Through coaching and encouragement I enabled participants to implement effective learning activities in their classrooms. These learning activities became easily transferable to other environments.

Competency 4e) Help others learn.

This competency has been fulfilled throughout the project by the organization of the MBTI® workshop, and by the focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews that I held. I helped participants identify attainable short term goals when the project seemed overwhelming at times. I posed appropriate questions that lead to further group discussion or discoveries, especially during focus group meetings. I successfully guided team members through the research project process and encouraged them to reflect on their learning through the project journey.

Competency 5a) Identify, locate and evaluate research findings.

This competency has been fulfilled through the completion of the major project. Research sources are pertinent and current and can be found in the literature review, in the bibliography, and elsewhere in the document. The major project report and evaluations of the findings capture and present clearly and logically essential information gleaned from research.

Compentency 5b) Use research methods to solve problems.

This competency was met by identifying and employing an appropriate research design based on the research question. The design used was action research. The humanistic approach of appreciative inquiry was also utilized. I used different information collection approaches such as focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews to carry out the major project. I found appropriate resources and used personal skill in the research design, methodology, and action plan to complete the major project.

Competency 7a) Interpret oral communication.

This competency was met by attentively listening at all times, particularly during the workshop, the focus group meetings, and the 1:1 interviews. I asked probing questions to draw others out, and summarized and clarified others' contributions for the group. Listeners' understanding was also checked regularly. I was respectful of and valued different opinions, and was particularly appreciative of the MBTI® communication differences.

Competency 7b) Communicate with others through writing.

This competency was demonstrated by the writing of the major project report and the letters of recruitment. Appreciative Inquiry questions were also written and given to participants a few days prior to the focus group meetings. E-mailing relevant information to participants was a common occurrence. Throughout the study I recorded information accurately, clearly, and coherently. I used appropriate language and terms and appropriate references to the literature to illustrate the hypothesis that the MBTI® instrument is beneficial to the educational system. I employed elements of personal insight and experience to enrich the writing and the creation of my hypothesis.

Competency 7c) Communicate orally.

This competency was met by showing a genuine interest in the ideas, opinions and feelings of others and seeking further information and insight in these ideas. I communicated my own needs

to ensure that I was able to provide strong contributions and ensure similar responses from other group members. I used my commanding voice to engage people during verbal presentations of all relevant materials needed for the carrying out and completion of the major project.

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LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Organization

Rocky Mountain School Division #6
Golden Zone
P.O. Box 1110
Golden, B.C.
V0A 1H0

Contact Person/Project Sponsor

Dave Garbutt, Vice Principal
Golden Secondary School
Phone: 250-344-2201
E-mail: dgarbutt@sd6.bc.ca

Project Leader/Graduate Student

Vicky Minich
Teacher at Golden Secondary School
Phone: 250-344-5805
Fax: 250-344-3052
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RRU Faculty Advisor

Laurie Hillis, M.A.
Consultant and Learning Facilitator
Megatrain Inc., Calgary, Alberta
Ph: (403) 236-8009 Fx: (403) 236-9277
E-mail: laurie@megatrain.com

Roles and Responsibilities

The Project Leader, Project Sponsor, and Faculty Advisor agree to participate in the successful completion of the proposed project and perform the roles and responsibilities described in Appendix C.

Project Description, Action Steps, and Milestones

The project goals, process and anticipated outcomes are described in the project proposal. The proposal highlights the activities to be completed, the study milestones and the involvement of Dave Garbutt as the sponsor.

Confidentiality

The RRU Project Leader/Graduate Student agrees to honour individual and corporate confidentiality and non-disclosure guidelines. Dave Garbutt as the sponsor agrees to allow the Project Leader every opportunity to canvas and collect data from individuals and groups identified in the proposal.

Rocky Mountain School Division # 6 (Golden Zone) project participants will be asked to formally acknowledge that the information they provide to the researcher will be handled in a confidential and privileged manner, as per the Consent Form, attached to the proposal.

Intellectual Property

Rocky Mountain School District #6 agrees that the final project report and supporting materials will remain the intellectual property of the author (Graduate Student). The commercial potential of all products will be assessed upon completion of the project and if deemed necessary, mutually agreeable arrangements will be identified to exploit the product in the commercial marketplace.

Deliverables

The Project Leader/Graduate Student will provide Rocky Mountain School District # 6 a copy of the final report. In addition, the Project Leader will provide formal briefings to individuals or groups identified by the Project Sponsor/Contact Person.

Company Commitment

Rocky Mountain School District # 6 agrees to provide the Project Leader with the following support: photocopying, fax, mail, phone, workshop space, access to relevant records or data, access to individuals and groups essential to the completion of the project and other items identified throughout the conduct of the project.

Endorsement

We, the undersigned agree to abide by the arrangements and statements contained in this letter of agreement.

Project Sponsor _____ Dated _____

Graduate Student _____ Dated _____

October 1st, 1999

Hi Dick. I trust that this note finds you healthy and in good spirits. I just wanted to make you aware that I am completing my Master's degree at Royal Roads University and my major project involves the Rocky Mountain School District #6. More specifically my project will involve teachers in Golden at the various schools. My topic is: **How does the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator ® instrument enhance teaching and learning in the classroom?** Dave Garbutt will be overlooking my project as the year progresses.

If you would like a copy of my proposal or have any further questions please feel free to contact me at vminich@rockies.net.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Vicky Minich

October 11th, 1999

Dearest colleagues,

I am presently doing my Master's degree at Royal Roads University and I am in need of as many participants as possible for my research project. My project is titled: **How does the Myers Briggs Type Indicator ® instrument enhance teaching and learning in the classroom?** I had never heard of the MBTI ® instrument until 2 summers ago during my first residency at RRU. I was administered this inventory for the very first time and it had a tremendous impact on my teaching. I applied one dimension of the MBTI ® theory (introvert/extrovert preferenced) to last year's kindergarten class which resulted in an improved enthusiasm to learn. As teachers we recognize that the environment plays a major role in students' ability to learn but the environment of personality types has remained largely ignored. Until I had applied the MBTI® theory I had not realized that personality issues can significantly define the class environment. In fact, I had not realized that my ability to recognize other personality types as well as my own could determine how well students learn.

Knowing our students and our subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. In his book, *The Courage To Teach*, Parker Palmer states that "the work required to 'know thyself' is neither selfish nor narcissistic. Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our students and our scholarship well. Good teaching requires self-knowledge: it is a secret hidden in plain sight" (Palmer, 1998, p.3).

The MBTI ® instrument contributed to my journey of self-awareness last year and my purpose for this undertaking is to determine the extent and manner to which it can provide you with similar and/or heightened benefits.

The requirements for participation in this project are as follows:

♦ You will need to complete an MBTI®questionnaire prior to a workshop.

♦ The MBTI® workshop will take place on Friday November 5th from 6-9p.m. and Saturday November 6th from 10 – 5p.m. in the green portable at GSS. You will have access to the washrooms in the school as well as the vending machines. For Saturday's session please bring a bag lunch.

♦ Reverend Derrick Smith will conduct the workshop as he has MBTI® instrument certification and your cost will be $30.00 which includes the questionnaire, the workshop and all related materials (payable in advance). You can send cheques to me at GSS in the name of Derrick Smith and upon receipt of your money you will be sent the questionnaire and a consent form. The last hour on Saturday will be dedicated to discussing how you can apply your new learning to your classroom.

- ◆ Afterwards we will meet once a month (for 3 consecutive months) either in a focus group format or in one-on-one interviews depending on your preference. The information at these meetings will be tape recorded (as outlined on the consent form) and then transcribed for analysis after the research is over.

- ◆ For the purpose of this project, your involvement will come to a close at the end of February, after we've had our last meeting and/or interviews. I will then analyze the data gathered over the three months and then begin writing a draft of my final report. You may request a copy of the final draft once it is approved by Royal Roads University.

I do realize that a teacher's time is very limited but I believe that if we apply our time more effectively we will have more time to be effective teachers. Three months goes by real quickly when you're having fun. Please join me in this research endeavour.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at home in the evenings at 344-5805 or via e-mail at vminich@rockies.net. It is extremely difficult to reach me at GSS because my portable does not have an intercom nor a phone.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Vicky Minich

October 25th, 1999

Dearest Colleagues,

I'm well aware that you are preparing for your parent/teacher interviews and I wish you well but I need a response to the letter that I sent you with regards to participating in my research project. The MBTI ® workshop date is fast approaching and I need to get it all organized with the hopes that I don't have to abandon it. Please return this note to me at the high school with either a "yay" or a "nay" as soon as possible. I believe that you may be able to get reimbursed by Pro-d as this workshop is Pro-d related. Thanks.

Vicky Minich

CONSENT FORM

Royal Roads University

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential. Knowledge of your identity is not required.

I understand the procedures to be used in this research and the personal **risks** to me in taking part such as my individual MBTI® profile possibly being identified in the research.

You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials including the MBTI® profile. Profiles will be tracked by means of a numbering system.

The benefits of the study include:

♦ the opportunity to be exposed to the MBTI® instrument and consequently have a better understanding of self
♦ using the results of the MBTI® instrument to enhance mutual communication and understanding with students
♦ the opportunity to study your own practice
♦ initiating change
♦ being a part of the process that helped shape this study

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this research at any time.

I have been informed that the research material will be used to write a final report which will then be made available to all stakeholders of the education system.

I may obtain a copy of this report upon its completion by contacting Vicky Minich at Golden Secondary School. Tel: 344-2201.

I agree to participate by :

♦ Completing the MBTI® psychometric instrument, attending an MBTI® workshop, and incurring its cost ($30.00)
♦ Attending focus group meetings or 1:1 interviews once a month for approximately an hour

- Applying the theory of personality types to my classroom and documenting noticeable changes in myself and in my students
- Helping to construct a self assessment tool to measure and evaluate the success of the project
- Reflecting on the learning process and sharing trials and tribulations during the focus group gatherings or 1:1 interviews

The research portion of the project will be conducted between November 5th, 1999 and February 29th, 1999.

Having been asked by Vicky Minich of Royal Roads University to participate in a research project, I have read the procedures specified and agree to the terms and conditions of this project.

NAME:

DATE:

SIGNATURE:

Self-Assessment Tool Constructed after the MBTI® Workshop

Following the workshop in October, participants formulated three appreciative inquiry-type questions that they felt would be a good measure of the success and or impact of the project after it had been completed. Their three questions were:

1. What were your expectations of this project and were they met?
2. How did you benefit or not benefit from participating?
3. What do you think you could do to make the world a better place to live in as a result of your experience with this project?

Le 5 décembre, 1999

Bonjour mes amis. On se rencontre mercredi, le 8 décembre après l'école (3:30) à ma portative pour discuter le Myers Briggs.

S.V.P. pensez à ces quelques questions avant qu'on se rencontre:

1) What changes have you made in your classroom during the past month to accommodate the E/I students you teach?

2) What did you observe in yourself and in your students with respect to E/I preferences?

3) What difficulties did you have in implementing the MBTI® theory with respect to the E/I dimension?

4) What successes did you have?

Merci et à mercredi!

Vicky

Dear Colleagues

Just a reminder that the MBTI group is meeting this Wednesday, at 3:30 in my portable.

Please keep the following questions in mind prior to the meeting:

1) What changes have you made in your classroom during the past month to accommodate the E/I students you teach?

2) What did you observe in yourself and in your students with respect to E/I preferences?

3) What difficulties did you have in implementing the MBTI theory with respect to the E/I dimension?

4) What successes did you have?

If you absolutely can't make the meeting then please let me know and we will meet one-on-one. We must meet before the holidays in order to continue phase 2 after the holidays.

Thanks

Vicky

Le 3 février, 2000

My dearest colleagues,

The end is near. Let's meet on Monday at lunch and chat about your progress this past month with the J/P dimensions and about our focus for the next month. I would prefer that we meet in a quiet space to facilitate the tape recording of our conversations. I'm flexible as to where you might want that to be.

Here is what I would like you to think about prior to our meeting:

1. What have you noticed in your J/P students?

2. What was it like working with the J/P dimension compared to the E/I dimension?

3. What are your feelings about the project thus far?

Please let me know where you would like to meet and we'll go from there. Thanks a bunch! I really appreciate your contributions.

Q.V.

Le 8 mars, 2000

My dearest colleagues,

We have accomplished our mission, at least this portion of the major project. We need to meet to wrap it up and I'd like you to think about the following questions prior to our meeting. I would like to meet on Monday, March 13th, after school at my place in Habart. I live in the brown 4 plex by the highway on your way to Pauls' house. I'm in apartment #2, the one facing the highway and I'll have some goodies to settle your growling tummies. If you can't make it please call me to let me know and we'll try to meet one-on-one before the March break. Thanks. Q.V.

1. What was your experience with combining both dimensions (E/I & J/P) for the last month of this project?

2. How did the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® instrument enhance teaching and learning in your classroom?

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PROJECT SPONSOR

Assist candidates in identifying and articulating the problems or issues to be examined.
Review and provide comments on the problem description and the implementation plan (project proposal) for investigating the problem.
Provide the resources, facilities, funds and personnel needed to support the successful completion of the project as described in the proposal.
Where necessary, facilitate the timely collection of data.
Review the project findings, conclusions and recommendations with the graduate candidates.
Assess the completion of the competencies described in the candidates' project learning contract.

PROJECT LEADER/GRADUATE CANDIDATE

In conjunction with the Project Sponsor and Faculty Supervisor, develop the problem or issue into a draft and final prospectus.
In conjunction with the Faculty Supervisor, develop a project proposal.
Complete the project, in accordance with the project proposal.
Regularly communicate your project's progress to the Project Sponsor and Faculty Supervisor.
Effectively lead the project and project team.
Produce a draft and final project report, which conforms to the university and program guidelines.

FACULTY SUPERVISOR

Undertake regular consultations with candidates during completion of their major projects.
Ensure that candidates apply rigorous research methodologies throughout their project completion.
Review and provide comments on, all drafts of the project report produced by candidates.
In consultation with other committee members, assess the completion of the competencies described in the candidates' project learning contract.
Communicate the success or failure of the candidate's major project report to the Program Director.