

Corporation for National & Community Service
Montana State Office

IN-SERVICE TRAINING



Learning Circle F:






COMMUNICATING ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Understanding of the multiple ways in which individuals capture, absorb, and analyze information in a constantly shifting world and how these methods can be nurtured to support effective communication in communities is the focus of this learning circle.

LC: COMMUNICATING ACROSS DIFFERENCES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

	<p>Identify the actions, attitudes, and behaviors that constitute effective organizational communication.</p>
	<p>Recognize their own individual approach to communication, and how their style fits with the organizational culture in which they serve.</p>
	<p>Effectively communicate with project stakeholders with specific regard to their individual style.</p>
	<p>Understand the danger in making assumptions about others' personalities, motivations and purposes as they relate to their work, based on communication style.</p>
	<p>Feel comfortable communicating with their varied stakeholders.</p>



PROPOSED AGENDA:

1. **Learning Circle Set-Up**
 - ✓ Welcome, introductions
 - ✓ Session overview, packet, working agreements

2. **Communication Styles Basics**
 - ✓ Introduce the self-assessment
 - ✓ Identification of the self
 - ✓ The limits of self-categorization

3. **Experiencing Communication Styles**
 - ✓ Discovering others' communication preferences
 - ✓ Learning to express to others what communication style is best for you

4. **Fostering Inter-group Communication**
 - ✓ Adapting communication for a variety of styles
 - ✓ Practicing communication

5. **Learning Circle Close-Out**
 - ✓ Summary of session, reflection
 - ✓ Closing remarks

The TRUE COLORS© TEST



Orange – The Activator:

Stresses: being stuck at a desk; too much responsibility; deadlines; redundancy; lack of freedom; reading manuals; abstract concepts; rules

Preferred Environment: active; fun; no repetition; variety; problem-solving environment; debate; brainstorming; competition with tangible rewards; frequent outside work/contracts; entrepreneurial environment

How to handle confrontation: work with Oranges to create freedoms to get things done at their own pace; direct, clear statement about what needs to be done with consideration for the Orange's need to act to support their esteem

How to meet their needs: Allow space to do own thing; freedom to “make up” own mind; independent activities that are fun/immediately gratifying; immediate and timely favorable responses; focus on behavior and performance more than finished product; give a variety of tangible rewards

Green – The Analyzer:

Stresses: lack of control or independence; elaborate use of adjectives; incompetence; emotional displays; inability to use or display knowledge; small talk; subjective judgment



Preferred Environment: logical/theoretical approach; individual research/quiet area; time to debate/analyze/create; use of models, diagrams, new ideas; serious, inventive atmosphere; “What if” and “why” questions allowed; ideas, new possibilities discussed

How to handle confrontation: discuss performance, allowing room for them to develop new ideas and plans; be aware that sarcasm and ridicule concerning their abilities can be devastating; provide opportunities for questions; help them to understand how the system works and where they fit within it

How to meet their needs: design meetings to clarify progress toward outcomes and redirect their focus while minimizing restrictions regarding their work; conduct two-way discussion regarding rules so that they make sense; provide a logical and rational work environment; avoid fake hoopla



Gold – The Organizer:

Stresses: incomplete tasks; ambiguous tasks/answers; too many things going on at the same time; disorganization; people who do not follow through; waste and irresponsibility; change and nonconformity; changing details; haphazard attitudes

Preferred Environment: structure; schedules; time frames given; deadlines clearly defined; review and wrap-up; opportunity to organize, plan, classify; orderly, neat workplace; areas assigned and respected

How to handle confrontation: keep requests clear and uncomplicated; be consistent; communicate clearly who is responsible for what and when; provide validation for the change with as much data and research for how it is a “better way” as possible

How to meet their needs: goals that state objectives clearly and outline steps required to accomplish them; critique their work fairly and consistently; be organized; provide opportunities to demonstrate their responsibility; be honest and sincere; note accuracy, efficiency, and thoroughness of their performance



Blue – The Peacemaker:

Stresses: broken promises; too much criticism; people talking about them behind their back; conflict; lying and rejection; lack of social contacts; focus on the system vs. the people; too much conformity without outlets for individuality; insincerity

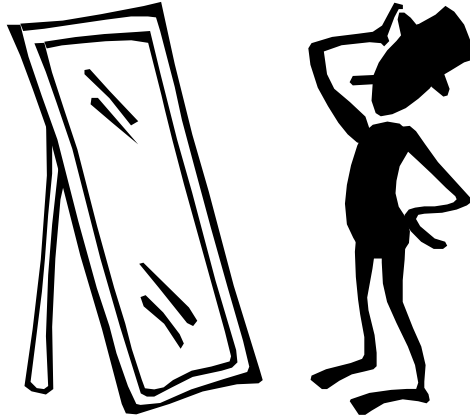
Preferred Environment: group activity/discussion; informal/warm friendly atmosphere; little or no conflict; verbal positive praise; freedom to integrate art/poetry into work assignments; project work with another associate

How to handle confrontation: be sincere and direct; allow these individuals occasions to express their feelings and ask questions; keep comments positive and criticism to a minimum

How to meet their needs: performance critiques that include reaffirmation for the value of the individual; catch them doing something right; provide opportunities for both supervisor and subordinate to express feelings; tell them frequently how good you feel about their contributions and achievements

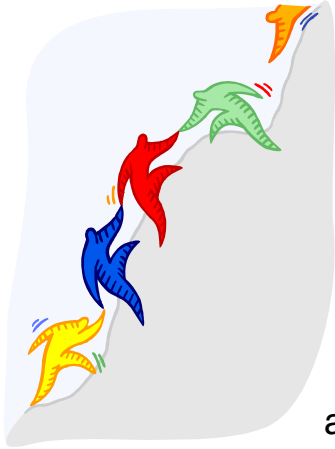
*From Michele Rastovich's "Rethinking Motivation: Managing With Color,"
March 13, 2006. www.rastovich.com.*

COMMUNICATION STYLES AND THE SELF...



Think about the activity you just engaged in. Which color do you identify with the most?

My PRIMARY color is: _____	
My preferred method of communication is:	
Describe what your desk looks like (messy, neat, lots of pictures, etc.):	
I don't like it when others...(talk while I'm e-mailing, e-mail me when I'm in the next room, etc.)	
I am willing to modify...(less clutter on my desk, find out if my e-mails are clear, etc.)	



COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION STYLES

Why is it important to understand other individuals' ways of absorbing and analyzing information?

Why is it important to know your communication style and your motivation style? How are they different?

How do they complement one another?

Think about the others in your small group.

Which colors are present in the group?

Which colors are not present in the group?

What barriers arose when you tried to solve the puzzle?

What solutions arose that you wouldn't have come up with on your own?

What's Your Motivation Style?

By Marcia L. Conner

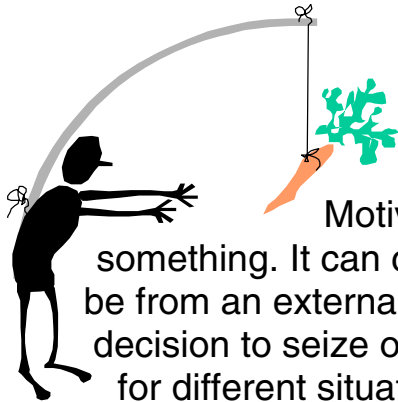


Take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire assessing your preferred motivation style. Begin by reading the words in the left-hand column. Of the three responses to the right, circle the one that best characterizes you, answering as honestly as possible with the description that applies to you now. Count the number of circled items and write your total at the bottom of each column. These questions have no right or wrong answers. Your response offers insight about how you're motivated to learn.

1. I'm proud when I...	Get things done.	Help other people.	Think things through.
2. I mostly think about...	What's next.	People.	Ideas.
3. To relax, I tend to...	Do whatever it takes to accomplish relaxation.	Hang out and talk with friends.	Read or surf the Web to learn new things.
4. I like to do things...	Now or on a schedule.	When it works for everyone.	When it feels right to me.
5. When online, I like to...	Search and retrieve.	Write e-mails, instant message, or chat.	Look around and linger.
6. Projects should be...	Finished on time.	Done in groups.	Meaningful to me.
7. At work, I like to...	Ask constant questions.	Make friends.	Explore.
8. Schedules...	Keep order.	Help coordinate people.	Are a useful tool.
9. I like to be recognized for...	Being organized, neat, productive, efficient, and punctual.	Noticing other people, being kind, fair, thoughtful, and considerate.	Being clever and smart, making discoveries, and solving problems.
10. In terms of completing things...	I finish what I start.	I like to enlist the help of other people.	I believe that life is a journey, not a destination.
Total:	<i>Goal:</i>	<i>Relationship:</i>	<i>Learning:</i>

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View this assessment online at <http://agelesslearner.com/assess/motivationstyle.html>



MOTIVATION...

Motivation is the force that draws you to move toward something. It can come from a desire or a curiosity within you or can be from an external force urging you on. In either case, you make the decision to seize or to skip a chance to learn. Motivation styles vary for different situations and topics but nonetheless, you draw on them all the time, especially when you try to learn something challenging. If you can recognize your predominant motivational style, you can identify the situations that best satisfy your needs. Likewise, you can't motivate anyone else. All you can do is invite them to learn.

The column with the highest total represents your primary motivation style. The column with the second-highest total is your secondary motivation style. You're likely to be motivated most in one area, with some overlap in a second area.

Your primary motivation style: _____

Your secondary motivation style: _____

If you're goal-oriented, you'll probably reach for your goals through a direct and obvious route. This might lead you to a reference book, your computer, or to call an expert—whatever means is available. You usually prefer meeting in person when it's the most effective method and don't find learning, itself, much fun.

If you're relationship-oriented, you take part in learning mainly for social contact. When you meet and interact with people, you learn things along the way. You may not like working independently or focusing on topics (separately from other people) because that doesn't give you the interactivity you crave.

If you're learning-oriented, the practice of learning, itself, drives you. You search for knowledge for its own sake and may become frustrated by anything that requires you to spend more time on procedure and process than on actual learning.

From Marcia Conner, 1993-2004.

WHAT ARE THE LEARNING STYLES?

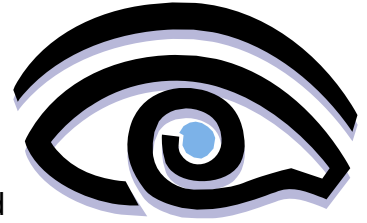
Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

What are the types of learning styles?

- **Visual Learners:**

learn through seeing...

These learners need to see the group leader's and participants' body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a meeting, conversation, or gathering. They tend to prefer sitting in a place that allows them to avoid visual obstructions (e.g., people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrations, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture, classroom discussion, or meeting, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.



- **Auditory Learners:**

learn through listening...

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed, and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

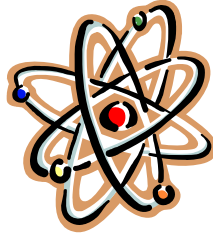
- **Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners:**

learn through moving, doing, and touching...

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

From L.D. Pride's "Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences," 2007





Effects of Each Preference in Work Situations

from Myers-Briggs Assessment

Extraverts

- Like variety and action
- Are often good at greeting people
- Are sometimes impatient with long slow jobs
- Are interested in how others do their jobs
- Often enjoy talking on the phone
- Often act quickly, sometimes without thinking
- Like to have people around in the working environment
- May prefer to communicate by talking rather than writing
- Like to learn a new task by talking it through with someone

Introverts

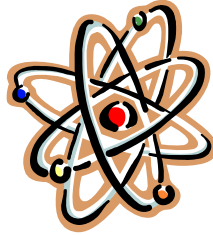
- Like quiet for concentration
- Have trouble remembering names and faces
- Can work on one project for a long time without interruption
- Are interested in the idea behind the job
- Dislike telephone interruptions
- Think before they act sometimes without acting
- Work alone contentedly
- May prefer communications to be in writing
- May prefer to learn by reading rather than talking or experiencing

Sensing Types

- Are aware of the uniqueness of each event
- Focus on what works now
- Like an established way of doing things
- Enjoy applying what they have already learned
- Work steadily, with a realistic idea of how long it will take
- Usually reach a conclusion step by step
- Are not often inspired, and may not trust the inspiration when they are
- Are careful about the facts
- May be good at precise work
- Can oversimplify a task
- Accept current reality as a given to work with

Intuitive Types

- Are aware of new challenges and possibilities
- Focus on how things could be improved
- Dislike doing the same thing repeatedly
- Enjoy learning new skills
- Work in bursts of energy powered by enthusiasm with slack periods in between
- May leap to a conclusion quickly
- Follow their inspirations and hunches
- May get their facts a bit wrong
- Dislike taking time for precision
- Can over-complexify a task
- Ask why things are as they are



Effects of Each Preference in Work Situations (cont.)

from Myers-Briggs Assessment

Thinking Types

- Are good at putting things in logical order
- Respond more to people's ideas than their feelings
- Anticipate or predict logical outcome of choices
- Need to be treated fairly
- Tend to be firm and tough-minded
- Are able to reprimand or fire people when necessary
- May hurt people's feelings without knowing it
- Have a talent for analyzing a problem or situation

Feeling Types

- Like harmony and will work to make it happen
- Respond to people's values as much as to their thoughts
- Are good at seeing the effects or choices on people
- Need occasional praise
- Tend to be sympathetic
- Dislike telling people unpleasant things
- Enjoy pleasing people
- Take an interest in the person behind the job or idea

Judging Types

- Work best when they plan their work and follow the plan
- Like to get things settled and finished
- May decide things too quickly
- May dislike to interrupt the project they are on for a more urgent one
- Tend to be satisfied once they reach a judgment on a thing, situation, or person
- Want only the essentials needed to begin their work
- Schedule projects so that each step gets done on time
- Use lists as agendas for action

Perceiving Types

- Do not mind leaving things open for last-minute changes
- Adapt well to changing situations
- May have trouble making decisions, feeling like they never have enough information
- May start too many projects and have difficulty in finishing them
- May postpone unpleasant jobs
- Want to know all about a new job
- Get a lot accomplished at the last minute under pressure of a deadline
- Use lists as reminders of all the things they have to do someday

Bibliography and Resources

Helpful Web sites...

<http://www.learning-styles-online.com/> - Includes free online inventory

<http://agelesslearner.com/>

<http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm>

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