Profiling for Success summary

Introduction

These pages contain information about Profiling for Success, a range of assessments that can help you in your personal and career development.

You can use these tools to understand more about:

- tests used for job selection
- your test-taking skills
- how your abilities relate to career choices
- your learning style and how you can become a more effective learner
- your preferences for working with others and how these relate to your strengths, as well as possible areas for development.
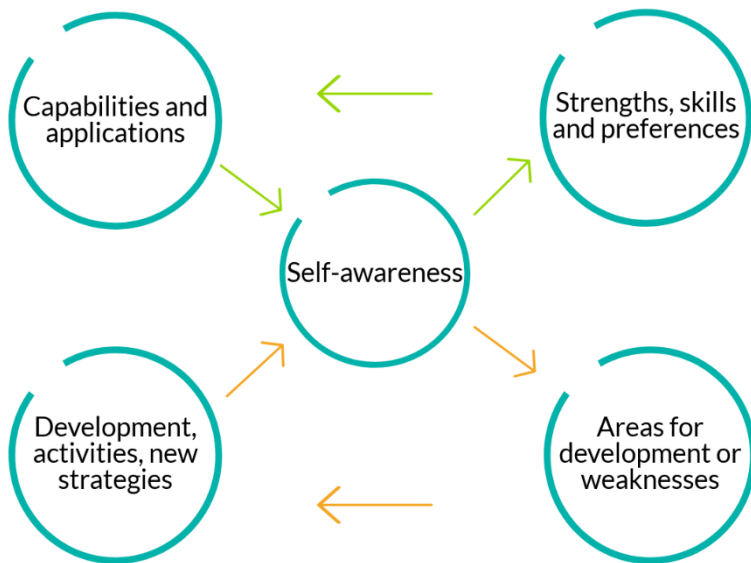
Self-awareness and your career

Self-awareness, or understanding more about ourselves, is at the centre of personal and career development. This developmental process should run parallel to your academic studies, and the two processes should complement each other.

As you progress through your course, you will gain knowledge of your subject and yourself. Combined, this knowledge will help you to prepare for what you want to do next, by helping you to:

- make the right choices (e.g. whether to get a job, what kind of job might suit you, whether to undertake further study or take time out)
- make the most of your learning opportunities
- identify your transferable skills and where you can apply these most effectively
- describe fluently the 'type' of person you are
- understand how you relate to others in different situations (e.g. team work, leadership/management, socially).

Becoming self-aware

One way to think about self-awareness and how it relates to development activities is shown below.

Self-awareness is simply knowing more about ourselves. It is a lifelong process that happens gradually, but at times it can be helpful to put effort into raising our self-awareness. There are many ways of doing this. This page focuses on a popular and powerful method for raising self-awareness-using psychometric assessments- but the process is most effective when information from many sources are used together.

Strengths, skills and preferences:

Self-awareness leads to an understanding of your strengths, core skills and preferences. These cover a wide range of both capabilities (what you know, what you can do and what you have the potential to do) and preferences and motivations (what interests and motivates you, how you do things and how you relate to others).

Capabilities and applications:

When you know what your strengths and preferences are, you need to think about how you can apply these in different situations. This is particularly important when applying for jobs-it helps you make career choices, gives you something concrete to say about yourself in applications/interviews, and to find a job that is right for you.

Development activities, new strategies:

When you know what you want to develop, there are usually many ways of going about this. Generally no one approach is best- the approach depends on what you want to develop. What is important however, is that you plan your development carefully, set yourself small manageable targets and check your progress against them regularly.

Areas for development or weaknesses:

 As well as showing us your strengths, self-awareness can identify area you may want to develop. These areas may be related to academic abilities, skills such as planning and time management, or personal characteristics such as how you work as part of a team or deal with difficult situations.

Values and the Values-based indicator of Motivation model

Overview

Why do people do what they do? Why do some people put in an enormous effort far beyond the call of duty? What are people willing to stand up for? The answers to these questions are determined by a person's fundamental values. Values are the key to understanding people's energy and motivation. When you understand your values you can unlock the "what, where, when and why" of your actions.

Detailed outline of the Values-based indicator of Motivation model

Group Heading	Scale	Quick definition
WHAT I WANT FOR MYSELF (Individual satisfaction)	Reward	Seeks wealth and the symbols of success.
	Fame	Seeks 'visibility' and wants to be in the public eye.
	Wellbeing	Seeks health and mental wellbeing.
	Excitement	Seeks fun, pleasure, spontaneity and immediate reward.
	Change	Values change and progress and willing to take risks.
	Conceptual	Seeks the opportunity to make an intellectual/creative difference.
WHAT I WANT TO BECOME (Individual meaning)	Personal growth	Values personal development, growth & being up-to-date.
	Career progression	Values careers orientation and is ambitious to achieve.
	Influence	Values leading, influencing and providing direction.
	Legacy	Values prestige or meaningful recognition for work well done.
	Wisdom	Values experience bringing new perspective with acceptance & humility.
	Transcendence	Values non-material and spiritual things.
WHAT I WANT FROM OTHERS (Group satisfaction)	Social contact	Seeks the company and support of others.
	Integrity	Seeks fair, honest and authentic interactions based on principles.
	Connection	Seeks to share emotional life and values in close 1-2-1 relationships.
	Openness	Seeks to develop trust through openness and honesty.
	Collaboration	Seeks participation based on agreement & joint decision making.
	Inclusion	Seeks to join, be included, grow roots and build community.
WHAT I WANT FROM SOCIETY (Group meaning)	Altruism	Values a caring, relational and 'giving' society.
	Tradition	Values the contribution, sacrifice & rituals of the past.
	Culture	Seeks cultural expression in diverse forms
	Harmony	Values group cohesion and avoids conflict.
	Libertarian	Values free will and the rights of people to express themselves.
	Accountability	Values a society where people are responsible for their choices.

How understanding your values can help you

An understanding of values can play a significant role in many areas in your life including your career decisions. Values are the key to understanding people's energy and motivation. If you are working in a role and organisation that fits well with your own personal values you are much more likely to excel in the role and to find career satisfaction. By identifying your values you will have an insight into what you want for yourself and what you want to become, allowing you to make a much more informed choice on your career.

Using your results

Knowing more about your values is central to developing self-awareness. Complete the Values based Indicator of Motivation to gain insight into what you want for yourself; what you want to become; what you want from others; what you want from society. Remember this is only a starting point for further exploration and clarification. Use MyCareer to book the Next Step appointment with your Careers Consultant to review your report.

Personality and Type Dynamics Indicator (TDI) personality type questionnaire

Overview

Our personality influences how we do things – how we interact with others, plan our work, use our leisure time and tackle problems to name but a few. Because of its wide-ranging impact, understanding personality is central to our self-awareness and development.

We are all unique individuals because of our personality. At the same time, we all share certain characteristics with other people. Theories of personality tend to describe what is common between people. Personality assessments then describe how individuals vary along these common dimensions.

The personality questionnaire available through this site – the Type Dynamics Indicator (TDI) – looks at your preferences or how you are likely to react and behave in different circumstances. It is based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung, whose theories are behind the most widely used personality assessments in the world.

How understanding your personality can help you

Employers want you to have a range of skills in addition to your academic qualifications.

They will differ in what they look for, but the following are likely to be high on their list:

team-working	adaptability
communication skills	creativity
decision-making	learning
ability to influence others	problem-solving
leadership	motivation
interpersonal skills	

Your personality will impact on all of these areas. Understanding more about your personality will help you to recognise the ways in which you are likely to approach different situations and those where you might have to change your preferences to work more effectively.

It is important to remember that personality assessments look at how you typically behave or what your usual preferences are. When necessary we can all change our behaviour; this may just take a little work and conscious effort.

Using your results

Knowing more about your personality is central to developing self-awareness. When you have completed the Type Dynamics Indicator, here are just some of the things you can do to help your personal and career development.

- *Finding your 'true' type:*
    - Read the report carefully and consider how accurately it describes you
    - Look at the other personality descriptions that are 'close' to yours and see how they fit – the report from the questionnaire is a 'best guess' as to your preferred style and should be challenged if you do not agree with it
- *CVs and job applications:*
    - Use the report when writing your CV and application forms to highlight specific aspects of your style in different areas – this gives you something 'concrete' to say about yourself and differentiates you from others

- o Similar to the previous point, think about how your report can help you in interviews to talk about specific aspects of the job or areas such as team-working and leadership
- *Personal development:*
    - o When interacting with others, explore how your preferences come across – how can you make the most of your strengths and also deal with areas that come less naturally?
    - o Sometimes we have to work outside of our preferences – identify areas where it could be useful to behave in different ways and try practising these in 'safe' situations (e.g. with friends or family).

Aptitude tests

Overview

The aptitude tests available here can be used to help you:

- understand more about your strengths and how these might shape your career and personal choices
- practise and improve your test taking skills.

Tests like these are widely used by employers for both selection and staff development. They are particularly useful because they:

- give everyone an equal opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities
- show employers how you are likely to perform in a job, particularly if you have no previous experience of that job
- give you feedback as to whether you have the right aptitudes for the work you are considering.

Details of the tests

The tests, known as 'Reasoning Skills Tests', available through this site are:

- **Verbal** reasoning test – assesses your ability to understand written material and work out what logically follows from what you have read.

- **Numerical** reasoning test – assesses your ability to solve problems using numbers.

- **Abstract reasoning test** – assesses your ability to find patterns and links between groups of shapes, and seeing where new shapes fit in. This ability is helpful to generating new ideas, creative thinking and problem-solving.

Tips for taking aptitude tests

The aptitude tests look at your ability to work quickly and accurately under timed conditions. To do your best you will need to:

- Take the tests in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.

- Allow between 20 and 25 minutes for each test.

- Have some scrap paper to make notes or do any calculations, but you should not use calculators.

- Try to remain motivated throughout the test and do your best – the more you put in, the more accurate your results will be and the more you will get out of the experience.

Understanding your results

The aptitude test reports contain information about how to interpret your scores. To put your scores into context they are compared against a large group of people who have previously taken the test.

You can use the results from the aptitude tests in a number of ways.

A) Practise for taking the type of tests employers use in their recruitment processes

- There is no better preparation than taking tests under timed conditions
- The Reasoning Skills Tests reports have tips for how you can improve your test taking skills
- Read the report carefully and practise some of the abilities suggested
- Take the tests again after a few months and try to apply what you have learnt.

B) Careers guidance

- Knowledge of your own abilities is important for making career decisions as you are generally happier doing what you are good at
- The Reasoning Tests may show you to have abilities outside of your direct course of study – think about how you could apply these
- You could decide to work on developing any areas the Reasoning Tests have shown you are less strong on – particularly those that may be important for careers you want to work in.

Learning styles

Have you ever wondered why some lectures really grab your interest and others leave you cold? How interested you are in the subject will obviously play a part, but learning styles are just as important.

Learning is often described as a cycle. Many popular models have described four stages or preferences in this cycle.

Clarifiers are at their most natural when having time to reflect on what has happened, what others did and how they experienced it. They contribute by recalling a lot of information and detail, asking questions about what was done, and encouraging others to be patient and reflect on their experiences.

Creators are at their most natural when using their experience to bring new understanding and seeing the wider implications of their experiences. They are creative and can see the 'big picture', bring clarity to complex and ambiguous situations and can reframe problems and ideas to make them more accessible to others.

Activators are at their most natural when learning through practical concrete activity. They contribute through making situations as active and practical as possible, finding ways to make concrete progress, getting stuck in and 'doing', turning ideas and plans into action.

Explorers are at their most natural when taking ideas and experiences and turning them into plans for action and delivery. They are good at providing general ideas (although not always practical ways of doing things), bringing in new ideas and angles that may have been overlooked and picking up on any last-minute changes.

Theories of learning styles are based on the belief that people differ in how comfortable they are with different stages of the learning process. Put simply, different people learn in different ways.

Understand your learning style

The theory of learning styles tells us that learning will be maximised when the way in which we are taught matches our preferred style. When learning experiences do not match our preferred style we find learning more difficult or incomplete.
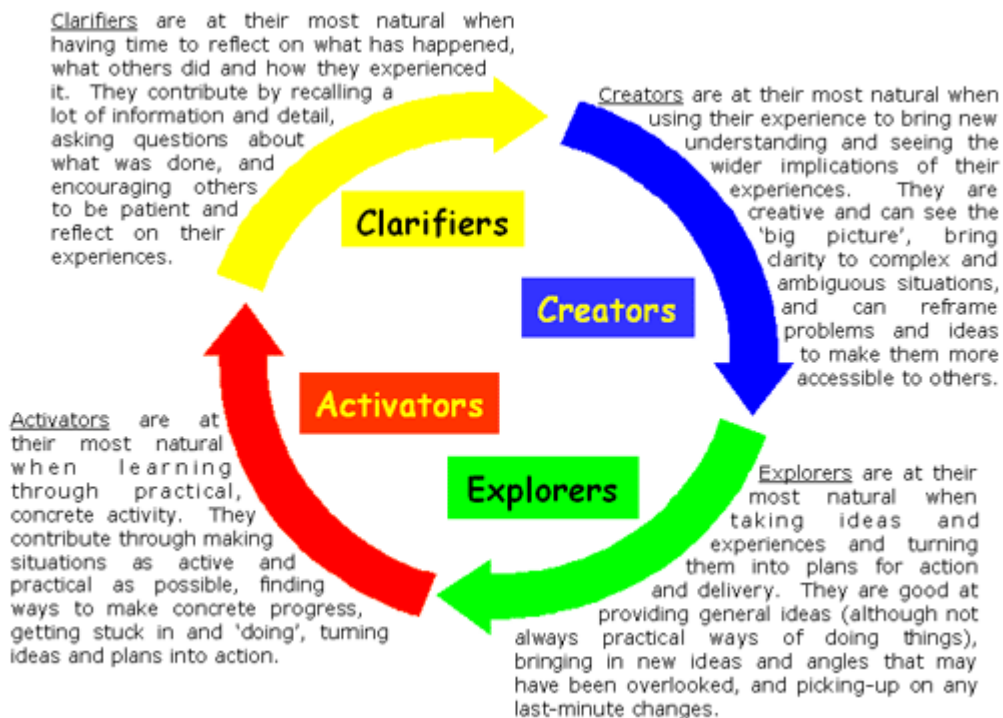Understanding your learning styles therefore helps you to:

- Recognise the 'style' of different learning situations
- Maximise learning when your preferred style matches the learning environment
- Recognise learning environments that you may find difficult
- Develop strategies to help deal with difficult learning environments
- Shape your personal learning environments and strategies to make learning most effective

Inform how you work with others

Learning is an essential part of most modern jobs. Learning styles therefore tells us something very important about how we approach work and how we work with others with different styles. Remember, the ability to work constructively with others is a skill valued very highly by most employers.

Become a more effective learner

Here is the learning cycle again. Look at the different learning styles to find out what environments each type of learner is likely to find more difficult and see a few tips for dealing with these.

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Creators are at their most natural when using their experience to bring new understanding and seeing the wider implications of their experiences. They are creative and can see the 'big picture', bring clarity to complex and ambiguous situations, and can reframe problems and ideas to make them more accessible to others.

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Explorers are at their most natural when taking ideas and experiences and turning them into plans for action and delivery. They are good at providing general ideas (although not always practical ways of doing things), bringing in new ideas and angles that may have been overlooked, and picking-up on any last-minute changes.

Developing your style of learning to cope with different environments takes time and effort, but is an essential skill for both your academic study and career development. Try the following:

- Identify the 'style' of different learning environments you experience
- Work on the development suggestions in the learning styles reports
- When starting new learning tasks, think about what styles will be most productive – don't just use your preferred style
- When working in groups, think about how each person contributes in terms of their learning style
- Think about your learning style in group tasks – what effect does this have on others?

Support

The assessments and your data

- All of the assessments on this site have been developed by experienced business psychologists "Team Focus" and conform to the British Psychological Society's guidelines for best practice.
- Personal information is used only for generating your personalised report and for data monitoring purposes. All information is stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- The assessments are regularly updated and background information that respondents supply (age, sex, ethnicity) is used to ensure that the assessments are fair to all those that take them.

Feedback and further advice

- Careers Consultants can support you when taking and interpreting a range of psychometric assessments. If you would like to discuss the results of your assessments with your Career Consultant, please make an appointment via MyCareer.

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