16 PF Newsletter

February 2002

Number 31

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Your committee have been mulling over the many responses received to the questionnaire. Joint chairperson Jane Wilkinson summarises the results.

The last Newsletter contained a Questionnaire asking for the opinions of members about various aspects of the 16PF Users group and we were very encouraged by the many carefully completed responses we received. Our thanks to all members who completed questionnaires. We will try to ensure that as many of your ideas as possible are included in our future plans.

In answer to the question “What do you want to get out of belonging to the Users Group?”, most people agreed that increasing their knowledge and understanding of the 16PF itself was most important. They also, though, want to learn about other psychometric instruments, both in their own right and in terms of their links with the 16PF. Several people also mentioned that our meetings provide a useful forum for networking and “the opportunity to share ideas with like-minded professionals”.

Most respondents stated that they choose to attend meetings when they are particularly interested in the subject and/or the speaker/s. A challenge therefore is for us on the committee to arrange programmes that excite this sort of interest, as there were also several comments from independent consultants about the difficulty of taking a “day off” from fee-earning work in order to attend meetings.

We asked you for ideas about next year’s programme and generally it seems that you want “more of the same”, with a mix of 16PF (lots of comments about individual factors and factor combinations) and other instruments (MBTI, FIRO B and NEO specifically mentioned) and also a mix between “academic and practical stuff”. There was a suggestion that we look in detail at some of the general psychometric test issues such as possible discrimination cases and the tightening legal scene and also an interesting idea that we should look at how the 16PF can help in measuring characteristics not directly tested, such as spirituality, honesty, sincerity etc. Proposals for future speakers included, not surprisingly, several mentions for Wendy Lord plus also Roy Chicks and Stephen Booy. Watch this space!

There was a generally very positive response to the idea that we allocate time in some afternoon sessions for practical discussions around 16PF profiles including unusual or difficult ones, and as you will see, we have built this into the programme for February’s meeting. It would be great to hear from any of you who would like to contribute profiles to this or future sessions. Having done this myself in the past, I know how helpful it can be to have the group (consisting as it does of lots of very experienced practitioners) look at and discuss profiles that have seemed particularly tricky either to interpret or to feedback.

Regarding practical aspects of the group’s meetings, we received a few comments about the London location (“Can we have one meeting a year in Birmingham?”) and a suggestion that we start later to fit in with train journeys. It was good that three people expressed their appreciation of the “excellent value” of meetings but there was also a request that we improve communications about future meetings including making more use of email. The specific questions about using email for correspondence and the newsletter did, however, get a mixed response with a third of respondents definitely not wanting to do so.

One comment we felt we should take very seriously was from a member who, as an infrequent attender of meetings, has sometimes felt like an outsider because the majority of people appear to know each other well.

All in all, a worthwhile and interesting exercise that enables us to know what you think about the group. The general theme of the responses did seem to be a real desire to continue to be a 16PF Users Group with everything that that title implies. We will do our best to fulfil that desire in the coming months.

By the way, consultation doesn’t stop here. If you have any comments or ideas about these topics or any others please do get in contact with Belinda or me. We’ll be really interested to hear from you.

Jane Wilkinson
Joint Chairperson

COGNITIVE PROCESS PROFILE

Those who were able to come to the November meeting heard ASE’s presentation on the CPP. Helen Bradley described it as the most exciting development in psychometric testing for years. The audience was equally intrigued ...

Earlier last year ASE launched into the UK marketplace what we believe to be a paradigm shift in the psychometric assessment of individuals. The Cognitive Process Profile is a computer-based assessment that helps individuals to understand their preferred style of thinking along with an insight into the level of complexity they can handle (in both quality and quantity). The assessment is the brainchild of a South African neuropsychologist, Dr Maretha Prinsloo who

VENUE - The Naval Club, 38 Hill St Mayfair, W1

1. 7th February - On-line Testing/AGM/Difficult Profiles
2. 10th April - NLP (proposed) & Personality Research
3. 20th June Wendy Lord - Beck Depression Inventory
4. 1st October TBA

Discussion of ‘difficult profiles’ in pm as often as possible.
wanted to develop an assessment that would overcome the cultural issues inherent in her country and demonstrate 'true' potential in individuals who may have only had up to 5 years schooling compared to the UK standard 11 years.

Psychologists and educationalists have long been aware that how people think and learn is very important. However we have been using forms of assessment of intellectual potential that have allowed the test taker to demonstrate reasoning potential but have not shown us how they have gone about solving the problem. CPP sits in between the BPS categorisation of tests of maximum intellectual performance v. typical behaviour as it assesses an individual's thinking and learning capacity in an non-time pressured environment where there is literally no right or wrong answer. Each response is as valid as the next - its influence on the interpretation will differ.

"A VAST ARRAY OF DATA CAN BE ANALYSED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS"

Initially the CPP was developed as a 'card sort' game requiring the concentration of a specially trained psychologist to act as an observer and note all movements made by an individual. As computer technology has now advanced, the CPP is entirely computer-based (both the administration and report generation), taking away any potential biases inherent in conversation rules and allowing the vast array of data collected to be analysed in a number of ways.

A trained administrator gives the individual sitting the CPP a very limited set of instructions and then the computer takes over. Joe, the voice over, talks one through instructions that are visually represented on the screen. Individuals work at their own pace and learn to make various moves with the cards - turning them to see what information is on the back (words or information), moving them on the screen and getting rid of irrelevant cards. It is these movements that are used to interpret how someone approaches novel or unusual problem solving situations.

The computer displays 8 series of symbols that must be interpreted to create a 'story' by moving cards around the screen. When they have finished each story they are asked to write down their interpretation of that story in a sentence or a few sentences. This along with the mouse movements and time delays are all integral parts of the interpretation.

"THE BLACK BOX OF THE MIND"

The outcome from the CPP is a means of observing what is happening inside the black box of the mind through the examination of how individuals explore new information, analyse, structure, and reason. An assessment is also made of their use of concepts, memory strategies and ability to incorporate new learning.

The report covers a range of areas: -

- The strongest style(s) used by the individual to solve this novel or unusual problem (these are not necessarily the styles used when in your comfort zone). There are 15 different styles ranging from logical, analytical, memory and structured (typically left brain type approaches) through to metaphoric, holistic, and impulsive (typically right brain type approachable).
- It also shows the current and potential level of functioning in five levels of work (based on the model from work by Elliot Jacques), from purely operational to strategic, giving you an insight into future capability of an individual.
- The final pages of the report show the individual's strengths, development areas and goodness of fit for job requirements.
- CPP has a wide range of applications from individual assessment for coaching, selection and development through to talent spotting, leadership assessment and team building. For more information please contact ASE's Customer Services on 01753 850333.

Helen Bradley is with ASE

TYPE AND TRAIT

The results of our survey of group members confirmed that our members are very interested in other psychometric tests, and how they relate to 16PF. Hugh McCredie's contribution on the MBTI is therefore timely.

A couple of months ago I joined an itinerant band conducting graduate interviews for a prestigious fast moving consumer goods manufacturer. Every day my colleagues and I each undertake several, hour-and-a-quarter-long structured interview sessions before driving 130 miles to our next destination. We survived the week by sharing each other's company in hotel corridors and landings during the first fifteen minutes of each session when the candidates were working on case material and also sharing cars and driving between venues. In this situation we got to know each other quite well, fairly quickly.

"I DON'T SEE YOu AS AN ENTJ"

During the second evening's journey, the conversation in the car centred on our experiences of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). In this dialogue I disclosed that I was a clear Extraverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Judging type (ENTJ). This revelation passed without much comment at the time. However, on our last evening journey one of the group, who was particularly respected for her astute assessment of candidates, said I just don't see you as an ENTJ, you have all the appearances of an Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving type (INFP).

My colleague's comments caused me to reflect. I first undertook the MBTI® more than ten years ago and have never seriously challenged the findings. Moreover, when I look at the descriptions of the adjacent types in the matrix, I generally conclude that ENTJ is as good a fit as any. However, like the observer, I am aware that there are bits of me that are decidedly not Extrovert, Thinking or Judging. Accordingly, I decided to remind myself of what 16PF (Form A) primary trait scales correlate with MBTI® dimensions and then to see whether there were any incongruities with my own trait scores that might explain my slight discomfort with the E, T and J categorisations.

The 1995 MBTI® Manual gives the strongest correlations between 16PF primaries and MBTI Primary dimensions as follows (decimal points are omitted):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MBTI Primary</th>
<th>16PF Primary</th>
<th>MBTI Primary</th>
<th>16PF Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>H+(76); F+(59); A+(43); G+(32)</td>
<td>Introversion</td>
<td>Q+(52); O+(33); Q+(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>O+(40)</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>I+(67); A+(31); Q+(33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>G+(47); O+(41)</td>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>F+(54); I+(33); E+(32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I looked at my own ten scores against the 16PF primaries correlating with Extraversion, I found directional correspondence on all counts. However, I also found a match with O+ which is the principal correlate of Introversion. Moreover, I recognise the introversionist tendency associated with O+ as part of my make-up. Particularly when running residential courses, I need to escape to my room at the end of the day to read or listen to the radio before turning in for the night.

The MBTI® Thinking dimension enjoys strong positive support from only one 16PF primary, O+, but on closer inspection of the data there is also weak support from C+, E+, G+, L+, N+. Q+ and Q+ of which I share in all but G+. So my categorisation as a Thinker seems appropriate. On the other hand, I also have high scores for both I+ and A+ that are associated with the Feeling type. I have been conscious on many occasions of having to 'manage' these tendencies during the course of a long career in the hard-nosed environment of heavy industry.
The Judging/Perceiving dichotomy is, for me, possibly the most interesting aspect of the comparison. I have a very high Judging score and for years I was the most Judging person that I had tested. My more spontaneous Perceiving associates would groan as I painstakingly struggled through detailed checklists before every course we ran.

THE PARADOX

However, my 16PF shows only 5 for G with positive scores for all of the Perceiving primaries. My explanation for this paradox is that most of my Judging behaviour is what the psychodynamic movement would call a 'reaction formation'. In other words, I am so concerned at the consequences of strong Judging tendencies that I have developed pre-emptive habits to combat them. A more mundane explanation would be that the cultures in which I have worked are those that reinforce Judging behaviours. This is to beg the question as to how far the J/P dichotomy is related to the person and how much to the environment.

So what does all of this suggest about type versus trait? I am happy with my ENJU typing as derived from MBTI® because I believe that it provides an accurate capsule description of a person whom I can recognise as myself. It is certainly better than the other 15 descriptions on offer. On the other hand, both the Type description and the four dimensional labels (which have some match with 16PF Global Factors) seem to smooth out some very important aspects of the person that I believe is me. I suggest that we need both type and traits. We need the former to give us some overall perspective, as we can’t hold data on 16 variables in our head at the same time. However, we also need to know the strongest trait scores in order to appreciate what is distinctive about the person whom we are considering. 16PF offers both types of information with its Global and Primary Factors, as does the most recent expanded version of MBTI®.

Hugh McCredie is Managing Consultant, Coordinates

Letter to the Editor

Gosh! Really?

It is regrettable that the Newsletter decided to descend to the level of the tabloids in this short piece. I do not defend the ludicrous comments apparently made by graphologists to The Times and other media any more than I (or you, no doubt) would defend some of the comments by populist psychologists on various topics.

Equally, as a B+. individual, you will probably subscribe to the notion that no method of assessment can tell us everything about a person (or always be accurate, as has been amply demonstrated in previous issues of the Newsletter).

Graphology, like psychometric assessment, can give valuable insights into one of the factors that affect behaviour. Because each of these two methods approaches personality from a different perspective they provide complimentary views. Used properly (and each is capable of being abused) they provide useful hypotheses for discussion with the individual so as to help people fulfil their potential.

Yours sincerely,
Lawrence Warner
The Personality Assessment Consultancy
Bath

For readers that missed the original piece, it referred to a graphologist’s facile assessment of the personalities of bin Laden and George Bush, going soley on their published signatures (bin Laden was described as a ‘worried man with a lot on his mind’ and Bush as being ‘determined’. As Lawrence Warner says, their comments appeared ludicrous. My incredulity was directed as much to The Times in publishing such a piece as it was to the writer. Some years ago, Lawrence addressed the User Group on the subject of graphology, and its linkage with 16PF personality traits. As a result of the above, Lawrence offered to analyse my handwriting which I found to be very revealing. Modesty (and The Data Protection Act) forbids me to give you the details.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

In the second article on creativity and innovation, we look at some further aspects that have intrigued and puzzled psychologists. Almost every organisation states that creativity is vital for survival. So why do they kill it?

In the October issue, we referred to Patterson’s Innovation Potential Indicator in which she isolated some of the characteristics thought to be critical to innovation. We then contrasted some aspects of creativity and innovation - on the one hand artistic achievements in music, painting and writing, (more people’s idea of creativity) and on the other scientific and technological advances achieved through applying creative thinking to solve problems. In this issue, we look briefly at other tests of creativity, and at some of the factors that might inhibit its development in the workplace.

RESEARCH INTO CREATIVITY

Psychologists appear to have developed interest in creativity only during the last fifty years or so. One writer, analysing, in Psychology Abstracts, the number of psychology-based articles which referred to creativity over the period 1975 - 1984, and found that the number represented just 0.5% of the total number of articles published. Up until 1930 the figure was just 0.2%. It is interesting to ponder why this might be so. One might conjecture that there were more important topics to engage the mind of the psychologist, such as motivation at work, and other issues that arose out of the ‘human relations’ school of management thinking. Other branches of psychology would also have made demands - social, educational, clinical and even sport psychology, to name just four.

But perhaps one of the main reasons concerns the nature of creativity itself. It was most likely to be seen as something ephemeral, a quality not capable of being pinned down with any precision. Psychology is most definitely a science but not an exact science, and it has often been criticised on these grounds, so perhaps psychologists tended to steer away from describing something that appeared to be as elusive as trying to find the end of the Scylla. They tended to concentrate on behaviourism and stimulus - response theories because these were capable of measurement. Creativity has been seen as something rather mysterious, even mystical, with implications of divine intervention. Sternberg and Lubart (1999) quote Rudyard Kipling referring to the daemon that lives in the writer’s pen, “My daemon was with me in the Jungle books, Kim, and both Puck books, and good care I took to walk delicately lest he should withdraw. When your daemon is in charge, do not think consciously. Drift, wait, and obey.” The popular writer Stan Barstow said something similar many years ago. He described writing as “something mysterious that flows down your right arm and into your pen”.

TESTS OF CREATIVITY

Guilford made the point that highly creative people such as Michelangelo and Einstein are so rare that it has limited the study of creativity. He went on to encourage the use of paper and pencil tests on everyday people using a psychometric approach. The Unusual Uses Test quickly followed, in which the subject was asked to think of as many uses for a specific object as possible. Other researchers followed this line and the ‘divergent thinking’ was the result. (Even today, nearly half a century later, creativity workshops often contain an item such as ‘how many uses can you think of for a paper clip’.)
TORRANCE TESTS OF CREATIVITY

In the early 1970s E.P. Torrance developed the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. These consisted of simple verbal and figural tasks that required divergent thinking and other problem-solving skills. Total scores took account of the number of relevant responses, the variety of such responses, originality and elaboration. Although this encouraged further research, the tests were criticised for being trivial and inadequate and failing to capture the real spirit of creativity. Torrance hoped to demonstrate a link between creativity and intelligence but was able to obtain a correlation of only 0.17 from his tests. In later tests he and Guilford concluded that it was the application of creativity that was important, and this results in what we now refer to as innovation.

More recently, some researchers have come round to the view that tests of creativity are an unreliable indicator as to who might be innovative in the workplace. A test is invariably timed. In other words, the pressure is on the subject. In the real work situation, would the subject necessarily be the most innovative? So perhaps a better measure of creativity is that which a person can demonstrate on a day-to-day basis.

There can hardly be a reader who has not at some point heard a manager enthuse about the need for creativity in his organisation. But few give any thought to the conditions that might encourage or discourage creativity.

Here’s a little test:

- Who discovered the circulation of the blood?
- Who invented the decimal system?
- Who invented the parachute?
- Who invented cast iron?
- Who discovered and utilised water power?
- Who invented the suspension bridge?
- Who invented paper?
- Who invented gunpowder?

The answer in all cases is the Chinese. Not only did they invent them, but they invented them hundreds of years, and in some cases, thousands of years before we in the West.

So what happened? The theory is that from around 3rd century BC the king or emperor governed with the aid of a bureaucracy. Temple says initially, bureaucracy helped science to grow, but in its later stages, it forcibly inhibited growth and prevented the breakthrough that occurred in Europe.

REWARDS OR RECOGNITION?

If creativity and innovation in the workplace were to flourish therefore, management style would seem to be an important factor. Amabile’s research indicates that where there is more control, certainly in the early stages of a project, the effect on creativity and innovation is detrimental. Where there is less control, it seems that innovation is more likely to flourish.

Why do so many managers appear to be averse to creativity? It gets killed more often than it is supported, says Amabile (1993). What is it about novel ideas that seem to invoke antipathy long before congratulations? The history of scientific discovery is littered with examples of original ideas that have been rejected long before any acceptance was gained. Bayliss’s clockwork radio was rejected by every organisation he contacted in the UK. It was eventually manufactured in South Africa. Perhaps there is something in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s comment: “Mediocritv recognises nothing higher than itself: it takes talent to recognise genius.” And yet, as mentioned in the introduction, we are constantly told that innovation and creativity are essential to our industrial survival. Who’s kidding here? We must prevent the phrase from becoming just another hollow mantra of top management, to be viewed in the same category as “People are our greatest asset.” Both statements are true, and both have been devalued in the hard realism of the workplace.

David Roberts

Adapted from a forthcoming book How to Manage Creative People

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SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL

The Editor welcomes contributions from members either as letters or as articles on the use of the 16PF. Case histories, unusual assignments, as well as unusual profiles are welcome.

When submitting material, please enclose a 3½" disk together with the printed copy. This saves re-typing and minimises the risk of mistakes.

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