Teacher Personality Characteristics in Instrumental Music Education Majors

David W. Snyder, DME, Professor of Music Education
Illinois State University

ABSTRACT

This poster presents data from a 6 year study of undergraduate students at Illinois State University. Specifically, personality type as it relates to major preference and attrition within the music education degree program was explored. Personality types as determined by the Myers-Briggs Personality Type (MBTI) test were collected on 285 undergraduate students.
The number of students leaving the program over a 4 year period was then tracked. A Chi-square (2x2 contingency table design) was used to look for significant differences in drop out rates as it relates to the four bi-modal personality characteristics: Extroversion/Introversion, Intuitive/Sensing, Thinking/Feeling and Judging/Perceiving. Results showed a significantly higher rate of drop out for those students being categorized as Introverts (p<.05). It was also found that the personality type ENFJ comprised about 30% of the undergraduate music education population consistently from year to year. This is of importance because only about 2.4% of the population of the US as a whole is classified as ENFJ and teaching is often chosen by ENFJ's as a career.

CONTACT

David W. Snyder
Illinois State University
Email: dsnyder@ilstu.edu
Phone: 309-438-5222
Website:
www.cfa.ilstu.edu/dsnyder/news

INTRODUCTION

Personality, as it relates to various aspects of teaching, has been a topic of interest to many researchers in the education profession. Many researchers, Pigge (1995), Lanning (1990), Wubbenhorst (1992) and Phillips(1997) have used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to determine personality type. Myers-Briggs uses four dichotomies to represent a personality type: Extrovert/Introvert, Sensing/iNtuitive, Feeling/Thinking and Judging/Perceiving.

MacLellan (2011) found that high school band, choir, orchestra students are more likely to be extroverts, intuitives and sensing. She also states that between 73% to 65% students tended to be perceivers. In addition, Uhl (1981) looked at attrition and student personality type amongst all college students and found 85% of music education majors to be Feeling (F) types.

Lanning (1990) used the Myers-Briggs test to look at music majors at select Oklahoma universities and found ENFP to be most common personality type among male (17%) and female (14%) music education students. Steele (2008) found ENFP and ENFJ types to be the most prevalent among both music education and music therapy majors. Wubbenhorst (1992) also found ENFP and ENFJ to be the dominant types for music education majors.

It was my intent in this study to build on the research already done on personality type and major preference and further look at how personality type affects attrition rates.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Students enrolled in an Introduction to Music Education course (N=285) between 2006-2011 were asked to complete an on-line version of the MBTI. Student's personality types were determined and recorded. Enrollment within the music education degree sequence was checked at the end of each academic year through the enrollment and student services office within the School of Music.

Personality types of the MBTI were compared against national norms and then attrition rate trends were compared among the four dichotomies (E/I, N/S, T/F and J/P) within the MBTI.

RESULTS

Fischer Chi Square using a 2x2 contingency table revealed a significant difference between Extroverts and Introverts in attrition rates when looking at students who had completed the program (2006-2009).

	remained	dropped	Total
E's	95	31	126
I's	39	23	62
Total	134	54	188

Fischer's exact test, one-tailed P value: 0.0549

The chart below shows the number of students classified by each personality type, the percentage they represent for the sample and the percentage that dropped out.

Types	Observed	% of sample	% that dropped
ENFJ	87	31%	23%
ESFJ	46	16%	26%
INFJ	42	15%	31%
ENTJ	25	9%	32%
INTJ	14	5%	36%
ISFJ	14	5%	29%
ISTJ	13	4.5%	23%
INFP	8	3%	75%
ESFP	8	3%	38%
ENFP	8	3%	38%
ESTJ	6	2%	33%
ISFP	4	1%	25%
ENTP	2	.5%	0
ESTP	1	.3%	0
ISTP	1	.3%	0
INTP	1	.33%	0
Unknown	5	1%	100%
Total N	**285**		

ENFJ's have strong organizational capabilities

ENFJ's get personal satisfaction from helping others

DISCUSSION

1. A significantly higher proportion of the students in this longitudinal study were ENFJ's (approx. 30%). ENFJ's comprise only 2-3% of the general US population. ENFJ's are also well suited for and often choose teaching as a career.
2. Students who were classified as **Introverts** had a higher risk of dropping out of the program before graduation. The reasons for leaving the program were not tracked.
3. The vast majority of the subjects (87%) were classified as J's. J's desire closure in the decision making process.
3. The percentage of drop outs was much higher for P's than their counterpart J's but not significantly so. The number of students entering the program who were P's was also very small (N=33).

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