The Influence of Myers-Briggs Personality Types on Blended Technologies Employed in Second Classroom

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Abstract
This paper briefly introduced different perception styles and learning preferentiality based on Myers-Briggs Type personality types and how instructors employ relative blended technologies to second language classroom to cultivate effective learning environment and positive attitudes and towards language learning.

Key words: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; Blended technologies; Language learning; Second language classrooms

INTRODUCTION
Nowadays, motivated by the possibility of creating rich and engaging learning environment, second language classrooms have long been encouraged to adopt blended technologies in their programmes and are being urged to move them from the periphery to the core of language programmes (O’Dowd, 2010). On the whole, universities have made massive investments in educational technologies over the last decades. Smart classroom, wireless networks and fully featured LMS facilities are available at many institutes that have made blended approaches truly viable. Nonetheless, many language instructors struggle to integrate appropriate technologies for a classroom containing different personality types of learners. Appropriate individual-oriented application of blended technologies would promote the whole language learning process.

Considering personality types in second language learning assists researchers and instructors to understand learners’ preferences and design relative teaching pedagogy in second language classroom to achieve the best teaching effect. Instructors will find it handy to design curriculums or activities while they interpret the personality type of each learner.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is an installment widely used to help people discover the way they tend to receive information, make decisions and relate to people. It identifies preferences in four areas: Extroversion vs. Introversion, Sensing vs. Intuition, Thinking vs. Feeling and Judging vs. Perceiving. We all have specific preferences in the way we construe our experiences, and these preferences underlie our interests, needs, values, motivation and perceptual learning. A principled selection of blended technologies with the guide of MBTI will no doubt facilitate the second language classroom.

1. APPROPRIATE BLENDED TECHNOLOGIES FOR MBTI

1.1 Extroversion vs. Introversion
1.1.1 Extroverts
Extroverts value interaction and communication the most. They are usually energized by being with people and interacting with them, and can often think best if they can talk over their ideas with other people.

Learning would be far more effective if extroverts interact with others and are physically engaged in the concrete environment. Willing to take conversational risks and needing talking to work out and organize their thoughts, they often behave best if they can talk over their
ideas in group work and consequently, sometimes find listening difficult. They tend to plunge into new material, act first and think later. Thus, tasks like reading, research, and writing may be challenging for them, while studying with a friend or pretending to be lecturers would stimulate more inspiration and efficiency. It is suggested allotting extroverts more time to communicative activities, such as group discussions, or working with another student. Activities with visible results would be favorable.

Communicative action technologies enable learners to interact with others, given that discussion is the key learner action (Laurillard, 2002). Paired and small group conversation with learners seated or standing in a classroom is a common technology for oral communication classes. In writing classes, pre-writing tasks can involve pair brainstorming of ideas and post-writing tasks may include comments and questions about the writing.

Communicative actions can come to the fore with technologies that include, for example, in online discussion forums, conversations in small groups and video link exchanges with learners in another country (Fotos, 2004). In face-to-face situations, communicative dimensions can be encouraged through fast-pair switching (Hinkelmann, 1996), conversational shadowing (Murphey, 2001) or carouselling (Bainbridge & O’Shea, 2010).

### 1.1.2 Introverts

Introverts are typically more reserved or reflective. They think better and internalize information more readily in self-studying and are easily overwhelmed by too much stimulation from social gatherings and engagement. Internal processing and reflection would be necessary before they talk to others. They think well when they work alone and are more analytical before speaking.

Introverted learners tend to enjoy reading, lectures, and written over oral work independently, listening to others talking about a topic while privately processing the information, and reasoning in a verbal fashion. They often feel uncomfortable in group or pair activities like discussion and talking. Anxiety may also arise when they encounter with instructors who speak quickly without allowing time for mental processing or the linguistic risk in a conversation. Cultivated in traditional culture and education, most of Chinese learners belong to introverts. When instructors organize group-work activities, Chinese learners excel when they can work independently with their own thoughts, through listening, observing, reading, writing, and independent lab work.

Instructors may employ blended technologies with interactive properties. The interactive actions include choral drills, quizzes and web information searches with fill-in-the-blank sentences, etc., permitting learners to ‘navigate and select content at will’ (Laurillard, 2002) in both texts and contexts. Instructors highlight the interactive action of technologies when they, for example, direct learners to use libraries or self-access centers, search the internet, respond to quizzes or complete problem-solving exercises. For Laurillard, questioning is the focal teacher action, and inquiry is the key learner action. Using computers for study and review will be positive for its providing sufficient time for introverts to complete their work and to think before answering a question and avoid asking them to speak in class but assign them supporting work.

Suggestions for effective language learning encourage interaction. Willis and Willis (2007), for example, set out exercises such as ‘corrupted text’ and ‘prediction’; other list numerous interactive, face-to-face examples, such as jumbled or cloze tasks for solitary study using printed/audio text, or a worksheet quiz (Brown, 2007) that can be adapted for online use (Blake, 2000). Chants and other forms of choral practice (Cook, 2008) can be seen as a technology that prompts interaction within a large group. A blended version of a chant uses prompts such as printed texts or words displayed on a screen or black board. Then individually, learners can further practice when a teacher integrates the chant into an online quiz with audio clips and cloze words to listen for.

### 1.2 Sensing vs. Intuition

#### 1.2.1 Sensing

Concrete facts, organization, and structure would be helpful for sensing (for concrete-sequential) type learners. Starting with the familiar, solid facts, they can gradually move toward abstract concepts and principles and tend to make in information in a sequential way. Sensing learners like specifics—They ask who, what, when, where—but have difficulty with theory disorganized and sophisticated situations. Thus, narrative actions of blended technologies would be their preference.

Narrative actions include mini-lecture, explanations and demonstrations by the instructor allowing a story to be told, an explanation to be given or an argument to be developed. It is a process of presenting and apprehending. In face-to-face contexts, typical narrative actions include, for example, lectures, demonstrations, explanations and story-telling, which may also include presentation through course books or movies that are discussed in class. In online contexts, narrative actions can take place through podcasts, as well as animations, web pages, blogs and digital video clips. In all contexts, narration consists of one person communicating to many people, and can be seen as a form of broadcasting. Laurillard (2002) sees ‘presenting’ or ‘exposition’ as primary teaching acts; for learners, that acts of ‘attention’ or ‘apprehending’ may take place through narrative.

Critics of narrative actions in teaching, however, see them contributing to a transmissive form of pedagogy (Collins & Halverson, 2009) that is teacher-centered and stilted (Leaver & Willis, 2004). However, in Laurillard’s (2002) view, such actions should not be excluded from a blended mix of tools and techniques, with the proviso that
their use be guarded against overuse through a balance with other pedagogical types. Potentially, another criticism of narrative actions is that instructors alone select and summarize materials and, therefore, conserve knowledge and limit experiential learning for others. Legacy CALL tutorial systems, such as those that used programmed instruction to test grammatical accuracy, can be seen as a form of narrative technology that perhaps ignored student participation in the content creation.

In an ideal blended language approach, a teacher mixes face-to-face narratives and online narratives within a language programme. A series of live face-to-face lectures could be video recorded, for example, and the clips of these could be put online for learners. Such material could be further enhanced with supplementary links that could complement a class textbook. Further, interactive whiteboards can also be used when teaching involves narrative actions. A document camera and computer connected to a projector and screen can, for example, be used for narrative purposes. Combined in a classroom, a displayed textbook can be annotated with colored pens; on the same screen and location, the display can then be switched online sites to blend external resources with the narration.

### 1.2.2 Intuition
The intuitive learner learns more effectively from flashes of insight, using their imagination, and grasping the general concepts rather than all the details. They desire only a general outline, and enjoy new material. They are best with tasks that appeal to their intellectual interests and call for grasping general concepts, seeing relationships, and using imagination. They can remember specifics when they relate to a pattern. Intuitive learners will write their term paper and then finish the required outline. They will always ask “why” before anything else. They want to clarify ideas and theories before putting them into practice. Intuitive learners may not read a test question all the way through, sometimes missing a key part, because they act on their hunches. Once they understand a concept or skill, they may find continued repetition or practice boring. They might become frustrated with instructors who pace the material too slowly for them. They tend to anticipate a speaker’s words, which sometimes results in Ns not really hearing what is being said. These characteristics will turn to barriers in learning points that require repetition and reflection.

Intuitive learners may benefit from adaptive activities involving making use of technologies that can be modified to fit the learners’ level or interests. For teacher, ‘modeling’ is a primary form of pedagogical adoptions; for learners, ‘practice’ and ‘simulation’ are the primary forms of action (Laurillard, 2002).

Adaptive actions of blended technologies may also take place, for example, when introvert learners engage in role plays and game, for example, that are cooperative, puzzle-solving, exploratory and adventurous (Westcott, 2003; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008). When pair work is designed with open-ended prompts and goals, it forces learners to adapt their vocabulary and usage. They can also simulate second language situations with role-playing exercises where prompts describe a particular role and task for each learner. Given a task, a learner can practice achieving that task multiple times, often with successively more difficult situations added. In written communication, introverted learners can search through prepared paragraphs to find errors or structural problems. In extensive reading, progress through graded readers at increasingly higher vocabulary and grammar levels.

One example of a face-to-face adaptive technology is a board game requiring questions answered in a target language. Shoemaker and Shoemaker (1991) describe how learners freely use a game atmosphere to review key phrases and conversations introduced in past lessons. Course books and guidebooks to short gaming exercise can be designed by either teacher or learners and included in every lesson. In an online environment, Warschauer and Meskill (2000) suggest that concordancing software can be an effective simulation tool for testing collocations.

### 1.3 Thinking vs. Feeling

#### 1.3.1 Thinking
Thinking learners learn more effectively from impersonal circumstances and logical consequences. Their strengths are in their ability to analyze and their self-discipline. They analyze experiences and material to find logical principles underlyning them, and they analyze problems to bring logical order out of confusion. They naturally critique things, making them good at problem solving when they can analyze to identify what’s wrong with something.

They focus on tasks and do best with objective material to study and enjoy going into depth. They strive to get a sense of mastery over the material being studied. They like clear course and topic objectives that are precise and action-oriented. However, they can suffer from performance anxiety because their self-esteem is attached to achievement, and may have difficulty with instructors who do not present material in a logical order.

Interactive actions may also be suitable for thinking learners. Historically, in the audio-lingual approaches, many face-to-face technologies were developed in minimal pairs or drills of expansion, chains, or substitution that may have a role in focus-on-form practice in a blended environment. Classroom instructors, for example, can develop paper-based quizzes or exercises as interactive technologies for work in small groups. Worksheets may be employed for information gap, jigsaw, matching, or corrupted text techniques. When provided online at appropriate moment, completed worksheets can provide instant feedback to learners.

Interactive activities are dynamic and non-linear. Recent work with ‘word clouds’ that present graphical
representations of phrases and terms by Sharma and Barrett (2009) can illustrate this concept. If graphical representations are made through entering phrases into a static word cloud application (e.g. Wordle), the image is set and thus exemplifies the result of a narrative action. In contrast, the use of an interactive word cloud (e.g. Tagull), in which the words are linked to a search engine so learners can click on any word to explore its meaning, can be used to foster interactive actions of the technologies. In this way, interactive actions differ from adaptive or communicative technologies in that the learning takes place through exploration.

1.4.1 Judging

The productive actions include a wiki posting, pair dictation, speech, and poster presentation, etc., allowing learners to create and publish their work for an audience. ‘Performance’, according to Laurillard (2002), is the key learner action and ‘coaching’ is the key teacher action. Production can involve the creation of materials for online communication (Lamy & Hampel, 2007), for example, or mazes, quizzes, montage and cards for use in the classroom (Egbert, 2005).

Faced with judging type learners, instructors need to be careful for structured, clear instructions and consistency. A clear, detailed outline with specific grading procedures is desirable, including strictly following outlines and timely feedback.

1.4.2 Perceiving

Perceiving learners learn more effectively through negotiation, feeling, and inductive processes that postpone closure. Their strong points are their openness, flexibility and adaptability to change and new experiences. Perceiving types start many tasks, want to know everything about each task, and often find it difficult to complete them. They work in flexible ways, following impulses. They are stimulated by the new and different. They study best when surges of impulsive energy come to them. They are good at informal problem solving and adept at managing arising problems. Their biggest problem is procrastination. They may make a calendar of things to do but often won’t follow it. Perceivers feel energized by last-minute pressures and often do their best work under pressure. They need to find novel ways to do routine assignments to increase their interest. They thrive on spontaneity and don’t mind surprises. When completing a lengthy assignment or project, they will work best if they divide the work into several sub-assignments. However, they may suffer from laziness and inconsistent pacing over the long haul. Thus, it is suggested to employ communicative actions for its involving more participation and interaction of both instructor and learners.

CONCLUSION

Understanding learners’ personality type, preferred ways of learning, and relative teaching pedagogy can help instructors effectively deal with classroom situations and achieve the best teaching effect. Instructors will find it handy to design blended technologies in classroom activities or curriculum while they interpret the personality type of each learner. However, teaching strategies for each personal type needs to be advanced and modified according to different teaching context.

In most cases, one or more pedagogical actions described earlier—narrative, interactive, adaptive, communicative and productive—may interolve in other actions in language learning practice. How to integrate these actions still needs further exploration.

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