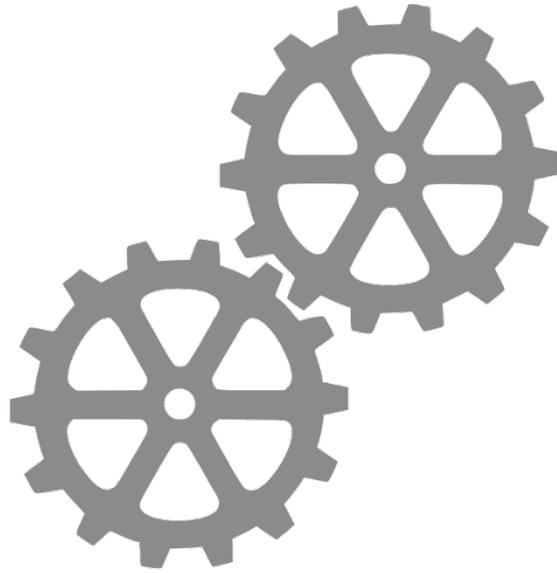


Jungian Mental Mechanisms in the Classroom



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Cres Woods
PO BOX 578
Ishpeming, MI 49849

info@PersonalityAcademy.com

www.PersonalityAcademy.com

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Edited by Vicki Brown

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Jungian Mental Mechanisms

In the early part of the 20th century, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung developed his theory of psychological types. Jung proposed that each person has a preferred orientation for directing mental energy, either outward, toward people and things (extraversion), or inward, toward ideas and concepts (introversion).

Jung also proposed that each person has two pairs of mental mechanisms for interacting with the world. These include two methods of gathering information and two ways of making decisions about that information. He believed that each person uses all four mechanisms, with a relative preference for one of each pair.

In the 1940s, Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers recognized another pair of mental mechanisms in Jung's work. This pair describes how people operate in the world, with a preference for either planned or spontaneous behavior.

The Jungian Mental Mechanisms using modern terms:

General Orientation:

Introversion - Extraversion

Modes of Operation:

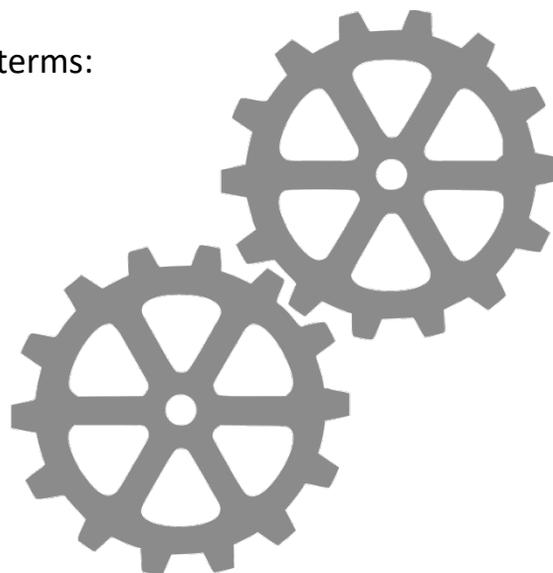
Planned - Spontaneous

Gathering Information:

Hands-On - Theoretical

Making Decisions:

Objective - Subjective



These mental mechanisms are also referred to as psychological type preferences.

“Everyone possesses both mechanisms, extraversion as well as introversion, and only the relative predominance of one over the other determines the type.”

- Carl Jung (Psychological Types p.4)

“Outer circumstances and inner disposition frequently favor one mechanism and restrict or hinder the other.”

- Carl Jung (Psychological Types p.6)

General Orientation

Extraversion: describes an outward orientation toward people and things.



A person who favors extraversion is likely to prefer studying in a group where they can process thoughts through dialogue with others.

Extraverted Orientation

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ May speak before thoughts are completed
- ▶ Use others as a sounding board to help them clarify and make decisions
- ▶ Develop their thoughts by talking through them
- ▶ May find it difficult to wait their turn to speak
- ▶ Gain energy from contributing to, and can easily dominate, a conversation
- ▶ Struggle to retain thoughts long enough for their turn to come
- ▶ May repeat themselves if not given sufficient indication that they were heard

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Practice a response that lets them know what you heard them say
- ▶ Help them learn how to self-regulate and keep thoughts active while listening

General Orientation

Introversion: describes an inward orientation toward ideas and concepts.



A person who favors introversion is likely to prefer studying alone in a quiet place where they can process thoughts inside their head.

Introverted Orientation

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ May display a blank stare when forming a response
- ▶ Tend to pause and reflect before sharing thoughts
- ▶ May give a one word answer if put on the spot
- ▶ Need alone time to recharge at the end of the day
- ▶ May not speak at all during a group discussion
- ▶ Enjoy listening to a discussion and contemplating other threads inside their head
- ▶ May lose track if conversation moves more quickly than inner dialogue
- ▶ May miss chances to speak while forming thoughts internally

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Allow them time to process before verbalizing a response
- ▶ Ask them to express thoughts in writing or after being given time to think

Modes of Operation

Planned: describes a more structured way of operating within the world.



Someone who favors a planned approach will typically pack in advance for a trip. They like to make decisions in advance and bring things to closure. They find schedules and routines comforting. They crave consistency and enjoy being prepared.

Planned Mode of Operation

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ Start projects when they are assigned
- ▶ Have a sincere need to see things brought to closure
- ▶ May view a rapidly approaching deadline with stress or anxiety
- ▶ May put other things on hold until the project is completed
- ▶ May seek clarification or balk when a rule or tradition is not followed
- ▶ Find comfort in everyone doing what they are supposed to do
- ▶ Need to know what is going on around them
- ▶ Ask “How is this supposed to be done?”

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Understand how much they value having time to prepare
- ▶ Offer guidance on how to proceed after unexpected changes

Modes of Operation

Spontaneous: describes a more “see what comes” way of operating within the world.



Someone who favors a spontaneous approach will typically pack at the very last minute for a trip. They like to leave options open and make decisions in the spur of the moment. They find schedules and routines restricting. They crave variety and enjoy improvising.

Spontaneous Mode of Operation

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

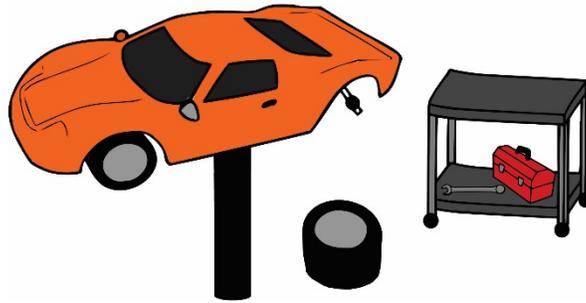
- ▶ May not show progress on a project until the last minute
- ▶ Have a sincere need to keep their options open as long as possible
- ▶ Find that a sense of urgency will stimulate effective thinking
- ▶ May need help determining a realistic “last possible minute” to start
- ▶ May ignore or forget to stay within established boundaries
- ▶ Automatically focus on new ways to make things fun
- ▶ Need extra effort to remember or keep within the rules
- ▶ May ask others to provide a list of rules instead of having to remember them

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Find creative and constructive ways to create a sense of urgency
- ▶ Show patience, understanding, and encouragement

Information Gathering

Hands-On: describes a concrete way of gathering information, using the 5 senses.



A person who favors hands-on gathering of information likes to put pieces together one step at a time and "get their hands dirty". They trust only what they can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. They tend to focus on "what is" right now in the present moment, or on past, lived, experience.

Hands-On Information Gathering

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ Work best at tangible tasks (may find abstract tasks uncomfortable)
- ▶ Prefer to start with an example and modify
- ▶ Appreciate clear objectives and detailed instructions
- ▶ Excel at gathering materials and proceeding one step at a time
- ▶ May get restless if they have nothing to get their hands on
- ▶ Prefer to follow an outline when writing an essay
- ▶ May tune out when a topic becomes too abstract or broad
- ▶ May be perceived as providing too much detail in conversation or a report

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Offer guidance on how to summarize thoughts and provide context in conversation
- ▶ Utilize tangible objects or examples when instructing if possible, incorporate movement, and allow frequent breaks

Information Gathering

Theoretical: describes an abstract, intuitive way of gathering information, using insight and patterns.



A person who favors theoretical gathering of information likes to put pieces together from all directions at once and use their imagination and insights. They see patterns and possibilities everywhere. They tend to direct their attention towards “what could be” in the future.

Theoretical Information Gathering

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ Work best at abstract tasks (may find tangible tasks uncomfortable)
- ▶ Prefer to start with a blank slate and imagine possibilities
- ▶ Appreciate broad objectives and freedom to think big
- ▶ Gather information from all directions to form a big picture
- ▶ May be perceived as not having supporting evidence for an idea
- ▶ May find that a project or essay only takes shape after they “connect the dots”
- ▶ May tune out when their mind is flooded with inspiration
- ▶ May be perceived as leaving out details in conversation or a report

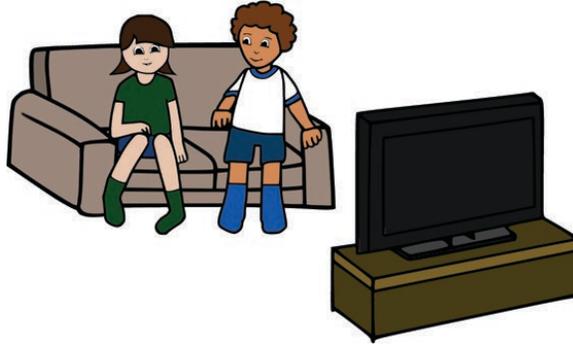
Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Encourage creative leaps, then ask direct questions to help them arrive at specifics
- ▶ Offer guidance on how to determine feasibility and implement ideas

Making Decisions

Objective: describes a decision-making mode that is based on logic and impersonal facts.

That is so illogical!



Someone who favors making decisions objectively is more likely to debate and defend a point of view. They seek clarity and have a sincere need to evaluate and improve. They are able to detach from their emotions and prefer to make decisions using logical reasoning. They are more likely to point out flaws in a movie, a book, or an argument.

Objective Decision-Making

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

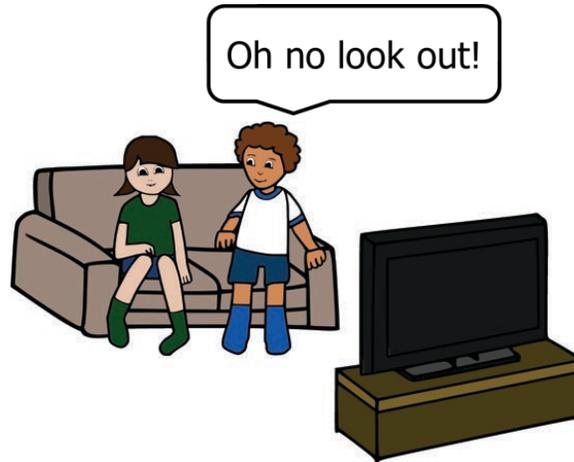
- ▶ Continually evaluate information for validity
- ▶ Have a sincere need for things to make sense
- ▶ Will question illogical statements and ask “Why?”
- ▶ Will try to solve their own problems before going to anyone for help
- ▶ Measure themselves by their knowledge or skills
- ▶ May become frustrated by their inability to know everything
- ▶ Can usually receive logical criticism without taking it personally
- ▶ Place high value on competency and dignity

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Understand that their questioning is not showing disrespect for authority
- ▶ Offer guidance on how to set priorities and narrow their focus

Making Decisions

Subjective: describes a decision-making mode that is based on values and personal impact.



Someone who favors making decisions subjectively is likely to sympathize with and accept other people's opinions. They seek harmony and have a sincere need to know that others care how they feel. They prefer to incorporate a measure of their feelings when making decisions. They'll usually look past logical flaws in a movie and empathize with the situations.

Subjective Decision-Making

Students who favor this mental mechanism:

- ▶ Continually look for validation of their feelings and values
- ▶ Have a sincere need to know that others care how they feel
- ▶ Look for approval from adults to determine their self-worth
- ▶ May feel rejected if an adult addresses an issue but not feelings
- ▶ Have a tendency to share stories with enthusiasm to invoke passion in others
- ▶ May measure themselves by how they make others feel
- ▶ May only be able to receive criticism delivered gently
- ▶ Need to learn how to set boundaries of their own

Things you can do to honor this preference:

- ▶ Recognize what may appear like complaining or bragging as enthusiasm
- ▶ Acknowledge feelings and teach them to evaluate their own performance