An Examination of Listening Effectiveness of Educators: Performance and Preference

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Abstract

Most students prefer visual input – through normal development or instructional reinforcement – yet, most teachers provide information to be taken in by listening. This mismatch can confound the learning process.

To determine how well teachers listen and what their teaching/learning preferences might be, more than 200 educators provided data about listening effectiveness and personality preferences. The data showed that those individuals who are more logical and thought-oriented listened more effectively overall and veteran educators listened better than student teachers (most likely attributable to their longer experience).

The implications are that teachers who overuse the auditory mode might be creating an environment where some students will get into distress and seek negative ways to get their needs met. The major finding was that educators who are strong in thought orientation tended to be the better listeners. Regardless of the personal orientation of teachers, the precursor to student learning is the teacher's ability to connect with them personally.

Introduction

People who become professional educators have base (foundation) personalities that are conducive to the profession. Educators, who typically fall into three of six base personality categories, make teaching their career choice because of the prospect of helping others, structuring logical learning sequences and environments, or offering the adults of tomorrow tools that are valuable and important to meet their (and society's) needs. These perceptual preferences describe some of the characteristics of those base personalities found in educators.

Teachers see students as ready receivers of the knowledge and skills they have to offer. They deliver lessons using the same structure their instructors used to teach them, and they presume their students will accept the information in the way they have delivered it. These methods are reinforced by their own learning preferences.

If these students have personalities that are much like their teachers and are indeed prepared to receive these learning experiences in the way they are being delivered, then the teachers and students are well matched. Students are motivated, and they move through the various learning activities unimpeded, for the most part.

For many students (regardless of their age), these strategies and this environment do not match their need for fun, action, or personal space. Students who are not motivated by their teachers, by school, or by life in general do all in their power to interact in ways to get these needs met. These students may be often characterized as *at-risk* when, in fact, their base personality types and their needs are very different from their teachers' types and needs. [*Base* personalities are seen in individuals as early as six months of age and provide the basic perceptual preferences (Kahler, 1982).]

Understanding the needs of students with different preferences and working to reach them is the first step in communicating with them. Successful learning for all students relies on connecting with the teacher productively:

> One aspect of managing a student successfully is related to whether the student and the teacher are "connecting" along open doorways of communication. If there is miscommunication, we can predict that negative coping strategies will be used by both the teacher and the student. These negative coping strategies are correlated to the personality part the individuals are using and the positive energy they have available. (Knaupp, n. d., p. 8)

When teachers' own psychological needs are not met, they usually deal with students' misbehavior in negative ways. When students do not get their needs met, they usually fall into predictable distressed behavior to get what they need — with or without their conscious awareness.

Connecting with others is at the heart of communication — defined best as one person understanding what another wants understood. The key to this understanding is listening. Teachers who prefer imparting information through lecture require students to listen carefully and well. Many of these teachers see the world through their thoughts and beliefs. Their reliance on auditory methods suggests that students already know how to listen. In reality, few do know how to listen.

A model is simple, but the practice is difficult. Average adults spend about one-half of available communication time listening. Students, however, are in listening situations much longer; some estimate 65 to 90 percent. One might presume that available time translates into effective practice; however, most people have never been taught the *skill* of listening. Hence, it is not surprising that most do not do it well. As a result, most listen ineffectively, including the educators who demand their students do it.

In their classrooms, teachers set the standard for student behavior and learning and demand that students conform — yet not every student is comfortable with this prescription. Students have differing learning styles and ways of processing information (Barbe & Swassing, 1979; Gardner, 1983; Gregorc, 1982; McCarthy, 1980). Personality characteristics may also describe different preferences (DeBono, 1985; Myers & Briggs, 1943, 1976, 1985). In most of these models, one or several aspects of personality are used to depict an individual and suggest that people function in life and in learning situations with the manifestations of those characterizations. (Chart 1 shows the comparative personality indicators of some of the major models.)

Chart 1
Comparative Personality Indicators

Kahler	Myers/Briggs	Gregorc	DeBono	McCarthy	Barbe/Swassing	Gardner
Reactor	E*FJ	CA	Red Hat	Style One	Visual	Interpersonal
Workaholic	**TJ	CS	Black Hat	Style Two	Auditory	Logical-Mathematical
Persister	**TJ	CS	Blue Hat	Style Two	Auditory	Spatial; Linguistic
Dreamer	I*TP	CR	White Hat		Kinesthetic	Intrapersonal
Rebel	EN*P	AR	Green Hat	Style Four	Kinesthetic	Musical; Bodily-Kinesthetic
Promoter	*NT*	CR	Yellow Hat	Style Three	Kinesthetic	Bodily-Kinesthetic

[Myers-Briggs Identifiers: E= Extraverted; F= Feeling; I= Introverted; J= Judging; N= Intuitive; P= Perceptive; T= Thinking]
[Gregorc Delineators: A= Abstract; C= Concrete; R= Random; S= Sequential]

Sources

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Keirsey, D., & Bates, M. (1984). *Please understand me: Character and temperament types.* Del Mar, CA: Gnosology Books.
McCarthy, B. (1980). *The 4MAT system: Teaching to learning styles with right/left mode techniques*. Barrington, IL: Excel, Inc.
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Using Kahler's (1982) Process Communication Model (described below) to identify personality types and preferences, Gilbert (1994) reported the relationship between the interaction energy (the ability to interact with other types of people) and performance (grades) of students. This relationship was a comparison of student personality type and teacher-designated grades. If one interprets a grade (criterion-referenced performance) as the student's ability to meet the teacher's expectations, it is not surprising that those who are most like the teacher will fare particularly well. Table 1 shows the significant correlations ($p < .05$) derived from the previous research (Gilbert, 1994). The positive general characteristics of each personality are as follows: Reactors are feeling-oriented; Workholics are thought-oriented; Persisters are belief-oriented; Dreamers are reflective; Rebels are playful; and Promoters are action-oriented.

Table 1
Correlations of Interaction Energy with Student Grade-Point Average

Personality Type	
Reactor	0.4101
Workaholic	0.3660
Persister	0.3591
Dreamer	0.3396
Rebel	0.0889
Promoter	–0.2496

This shows a higher correlation of grades with the personality types of most teachers (see below). Those students who have a lower or negative relationship to grades may prefer a kinesthetic environment, something not readily available in many classrooms. Moreover, these students are likely to be identified as Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disordered by their teachers (Bailey, 1998).

The Process Communication Model (Kahler, 1982) places six personality types in one of four quadrants on an Assessing Matrix (Figure 1), the two axes of which describe continua from *Involved* to *Withdrawn* and *Intrinsically* to *Extrinsically Motivated*. Teacher types tend to be more intrinsically motivated, spanning the full range from being involved to withdrawn. Poor-performing (at-risk) students fall into the quadrant that describes them mostly as Involved and Extrinsically Motivated. Those types that had the weakest correlations between Interaction Energy and Grades must get their

needs met positively to stay out of distress: Rebels *need* playful contact, and Promoters *need* incidence (lots of activities in short periods of time with quick payoffs). Their main preferred intake mode is *kinesthetic* – provided on a limited basis by their intrinsically motivated teachers.

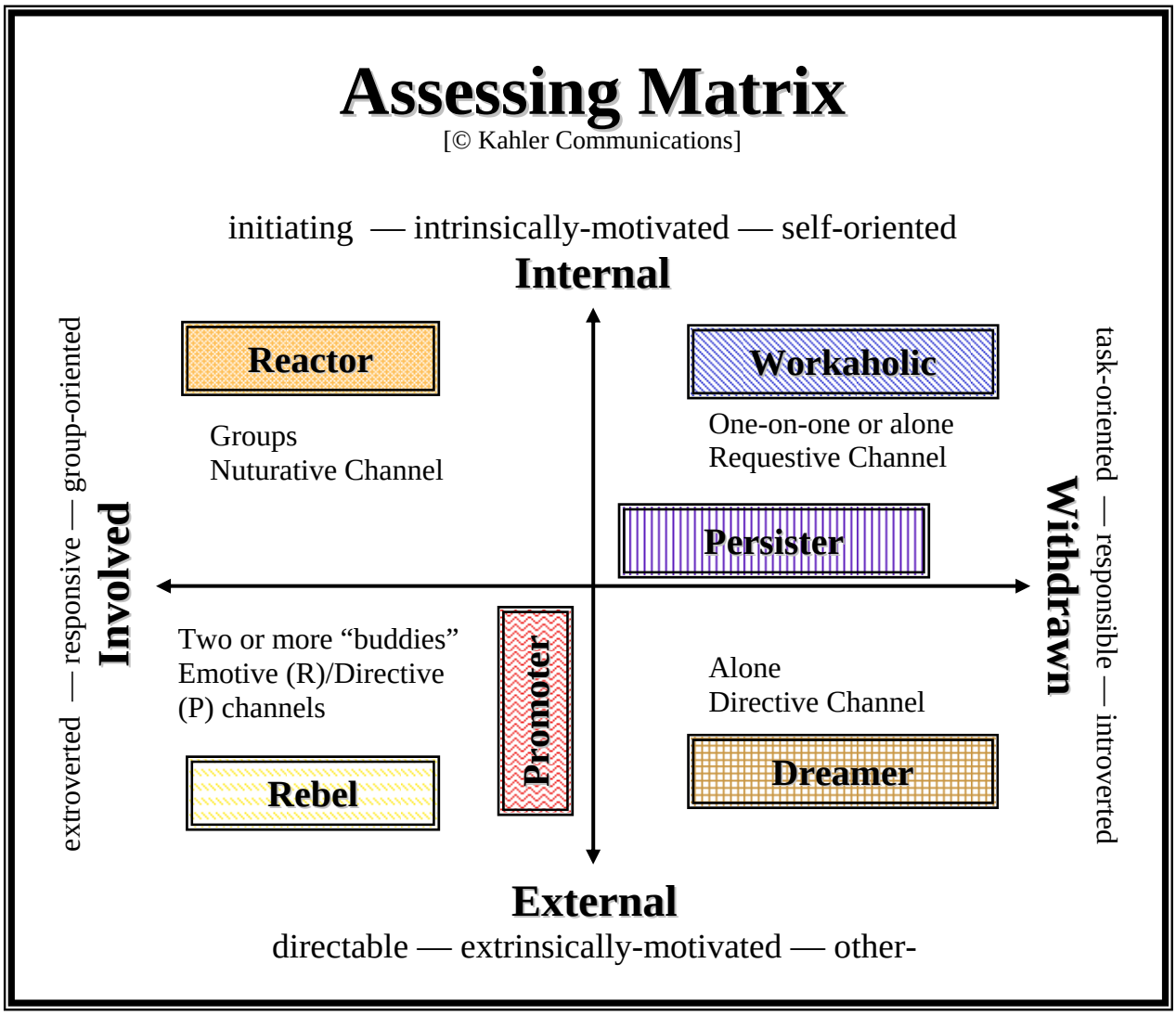

Figure 1

Another study focusing on aspects of Process Communication showed similar results: "… a student's grade is significantly affected by the student's personality type base…" (Wallin, 1992, p. iii). Teachers trained in Process Communication may positively affect student performance through understanding student needs and preferences better (Hawking, 1995).

Class size may confound the individualized activities or learning input necessary to access those students who do not respond readily to the teacher's predominant mode of instruction (Coty, 1994). If teachers deliver instruction verbally, then learning to listen carefully and critically are key aspects of improved student involvement.

H. A. Murray's 1938 work, *Explorations in Personality,* suggested important concepts:

> … personal needs, defined as motivational personality characteristics, represent tendencies to move in the direction of certain goals, whereas (the classroom environment) provides an external situational counterpart that supports or frustrates the expression of internalized personality needs. Therefore, situational variables found in the classroom environment may account for a significant amount of behavioral variance (in Pierce, 1994, p. 38).

At-risk learners need a supportive classroom environment, one that caters to their learning preferences. Most classrooms offer a product-oriented climate, which may only reinforce student insecurities in their performance. "They associate the classroom environment with failure; expecting to fail, they often do" (Pierce, 1994, p. 38). To be effective, teachers need to listen to and talk with their students (Steer, 1984). Of course, this presumes that teachers are educated in listening skills (Swanson, 1997) and are prepared to listen when situations or students invite them.

"As good listeners, teachers: (1) establish a classroom environment conducive to learning; (2) make better pedagogical decisions based on good listening skills; and (3) model good listening behavior for students" (Bozik, 1987). Listening competency is important to being an effective teacher in "sending and receiving messages that: (1) are used to obtain or give information; (2) express or respond to feelings; (3) speculate, theorize, or include fantasy; (4) serve to maintain and facilitate social interaction; and (5) seek to convince" (Cooper, 1986).

Flexibility in environmental and instructional strategy provides ways in which all learners can be accessed (i.e., motivated). Subscribing to this approach allows educators to explode one of the long-standing myths: "You can't let them move around; they are too disruptive" (Pope, 1994, p. 7). Moving away from traditional patterns by recognizing different learner needs gives teachers a plethora of approaches – and permission to use them.

Many educators limit the ways in which they offer and process information because of their personality strengths and preferences. Sometimes even good teachers may assume mistakenly that teaching strategies that worked previously for their students will work with all children. A reason they may have been successful is that they connected with similar personality strength and preferences of their students. Educators must listen carefully and collaboratively (to and with their students) to communicate successfully (Wilmore, 1995). Knowing how to accommodate different patterns and perceptions expands the interaction effectiveness most educators seek.

Purpose of the Study

Because listening occupies such a predominant place in most classroom instruction — far in excess of the approximate 50 percent non-instructional use noted by Rankin, Nichols, Steil, and others (Gilbert, 1989) — the purpose of the study was to determine how well educators perform the skill they require most students to use 65 to 90 percent of classroom time. Moreover, the research focused on whether some types of educators listened more effectively than others. It was presumed that those educators who are more withdrawn and intrinsically motivated would listen better than other educator types.

An ancillary purpose was to document what patterns — perceptual and motivational — predominate with educators. A corollary problem was to determine how able educators are to interact with others, especially those unlike themselves. These aspects would suggest how likely educators are able to adapt to other people (in their professional and personal lives). Teachers who are more alert to

the physical and psychological manifestations of students' loss of motivation will understand blocks to learning (Kasimbira, 1984).

Instrumentation

Listening effectiveness was determined by an overall score on the *Watson-Barker Listening Test (WBLT)* (Watson & Barker, 1991), standardized for adult audiences and divided into five subscales: (1) evaluating message content, (2) understanding meaning in conversations, (3) understanding and remembering information, (4) evaluating emotional meanings in messages, and (5) following directions and instructions. Personality patterns were derived from the *Kahler Personality Pattern Inventory (PPI)* (Kahler, 1997).

The *WBLT* videotape took approximately 30 minutes to administer in group settings. The *PPI* was completed individually in about 30 minutes. Data were collected during the 2002–2003 academic year.

Several thousand subjects across the United States were used to refine and validate the *WBLT*, including executives, professionals, government employees, and undergraduate/ graduate students from a variety of universities and curricula. Pilot tests were subjected to factor analyses, item analyses, reliability tests, and descriptive analyses. Face validity of each item was judged by a panel of listening experts (Watson & Barker, 1991). In addition, Roberts (1986; 1988) and others (as cited in Watson & Barker, 1991) reported the *WBLT* to be valid.

A study similar to the current one was undertaken in 1996 by the author with nothing notable coming from the data analysis, only that no distinctions between personality types could be ascertained (Gilbert, 1997). This was puzzling until the findings of Villaume and Weaver (1996) were published. Their work challenged the validity and reliability of the subscales of both the *WBLT* and the *Kentucky Comprehensive Listening Test (KCLT)* (Bostrom & Waldhart, 1983), a standard measure for many years.

Villaume and Weaver (1996) contended that the overall scores on the tests were circumspect because the sub scores were deemed unreliable. Their research showed different groupings of items in factor analyses than the test authors indicated. Further, Villaume and Weaver suggested that there were distinctions to be made between literal recall in listening situations and those areas that required interpretation and evaluation-based paralinguistic factors and subtextual cues.

Even though the *WBLT* had been revised (1999) into a shorter test, no additional validity and reliability data were available to support use of the shorter, less-fatiguing version. The researcher instead chose to use the original longer version, incorporating the factors discovered by Villaume and Weaver. [The *KCLT* was also considered as a data-gathering instrument, but it was unavailable from the publisher in time for the initial data gathering at the beginning of the academic year. Even though the researcher found another source for the *KCLT*, he eliminated this instrument from the project since all of the potential subjects would not be able to use the same instrumentation.]

Kahler's work (1982) has its foundations in Transactional Analysis, which suggests that certain ego states (Parent, Adult, or Child) describe behavior. Each person has an individual structure of personality types — a *base*, the strongest part, and each of five other personality types in decreasing strength. Each personality type has character strengths, psychological (motivational) needs, communication preferences, and predictable patterns and behaviors that occur when one is in distress (described simply as not fulfilling one's needs positively).

Kahler's (1997b) *PPI* is a valid and reliable measure of one's personality structure and behavioral preferences. Two hundred four items were administered to 180 people, representing each of the identified personality types, to determine face, concurrent, and predictive validity. Only items with a correlation greater than .60 ($p < .01$) were accepted for inclusion in the final inventory (Kahler Communications, n. d.).

The data used for the current research were the personality determinations from the *PPI*, and the overall and the five Villaume-Weaver factored subscale scores on the *WBLT*. These six scores allowed for an analysis of the relationship between one's personality patterns and listening effectiveness. The demographic categories (independent variables) were *gender* and *position* (student teacher or veteran educator).

Sample

To provide a cross section of educators, both student teachers and veteran educators were sampled. Subjects came from Maryland, Michigan, New York, and Tennessee. Data were gathered from 217 subjects. The sample was predominantly female (n = 164, 76%) student teachers (n = 139, 71%). (Fifty-three males comprised the sample, and there were 58 veteran educators. Twenty of the subjects were missing position designations.)

Educator Types

Educators tend to predominate with three personality types described by the *Process Communication Model (PCM)* (Kahler, 1982) — Reactors (*"feelers"*), Workaholics (*"thinkers"*), and Persisters (*"believers"*). The probable reasons people choose education as a profession may explain this array. In the strongest part of their personalities, they are *compassionate, sensitive and warm* (Reactors) and want to help others; they are *logical, responsible, and organized* (Workaholics) and can structure learning activities in sequences, in a timely fashion, and in rational ways; or they are *conscientious, dedicated, and observant* (Persisters) and understand what they believe is valuable and important to teach and be learned.

The *PCM* contends that each of us has a personality depicted as a six-story building. The first floor is our *base* personality, observable by six months of age. The order of the remaining five floors is set by age seven. Each successively higher floor is less "furnished" than those below. This furnishing relates to the amount of relative *energy* available to each person in those aspects of personality.

A unique feature of the *PCM* is Phase. This describes that aspect of one's personality where one attempts to fulfill needs — one's motivation. This motivation may be described by one's Base (33 percent of the time) or in movement to the next higher floor (Phase change) of the personality structure (67 percent of the time). Ninety-nine percent of those who experience a Phase change do so as a result of long-term distress with and resolution of a particular life issue (Kahler, 1997a). Interestingly, this evolution occurs with or without one's awareness. These life issues are as follows for the six *PCM* Personality Types:

Personality Type	*Issue for Phase Change*
Reactor	Anger
Workaholic	Grief
Persister	Fear
Dreamer	Self-Confidence
Rebel	Self-Love
Promoter	Abandonment/Bonding

Not all of the subjects completed the *PPI.* This shortcoming was due in part to the voluntary nature of participation in the project and the fact that responses were to be completed online and out of the control of the researcher. Eighty-eight percent of the group (n = 133) were Base Reactors (49%), Workaholics (13%) and Persisters (25%), and 82 percent were Phase Reactors (25%), Workaholics (26%) and Persisters (31%). More than 74 percent of the group was either a Base or Phase Reactor, Workaholic

or Persister, or a combination of two out of the three. The data showed this group of educators was eight percent Base Rebels, two percent Base Dreamers, and three percent Base Promoters. Thirteen percent were Phase Rebels; five percent were Phase Promoters; and one percent was Phase Dreamers. The comparative data between the general population and the research sample are shown in Table 2. [The "Educator" arrays were derived from the data collected for this study.]

Table 2
Distribution of Personality Types

Personality	General Population	Educator	General Population	Educator
Type	Base	Base	Phase	Phase
Reactor	30%	49%	22%	25%
Workaholic	25%	14%	20%	26%
Persister	10%	25%	22%	31%
Dreamer	10%	2%	4%	1%
Rebel	20%	8%	24%	13%
Promoter	5%	3%	8%	5%

These differences were significant (p <.001). Educators were much more intrinsically motivated than the general population. (This is characteristic of Reactors, Workaholics and Persisters.)

Table 3
Chi-Square Comparisons of General Population and Educator Sample

	X^2	p
Base	82.1	< .001
Phase	22.0	< .001

It was interesting to note that 43 (28%) subjects had Bases that were also their Phases. This means that the perceptual preferences and motivational needs of the sample group of educators were drawn from the same personality type; they had not yet experienced the Phase change found in two-thirds of the general population. While the group was evenly divided in the number of people who did *not* change Phases, the veteran educators had a higher percentage (43%) than did the student teachers (13%). A higher proportion of the veteran educators seem to have had less opportunity to deal with the life issues that precipitate Phase changes than did the student teachers. [One might presume the obverse, given that veteran educators have more life experience.] The Base and Phase frequencies are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Educator Demographics

	Phase						
	Reactor	W'holic	Persister	Dreamer	Rebel	Pr'mot'r	**Total**
Base							
Reactor	21	14	24	2	12	1	**74**
W'holic	–	12	8	–	–	1	**21**
Persister	12	10	12	–	3	1	**38**
Dreamer	1	–	1	–	–	1	**3**
Rebel	4	1	2	–	3	2	**12**
Pr'mot'r	–	2	–	–	1	1	**4**
Total	**38**	**39**	**47**	**2**	**19**	**7**	**152**

Again, the concept of *Phase* is unique to the Process Communication Model and adds to the model's comprehensiveness. One's Phase is the part of the personality structure where one is motivated under normal conditions. Experiencing a Phase *change* means that one's motivators change. If one is a Reactor (base) in Persister phase (the most frequent pattern, seen in 16% of the sample), then that person is most easily motivated by *recognition for work* and *conviction* — these are the psychological needs of Persisters. However, that individual still experiences the world most easily through feelings (Reactor perceptual preferences), but, in this case, will appear more like a Persister, in many of the words, tones, dress, and environmental preferences of the Persister-type person. For this sample, this predominant pattern indicates educators with strong abilities to feel first but currently motivated by recognition of their positive contributions to the organization and for their convictions.

Results

The overall mean of the 217 people who completed the *Watson-Barker Listening Test (WBLT)* was 32.3 out of a possible 50. This converts to a mean scaled score of 64.6 (by multiplying the raw score by 2), almost three percent below ($p < .01$) the national median of 66 and the national mean of 66.4, both normed on a pretest basis in 1991 with a group of more than 3,700 managers, supervisors, and professionals (Watson & Barker, 1995). The five subscales on the *WBLT* are: (1) evaluating message content (CONTENT), (2) understanding meaning in conversations (CONVERS), (3) understanding and remembering information (REMEMB), (4) evaluating emotional meanings in messages (EVALEMO), and (5) following directions and instructions (DIRECTNS).

The *WBLT* contains 50 questions. The scores on each 10-response subtest were multiplied by 2 to convert it to a possible total of 100, the basis on which the national norms were calculated for the longer version. The means for each of the converted subscales are shown in Table 5, along with the comparisons with the norms, as follows:

Table 5
Mean WBLT Subscale and Overall Scores and Comparisons

Subscale	Converted	Norm	*t*	*p*
CONTENT	12.8	12.8	- .448	.66
CONVERS	8.6	8.8	- .672	.50
REMEMB	13.0	14.2	-4.525	**<.001**
EVALEMO	15.6	14.6	5.888	**<.001**
DIRECTNS	14.8	16.0	-6.027	**<.001**
Total	64.6	66.4	-2.855	**.005**

The lowest subscale for the sample group of educators was in *understanding meaning in conversations,* 2.3 percent below the national norm. The greatest difference from national norms was in *understanding and remembering information,* 8.5 percent below the national norm ($p < .001$). The area of greatest proficiency was *evaluating emotional meanings in messages*, exceeding the national norm by 6.8 percent ($p < .001$). Other significant differences were in *following directions and instructions*, 7.5 percent below the national norm ($p < .001$), and in the overall score, 2.8 percent below the national norm ($p < .01$).

The *PCM* variables (as determined by the *PPI*) were the main focus of the research — to determine if any aspects of personality were predictable indicators of listening effectiveness. Previous research (Gilbert, 1997) found no differences in the listening effectiveness of the sample on the overall *WBLT* score or any of the subscales when using *Base* and *Phase* designations. The reason for no variation seemed to be the lack of differentiation among the designators — Base and Phase were each assigned a single digit to distinguish one personality type from another. The *Personality Pattern Inventory* responses provide distinctions from 0 to 100 for each personality. This represents the percentage of available "energy," or the ability to tap into that part of a person's structure. Because of the greater distinguishability, more discrete analyses were possible.

The "energy" means for the group were (higher numbers mean greater energy):

Personality Type	*Mean*
Reactor	79
Workaholic	62
Persister	71
Dreamer	31
Rebel	47
Promoter	38

The major questions to be answered were:

1. Are there personality types that listen more effectively than others in general?
2. Are there specific types of listening that distinguish one personality type from another?

Using the overall score on the *WBLT,* the following results were found:

1. Veteran educators listened significantly ($p <.001$) better than student teachers (see Table 6).
2. Strong *Workaholic* energy was the best predictor of overall listening effectiveness ($p <.01$; see Table 7).
3. Strong *Dreamer* energy was the best predictor of overall listening ineffectiveness ($p <.05$; see Table 7).

Table 6
Listening Effectiveness by Position

Position	N	Mean	t score	df	*p* value
Student	139	30.5	- 4.76	2	**<.001**
Veteran	58	33.5			

Veteran educators listened significantly better than student teachers. They scored 10 percent higher overall on the *WBLT*.

Table 7
Predictors of Listening Effectiveness by Total Score on the *Watson-Barker Listening Test*

Personality	Beta	t score	*p* value
Reactor	-.143	-1.693	.093
Workaholic	**.303**	**3.380**	**.001**
Persister	-.139	-1.678	.095
Dreamer	**-.192**	**-2.418**	**.017**
Rebel	-.056	- .577	.565
Promoter	-.052	- .511	.610

People with strong *Workaholic* energy were better listeners. People with strong *Dreamer* energy were poorer listeners. (Workaholics are very data-driven; Dreamers are highly directable and may need to be instructed regarding particular information beforehand.) Other predictors and differentiations were not significant.

The distinctions discovered through the factor analysis done by Villaume and Weaver (1996) were interesting in the different subscales that were generated. They determined the following groupings:

Factor	*WBLT* Items
1. Literal recall of information	WB2, WB13, WB14, WB29, WB41, WB43, WB48, WB49, WB50
2. Literal recall with semantic and and pragmatic inferences	WB23, WB24, WB25, WB26
3. Paralinguistic elements	WB31, WB32, WB34, WB40
4. Discursive judgments based on subtextual cues	WB11, WB16, WB18, WB20, WB38
5. Most warranted implications in the context of strongly competing alternative implications	WB4, WB8, WB36, WB45, WB47

These designations were a bit different than the ones identified by the test authors: (1) evaluating message content, (2) understanding meaning in conversations, (3) understanding and remembering information, (4) evaluating emotional meanings in messages, and (5) following directions and instructions. The items making up the majority of Factor One, characterized as Literal Recall of Information, were taken mostly from the *WBLT* Subscale Five, Following Directions and Instructions. Factor Two, Literal Recall with Semantic and Pragmatic Inferences, was comprised of items from the *WBLT* Subscale Three, Understanding and Remembering Information. Factor Three, Using Paralinguistic Elements, was made up of items from the *WBLT* Subscale Four, Evaluating Emotional Meaning in Messages. Factor Four, Discursive Judgments Based on Subtextual Cues, was comprised mostly of items from the *WBLT* Subscale Two, Understanding Meaning in Conversations. Finally, Factor Five, Most Warranted Implications, was based on items from three *WBLT* subscales: One, Literal Recall; Four, Evaluating Emotional Meanings; and Five, Following Directions and Instructions.

The reordering of the items gives the user of the test more meaningful (reliable) information with which to draw conclusions. The distinctions offered by Villaume and Weaver give a sounder basis for the use of the *WBLT.*

The following data present the Villaume-Weaver factors with the *PCM* personality designations:

Table 8
Predictors of Listening Effectiveness by Factor One (Literal Recall of Information)

Personality	*Beta*	t Score	*p* value
Reactor	-.119	-1.506	.134
Workaholic	.088	1.102	.272
Persister	-.031	- .386	.700
Dreamer	**-.234**	**-2.945**	**.004**
Rebel	-.108	-1.330	.186
Promoter	-.051	- .618	.538

Table 8 shows that people with strong *Dreamer* energy listen poorest when required to recall information literally. Dreamers tend to be highly directable; hence, they might need to be told to focus on particular information. No other significant distinctions were shown.

Table 9
Predictors of Listening Effectiveness by Factor Two (Semantic and Pragmatic Inferences)

Personality	*Beta*	t score	*p* value
Reactor	**-.222**	**-2.784**	**.006**
Workaholic	-.037	- .431	.667
Persister	-.122	-1.509	.134
Dreamer	-.137	-1.732	.085
Rebel	-.006	- .076	.940
Promoter	.043	.527	.599

Table 9 shows that strong *Reactor* energy yields poorest listening related to semantic and pragmatic inferences. These people tend to be more literal (and initially trusting) in their relationships. They prefer to believe what they are told and typically will not infer other interpretations to what the speaker says.

An analysis of Factor Three, Paralinguistic Elements, did not yield any significant predictors among the personality types. An analysis of Factor Four, Evaluation of Subtextual Cues, showed those with high *Dreamer* energy listen more poorly. These data are arrayed in Table 10, with a similar interpretation to the analysis of Factor Two (above) — Dreamers need focus.

Table 10
Predictors of Listening Effectiveness by Factor Four (Subtextual Cues)

Personality	Beta	t score	*p* value
Reactor	- .144	- 1.810	.072
Workaholic	.140	1.761	.080
Persister	.012	.152	.879
Dreamer	**- .190**	**- 2.375**	**.019**
Rebel	- .091	- 1.113	.267
Promoter	.070	.849	.397

An analysis of Factor Five, Most Warranted Implications, yielded no significant results among the personality types. The analyses using the factors determined by Villaume and Weaver (1996) showed those with high *Workaholic* energy listened best to factual information; those with high *Dreamer* energy listened poorest on two factors (Semantic and Pragmatic Inferences, and Subtextual Cues); and those with high *Reactor* energy listened poorest on the factor relating to drawing pragmatic and semantic inferences.

Discussion

It was anticipated that educators who are more intrinsically motivated and withdrawn (Workaholics and Persisters) would listen more effectively than any of the other personality types, because they seem to prefer auditory input. This was not the case with Persisters, even though the contention related to Workaholics was borne out.

A possible reason that Persisters did not listen as well was because they tend to overlay messages with their beliefs initially. That is, they evaluate the message using their values and opinions as they consider the worth and utility of the information.

Prior to the data collection, the presumption of differences was based on the various orientations and descriptions of the personality types identified by the *Process Communication Model* (Kahler, 1982). Workaholics and Persisters are motivated by recognition for their work – a focus on accomplishment acknowledged by others and a certain precision in functioning. They experience the world through *thoughts* and *opinions,* respectively. Knowing that Reactors are more people-oriented and need acceptance of self, that Dreamers prefer solitude with little or no interaction with others, and that Rebels and Promoters need the more kinesthetic interaction of playful contact and incidence led the researcher to the construct that there would be a difference in listening performance.

Using the factors determined by Villaume and Weaver (1996) yielded some interesting and predictable results. Workaholic energy may allow one to focus better on factual information; the more Workaholic one is the better one can sort through data delivered orally.

High Dreamer energy may confound a listener unless the directions for gleaning information are provided beforehand. Similarly, those whose feelings guide them tend to have difficulty in sifting through information to use pragmatic and semantic inferences effectively.

The researcher, who oversaw the administration of all of the listening tests, observed some consistent flagging of attention as the test progressed. Villaume and Weaver (1996) also echoed that the longer version of the *WBLT* might be fatiguing.

A disappointment was the failure of all of the subjects to complete the *PPI*; hence, there were fewer complete files to use for the more extensive data analyses. Using the current (shorter) version of the *WBLT,* after it has been factor analyzed, would provide another way of gathering the listening data. Different "incentives" or finding a more captive way of collecting the personality information would be more salutary. An additional problem is the cost of the *PPI*, which is substantial when compared with other instruments. This means that categorical support would be necessary to use the instrument more extensively. Its value is its comprehensiveness, which does not appear to be available elsewhere.

Summary and Implications

Gilbert (1988; 1989) reported that listening is required in classrooms and in other educational situations a majority of the time, but most educators have had little or no formal training in learning and teaching the *skill* of listening. Moreover, the differences in personalities and preferences provide other layers of explanation as to what happens in classrooms (Bailey, 1998; Gilbert, 1999).

Since the gap between the need for listening and preparation in listening appears to be consistent, the researcher wanted to examine whether certain types of educators listened more effectively than others, especially as the research might have implications for classroom environments. The representative educators demonstrated limited significant differences in their listening effectiveness as measured by the *Watson-Barker Listening Test.*

Educators who have a strong ability to think (as opposed to feel, believe, etc.) appeared to be the best listeners. Those who are more reflective and are highly directable listened least effectively.

Most educators typically use auditory and visual input for instructional activities — approaches that work best with students who have those preferences. If learners follow the same patterns as the educators in this current study, Workaholics will be most effective in taking in factual information by listening. Reactors will need encouragement to look past the literal information. Dreamers will need to be directed to focus on particular aspects of messages to listen effectively.

If Persisters are to listen effectively, they may need to be given time to filter messages through their belief systems. Rebels and Promoters will have to be motivated to listen, since it is likely they prefer to learn kinesthetically. This means these students can *shift* their learning preferences *only* if they meet their *contact* and *incidence* needs first and positively.

Educators should be sensitive to potential problems in overusing the auditory mode to present material. While oral presentation might be preferable for classroom control and for other reasons, it may also foster distress in those learners who prefer to take in information visually or kinesthetically.

Those educators whose preferences or personality strengths suggest they might listen better to be more effective would do well to seek workshops or training in developing listening skills. Teacher educators might also consider adding instruction in listening to pre-service programs to make requisite training in a critical communication skill that will augment the emphasis on classroom management and discipline strategies (Ritter & Taylor, 1990).

Effective teachers must first connect with their students personally as the precursor to foster student learning. This may result in their being remembered by their students, in part, for their active listening and empathy (Ferguson & Thomas, 1987).

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