

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education (AETC)
Maxwell AFB, AL 36118

1 Mar 18

AIRMAN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL
STUDENT GUIDE

PART I
COVER SHEET

LESSON TITLE: CF05, SELF-AWARENESS

TIME: 3 Hours

METHOD: Guided Discussion and Experiential

REFERENCES:

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2618, *The Enlisted Force Structure*, 27 February 2009.

Kirton, M. J. *Adaption-Innovation in the Context of Diversity and Change* (New York, NY): Routledge, 2003.

Kirton, M. J. *Adaptors and Innovators: Why New Initiatives Get Blocked Paper*, 1999

Luft, J. and Ingham, H. "The Johari Window, A Graphic Model of Interpersonal Awareness," Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development, Los Angeles: UCLA, 1955

STUDENT PREPARATION: Read student guide (approx. 5,400 words, 22 minutes), complete all ECAT self-assessments (e-CPE, e-SALB, e-TMPRE, and e-CMSPE approx. 20minutes) and print/save copies to your personal computer for future reference.

PART IA

GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOME: Students who graduate from Airman Leadership School will possess an improved knowledge and understanding of *Self-Awareness* and *Adaption-Innovation Theory (A-I Theory)*

SUPPORTED COMPETENCIES/DIRECTIVES:

This *Self-Awareness* lesson supports the following Air Force Institutional Competency (IC) and sub-competencies:

- Embodies Airman Culture: Develops Self
- AFDD 1-1 and AFI 36-2618: The Enlisted Force Structure

TERMINAL COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE: Comprehend Self-Awareness concepts and their impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

TERMINAL COGNITIVE SAMPLES OF BEHAVIOR:

1. Explain Self-Awareness and its impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

2. Give examples of Self-Awareness and its impact NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.
3. Predict the impact of Self-Awareness on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVE: Value Self-Awareness and its impact on NCO, unit, and mission effectiveness.

PART IB

ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN: Topical

ASSOCIATED LESSONS: Since this lesson is a Course Foundation, it is associated with all other ALS lessons. CF04 Full Range Leadership, SA05 Leader Influence, SA03 Team Leader, and SA06 Intro in Negotiating.

PART IC

LESSON OUTLINE:

CONTENT
INTRODUCTION: Attention, Motivation, and Overview
MP 1. SELF-AWARENESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Blind SpotsB. Maturity
MP 2. AI THEORY BASICS <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. What is A-I Theory?B. Key Terms
MP 3. PREFERRED COGNITIVE STYLE <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Adaptors and InnovatorsB. Key Points of A-I TheoryC. Cognitive GapD. Coping Behavior
MP 4. STUDENT ACTIVITY
CONCLUSION: Summary, Re-motivation, and Closure

PART II

STUDENT READING

It is probably safe to assume that at this point in your career you have been part of a team, in charge of a team, or have been tasked to lead projects within your work-center. Think for a moment about both experiences. Did everything always go smoothly? Did every team member accomplish their assigned tasks flawlessly? Or, did turmoil occur between team members as they attempted to problem solve together? If you answered yes to any of those questions, how did you handle the situation?

As a first-line supervisor, in charge of teams, you must learn to solve difficult problems that may sometimes be complex and/or hard to define. You must also develop the ability to adapt to situations as they develop. A perfect solution in one situation, could be a disaster in another. Effective problem solving relies on different talents, in different combinations, in order to reach lasting solutions.

Self-Awareness will help you understand yourself the diversity of thought amongst your team members. Knowing how you and the people in your work-center prefer to think can help you effectively solve problems and in turn contribute to team and mission success.

MP 1. SELF-AWARENESS

According to Merriam-Webster self-awareness is an awareness of one's own personality, which includes knowing what your strengths, weakness, and blind spot. Knowing these things about yourself has a significant impact on how you behave as a leader and how you interact with those that you supervise.

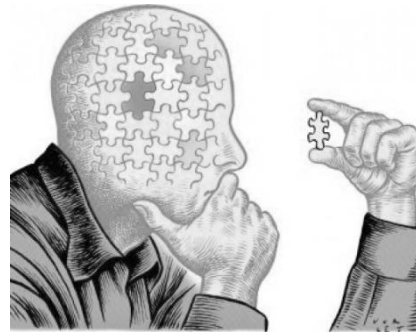


Figure 1

A. Blind Spots

One of the most commonly used models used to illustrate your self-awareness and what others perceive of you is illustrated in The Johari Window (see figure 2). This framework, developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is essentially a matrix with four quadrants used to determine how you typically operate as levels of self-awareness and others' awareness of you change.

Counter-clockwise and beginning in the upper left-hand corner of the model, the *Open* windowpane refers to characteristics and traits that you and others know about yourself. For example, you and others may realize that you do not care for sitting through long meetings, eating chocolate, or that you have a habit for playing with your hair when you are nervous. The next windowpane, *Hidden*, (or façade) regards aspects about yourself that you refuse to share with others. Sometimes referred to as the “skeletons within our closet,” these may include

fears, traumatic past experiences, etc. However, sharing information about these characteristics moves this awareness from the hidden to the open pane. The next windowpane, *Unknown*, refers to aspects about ourselves that no one knows, to include ourselves. For instance, you will never know if you like or despise broccoli unless you try it. Neither you nor anyone else knows for sure whether you like (or despise) broccoli. On the other hand, once you try broccoli and share your opinion of it with others, your love, (or hatred) for broccoli moves from the *Unknown* to the *Open* pane.

In this model, the *Blind* spot refers to an aspect of our personality that is not known to self, but is apparent to others. For example, others may notice that you lack eye contact when talking to people. You, however, may be completely unaware of this. It is only through the process of receiving feedback that the blind spot can be addressed. You become aware of the eye contact issue and change this behavior. In effect, the blind spot is reduced through identification and learning—moving you to the left of Johari’s Window to the area of “known to others and known to self.”

The first step to reducing these Blind Spots is being aware of them. Once you realize they exist, you can then explore ways to reduce your Blind Spots.

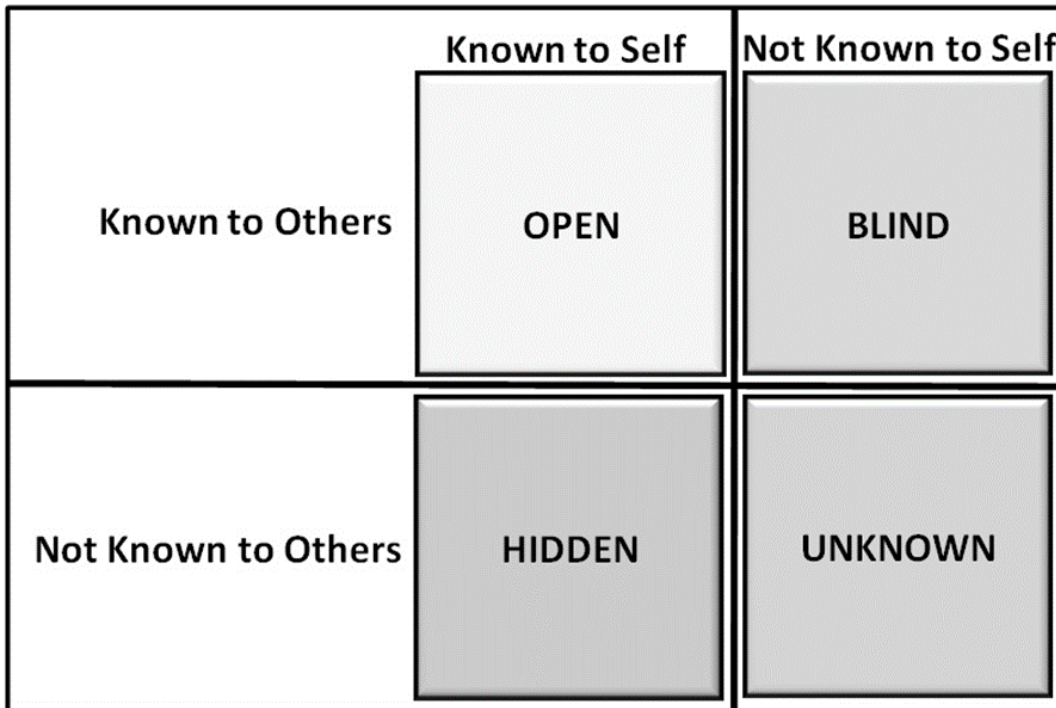


Figure 2

B. Maturity

Maturity is the ability to express one's own strengths, feelings, and beliefs in a manner that is considerate to the abilities, thoughts, and feelings of others. One's maturity can be viewed as a continuum of low maturity to high maturity. A person with a high level of maturity can be referred to as humble, modest, and discreet.

Maturity is a product of, and the proverbial "face" of, our character. Maturity develops as character develops. A low level of maturity doesn't necessarily mean a person is immature; it simply means the person requires development. To develop maturity, one should expand their knowledge and be willing to make personal behavioral changes (sometimes sacrifices) to better empathize, relate, and communicate with people of different character.

As a person develops their maturity, he/she might start out with a low-level, firmly believing that their way is the best/correct way. They may even "force" their preferences on others. As you mature you gain knowledge and experience, this allows you to be open to multiple ways in gaining self-awareness such as learning about the Adaption and Innovation Theory. The next main point we will discuss A-I Theory. A-I theory is one of the self-awareness tools that enables you to have a better understanding of your own cognitive preference and of those that are in your work-center or on your team.

MP 2. WHAT IS A-I THEORY?

What is A-I Theory? We get A-I Theory from Kirton's Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KAI). The Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (KAI) is a psychometric instrument that has been tested across many cultures, and for over 40 years, proven to be one of the world's most reliable and valid instruments for measuring cognitive preference. Kirton's work proves that preferred styles are established by the late teenage years and remains stable throughout life. The instrument is so reliable that if you took it when you first joined the Air Force and then take it again while attending this school, your score today would be within one half of a standard error of measurement (10 points) deviation from your original score.

A. A-I Theory Basics

Kirton's adaptive-innovative theory was developed in order to explain cognitive tendencies and problem-solving styles. For example Adaptors desire to do things better, improves processes; innovators seek to do things differently, think outside the box. KAI is a theory that attempts to explain differences in creativity and, in this understanding, create more cohesion and collaboration among team members. By understanding the differences between adaptors and innovators, you as a NCO can better influence and manage teams of people who are diverse in their cognitive styles.

B. Key Terms

- **Adaptors** - Prefer to solve problems in a structured and methodical manner. Creativity is exercised "inside the box." Someone that prefers

this style usually comes up with ideas by modifying the current organizational paradigm.

- **Innovators** – Prefer to solve problems in a manner that is less concerned with structure and details. Creativity is exercised “outside the box.” Someone that prefers this style usually breaks or goes against the current organizational paradigm when coming up with ideas.

- **Bridger** – A person willing to help others understand the cognitive approach between those being bridged through interpersonal skills, active listening, and effective questioning techniques. Bridgers accomplish this through the roles of counselor, mediator, and negotiator.



Figure 3

- **Style** – Refers to “how we think,” our preferred cognitive approach to problem solving and decision making. These style differences, which are normally distributed along a continuum, range from strong adaption to strong innovation
- **Problem A** – This is the “actual problem” that two or more individuals come together to solve.
- **Problem B** – This encompasses all of the problems (team dynamics, interpersonal skills, communication, collaboration, etc.) that stem, from “human interaction.” Problem B’s steal time and energy from efforts needed to solve Problem A.
- **Motive** – An emotional, desire, or physiological need that causes one to take action.
- **Opportunity** – An appropriate or favorable time, occasion, or situation favorable for attainment of a goal.

MP 3. PREFERRED COGNITIVE STYLE

Have you ever been tasked to work with a group of individuals to solve a problem in your work center? Maybe you were tasked to implement a new work schedule or possibly reduce the amount of time it takes to complete a process. Imagine that some members of the group think that the best solution is to do away with what is currently in place and replace it with something new. Others may think, we already have a framework to deal with, let’s improve what we currently have. Which would you prefer? What if the majority thinks differently than you do? How would you feel? In this section you will learn more about the preferred

cognitive style and how as a leader you can capitalize on team members' ability to solve problems.

A. **Adaptors and Innovators**

Adaptors and innovators naturally approach problem solving and managing change differently. The A-I Theory is founded on the assumption that all people solve problems and are creative. The A-I construct helps define each persons preferred cognitive style of problem solving.

Adaptors are described as “doing things better.” Adaptors prefer more structure and would rather utilize the existing framework to improve team processes or to solve organizational problems. Innovators on the other hand prefer to do things differently. They have the tendency to overhaul the entire process and are less concerned with acting in accordance with the existing structures. Review the figure below to see how their tendencies differ.

<i>Adaptors</i> Tendencies	<i>Innovators</i> Tendencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer more structure • Improve or extend the paradigm in order to solve problems • Use rules to solve problems • Bring order out of turbulence • Revitalize current systems for tomorrow • Work within the system to bring about new improvement, ideas, and greater efficiencies • Supply consensus, sensitivity, and group cohesion • Provide stability and continuity • Provide a safe testing group for risky ventures • Value themselves for being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvers • Resource Effective • Supportive • Consistent • Methodical • Masters of Structure • Sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer less structure • Challenge or break the paradigm in order to solve problems • May break the rules to solve problems • Catalyze the necessary turbulence. • Help create break from worn-out systems • Work outside the system to bring about different ideas and different structures for the high Adaptors • Provide the break with accepted theory • Provoke the group to reconsider consensus related issues • Supply the dynamics to bring about discontinuous change • Value themselves for being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full of Ideas • Provocative • Assumption Challengers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent Risk-takers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting of Change • Intuitive • Mold Breakers • Shocking • Daring Risk-takers
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Figure 4

B. Key Points of A-I Theory

First-line supervisors are faced with the difficult task of leading diverse teams in a rapidly changing culture. This may be challenging for some, due to inexperience or maybe the lack of opportunity. In either case, the important thing to understand is that recognizing the value of individuals, despite their style of problem solving, allows all individuals to contribute to mission success and feel like valued members of the organization. Remember all individuals are problem solvers and as such are agents of change. Following these three key points will help enhance your effectiveness as you begin, or continue to, provide the leadership necessary to increase the efficiency of your teams.

- *Problem Solving Limits*

Effective leaders and team members have many things in common, but one of the most notable is the fact that they are good at solving problems! However, when we problem solve, we all have our limitations. For example, in our intelligence, no one has an endless capacity of knowledge. Simply put, even someone whom some would consider to be the smartest in the world would be limited when problem solving alone. Even groups of people with similar cognitive styles can be limited in the problem solving process because of the shared preferred approach to problem solving. This is important for you as a first line supervisor and team lead to remember. Consider this, if you were to assemble a team, brought together to fix a process, with only individuals that are all mildly innovative you would probably soon find out that it is not as effective at generating the variety of ideas as you may have anticipated. Restricting the variety of ideas limits your options when seeking lasting solutions.

- *Managing A-I Diversity*

Managing a diverse team can lead to unique challenges, advantages, pitfalls, and successes. As a first-line supervisor you will interact with a myriad of people to solve a variety of problems every day. To be truly successful at solving both Problem A's and Problem B's, you must be able to effectively manage the diversity that stems from people whose cognitive preference ranges from highly adaptive to highly innovative and every point in between.

It is important to not only understand your cognitive style, but it is equally important to understand the preferred styles of others you interact with on a daily basis. This basic understanding may help you to reduce Problem B's and keep your team focused on their primary roles.

- *Learning Capability*

All of us are intelligent and creative at different levels and with different styles. Therefore, all of us are capable of learning to contribute to team problem solving, as long as there is both motive and opportunity; motive is the emotional, desire, or physiological need that causes one to take action. Opportunity presents itself when an appropriate or favorable time, occasion, or situation becomes favorable for attainment of a goal.

Even highly adaptive people are creative and do not require structure (although it is preferred) to problem solve. However, it is much more difficult for the highly adaptive person to solve the problem in this situation (less structure) than it would be for a slightly innovative person, or even a mildly adaptive person for that matter. As a first-line supervisor it's your responsibility to provide opportunity and motive for the Airmen you lead during the problem solving process. For example if you are a more adaptive person you may prefer to do things in a structured organized manner while you may have an airman that is more innovative and completes a task by thinking outside the box and with no real structure involved.

As a first-line supervisor you will interact with a myriad of people to solve a variety of problems every day. To be truly successful at solving both Problem A's and Problem B's, NCOs must be able to effectively manage the diversity that stems from people whose cognitive preference ranges from highly adaptive to highly innovative and every point in-between.

A-I Theory Continuum

The A-I Theory Continuum is depicted in conjunction with the bell curve and it displays the distribution of style preferences from strong adaptor to strong innovator. Although your position on the continuum remains stable over time, how you are perceived is relative and changes depending on who (individuals/groups) you are interacting with.

Example 1:

In this example, you (Y) are in the Mild Innovator area of the continuum and the people (P) you work with are very close to your position on the continuum. These people perceive you (and you perceive them) as being very similar. If this group were tasked to address a situation in the work center, they could easily, readily agree on what they consider to be the most efficient way to accomplish this task.

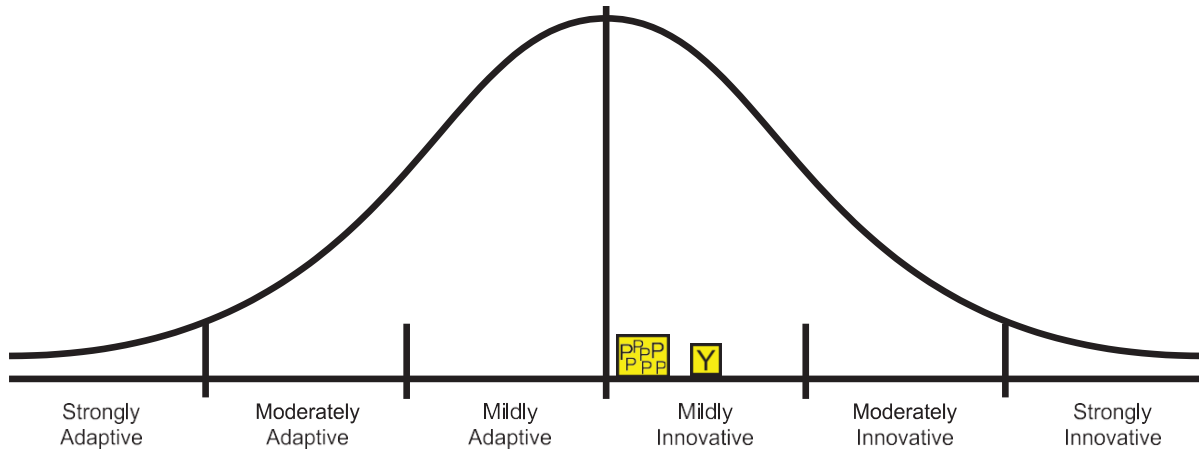


Figure 5

Example 2:

Although your position (Y) on the continuum has not changed, the people you interact with fall in the Moderate and Strong Adaptor areas of the continuum, and as a result, they may perceive you as more unsound, impractical, and riskier than they perceive themselves. You probably see them as more conforming, predictable and inflexible than yourself. If this group were tasked to address a situation in the work center, they may find it difficult to readily agree on what they consider to be the most efficient way to accomplish the task.

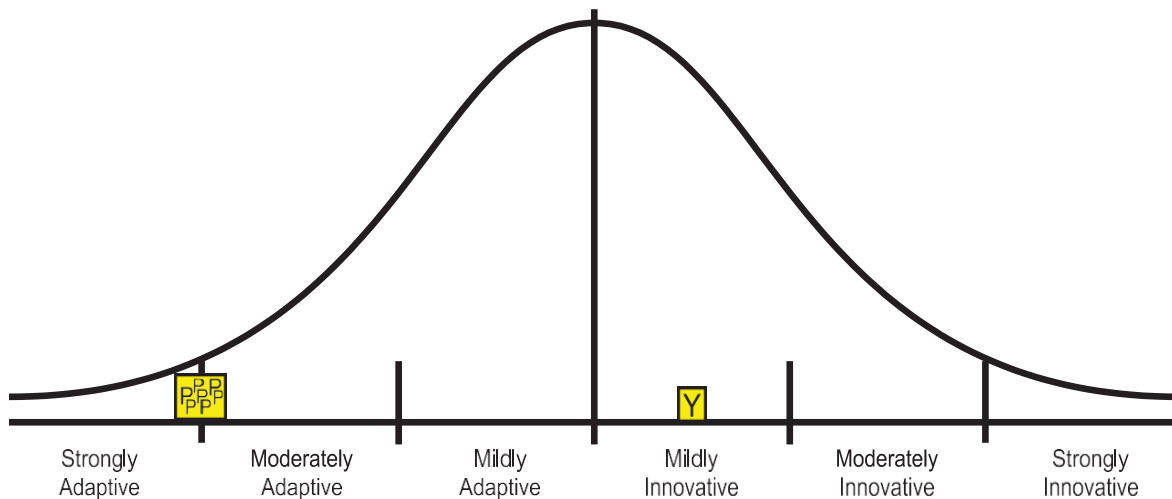


Figure 6

Example 3:

Once again, your position has not changed, but this time, the people you must interact with fall just below the Strong Innovator descriptor on the continuum. This means they will more than likely perceive you as conforming, predictable, inflexible, wedded to the system, and intolerant of ambiguity. In this situation, it may be more challenging for agreement and to portray your ideas to the others assigned to the task.

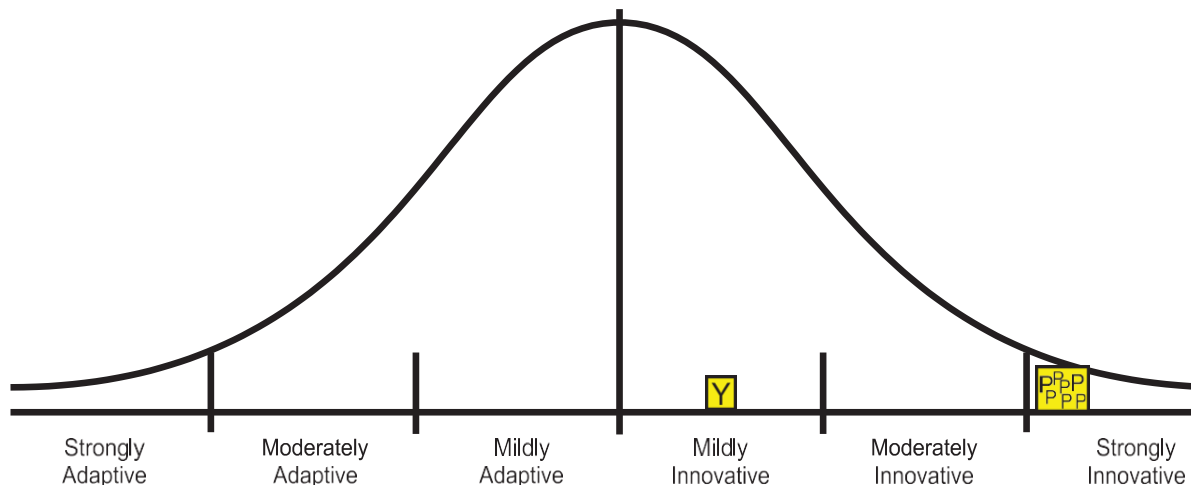


Figure 7

So, as you can see, it's all relative! Although your position on the continuum does not change, how others perceive you and how you perceive them depends on where you are on the continuum in relation to their position.

So what is the take away from these examples? First, it is equally important that you understand how others perceive you, and why they perceive you that way. Remember group problem solving is relative to where you and others fall on the continuum. Second, although large gaps between styles means greater chances of conflict (i.e. Problem B), it also offers greater potential/ability to solve problems (Problem A) because of cognitive diversity. Regardless of where we fall on the continuum, we can all be equally creative, which also means we can all be equally good or equally bad at handling change.

In the examples above the words and phrases such as predictable, inflexible, wedded to the system, and unsound were used to describe the more adaptive. And words like impractical, risky, and abrasive to describe the more innovative. In reality, both styles have many traits, tendencies, and characteristics that aid in the problem solving process and should not be considered as either just simply "good" or "bad." As an NCO, it is your responsibility to ensure that team members are not labeled as such.

You should now have a better understanding of the A-I Theory Continuum and how all positions are relative to each other. Although there may be gaps between your position and the position of others, if managed appropriately, the potential for conflict can be kept to a minimum.

C. Cognitive Gap

There are two forms of cognitive gap. The first form is the distance between one's preferred style and the behavior actually needed in a particular situation (i.e. the distance between one's preferred style and his/her task). The second form is the distance in a social interaction between the preferred styles of two people, a person and a group, or between two groups.

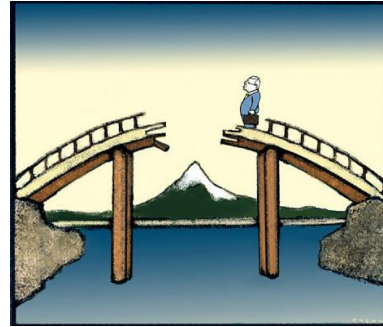


Figure 8

Potential for Conflict

A difference in cognitive styles becomes noticeable when the distance between two individuals or two groups falls on the extreme edges of the A-I Theory Continuum. When these gaps occur, they can range from small to significant. In each case, there are advantages and disadvantages.

- **Small Gaps:** The advantage of a small gap is that there is very little, if any, conflict. If conflict does occur, both individuals and/or groups find it easy to manage. Small gaps allow for an easier solution to a problem to be reached. The disadvantage of this gap is like-minded thinking can lead to less than optimal solutions. (Figure 5 above)
- **Large Gaps:** The advantage here is that different perspectives lead to better solutions when dealing with Problem A. The disadvantage is that individuals must expend time and energy coping and managing Problem B. Individuals may find they must consciously manage relationships due to minor, but very noticeable conflicts caused by their difference in styles. (Figure 6 above)
- **Significant Gaps:** Once again, the advantage of this cognitive gap is a wider range of thinking that can lead to outstanding solutions for Problem A. The disadvantage is that when the cognitive gap is at the extreme ends of the ranges for the groups, these individuals (or groups) experience a great deal of conflict and need increasing amounts of coping behavior to manage/maintain the relationship. Individuals usually end up expending more energy and time coping and trying to fix Problem B than they expend on solving Problem A. In many cases, without help, these individuals or groups may never even get around to solving Problem A. (Figure 7 above)

Potential for Problem Solving

Adaptors and innovators are equally good at solving problems...but optimal problem solving results from both adaptors and innovators working on the problem together because it brings all perspectives of a problem to light. Although this may bring Problem B into the mix, leaders who manage this *cognitive diversity* effectively end up with the best possible solutions.

Because all organizations naturally cycle through periods of steadiness-change-steadiness, they need a mix of adaptors and innovators to help with the myriad of challenges that stem from this cycle. Imagine an organization (or team) comprised of only adaptors. Given what

has previously been presented, it would be an organization full of people who are extremely good at solving problems by “staying within the organization’s paradigm,” “working within the existing structure, rules, and policies,” and ensuring they had group consensus on every decision before implementing any change. This organization would have great efficiency and operate like a well-oiled machine...at first. However, nothing in the United States Air Force is static for long. Missions change and when they do, the organization must be able to change and adapt as well. Organizations with only adaptors handle small, incremental changes just fine...but major changes may send it into a death spiral.

Now imagine an organization (or team) comprised of only innovators. Again, given what has previously been presented, it would be an organization full of people who are extremely good at solving problems by “breaking the rules”, “working outside the existing structure, rules, and policies”, and having little or no concern for group consensus before implementing change. Although this organization might experience major success at first, it would not be very efficient in the long run because of the constant change and very little rule following which in-turn allows for less stability.

Organizations with only adaptors or only innovators quickly perish or fail in effectively executing its mission. The take away here is that optimal problem solving results from both adaptors and innovators working on the problem together which also requires effective management of the cognitive gaps that may exist. An effective method for managing cognitive gaps is through the use of Bridgers.

Cognitive gaps are key factors in ensuring the success or the failure of an integrated organization; they must be managed wisely. This task is complicated and challenging. The gaps that are necessary must be handled effectively in order to eliminate the gaps that limit the organization. On one hand you can attempt to manage the cognitive gaps that exist and create conflict among individuals by simply changing their job positions or duties, delegating or reassigning team roles, or reorganizing teams or certain team members. However, as members of the Profession of Arms, we seldom have the luxury of simply changing jobs or reassigning individuals. That’s where Bridgers come into play. So just what role does a Bridger play?

First and foremost, bridging is a social role that requires:

- Interpersonal skills (or else there is a danger of making matters worse)
- Bridgers to be acceptable to those they are attempting to bridge (trust/acceptance)
- A willingness to fulfill the role (many people don’t like to be the go-between for others)

To be successful, the role of a Bridger should not be mandated. Remember, trust is a key aspect and the Bridger must be objective and able to communicate with every member of the team. If mandated, it may take away from the authenticity of the role. It also helps if the Bridger has a cognitive preference somewhere between those needing to be bridged.

Successful Bridgers help those being bridged understand each other’s approach through the use of interpersonal skills, active listening, and effective questioning techniques. This helps both parties understand why and how the other party approaches problem solving

and also helps both parties understand each other's strengths and weakness, which in-turn helps both parties expend more effort on Problem A.

Bridging is a learned skill, one that NCOs must learn, to add to their effectiveness. Bridgers assist with the forward movement of ideas and work to get all parties involved on the same page. When no one is available (or willing) to fulfill the role of Bridger, NCOs may find themselves in a situation where they have no choice but to act as the Bridger. It is important to note that when Bridgers are not available or willing to bridge the gap it does not mean decisions don't get made and processes are allowed to breakdown. It means an individual may have to work outside their preferred style causing them to use coping behaviors in order to ensure mission success.

Coping Behavior

Have you ever been in a situation where you just didn't enjoy going to work? Maybe you didn't enjoy the task or the assignment. Or maybe it wasn't because of the job but, because of the individuals you were assigned to work with. For some, no matter how much is applied in building a working relationship with some members of the team, maintaining that relationship over time becomes just too stressful. Many people simply cope with the situation with a hope that an opportunity may come along to move to another tasking or that the task will be completed quickly. Coping behavior helps some individuals deal with stressful situations but, coping comes at a cost.

When coping, adaptors must move away from familiar, consensually agreed upon structure into territory with more of the kinds of risk they carefully avoid. On the other hand innovators may be forced to work within the constraints of a structured system and have less flexibility than they would prefer.

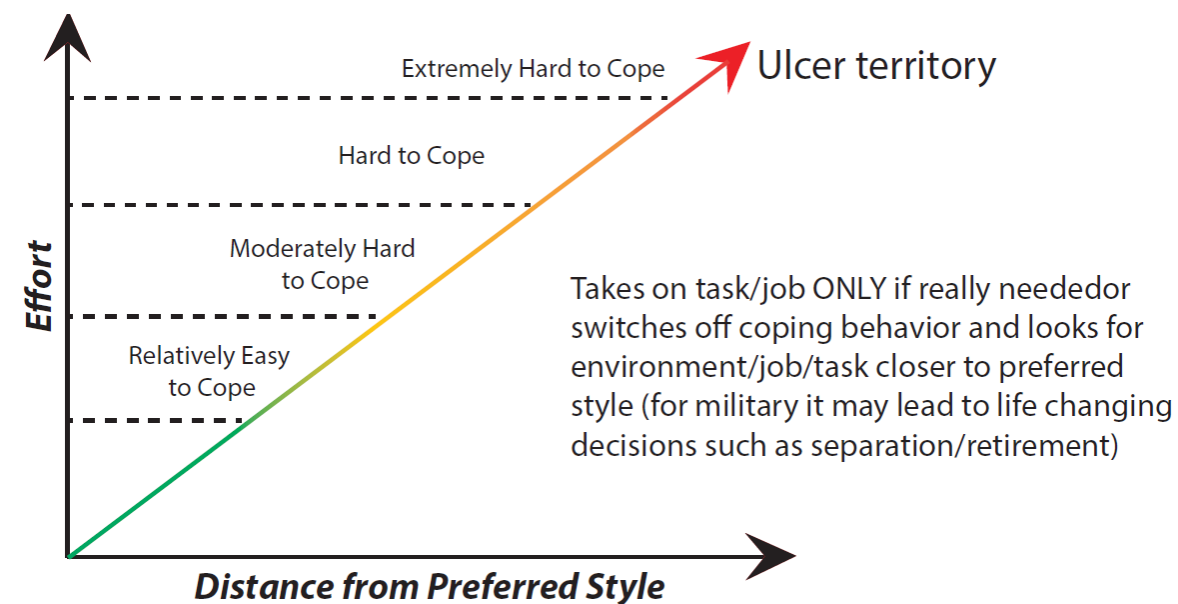


Figure 9

Cost of Coping Behavior

The Cost of Coping Behavior figure above shows us two very important points:

First, we can cope for long periods of time when the behavior required is not too far away from our preferred style.

Second, the further we move away from our preferred style, the harder it is to continue coping. If we are unable to walk away from a situation for reasons outside our control, and must continue coping, the effort takes a toll on our mental and physical health. Eventually, the effort becomes so psychologically costly that, regardless of the consequences, we lose our motive and switch off our coping. When this happens, we see people make life-changing choices in order to get away from the situation so they can return to a state where they can use their preferred style. When people stop coping, we often see a significant impact: switching career fields, no-notice retirements, and separation from the service without benefits, divorces, and suicides.

“Turn Off” Coping

If operating outside our preferred style is psychologically expensive—why do we do it?

The simple answer is Motive, which generates additional energy and discounts additional discomfort until either the task is complete, or it becomes possible to solve the problem within limits closer to one’s preferred style. Of course, if there is no opportunity for this to occur, then there is little to no motive. Although there are many definitions for motive and opportunity, for our purposes we define them as follows:

Motive: “An emotion, desire, physiological need, or similar impulse that causes one to take action.”

Opportunity: “An appropriate or favorable time, occasion, or situation favorable for attainment of a goal.”

When motive is switched off, coping behavior is also switched off! There are at least four conditions where we simply “turn off” our coping behavior.

- Condition 1 - When operating in an environment where we can use our preferred style (i.e. little to no Cognitive Gap exists). This would happen when you are working on a project, on your own, with complete autonomy to design and implement it however you desired.
- Condition 2 - When operating in an environment where we cannot use our preferred style because of a large Cognitive Gap (e.g. Mild Adaptor working with/for Strong Innovator). This may occur when you and your co-worker are tasked to complete a project together and your cognitive preferences are separated by more than one preference.
- Condition 3 - When the opportunity requiring you to cope no longer exists (new position, duties, assignment, boss, etc.). This would occur when you get a new job within your organization or are no longer required to work with others on a daily basis. (especially ones that have much different preferences)

- Condition 4 - When the motive for coping no longer exists or is no longer important (unable to get promoted, recognized, or rewarded or some changing event has occurred). This would occur if you reached high year tenure and you knew the possibility of promotion no longer exists or if you were in a situation and realized under the circumstances that your efforts were going to go unnoticed.

A little bit of stress in our lives is normal and can be a good thing – it keeps us engaged and enables us to meet challenges. Most of us develop certain habits that act as coping mechanisms and outlets for stress. But, as previously stated, coping over long periods of time is not healthy and will eventually lead to dangerous health implications. Stress interferes with sleep, work, and general enjoyment of life.

As first-line supervisors it is important that you are aware of not only your stress level but, also the level of stress your team members may be experiencing. Remain vigilant and be on the lookout for individuals exhibiting coping behavior. Being on the lookout for and appropriately identifying coping or undue stress may enable you to determine the root cause of the stressor and provide you an opportunity to assist your subordinates in times of need.

MP 4: STUDENT ACTIVITY

Students will participate in either a Commandant Hour focused on Self-Awareness or in the “Marshmallow Challenge” small group exercise where you will work in a small group of three or four to build the tallest free standing tower using just spaghetti noodles, tape, and string. During this challenge look for traits in others that would identify them as being innovated or adaptive.

CONCLUSION

The self-assessments that you complete in this course were specifically designed so you can learn about yourself and others in a way that helps you become more skilled at interacting with people. The knowledge you have gained in this lesson will help you communicate with others in a way that fosters mutual understanding and acceptance. In doing so it will enhance your effectiveness as a first-line supervisor and an NCO.

Kirton wrote, “To problem solve successfully . . . we need to view problems and conceive solutions in terms of what is needed. . . we need to understand how each person in our problem-solving team works, so as to get the best out of everyone as the nature of each problem changes.”