

Learning to teach type and the MBTI: An Accreditation Experience

Peter Geyer

BA (Hons) DipEd GradDip(OrgBeh) MSc PhD candidate
Centre for Research into Education, Equity and Work
University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes SA 5095 Australia
alchymia@ozemail.com.au ; www.petergeyer.com.au

Background

For reasons unknown to me, perhaps a difference in professional language, the term "Accreditation" has always been used for the MBTI Qualifying process in Australia.

Australian MBTI Accreditation courses themselves have varied, sometimes colourful origins, and the first Accreditation courses or workshops (Stephen Moss; Institute for Type Development) commenced operations without any involvement from the (then) sole Australian MBTI distributor in the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). This was in the mid-1980s. Moss had approval of sorts from US APT to both establish an Australian APT and to conduct courses (this was subsequently withdrawn after a few contentious issues). Katharine Myers and Margaret Hartzler taught the first Institute for Type Development (ITD) course in Sydney in 1986.

Personal MBTI Accreditation

By the time I became accredited in mid-late 1989 (having discovered MBTI a year earlier as part of studies in Organisational Behaviour), another MBTI distributor had arrived (Australian Psychologists Press-APP). The course I attended was conducted by Greg Latemore on behalf of Coopers and Lybrand: a direct descendant of the Moss course. Another Moss alumnus, Daniel Foster, also conducted Accreditation courses, as did ACER on an irregular basis, as well as APP. I didn't know of any of these people or organisations at the time; advertising for the Latemore course was the first that crossed my desk.

The course was 6 days in length: divided into 3, 2 and 1 days. The latter was a refresher/revision day. Well over 30 people were in attendance, in a crowded room. Isabel Myers' *Gifts Differing* was provided and a spiral bound course workbook which also contained Chapter X (10) of C.G.Jung's *Psychological Types*.

The assessment included a *practicum* where participants gave the MBTI to 5 people providing feedback on the results, and then commenting on the experience in both verbal and written form. This was held in between the third and fourth days. A written exam was also set, which included the calculation of a correlation coefficient

(a mysterious requirement to me then, and now, but it was apparently regular at one time). Results were notified sometime after the completion of the course, which I recall as a quite stressful and perhaps unnecessary experience from an educational point of view.

Greg Latemore was the predominant presenter and quite engaging. He reawakened my interest in Jung through his knowledge and anecdotes. The Latemore course was refused recognition by CPP in 1996, along with other local MBTI Accreditation courses, at least partly because of Jungian content not considered relevant to the teaching of the MBTI.

Developing MBTI knowledge

My interest and involvement in the MBTI grew, and I managed to have an MBTI-related project at Australia Post, where I worked at the time. So these names mentioned above, as well as others I was previously unaware of, became more familiar, particularly with my decision to attend the 1991 APT Conference in Richmond Va (something I found out about by accident) and the founding of an Australian Association for Psychological Type (now AusAPT) later that year. I became involved in type as much as I could.

I'd also engaged in further study at the Masters level and had embarked on my thesis *Quantifying Jung: The Origin and Development of the MBTI*. In early 1993, I was asked by ACER to conduct their MBTI Accreditation Programme.

ACER MBTI Accreditation Programme 1993 -1995

The offer to develop and conduct this course came as I was starting off in business for myself, and so I took the opportunity with both hands. Taking ACER's advice to have someone of different type to co-train the course, I collaborated with Glenda Hutchinson, a training consultant, on developing and presenting the course, a task that took several months of research and discussion.

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Glenda had been Accredited through APP, and so we had two experiences to draw on, as well as her expertise and experience as a trainer in organisations, which was not my background at all. I provided technical knowledge and research. We agreed on a framework similar to the Latemore course, as that seemed to fit into what we both understood at the time to be adult learning principles. This was a 5-day course with three to four weeks between the third and fourth days.

There were random materials available from ACER, essentially handouts, but no course workbook, so we developed our own. No other information, other than a copy of an exam, was available concerning how the ACER Accreditation was conducted in the past. The course material was divided up in terms of interest and expertise, and two guest speakers were engaged, the first being someone from ACER to talk about the statistical component of the course. We thought it was better to have an expert than present statistics ourselves, but the person concerned didn't perform as expected and so we worked on developing that expertise ourselves. The other guest speaker was Peter Malone, who presented movie clips as illustrations of type preferences. Peter is well known today for his presentations at conferences and his columns in various type publications across the world.

Assessment was a combination of the *practicum* and an open-book exam based on ACER material. The open-book component proved problematic, particularly as the then MBTI Manual had no index, and so it wasn't difficult to find written justification for an incorrect answer. The language, too, was open to interpretation, and so there were regular revisions of questions in an attempt to tighten things up, and this was fairly successful.

The course itself, launched in late 1993, gained popularity and respect. The presenters worked hard, but fundamental differences in approach to the course and its management led to a split in early 1995. I continued the course with assistance from various others until it ceased to operate at the end of 1995. With ACER's agreement, it was replaced by an *MBTI Qualifying Workshop* developed by Otto Kroeger Associates, conducted by me as an Associate, conducted with the help of others.

Otto Kroeger Associates 1995-2005

Otto Kroeger and Janet Thuesen were involved in supporting and developing the fledgling Australian Association for Psychological Type from the early 1990s through their participation in Conferences and some financial help through donation. I got to know them in this context as well as through offering assistance for their advertised workshops in Melbourne. Otto made me an offer in 1993 to learn and present the OKA course, which I declined, but accepted

a year later when the offer was made again. After successfully negotiating with ACER regarding the benefits of replacing the course I was conducting with that from OKA, I spent 4 months in the USA learning about the course; subsequently becoming an Otto Kroeger Associate.

The OKA course was overtly much more a training course than what I'd been teaching, it being constructed for groups of 30-32 people, which I hadn't experienced, so I learned a lot. The course content itself seemed fairly compatible with my personal perspective, particularly the way the segment on Jung's ideas was set up. The only reservation I really had was giving up the *practicum*, which I liked. However, after I returned from the USA and conducted the last two courses containing this exercise, I observed that group discussion of the *practicum* results seemed fairly cursory, as if it were just a matter of ticking the boxes. This was fairly disappointing, as it was one of the few things associated with "adult learning" that I thought was worthwhile. However, this experience made it much easier to give this process away.

Developments and Change

As time went on I developed my own style of presenting the OKA course, collaborating with others for a while, notably Christine Boyer. But essentially course presentation has been a solo effort. I teach as a subject-matter expert in any case and so issues over the understanding and presentation of course content arose fairly quickly with co-trainers. I'm also the OKA Associate and so I have a responsibility for the information being imparted.

This approach is partly due to course numbers that, for the most part, have hardly justified two presenters, which has something to do with economics, politics and marketing, as well as personal preferences. However, the development of a teaching style for small groups enabled me to respond effectively to the surprisingly large numbers of people who wanted to be accredited in small groups, or as individuals. I asked for permission to teach the OKA course in this way.

Changes in the approach to assessment, driven by the publisher, also had an impact on the way I taught Accreditation courses. The in-house OKA exam was replaced by an international exam for all English-speaking countries.

Finally, a decision by CPP to withdraw permission for OKAs Qualifying Workshop to be taught in Australia means that I will no longer be teaching this type of course from June 30, 2006.

Numbers and courses

To date, I have conducted 107 MBTI Accreditation/Qualifying courses. This excludes my USA experience, but includes a course conducted for 9 expatriate academics at Zayed University, Dubai in early 2002. All other courses have been conducted in Australia, predominantly in Melbourne (and suburbs), but also city and suburbs of Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Hobart, Launceston and Sydney, as well as country areas of Victoria and Tasmania.

Venues range from the more conventional corporate offices and training rooms to hotel suites, small offices, home offices (including mine), kitchens, dining rooms and living rooms. Course numbers range from 1 to 27, the latter referring to one particular group, with the next highest number being 22, then 18.

The attached type table represents the successful participants in my courses in terms of their agreed type (best-fit is too loose a term). The percentage of each type in the group is indicated as such. Underneath a range of numbers, in brackets, indicates the estimated percentage of that type in the Australian population. There are no published norms for any MBTI Form in Australia, which is of professional concern. My estimates are gathered from experience and continuing work from the Psychological Type Research Unit at Deakin University, a joint venture between the University and the Australian Association for Psychological Type. It was founded in 1996.

It can be seen that more than twice as many females than males have attended my courses; the modal type is ENFP and the group type is ENTP. Females outnumber males in every type category with the exception of INTP and ISTP.

The sample is almost entirely comprised of Australian citizens or residents and includes one Aboriginal person. Small numbers of New Zealanders and people from Hong Kong, Singapore, the UK, Sweden and Canada have attended, as well as one Kuwaiti woman. The age of participants ranges from early 20s to late 60s.

Participants qualifications

Australian MBTI Accreditation courses have generally accepted participants without degree-level qualifications, in addition to those who have the basic requirement of a degree. This is consistent with a culture that currently places store on recognition for prior learning, and which has also a long tradition of working-class self-education amidst the usual anti-intellectual approach endemic in most cultures, which is there for both good and bad reasons.

At times there have been moves to formalise this approach in requiring specific sub-degree qualifications (e.g. Certificate IV in Workplace Training) as a pre-requisite. Apart from making a mistake in considering that the MBTI is going to be predominantly used in training situations,

rather than in consulting, coaching, counselling, managing, leading, mentoring and the like, this ignores that the key point is whether the person can engage with the topic.

This is essentially an intellectual question, not something related to credentials. A qualification is nothing without a broad understanding of the nature of human beings, however gathered. My experience is that as many, perhaps more, people with degree-level qualifications can struggle with the course content. Age is also a factor. Psychologically, an MBTI Accreditation course or equivalent is of more value to someone over 30, even late 30s, than younger people, even though the course may be well-comprehended intellectually.

Type development is the reason here.

Psychologists as participants

In Australia, as elsewhere, registered psychologists or equivalents do not have to sit for the Qualifying assessments. In some courses, a truncated version of is made available for them, on the basis that certain material will be redundant. The approach adopted in the courses I've been associated with treats psychologists as no different to any other professional group wishing to be accredited to purchase and use the MBTI.

Observation and experience would question the utility of a policy of providing a concession to any professional group on the basis of the presumed content of previous courses undertaken. This is particularly the case with regard to psychologists and an understanding of tests and measurement, let alone the ideas of C. G. Jung, rarely a part of a psychologists' training.

Psychologists of any type who have attended my course invariably state that they never understood the statistics they were taught at university and are grateful for my philosophical approach to numbers which in some cases has enabled them to understand the topic in some way for the first time. This might be more a reflection on the way they were initially taught than anything else.

Participants and the course

In my experience, Australians as a whole are more informal in their approach to learning about the MBTI than what I experienced in the USA in my OKA training. They are less likely to engage the pre-reading, on the basis that they'll get the answers to their questions at the course directly from the presenter. Groups I've taught readily agree to that proposition when I present it.

Consequently, a wide range of questions is asked and discussed, covering history,

psychology, anthropology, science, relationships, education, culture, religion and so on, as well as practical issues on the use of the MBTI. These questions are asked at any time in the course, but particularly after overnight reflection and home study. This suits my approach to teaching the topic and so I openly encourage questions on anything, undertaking to answer them. The course meanders a little more than it might as a consequence.

It might be added that the real value of texts like the *MBTI Manual*, much like texts in other disciplines, is after the course, rather than before, when there is more idea of what to look for and what it means.

This ambivalent approach to pre-reading also has something to do with the statistical component of the study. As a culture, Australians are not all that enamoured of statistical approaches, although this may be changing with increasing emphasis on testing as part of education over the past few years.

Those who attend university in Australia rarely make an acquaintance with mathematics, perhaps not at all where the humanities are concerned. Unlike the United States, for instance, there is no general year of study.

Participants' approach can be fairly close to cynicism, but also includes a perception that the MBTI must work because it does and so the professional work of others, i.e. psychometricians, is accepted as such, however arcane. NFs, as a group, however, can treat the whole statistical project with something approaching disdain, relying on their innate goodness to present the MBTI plausibly.

In general, participants see the statistical component of the course as not all that relevant to what they intend to do with the MBTI. Where participants have expertise in statistics (and this is much less than one in every group), they are useful in providing another means than mine in explaining the topic, although one or two remain skeptical, often rightly so, about the mathematical presuppositions behind the methods of psychometricians. C.G. Jung's comment that once you get into statistics you get outside the realm of psychology altogether would resonate with these people.

As a whole, Australian participants find the ideas of C.G. Jung congenial and interesting. They usually have little trouble seeing the relevance of his broader theory to a personality questionnaire. Having said that, a growing number of participants, tertiary qualified or otherwise, are completely unfamiliar with Jung, to the extent of thinking him Chinese. Many participants have come to the course via Jung's ideas.

A personal observation is that many people come to my Accreditation course at a liminal point in their life, where they are unconsciously needing to discover something about them-

selves, or even discover themselves in the first place. This is particularly synchronistic in the case of successful professional women in their late 20s - early 30s

Course Content

Although I've collaborated with others in teaching MBTI Accreditation courses in Australia, the nature of the teaching isn't collaborative in that I'm not part of a group of people teaching the same course, as is the case for Otto Kroeger Associates and other groups in the USA.

This means that I've effectively been the sole representative of the course I teach: I'm accountable for its teaching, and the management of the assessment process. Therefore, I have to be across all content areas in some depth. I think this also applies to other Accreditation courses in Australia where people over the years have been employed as trainers (an inadequate description of the requirements).

The paradox here is that essentially the MBTI teaches itself, in that the basic propositions are clear and it's a positive field of study in personality. So you can know comparatively little in the topic but still do a presentable job. Notwithstanding the approval of individuals and groups beforehand, I think I started to really know something about the topic after 8 years or so of intense work. This meant I could answer the hard questions, be clearer about what I didn't know and develop a competence and interest in areas that weren't my strengths when I started out.

This is important because a certain element of teaching type to people, particularly in an Accreditation setting, involves the acceptance of some fairly tenuous propositions, often tenuously proposed.

In the environment I've described earlier, where questions are encouraged, but also presented whether you want them or not, knowledge of the rubbery areas, and elimination of them as far as possible is essential. This is particularly the case given the still invidious status of the MBTI, a situation maintained by ignorance, wilful or otherwise and an inability for some reason (there are many, really) for its propositions to be articulated in a factual, philosophical, scientific and historical way. The situation alluded to is notwithstanding the excellence of much of MBTI associated material.

It's my nature to do this sort of thing, anyway, but here are areas I felt required investigation.

1. History of psychology. The questions here range from why anyone would want to make up a questionnaire in the first place, to how they came about and

where Jung fitted in. In teaching type, I think it has to be made clear that Jung didn't like questionnaires and would never have made one up himself; that Isabel Myers' MBTI as a questionnaire is a cultural solution (i.e. a US one) to the problem of how to help people using Jung's typology; that the origin of psychological instruments itself is controversial, both philosophically and socially; that both Isabel Myers and Jung took a scientific approach to their work; that in associating with Freud Jung was taking the larger professional risk and so on.

2. Isabel Myers. A lot of this is probably commercial-in confidence, which doesn't help, but what about Isabel Myers' decision making processes regarding selection of items and scoring methods, including how much of the work was a "team"; Isabel's educational background; the middle-class nature of her life and influences. Less hagiography and more information.
3. Jung, Personality and Consciousness. It's easier to understand how type works when you read about Jung's notion (consistent with his culture) that personality was a "calling" and how that fits in to ideas about being conscious, or unconscious.
4. Emotion. You can't teach about Feeling without knowing where emotion fits into Jung's schema and also what other people such as neuroscientists think emotions are. If emotions come from the unconscious, then they must be attached to the functions in some way
5. Type Dynamics/Development The most rubbery concept in type for me is Harold Grant's model, partly because it presents as being so rigid. You can't teach type dynamics and without knowing something about scientific research into early childhood development and being able to speak about it in some way, as well as being able to explain people's lives according to their experience and their responses without having to say "well, when you were 12, this must have happened." The associated and currently favoured 8 function model, influenced by John Beebe may be interpreted too literally at this stage. I believe it's inappropriate to teach at the Accreditation level and a less convoluted approach would be more appropriate. This

is at least in part to account for people who don't fit in with the framework, which includes me. These people have to be adequately explained, without the implication that something is wrong.

6. Measurement. Do psychological constructs exist? If I measure something does it necessarily exist (no, interestingly). With Isabel Myers the paradox of the scores and items meaning nothing, but perhaps something. Omissions as a key part of her measurement strategy.
7. Type and Behaviour. Type preferences are content free and so descriptions of type behaviour are contingent on culture and other factors. Therefore behaviour can be a guide to type preferences, but people can do the same thing for different reasons
8. Nature/Nurture. The interaction of nature and nurture is fairly well established in science, but not so well elsewhere. It's an idea that's extremely compatible with Jung's world view and always provokes some discussion in courses.

Assessment/Qualifying

MBTI Accreditation courses of whatever type are probably too short for effective assessment.

The current situation of a mandated exam I support in principle and by and large it works.

However, the core assessment (multiple choice; true/false) needs professional help in the realm of written language and multiple-choice techniques. Either that or the exam is deliberately obfuscatory, which makes its educational utility questionable. This might be a cultural issue, however too much time is spent explaining grammar and sentence structure in the homework (based on the exam) to help people approach the exam without too much confusion. Whether some questions should be asked at all is also a problem, particularly from a cultural perspective.

I'm also unsure about the appropriateness of having a body whose aim is to make money regulating something which is more an educational requirement than a business one. Course presenters less aligned to those sorts of commercial imperatives, but knowledgeable in the field would be more appro-

priate. This may, of course, be an old-fashioned point of view.

Currently, too, Accreditation or Qualifying is for life. This situation often startles professionals who are qualified in other methods and certainly a period of 5 years maximum with requirements for refresher upgrades would be better in my view. This would address ethical issues as well, where numbers of accredited people are using MBTI in staff selection or giv-

ing feedback in an insufficient or inappropriate manner.

Conclusion

This paper is intended as a stimulus for discussion and as a precursor to a larger report on my experience as an Accreditor and the nature of the people who have attended these courses.

Some References

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MBTI® Qualifying Workshop Participants*

N = 972
M: 307
F: 665

<p>ISTJ Total: 56 %: 5.76 [7-10] M: 21 ; F: 35 *****</p>	<p>ISFJ Total: 29 %: 2.98 [7-10] M: 11 ; F: 18 ***</p>	<p>INFJ Total: 53 %: 5.45 [2-3] M: 11 ; F: 42 *****</p>	<p>INTJ Total: 67 %: 6.89 [2-3] M: 21 ; F: 46 *****</p>
<p>ISTP Total: 18 %: 1.85 [4-7] M: 13 ; F: 4 **</p>	<p>ISFP Total: 17 %: 1.75 [5-7] M: 7 ; F: 10 **</p>	<p>INFP Total: 104 %: 10.70 [3-4] M: 30 ; F: 74 *****</p>	<p>INTP Total: 77 %: 7.92 [3-4] M: 40 ; F: 37 *****</p>
<p>ESTP Total: 17 %: 1.75 [6-8] M: 6 ; F: 11 **</p>	<p>ESFP Total: 24 %: 2.47 [8-10] M: 4 ; F: 19 ***</p>	<p>ENFP Total: 166 %: 17.08 [6-7] M: 46 ; F: 120 *****</p>	<p>ENTP Total: 118 %: 12.14 [4-6] M: 33 ; F: 85 *****</p>
<p>ESTJ Total: 53 %: 5.45 [12-15] M: 16 ; F: 37 *****</p>	<p>ESFJ Total: 32 %: 3.29 [7-10] M: 7 ; F: 25 ***</p>	<p>ENFJ Total: 59 %: 6.07 [3-5] M: 14 ; F: 45 *****</p>	<p>ENTJ Total: 82 %: 8.44 [3-5] M: 27 ; F: 55 *****</p>

ST: 144
SF: 102

NF: 382
NT: 344

SJ: 170
SP: 75

TJ: 258

Group Type

E N T P

Modal Type

E N F P

E	551		421	I
S	246		P 726	N
T	488	J	484	F
J	430		542	P

*for courses conducted by Peter Geyer 1993-2005

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Peter Geyer

BA (Hons) DipEd GradDip(OrgBeh) MSc PhD candidate

Centre for Research into Education, Equity and Work

University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes SA 5095 Australia

alchymia@ozemail.com.au ; www.petergeyer.com.au