

Comparing Results of  
Clifton *StrengthsFinder* (CSF)  
*Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) and  
*Values-in-Action* (VIA)

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# The Myers Briggs MBTI

- Pioneer test in positive psychology
- Suddenly became popular (tipped) in the 1970's
- Norms available by category for proportion of people in different jobs (but not their happiness in the job).
- Variant versions on web

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# Clifton StrengthsFinder (CSF)

- Developed from years of experience using strengths-oriented interviews to match people to jobs.
- Organized into 34 “strengths”

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# Values in Action (VIA)

- Partly based on what philosophers wrote on character and virtues
- Partly builds upon Gallup “Wellsprings” project as well as psychological research on specific virtues such as “gratitude”.
- Sponsored by the Mayerson Foundation and available on-line.

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# Some differences between the instruments

- MBTI items force choices between two ends of a dimension. Result is a forced opposition of eight categories on four dimensions.
- VIA uses five-point scales with many reverse scored. Each item relates to one scale.
- CSF has each item compared against a “distracter” that is usually not scored in order to avoid creating forced oppositions. Distracter provides a context. Also, some items scored on more than one scale.

# Questions driving this investigation

- How do the VIA, MBTI and CSF relate to one another?
  - Are there strengths covered by one instrument that the others miss?
    - If so, what are they?
    - If so, do the three instruments then complement one another to provide to a more comprehensive portrait?
    - If not, are they redundant?

# This report will show that..

- The MBTI serves a useful orienting function to think about one's strengths
- The VIA and CSF results complement each other and add richness to a student's self-understanding
  - One test situates some strengths of the other.
    - Example: VIA's "Leadership"
  - Some strengths have special functions
    - Example: VIA's "Zest"
- The MBTI results identify an area of sparse strengths coverage in both the VIA and CSF

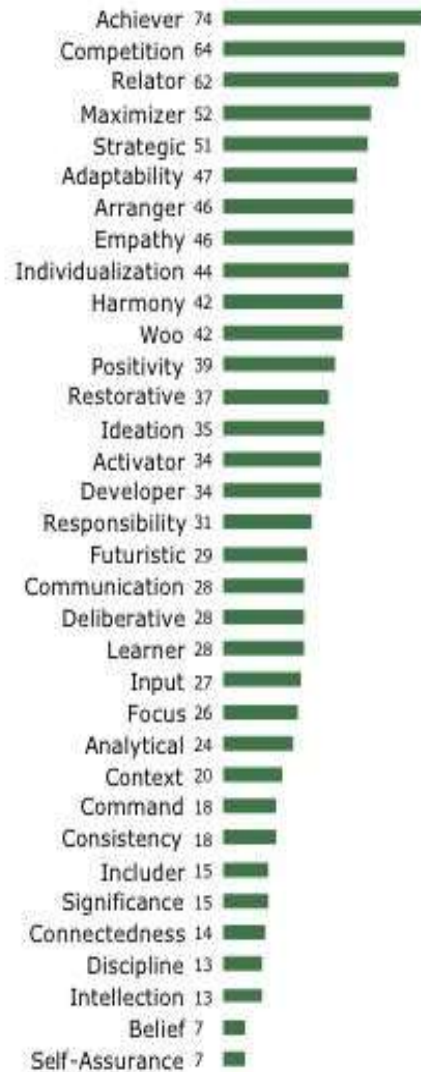
# Our comparison of the three instruments

- Information gathered from students in a large (non-required) applied social psychology class at Harvard, with feedback an integral part of the course content.
  - Participants were 39 Freshmen, 43 Sophomores, 80 Juniors and 116 seniors.
  - Most concentrators in economics (25%) psychology (25%), government (19%)
- VIA and CSF staffs kindly provided scores on each scale, not just the “top five” scores.
- Meyers-Briggs type scores mainly from a short on-line version. Many students had taken the MBTI previously and reported the online results generally agreed with prior testing.



### Signature Theme Frequency Harvard Students March 2004

Group of 222 respondents



Overall CSF  
Class Profile  
(2004 shown;  
2005 is similar)

# Top VIA Strengths of Harvard students

- Judgment, critical thinking and open-mindedness 3.97
- Capacity to love and be loved 3.94
- Kindness and generosity 3.94
- Humor and Playfulness 3.93
- Honesty, authenticity and genuineness 3.90
- Gratitude 3.89
- Curiosity and interest in the world 3.88
- Social intelligence 3.85
- Perspective wisdom 3.86

# Lowest VIA Strengths of Harvard students

- Modesty and humility 3.27
- Spirituality, sense of purpose, faith 3.29
- Forgiveness and mercy 3.34
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence 3.36
- Self control and regulation: 3.40
- Love of learning 3.46
- Caution, prudence and discretion 3.47

# Distribution of our students compared with MBTI norms

MBTI category	Student %	MBTI norms %
Extraversion	54%	60%
Introversion	46%	40%
Sensing	67%	71%
Intuition	33%	29%
Thinking	54%	50%
Feeling	46%	50%
Judging	71%	56%
Perceiving	29%	44%

# MBTI:

## *Sensing vs Intuitive*

- “People who prefer *Sensing* tend to focus on the present and on concrete information gained from their senses”
- “People who prefer *Intuition* tend to focus on the future with a view toward patterns and possibilities.”

# MBTI :

## *Sensing vs Intuitive*

- Make
- Production
- Build
- Experience
- Sign
- Literal
- Prefers realistic people
- Prefers those who say what they mean.
- Do in accepted way.
- Prefer to be conventional
- Values having commons sense
- Create
- Design
- Invent
- Theory
- Symbol
- Figurative
- Prefers imaginative people
- Prefers those with original ways of saying things
- Invent a way of your own
- Prefer to be original
- Values having vision

# MBTI Types:

## *Judging* vs *Perceiving*

- People who prefer *Judging* tend to like a planned and **organized** approach to life and prefer to have things settled.
- People who prefer *Perceiving* tend to like a flexible and **spontaneous** approach to life and prefer to keep their options open.
  - Example items: Does the idea of making a list of what you should get done over a weekend appeal to you, leave you cold, or positively depress you?
  - Do you find the more routine parts of the day restful or boring?

# High MBTI “judging” types are high in these CSF and VIA scales:

- Achiever  $t = 2.51$   $p = .013$
- Analytical  $t = 3.451$   $p = .0007$
- Discipline  $t = 10.15$   $p < .0001$
- Consistency  $t = 5.97$   $p < .0001$
- Focus  $t = 3.543$   $p = .0002$
- Harmony  $t = 3.96$   $p < .0001$
- Learner  $t = 2.274$   $p = .022$
- Caution, prudence and discretion  $t = 3.798$   $p .0002$
- Industry, diligence and perserverence  $t = 3.265$   $p = .0013$
- Self control and regulation  $t = 2.246$   $p = .0257$



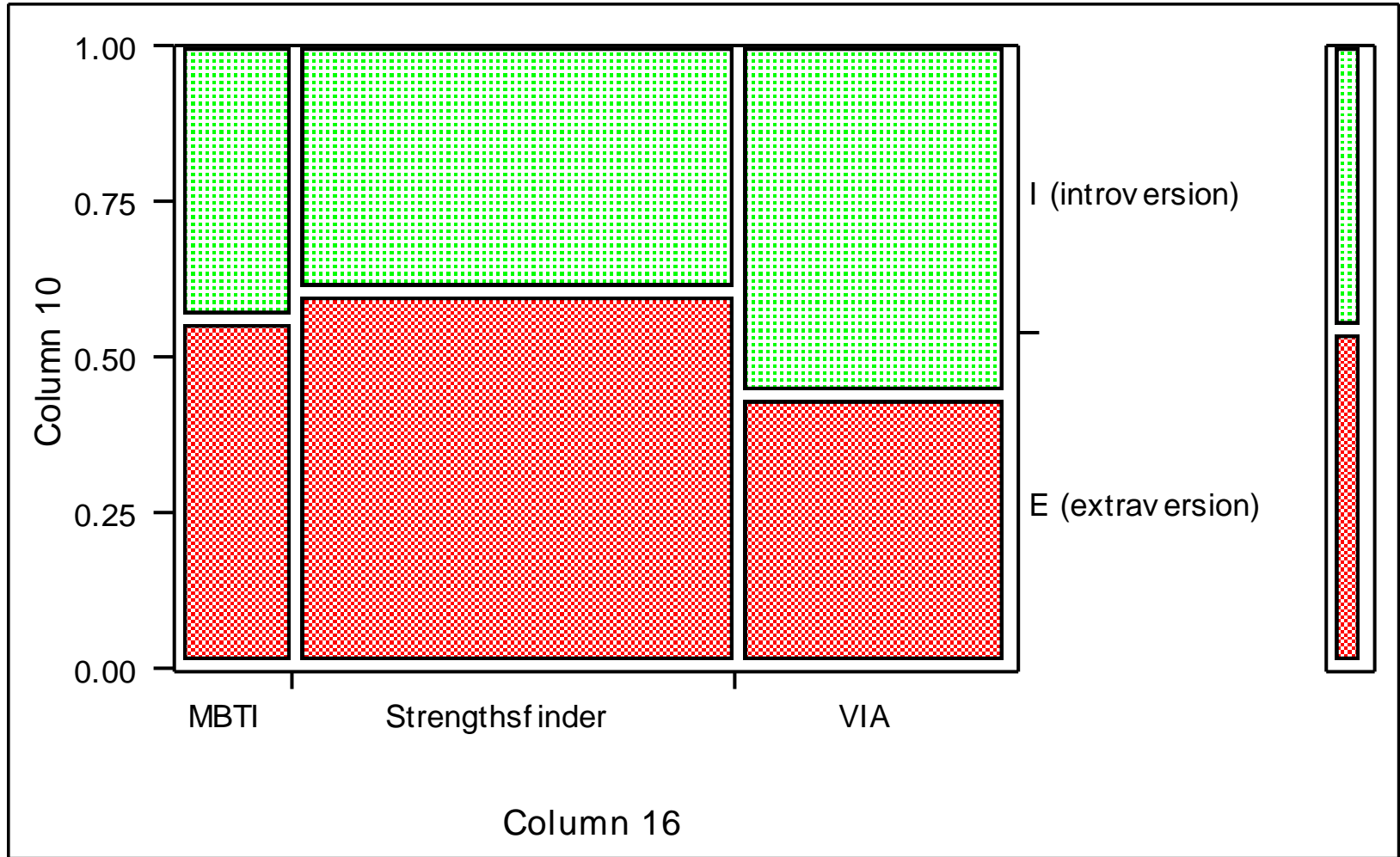
# High MBTI “perceiving” types are high in these CSF and VIA scales:

- Activator  $t = 1.36$   $p = .142$
- Adaptability  $t = 6.475$   $p = .0001$
- Command  $t = 2.561$   $p = .0117$
- Ideation  $t = 5.459$   $p < .0001$
- Self-assurance  $t = 2.72$   $p = .0076$
- Strategic  $t = 3.874$   $p = .0005$
- Woo  $t = 1.919$   $p = .0562$
- Bravery and valor  $t = 1.922$   $p = .055$
- Creativity, ingenuity and originality  $t = 3.249$   $p = .0009$
- Humor and playfulness  $t = 2.544$   $p = .0116$

# Which instrument do the students find most valuable?

- MBTI 14%
- VIA 32%
- CSF 53%
- Students often preferred the test that provided what they thought to be the “best fit”
- Most prefer more detailed pinpointing of the CSF and VIA. Some complained the CSF was the most aggravating to take.
- MBTI seen as providing useful overview

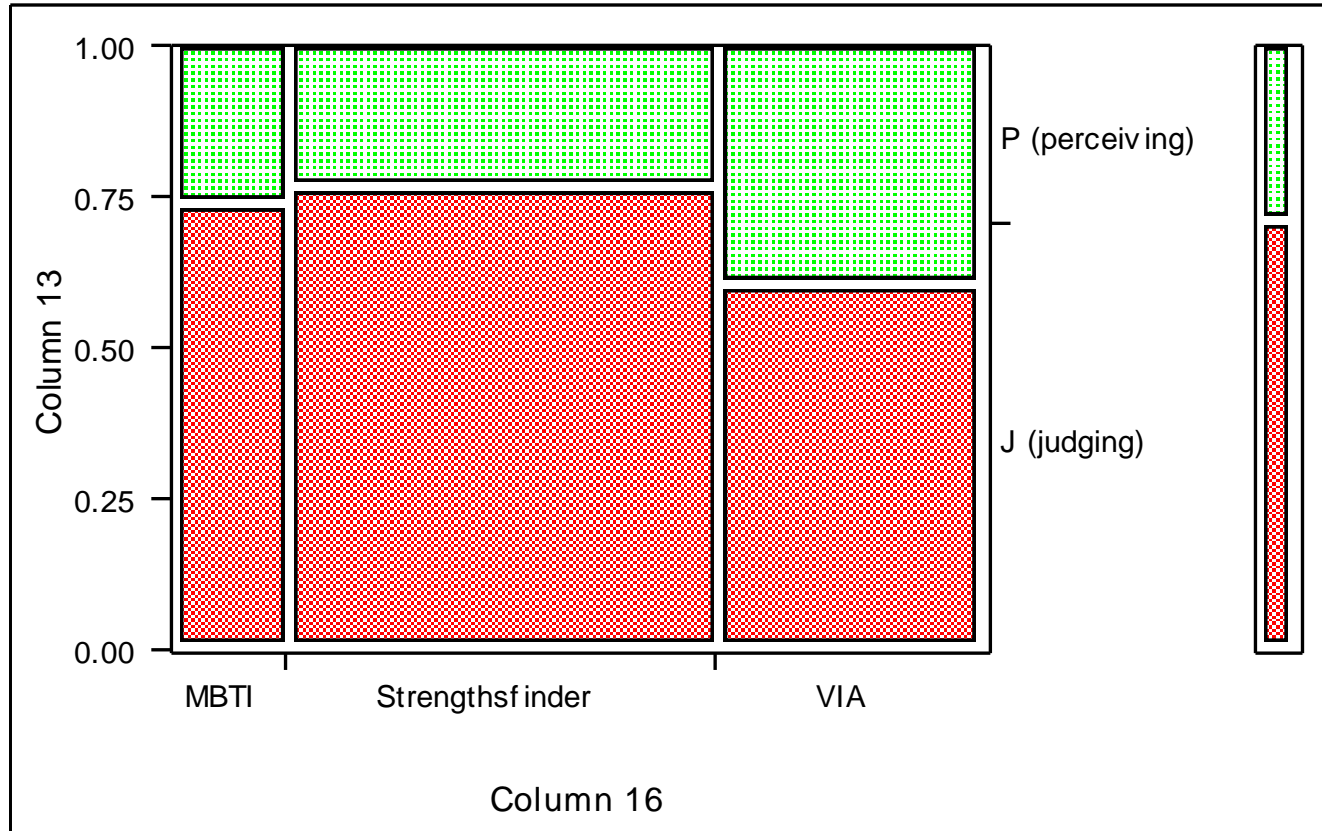
# Introverts prefer VIA



Test	ChiSquare	Prob>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	5.287	0.0711
Pearson	5.285	0.0712

N=235

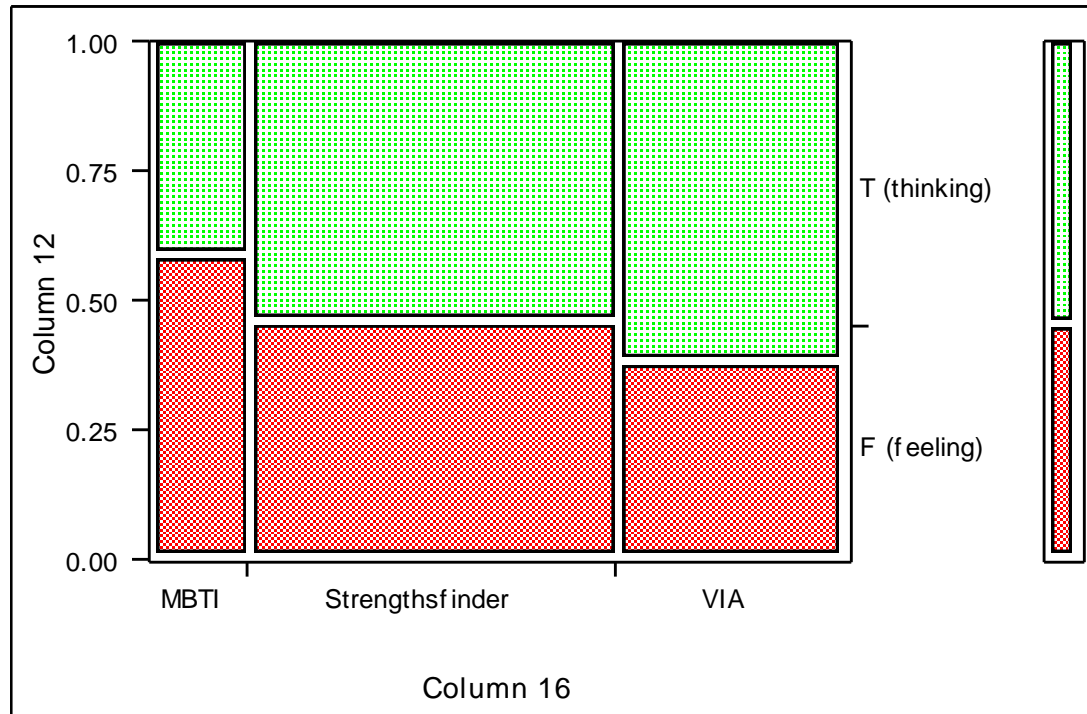
# Spontaneous students prefer VIA



Test	ChiSquare	Pro b> ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	5.904	0.0522
Pearson	6.044	0.0487

N =234

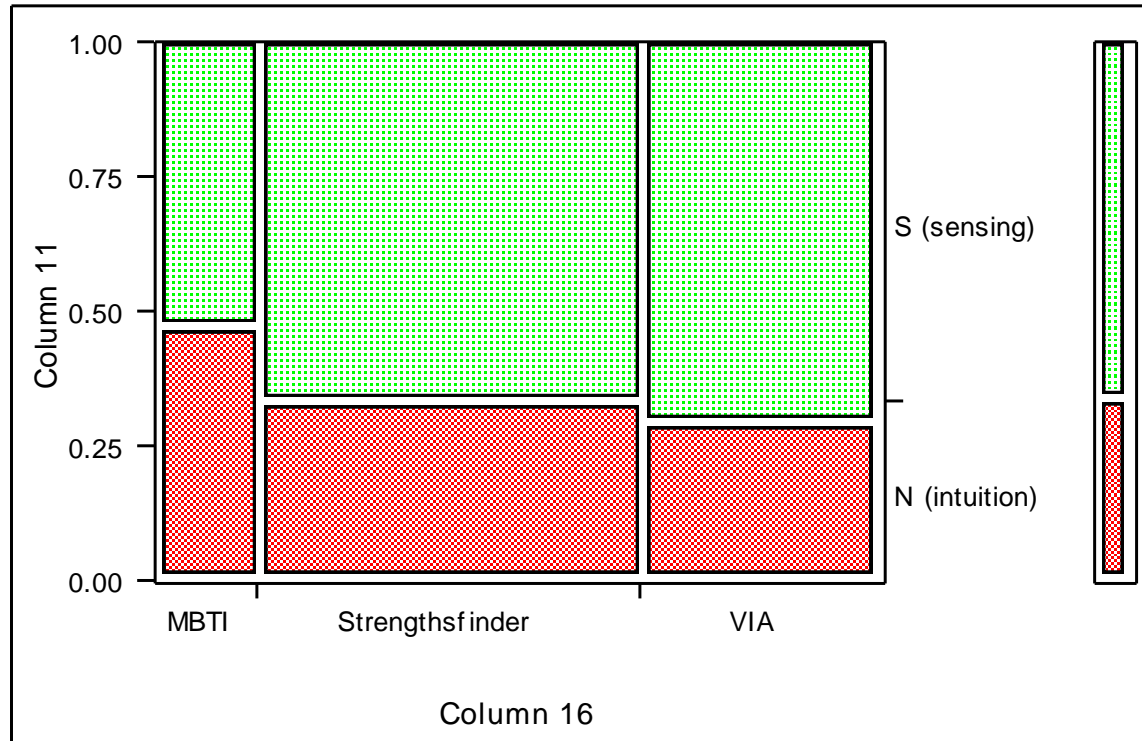
# Feeling people tend to prefer MBTI



Test	ChiSquare	Prob > ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	4.083	0.1298
Pearson	4.078	0.1302

Only 34 preferred MBTI out of 235

# Intuitives slightly tend to prefer MBTI



Only 34 preferred MBTI out of 235; Chart  $p = .18$

To interpret correlations between scales, it is necessary to consider an overall “g” factor found in our Harvard VIA results

- Similar to “g” as a general intelligence factor, the VIA scales correlate an average of .30 with each other, while the CSF scales only correlate an average of .16 with each other.
- VIA scales correlate an average of .12 with CSF scales
- Negative correlations between VIA scales are very rare; more common in CSF.

## VIA scales that correlated an average of more than .30 with other VIA scales

- Bravery and valor, .35
- Capacity to love and be loved, .34
- Curiosity and interest in the world, .37
- Fairness equity and justice, .35
- Gratitude, .38
- Honesty, authenticity and genuineness .33
- Kindness and generosity .36
- Leadership .37
- Perspective wisdom .38
- Social intelligence .34
- Zest .35



## VIA scales that correlated an average of less than .30 with other VIA scales

- Modesty and humility: .07
- Spirituality: .20
- Creativity, ingenuity and originality: .21
- Humor and playfulness: .21
- Self control and regulation: .23
- Caution, prudence and direction: .24
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence: .24

# CSF scales that correlate an average of .20 or more with VIA scales are:

- Achiever .22
- Arranger .24
- Belief .23
- Learner .27
- Positivity .20
- Relator .20
- Responsibility .23
- Self assurance .25
- Woo .22

CSF scales that correlate an average of about zero (-.09 to +.09) with VIA scales are:

- Adaptability
- Analytical
- Command
- Competition
- Context
- Deliberative
- Discipline
- Empathy
- Consistency
- Harmony
- Ideation
- Individualization
- Intellection
- Maximizer
- Restorative
- Significance

# How MBTI & CSF results shed light on what is VIA “Leadership”

- Example VIA “leadership” items
  - “I can always get people to do things together without nagging.”
  - (reverse score) “I am not very good at planning group activities.”
  - “In a group, I try to make sure everyone feels included.”
- High leaders score characteristic of these MBTI categories:
  - Extravert  $t = 2.93$   $p = .004$
  - Feeling  $t = 2.98$   $p = .003$

# VIA's "Leadership" correlations with CSF scales

- High correlations
  - Achiever .24
  - Arranger .37
  - Learner .24
  - Positivity .32
  - Relator .30
  - Responsibility .24
  - Self Assurance .22
  - Woo .23
- Low correlations
  - Adaptability .00
  - Analytical -.13
  - **Command** -.01
  - **Competition** -.01
  - Consistency -.01
  - Deliberative -.27
  - Empathy .07
  - Harmony -.01
  - Ideation -.02
  - **Individualization** .03
  - Intellection -.04
  - **Maximizer** .02
  - Restorative .01
  - **Significance** .01

# VIA's "Zest" as an amplifier for some strengths

- Example items:
  - "I throw myself into everything I do"
  - (reverse score:) "I mope a lot"
- "Zest" correlates  $-.21$  with Modesty and humility, but an average of  $.35$  with other VIA scales.
  - Correlations especially high with "Curiosity and interest in the world" ( $.64$ ) and "Hope optimism and future mindedness." ( $.66$ )

# Correlations of “Zest” with CSF Scales

- High correlations:

- Achiever .39
- Activator .40
- Arranger .39
- Communication .45
- Focus .36
- Learner .40
- Positivity .44
- Self assurance .41
- Woo .52

- Low correlations

- Adaptability -.07
- Analytical -.13
- Deliberative -.21
- Empathy -.04
- Consistency -.18
- Harmony -.14
- Restorative -.19

# How VIA virtue scales relate to CSF scales

- “Forgiveness and mercy”
  - Correlates with “*includer*” .38
    - *Includer* item: “I accept many types of people.”
  - Also correlates with “*positivity*” .34
- “Appreciation of beauty and excellence”
  - Correlates with “*connectedness*” .40, “*empathy*” (.37 and “*input*” (.36)
- “Gratitude” correlates with:
  - “*belief*” (.43), “*positivity*” (.38), “*arranger*” (.34), “*developer*” (.33), *responsibility* (.32).



# Generally, those high on an MBTI type are also high on the corresponding VIA and CSF scales

- True for *Introvert, Extravert, Thinking, Feeling, Judging* and *Perceiving* types.
  - Each represented by a good number of categories
- VIA and CSF scales not relevant to a MBTI type usually show little relation to the type dimension.
- However contrasts between *Sensing* and *Intuitive* types seem to reveal a gap in VIA and CSF strengths coverage:

# Do the VIA and CSF do justice to strengths of those who are high on the MBTI sensing category?

- Our Harvard MBTI *Sensing* students significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ) than *Intuitives only* on these few scales:
  - **CSF:**
    - Consistency.  $t = 6.014$   $p = .0001$
    - Discipline  $t = 3.17$   $p = .0004$
    - Harmony  $t = 5.052$   $p = .0001$
  - **VIA:**
    - Citizenship, teamwork and loyalty:  $t = 1.98$   $p = .0489$
    - Modesty and humility  $t = 3.088$   $p = .0023$

# By contrast, Harvard MBTI *Intuitives* are significantly higher than *Sensing* students on all these CSF scales

- Ideation:  $t = 7.115$   $p = .0001$
- Intellection  $t = 3.33$   $p = .0010$
- Strategic  $t = 5.626$   $p = .0001$
- Creativity  $t = 6.307$   $p = .0001$
- Belief  $t = 2.034$   $p = .0427$
- Learner  $t = 1.96$   $p = .0520$
- Input  $t = 3.604$   $p = .0098$
- Futurististic  $t = 2.750$   $p = .0064$
- Positivity  $t = 3.045$   $p = .0026$
- Self-assurance  $t = 3.808$   $p = .0002$
- Command  $t = 3.23$   $p = .0006$
- Woo  $t = 3.039$   $p = .0027$
- Communication  $t = 2.322$   $p = .021$
- Connectedness  $t = 5.811$   $p = .0001$
- Activator  $t = 2.190$   $p = .03$

# And, our Harvard MB *Intuitives* are significantly higher than *Sensing* students on these VIA scales

- Bravery and valor  $t = 2.704$   $p = .0074$
- Fairness, equity and justice  $t = 2.156$   $p = .0321$
- Curiosity and interest in the world  $t = 3.662$   $p = .0003$
- Love of learning  $t = 2.495$   $p = .0133$
- Judgment, critical thinking and open mindedness:  $t = 1.915$   $p = .0567$
- Perspective wisdom:  $t = 2.098$   $p = .03$
- Appreciation of beauty and excellence  $t = 3.73$   $p = .0002$
- Forgiveness and mercy  $t = 2.502$   $p = .0135$
- Hope, optimism  $t = 1.77$   $p = .06$
- Humor and playfulness  $t = 2.117$   $p = .03$
- Zest  $t = 2.893$   $p = .0044$

# Why do those respondents high in *Sensing* not get a fair shake in identifying their richness of strengths?

- Possible CSF reason: Sensing people of less interest for matching people to managerial jobs; Classic manager is an ENTJ.
  - But CSF is used in schools and other contexts. Should serve *Sensing* types equally well.
- Possible VIA reason: Philosophers are high *Intuitive* and don't understand how *Sensing* respondents think
  - More likely to devise items that appeal to *Intuitives* who are higher on Piaget abstract reasoning or Kohlberg scale.

# Some suggestions

- CSF distracter items should be as abstract as strength items.
  - CSF distracters tend to be concrete in ways that might appeal to sensing types
- VIA and CSF can include more items that use these MBTI words appealing to *sensing* types:
  - “make”, “craft”, “build”, “be realistic”, “have common sense”, “stick to the facts”, “feet on the ground” etc.
- Similar studies are needed to verify whether these cross-instrument relationships hold for other groups.
- Also, investigations might identify ways *Sensing* people appreciate beauty, express hope, are brave, etc.