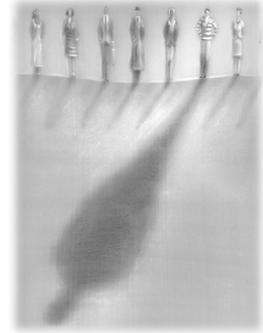


PART I

Your Personality and Your Major



People often use the term “personality” to refer to various aspects of people they know. When describing their friends, their classmates, or even themselves, they may refer to aspects of personality such as sense of humor, optimism, ambition, irritability, or decisiveness.

Many such concepts of personality are interesting to know about a person but not very useful in helping someone decide on a college major. Fortunately, psychologists have found other aspects of personality that can be valuable to consider when making educational and career plans. In this part of the book, you’ll learn about the relationship between personality and college majors, and you will gain a working understanding of the most commonly used scheme for describing personality types in this context.

Why Personality Is Useful for Choosing a Major

Personality theorists believe that people with similar personality types naturally tend to associate with one another in the workplace, the classroom, and other places. As they do so, they create an environment that is hospitable to their personality type. For example, a workplace or classroom with a lot of Artistic types tends to reward creative thinking and behavior. Therefore your personality type not only predicts how well your skills will match the demands of the tasks in a particular major or job; it also predicts how well you will fit in with the culture of the classroom or work site as shaped by the people who will surround you and interact with you. Your personality type thus is a key to career choice because it affects your satisfaction with the job, your productivity in it, and the likelihood that you will persist in this type of work. Likewise, your personality indicates which majors might be good choices for you because most college students choose their major to help advance their careers.