

CASE STUDY



Indiana Wesleyan University

Indiana Wesleyan University is an evangelical Christian comprehensive university that offers more than 80 majors, covering everything from Art to Theology and Ministry. With an enrollment exceeding 15,000 students, IWU is the largest private university in Indiana. It is also ranked as "one of the best Master's universities in the Midwest" by U.S. News & World Report.



"The key outcomes have been insight and career information... Students are amazed at which careers surface for them, and encouraged by how 'spot on' they feel."

Dr. Keith Puffer
Professor, Indiana Wesleyan University

Background

Professors of psychology at Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) recognized they could help their students work through the psychological concepts being taught by incorporating an interactive element in the classroom. By bringing theory and practice together, students would enhance their understanding of psychology. As part of this process, students were given the opportunity to take the *16PF® Questionnaire* and receive feedback on their results.

The psychology professors also understood that something beyond individual personal reflection was required for students to truly understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and that this self-knowledge was a necessary first step in selecting an appropriate career. The 16PF instrument fulfilled this need as well, via a suite of career-oriented products.

Solution

Why the 16PF Instrument?

The technical credibility of the 16PF tool was a big selling point in this academic environment. IWU Professor Dr. Keith Puffer explains, "The psychometrics of the 16PF measure were alluring, along with the way the tool is constructed, which makes it very helpful for research analyses." Robust and reliable computer-generated reports support the technical standing of the questionnaire by presenting the results in an accessible way for students.

Using the 16PFQ throughout the Academic Cycle

The 16PF instrument is ideally suited to the university's purposes. Completion of the *16PF Questionnaire* is part of the curriculum for three psychology courses at IWU. To maximize the value of the 16PF information, students receive a 16PF report in each course, and review the report with a staff member who is credentialed in the interpretation of the *16PF Questionnaire*.

The questionnaire is first used as part of the *General Psychology* course during the freshman year, as it addresses several of the core psychological concepts being studied in this first-year course. For example, areas such as stress, interpersonal habits and career success are explored – all of which can be measured using the 16PF assessment.

The sophomore class, *Life-Calling and Career Counseling*, expands on this learning and applies each student's personality insights to their own development in a very personal way. The *16PF Career Development Report* is used in this course to look at how an individual solves problems, deals

with stress, and interacts with colleagues, listing a series of general and specific career environments that would be suitable for the student. During the second year, students use this report to begin career planning.



Following this, students at the junior level study the *16PF Questionnaire* as part of their *Psychology and Personality* course, where they research the author of the 16PF test, influential academic Dr. Raymond Cattell. Cattell was the first to come up with a five-factor model of personality, which is still the prevalent theory by which psychologists understand personality. In this course, students also write a brief description of their personality traits as a way to process some of the results from their *16PF Career Development Report*.

Results

Both the professors and the students agree that use of the *16PF Questionnaire* is something that should carry on, as they continue to witness the tangible benefits of exposure to the tool. Dr. Puffer explains: "The key outcomes have been insight and career information. Integral to this personal knowledge is the ability the tool gives us to recognize our personal traits – both the good and not-so-good ones – and to use this information to inform career choices. Students are amazed at which careers surface for them, and encouraged by how 'spot on' they feel. The career information helps them confirm what they may already have vaguely identified as a vocation, giving them the confidence to pursue this direction."

Professors at Indiana Wesleyan University continue to use the *16PF Questionnaire* in psychology classes, seeing it as a useful tool to help students gain self-knowledge and to discover areas where they may need personal improvement.