Self Awareness: Self & Environmental Influences   Name:_____

True Self

Point of the Assignment: 1) To understand that many factors influence personality and skills development. 2) To understand personality and skills development can be affected either positively or negatively by environmental factors.

Image: Square Watermelons - (*See first image – Page A-1*)
These images are of watermelons that were grown in square containers in Japan to save space since the country is so crowded. Forcing watermelons to grow into a square shape makes them take up less space. Forcing all round watermelons to grow into the same shape and size makes the environment in which they are stored more efficient. This analogy relates well to how human beings grow and develop. Forcing naturally round watermelons to grow into becoming square watermelons can have either a positive affect or a negative effect on personality and skills development:
- Positive Shaping: Develops natural talent and skills & Compensates for weakness
  Negative Shaping: Does much damage to the individual's psyche

Image: True Self – (*See second image – Page A-2*)
This image reveals that we are born with a natural personality and set of preferences. However, like the "square watermelons" we are also shaped by our environment. Therefore, during this self-awareness process, you are going to consider how your environment has shaped you. Without this understanding of the difference between in-born nature and skills developed through environmental influences, it will be difficult to answer the questions on the assessments accurately.   If you do not answer them correctly, then the accuracy of the results will be compromised.

"True Self": This image looks like a target. Notice that the center (or bull's eye) says it is the "true self", which is your in-born nature. This true nature does not change, but it can be stifled, shaped or influenced based environmental forces such as upbringing, Socio-Economic Status, culture, various life roles, life experience, etc. The personality is also supposed grow as we mature. For example, someone who is naturally rather free-spirited and would naturally prefer to just "go with the flow" can easily be "shaped" to become rather self-disciplined through things such as strict parenting, military training, job responsibilities or parental responsibilities. *(Some people's personality does not grow over time. This is called "arrested development.")* Therefore, your task is to learn to distinguish the difference between what is natural tendency (in-born), and what is a developed skill based on environmental shaping (upbringing, job, responsibilities, life experiences, etc.). Because of various environmental issues, some people will discover that this process could take some time to consider.

(Note that the Myers Briggs Type Indicator aims at identifying the "True Self" – Not the "Developed Self". Therefore, if anyone ever tries to say that their Myers Briggs personality type changes", then they have not been properly educated to fully understand how this assessment tool works since your in-born nature does NOT change.)

The "Developed Self" takes into consideration, not only the true, in-born nature, but also those habits, attitudes, and values that are not natural, but fully "internalized" (has become part of you) into a well-developed skill by the above-mentioned environmental shaping forces. (for example, someone who is naturally rather quiet and self-contained, but has worked many years in jobs which require them to be much more social than they would naturally prefer, thereby has brought them out of their natural self-contained 'shell.' However, they still generally prefer their solitude over social interaction.)

The "Current Self" is your current behavior that is NOT internalized, and is temporary and only a result of current circumstances (A normally friendly student, whose behavior is quiet and reserved in a classroom to show respect to the teacher. Yet this student will resume his naturally social tendencies once he walks out of the classroom.)

Sometimes an individual can spend so much time living in a style that is contrary to their nature, that they actually lose touch with their in-born preferences. Sometimes these people have developed a non-preferred activity into a skill, which becomes a habit. Such people may need to spend quite some time (months or years) away from those constraining environmental influences, and engaging in self-reflection to be able to re-discover their "True Self".

The "Future Self" are those character traits which you do not currently possess, but will need to develop to help you get to your "dream job". For example: a normally objective and non-sympathetic person who will eventually need to develop patience, and the skills of empathy and diplomacy so that he or she can be prepared to deal with difficult people under difficult circumstances without upsetting them.

Image: Environmental Shaping Factors – (*See third image – Page A-3*)

(What Influences Personality Type Development)
We live in an imperfect world where weakness, failures, offenses, and all their consequences abound. So, whether for good or for bad, our environmental circumstances significantly affect how we develop. Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of Ecological Model of Child Development, gives a way to understand how both positive and negative environmental circumstances shape our development and skills.

Image: Talent vs. Skill – (*See fourth image – Page A-4*)
A person's ability to reach their full potential at a given activity will depend on two variables: 1) Natural talent or ability at the task, and 2) Practice or development of skill at the activity through education/training.

> **Scenario 1: Talent without Practice/Skill**
> A person who has natural talent for the task will find that initially learning to do the task becomes easy, but without education/training and practice, will be limited in their ability to reach full potential.
>
> **Scenario 2: Practice/Skill without Talent**
> A person who lacks natural talent for the task, but acquires the skill, can eventually compensate with skill acquired through education/training and practice. He or she will

find that initially learning to do the task may be hard, but will eventually be able to achieve at least a minimum level of skill needed to function. Yet, their ability to reach full potential will ultimately be limited by lack of talent.

Scenario 3: Talent Combined with Practice/Skill
 A person who has natural talent, and chooses to develop that natural ability through education/training and practice, will excel beyond those with talent or skill alone.

Image: Ability vs. Interest – (*See fifth image – Page A-5*)

A person can have an interest in a job, but lack the necessary ability (talent) to do it. Or he or she can have the ability, but lack the interest. Both of these situations can have a negative impact on the individual's self-perception, how others see them, and their performance on the job. These experiences can impact a person's self-perception, which can also affect a person's perception of their abilities and/or weaknesses.

You will now consider how your life experiences have either encouraged or stifled your personality and skills development. Keep in mind that we will go more in depth with most all of these issues later. But for now, take the time to consider the following.

Identify <u>at least three</u> of these environmental shaping factors that have affected your development. <u>Explain your responses.</u>

- *<u>Culture</u>* – Whether we grew up as a member of the dominant culture or another culture. In the United States, the dominant culture is considered the White/Caucasian (Western/ European) culture because these are the people groups who founded the nation, its value system, and most of its institutions. Many people who claim this heritage may take their cultural influences for granted because they may not have had to give it much thought.

  - If your background is other than White/Caucasian *(Western European)*, you will likely be more aware of how your culture has influenced you. You may want to also ask yourself how both the dominant culture, as well as your own ethnic culture, has affected your development.

  - Or, your background could be bi-racial or multi-racial where your upbringing has been affected by two or more cultural value systems. Regardless of what that background is, what values does your culture(s) impress on you?

  - Immigration-generation status also can have an effect on development. Those who emigrated from another country usually have much stronger ties to their cultural roots than do those individuals whose families immigrated several generations ago.

- ▪ Also, first-generation American-born individuals often experience conflicts between their parents' traditional cultural values and the values of the country in which they were raised. For example, second-generation children are more likely to defy their parents' upbringing.

  What, if any, cultural issues did you deal with? How did they shape your development?

- ▪ ***Language Skills*** – How well-developed *(or under developed)* an individual's language skills (comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, etc.) are – especially during their developmental (childhood) years – can possibly affect their personality and or skills development. This also includes the challenge of needing to learn second language skills. For example, individuals with well-developed language skills are more likely to be perceived as "smart" or articulate by other people. This could encourage such a person to develop the confidence to step out of their comfort zone and take risks. Whereas someone with under-developed language skills *(including developing a second language),* might be more reluctant to speak up in crowds for fear of looking "stupid".   What, if any, "issues" relating to language skills did/do you deal with? How did they shape your development?

- ▪ ***Religion/Spirituality*** – What, if any, religious foundations were you given? How did they shape your development? Also, are your current religious beliefs different from how you were raised? How did those differences affect who you have become?

- ▪ ***Generation*** – How did the prevailing cultural values, historical events, rate of change, jobs role modeled by your elder generation, and jobs and industries available to you, in the era in which you grew up affect your personality development, life experience, and values? (For example, Mature generation grew up in a slower-paced world where job loyalty was valued, Baby Boomers grew up expecting to get good jobs with big companies, Millennials grew up with constant change and technological advances that changed the nature of work.)

- ▪ ***Overall Economic Conditions*** - For example: People who grew up in the Great Depression tend to be more disciplined and frugal than individuals who grew up during times of overall economic prosperity (i.e. Baby Boomers). People who look for jobs, or try to go to school during an economic recession, need to be more determined and persistent because jobs and educational opportunities are not as plentiful as they may have been during better economic times. **What was/are the overall economic conditions during your shaping years?** How did that affect your development?

- ***Local Labor Market*** – What kinds of jobs and/or industries were/are available to you and your family and friends based on where you live? Industries include things like manufacturing, military defense contractors, military bases, government offices, farming/agricultural, travel/tourism, higher education, medical facilities, financial services, oil/natural resources, publishing, shipping, etc. Local job opportunities can include things such as working in a factory, farm, hotel, office, school/college, hospital, or lawyers, police officers, truck drivers, etc. For example, people who come from small towns often may be limited to one or two large employers in the area; whereas individuals who come from large metropolitan areas such as Southern California will have access to many different employers, jobs and industries if they are willing to commute. What types of employment prospects available to individuals – especially during their formative years – will have a large impact on their ability to dream a future they find desirable. How did local job opportunities shape your visions/dreams for your future?

- ***Socio-Economic Status (SES)*** – Your family's income level can also impact your development. The higher your family's level of income, the more access to choices, resources, education, material possessions, etc. you will have. Some people who grow up in prosperity may choose to reject their family's lifestyle because they don't agree with certain aspects of it. However, families that live in poverty are often only concerned about meeting the most basic needs of survival, and sometimes develop lower expectations since they assume their options are limited to what their SES makes available to them. Struggling to get your needs met tends to force people to focus only on the short-term and thus don't have the mental or emotional energy to make decisions (i.e. saving for the future and emergencies) that are a luxury they cannot afford. Some people learn to be very frugal and/or disciplined. Yet, some people who grow up in poverty find that is what drives them to succeed. Therefore, one's socio-economic status can impact a person in many ways, including their level of drive and determination. Therefore, some people grow up believing they can achieve anything they want, some grow up thinking they need to live up to their parents' lifestyle expectations, and some reject their parents' lifestyle expectations altogether.

  Another aspect of SES is income stability (or lack thereof). People and families who had predictable and stable sources of income (stable job, pension payments, etc.) will either live within their means (i.e. self-discipline) or they will not. However, people who do not have the luxury of predictable income (seasonal work, loss of job or other livelihood, etc.) need to find other ways to deal with life, such as waiting to do things until money comes in, borrowing or charging, getting creative, etc.

  How did your SES affect your development?

- ***Political Orientation*** – Your point of view (or your families') regarding the role of government in society, life, religion, etc. can affect your development and perception of reality. For example, many people who grow up with strong political perspectives (conservative, liberal or otherwise) may find it difficult to see a point of view that is different from their own. This can also be a challenge, when the popular orientation contradicts their own. For example, an individual comes from a family with strong 'conservative' (respect for American traditions, personal responsibility, and capitalism), but due to their own personality, life experiences, or values may instead lean towards liberal (priority is on equality and social justice) values. This political orientation can also become an issue when one's preferred political party/group/orientation/candidate moves outside of one's range of personal values. For example, during the 2016 presidential campaign many conservatives found themselves needing to choose the highly controversial conservative candidate, Donald Trump, whose ideology did not reflect their own, and supporting the classic liberal candidate, Hilary Clinton.

- ***Technology*** – The kinds of technologies you regularly have access to *(or don't have access to)* can also affect your development. For example, individuals who have cars, household appliances, computers, cell phones, Internet, games, etc. available at any given moment learn to solve problems by using the technology rather than through physical effort, critical thinking skills, ability to adapt and improvise, etc. How has your access *(or lack of)* to technology impacted your development?

- ***Gender*** – Our gender and the roles expected of our gender. Men are often expected to be thinkers and women are expected to be feelers. Also, men are often expected to be the provider; whereas many women are expected to be the childcare provider and keeper of the home. Some women are encouraged to do both; and some women are encouraged / expected to have their careers take second priority to their family life. Therefore, men are often expected to be more firm in their decision making and women are often expected to be more compassionate and nurturing. How has your gender affected your development?

- **_Family_** – Your family-life dynamics, values, and history will affect your development. Whether your family of origin was traditional, blended, multi-cultural, functional or dysfunctional can either stifle or enhance personality development.

- **_Birth Order_** – Expectations placed on you because of your birth order. For example, many first-born children often take on the role of being "the responsible one" because they often take care of younger siblings or because the parents' tried to be the 'perfect parents' trying to raise the 'perfect child'. Yet, younger children often experience parents whose parenting style is more lax due to the parents' being more experienced. Parents are often less concerned with being perfect or trying to over-protect the child by the time the last one comes along. Some younger children learn to stay out of trouble because they learned to anticipate consequences of behavior based on watching older siblings get in trouble for their actions.

  Birth order also includes those who were part of a "multiple birth" (i.e. twins, triplets, etc.). For example, children born as part of a multiple set may have been less likely to develop as an individual because they usually wind up sharing so much (time, attention, physical appearance, resources, etc. with their siblings). They may have also learned to adapt to get along, or they may have had to compete for resources. Multiples are often compared to their siblings, thus potentially minimizing their individuality.

  How did your birth-order affect your development?

- **_Relationships_** – Relationships of all kinds with parents, children, friends, family, romantic partner and employer/employee have the potential to affect our development. For example, individuals who are normally not very thoughtful and sensitive to other peoples' feelings may find that they learn how to become more sensitive by relating to others who are because significant people in their life either role model or pressure them into thinking of others' feelings. Or, by spending a lot of time around individuals who are intellectual, creative, responsible, adaptable, industrious, talkative etc. you may learn how to develop these things as "skills", even though they don't come naturally to you.

- **_Individual Circumstances_** – Circumstances or experiences that are unique to yourself apart from other family members, can affect development.

- **_Abuse_** – Abuse *(physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, spousal, bullying, victim of violent crime, etc.)* may hinder certain personality traits *(friendliness, assertiveness, spontaneity,*

intuition, thinking, etc.) from developing and encourage others *(withdrawal, feeling, self-discipline, etc.)* to develop.

- ▪ ***Overall Health Issues*** – Physical and mental/emotional (ADD/ADHD, Bi-Polar, depression, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, etc.) issues can also affect development or personality expression.

- ▪ ***Education*** – How much education you have or have not had will affect your development. What you focused your educational learning on will also shape our development *(business training can develop organizational or leadership skills; counseling can develop empathy skills, training in skilled crafts can encourage a hands-on approach, etc.).*

- ▪ ***Work Experience*** – Work experiences can encourage you to either develop or stifle certain processes, such as self-discipline, leadership skills, critical thinking, empathy, organization, etc.

- ▪ ***Hobbies/Play/Leisure Activities*** - How we spend our free / leisure time can potentially impact our personality and skills development. Examples include: Physical exercise and sports may develop physical strength, agility, stamina, and teamwork. Playing video games may develop eye-hand coordination and strategizing. Board games such as chess/checkers, etc. may develop critical thinking, strategic, problem solving skills and competitiveness. Care giving, volunteering, and coordinating social gatherings can develop leadership, interpersonal, social, empathy and hospitality skills. Reading and writing can possibly develop critical thinking and communication skills and appreciation for the arts. So, how do you spend your spare time? Organized social activities, games, sports, learning, cultural events, family activities, socializing, etc.? You could potentially be developing: critical thinking/academic, organizational, leadership, interpersonal, technology, eye-hand coordination, musical/artistic talents and skills, and physical abilities, persistence/stamina, etc.

- *__Military Life__* – Individuals who have either served in the armed forces, or were raised by parents while their parent(s) served *(i.e. "military brats")*, have likely experienced at least a season of their life where their environment was extremely structured and disciplined. Such structuring often helps an individual to develop self-discipline in their own lives. Some people have naturally disciplined personalities, and find this kind of environment comfortable; whereas some individuals would find that without such structuring; they would have become an undisciplined person. Some people, however, will respond to such excessive structuring by rebelling.

- *__Life Roles__* – Your various life roles (parent, caretaker, provider, employer, employee, student, volunteer, church member, etc.) will also affect how your personality and skills develop.

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

_____

_____

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

_____

_____

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

_____

_____

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

_____

_____

Reflection: (*Write down your response after completing this assignment.*)

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Urie Bronfenbrenner. (2007, October 12). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 07:08, October 15, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Urie_Bronfenbrenner&oldid=164111700
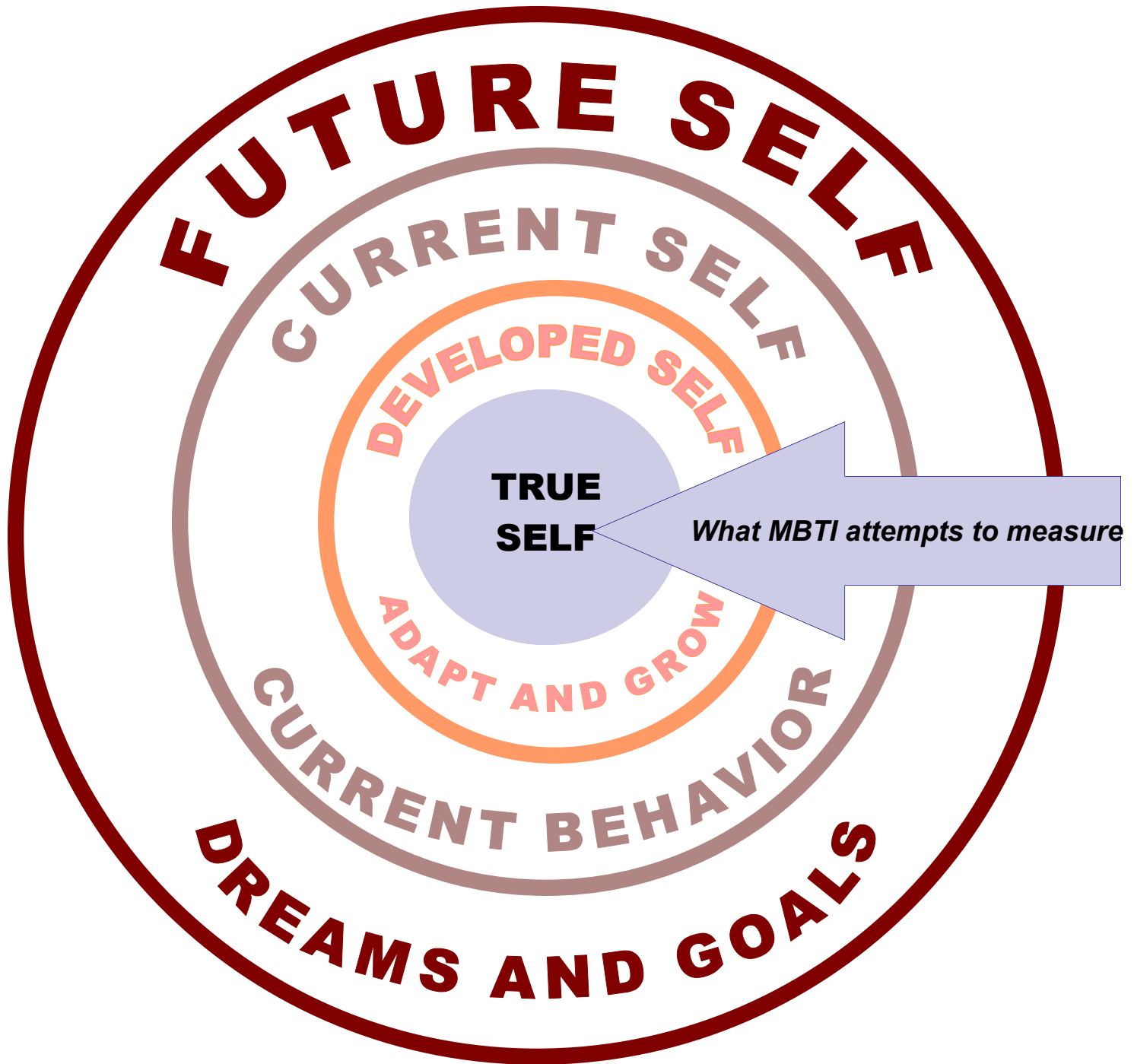
Square Watermelons

Watermelons grown in a square box in Japan to make them more space-efficient for storage and shipping purposes.)

Positive shaping – Develops natural talent and compensates for weakness
Negative Shaping – Does much damage to the individual's psyche

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_watermelon. Retrieved: 8/23/2015

Understanding Your
True "Self" and the MBTI

FUTURE SELF

CURRENT SELF

DEVELOPED SELF

TRUE SELF

What MBTI attempts to measure

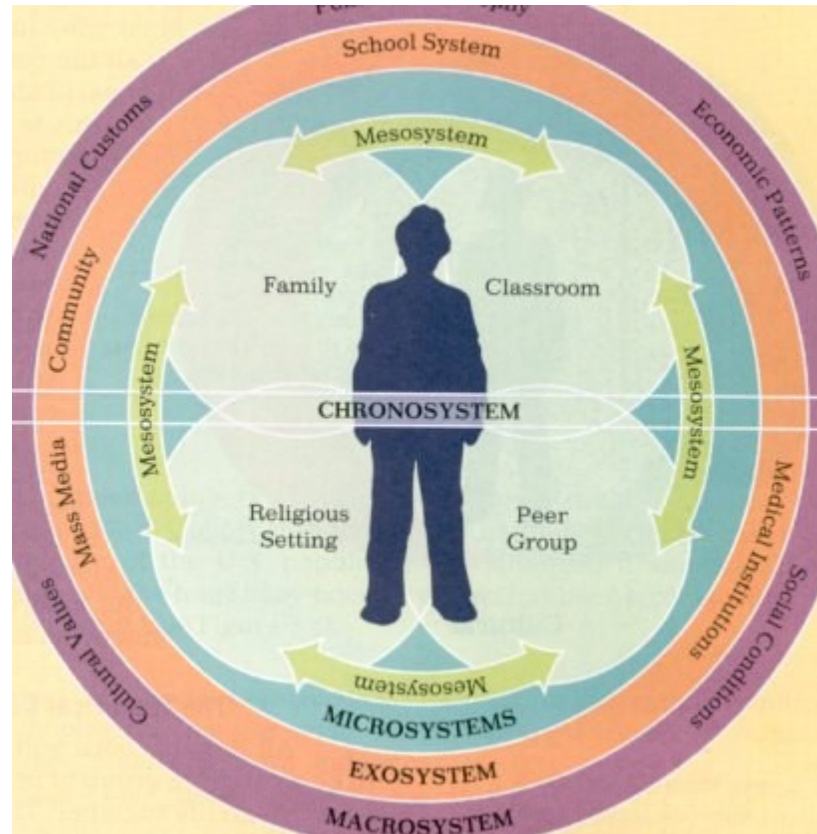ADAPT AND GROW

CURRENT BEHAVIOR

DREAMS AND GOALS

*Adapted from: L. Berens (1999). *Dynamics of personality type: Understanding and applying Jung's cognitive processes.* Huntington Beach, CA: Telos Publishing.

Environmental Shaping Factors

"Ecological Model of Child Development"
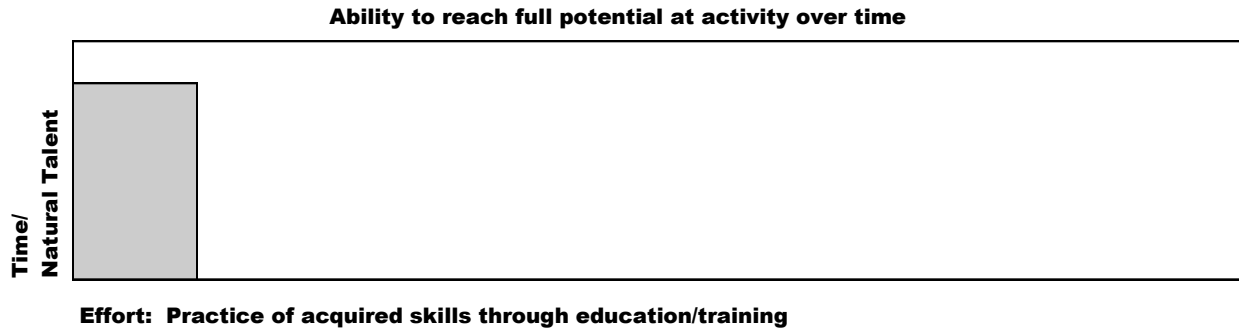### *By: Urie Bronfenbrenner*

Ecological Systems Theory

Four types of nested systems that impact a child's development:

1. **Microsystem** *(family, classroom, religious, etc.)*
2. **Mesosystem** *(two Microsystems in interaction)*
3. **Exosystem** *(external environments, which indirectly affect — parent's work, etc.)*
4. **Macrosystem** *(larger socio-cultural context—CULTURE)*
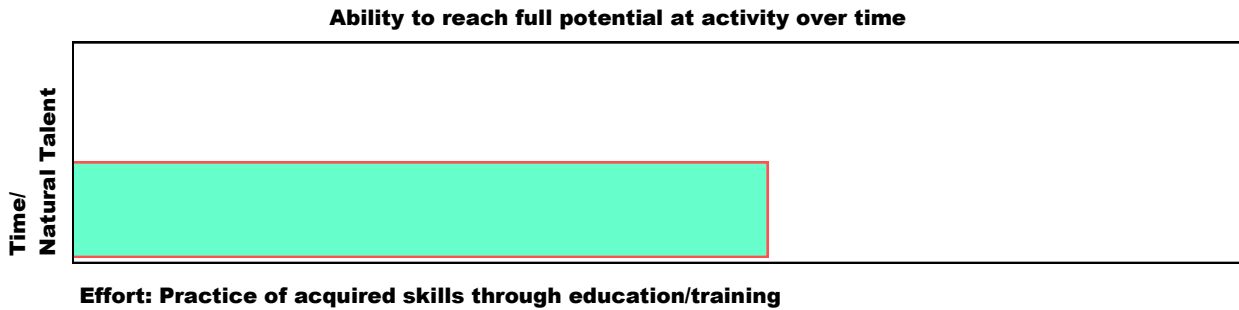5. **Chronosystem** *(the evolution of the external systems over time—GENERATION)*

Talent vs Skill in Reaching Full Potential

Scenario 1: Talent without Practice/Skill

Ability to reach full potential at activity over time

Time/Natural Talent

Effort: Practice of acquired skills through education/training

Scenario 2: Practice/Skill without Talent

Ability to reach full potential at activity over time

Time/Natural Talent

Effort: Practice of acquired skills through education/training

Scenario 3: Talent Combined with Practice/Skill

Ability to reach full potential at activity over time

Time/Natural Talent

Effort: Practice of acquired skills through education/training
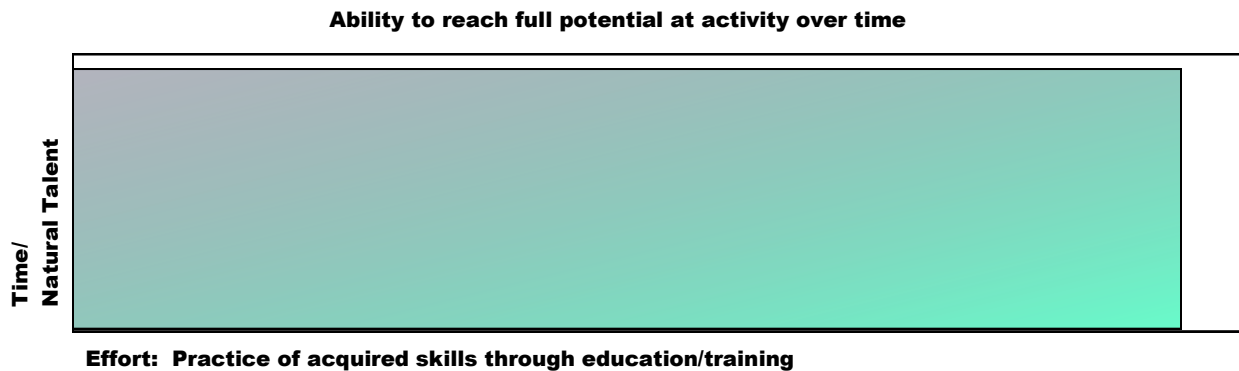
Source: Smilkstein, R. (2003). We're born to learn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Ability vs. Interest

PERSON'S ABILITY AND INTERESTS AS COMPARED TO JOB OR CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

ABILITY

	LOW	HIGH
HIGH	**Individual:** May suffer from low self-worth; could experience anxiety; could experience job insecurity; may be amenable to training and education to enhance abilities **Employer:** Sees poor performance as a job security issue; considers initiating change in job status **Career Services Provider:** Helps to determine the cause of low ability; works with individual to close gaps in job performance through academic and training resources; provides assistance to raise self-concept; employs ability assessments to find compatible occupations/jobs; helps individual with resume, interviewing and networking;	**Individual:** Probably experiences high levels of personal fulfilment and job satisfaction; feels as if in the zone or flow **Employer:** Sees the employee as a great asset to the company or organization; considers how organization can develop and leverage the asset for the individual's and company's benefit; works to retain employee **Career Services Provider:** Poised to assist individual when there is a need; provides advice and resources when there is a request; works with the employee on a promotion, transfer; advises on career management and progression; suggests retention techniques to employer
LOW	**Individual:** Probably finds little joy in work; considers work as drudgery; receives little personal fulfillment; may feel trapped, hopeless, or victimized; looks for better options; seeks to escape situation; seeks new job situation; lacks job engagement **Employer:** Unhappy with employee's performance; seeks to make a change in person's job status **Career Services Provider:** Assesses employee interests and abilities to determine reason for low ability and interests; assists employee in finding academic and training resources to enhance abilities; refers the individual to mental health resources, if needed	**Individual:** Probably experiences boredom; seeks more fulfillment and passion for work; may be in this job temporarily for wages and benefits in the short term with other goals in the longer term **Employer:** Sees the employee as an asset to company but senses lack of job fulfillment or total job engagement; may offer an opportunity for a career transition to a job with a better interest fit **Career Services Provider:** Employs interest assessment to determine reason for low interest in the job/career field; works with individual to find more fulfilling work; helps with possible job transition; works with employer to find options within organization; helps individual with resume, interviewing and networking skills

(Left axis label: INTERESTS)