

All AboutU

When it comes to learning leadership potential, it's all AboutU

A few people go through life knowing exactly who they are. For the rest of us, there's AboutU. The AboutU report, now being used in the undergraduate leadership classes, as well as in the MSOLE program, helps students get at their authentic selves. They discover what motivates them, how they approach being a leader and what they need to reach their true potential. The report uses the Birkman Method, a thorough, extensive personality assessment, and frames the results in a user-friendly format to help students learn about their everyday behaviors, how they handle stress, and their underlying needs and motivations. *Directions* talked with Louise Menlo, who created AboutU in 2003 with Barry and Dave Lovelace, about the benefits of this tool.

HOW DOES THE ABOUTU REPORT HELP EMERGING LEADERS DEVELOP?

The report provides students with a tool that can help them understand how they'll approach leadership. Perhaps more important, it allows them to see themselves as they really are: what interests, motivates and stresses them. That's really a model a leader should follow. Once they accept themselves, they can understand and actualize their leadership capabilities. Everyone is a potential leader; it is learning how you lead that is critical.

ST. EDWARD'S IS USING THIS TOOL WITH UNDERGRADUATES. HOW IS IT PARTICULARLY USEFUL FOR THEM?

One of the things we hear from parents and older students who take the assessment is that they wish they had taken it when they were younger. The students, after taking the assessment, recognize how their effective behaviors may affect others and so are better able to focus on managing various situations at a young age. They also learn what internally motivates and drives them, which can help provide a sense of direction.

WHAT REACTIONS HAVE YOU GOTTEN FROM STUDENTS?

Actually, the report is just words on paper. Ultimately, the student needs to validate the results and find something in it that has meaning to him or her, which we do in the classroom and in one-on-one feedback sessions. For some students, the report and the feedback sessions are an epiphany. For others, it's a nice validation of something they knew. Most students walk away with a new perspective or see something in a new light. And, as an added benefit, the report provides students with information on the job families with which they align. We find this helps many students focus on where they are going in life.

— Frannie Schneider



Barry Lovelace and Louise Menlo used the Birkman Method, an extensive personality assessment, to develop AboutU.

How AboutU Works

The AboutU Report works by compiling information from these five separate reports:

- **Interests:** The areas of interests that can give a clue to your future career path
- **Elements:** The elements of behavior that can help explain when and how you are most effective, what you need to be effective and what happens to you when you don't get what you need
- **Careers:** The top job families or work areas that can guide you in choosing a college major (plus the three least suitable jobs as well)
- **How I Want Others to Deal With Me:** A "playbook" that helps you communicate to others how you'd like to be treated