BARRIERS AND CAREER CHALLENGES FACED 
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The workforce in the U.S. has become increasingly diverse racially and ethnically. The 2000 census reports that workers 18 years or younger are more likely to identify with two or more racial/ethnic groups. Currently there are 13.5 million Asian Americans living in the U.S.; of that total 63% were born in Asian countries. Chinese immigrants from mainland China make up 11% of all immigrants. They were the second largest immigrant group of all groups admitted into the United States in the past decade (U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security). One of the primary reasons Asians immigrate to the U.S. is to seek better educational and career opportunities. However once in the U.S., they encounter a host of issues, including racism and discrimination, acculturation stress, linguistic barriers and often intergenerational conflicts with their family. Traditional U.S. based career theories emphasize individualistic culture (e.g. autonomy, equality of vocational opportunity, freedom and economic affluence to make career choices; linear, progressive career paths). Consequently these theories ignore the sociopolitical realities faced by many racial/ethnic minorities and contradict their worldviews and career experiences.

For instance many recent immigrants encounter employment discrimination because of their limited English fluency. Despite their previous professional or career status, they are deterred from entering the mainstream economy where English is an essential tool of communication. As a result, they may be underemployed. In this case, their career paths do not necessarily follow a linear, progressive trend, nor are the paths based on educational level, work experience or freedom of choice to choose whatever they want to pursue. Instead, their career paths are often affected by their immigration experience, limited English proficiency, and cultural barriers.

When counseling and guiding immigrant students it is important to consider the cultural context of each individual student. Career Counselors along with Language teachers can serve as advocates for students who have potential but have cultural, social and language barriers to communicating their skills and abilities during school to work transitions, such as adapting intervention strategies to language and worldviews of immigrant workers that facilitate their career development.

WHAT’S YOUR TYPE? THE MYERS-BRIGGS INDICATOR OR ‘MBTI’

Are you ENFP or INTJ? There are sixteen personality preference types according to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Many of you may have taken an ‘MBTI’ survey at one time in your life or have at least heard the term mentioned in one context or another.

The type indicator has 4 alternate areas: Extrovert vs. Introvert, Sensing vs. Intuitive, Thinking vs. Feeling, and Judging vs. Perceiving. The first area has to do with where you get your energy from (from outside or inside). The second area has to do with how you gather information; in a sequential way or a more figurative, random way. The third area relates to the way you prefer to make decisions; objectively or subjectively. Finally the fourth area focuses on your day to day lifestyle; are you decisive and planned out or are you flexible and spontaneous? The MBTI survey can be used to help students assess their preferences and gain insight to internal modes of operation and how they function in the external world. It can be useful to help determine possible career pathways that are complimentary to personal preferences. Additionally it can be used in a work place to help employees better understand each other and to develop strategies of communications that consider all types to increase productivity and civility within an organization.

A VERSION OF THE MBTI IS AVAILABLE IN THE CAREER SERVICES CENTER WITH IN DEPTH ANALYSIS OF EACH OF THE SIXTEEN PERSONALITY PREFERENCE TYPES.