

Learning Agility is Good News for Leadership Development

At E·A·S·I·Consult® we pride ourselves in our comprehensive approach to assessing leaders for purposes of selection and development. People are multi-faceted so we use multi-faceted approaches when we seek to understand them. Further, research supports that multiple data points are preferred when predicting success. For these reasons, E·A·S·I·Consult's leadership development approaches typically include multiple components, such as personality tests, critical thinking and abstract reasoning assessments, structured behavioral interviews and even business case simulations when appropriate.

When E·A·S·I·Consult launched the Burke Learning Agility Inventory® (Burke LAI®) earlier this year, I had no idea the extent to which it would change my views on leadership development. At the core of industrial and organizational psychology lies the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. Nearly everything we do in the area of assessment is built on this premise.

In recent years, however, we have seen a shift in this idea and are recognizing that the leaders who are most successful are those who are able to let go of behaviors that have worked well for **them in the past and pick up new behaviors “on the fly” to respond to** changing or uncertain circumstances. While we knew it was a critical part of leadership **success, until we launched the Burke LAI we didn't have a great way of capturing or** assessing this idea, which we now call learning agility.

For me, the Burke LAI offers great news. In some ways, it levels the playing field for those **who are aspiring to become leaders or become better leaders. In the past, I've always** struggled when I worked with a leader whose critical thinking scores fell below the desired range or who had aspects of his or her personality that were not an ideal fit for the job. While we always find ways to recommend growth, which are typically linked to specific **competencies, it's a** simple truth that some development conversations are harder than others. But anyone can become more learning agile, and the Burke LAI identifies specific behaviors that one can enact to improve.

While we are still exploring the link to cognitive ability, we believe at this time that a **minimum threshold is needed. Beyond that, the level of cognitive ability doesn't really** matter. Learning agility provides a very tangible way to measure and also grow or improve a **person's leadership potential.**

The Burke LAI is an excellent complement to our leadership development process. It is too early to generate meaningful correlations between the Burke LAI and our other assessments

because our sample sizes aren't big enough yet. But we are starting to see patterns in responding, which is exciting.

Speed and Flexibility are key components of learning agility, but the other seven dimensions are equally as important to understand and leverage. For example, it is great for a leader to quickly act on new ideas and try out new behaviors (Speed), but if he or she fails to ask **others for feedback (Feedback Seeking) or doesn't pause to reflect on "how it went"** (Reflecting), the experiment with learning agility could backfire. Agile leaders are those who leverage past experiences and rely on others along the way.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is helping leaders better understand themselves so that they can continue to grow. The Burke LAI is a valued addition to this capability because it offers concrete ways for those seeking to become more agile to do so, **and it shows them exactly where to focus their efforts. As a scientist, I'm excited to see the support for learning agility continue to grow. As a practitioner, I'm thankful to have a tool** like the Burke LAI that is built on solid research and to see firsthand the positive impact it is **making on my clients' lives.**

About the Author

Rebekah Cardenas, Ph.D., is vice president of business development and assessment solutions for E•A•S•I-Consult®. E•A•S•I-Consult works with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and mid-sized corporations to provide customized Talent Management solutions. E•A•S•I-Consult specialties include individual assessment, online employment testing, survey research, competency modeling, leadership development, executive coaching, 360-degree feedback, online structured interviews, and EEO hiring compliance. The company is a leader in the field of providing accurate information about people through professional assessment. To learn more about E•A•S•I-Consult, visit <https://easiconsult.com> or email ContactUs@easiconsult.com or call 800.922.EASI.