

Learning Styles Inventory

Instructions:

This questionnaire is designed to explore the way in which you prefer to learn.

There are nine sets of four phrases overleaf. Rank-order the phrases in each set by assigning:

4. to the phrase that best characterises your learning style
3. to the phrase that next best characterises your learning style
2. to the next most characteristic phrase
1. to the phrase that is least characteristic of you as a learner

Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers - all the choices are equally acceptable. The aim of the inventory is to describe how you learn, not to evaluate your learning ability.

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 1A | <input type="text"/> | I like to take my time before acting. |
| 1B | <input type="text"/> | I like to get involved. |
| 1C | <input type="text"/> | I am particular about what I like. |
| 1D | <input type="text"/> | I like things to be useful. |
| | | |
| 2A | <input type="text"/> | I like to analyse things and break them down. |
| 2B | <input type="text"/> | I like to try things out. |
| 2C | <input type="text"/> | I am open to new experiences. |
| 2D | <input type="text"/> | I like to look at all sides of issues. |
| | | |
| 3A | <input type="text"/> | I like to think about things. |
| 3B | <input type="text"/> | I like to be doing things. |
| 3C | <input type="text"/> | I like to follow my feelings. |
| 3D | <input type="text"/> | I like to watch. |
| | | |
| 4A | <input type="text"/> | I accept people and situations the way they are. |
| 4B | <input type="text"/> | I like to evaluate. |
| 4C | <input type="text"/> | I like to be aware of what is around me. |
| 4D | <input type="text"/> | I like to take risks. |
| | | |
| 5A | <input type="text"/> | I have gut feelings and hunches. |
| 5B | <input type="text"/> | I have lots of questions. |
| 5C | <input type="text"/> | I am logical. |
| 5D | <input type="text"/> | I am hard working and get things done. |
| | | |
| 6A | <input type="text"/> | I like to be active. |
| 6B | <input type="text"/> | I like to observe. |
| 6C | <input type="text"/> | I like ideas and theories. |
| 6D | <input type="text"/> | I like concrete things: things that I can see, feel. |
| | | |
| 7A | <input type="text"/> | I tend to think about the future. |
| 7B | <input type="text"/> | I prefer learning in the "here and now". |
| 7C | <input type="text"/> | I like to see results from my work. |
| 7D | <input type="text"/> | I like to consider and reflect about things. |
| | | |
| 8A | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my feelings. |
| 8B | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my own observations. |
| 8C | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my own ideas. |
| 8D | <input type="text"/> | I have to try things out for myself. |
| | | |
| 9A | <input type="text"/> | I tend to reason things out |
| 9B | <input type="text"/> | I am quiet and reserved |
| 9C | <input type="text"/> | I am responsible about things |
| 9D | <input type="text"/> | I am energetic and enthusiastic |

The four phrases in each set in the Learning Styles Inventory correspond to the four learning style scales:

- Concrete Experience (CE)
- Reflective Observation (RO)
- Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)
- Active Experimentation (AE)

Write your numbers in the boxes below **for the designated items only**. Work out your scores by adding the numbers for each set of boxes.

CE	
1B	
2C	
3C	
4A	
8A	
9D	

RO	
1A	
2D	
3D	
6B	
8B	
9B	

AC	
2A	
3A	
4B	
6C	
8C	
9A	

AE	
2B	
3B	
6A	
7C	
8D	
9C	

CE =

RO =

AC =

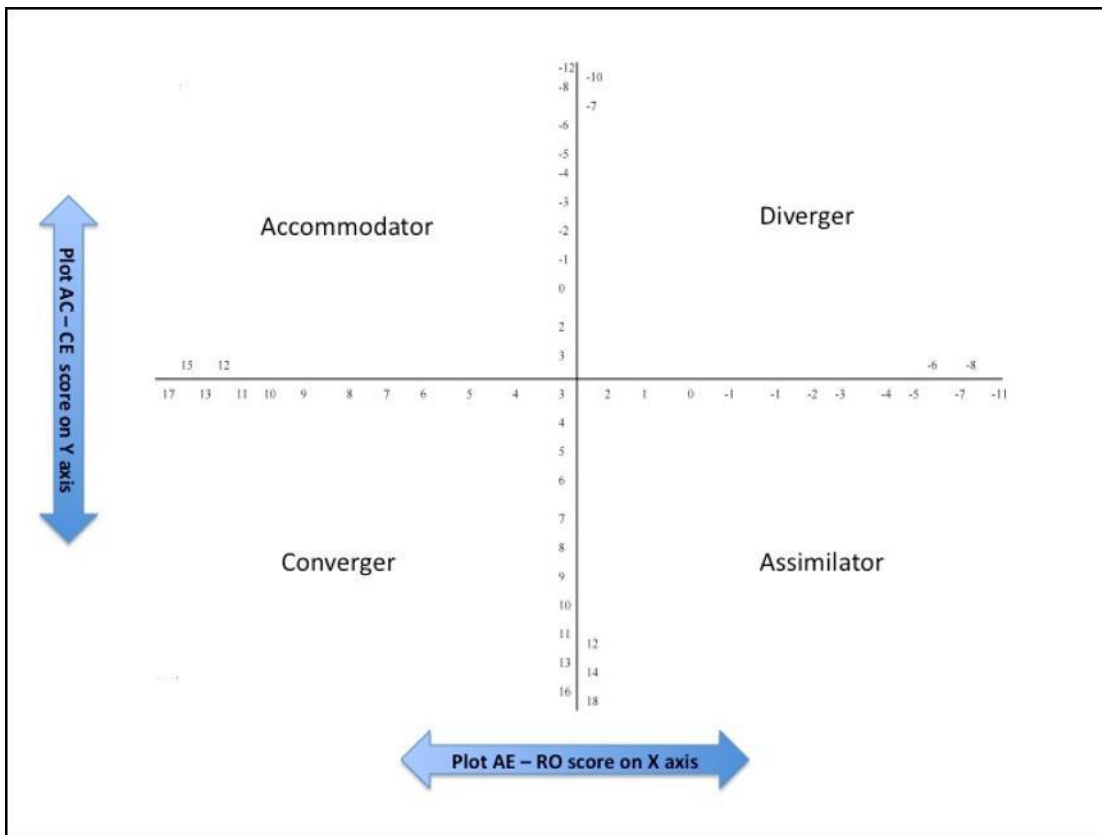
AE =

To work out the two combination scores, subtract **CE** from **AC** and subtract **RO** from **AE**. Keep the negative signs if they appear.

AC - CE - = _____

AE - RO - = _____

Plot the above scores on the grid diagram below, titled 'Learning Style Type Grid'



Interpreting Your Scores

The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is a simple self-description test designed to measure your strengths and weaknesses as a learner in the four stages of the learning process. Effective learners rely on four different learning modes:

Concrete Experience (CE) - Involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences

Reflective Observation (RO) - Reflect on and observe these experiences from many perspectives

Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) - Create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories

Active Experimentation (AE) - Use these theories to make decisions and solve problems

The LSI is designed to assess the relative importance to you of each of the four learning modes so that you can get some indication of which modes you tend to emphasise. Combination scores indicate the extent to which you emphasise abstractness over concreteness (AC-CE); and the extent to which you emphasise active experiment over reflection (AE-RO).

Learning Modes:

A high score on **concrete experience** represents a receptive, experience-based approach to learning that relies heavily on feeling-based judgments. High CE individuals tend to be empathetic and "people-oriented". They generally find theoretical approaches to be unhelpful and prefer to treat each situation as a unique case. They learn best from specific examples in which they can become involved. Individuals who emphasise CE tend to be oriented more toward peers and less toward authority in their approach to learning and benefit most from feedback and discussion with fellow CE learners.

A high score on **abstract conceptualisation** indicates an analytical, conceptual approach to learning that relies heavily on logical thinking and rational evaluation. High AC individuals tend to be oriented more toward things and symbols and less toward other people. They learn in impersonal, authority-directed learning situations that emphasise theory and systematic analysis. They are often frustrated by, and benefit little from, unstructured "discovery" learning approaches such as exercises and simulations.

A high score on **active experimentation** indicates an active, "doing" orientation to learning that relies heavily on experimentation. High AE individuals learn best when they can engage in such things as projects, homework or small group discussions. They dislike passive learning situations such as lectures. These individuals tend to be extroverts.

A high score on **reflective observation** indicates a tentative, impartial and reflective approach to learning. High RO individuals rely heavily on careful observation in making judgments and prefer learning situations such as lectures that allow them to take the role of impartial objective observers. These individuals tend to be introverts.

It should be emphasised that the LSI does not measure your learning style with 100% accuracy. Rather it is an indication of how you see yourself as a learner. You will need data from other sources if you wish to pinpoint your learning style more exactly (eg how you make decisions on the job, how others see you and what kinds of problems you solve best).

Identifying Your Learning Styles:

It is unlikely that your learning style will be described accurately by just one of the four learning modes. This is because each person's learning style is a combination of the four basic learning modes. It is therefore more meaningful to describe your learning style by a single data point that combines your scores on the four basic modes. This is accomplished by using the two combination scores, AC-CE and AE-RO.

These scales indicate the degree to which you emphasise abstractness over concreteness and action over reflection, respectively.

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The grid has the raw scores for these two scales on the crossed lines (AC-CE on the vertical and AE-RO on the horizontal) and percentile scores based on the normative group on the sides. By marking your raw scores on the two lines and plotting their point of interception, you can find which of the four learning style quadrants you fall into. These four quadrants, labelled **accommodator, diverger, converger and assimilator**, represent the four dominant learning styles.

If your AC-CE score were --4 and your AE-RO score were +8, you would fall strongly in the accommodator quadrant. An AC-CE score of +4 and an AE-RO score of +3 would put you slightly in the converger quadrant. The closer your data point is to the point where lines cross, the more balanced your learning style. If your data point is close to any of the four corners, this indicates that you rely heavily on one particular learning style.

The following summary of the four basic learning style types is based on both research and clinical observation of these patterns of LSI scores:

The **converger's** dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualisation (AC) and active experimentation (AE). This person's greatest strength lies in the practical application of such ideas. A person with this style seems to do best in those situations, such as conventional intelligence tests, where there is a single correct answer or solution to a question or problem. The converger focuses his/her knowledge through hypothetical-deductive reasoning on specific problems. Research on this style of learning shows that convergers are relatively unemotional, preferring to deal with things rather than people. They tend to have narrow technical interests and choose to specialise in the physical sciences. This learning style is characteristic of many engineers.

The **diverger** has the opposite learning strengths of the converger. This person is best at concrete experience (CE) and reflective observation (RO). This person's greatest strength lies in imaginative ability. This person excels in the ability to view concrete situations from many perspectives. We have labelled this style "diverger" because a person with this style performs better in situations that call for the generation of ideas, such as a "brainstorming" session. Research shows that divergers are interested in people and tend to be imaginative and emotional. They have broad cultural interests and tend to specialize in the arts. This style is characteristic of individuals from humanities and arts backgrounds. Counselors, organization development specialists and personnel managers tend to be characterized by this learning style.

The **assimilator's** dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualisation (AC) and reflective observation (RO). This person's greatest strength lies in the ability to create theoretical models. This person excels in inductive reasoning and in assimilating disparate observations into an integrated explanation. This person, like the converger, is less interested in people and more concerned with abstract concepts, but is less concerned with the practical use of theories. For this person it is more important that the theory be logically sound and precise; in a situation where a theory or plan does not fit the facts, the assimilator would be likely to disregard or re-examine the facts. As a result, this learning style is more characteristic of pure sciences and mathematics rather than the applied sciences. In organisations, this learning style is found most often in the research and planning departments.

The **accommodator** has the opposite learning strengths of the assimilator. This person is best at concrete experience (CE) and active experimentation (AE), and his/her greatest strength lies in doing things - in carrying out plans and experiments -and involving him/herself in new experiences. This person tends to be more of a risk taker than people with the other three learning styles. We have labeled this person "accommodator" because he/she tends to excel in situations which require adaptation to specific immediate circumstances. In situations where a theory or plan does not fit the "facts", this person will most likely discard the plan or theory. This person tends to solve problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner, relying heavily on other people for information rather than on one's own analytic ability. The accommodator is at ease with people but is sometimes seen as impatient and

Diverger

Characteristics

- Innovative
- Sociable
- Easy-going
- Observer
- Listener
- Questioner
- Imaginative

Strengths

- Sees lots of alternatives
- Creative and divergent thinker
- Uses imagination and fantasy
- Shares ideas
- Sees things from many perspectives
- Co-operative and warm to others
- Asks questions and listens to the answers
- Unhurried, friendly

Weaknesses

- Waits too long before acting
- Many ideas, little action
- Can not be pushed
- Needs reassurance
- Avoids conflict
- Can't see the wood for the trees
- Low tolerance for detail
- Often frustrating to friends
- Works in bursts

Assimilator

Characteristics

- Analytical
- Industrious
- Precise
- Logical
- Cool, unemotional

Strengths

- Gathers all the facts
- Organised and constructive
- Calculates probabilities
- Works well alone
- Uses past experience
- Thinks through ideas
- Plans and checks
- Avoids emotional reactions

Weaknesses

- Goes into too much detail
- Gets bogged down in theory
- Over-cautious, pedantic
- Reluctant to let go past plans
- More interested in ideas than people
- Needs facts
- Sequential thinker

Converger

Characteristics

- Practical
- Hands-on
- Results-orientated
- Independent
- Common-sense

Strengths

- Good at solving problems
- Good detective skills
- Evaluates and tests things
- Sets goals and acts
- Works well independently
- Applies theory to practical situations
- Ready to reward others

Weaknesses

- Needs to go it alone
- Impatient and critical
- Dismissive of woolly ideas
- Does not use other people well
- People come second to the tasks
- Ready to criticise others
- Resents being given answers

Accommodator

Characteristics

- Enthusiastic
- Flexible
- "Action man"
- Impulsive

Strengths

- Takes risks
- Gets others involved
- Uses gut reaction
- Likes new challenges

Weaknesses

- Impulsive, rushes in
- Leaves loose ends
- Changeable and demanding
- Little systematic organisation

- Risk-taker
- Sociable
- Emotional

- Active, will try anything
- Enjoys new situations

- Gets involved in too many things
- Pushy