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

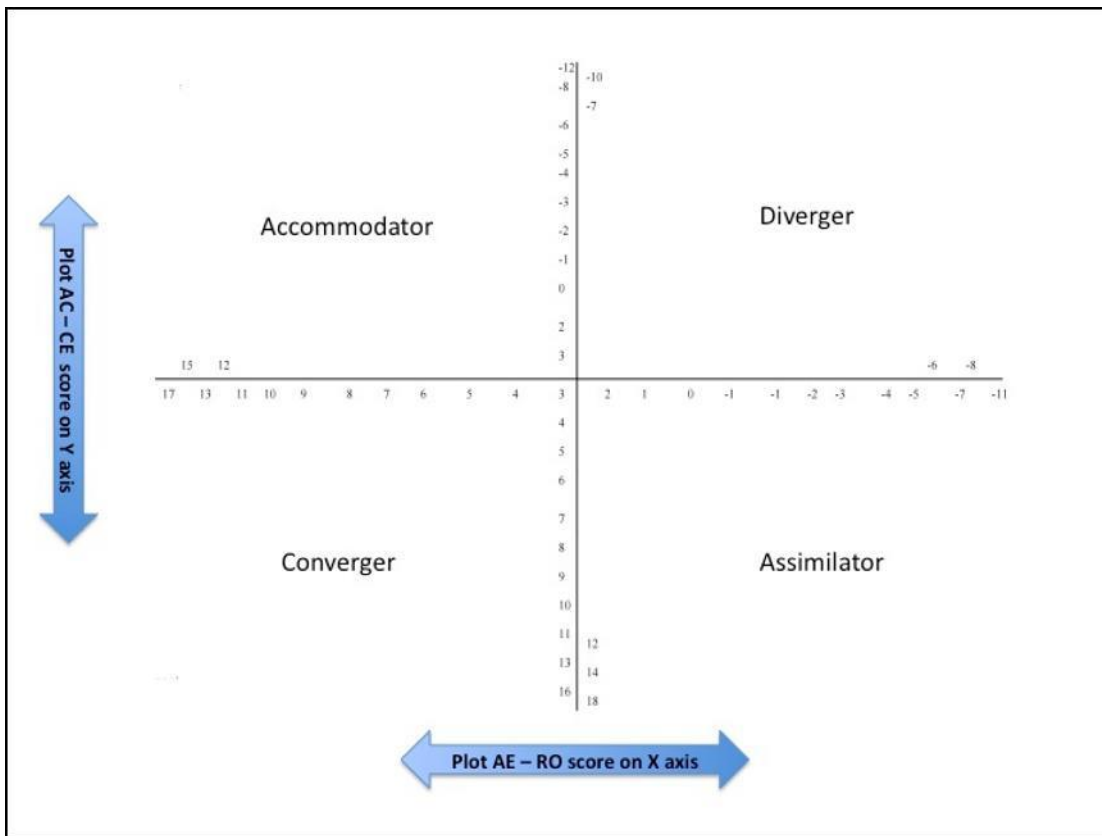| RO =	

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   **AC** [ ] - **CE** [ ] = _____

AE - RO   **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 "pushy". In organisations people with this learning style are found in "action-orientated" jobs, often in marketing or sales.

Diverger

Characteristics	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
• Innovative	• Sees lots of alternatives	• Waits too long before acting
• Sociable	• Creative and divergent thinker	• Many ideas, little action
• Easy-going	• Uses imagination and fantasy	• Can not be pushed
• Observer	• Shares ideas	• Needs reassurance
• Listener	• Sees things from many perspectives	• Avoids conflict
• Questioner	• Co-operative and warm to others	• Can't see the wood for the trees
• Imaginative	• Asks questions and listens to the answers	• Low tolerance for detail
	• Unhurried, friendly	• Often frustrating to friends
		• Works in bursts

Assimilator

Characteristics	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
• Analytical	• Gathers all the facts	• Goes into too much detail
• Industrious	• Organised and constructive	• Gets bogged down in theory
• Precise	• Calculates probabilities	• Over-cautious, pedantic
• Logical	• Works well alone	• Reluctant to let go past plans
• Cool, unemotional	• Uses past experience	• More interested in ideas than people
	• Thinks through ideas	• Needs facts
	• Plans and checks	• Sequential thinker
	• Avoids emotional reactions	

Converger

Characteristics	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
• Practical	• Good at solving problems	• Needs to go it alone
• Hands-on	• Good detective skills	• Impatient and critical
• Results-orientated	• Evaluates and tests things	• Dismissive of woolly ideas
• Independent	• Sets goals and acts	• Does not use other people well
• Common-sense	• Works well independently	• People come second to the tasks
	• Applies theory to practical situations	• Ready to criticise others
	• Ready to reward others	• Resents being given answers

Accommodator

Characteristics	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
• Enthusiastic	• Takes risks	• Impulsive, rushes in
• Flexible	• Gets others involved	• Leaves loose ends
• "Action man"	• Uses gut reaction	• Changeable and demanding
• Impulsive	• Likes new challenges	• Little systematic organisation
• Risk-taker	• Active, will try anything	• Gets involved in too many things
• Sociable	• Enjoys new situations	• Pushy
• Emotional		