

Assessing Adult Learning in Distance Education

Self-Assessment Inventories



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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Competencies of Self-Directed Learning: A Self-Rating Instrument	4
Left Brain/Right Brain Orientation Introduction	5
Left/Right Brain Orientation Inventory	7
Kolb's Learning Style Introduction	10
Learning Style Inventory	11
How to Identify Your Best Learning Styles	14
Aging & Learning Introduction	15
Aging & Learning Quiz	16
How to Improve Reading Comprehension	18
How to Read Textbooks	19
How to Mark Textbooks	20
How to be an Effective Writer	21
How to Take Notes	22
The Cornell Method	23
Grouper/Stringer Inventory	25
How Vulnerable Are You to Stress Inventory	28
Social Readjustment Rating Scale	29
Your Best & Worst of Times Inventory	31
Principles of Scheduling	32
Time Analysis Planner	33
Time Planner	34
Daily Planner	35
Goals/Objectives Planner	36

INTRODUCTION

This group of learning assessments is a companion volume to the primary text, *Orienting Adult Learners to Distance Education*. The materials compiled have been selected because of their utility of application and usefulness for conducting self-assessments by adult learners in a distance education program. The inventories and assessments will combine to provide a comprehensive picture of your learning skills. The information gleaned from the taking of the inventories and assessments will provide you with essential information about the type of learner you are or need to become. All of the inventories and assessments are self-administering and self-grading. None of the inventories, with the possible exception of Kolb's *Learning Style Inventory*, have any predictive value. The purpose of the inventories is to provide you with additional information concerning your learning skills not to make judgments on your academic abilities. None of these inventories are correlated to GPA or IQ. Do not let the test taking quality of these inventories scare you away from completing them. There are no "right answers" required for any of them; they are simply appraisals based most often upon your own self-assessment.

The *Competencies of Self-Directed Learning: A Self-Rating Instrument*, was designed by Malcolm Knowles as an informal means of assessing the basic skills of self-directed learning. An honest response to the inventory items will reveal skill areas that need improvement or areas in which you already possess a certain degree of competence. This instrument will give you a fairly accurate idea as to your present level of competence in regard to what Knowles affirms are the essential skills of self-direction.

Competencies of Self-Directed Learning: A Self-Rating Instrument

I possess these competencies to the following degree:

	None	Weak	Fair	Strong
1. An understanding of the differences in assumptions about learners and the skills required for learning under teacher-directed learning and self-directed learning, and the ability to explain these differences to others.				
2. A concept of myself as being a non-dependent and a self-directing person.				
3. The ability to relate to peers collaboratively, to see them as resources for diagnosing needs, planning my learning, and learning; and to give help to them and receive help from them.				
4. The ability to diagnose my own learning needs realistically, with help from teachers and peers.				
5. The ability to translate learning needs into learning objectives in a form that makes it possible for their accomplishment to be assessed.				
6. The ability to relate to teachers as facilitators, helpers, or consultants, and to take the initiative in making use of their resources.				
7. The ability to identify human and material resources appropriate to different kinds of learning objectives.				
8. The ability to select effective strategies for making use of learning resources and to perform these strategies skillfully and with initiative.				
9. The ability to collect and validate evidence of the accomplishment of various kinds of learning objectives.				

Where Does Your Time Go?

Peter Drucker, in *The Effective Executive*, notes that “Effective executives, in my observation, do not start with their tasks. They start with their time. And they do not start out with planning. They start out by finding out where their time actually goes. Then they attempt to manage their time and cut back unproductive demands on their time. Finally, they consolidate their “discretionary” time into the largest possible continuing units” (1966:25). These sheets can be used by you to start with your time and analyze how it is being used so you can manage it more effectively and productively.

Estimate the number of hours you spend each week on the following activities. When you are finished, subtract your total hours from 168, the number of hours in a week. How much time is left? How will you use this time?

Activity Hours Per Week

1. Working	<i>Hours</i> _____
2. Studying	<i>Hours</i> _____
3. Sleeping	<i>Hours</i> _____
4. Dressing, showering, etc.	<i>Hours</i> _____
5. Traveling to/from work	<i>Hours</i> _____
6. Eating	<i>Hours</i> _____
7. Watching TV	<i>Hours</i> _____
8. Engaging in recreational activities, hobbies, etc.	<i>Hours</i> _____
9. Other obligations/appointments required during a typical week, i.e. church, visitation, extra-curricular duties, etc.	
a.	<i>Hours</i> _____
b.	<i>Hours</i> _____
c.	<i>Hours</i> _____
SUBTOTAL =	_____
	<i>Subtract subtotal from 168 Hours</i>
TOTAL =	_____

Now answer the following:

1. On what activity do you spend the least amount of time?
2. On what activity do you spend the most time?
3. Is the amount of time you spend studying producing the grades you want?
4. Overall, are you satisfied with the way you spend your time? Why or why not?
5. If you could make some changes, what would they be?

Time Management Evaluation: A Reflective Survey

Students should answer the questions in this initial evaluation as honestly as possible. Fill in the blanks or check the answer that best describes your behavior. Then examine your answers and see what it tells you about yourself and what ways you can make improvements.

On average:

I spend ____ hours per week studying

I spend ____ hours per week sleeping.

I spend ____ hours per week relaxing, recreating, socializing

I spend ____ hours per week in extra-curricular/vocational activities

I spend ____ hours per week at paid job

For every class hour, I spend ____ hours studying.

(Most Trinity courses are considered 3 semester credit hours so for a typical course, you would have three (3) one hour class sessions per week. Beyond your “class time,” how many hours do you spend doing assignments, studying, reading, etc.)

I am late to meetings, appointments, work, ____ times per week.

When I am late, I feel _____

What course(s) do you spend the most time on and why?

I use short periods of “down time” to do simple academic tasks like reviews, readings, etc.

____ yes ____ no

I use short periods of “down time” to do simple, nonacademic tasks like cleaning, bills, etc.

____ yes ____ no

I use a daily planner

____ yes ____ no

I use a weekly planner

____ yes ____ no

I use a monthly planner

____ yes ____ no

I work better under pressure

____ yes ____ no

I check my syllabi for upcoming assignments:

____ everyday ____ twice per week ____ once per week ____ every other week

I would describe myself as a procrastinator ____ yes ____ no

I have done poorly on assignments (papers, speeches, tests) in the past because I did not spend enough time on preparation

____ yes ____ no

I have done poorly on assignments (papers, speeches, tests) in the past because I did not start early enough

____ yes ____ no

The most time consuming course I have is:

This and other courses will require what amount of time per week:

Course _____	Time _____
Course _____	Time _____
Course _____	Time _____
Course _____	Time _____

Some ways I can use short periods of “down time” are:

What, if any, changes will you make as a result of evaluating your time?

Buy, *and use*, a time planner

Restructure my “down time”

Organize my study time

Other

Daily Planner

Record everything you do during each hour period of a typical week that you choose. At the end of the week, complete the *Summary of Activities* to see how you spent your time.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 a.m.							
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00a.m.							
11:00a.m.							
12:00p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m.							
10:00p.m.							
11:00p.m.							

Summary of Activities for the Time Use Chart

At the end of a typical week, summarize your activities on the chart below.

Activity	M	T	W	T	F	Sat	Sun	Total	Percent*
Class Time									
Studying									
Work									
Social engagements									
Recreation									
Hobbies									
Sleeping									
Eating									
Travel									
Church									
Other (list)									
Total	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	168	100

** To determine percentage, divide the number of hours in an activity by 168. For example, 56 hours of sleep divided by 168 = 33.3%*

Evaluation of Time Use Summary

Possible Problems	Possible Solutions
Too much time spent PREPARING to study and not enough time actually STUDYING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the time of day when you are most alert and use that time for studying. 2. Set realistic goals for amount of studying to be accomplished per day or week. 3. Have ONE FIXED place to study.
Lack of adequate study plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule a set number of pages or chapters per study session. 2. Know what you're responsible for.
Difficulty in deciding WHAT to study WHEN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put the most uninteresting and/or difficult subject first on your study schedule. 2. Schedule each of your classes into some study-time-slots during the week. 3. Use times when you are most alert for study.
Having to ask yourself, "What am I learning?"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study to discover key concepts and main points. The details will only make sense once you have mastered the general ideas. 2. Review study tips.

Principles of Scheduling

1. Make use of daylight hours. Research shows that each hour used for study during the day is equal to one and a half hours at night. This means trying to make use of free hours during the day. These are the most effective yet most often wasted hours.
2. Study at the same time every day. A student should have certain hours set aside for study that are treated the same as class. Having the same study time five days a week will soon become habit and therefore easier to follow. Our minds are programmed by routine, and it will be easier to get started and to concentrate on the task at hand. Studying in the same place also aids concentration.
3. Plan enough time to study. The rule of thumb that you should study two hours for every class hour. Depending on your background or experience or the difficulty of the class, you may need to allow more. Start out by allowing two hours, but adjust according to your need.
4. Space study periods. Fifty to ninety minutes at a time for each subject is probably most efficient. You should then take a break for ten to fifteen minutes. Studying for longer periods of time often becomes counter-productive.
5. List activities according to priorities. By putting first things first, you will get the most important things done on time.
6. Study during your prime time. We all have daily cycles of sluggishness and alertness. If your work, classes and circumstances permit, make use of this knowledge. Schedule your hardest subject at your most alert time. And during the day when you are less productive than you'd like to be, schedule less demanding tasks.
7. Leave unscheduled time for flexibility. Packing your schedule with too many details will almost assure your failure. Lack of flexibility is the major reason why students don't follow schedules.
8. Analyze your use of time. One cause of getting behind is failure to make use of short periods of time. By keeping a time log, you can see where you are currently wasting time. Your time log may reveal a waste as simple as not responding to your alarm clock the first time or napping in the afternoon.

"Time is the scarcest resource . . . unless it's managed, nothing else can be managed"
 (Peter Drucker in <http://www.furninfo.com/canadatime995.html>).

5 Ways to Get Control of Your Time

- 1. Make a monthly schedule which shows all your commitments and things to remember.
- 2. Keep a "to-do" list every week and check things off each time you complete something.
- 3. Make a daily planner. Post it somewhere you can see it often.
- 4. Know what your best time of day is for studying.
- 5. Develop a time budget. Remember, if you have cash on hand, you'll spend it! If you have time on your hands, you'll waste it. Put your money into a savings account and do the same with time - learn to save it!

Monthly Planner

With a **red** pen, fill in those responsibilities you feel are first priority.

With a **blue** pen, fill in those responsibilities you feel are second priority.

With a **green** pen, fill in those responsibilities you feel are third priority.

Month _____

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

To Do List

With a **red** pen, fill in your daily list (what needs to be done THAT day)

With a **blue** pen, fill in your weekly list (what needs to be done sometime THAT week).

With a **green** pen, fill in your monthly list (what needs to be done sometime THAT month).

Week of ___/___/___ (i.e. Week of 2/5/04)

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Daily Planner

With a **red** pen, fill in each of your class assignments.

With a **blue** pen, fill in your work/job hours.

With a **green** pen, fill in homework (research, projects) hours.

With a **purple** pen, fill in recreational activities.

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							

Hemispheric Dominance

The *Left/Right Brain Orientation* inventory is designed to provide an informal indication as to your preferred hemisphere orientation. This information will enable you to better understand and appreciate your preference for processing materials to be learned. A few people will display a preference for one or the other, but the majority seem to prefer a balance between the two. Taking this inventory will show you how you compare to other adult learners.

In the early 1960's, Dr. Roger Sperry and his colleagues studied the behavior of “split-brain patients” who were undergoing traumatic epileptic seizures. To relieve their symptoms, brain surgery was conducted during which the *corpus callosum*, the bundle of nerve fibers connecting the right and left hemispheres, was surgically divided. Performing these procedures provided brain researchers with useful empirical data concerning brain function. Consequently, we now know that each hemisphere of our brain conducts discrete functions. These functions are displayed in diagram form on the next page.

Brain dominance research has demonstrated compelling evidence for the fact that there are two equally valid and compelling ways of viewing and understanding stimuli. Although we have two brain hemispheres, most of us have a dominant hemisphere, just as most of us have a dominant eye, ear, hand and foot. This does not mean the less dominant side of our brain is dormant but simply not one's preferred way of perceiving and processing the world.

The concept of *Whole Brain Teaching and Learning* assumes that both sides of the brain need to be used in order to fully appreciate reality. This approach to teaching and learning is designed to purposely move back and forth in teaching and learning style between techniques and strategies that avoid favoring one side of the brain over the other. The following is an outline of the characteristics of each side of the brain.

LEFT/RIGHT BRAIN ORIENTATION

Place a check mark next to the item that best represents you. The numbers in parentheses are to be used for obtaining the score for each question. Be sure to select only eight characteristics on question 5 and refer to page 8 for scoring on that question. Note that questions 6 and 7 require a certain number of characteristics as well with the points for each noted in parentheses. **Total the figures from each question** and compare your results with those listed on page 9 to see how you rank in the left brain/right brain dominance chart.

1. In auditoriums, movie theaters, lecture halls, etc. do you prefer to sit...
 - a. _____ on the right side? (1)
 - b. _____ on the left side? (10)
 - c. _____ in the middle? (5)

2. When responding to a question requiring some thought, do you...
 - a. _____ tend to look to the left? (10)
 - b. _____ tend to look to the right? (1)
 - c. _____ tent to look directly at the person (5)

3. Are you...
 - a. _____ more extroverted? (2)
 - b. _____ more introverted? (8)

4. Are you...
 - a. _____ more of a "day person"? (2)
 - b. _____ more of a "night person"? (8)
 - c. _____ both equally? (5)

5. From the following list of characteristics and skills useful in work, identify four that you especially possess or are good at, and four that you find difficult. Designate "good" with **g**, and difficult with **d**.
 - a. _____ managing time
 - b. _____ organizing projects
 - c. _____ strategic planning
 - d. _____ creative problem solving
 - e. _____ persuading others
 - f. _____ exercising initiative
 - g. _____ supervising others
 - h. _____ conceptualizing
 - i. _____ controlling
 - j. _____ having drive/motivation
 - k. _____ exercising self-discipline
 - l. _____ developing programs
 - m. _____ meeting deadlines
 - n. _____ budgeting

- o. ___ integrating
- p. ___ motivating others
- q. ___ consulting
- r. ___ courteousness
- s. ___ perception
- t. ___ responsiveness
- u. ___ foresightedness
- v. ___ dependability
- w. ___ insight
- x. ___ practicality
- y. ___ energy
- z. ___ intuitiveness

6. From the following list of words, check **five** that best describe you

- a. ___ analytical (3)
- b. ___ logical (2)
- c. ___ musical (9)
- d. ___ artistic (9)
- e. ___ mathematical (3)
- f. ___ verbal (4)
- g. ___ innovative (8)
- h. ___ intuitive (8)
- i. ___ self-controlled (2)
- j. ___ detail-minded (3)
- k. ___ emotional (7)
- l. ___ able to grasp wholes(8) (holistic)
- m. ___ dominant (3)
- n. ___ intellectual (3)
- o. ___ able to synthesize (8)
- p. ___ spatially oriented (8)
- q. ___ linearly oriented (2)
- r. ___ a reader (5)
- s. ___ a synthesizer (8)
- t. ___ able to use analogies (8)

7. From the following list of phrases, check **four** that most apply to you

- a. I have a strong leadership ability _____ (2)
- b. I prefer to work independently _____ (8)
- c. I tend to be outgoing and sociable _____ (2)
- d. I have a great love for the arts _____ (8)
- e. I am conscientious and responsible _____ (2)
- f. I consider myself quite sensitive _____ (7)

- | | | | |
|----|--|-------|-----|
| g. | I like to participate in team or group efforts | _____ | (3) |
| h. | I am not very well organized | _____ | (7) |
| i. | I have good social poise | _____ | (3) |
| j. | I am frequently critical of myself | _____ | (7) |
| k. | I respect social conventions and values | _____ | (3) |
| l. | I sometimes have doubts about my intellectual efficiency | _____ | (7) |

Scoring for question five.

a.	G = 2	d = 7	n.	G = 2	d = 7
b.	G = 7	d = 2	o.	G = 7	d = 2
c.	G = 2	d = 7	p.	G = 2	d = 7
d.	G = 8	d = 2	q.	G = 7	d = 2
e.	G = 2	d = 8	r.	G = 1	d = 8
f.	G = 7	d = 2	s.	G = 8	d = 2
g.	G = 2	d = 7	t.	G = 2	d = 7
h.	G = 7	d = 2	u.	G = 7	d = 3
i.	G = 2	d = 8	v.	G = 2	d = 7
j.	G = 7	d = 2	w.	G = 8	d = 3
k.	G = 2	d = 7	x.	G = 2	d = 8
l.	G = 7	d = 2	y.	G = 7	d = 3
m.	G = 1	d = 8	z.	G = 8	d = 2

Scoring

41 - 84

Left-brain oriented

85 - 128

Double-dominant

129 - 172

Right-brain oriented

The left hemisphere (in our culture, the more “dominant” and overdeveloped) specializes in numerical information processed sequentially in a linear fashion. It is the active verbal, logical, rational and analytical part of our brain.

The right hemisphere is associated primarily with those activities we consider to be creative. It is the intuitive, experimental, nonverbal part of the brain and it deals in images and holistic, relational grasping of complex configurations and structures. It creates metaphors, analogies, and new combinations of ideas.

L-Mode

Verbal: Using words to name, describe, define.

Analytic: Figuring things out step-by-step and part-by-part.

Symbolic: Using a symbol to stand for something.

Abstract: Taking out a small bit of information and using it to represent the whole thing.

Temporal: Keeping track of time, sequencing one thing after another: doing first things first.

Rational: Drawing conclusions based on reason and fact.

Digital: Using numbers as in counting.

Logical: Drawing conclusions based on logic: one thing following another in logical order-for example, a mathematical theorem or a well-stated argument.

Linear: Thinking in terms of linked ideas, one thought directly following another.

R-Mode

Nonverbal: Awareness of things, but minimal connection with words.

Synthetic: Putting things together to form wholes.

Concrete: Relating to things as they are, at the present moment.

Analogic: Seeing likenesses between things; understanding metaphoric relationships.

Nontemporal: Without a sense of time.

Nonrational: Not requiring a basis of reason or facts; willingness to suspend judgment.

Spatial: Seeing where things are in relation to other things, and how parts go together to form a whole.

Intuitive: Making leaps of insight, often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings or visual images.

Holistic: Seeing whole things all at once; perceiving the overall patterns and structures, often leading to divergent conclusions.

A comparison of Left-Mode and Right-Mode Characteristics [Source: Betty Edwards, Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1979)]

HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU TO STRESS?

STRESS INVENTORY

Instructions: The following scale was developed by Holmes and Rahe to investigate the relationship between social readjustment, stress, and susceptibility to illness. They found that a person with a score of 200-250 during a one-year period has a 50% chance of developing illness or health change. With a score of 300 or more, a person's chances increase to 80%. Look over the events listed below. Place a check in the space provided if it has happened to you within the last twelve months.

1. Death of a spouse (100)
2. Divorce (72)
3. Marital separation (65)
4. Death of a close family member (63)
5. Personal injury or illness (53)
6. Marriage (50)
7. Marital reconciliation (45)
8. Change in health of family member (44)
9. Pregnancy (40)
10. Gain of new family member (39)
11. Job Change (38)
12. Change in financial status (37)
13. Death of a close friend (36)
14. Increase in arguments with significant other (35)
15. Mortgage or loan of major purchase (home, etc.) (31)
16. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan (30)

17. Change in responsibilities of your job (29)
18. Son or daughter leaving home (29)
19. Trouble with in-laws (29)
20. Outstanding personal achievement (28)
21. Spouse begins or stops work outside the home (26)
22. Revision of personal habits (24)
23. Trouble with boss (23)
24. Change in work hours or conditions (20)
25. Change in residence (20)
26. Change in sleeping habits (16)
27. Change in eating habits (15)
28. Vacation (13)
29. Christmas (12)
30. Minor violations of the law (11)

Total _____

Interpretation: Drs. Holmes and Rahe have shown the relationship between recent life changes (exposure to stressors) and future illness. Listed below are the score categories and the related probability of illness for a person in that range. It is estimated that it will take 1 year to replenish the energy expended in adjusting to any of the changes described in the scale.

0-149	no significant problem	
150-199	mild stress	35% chance of illness
200-299	moderate stress	50% chance of illness
300+	major stress	80% chance of illness

(Inventory copied from: http://www.jeassociates.com/eap/stress_inv.html)

Kolb Learning Style Inventory

This inventory is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring learning differences among adults. The LSI is a nine-item self-description questionnaire that measures a person's relative emphasis on each of the four modes of the learning process (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation). Kolb prefers to describe learning styles as "possibility-processing" structures rather than "fixed personality traits." That is, a person's learning style is adaptive and dynamic rather than static. Remember this when you are assessing the results of your LSI, it is giving you a picture of yourself as a learner NOW, not what you used to be or will become. Adult learners, if they are going to be effective and successful learners, need to acquire four different learning abilities: concrete learner abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities, and active experimentation abilities. Although this is the ideal, in practice it is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, it still is something toward which all adult learners need to strive in order to be able to handle competently any learning environment. The *Learning Style Inventory* will demonstrate your ability levels in each of these four learning modes. The results of the inventory will indicate which are your strongest and weakest learning abilities and provide you with a descriptive learning style indicative of your learning strengths.

KOLB'S LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY

This inventory is designed to assess your preferred style of learning. As you take the inventory, give a high rank to those words which best describe the way you normally prefer to learn. Give a low rank to those words which are least characteristic of the way you normally prefer to learn.

There are no right or wrong answers to the responses. Each of the items is equally good. The aim of the inventory is to describe your preferred style of learning.

INSTRUCTIONS:

There are nine sets of four words listed below. RANK ORDER each set of four words across the page. Assign a **4** to the word which BEST CHARACTERIZES your approach to learning, a **3** to the word which next best characterizes, a **2** to the next, and a **1** to the word which LEAST CHARACTERIZES your approach to learning. BE SURE TO ASSIGN A *DIFFERENT* RANK NUMBER TO EACH OF THE FOUR WORDS IN EACH SET ACROSS THE PAGE. Do not make ties.

CE	RO	AC	AE
1. <input type="checkbox"/> Discriminating	<input type="checkbox"/> Tentative	<input type="checkbox"/> Involved	<input type="checkbox"/> Practical
2. <input type="checkbox"/> Receptive	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant	<input type="checkbox"/> Analytical	<input type="checkbox"/> Impartial
3. <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching	<input type="checkbox"/> Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Doing
4. <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluative	<input type="checkbox"/> Aware
5. <input type="checkbox"/> Intuitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Productive	<input type="checkbox"/> Logical	<input type="checkbox"/> Questioning
6. <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/> Observing	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> Active
7. <input type="checkbox"/> Present-oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflecting	<input type="checkbox"/> Future-oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic
8. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Observe	<input type="checkbox"/> Conceptualize	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiment
9. <input type="checkbox"/> Intense	<input type="checkbox"/> Reserved	<input type="checkbox"/> Rational	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsible

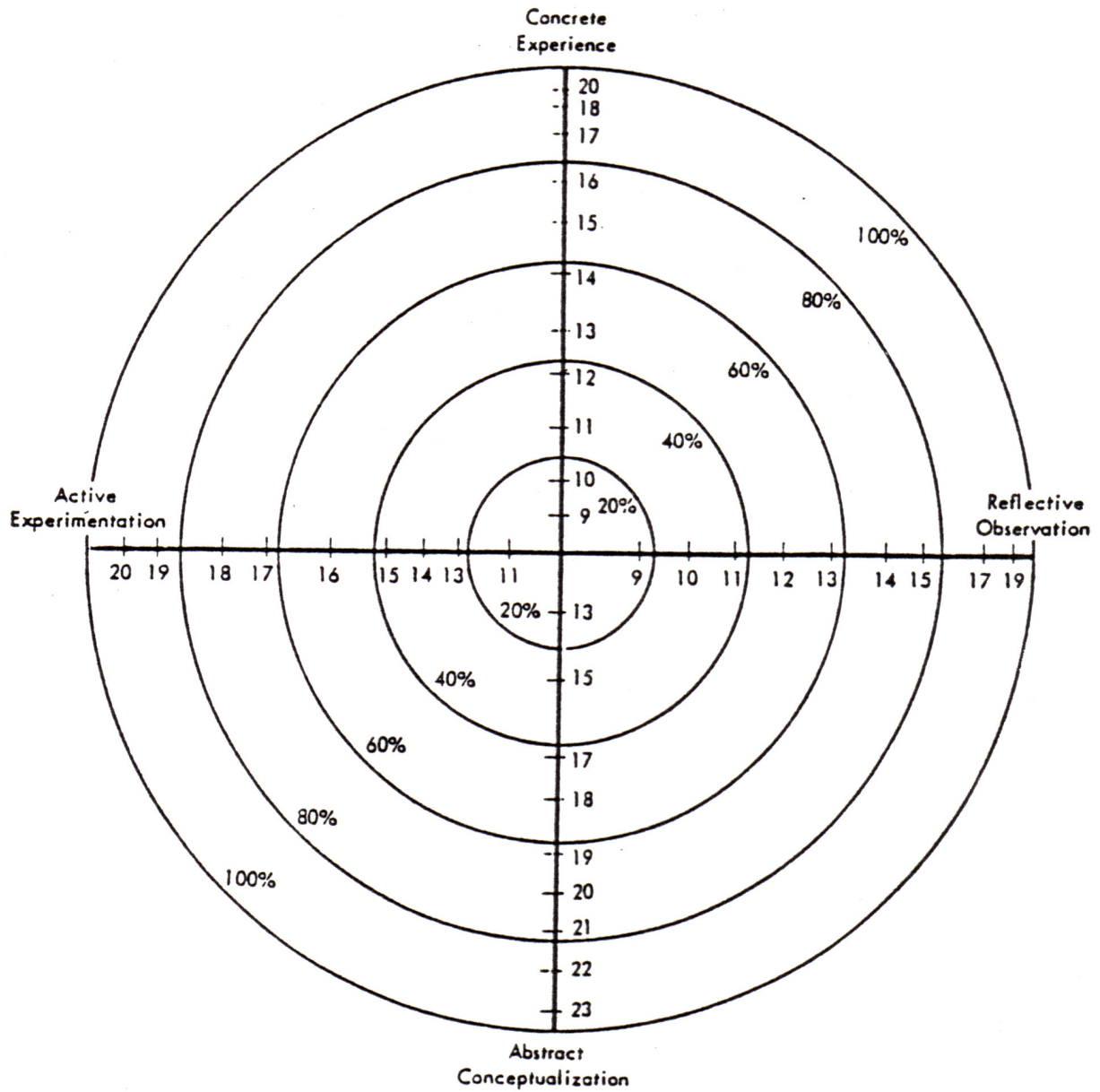
SCORING: In each column, **add up** the figures assigned to the numbers requested **beneath** each category. *For example*, the category CE requires that you add the numbers of importance you assigned only to statements 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Put that total on the line beside CE.

CE _____	RO _____	AC _____	AE _____
(2,3,4,5,7,8)	(1,3,6,7,8,9)	(2,3,4,5,8,9)	(1,3,6,7,8,9)

Each vertical column represents one quadrant on the learning style grid (CE= concrete experience, etc.). You will end up with a total score for each vertical column.

Transfer each vertical column total (CE, OR, AC & E) to its appropriate place on the Learning Style Grid. Using a pen or pencil, connect these four numbers with straight lines. Now you have a visual profile of your preferred learning style based upon the responses to the above items.

Learning Style Grid



LEARNING-STYLE PROFILE NORMS FOR THE LEARNING-STYLE INVENTORY

In order to plot your results, please print this page and follow the directions on the previous page.

Learning Style Inventory Results

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 emphasize Concrete Experience tend to be oriented more towards peers and less towards authority in their approach to learning, and benefit most from feedback and discussion with fellow CE learners.

A high score on *Abstract Conceptualization* indicates an analytical, conceptual approach to learning that relies heavily on logical thinking and rational evaluation. High AC individuals tend to be oriented more towards things and symbols and less towards other people. They learn best in authority-directed, impersonal learning situations that emphasize theory and systematic analysis. They are frustrated by and benefit little from unstructured “discovery” learning approaches like 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.

In addition to a score indicating one's relative emphasis on one of the four learning modes, the LSI also reveals two combination scores that indicate the extent to which the person emphasizes abstractness over concreteness (AC-CE) and the extent to which the person emphasizes action over reflection (AE-RO).

The **Converger** (AC+AE learning mode preferences), has learning strengths in problem solving, decision making, and the practical application of ideas. The term "converger" is used to describe this learning style because this type of learner excels in situations that call for a single correct answer or solution to a question or problem. Convergers are typically reserved emotionally and prefer dealing with technical tasks and problems rather than social and interpersonal issues.

The **Diverger** (CE + RO learning mode preferences), has the opposite learning style strengths from that of the Converger. The greatest strength of this learning style lies in imaginative ability and the ability to see concrete experiences from many perspectives and to organize many relationships into a meaningful whole. The orientation of this style is on adaptation by observation rather than action. The "diverger" has the ability to generate ideas and see implications and prefers more social learning environments.

The **Assimilator** (RO + AC learning mode preferences), excels in inductive reasoning and the ability to create theories and models. The strength of the Assimilator is the ability to "assimilate" or integrate disparate observations and facts into a coherent whole. The person with this learning style prefers working with ideas and concepts rather than people and things.

The **Accommodator** (AE + CE learning mode preferences), has the opposite learning style strengths from those of the Assimilator. The greatest strength of this style of learning lies in doing things, getting involved in new experiences, and applying ideas and concepts in real

situations. The person with this style has the ability to “accommodate” him/herself to immediate circumstances and prefers to solve problems using an intuitive trial-and-error approach.

YOUR BEST & WORST OF TIMES

Your Best and Worst of Times inventory is intended to give you an objective view of your own internal clock. We all have certain times of the day, and even times of the week, that are our optimal periods of creativity and learning. Part of the self-assessment process includes being able to identify these times for yourself so you can attempt to structure your study schedule accordingly. Due to occupational constraints, we all may not have the luxury of selecting our “best” times for study. As always, we have trade-offs we must make and this may mean that you must choose a time of study that is less than ideal but better than your worst time. In any case, this inventory is intended to sensitize you to the importance of being aware of all the factors that impinge upon your ability to learn.

The following questions will help you sharpen your sense of what time of day you learn best. You may already be generally aware of your preferences, but these simple questions will help spur you on to act on them. The questions were developed by Professor Rita Dunn of St. John’s University, Jamaica, New York. Answer *true* or *false* to each question.

___ I dislike getting up in the morning

___ I dislike going to sleep at night

___ I wish I could sleep all morning

___ I stay awake a long time after I get into bed

___ I feel wide awake only after 10:00 in the morning

___ If I stay up late at night, I get too sleepy to remember anything

___ I usually feel a low after lunch

___ When I have a task requiring concentration, I like to get up early in the morning to do it

___ I’d rather do those tasks requiring concentration in the afternoon

___ I usually start the tasks that require the most concentration after dinner

___ I could stay up all night

___ I wish I didn’t have to go to work before noon

___ I wish I could stay home during the day and go to work at night

___ I like going to work in the morning

I can remember things best when I concentrate on them:

___ in the morning ___ before dinner

___ after dinner ___ late at night

___ at lunchtime ___ in the afternoon

To interpret your answers, check whether you answered true or false for most of the questions that point to a single time of day: morning, noon, afternoon, early evening or night. That will be the period during which you feel that you either work your best or worst.

Aging and Learning Quiz

The Aging and Learning Quiz is designed to sensitize you to the effects of the aging process on learning. Many misconceptions exist in the popular culture about the relationship between these two factors. However, research on aging, learning, and memory clearly reveals that those adults who choose to stay mentally active can postpone the harsh effects of aging well up into old age (eighties and nineties). Taking this inventory will alert you as to how accurate your knowledge is concerning this vital relationship. There is a heated debate among students of adult development concerning the nature of cognitive functioning during adulthood. On the one hand are those who argue that “decline” is the hallmark of adult cognition, but on the other are more recent gerontologists (those who study older adults and the aging process) who propose a “restructuring” view of adult cognition. These views can be highlighted by responding to the following story. Imagine you are participating in an experiment on problem solving. You are given the following problem:

Downstairs, there are three rooms: the kitchen, the dining room, and the sitting room. The sitting room is in the front of the house, and the kitchen and dining room face the vegetable garden at the back of the house. The noise of the traffic is very disturbing in the front rooms. Mother is in the kitchen cooking and Grandfather is reading the paper in the sitting room. The children are at school and won't be home 'til teatime. Who is being disturbed by the traffic noise?

(Source: "Language comprehension in old age," Cohen G. *Cognitive Psychology*, 11,412-429).

Those who view adult cognition as a time of decline, always pick the Grandfather. Most of the time, these are young adults. Those who view adult cognition as a time of restructuring

pick no one as the object of disturbance and offer competing explanations as to what may be going on in this situation. Most of the persons who answer this way are older adults.

The current dominant view of adult cognition is the restructuring view. This group of researchers propose that adults experience the same kind of restructuring of experience that was identified by Piaget in his landmark research on children's cognition. Therefore, adults remain adaptive and flexible in cognitive abilities even as they approach older age.

AGING & LEARNING QUIZ

- T F 1. Vision tends to decline with age.
- T F 2. Hearing tends to decrease with age.
- T F 3. Ability to adapt to external temperature change tends to decline with age.
- T F 4. Time required to react to a stimulus tends to rise with age.
- T F 5. Anxiety tends to decrease with age.
- T F 6. Cautiousness tends to rise with age.
- T F 7. Performance after reprimand tends to rise with age.
- T F 8. Risk taking tends to increase with age.
- T F 9. "If" concept tends to rise and then decline with age.
- T F 10. Pace of learning tends to decline with age.
- T F 11. The need to relate new information to current knowledge tends to decrease with age.
- T F 12. Ability to learn complex material tends to increase with age.
- T F 13. Abstract reasoning tends to rise with age.
- T F 14. Short term memory tends to rise with age.

- T F 15. Accumulation of knowledge tends to decline with age.
- T F 16. The learning process tends to change with age.
- T F 17. Ability to learn tends to remain stable with age.
- T F 18. Data collection for decision-making tends to decrease with age.
- T F 19. Information overload tends to decline with age.
- T F 20. Time required to make a decision tends to increase with age.
- T F 21. Conservativeness in decision making tends to decline with age.
- T F 22. Review of previously successful solutions for problem solving tends to increase with age.
- T F 23. Importance of experience in decision making tends to decline with age.
- T F 24. Accuracy of work tends to decrease with age.
- T F 25. Rate of worker output tends to decrease with age.
- T F 26. Consistency of worker output tends to decline with age.
- T F 27. Timed performance tends to decline with age.
- T F 28. Untimed performance tends to remain stable with age.
- T F 29. Individual differences in performance tend to decrease with age.

Answer Key to Aging and Learning Quiz:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | T | 11. | F | 21. | F |
| 2. | T | 12. | F | 22. | T |
| 3. | T | 13. | F | 23. | F |
| 4. | T | 14. | F | 24. | F |
| 5. | F | 15. | F | 25. | T |
| 6. | T | 16. | T | 26. | F |
| 7. | F | 17. | T | 27. | T |
| 8. | F | 18. | F | 28. | T |
| 9. | T | 19. | F | 29. | F |
| 10. | T | 20. | T | | |

These next two sheets on reading skills are included to provide additional information beyond what is given in the primary text. The first sheet, *How To Improve Reading Comprehension*, offers some invaluable insights into the structure of the reading process. The second sheet, *How to Read Textbooks*, reviews the old SQR3 method of reading. Although you may not want to use this method in a wooden lockstep fashion, you may find yourself incorporating many of the suggestions into your own system.

How to Improve Reading Comprehension

The purpose of reading is to connect the ideas on the page to what you already know. If you don't know anything about a subject, then pouring words of text into your mind is like pouring water into your hand. You don't retain much. For example, try reading these numbers:

7516324 This is hard to read and remember.

751-6324 This is easier because of chunking.

123-4567 This is very easy to read because of prior knowledge and structure.

Similarly, if you like sports, then reading the sports page is easy. You have a framework in your mind for reading, understanding and storing information.

Improving comprehension.

Reading comprehension requires motivation, mental frameworks for holding ideas, concentration and good study techniques. Here are some suggestions:

∇ *Develop a broad background.*

Broaden your background knowledge by reading newspapers, magazines and books. Become interested in world events.

∇ *Know the structure of paragraphs.*

Good writers construct paragraphs that have a beginning, middle, and end. Often, the first sentence will give an overview that helps provide a framework for adding details. Also, look for transitional words, phrases, or paragraphs that change the topic.

∇ *Identify the type of reasoning.*

Does the author use cause and effect reasoning, hypothesis, model building, induction or deduction, systems thinking?

∇ *Anticipate and predict.*

Really smart readers try to anticipate the author and predict future ideas and questions. If you're right, this reinforces your understanding. If you're wrong, you make adjustments quicker.

∇ *Look for the method of organization.*

Is the material organized chronologically, serially, logically, functionally, spatially or hierarchically?

▽ ***Create motivation and interest.***

Preview material, ask questions, discuss ideas with classmates. The stronger your interest, the greater your comprehension.

▽ ***Pay attention to supporting cues.***

Study pictures, graphs and headings. Read the first and last paragraph in a chapter, or the first sentence in each section.

▽ ***Highlight, summarize and review.***

Just reading a book once is not enough. To develop a deeper understanding, you have to highlight, summarize and review important ideas.

How to Read Textbooks

The most widely used reading strategy ever developed is the SQR3 method - Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review.

Survey

Read the introduction to the chapter. Look over the major section headings. Glance at the figures. Skim questions, key words and summaries at the end of the chapter. Create a context for remembering. Generate interest and a sense of what is important.

Question

Create and answer questions. For each section in the chapter, ask these 4 basic questions:

What is the main point?

What evidence supports the main point?

What are the applications?

How is this related to the rest of the chapter, the book, the world, to me?

Other questions can focus on comparing, contrasting, and evaluating ideas, predicting future ideas and developing problem-solving strategies.

Read

Skim or read the section actively. Search for the answers to your questions. Make notes in the margins to create your own organization. Start an outline on scratch paper.

Recite

Look up from the book and verbalize the answers to your questions. Talk out loud and listen to the answers. Recite to strengthen connections and to improve memory.

Review

Now go back and review the main points in the section. Add more notes to your outlines and margin. Repeat the SQR3 method for each section in the chapter. When finished, create a one-page hierarchical summary of the entire chapter.

Marking Textbooks

1. Finish reading before marking.

Never mark until you have finished reading a full paragraph or headed section and have paused to think about what you just read. The procedure will keep you from grabbing at everything that looks important at first glance.

2. Be extremely selective.

Don't underline or jot down so many items that they overload your memory or cause you to try to think in several directions at once. Be stingy with your markings, but don't be so brief that you'll have to read through the page again when you review.

3. Use your own words.

The jottings in the margins should be in your own words. Since your own words represent your own thinking, they will later be powerful cues to the ideas on the page.

4. Be brief.

Underline brief but meaningful phrases, rather than complete sentences. Make your marginal jottings short and to the point. They will make a sharper impression on your memory, and they will be easier to use when you recite and review.

5. Be swift.

You don't have all day for marking. Read, go back for a mini-overview, and make your markings. Then attack the next portion of the chapter.

6. Be neat.

Neatness takes conscious effort, not time. Later when you review, the neat marks will encourage you and save time, since the ideas will be easily and clearly perceived.

7. Organize facts and ideas under categories.

Items within categories are far more easily memorized than random facts and ideas.

8. Try cross-referencing.

For example, if you find an idea on page 64 that has a direct bearing on an idea back on page 28, draw a little arrow pointing upward and write "28" by it. Then turn back to page 28 and alongside the idea there, draw an arrow pointing downward and write "64" by it. In this way, you'll tie the two ideas together, in your mind and in your reviewing.

9. Be systematic.

There are many ways to mark the text: single and double underlines; the use of asterisks, circling, boxing for important items; and the use of top and bottom margins for longer notations. If some of these ideas appeal to you, work them into your marking system, one or two at a time. But use them consistently so you will remember what they mean at review time.

The *How To Be an Effective Writer* sheet provides an excellent summary of five essential steps in the writing process no matter what it is you are writing. Since a large percentage of distance education learning is comprised of reading and writing, these sheets are provided to give you additional information so that you can better equip yourself in these two primary skill areas.

How To Be An Effective Writer

Good writing takes effort, clear organization, and a consistent writing technique. It should convey imagery and feelings as well as meaning. Here is one 5-step approach.

- Choose a topic.
- Gather information.
- Outline the main points and the supporting evidence.
- Write with clarity, conciseness, and interest.
- Proofread and revise to improve organization and clarity.

∇ Write with clarity

- identify your audience
- outline before you write
- use simple words
- keep sentences short and sweet
write in single tense
- create a hierarchical organization of major points
- deal with one main idea per paragraph
- provide smooth transitions between paragraphs and ideas
- back up statements with evidence and concrete relevant detail

∇ Be concise

- stick to the point and say exactly what you mean
- use verbs and nouns rather than distracting adjectives and adverbs
- avoid weak qualifiers like *many, very, little, and pretty*

∇ Interest

Develop interest by:

- researching the topic
- being interested in what you write
- giving specific details
- using distinctive, fresh, and precise language
- using the active voice rather than the passive voice
- avoiding weak verbs like *is, are, do, and make*.

∇ Problem areas

- If you have problems getting started or writing what you want to say, then spend more time on the outline. Rework your organization. Add more details.
- If you have problems writing enough words, then add more evidence and details to support your main points.
- If your writing lacks spice, then create analogies and metaphors.

The next set of sheets, beginning with *How to Take Notes*, introduces the Cornell method of note taking referred to in our primary text. The first sheet summarizes the method and the following sheets provide you with sample sheets and illustrations for implementing the method into your own skill repertoire. Although you are not taking notes in class in a distance education setting, most students do take notes from the audio cassette lectures available in most distance education courses. The Cornell method is a time-proven approach to the task of note taking that will enable you to capture the essential message needed to prepare you to take any final exams.

How To Take Notes

Good note taking requires motivation, concentration and a systematic method of recording information. One time-proven method is the *Cornell system* developed at Cornell University.

- Use an 8 ½ by 11" notebook. Loose-leaf books are considered best because you can insert handouts and other notes into them. You need to be well organized and have a 3-hole punch to make this method work. Use a bound notebook if this sounds too difficult.
- Divide each page in two as shown below. Label, date, and number each page, especially if you use a loose-leaf binder.
- Develop and keep a list a standard set of abbreviations. (std set of abb). However, it doesn't have to be perfect or unchanging. Be flexible.
- Record notes on the right. Try to organize your notes similar to the teacher's method of organization. Keep your thoughts separate.
- Don't write complete sentences, except for definitions or quotations. It takes too much time and effort. On the other hand, don't be lazy. Record details, evidence, applications, and comparisons to support main points.
- Copy anything put on the board. It is more likely to show up on tests.

The Cornell Method

This method is a note-taking system developed by Dr. Walter Pauk of Cornell University. One version of this system involves six steps: *recording, questioning, reciting, reflecting, reviewing, and recapitulating*. Begin by dividing an 8.5 by 11" sheet of notebook paper into three sections as illustrated in enclosed example. Then, follow these steps for taking notes during lectures.

∇ 1. *Record* facts and ideas in the wide column. After the lecture, fill in any gaps and neaten your handwriting if necessary so that you will be able to read your notes when you review again.

∇ 2. *Question* facts and ideas presented in lectures. When you review the lecture, formulate questions about what you have learned and write them in the left margin beside the fact or idea in the wide column. Writing questions helps you strengthen your memory, improve your understanding, and anticipate test questions.

∇ 3. *Recite* the facts of ideas aloud from memory and in your own words. If you summarized them in your own words, then this will be easy to do. If you are an auditory learner, reciting will improve your retention because you will be used to listening, your preferred mode. As an awareness check of how much you remember, cover up the wide column of your notes and recite from the key words or questions in the left margin. Recite the key word or question first, then try to recall and recite the whole fact or idea. Check yourself by uncovering the wide column and reading your notes.

∇ 4. *Reflect* on what you have learned from the lecture by applying the facts and ideas to real-life situations. Determine why the facts are significant, how you can use them, and how they expand or modify what you already know about the topic.

∇ 5. *Review* and recite your notes every day. A good way to begin a study session, especially if you have trouble getting started, is to review your notes. Reviewing reminds you of what you have learned and sets the scene for new information that you will learn in the next assignment.

∇ 6. *Recapitulate* by writing a summary of your notes in the space at the bottom of your paper. You can summarize what you have written on each page of notes, or you can summarize the whole lecture at the end of the last page.

Are you a Grouper or a Stringer?

The *Are You a Grouper or a Stringer?* inventory is designed to ascertain whether you prefer to reason and learn inductively or deductively, or to use the educational terms, are you field-dependent or field-independent? A field-dependent learner prefers to learn in a global or in an undifferentiated manner in a social context. A field-independent learner prefers to learn in a more analytical and systematic fashion in isolation.

Check the phrase in each pair that corresponds more closely to your preferred approach to learning. There are no right or wrong ways to complete these statements; they're designed simply to distinguish your preferences.

When studying one unfamiliar subject, you

- ∇ (a) prefer to gather information from diverse topic areas
- ∇ (b) prefer to focus on one topic

You would rather

- ∇ (a) know a little about a great many subjects
- ∇ (b) become an expert on just one subject

When studying from a textbook, you

- ∇ (a) skip ahead and read chapters of special interest out of sequence
- ∇ (b) work systematically from one chapter to the next, not moving on until you have understood earlier material.

When asking people for information about some subject of interest, you

- ∇ (a) tend to ask broad questions that call for rather general answers
- ∇ (b) tend to ask narrow questions that demand specific answers

When browsing in a library or bookstore, you

- ∇ (a) roam around looking at books on many different subjects
- ∇ (b) stay more or less in one place, looking at books on just a couple of subjects

You are best at remembering

- ∇ (a) general principles
- ∇ (b) specific facts

When performing some tasks, you

- ∇ (a) like to have background information not strictly related to the work
- ∇ (b) prefer to concentrate on strictly relevant information

You think that educators should

- ∇ (a) give students exposure to a wide range of subjects in college
- ∇ (b) ensure that students mainly acquire in-depth knowledge related to their specialties

When on vacation, you would rather

- ∇ (a) spend a short amount of time in several places
- ∇ (b) stay in one place the whole time and get to know it well

When learning something, you would rather

- ∇ (a) follow general guidelines
- ∇ (b) work with a detailed plan of action

Do you agree that, in addition to specialized knowledge, a person should know some math, art, physics, literature, psychology, politics, languages, biology, history, and medicine?

- ∇ (a) Yes
- ∇ (b) No

SCORING:

- Total all the A & B answers.
- If you scored 6 or more A's on the test, you are a **Groupier**; if you scored 6 or more B's, you are a **Stringer**.
- If your A's and B's were close to equal, you find both approaches congenial and can choose the one that better fits the subject at hand.
- The higher your total of either A's or B's, the more specialized your learning style.

Groupiers

- ∇ Prefer to take a broad view of any subject
- ∇ Like to search out general principles
- ∇ Quick to find relationships and relate one topic to another
- ∇ Prefer to tackle new topics from the top down, gaining an overall perspective before filling in the details.

Stringers

- ∇ Learn best by mastering specific details
- ∇ Move through new learning in a systematic, methodical manner
- ∇ Prefer to learn new material from the bottom up, laying a solid foundation first.

(copied from http://www.whitireia.ac.nz/documents/studyskills/Appendix1_AreYouAGroupOrAStringer.pdf)