



## **Paragon Learning Style Inventory**

**A Window into Learning Style and Cognitive Preference**

[www.calstatela.edu/plsi](http://www.calstatela.edu/plsi)

[www.learningstylelessite.com](http://www.learningstylelessite.com)

### **Understanding My Score on the PLSI Q & A- Student Version**

#### **Q. What does my score mean?**

A. The score you just obtained from taking the Paragon Learning Style Inventory (i.e., ESFJ, INFP or INTP, etc.) is a measure of some of your thinking and processing preferences. There are 16 learning types possible. All of the 16 types are well represented in our society. All are valuable and capable. They are just different in a few fundamental ways.

#### **Q. What if I scored a 6-6 tie?**

A. It is possible to have one dimension or more in which you have no clear preference. For example you may be right in the middle of being an extrovert or an introvert. But for most people there will be at least a slight preference for one side over the other. If your score was 6-6 on a particular dimension, then it may help to look at the descriptions on the "4 factors" page. After examining each pair of characteristics, see if one is a little "more you" than the other. And as you examine the 2 and 4 letter combinations, your preference may become clearer. However, if you cannot break the tie, then you can use an X for that dimension. For example for the first dimension someone with a tie might be an XNFP or XSTJ.

#### **Q. Will I always be this type?**

A. Experts disagree, but your learning type should be pretty stable. Most people do not change very much in their lifetime. If you are very young, this kind of test is a bit less reliable, after 25 there should be little change. But remember a test like the PLSI is only getting at what is inside you and if you are not honest or if your "head is in a funny place" it will make your score less of a reliable indicator of your inner type.

#### **Q. What do I do now that I have a four-letter type?**

A. It is hoped that just knowing your type is helpful in understanding yourself. And it may help you see how you are different from others. You may find that some people you meet are harder to understand than others. This usually has something to do with your learning style (also called "type" in the MBTI). Exploring the PLSI materials on paper or on the website might help you understand how your learning type most prefers to learn and interact with others.

#### **Q. What are the four dimensions? and what do they mean?**

A. The four dimensions seem to be areas where human beings differ in very fundamental ways. These differences seem to represent what could be called "traits."

These traits are something like left-handedness and right-handedness. We did not really learn to be one or the other, and most of us did not choose one over the other, but most people are just dominant with one hand or the other and not usually both. And while we use both hands everyday, when we need to feel secure, we tend to use our preferred hand. This is the same with each of the four dimensions. We use them both, but we usually choose our dominant preference when we need to feel comfortable.

Introversion and extroversion are ways of orienting ourselves to ideas and people. Extroverts merge easily with the outer world and/or people and external reality and introverts are more inner-centered. Extroverts work more outside in and introverts work more inside out.

The dimension of Sensation and/or Intuition (also called Practicals and Abstracts by Kolb) is a way of making sense of ideas. Sensates see ideas more as part of physical reality and connected to what is. Intuitives see ideas as a world in and of themselves and see ideas as just as real as things. This area has much to do with preferences in communication, where Sensates often prefer to talk about what is, and Intuitives more often talk about what is perceived and interpreted.

The dimension of Thinking and Feeling deals with one's orientation to making decisions. Thinkers tend to make decisions based on logic and ideas whereas Feelers tend to make decisions based more on relation to people and how their actions affect others, especially their feelings.

The dimension of judgment and perception (also called Sequentials or Randoms by Gregorc) deals with how one is oriented to the outer world. They use their other preferences to approach their thoughts and actions. Perceivers are very attuned to incoming information and Judgers are very comfortable making judgments and decisions about things. This dimension is very influential in one's orientation to time and physical order.

**Q. Should this affect who my friends are?**

A. It probably already has. Most of us are attracted to people who are like us because they think like us, and what they say makes sense to us. Those people give us a sense of comfort and validation. But almost as often we are attracted to people who are in many areas our opposites. This is because opposite types are interesting to us and exciting to be around because we can feel the contrast. Often this contrast is useful because opposite types can compliment one another and often get a job done more effectively than a group of similar types.

**Q. Are there better types to be?**

A. Absolutely not! All the learning types are absolutely critical to make the world function. But certain types are better at certain things. Our preferences and styles affect how we work and what we like to do. Learning type is often used to help people find jobs that are best suited to their abilities. For example most artists are Intuitives (N), and are more often feelers (F) and introverts(I). Most engineers are sensates (S) and thinkers (T). Most teachers are feelers (F) and judgers (J) and often SJ's (sensate judgers). Most scientists are NT's (intuitive-thinkers). Most sales people are SF's (sensate feelers).

Take a look at the career choices of the 16 types in your packet for more ideas. But remember, never feel limited by your preferences. Use your type to gain insight, but never to limit your choices or future goals.

**Q. What should I do with this knowledge when I go back to school?**

A. It is usually very helpful understanding how you learn. If your teacher is similar to you, your class will likely seem to work well. If your teacher is different from you, you may want to keep that fact in mind when you are frustrated. Here are some ways difference can be experienced in school and what to do about it.

(see also - [Teaching across type included in your materials](#))

<b><i>Potential Problem</i></b>	<b><i>Helpful hints related to learning style and School</i></b>
<p><b>I Don't understand the teacher's directions.</b></p> <p>Sometimes Sensate (practical-minded) teachers give directions without explaining how the task fits into the big picture. Sometimes iNtuitive (abstract-minded) teachers give a lot of explanation but leave out what the students are supposed to do in practical terms. Sometimes Perceiving (Random-minded) teachers do not give a lot of structure in their directions.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid to ask your teacher to explain what they meant. Do not just assume you are a bad listener. If you need clarification about what is expected ask for it. You may want to ask nicely "Ms/Mr. X could you explain the direction in sensate (or intuitive) language for me please?" If you have a question it is a good bet that many of the students with your learning style do as well.</p>
<p><b>I don't think my teacher appreciates my writing style.</b></p> <p>Sometimes teachers are not aware that they like and give better grades to students who are like them because they like their writing style better. This is true of all types.</p>	<p>As with most areas, there are 2 main solutions to this. First, get a clear set of the guidelines from your teacher- what should go in a "good paper?" Second, if you think you wrote a piece in a style that you liked and it was mechanically good, and your teacher didn't seem to understand you, in a nice tone of voice remind them of your type and explain to them why you approached the assignment the way you did. Help them understand your intentions. The more specific you can get them to be, the</p>

**I think my teacher and I are really different styles.**

Working conditions are not fitting your style. If your teacher is an IS-J they may like things very quiet and rely a lot of independent work. The EN's may have a hard time showing what they know and sitting still and not talking. If the teacher is an EN\_P they may have a class that is so active and open-ended that some students especially the IS-J's may be uncomfortable.

**I feel like the teacher is really disorganized and vague.**

Chances are you are a J and likely an S. And your teacher is a P and might also be an N. When the teacher is an NP or "abstract-random" then it can be hard for the SJ or "concrete-sequential" student. The teacher likes to think in large generalities, and the student likes things clearly spelled out.

less stress it will be for everyone.

It is good to work to your weaknesses. Some adaptation is good for you. But this kind of misalignment of styles can be difficult for sure. You may never see eye to eye, but it is best to communicate your feelings and needs. Be honest and share that you are uncomfortable and do your best. (For teachers- those who teach with a variety of instructional models and modalities and consider the needs of students with different styles, you will have much more student satisfaction.) In a respectful tone, you may want to ask your teacher when they have planned time for you to work to your style strength.

First, understand that the teacher probably does have a plan, but it is hidden from your perception. Second, be patient, but do not wait forever to approach the teacher. Explain to them your needs. Tell them about your score on the PLSI. Tell them you work really well when you are clear about what is expected, and the directions are spelled out. Ask them to provide rubrics and written directions to help you succeed.

In any case, it might be good to keep in mind type differences when you feel frustrated in school. And if you can help your teacher understand how learning style type plays a role in many areas of school, then all of your classmates will benefit as well.