

Understanding Myself

The Big Ideas:

Likes and Dislikes

Self-assessment

Strengths and Challenges

Setting goals

Four areas of transition:

Employment and Careers

Post-secondary Education and Training

Living Arrangements

Recreation and Leisure

How I learn

Stereotypes

What is my disability?

What does understanding myself have to do with transition planning?

Before you start planning for *your future*, it's important that you have some idea of who you are *now*. Of course it can be hard to know who you are. Like everyone else, you have many different sides to yourself. So where do you begin? When planning for your future, it's a good idea to start by asking yourself a few basic questions:

- What do I like?
- What don't I like?
- What am I good at?
- What do I need help with?

You'll see that if you can answer these questions, the plans you make will be ones that really do make sense for you.

"I think you should put thought into it [what you're going to do after you graduate] while you can. It's real life. It's going to sneak up on you. You don't want to be out of high school, and then be like, okay, now I'm going to think about it." High school student.

What are "likes" and "dislikes," and why do they matter for transition planning?

Likes are the things that make us feel good, or happy, and dislikes are the things we don't like.

Our likes are the things that we enjoy, or that make us feel happy. Our dislikes are the things we don't enjoy, or that make us feel unhappy. Our likes and dislikes are a big part of who we are. Often when we talk about ourselves to other people, we tell them what we like and what we don't like. It's one way to say to the world, "This is *me*." We are all *individuals*, or *unique*, or *different from each other*, and our likes and dislikes are an important part of what makes us that way. For your transition plan to make sense *for you*, you need to know what you like and don't like. You also need to make sure other people know how you feel about things.

There is another reason why it's important to know your likes and dislikes as you begin your transition planning. If you like doing something now, it can be a first step in thinking about what you'd like to do after high school. You've probably already said something like, "I like spending time on the computer, so I want to get a job working with computers." People's feelings can change over time, but knowing what you like to do now is still a good start for thinking about what you might like to do in the future.

"College really isn't my thing. Maybe a trade school, something more physical, not really academic." High school student

"I want to go to college. My mother wants me to go to a trade school, learn a skill, but I don't want to." High school student

"I'm leaning more towards, as soon as I graduate, going into the Marines... I want to make that into a career." High school student

Activity:

When you assess something, you think about how you feel about it. A self-assessment is a way to help you think about yourself.

When you “assess” something, you think about it and decide how you feel about it. This workbook includes something called a “Self-assessment.”

Completing this assessment will help you to understand yourself a little better. Either on your own, or with one of your classmates:

- Find the Self-assessment at the back of this chapter. Check off, next to each activity that is listed, whether you “like” it, “dislike” it, or “don’t know” how you feel about it. Don’t check off any of the other boxes.

Write down two things you like:

1. _____

2. _____

Write down two things you don’t like:

1. _____

2. _____

If you did this with a classmate, is there something you both liked? Is there something you both disliked? Is there something you felt differently about?

What else do I need to know about myself?

Knowing what you like and dislike is a good start, but understanding *why* you like or dislike something makes it much easier to *use* what you know. It's helpful to say, "I don't like working at the computer." It's even more helpful to say, "I don't like working at a computer because staring at the screen makes my eyes tired." (Or other reasons might be, "because I don't know how to type," or "because I don't like sitting still for so long.") Depending on the reason, you might make different choices about your future.

For example, if your eyes get tired, then you might need a screen that is easier to look at. It might be that if you had a screen that was better for your eyes, you would decide you *do* like working at the computer after all.

If the problem is that you don't know how to type, then you might find that taking a typing class helps you to enjoy working with computers.

Of course if you're someone who really doesn't like to sit still for long, then working with computers may not be the right job for you, no matter what skills you learn. It might just be a part of who you are, and it might be that you'd be happier in a job that gives you a chance to move around a lot more.

Activity:

Go back to the Self-assessment, and check off the word or words that describe each thing that is listed (you can check off more than one word).

- Do the things you like have something in common (or the same)? For example, do a lot of them involve being alone? Being in a group? Being active? Being quiet? What about the things you don't like?

Write down two words that describe what is the same about the things you like:

1. _____

2. _____

Write down two words that describe what is the same about the things you don't like:

1. _____

2. _____

What are my strengths?

Strengths are things we can do well, and challenges are things that can be hard for us to do.

Strengths are the things we can do well; challenges are the things that are hard for us to do. Sometimes we choose to use our strengths and do things we're already good at. Sometimes we choose to turn our challenges into strengths by learning new skills. Either way, knowing what our strengths and challenges are is an important part of planning for the future.

The next part of the self-assessment you are going to complete has to do with deciding what you find easy or hard to do. Keep in mind, this is not a test! No one is going to grade you. Again, it's a way to help *you* think about different activities (things people do), and then come up with *your own* opinion about whether it's one of your strengths or one of your challenges.

Activity:

- Complete the Skills part of the Self-assessment. Look at each thing that is listed, and decide if this is something that is “easy to do,” “hard to do,” “not too hard or too easy,” or “don’t know.”

Write down two things that you find “easy to do” (strengths):

1. _____

2. _____

Write down two things that you find “not too hard or too easy” (count these as strengths, too!):

1. _____

2. _____

Write down two things that you find “hard to do” (challenges):

1. _____

2. _____

How do I decide what goals I want to work towards?

Remember your last report card? Some of your grades were probably better than others. Does that mean all you have to do is look at that report card to know exactly what you want to do after you graduate? Of course not! That's because report cards can give you an idea of what subjects you did or didn't do well in (your strengths and challenges), but they don't say anything about which subjects you liked or didn't like.

Goals are the things you try to get done in your life. Sometimes you have to work hard to reach the goals that are most important to you.

Goals are the successes you decide to work towards in your life. Choosing goals that are exciting and realistic (that means they really can happen!) takes knowing what your likes and dislikes are *and* what your strengths and challenges are. Most of us work a lot harder to reach the goals we really care about ... and those goals are usually the ones that combine what we like with what we do well (or else what we want to learn how to do better).

This book is meant to help you think about what goals you want to work towards in four different areas of adult life. Here are the four areas:

- 1. Employment and Careers** (that means the kind of work you want to do)
- 2. Post-secondary Education and Training** (that means more schooling, or more training in a specific skill)
- 3. Living Arrangements** (that means where you want to live)
- 4. Recreation and Leisure** (that means what you want to do for fun)

Do different goals involve different likes and strengths?

They might. It all depends on what you like to do, what you do well, and what you'd like to learn to do better. Let's take cooking as an example:

- If cooking is something you like and are good at, you might want to choose that as a goal for Employment and Careers.
- If you like cooking, but want to learn more about it before you get a job, than it could be a goal for Post-secondary Education and Training.
- If you'd like to take cooking classes just for fun, that might be a good Recreation and Leisure goal.
- If you don't know anything at all about cooking, but you want to know how to make meals for yourself when you move out on your own, that might be a goal for Living Arrangements.

Everyone has their own likes, strengths, and things they want to learn, and that means everyone will have different goals for adult life.

Activity:

- Look again at the Self-assessment. Find an activity that you like to do *and* that is either a strength, or a challenge that you'd like to learn how to do better.

Write down the activity you chose: _____

Which of the four areas of adult life do you think this activity has the most to do with?

- Employment and Careers _____
- Post-secondary Education and Training _____
- Living Arrangements _____
- Recreation and Leisure _____

Can you think of a goal that you would like to work on that includes this activity? If so, write this goal down: _____

PORTFOLIO: Put your Self-assessment in the section for “Personal Information.”

What else would be helpful to know about myself?

In the first chapter we talked about supports, and how important they are for helping everyone reach their goals. In this chapter, we're going to spend a little time on an activity called **How I Learn**.

The How I Learn activity will tell you something about your "learning style." Some people learn best by *hearing* information, and some people learn best by *seeing* information. Some people learn best when they are *alone*, and some people learn best when they are in a *group*.

One style of learning isn't better or worse than another style, but it's useful to know what makes it easier for you to learn new skills. That way you can let other people know what you find most helpful. For example, if you're someone who learns best by seeing things, you might ask that new information be given to you in writing or pictures. Or, if you're someone who learns best by hearing things, you might ask that new information be spoken out loud to you.

Activity:

- Complete the “How I Learn” activity at the end of this chapter.

How do you think you learn best (you can check off more than one)?

- By hearing information _____
- By seeing information _____
- By doing things “hand on” _____
- Alone _____
- In a group _____

How do you express yourself best?

- By talking _____
- By writing _____

PORTFOLIO: Put the “How I learn” activity (either the whole activity or this summary page) in the section for “Personal Information.” Use it to let people know at your next IEP meeting about how you learn and express yourself best. This is also useful information for you to have when you go to college or get a job.

Does having a disability change how someone plans for the future?

In many ways it doesn't. Figuring out likes and dislikes, and strengths and challenges, is something everyone should do when planning for the future. Whether you're a high school student with a disability or not, whether you have an IEP or not, understanding yourself is *the* most important first step in deciding what you want to do after you leave school. Understanding your disability is just another part of understanding who you are and what you need

Stereotypes happen when people think that a label tells us all we need to know about someone.

Before you think more about your own disability, it might be a good idea to think about disabilities in general. People have lots of different thoughts about disabilities. These thoughts sometimes include "stereotypes." A stereotype is a label like "disabled person," and thinking that everyone with that label is the same. Stereotypes happen when people forget that you have to get to know someone to understand who they are. Stereotypes are wrong because they ignore the fact that *everyone* is an individual with their own likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges.

What does "disability" mean to you? What are some of the thoughts and feelings you have when you hear that word? The following activity is meant to help you think about your own answers to these questions.

Activity:

- Either on your own, or with your classmates, read the questions for **Thinking About Stereotypes** at the back of this chapter.

Write down one stereotype people sometimes have about a person with a disability: _____

Write down one fact that shows how this stereotype is not true:

What about my own disability?

Now that you've thought a little more about disabilities in general, let's go back to thinking about your own disability. A good place to start is with your IEP. What is the disability that is written down? Do you understand what it means? If not, try talking to a parent, a teacher, or someone else who can explain it clearly.

Talking about your disability might not always be easy. You might feel embarrassed, or you might be afraid that it will make the person you are talking with uncomfortable. Sometimes people with disabilities worry that talking about their disability will make other people think less of them.

The fact is, you are a person with many strengths, and many dreams about your future – just like everyone else. Your disability is only *one* piece of who you are. It is not all of you. Having a disability just means that it can take more work to get the supports you need to do the things you want to do. That's the reason it's important for you to both understand your disability and help other people understand it.

Activity:

- Sit down with a parent, a teacher, or another adult who knows you well and talk with them about your disability. The following are some suggested questions, but feel free to think of your own :

What is my disability called? _____

What does that mean? _____

What does it say about my disability on my IEP? _____

Other questions I have about my disability:

1. _____

2. _____

PORTFOLIO: Put this page in the section for “Personal Information.”

Who else besides my parents or teachers might be good to talk with about my disability?

It can be really helpful to talk with other people who have a disability that is like yours. You can hear about their successes, as well as the challenges they have faced. You can ask them how they solved problems, and who supported them along the way. Talking with someone else can inspire you by showing you how that person was able to do things you might not have thought were possible.

"You can always just go and sit down and talk with somebody who is in that profession, and say, "What are the pros and cons of this? And what do you wish you had done differently?" High school student

"And one of the biggest things is to always believe in yourself and never give up, even at the hardest times, because that's the biggest mistake you could ever do in your life."

"And that's my advice."

"Mine, too." Three recent high school graduates with disabilities

Learning from Leaders

LeDerick R. Horne is a young man who in 2003 graduated from college with honors and a Bachelor's degree in mathematics. He also is someone who has a learning disability which made it very difficult for Horne to learn how to read and write. In fact, for a long time he believed he could not be successful in school. Fortunately, he didn't stop trying, and after graduating from high school Horne went on to a local community college where he found the supports he needed. It was at college he learned that he had a talent for writing poetry and doing math. He also developed the confidence to be a leader. Horne worked as a tutor for the college and for a nearby public school, and helped create a new literary magazine.

After his successes at the community college, Horne transferred to a four year college where he earned a number of awards, including the President's Award for Community Service and Academic Achievement. Since graduating from college, he has managed his family's real estate business. He also travels around the state, giving lectures to various groups about self advocacy, student leadership, and transition.

Questions to think about:

1. Either by using the internet or the phone, find out what services your local community college provides for students with disabilities.
2. What are some different ways that people can be leaders?
3. What is one of your talents?

Kristen's story:

Kristen is 16 years old. She likes watching movies and listening to music (any kind, as long as it's LOUD). She lives with her mother and sister, Alison, who is a couple of years older. Kristen likes going to the mall, especially when Alison drives and it's just the two of them spending time together.

Kristen isn't able to read or write, though she can play some computer games and can point to pictures as a way of answering questions. She can answer "yes/no" questions, but sometimes says "yes" when she means "no," and the other way around. Kristen has a hard time thinking about something if it isn't right in front of her. This makes it difficult for her to make choices about the future.

Just because Kristen has a hard time understanding some things, or getting other people to understand her, doesn't mean she's confused about what she likes and doesn't like. She has strong feelings about her likes and dislikes, and not being able to use words to tell other people what those feelings are can sometimes make Kristen mad.

Kristen's mother and Alison have started to talk about where Kristen should work when she graduates from high school. There's a place only ten minutes from their home where many people with disabilities work together. It's called a "sheltered workshop". Kristen's mother thinks this might be the best place for Kristen. Alison knows some students at her school who have disabilities and work at the mall. She knows how much Kristen likes the mall, and thinks Kristen should work there.

At dinner one night, Alison asks Kristen, "Don't you think it would be fun to work at the mall?" Kristen immediately answers, "Yes!"

But when their mother asks Kristen, "Wouldn't you like to work at the workshop with your friend Susan?" Kristen also answers, "Yes!"

Activity:

- Either on your own, or with your classmates, think about Kristen's story and answer the following questions:

What do you think about how Kristen's mother and sister are planning for Kristen's future? _____

Do you think asking Kristen is the best way to learn about where she wants to work? Why or why not? _____

What might be another way to learn about what she wants? _____

What if someone has a hard time saying what she's thinking and feeling?

If someone has a hard time using words to say how he feels about things, it can be hard for other people to know for sure what that person wants. Here are some things that can be done to make it easier for everyone:

- A **Circle of Support** is a group of people who know someone well, and who want to help that person live the life that's best for her. It's important that a Circle of Support be made up of people that the person likes and trusts. The idea of the Circle is that the members work together with the person to help her make her own decisions.
- **Person-Centered Planning** is a way to sit down with someone and figure out what that person wants for himself. It's a way to help someone with a disability, and the people who are supporting him, understand one another. It does this by asking important questions, and then showing people how to find answers to those questions that make sense for the person with a disability. "Essential Lifestyle Planning" is a kind of person-centered planning.

Let's Review:

- Your likes are things you enjoy, and your dislikes are things you don't enjoy. They are a big part of who you are. Understanding your likes and dislikes is an important part of planning for your future.
- Knowing what you can do well (your strengths), and what skills you still need to work on (your challenges) is also an important part of planning for your future.
- Goals are what you decide you're going to work towards in your future. The key is to pick goals that include both your likes and your strengths. Sometime our goals include things that are hard for us to do now, but that we want to learn how to do better.
- This workbook was written to help you plan for four areas of adult life: jobs, post-secondary education and training, living arrangements and recreation. Knowing your likes and dislikes, and strengths and challenges, will help you choose goals for each of these areas that make sense for you.
- Understanding how you learn makes it easier to learn new skills.
- Understanding your disability is an important step in understanding yourself. It will also help other people understand what supports you need in order to reach your goals.

Additional Activities:

- Talk with someone who has a disability that is like yours, and who has already graduated from high school. You can use the **Suggested Questions for Recent Graduates** at the end of this chapter. This activity can also be done as a group activity in the classroom, with students asking questions of several graduates. Two places that can put you in touch with people with disabilities who have already graduated from high school are:
 - A local Center for Independent Living (CIL), also called Independent Living Center
On the web: <http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm>
 - The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project
Call (732) 926-8010
- Try to find out some information about your own disability. Here are some New Jersey organizations to get you started:
 - ASPEN (Asperger Syndrome Education Network, Inc.)
On the web: www.aspennj.org
 - Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
Call (732) 738-1002
On the web: www.bianj.org
 - C.H.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders) – this is a national organization with local chapters
Call 1-800- 233- 4050
On the web: www.chadd.org
 - Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey
Call (609) 392-4004
On the web: www.cpofnj.org
 - COSAC (New Jersey Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community)
Call 1.800.4.AUTISM, or 609.883.8100
On the web: www.njcosac.org

Additional Activities (cont.):

- Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey
Call 1-800-EFNJ-TIE, or (609) 392-4900
On the web: www.efnj.com
- Learning Disabilities Online - this site has information about state resources for learning disabilities
On the web: www.ldonline.org
- New Jersey Association of the Deaf-Blind, Inc.
Call (732) 805-1912
On the web: www.njadb.org
- Spina Bifada Association of the Tri-State Region
Call (908) 782-7475
On the web: www.sbatsr.org
- The Arc of New Jersey (serving individuals with mental retardation)
Call (732) 246-2525
On the web: www.arcnj.org
- Find out more about Essential Lifestyle Planning.
 - Go to <http://www.elpnet.net/> and click on “Plans.” Read some sample plans to get an idea of the kind of information that is important for Essential Lifestyle Planning.

Self-assessment

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills				
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Spending time with my family																	
Spending time with my friends																	
Meeting new people																	
Watching T.V.																	
Playing video/computer games																	

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills				
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Emailing or IMing																	
Reading																	
Writing																	
Doing math																	
Drawing/ Painting																	

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills					
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know	
Dancing																		
Singing																		
Listening to music																		
Playing an instrument																		
Playing sports																		

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills				
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Watching sports																	
Dressing casually																	
Dressing up																	
Fixing things																	
Organizing things																	

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills					
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know	
Cleaning																		
Cooking																		
Working outside																		
Shopping																		
Handling money																		

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills				
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Eating in restaurants																	
Going to church/temple/mosque																	
Being in a city																	
Being in the countryside																	
Having pets																	

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity			Description of activity (check all that apply)								Skills						
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know	
Using public transportation																		
Walking places																		
Driving																		
Riding a bike																		
Visiting new places																		

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity		Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills				
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Sleeping in my own room																	
Sharing a room																	
Talking things out when I'm upset																	
Being alone when I'm upset																	
Making my own decisions																	

Self-assessment (cont.)

Activity	How you feel about activity			Description of activity (check all that apply)										Skills			
	Like	Dislike	Don't know	Do alone	Do with a few people	Do with lots of people	Quiet	Noisy	Active	Sitting	Inside	Outside	Don't know	Easy to do	Hard to do	Not too hard or too easy	Don't know
Figuring out how to solve problems																	
Using the telephone to get info																	
Using the computer to get info																	
Working in groups																	
Working on my own																	

How I Learn

(The Center for Innovative Teaching Learning Styles Instrument)

	Really Like Me	Partly Like Me	Not Really Like Me	Not Like Me At All
1. When I make things for my studies, I remember what I have learned better	4	3	2	1
2. Written assignments are easy for me to do.....	4	3	2	1
3. I learn better if someone reads a book to me than if I read silently to myself.....	4	3	2	1
4. I learn best when I study alone.....	4	3	2	1
5. Having assignment directions written on the board makes them easier to understand.....	4	3	2	1
6. It's harder for me to do a written assignment than an oral one	4	3	2	1
7. When I do math problems in my head, I say the numbers to myself.....	4	3	2	1
8. If I need help in the subject, I will ask a classmate for help.....	4	3	2	1
9. I understand a math problem that is written down better than one I hear.....	4	3	2	1
10. I don't mind doing written assignments.....	4	3	2	1
11. I remember things I hear better than when I read them.....	4	3	2	1
12. I remember more of what I learn if I learn it when I am alone.....	4	3	2	1

How I Learn (cont.)

	Really Like Me	Partly Like Me	Not Really Like Me	Not Like Me At All
13. I would rather read a story than listen to it read.....	4	3	2	1
14. I feel like I talk smarter than I write.....	4	3	2	1
15. If someone tells me three numbers to add, I can usually get the right answer without writing them down.....	4	3	2	1
16. I like to work in a group because I learn from the others in my group.....	4	3	2	1
17. Written math problems are easier for me than oral ones.....	4	3	2	1
18. Writing a spelling word several times helps me remember it better.....	4	3	2	1
19. I find it easier to remember what I have heard than what I have read.....	4	3	2	1
20. It is more fun to learn with classmates at first, but it is hard to study with them.....	4	3	2	1
21. I like written directions better than spoken ones.....	4	3	2	1
22. If homework were oral, I would do it all.....	4	3	2	1
23. When I hear a phone number, I can remember it without writing it down.....	4	3	2	1

How I Learn (cont.)

	Really Like Me	Partly Like Me	Not Really Like Me	Not Like Me At All
24. I get more work done when I work with someone.....	4	3	2	1
25. Seeing a number makes more sense to me than hearing a number.....	4	3	2	1
26. I like to do things like simple repairs or crafts with my hands.....	4	3	2	1
27. The things I write on paper sound better than when I say them.....	4	3	2	1
28. I study best when no one is around to talk or listen to.....	4	3	2	1
29. I would rather read things in a book than have the teacher tell me about them.....	4	3	2	1
30. Speaking is a better way than writing if I want someone to understand what I really mean.....	4	3	2	1
31. When I have a written math problem to do, I say it to myself to understand it better.....	4	3	2	1
32. I can learn more about a subject if I am with a small group of students.....	4	3	2	1
33. Seeing the price of something written down is easier for me to understand than having someone tell me the price.....	4	3	2	1
34. I like to make things with my hands.....	4	3	2	1

How I Learn (cont.)

	Really Like Me	Partly Like Me	Not Really Like Me	Not Like Me At All
35. I like tests that call for sentence completion or written answers.....	4	3	2	1
36. I understand more from a class discussion than from reading about a subject.....	4	3	2	1
37. I remember the spelling of a word better if I see it written down than if someone spells it out loud.....	4	3	2	1
38. Spelling and grammar rules make it hard for me to say what I want to in writing.....	4	3	2	1
39. It makes it easier when I say the numbers of a problem to myself as I work it out.....	4	3	2	1
40. I like to study with other people.....	4	3	2	1
41. I have to see the combination to my lock in order to remember it.....	4	3	2	1
42. I understand what I have learned better when I am involved in making something for the subject.....	4	3	2	1
43. My written work sounds better than my oral reports.....	4	3	2	1
44. I do well on tests if they are about things I heard in class.....	4	3	2	1
45. I can't think as well when I work with someone else as when I work alone.....	4	3	2	1

Directions for Scoring How I Learn activity

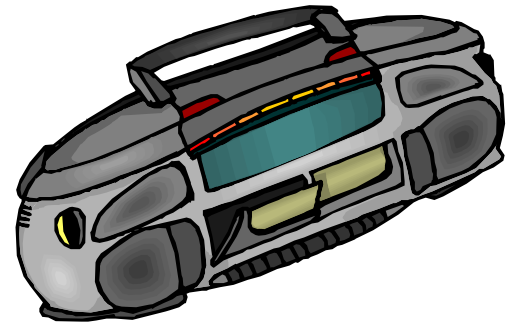
Note: Scoring this instrument may be confusing. You may need assistance from your teacher or a family member.



1. Go back through the Learning Styles Instrument. Notice that each sentence is **numbered**.
2. On the score sheet, write the **score** you gave each sentence on the line next to the same number as the sentence. For example, you would write the score for sentence 3 on the first line in the Auditory- Language Category.
3. After you have recorded each sentence score on the Score sheet, **add** up the scores in each category and record that number on the total line _____.
4. **Multiply** each total by 2 to come up with your score for each category.
5. **Compare** your score for each category with the Learning Styles Instrument Scoring Box.
6. Circle the title(s) of the category or categories where you scored between 33 and 40. Then turn to the Learning Style Descriptions on the next pages to read about how you **learn best**.
7. Underline the title(s) of the category or categories where you scored between 20 and 32. Then turn to the Learning Style Descriptions to read about the **other ways** you learn.

Auditory Language (information gathering)

- 3. _____
- 11. _____
- 19. _____
- 36. _____
- 44. _____



Total _____ x 2 = _____ Score

Visual Language (information gathering)

- 5. _____
- 13. _____
- 21. _____
- 29. _____
- 37. _____



Total _____ x 2 = _____ Score

Auditory Numerical (information gathering)

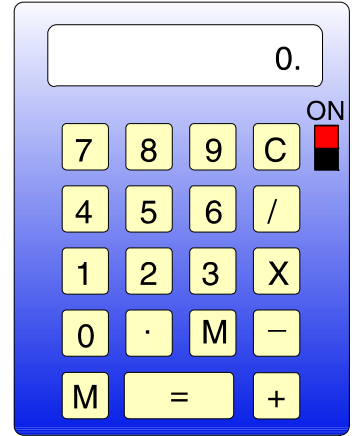
- 7. _____
- 15. _____
- 23. _____
- 31. _____
- 39. _____



Total _____ x 2 = _____ Score

Visual Numerical (information gathering)

- 9. _____
- 17. _____
- 25. _____
- 33. _____
- 41. _____



Total _____ x 2 = _____ Score

Auditory-Visual-Kinesthetic (information gathering)

- 1. _____
- 18. _____
- 26. _____
- 34. _____
- 42. _____



Total _____ x 2 = _____ Score

Individual Learner (work conditions)

- 4. _____
- 12. _____
- 20. _____
- 28. _____
- 45. _____



Total _____ x2 = _____ Score

Group Learner (work conditions)

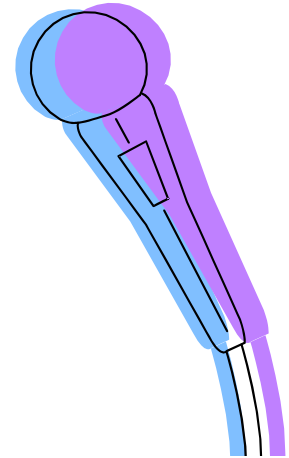
- 8. _____
- 16. _____
- 24. _____
- 32. _____
- 40. _____



Total _____ x2 = _____ Score

Oral Expression (expressive preference)

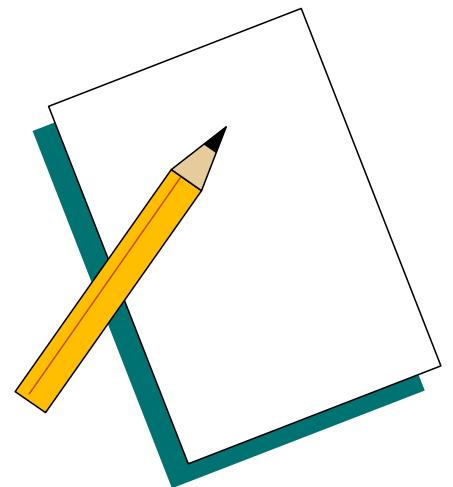
- 6. _____
- 14. _____
- 22. _____
- 30. _____
- 38. _____



Total _____ x2 = _____ Score

Written Expressive (expressive preference)

- 2. _____
- 10. _____
- 27. _____
- 35. _____
- 43. _____



Total _____ x2 = _____ Score

Learning Style Scoring Box

Scores

33 to 40 = Major Learning Style – how you learn best

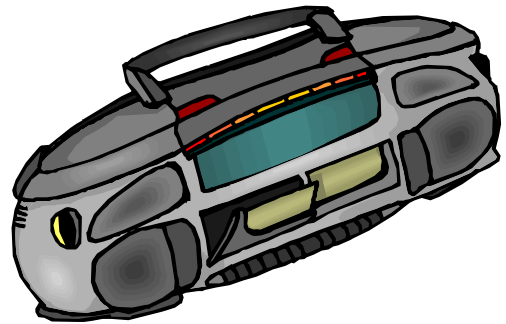
20 to 32 = Minor Learning Style – other ways you learn

05 to 20 = Negligible Use – less important ways you learn

Descriptions of the Nine (9) Learning Styles

Auditory Language (information gathering)

You learn from hearing words spoken. You may vocalize or move your lips or throat while reading, particularly when striving to understand new material. You will be more capable of understanding and remembering words or facts that that you have learned by hearing.



Visual Language (information gathering)

You learn well from seeing words in books, on the chalkboard, charts or workbooks. You may even write down words that are given orally, in order to learn by seeing them on paper. You remember and use information better if you have read it.



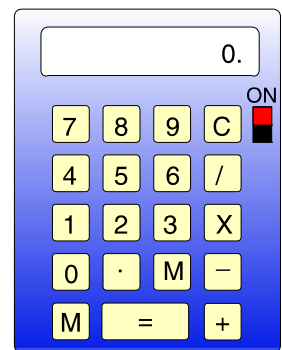
Auditory Numerical (information gathering)

You learn from hearing numbers and oral explanations. Remembering telephone and locker numbers is easy, and you may be successful with oral number games and puzzles. You may do just as well without your math book, for written materials are not important. You can probably work problems in your head, and may say numbers out loud when reading.



Visual Numerical (information gathering)

You must see numbers – on the board, in a book, or on paper – in order to work with them. You are more likely to remember and understand math facts with they are presented visually, but you don't seem to need much oral explanation.



Auditory-Visual-Kinesthetic (information gathering)

You learn best by experience, by doing, by self-involvement. You profit from a combination of stimuli. The manipulation of material along with accompanying sight and sound (words and numbers seen and heard) will aid your learning. You may not seem to understand or be able to concentrate or work unless totally involved. You seek to handle, touch and work with what you are learning.



Individual Learner (work conditions)

You get more work done alone. You think best and remember more when learning has been done alone. You care more for your own opinions than for the ideas of others. Teachers do not have much difficulty keeping you from over-socializing during class.



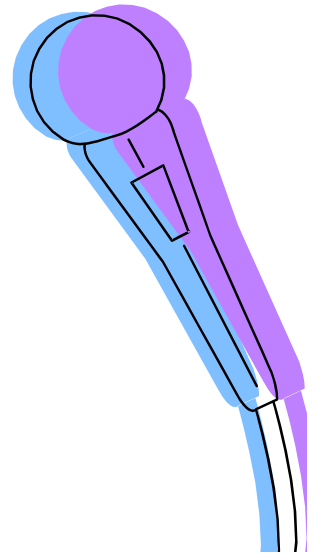
Group Learner (work conditions)

You prefer to study with a least one other student and will not get much done alone. You value others' opinions and preferences. Group interaction increases your learning and later recognition of facts. Class observation will quickly reveal how important socializing is to you.



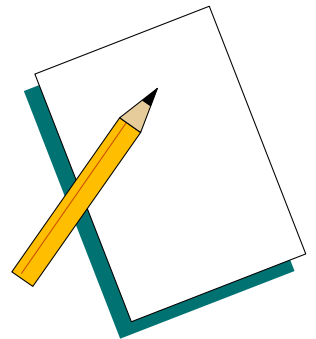
Oral Expressive (expressive preference)

You prefer to tell what you know. You talk fluently, comfortably, and clearly. Teachers may find that you know more than written tests show. You are probably less shy than others about giving reports or talking to the teacher or classmates. The muscular coordination involved in writing may be difficult for you. Organizing and putting thoughts on paper may be too slow and tedious a task for you.



Written Expressive (expressive preference)

You can write fluent essays and good answers on tests to show what you know. You feel less comfortable, when oral answers or reports are required. Your thoughts are better organized on paper than when they are give orally.



Note. Center for Innovative Teaching Experiences (C.I.T.E.) *Learning Styles Instrument*, by D. M. Babich, P. Burdine, L. Allbright and Pl. Randal, 1976. Wichita, KS: Wichita Public Schools. Adapted by permission.

Thinking About Stereotypes

(from M. Wehmeyer's Whose Future Is It Anyway?)

You don't have to write your answers down, but think about the following questions:

1. What is a disability ?
2. What does the word “disability” mean to you?
3. What does a person with a disability look like?
4. What happens to people when they have a disability?
5. What is your first thought when you see a person with a white cane?
6. What is your first thought when you see someone with a hearing aid?
7. What is your first thought when you are told a person has mental retardation?
8. What do you first think when a person has a learning disability?
9. What is your first thought when you see a person using a wheelchair?
10. What kind of rights do people with disabilities have?
11. Where should people with disabilities live?
12. Should people with disabilities work?
13. Should a person with a disability get married?
14. Should people with disabilities have children?

Thinking About Stereotypes (cont.)

Think about your answers. These are your beliefs and opinions. Your opinions might have been formed by your own experiences, or, maybe by knowing someone else with a disability. Or by watching a movie or TV. Or by hearing someone else talk about a person with a disability.

Let's look at these same questions, but based on facts. These may be just like your answers. But they may be very different. It is true that everyone has the right to their own opinions, but most people want their opinions or beliefs to be based on what is true.

1. What is a disability?

In the Americans with Disabilities Act (called ADA) a person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment. Impairment means a limit. The ADA goes on to say that a person with a disability is someone who has a hard time caring for his/her needs alone, seeing, speaking, working, breathing, learning, walking, or hearing.

A person doesn't have to have all of these, just one.

It is important to know that a disability is not a person! A disability is something that a person may have. A disability is only one part of a person. People like to be known by who they are and not what they have. People with disabilities have been saying that they want to be seen as people first. Most people with disabilities do not like to be called by their labels. When meeting someone with a disability it is best to call them by their name. When talking about a person with a disability it is best to call the person by their name and not their disability. People without disabilities like to be called by their name also.

2. What does the word “disability” mean to you?

Words matter. The words we use to talk about people make stereotypes. People use different words to talk about people with disabilities. Many of them are unfair, and create negative stereotypes. Like “retarded” or “gimp.”

Many people talk about people with disabilities as “handicapped.” Like in the parking space. But a lot of people with disabilities disagree with that word.

Why? Well, saying that a disability is a handicap means that you can’t do things because of the disability. So, some people might say that a person who lost his left arm in a car wreck was “handicapped” when it came to playing the piano, right?

The problem with that is that there is a lot of music written for the piano that uses only a person’s right hand. So, for that person, not having a left arm is not a handicap.

The other reason many people with disabilities don’t like the word “handicap” is that people think of “handicapped” people as needing help. The word came from the phrase “hand in cap” meaning a person who was begging.

Another word that is sometimes used to talk about people with disabilities is “challenged.” Physically-challenged. Mentally-challenged. While it is probably true that a person with a disability has many challenges each day, many people with disabilities don’t like to be called challenged. They say that by calling them challenged, it means that they are the ones who have to change. There are many cases where the world can change just as easily.

For example, a person using an electric wheelchair cannot get over a curb. The chair is too big and heavy. You could say that the person is “physically challenged” but really the challenge is not on the person, but the curb. You can add a curb cut or a ramp, and the challenge is gone.

The word “disability” may feel uncomfortable to you. You may still think of it as negative. Sometimes people think of a disability as the same thing as a disease. It is not, although some diseases lead to a disability.

Thinking About Stereotypes (cont.)

In the long run, you need to be comfortable with yourself. All people have some type of limitation. Having a disability means that the limitation in some areas is greater than for most people. People with disabilities are people first. People with disabilities should be treated as any other person without a disability. A person with disability is a person, not the disability!

3. What does a person with a disability look like?

Most people with a disability look like people without disabilities. Sometimes a person may not have an arm or leg or they may use some support like a wheelchair, walker, or hearing aid. These supports, called adaptive devices, are sometimes a clue that a person has a disability. Actually these adaptive devices make it so that the person can do activities that their disability makes more difficult. So, a person with a disability may use a wheelchair to get around in the world. A person who doesn't hear everything may use a hearing aid to make the sounds louder so they can hear them. Some people with disabilities may not need adaptive devices so their disabilities are not seen.

Disabilities that are not seen are sometimes called "hidden" disabilities. Some learning disabilities are like that. You can't see the disability.

Did you know that Tom Cruise has a learning disability? He doesn't "look" like a person with a disability, does he? Or, is it that he doesn't look like the stereotype of a person with a disability?

The final answer is that a person with a disability looks like herself or himself. Not like anyone else. Unique. All people are unique. Even identical twins have things that make them look unique.

4. What happens to people when they have a disability?

Seem like a dumb question? Well, one stereotype of people with disabilities is that they shouldn't be in public with everyone else. That they are better off somewhere else.

Each person with a disability has different experiences. Because of stereotypes, some people with disabilities have not been given the same chances as other people. They don't get a chance to go to school with their neighborhood friends. In some cases, they have to live in a different building.

The truth is, people with disabilities can do the same things everyone else can, if given the chance and support. Some people with disabilities will make it in the world fine, others won't. Some people without disabilities make it in the world fine and others don't. Not much difference.

But people with disabilities have to be given the chance to choose where they want to live, work, learn and play and the support to do this.

5. What is your first thought when you see someone with a white cane?

People with visual impairments (limitations in being able to see) or blindness may use a white cane to move about on their own. The white cane helps a person to be independent. The white cane is a support for the person who cannot see.

6. What is your first thought when you see someone with a hearing aid?

A hearing aid helps some people with hearing loss or deafness to hear sounds. It depends on the type and degree of hearing loss. Some people with hearing loss or deafness do not use hearing aids.

7. What is your first thought when you are told that a person has mental retardation?

People with mental retardation just need more time or support to learn things. The words mental retardation have been used in negative ways so some people do not like the words. People with mental retardation are people first and can live in their own homes, drive cars, work at real jobs and have their own families.

8. What do you think when a person has a learning disability?

People with learning disabilities need more time or support to learn certain things, like reading school lessons or doing some types of math work.

Some very smart people in history have had learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities may use supports like having a test read to them, not having time limits set on taking a test, or using a cassette recording of the lesson to learn better. People with learning disabilities are just like other people only they may learn things in a different way.

9. What is your first thought when you see someone using a wheelchair?

People usually use a wheelchair because they have a hard time walking or just are not able to walk. A wheelchair gives people with physical disabilities the chance to move around their world. People sometimes think of wheelchairs as big, slow, clunky things you sit in and wait for someone to push you around.

Not true! Now wheelchairs come in many sizes, shapes, colors and styles. If you have ever seen a wheelchair basketball game you know they are anything but slow. People who use wheelchairs have done basically anything they wanted to do, from climbing mountains and skiing to becoming a judge or acting in movies.

Thinking About Stereotypes (cont.)

10. What kind of rights do people with disabilities have?

The same rights as all Americans. People with disabilities do not give up their rights just because they have a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) talks about those rights and gives people with disabilities protection from discrimination. Discrimination means that people are treating you unfairly. The ADA says that people with disabilities must have a chance to do the same things that people without disabilities have.

The reason the ADA had to be passed was because too many people with disabilities were being discriminated against in their chances to get a good education, find and keep a job, and do things they wanted to do. Discrimination occurs when other people let their stereotypes and beliefs judge what a person can do, instead of letting that person show them.

11. Where should people with disabilities live?

Anywhere they want to!! Having a disability does not mean that a person has to live in a certain kind of place. This has happened to a lot of people. Now people with disabilities are gaining more opportunities to live in places like people without disabilities.

Having a disability may mean that a person uses assistance or support to live where they want. This may mean that a person uses supports to write checks for bills. A person may use a personal care attendant to help with many life activities. The type of support a person uses will be different for each person.

12. Should people with disabilities be able to work?

Yes!!! People with disabilities should also be able to work where they want. Having a disability does not mean that a person can only do one kind of work. People with disabilities work in all types of jobs.

Too many people with disabilities have to work in low-paying, dead-end jobs or are not working at all because of discrimination and lack of support. The ADA requires that employers provide some supports.

But, people with disabilities have to know what supports would let them do the same job as other workers. This is one more reason it is important to think about the ways having a disability changes how you learn and work.

13. Should a person with a disability get married?

Only if they want to! Getting married is something that a lot of adults do. There are some adults who choose to stay single. This choice should be up to the person.

14. Should people with disabilities have children?

If they want to! Having children is something that a lot of adults do. There are some adults who choose not to have children. This choice should be up to the person.

Stereotypes can really limit people more than a disability does. Some day maybe you won't have to think about questions like these because people will learn that having a disability is not a dead-end street. They will learn to judge people on what they can do, not what other people think they can or cannot do.

Note: Wehmeyer, M. (1995). Whose Future Is It Anyway? The Arc National Headquarters: Arlington, TX.

Suggested Questions for Recent Graduates

1. What are some of the things you have done since leaving high school?
2. What have you enjoyed most about being out of high school?
3. What have been some of the biggest challenges that you have faced since leaving school?
4. What was the most helpful thing you learned in school that helped you to do what you wanted when you left school?
5. Do you feel you had a lot of hands-on experience in high school?
6. Do you feel you were taught to take on enough responsibility when you were in school?
7. Did you attend IEP meetings? Were you actively involved in the writing of your IEPs? If so, did you find that helpful?
8. What other things do you wish your school had done to help you plan for life after leaving school?
9. How did your family help you plan for your future? Were there other things you wish your family had done to help you plan for life after leaving school?
10. Was there anyone else that helped you in high school?
11. There are different kinds of supports, ranging from support from friends and family, to support from agencies. What sort of supports have you used since leaving school?
12. Do you feel you have the skills to get the supports you need? If so, who or what helped you to learn those skills?
13. What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were still in high school?