

Introducing Students to Learning Styles

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The learning styles described by personality type provide a deep framework for describing normal differences among students and adults. The styles are based on “preferences” you note every day among students and peers. Obviously, the more you read and study related materials, the more strategies you can develop for working with various students. However, you can begin using related information right away by recognizing the styles and providing students with strategies when activities don’t fit their style

1. Introduce the concept of preferences by having students first sign their names with their non-preferred hand. Sign your own on the whiteboard, then write beneath it adjectives students provide to describe how it feels to write with their nonpreferred hand. Do the same for the preferred hand. Then explain that this is a physical preference; we have psychological ones, too..
2. Provide a 20-second history of psychological type:
 - Around 1920, Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist, student of Freud, developed his concept of psychological types, based on observing the people he counseled.
 - At the same time, in the U. S., Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Myers came up with basically the same way of classifying people based on their observations of people and from reading biographies.
 - Type concepts have been used for over 80 years to help people understand how they are energized, gather information, make decisions, and approach life. Organizations worldwide use the MBTI.

Extraversion (E) and Introversion (I)

Main Points to Emphasize

- This preference is not about shyness or popularity. It’s about how you are energized.
- Half the population of the United States reports preferences for Extraversion; half for Introversion. In most groups of teenagers, more will be inclined to say they are Extraverted. Point out that over the next few years, many of the “Extraverts” will discover that they are truly Introverts.
- Schools sometimes honor more Extraverted behavior, requiring class participation or emphasizing quick responses to questions.
- E’s often talk to decide what they are thinking. I’s want to think before talking and therefore need more time to process.

1. Give each student a copy of the Extraversion-Introversion worksheet and explain that these describe two ways that people are energized. Make sure everyone understands the cartoon. Then, go through the word pair choices, having students check off one from each pair. The forced choice exercise below can also be done as seatwork, although it won't be as fun...
2. **Forced choice exercise.** Have the students all stand in the center of the classroom. Go through the following pairs of choices for each scenario. The left-hand responses indicate Extraversion and the right-hand responses Introversion. As you read the choices, have students move to the left or right sides of the classroom to indicate which response sounds more like them. The key to this exercise is *moving quickly* or it loses its fun. Also, be aware of whether students are simply going where their friends go—for example, if everyone goes to the E side you might say, “If this class is a typical group, half of you will eventually find out you’re I’s...now let’s be honest on this...”
 - A. You just got home after a long day at school. Would you most likely:

<p>Extraverts might</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Call friends right away –or have one come home with you <input type="checkbox"/> Head outside to shoot hoops or skateboard <input type="checkbox"/> Try to talk homework through with a friend on the phone or get together to do it 	<p>Introverts might</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Head to your room and turn on some music <input type="checkbox"/> Need some downtime before wanting to do something active <input type="checkbox"/> Want to do homework alone
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 - B. You’re supposed to work with a group on a project. Which describes your approach to the task?

<p>Extraverts might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have fun working as a group <input type="checkbox"/> Turn the group sessions into a chance to socialize <input type="checkbox"/> Share ideas readily 	<p>Introverts might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Divvy up the assignment so you can do your part alone <input type="checkbox"/> Keep the group sessions shorter unless working with a close friend <input type="checkbox"/> Share ideas when asked
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3. Some students will be able to decide easily, others will go back and forth between the two sides of the room. Summarize by saying which was the E side and which was the I side. If students spent time on both sides, that’s the time to mention that we all have an E side and an I side, we just *prefer* to use one more than the other.
4. Ask how many have a preference for E? I? Are still unsure? Let them guess your preference. If they’re right, point out that these are observable differences. Mention a couple of other teachers at your grade level who share your preference and a couple who are the opposite. Let the students know that 50% of U. S. adults are E and 50% I.

5. Form groups of E's and I's, 4-6 students per group, and give each group a piece of poster paper and markers. Have them draw a floor plan of their ideal classroom. Where would they read? Write? How many students would there be? What kind of furniture? Materials? What else might be in the classroom? E's have more students, moveable chairs or walls, and more things in the room. I's often have quiet spaces for thinking, individual desks, etc. Note differences in how the groups interact, too.
6. Have students journal for 5 minutes on "Why I think I'm an E (or I) *or* Why I'm unsure." Make sure they tell stories as examples. You might want to display "okay, good, great" examples and use graphic organizers to encourage more writing.

Sensing (S) and Intuition (N)

Main Points to Emphasize

- This preference is about how we gather information.
 - Sensors look at the details—they see *what is*.
 - Intuitives pay attention to *what could be*—the details inspire hunches, analogies, connections.
 - Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the U. S. population report a preference for Sensing, $\frac{1}{4}$ prefer Intuition.
 - In some school subjects, there is an early bias toward Sensing—memorizing arithmetic facts, spelling words, geography lessons. Later in school many subjects are biased toward Intuition—geometry, essays requiring analogies or comparisons, discovering historical patterns.
1. Remind students of the concept of preferences by mentioning again the preferred/non-preferred hand exercise.
 2. Introduce "What Do You See" exercise. Tell the students you are about to display a work of art and that they are to "write down what they see." Do not say 'describe' or you will get the same kinds of responses from all students. Let them know that you will be asking some students to share what they've written. Any artwork that shows a variety of objects yet conveys an overall theme will work. Salvador Dali's "Coming to America" is a good example.

Collect student responses and read the clearest examples of S and N. Typical S responses list the objects in the picture. Typical N responses include discussing possible themes, writing fictional stories, describing what it reminds them of, etc.

Alternative: Have the students write about a holiday or symbol (e.g. Thanksgiving Dinner). Give them about 5 minutes. As they write, read over their shoulders. Find a good Sensing example to read to the group (a list of what is on the table) and a good Intuitive example (what the holiday means, the feelings or connections it evokes.)
 3. Ask students if they could have written an S response if told to? An N response?
 4. Pass out the S-N worksheet and emphasize that this is about gathering information—what grabs our attention.

5. **To help students understand the preferences more deeply, set out a pop can or a pop bottle.** Have students work in pairs to come up with 15 fact statements about the can or bottle (Sensing) and 15 new ways to use the bottle or can if it were empty (Intuition). Talk about which is easier for them. Which is more natural? If students struggle, give them strategies. For example, if they can't come up with facts, have them think through the facts they could gather with each of their five senses. For new uses, have them imagine how they could use it in each room of their home.
6. Ask how many have a preference for S? N? Are still unsure? Let them guess your preference. If they're right, point out that these are observable differences. Mention a couple of other teachers at your grade level who share your preference and a couple who are the opposite. Let the students know that 70-75% of U. S. adults are S and 25-30% are N.
 - **Tie breakers:** Can you give precise directions to get to your home or another landmark (S) or do you have trouble finding your way out of a shopping mall (N).
7. Have students journal on "Why I think I'm an S (or N) *or* Why I'm unsure." They should list specific reasons.

Resources for Additional Information

Murphy, E. (1992). *The developing child*. Mountain View, CAC: Davies-Black.

Allan, M., Hayman, C., & Abella, K. (2010). *Discovering type with teens*. Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type

Chart 11.2 Student Type Checklist

Extraversion or Introversion

Where do you get your **Energy**?

<p>EXTRAVERSION <i>Your energy comes from being with others or from activities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thinks out loud (talks!) <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to work in groups <input type="checkbox"/> Likes noise <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to speak <input type="checkbox"/> Lots going on <input type="checkbox"/> Says what they're thinking 	<p>INTROVERSION <i>Your energy comes from time away from others or a few in-depth activities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thinks inside (quiet!) <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to work alone or with close friend <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes noise <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to read or write <input type="checkbox"/> One activity at a time <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps thoughts inside
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Remember: Extraverts need some time alone. Introverts need time with people. The question is how much and for how long?

Circle which describes you best:

E(Extraversion) I(Introversion) U(Not Sure)

Sensing or Intuition

What **Information** gets your attention?

<p>SENSING <i>Perceiving what is, the information the five senses can gather.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Likes facts and concrete things <input type="checkbox"/> Experience first <input type="checkbox"/> Sees the trees—details <input type="checkbox"/> Wants clear expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Step-by-step learning <input type="checkbox"/> Practical, common sense 	<p>INTUITION <i>Perceiving what could be, through hunches, connections, analogies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Likes ideas and imagination <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation first <input type="checkbox"/> Sees the forest—big ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Wants room to roam <input type="checkbox"/> Random learning <input type="checkbox"/> New insights
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Remember: Sensing types use facts to build to the big picture. Intuitive types start with the big picture and use facts to support it.

Circle which describes you best:

S(Sensing) N(INTuition) U(Not Sure)

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