

Four Types Of Thinking Style

Not only do we have preferred learning styles; we also have favourite thinking styles. Anthony Gregorc, professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Connecticut, has divided these into four separate groups:¹⁴

- * **Concrete sequential.**
- * **Concrete random.**
- * **Abstract random.**
- * **Abstract sequential.**

We're indebted to SuperCamp consultant John LeTellier for adapting the Gregorc model and providing the checklist on the next three pages.¹⁵

We stress, however, that no thinking style is superior; they are simply different. Each style can be effective in its own way. The important thing is that you become more aware of which learning style and thinking style works best for you. Once you know your own style, you can then analyse the others. This will help you understand other people better. It will make you more flexible. And perhaps we can all pick up tips from each other on how to be more effective.

Once you've made a graph for yourself on page 358, consider these explanations to improve your own ability to learn, think, study, work and enjoy life:

Concrete sequential thinkers are based in reality, according to SuperCamp co-founder and president Bobbi DePorter. They process information in an ordered, sequential, linear way. To them, "reality consists of what they can detect through their physical sense of sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. They notice and recall details easily and remember facts specific information, formulas and rules with ease. 'Hands on' is a good way for these people to learn." If you're concrete sequential—a CS—build on your organisational strengths. Provide yourself with details. Break your projects down into specific steps. Set up quiet work environments.

Concrete random thinkers are experimenters. says DePorter: "Like concrete sequentials, they're based in reality, but are willing to take more of a trial-and-error approach. Because of this, they often make the intuitive leaps necessary for true creative thought. They have a strong need to find alternatives and do things in their own way." If you're a CR, use your divergent thinking ability. Believe that it's good to see things from more than one viewpoint. Put yourself in a position to solve problems. But give yourself deadlines. Accept your need for change. Try and work with people who value divergent thinking.

Abstract random thinkers organise information through reflection, and thrive in unstructured, people-oriented environments. Says DePorter: "The 'real' world for abstract random learners is the world of feelings and emotions. The AR's mind absorbs ideas, information and impressions and organises them through reflection. They remember best if information is personalised. They feel constricted when they're subjected to a very structured environment." If you're an AR, use your natural ability to work with others. Recognise how strongly emotions influence your concentration. Build on your strength of learning by association. Look at the big picture first. Be careful to allow enough time to finish the job. Remind yourself to do things through plenty of visual clues, such as coloured stickers pasted up where you'll see them.

Abstract sequential thinkers love the world of theory and abstract thought. They like to think in concepts and analyse information. They make great philosophers and research scientists. DePorter again: "It's easy for them to zoom in on what's important, such as key points and significant details. Their thinking processes are logical, rational and intellectual. A favourite activity for abstract sequentials is reading, and when a project needs to be researched they are very thorough at it. Generally they prefer to work alone rather than in groups." If you're an AS, give yourself exercises in logic. Feed your intellect. Steer yourself toward highly structured situations.

Reference:

Dryden G., & Vos J. (1993) The learning revolution. A lifelong learning programme for the world's finest computer: your amazing brain. Auckland: Profile books.

Test Your Own Thinking Style:

Follow the instructions to find out your thinking style!

The Learning Revolution

To test your own thinking style

Read each set of words and mark
The two that best describe you

- | | | | | | |
|----|----|----------------------|-----|----|----------------------|
| 1. | a. | imaginative | 9. | a. | reader |
| | b. | investigative | | b. | people person |
| | c. | realistic | | c. | problem solver |
| | d. | analytical | | d. | planner |
| 2. | a. | organised | 10. | a. | memorise |
| | b. | adaptable | | b. | associate |
| | c. | critical | | c. | think-through |
| | d. | inquisitive | | d. | originate |
| 3. | a. | debating | 11. | a. | changer |
| | b. | getting to the point | | b. | judger |
| | c. | creating | | c. | spontaneous |
| | d. | relating | | d. | wants direction |
| 4. | a. | personal | 12. | a. | communicating |
| | b. | practical | | b. | discovering |
| | c. | academic | | c. | cautious |
| | d. | adventurous | | d. | reasoning |
| 5. | a. | precise | 13. | a. | challenging |
| | b. | flexible | | b. | practising |
| | c. | systematic | | c. | caring |
| | d. | inventive | | d. | examining |
| 6. | a. | sharing | 14. | a. | completing work |
| | b. | orderly | | b. | seeing possibilities |
| | c. | sensible | | c. | gaining ideas |
| | d. | independent | | d. | interpreting |
| 7. | a. | competitive | 15. | a. | doing |
| | b. | perfectionist | | b. | feeling |
| | c. | cooperative | | c. | thinking |
| | d. | logical | | d. | experimenting |
| 8. | a. | intellectual | | | |
| | b. | sensitive | | | |
| | c. | hardworking | | | |
| | d. | risk-taking | | | |

After completing the test on the previous page:

In the columns below, circle the letters of the words you chose for each number. Add your totals for columns I, II, III and IV. Multiply the total of each column by 4. The box with the highest number describes how you most often process information.

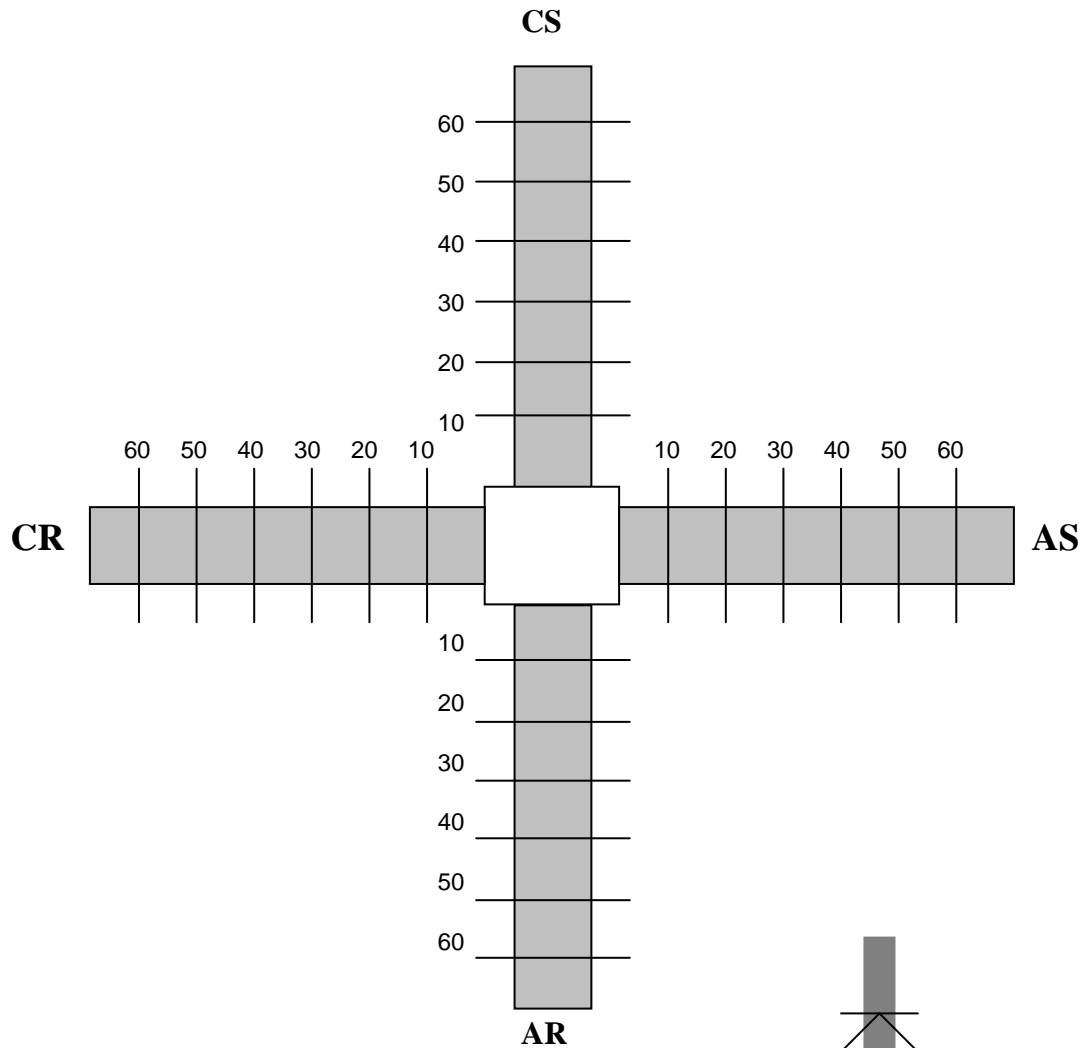
	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>
1.	C	D	A	B
2.	A	C	B	D
3.	B	A	C	D
4.	B	C	A	D
5.	A	C	B	D
6.	B	C	A	D
7.	B	D	C	A
8.	C	A	B	D
9.	D	A	B	C
10.	A	C	B	D
11.	D	B	C	A
12.	C	D	A	B
13.	B	D	C	A
14.	A	C	D	B
15.	A	C	B	D

TOTAL:

I	_____	x 4 =	<input type="text"/>	Concrete Sequential (CS)
II	_____	x 4 =	<input type="text"/>	Abstract Sequential (AS)
III	_____	x 4 =	<input type="text"/>	Abstract Random (AR)
IV	_____	x 4 =	<input type="text"/>	Concrete Random (CR)

The Learning Revolution

After you have completed your personal thinking-style test on the previous page chart your results below



To graph your preferred "thinking style" just place a dot on the number that corresponds to your score in each of the classifications on the previous page, and link dots as shown in the miniature diagram.

Our thanks to John LeTellier and Dell Publishing, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York 10103 for permission to reprint this test from *Quantum learning*, by Bobbi DePorter. The test is based on research by Professor Anthony Gregorc.

