

LEARNING STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT



*To accompany the book*

# Reclaiming Education

TEACH YOUR CHILD  
TO BE A CONFIDENT LEARNER

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with Mary Jo Dean

NAME

DATE

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## Who Can Benefit from Using This Assessment?

**Parents**—who can partner with their children to discover and understand how to help each child become a confident and successful learner.

**Teachers**—who can partner with both students and their parents in finding ways to use their strengths to overcome weakness or frustration when they need to learn or do what doesn't come naturally.

**Students**—who can identify their individual strengths and figure out how to succeed even when they have to do hard things or work with teachers and circumstances that don't fit their learning style.

## What Ages Can Use This Assessment?

### **For Preschool-Early Elementary:**

Parents can fill out an assessment for each child, using a combination of observation, questions, and discussion. Experiment with choices and options for learning to discover what works best for each child.

### **For Ten Years Old and Older:**

Each child can fill out the workbook on his or her own, but parents should discuss each section with the child. Encourage each child to experiment with choices and parent-approved options to find out what works best for learning and doing homework.

### **For High School and Beyond:**

As students fill out the assessment and experiment with what works best for them, parents and teachers should challenge them to think about how this information will be useful for college, the workplace, and their long-term future.

# Introduction

If you've ever put a puzzle together, you know that assembling the border first often makes it easier to fit the whole picture together. Discovering your learning style is like getting the border pieces for how your mind works when it comes to learning and understanding information. Each of us is born with natural strengths and preferences, and no two people are exactly alike when it comes to learning.

Identifying what your personal learning strengths are can help you understand why certain subjects or classes are easier than others, or why you dread doing homework, or how you can be better prepared for taking tests. It can help you figure out what to do when you struggle with a particular teacher or deal with doing hard or boring tasks.

The best part of getting a handle on how you learn is that you can learn to do hard things. You can overcome frustration and boredom. And you can succeed even when you have to work in ways that don't come naturally for you.

This assessment is designed to go along with chapters 4-6 of the book your parents or teachers have already read: *Reclaiming Education: Teach Your Child to be a Confident Learner*. This is your chance to not only find out about your own learning style strengths, but also to share what you know with the ones who are teaching you.

## The Formula for Success

### 1. Know your strengths.

Sometimes you just need to sit down and work through a few questions that will get you thinking about what you need to be at your best.

### 2. Figure out what you need to succeed.

It may take some trial and error, but by deliberately trying different methods, you can begin to form a plan for how to face almost any learning challenge.

### 3. Be ready to prove it works.

Accountability is always necessary. You don't get to use your learning style as an excuse for failing to learn. But you may be surprised at what actually works.



# How Do I Concentrate? (Environmental Preferences)

*Reclaiming Education chapter 4*



**If I wanted to do my hardest things at my best time of day and my easiest things at my worst time of day, what would they be?**

My Hardest Things (what I tend to put off or dread doing):

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My Easiest Things (what comes easy for me or what I enjoy doing):

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If school was 6 hours a day and I had to choose one shift or the other, would I rather go:

- 6 am to noon
- Noon to 6 pm

**When it comes to being at my best when learning, I am more of a:**

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



Morning Person

No Preference

Night Owl



## SETTINGS

### Traditional Setting:

- Desk
- Straight chair
- Bright light
- Quiet room
- By myself

Other more traditional items:

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### Informal, Relaxed Setting:

- No desk
- Comfortable chair
- No bright light
- Favorite noise in the background (music, TV, voices, etc.)
- By myself

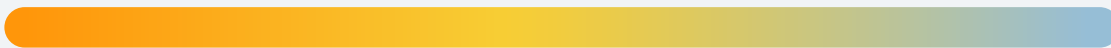
Other more relaxed, informal items:

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### In order to be at my best when studying or working, I like:

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



A more  
traditional setting

No preference

A more informal,  
relaxed setting



**Bright Lighting:**

- Lots of natural light, sunshine
- Overhead lighting
- Lots of lamps

Other forms of bright light:

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**Subdued Lighting:**

- Filtered sunshine
- Indirect lighting
- Lamp(s)

Other subdued lighting:

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**When concentrating or learning, I need:**

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



Bright lighting

No preference

Subdued lighting



## FOOD AND DRINK

**If I really can't concentrate without having something to eat or drink, but I'm in a setting where it's not allowed, what could I do?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**If someone near me needs to eat or drink but it really distracts me, what could that person do to help me not be distracted?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**In order to be at my best when studying or learning:**

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



I get distracted if  
I eat and drink

No preference

I need to eat  
and/or drink





# TEMPERATURE

**If I need to get cooler in a warm room, what could I do?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**If I need to get warmer in a cold room, what could I do?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**If I could have my perfect temperature setting, where would I be?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **In order to concentrate when studying or learning:**

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



I need the room  
to be cool

I can usually just  
adapt

I need the room  
to be warm

# Some Suggestions for Working in Settings You Don't Like

**NEED HELP?**

## WHAT IF YOU CAN'T CONCENTRATE...

### ... because it's the wrong time of day?

Ex: *Experiment with what keeps you most alert—maybe a particular food or drink, an exercise or activity.*

What else might help you concentrate when you have to work at your worst time of day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ... because you need to eat or drink and it's not allowed?

Ex: *Try to eat before class; find something you can keep in your mouth without getting in trouble.*

What else might help you concentrate when you aren't allowed to eat or drink?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ... because you have to sit in a physically uncomfortable place?

Ex: *Ask to bring something that makes you more comfortable—a footrest, a back pillow, a cushion.*

What else might help you concentrate when you are sitting in an uncomfortable place?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ... because the temperature of the room is too extreme for you?

Ex: *Dress in layers; wear comfortable clothing that can adapt to different temperature levels.*

What else might help you concentrate when the room is too cold or hot?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

# How Do I Remember? (Modalities)

*Reclaiming Education chapter 5*



## AUDITORY LEARNERS

### Some ways to recognize I'm an auditory learner:

- I tend to ask a lot of questions.
- I may frequently interrupt you.
- I will often repeat what you say.
- I may give you long answers to short questions.
- I will often talk through my thought process out loud.

### What you'll probably hear me say:

- "Could I talk to you a minute?"
- "Let me ask you a question."
- "You didn't tell us ..."
- "Could I just say one thing?"

### You are encouraging me to learn or process auditorily if you:

- Encourage discussions, ask questions, or brainstorm ideas.
- Use music, poetry, or rhythm to get your message across.
- Read aloud to me or have me read aloud to you.
- Let me use others as a sounding board as I talk through ideas or plans.
- Use emphasis and emotion when speaking certain words in your conversation.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Auditory Checkmarks**

### In order to remember best when learning:

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



I need to talk to  
remember

No preference

I don't need to  
talk much



## VISUAL LEARNERS

### Some ways to recognize I'm a visual learner:

- I will almost always be more interested in what I see than in what you say.
- I may bring a picture in with me, and I'll be drawn to illustrations or media.
- I tend to "zone out" while you're talking if you're not showing me anything.
- I may quickly forget what you just said.
- My appearance, even when dressed casually, will be neat, and my clothes will match.

### What you'll hear me say:

- "Could I see you for a minute?"
- "Will you look at this and see if it's right?"
- "I need to see if I can do it."
- "I get the picture."

### You are encouraging me to learn or process visually if you:

- Use even a rough sketch to make sure I can see what you mean.
- Use bright, stimulating colors in folders, notebooks, and presentations.
- Use outlines and agendas for assignments and learning tasks.
- Use charts and graphs to make your point.
- Ask me to do more reading than talking.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Visual Checkmarks**

### In order to remember best when learning:

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



I need to get a  
mental picture

No preference

I don't need to  
see it

# KINESTHETIC

## Some ways to recognize I'm a kinesthetic:

- I'm usually more restless and active.
- I often move quickly from one thing to the next.
- I may appear more impatient while you're getting to the point.
- I'm almost always eager to take some sort of action.
- I'm focused on getting started as soon as possible.

## What you'll hear me say:

- "I'll get back to you."
- "Let's try it."
- "How long will this take?"
- "What does this do?"

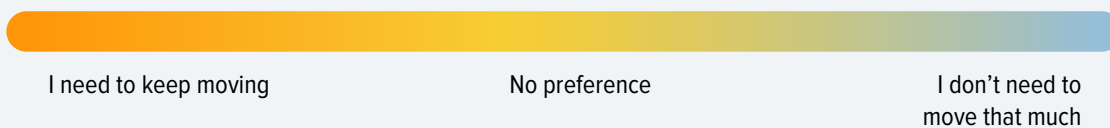
## You are encouraging me to learn or process kinesthetically if you:

- Design activities or projects to be done in short spurts.
- Create a relaxed, informal classroom environment.
- Allow for frequent breaks or changes of environment.
- Use big spaces for writing, drawing, or working.
- Let me walk and talk at the same time.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Kinesthetic Checkmarks**

## In order to remember best when learning:

*Mark a place on the continuum line that best fits you*



# Some Suggestions for Helping You Remember

**NEED HELP?**

## WHAT WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER IF...

### ... You're Visual?

Ex: *Work in a clean, uncluttered space; drawing or taking notes; making my own flashcards.*

What else might help you remember when you have to work at your worst time of day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ... You're Auditory?

Ex: *Talk things through with a friend; reviewing out loud; using my voice to emphasize words.*

What else might help you remember when you have to work at your worst time of day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### ... You're Kinesthetic?

Ex: *Move while working; take frequent breaks; work in large, comfortable space; do something.*

What else might help you remember when you have to work at your worst time of day?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

# How Do I Process and Understand When I Learn?

## Reclaiming Education chapter 6

### WHEN I'M LEARNING, I USUALLY:

Place a check mark beside either A or B in each pair that best describes you when you are learning.

#### A

- 1. Like learning by myself.
- 2. Finish one job before beginning the next.
- 3. Begin work without watching how someone else does it.
- 4. Remember details when reading.
- 5. Prefer true-false/multiple-choice tests.
- 6. Need to have my desk and work area neat to concentrate.
- 7. Need specific feedback to feel my work is valued.
- 8. Prefer competing on my own to competing on a team.
- 9. Prefer to have choices for accomplishing a task.
- 10. Want to go over a past assignment to correct what I missed.
- 11. Ignore distractions while I work or study.
- 12. Prefer to have an assignment given in small parts.
- 13. Prefer to think about a decision and figure out what to do by myself.
- 14. Don't take it personally if someone tells me I've done something wrong.
- 15. Tend to blame the situation if I fail after thorough preparation.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Column A**

#### B

- 1. Like learning with a person or group.
- 2. Begin a new job even if I have not finished an earlier one.
- 3. Wait for someone else to start and watch how he or she does it.
- 4. Remember main ideas when reading.
- 5. Prefer writing my own answers on tests.
- 6. Get my work done even if my desk or work area is cluttered.
- 7. Feel valued as long as my work is acknowledged.
- 8. Prefer competing on a team to competing on my own.
- 9. Prefer to be told exactly how the task should be done.
- 10. Want to keep moving instead of analyzing past mistakes.
- 11. Have difficulty ignoring distractions while I work or study.
- 12. Need to know the whole assignment before beginning.
- 13. Ask other people's opinions if I'm not sure about making a decision.
- 14. Automatically take it personally if someone tells me I've done something wrong.
- 15. Tend to blame myself if I fail despite thorough preparation.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Column B**

If the number is greater in Column A, you tend to be a more analytic learner.  
If the number is greater in Column B, you tend to be a more global learner.

## DOMINANTLY ANALYTIC LEARNERS

### My Strengths:

- Focusing on details
- Doing one thing at a time
- Working independently

### My Preferences:

- Having an orderly process
- Knowing what to expect
- Being objective and consistent

### My Frustrations:

- Having a sudden change of plans
- Dealing with vague generalities
- Being forced to work together

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

## DOMINANTLY GLOBAL LEARNERS

### My Strengths:

- Seeing the overall picture
- Doing several things at once
- Working with others

### My Preferences:

- Spreading things out to see everything
- Feeling understood and appreciated
- Flexibility and variety

### My Frustrations:

- Having to explain myself
- Not knowing the end result
- Having to work alone

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total**

Note: Of course, no one is only Global or purely Analytic. We all have both kinds of pieces of the puzzle. Most of us will have some pieces that are bigger than others, and some may be almost even. It's not important that you identify your exact style. It's more important that you notice how your strengths and preferences make a difference when it comes to learning and remembering information.



# Some Suggestions for Helping Analytics Stretch

**NEED HELP?**

## WHAT WILL HELP YOU STRETCH IF...

### **You never seem to have enough time to finish your assignments?**

It's natural to work step by step, but you may be spending too much time on one step instead of moving on to the next one and coming back to finish later.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You can't do so many things at the same time?**

Use your analytic mind to decide the logical order for the tasks, then budget the time you can afford to give each one and still finish them all on time.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You can't work in a room full of clutter?**

Focus on your own desk or work area, and keep it as neat and clean as possible. Do your best to ignore the areas you can't control.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You don't like working with partners or in groups?**

Figure out at least one good reason to work with one or more other people. If possible, take responsibility for one individual assignment in the group instead of working on a little bit of everything.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Some Suggestions for Helping Globals Stretch



**NEED  
HELP?**

## WHAT WILL HELP YOU STRETCH IF...

### **You think the one teaching doesn't like you?**

Think about what the teacher is saying or doing that makes you believe he or she doesn't like you. Is it possible that the teacher is just a lot more analytic than you?

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You get really distracted when you're trying to read or work?**

Set up some of your own distractions and practice concentrating in spite of them—maybe even make a game out of winning in spite of the obstacles.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You just can't seem to get organized?**

It's easy to get overwhelmed, so ask a friend to help you put together what you need to get your work done. It might not be the usual desk and chair, but it needs to actually help you get the work done.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **You don't like to work by yourself?**

Try working in an area where others are working too. It may help to have people in the room, even if they're making some noise—as long as they aren't talking to you.

Can you think of other ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# A Quick Review

## AUDITORY LEARNERS

Need to talk.  
Need to ask questions.  
Need to hear from the teacher.

## VISUAL LEARNERS

Need to see what the teacher is talking about.  
Need to show the teacher what they mean.  
Need to have time to watch and think.

## KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Need to keep moving.  
Need to get to the bottom line quickly.  
Need to take action.

## ANALYTIC LEARNERS

Need routine and predictability.  
Need organization and procedures.  
Need to work on one thing at a time.

## GLOBAL LEARNERS

Need to be valued as part of a team.  
Need flexibility and opportunities to be spontaneous.  
Need to multitask to capitalize on inspiration.



# One More Note

**WISE MEN AND WOMEN ARE ALWAYS LEARNING,  
ALWAYS LISTENING FOR FRESH INSIGHTS.**

**Proverbs 18:15 (The Message)**



All through your life you'll be learning, and some of the lessons may be hard and unexpected. You won't always have your favorite places to study or methods that match the way your mind naturally works.

That's when you remind yourself that you can do hard things. You can face challenges and overcome difficulties by drawing on the strengths God has given you from the very beginning. Understanding what you do best can help you do what you might not want to do at all. Remember the formula:

**1. Know your strengths.**

Recognize where you are or what you're doing when you're at your best.

**2. Figure out what you need to succeed.**

Ask yourself: Why is this hard for me? What could I do that would make it less frustrating?

**3. Be ready to prove it works.**

Remember, you're not trying to get out of doing an assigned task—you're trying to find another way to get it done.

# Partnering for Success



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