Learning Environment Preferences (LEP)

Description

The Learning Environment Preferences (LEP) is an objective, recognition-task instrument developed by William S. Moore, Center of the Study of Intellectual Development (1987). This measurement was initially designed and validated based upon the qualitative research done on Perry’s intellectual and ethical development model (1981) for college students and patterned after Rest’s Defining Issues Test of moral judgment (1979). According to the preliminary longitudinal studies (Moore, 1989), there is a predicted upward trend in cognitive performance from the freshmen year to the senior year. Scores of “independent” student learners are highly correlated with the higher stages in Perry’s scheme (i.e. lowest stage of dualism to the highest stage of contextual relativism).

The LEP addresses five domains which include course content, the roles of instructors and peers, classroom atmosphere and activities, and course evaluation. Each domain includes 13 statements which a student rates on a four-point likert-scale (not at all significant to very significant). The student focuses on the level of significance of each task in their learning environment.

**The Office of Academic Assessment at USM has been given permission to use the LEP Scale for purposes of course assessment and class improvement only. If you plan to use the LEP Scale for further research or publication, you must get permission below.

- To get approval to use the LEP, you must contact: Center for the Study of Intellectual Development, 1505 Farwell Ct. NW, Olympia, WA 98502 phone: 360-786-5094 fax: 503-212-8082.

Learning Environment Preferences (LEP) Scale
* Survey by the Center for the Study of Intellectual Development

Please rate each item using the following scale in terms of its significance or importance to your learning.

1= Not at all significant  
2= Somewhat significant  
3= Moderately significant  
4= Very significant

Course Content/View of Learning

My ideal learning environment would:

1. Emphasize basic facts and definitions.
2. Focus more on having the right answers than on discussing methods or how to solve problems.
3. Insure that I get all the course knowledge from the professor.
4. Provide me with an opportunity to learn methods and solve problems.
5. Allow me a chance to think and reason, applying facts to support my opinions.
6. Emphasize learning simply for the sake of learning or gaining new expertise.
7. Let me decide for myself whether issues discussed in class are right or wrong, based on my own interpretations and ideas.
8. Stress the practical applications of the material.
10. Serve primarily as a catalyst for research and learning on my own, integrating the knowledge gained into my thinking.
11. Stress learning and thinking on my own, not being spoon fed learning by the instructor.
12. Provide me with appropriate learning situations for thinking about and seeking personal truths.
13. Emphasize a good positive relationship among the students and between the students and teacher.

Role of Instructor

In my ideal learning environment, the instructor would:

14. Teach me all the facts and information I am supposed to learn.
15. Use up-to-date textbooks and materials and teach from them, not ignore them.
16. Give clear directions and guidance for all course activities and assignments.
17. Have only a minimal role in the class, turning much of the control of course content and class discussions over to the students.
18. Be not just an instructor, but more an explainer, entertainer and friend.
19. Recognize that learning is mutual---individual class members contribute fully to the teaching and learning in the class.
20. Provide a model for conceptualizing living and learning rather than solving problems.
21. Utilize his/her expertise to provide me with a critique of my work.
22. Demonstrate a way to think about the subject matter and then help me explore the issues and come to my own conclusions.
23. Offer extensive comments and reactions about my class performance (papers, exams, etc.).
24. Challenge students to present their own ideas, argue with positions taken, and demand evidence for their beliefs.
25. Put a lot of effort into the class, making it interesting and worthwhile.
26. Present arguments on course issues based on this/her expertise to stimulate active debate among class members.
Role of Student/Peers

In my ideal learning environment, as a student I would:

27. Study and memorize the subject matter—the teacher is there to teach it.
28. Take good notes on what’s presented in class and reproduce that information on the tests.
29. Enjoy having my friends in the class, but other than that classmates don’t add much to what I would get from a class.
30. Hope to develop my ability to reason and judge based on standards defined by the subject.
31. Prefer to do independent research allowing me to produce my own ideas and arguments.
32. Expect to be challenged to work hard in the class.
33. Prefer that my classmates be concerned with increasing their awareness of themselves to others in relation to the world.
34. Anticipate that my classmates would contribute significantly to the course learning through their own expertise in the content.
35. Want opportunities to think on my own, making connections between the issues discussed in class and other areas I’m studying.
36. Take some leadership, along with my classmates, in deciding how the class will be run.
37. Participate actively with my peers in class discussions and ask as many questions as necessary to fully understand the topic.
38. Expect to take learning seriously and be personally motivated to learn the subject.
39. Want to learn methods and procedures related to the subject—learn how to learn.

Classroom Atmosphere/Activities

In my ideal learning environment, the classroom atmosphere and activities would:

40. Be very organized and well-structured—clear expectations should be set (i.e. the class should carefully follow a detailed and structured syllabus).
41. Consist of lectures, (with a chance to ask questions) because I can get all the facts I need to know more efficiently that way.
42. Include specific, detailed instructions for all activities and assignments.
43. Focus on step-by-step procedures so that if you did the procedure correctly each time, your answer would be correct.
44. Provide opportunities for me to pull together connections among various subject areas and then construct an adequate argument.
45. Be only loosely structured, with the students themselves taking most of the responsibility for what structure there is.
46. Include research papers, since they demand that I consult sources and then offer my own interpretation and thinking.
47. Have enough variety in content areas and learning experiences to keep me interested.
48. Be practiced and internalized but be balanced by group experimentation, intuition, comprehension, and imagination.
49. Consist of a seminar format, providing an exchange of ideas so that I can critique my own perspectives on the subject matter.
50. Emphasize discussions of personal answers based on relevant evidence rather than just right and wrong answers.
51. Be an intellectual dialogue and debate among a small group of peers motivated to learn for the sake of learning.
52. Include lots of projects and assignments with practical, everyday applications.
Evaluation Procedures

Evaluation activities in my ideal learning environment would:

53. Include straightforward, not tricky tests, covering only what has been taught and nothing else.
54. Be up to the teacher, since she/he knows the material best.
55. Consist of objective-style test because they have clear-cut right or wrong answers.
56. Be based on how much students have improved in the class and on how hard they have worked in class.
57. Provide an opportunity for me to judge my own work along with the teacher and learn from the critique at the same time.
58. Not include grades, since there aren’t really any objective standards teachers can use to evaluate students’ thinking.
59. Include grading by a prearranged point system (homework, participation, test, etc.), since I think this is fairest.
60. Represent a synthesis of internal and external opportunities for judgment and learning enhancing the quality of the class.
61. Consist of thoughtful criticism of my work by someone with appropriate expertise.
62. Emphasize essay exams, papers, etc. rather than objective-style tests so that I can show how much I’ve learned.
63. Allow students to demonstrate that they can think on their own and make connections not made in class.
64. Include judgments of the quality of my oral and written work as a way to enhance my learning in the class.
65. Emphasize independent thinking by each student, but include some focus on the quality of one’s arguments and evidence.

Pick the three most important items in each category as you think about your ideal learning environment. Write the item numbers on the appropriate spaces below.

Course Content/View of Learning  ____  ____  ____
Role of Instructor  ____  ____  ____
Role of Students/Peers  ____  ____  ____
Classroom Atmosphere  ____  ____  ____
Evaluation Procedures  ____  ____  ____
Learning Environment Preferences (LEP) scale/Answer Sheet Instructions

This survey asks you to describe what you believe to be the most significant issues in your IDEAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. Your opinions are important to us as we study how students think about teaching and learning issues. We ask that you take this task seriously and give your responses some thought. We appreciate your cooperation in sharing what you find most important in a learning environment.

The survey consists of five sections, each representing a different aspect of learning environments. In each section, you are presented with a list of specific statements about that particular area. Try not to focus on a specific class or classes as you think about these items; focus on their significance in an ideal learning environment for you.

Please rate each item using the scale (1-4) below in terms of its significance or importance to your learning.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE GENERAL PURPOSE ANSWER SHEET
(Use a No.2 pencil only)

Demographic Information:

- Please put your name in the appropriate NAME section; entering one letter per box.
- Indicate your birth date in the appropriate section.
- Write your ID number (social security) in the appropriate section under the letters labeled A thru I (J should be left blank).
- In the Special Codes section, enter the CRN number of this course; starting at letter K.

Responses on the LEP scale:

- Please put your answer choices in the response section. Please use the following scale to respond to the items (1-65);

  1 = Not at all significant  2 = Somewhat significant
  3 = Moderately significant  4 = Very significant.

- Please do not write on the scale, put all answers on the answer sheet. Please do not make any other stray marks on the answer sheets. Answer sheets are scanned and scored.
Learning Environment Preference Answer Sheet: Student Information

Student Social Security Number: _______________  Birth Date: ____________

Instructor’s Name ________________________________

Name of High School from which you graduated: ____________________________

Date: High School graduation: ____ Have you attended college before USM? Yes No

How many hours per week do you work? ______________

Did you take pre-college course in high school? Yes No

Highest level of parent’s education:

Mother ____________________  Father ________________________

Parent’s employment:

Mother _____________________  Father _________________________

Answer the following questions by indicating the frequency with which you engage in these behaviors:

1= never  2= one time per week  3= two times per week  4= more than two times per week

How often do you read for pleasure? ______
How often do you read books for pleasure? ______
How often do you read magazines for pleasure? ______
How often do you read newspapers for pleasure? ______

Which of the following best characterizes your college writing:

A) I have a difficult time organizing my thoughts
B) I have some difficulty organizing my thought, but can put the paper together
C) I don’t have a problem organizing my thoughts

What expectations, if any, do you have (or did have) for your learning in this class?

Return the LEP scale and your answer sheet to your instructor. Thank you.