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Intellectual Experience Scale

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John D. Mayer & David Caruso

Research with the scale is reported in: Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D., Zigler, E., Dreyden, J. (1989).
Intelligence and intelligence-related personality traits. *Intelligence*, 13, 119-133.

Scoring the test items

Each test item is followed by a 5-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, as shown below.

Strongly Agree (scored as 5)

Agree (scored as 4)

Neither Agree nor Disagree (scored as 3)

Disagree (scored as 2)

Strongly Disagree (scored as 1)

The test produces three scales and one overall score.

The three scales are:

1. Intellectual Absorption
2. Intellectual Apathy, and
3. Intellectual Pleasure

To calculate the scale, add the participant's responses to the scale items. Each item below is preceded by a number in brackets indicating the scale to which it is assigned. Six items are scored on two or three scales. An "R" indicates that the item needs to be reversed before it is added into its scale score.

To calculate the overall scale (not necessarily recommended, but possible), reverse score Intellectual Apathy, and add up the three scales.

[3] 1. Sometimes when I'm working on a problem I find myself saying something like, "I like this!" or "This is really fun."

[2] 2. I wish I could get involved in something, but my mind often wanders from one topic to the next.

[2] 3. "Intellectual" thinking is just a chore; there are more important things in life than that.

[1] 4. At times, even the most intense concentration seems to require almost no energy at all of me.

[1, 3R] 5. It is difficult to distract me when I'm thinking hard about something.

[3] 6. When I get into an intellectual discussion about something, I may dwell on the problem for hours, days, or even weeks afterward.

[2] 7. I'm not very good at intellectual problem solving.

[1] 8. Sometimes when I'm thinking about a topic, I'll get so involved in it that I'll really forget about everything. I forget about so much other stuff it's almost frightening.

[2] 9. I am not interested in abstract intellectual arguments.

[1] 10. Sometimes my thinking just seems to flow in the right direction to solve a problem, entirely on its own.

[3, 2R] 11. I get chills down my spine when I'm really excited by an idea, my voice rises, and other people can often sense my excitement.

[1] 12. When I'm concentrating it is sometimes as if other people just don't exist.

[2] 13. It is difficult to understand how the great thinkers in history kept up their interest in what they were studying.

[3] 14. After I've gotten an insight into a really difficult problem I feel very good about it.

[1] 15. Sometimes I imagine a problem so vividly that it is almost as if I were living in the midst of it.

[2] 16. I try to do well in school or at work, but there are things I am much more interested in pursuing than debates about issues that have little to do with my life.

[3] 17. At times when I'm thinking about a subject and I get an insight, I experience a rush – I breathe faster and my pulse goes up in a pleasurable way.

[1] 18. I can solve most intellectual problems better and faster than other people.

[3R, 1R] 19. Intellectual discussions never solve anything and are usually boring and a waste of time.

[2, 1] 20. I can solve many problems easily, but few keep my attention for long.

[2] 21. What is most important to think about is how to meet specific goals—not abstract ideas.

[2] 22. I rarely feel intellectually confident

[1] 23. When I'm working on a problem, not necessarily solving it but just understanding it more, it justifies my existence.

[3] 24. Thinking about something I'm really interested in is something I really enjoy.

[3] 25. When I get interested in something, time goes by really fast.

[3] 26. When I get into an intellectual argument about something with a close friend, I sometimes want to continue the argument over a period of days.

[2] 27. I solve only problems that need to be solved. Thinking about a subject is sometimes important, but it is foolish to build a life-purpose or self-image about being able to solve problems.

- [2, 1R, 3] 28. Other people can easily distract me when I'm trying to concentrate.
- [1] 29. When I get interested in something I have to read everything there is on the subject.
- [1] 30. Often, when I first see a problem, the answer just occurs to me. Later on if it is important I'll go back and figure out the reasoning behind it.
- [1] 31. When I'm working on something that's really interesting, I'm not even aware of other things going on around me.
- [2] 32. Thinking too much robs you of the rich experiences of life.
- [3] 33. When I understand what I'm studying, it makes me understand more about the subject, and I also understand more about myself.
- [1] 34. I know it is impolite, but sometimes when people talk to me my mind is far away, thinking about some intellectual problem that I'm interested in.
- [2] 35. You could say my way of thinking is more intuitive than logical.
- [3] 36. I feel most intellectually able when I'm deeply involved in a problem.
- [2] 37. The best thinking always requires an enormous amount of energy [1R, 3]
- [3R] 38. I don't let my ideas run my life; I wouldn't go out of my way to write them down or tell others about them.
- [2] 39. To me, problem solving is nothing more or less than a way of achieving my specific life goals.
- [3] 40. Sometimes I gasp and suddenly realize that I've gotten a new insight and have really been involved.
- [1] 41. There are times when concentrating feels like an effortless flow of energy
- [3] 42. If I can come up with a new way of thinking about something, it makes me feel really good—closer to nature. It is like a religious experience to me.
- [2] 43. Sometimes when I talk about something exciting that has been interesting to me, I rush through all the basic material to get to the point, and I do it so fast that other people can't understand me.
- [1] 44. I read a great deal
- [3] 45. I like to work on something until I get it perfect—to do the very best I can.
- [2] 46. When I work on a problem it is purely an intellectual sort of thing and I don't feel either frustration or happiness about it.
- [3] 47. I try to set aside definite periods of time for thinking about things that interest me.

[1R] 48. My life goals and plans for the future are not very clear to me.

[3R, 1R] 49. The business person and the engineer are more important to society than are the artist or scientist.

[1] 50. I get really involved in what I'm doing in the present – so involved that sometimes I don't think very much about the past or future.

[3] 51. Thinking about your life is really important.