

*Florida Tech
Counseling & Psychological Services*

Interpreting the College Student Inventory (CSI)

The College Student Inventory, CSI, is an instrument created and operated as part of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System. Noel-Levitz is the nationally recognized authority on student retention. A primary function of the inventory is to assist college and university personnel in identifying the needs of their student populations in order to better assist them as they begin their collegiate endeavors. By pinpointing the needs of these students early, within the first six weeks, programs can be formulated and tailored to specifically meet those needs and to begin the process of intervening in areas students target for themselves as potential problems.

By providing an opportunity for the students to participate in the inventory and most importantly by collecting data directly from the students concerning their academic preparedness, study skills, and anticipated social interests, for example, college and university personnel can then highlight areas of concerns and work directly with the student to overcome any of these obstacles. Armed with this information, the campus community can begin building stronger relationships and linking incoming students to the campus as well as their peers. The ultimate goal of the entire program is to help students succeed in their academic pursuits and to improve persistence and retention of students.

Interpreting the CSI:

The statistics for all scales are computed from national percentile scores with the national norm being the 50th percentile. High scores indicate high levels of the characteristic described in the scale name (e.g. a high score on self-reliance means that the individual was above the average in self reliance).

****The students receive a copy of their CSI results identified as “Student Report.” Advisors will receive “Advisor/Counselor Report” with a rating of Dropout Proneness. However, their copy does not include the scale “Dropout Proneness.” DO NOT share their scores on Dropout Proneness with the students or give them your report.**

Scales on the CSI:

Academic Motivation:

1. **Study habits:** Measures the amount of time and effort that a student puts into their studies. A high score indicates a large amount of time and effort. A lower score indicates that not enough time and effort is put into studies, and the student has weak study habits. Suggestions for low scores include a) developing a clear daily routine in which the student sets aside certain periods of time to study, b) having the student learn to focus his attention and to pace himself effectively, c) thoughtful previewing, underlining, note-taking, and reviewing, d) finding an

optimal study environment, e) developing time management skills, and f) working with the Academic Support Center or Counseling and Psychological Services to address these issues.

2. **Intellectual Interests:** Measures the degree to which a student enjoys reading and discussing serious ideas. High scores indicate an interest and comfort with high levels of intellectual activity. Low scores indicate that the student is more comfortable with straightforward, practical problems than with abstract thinking. For low scores, suggestions include learning more about understanding through words, numbers, and formal knowledge by studying and reading these areas, developing an academic schedule that will provide a balance of coursework to satisfy both styles.
3. **Academic Confidence:** Measures the degree to which students feel capable of doing well in college. High scores indicate a confident attitude toward their studies. Low scores indicate that they have some very strong self-doubts. These may not be based on their actual potential, but rather on some bad experiences in school. Since greater confidence often leads to greater success, such students would probably benefit from talking with someone who can help them put their earlier learning experiences into perspective. Although high scores may be positive, it also may suggest overconfidence, particularly if other critical scales are low such as study habits or academic motivation.
4. **Desire to Finish College:** Measures the strength of the students' commitment to completing a degree. High scores indicate a well-developed appreciation for the value of a college education. Low scores indicate that they have some doubts about the value of a college education. Suggestions include helping the students to clarify their objectives in order to aid them toward a clear decision about their career goals, which will strengthen their commitment toward college.
5. **Attitude Toward Educators:** Measures the degree to which the students see teachers and administrators as competent, reasonable, and caring. High scores indicate that the students have a positive perception of educators and believe that teachers are warm and caring. Low scores indicate that negative perceptions probably make it very difficult for the students to accept their teachers and that may hurt their attention and effort in school. Suggestions include getting to know teachers, talking with a counselor, and the advisors spending more time and meeting more frequently to mentor the students.

Social Motivation:

1. **Self-Reliance:** Measures the degree that students trust their own judgment and make their own decisions. High scores suggest that the students have a fairly strong sense of independence and ability to resist social pressures. Low scores can express themselves in a) spending too much time seeking companionship, b) going along with social activities that violate their values, and c) feeling

uncomfortable with the solitude of studying. Suggestions include seeing a counselor who can help the students learn to resist outside pressures and rely more heavily on their inner resources.

2. **Sociability:** Measures the students' desire for companionship and social entertainment. High scores suggest an above-average level of sociability, which has the advantage of motivating the students to establish friendships and spend a lot of time with others. However, it can distract them from the main purpose of college, which is learning. Try to help the students keep their social life within reasonable boundaries. Low scores have the advantage of leaving a lot of time for studying. However, it may lead to loneliness and dissatisfaction with college life, which could hurt the students' grades. Encourage the students to try to establish some good friendships at college, and spend time with their friends each day.
3. **Leadership:** Measures the degree to which the students feel accepted as a leader. High scores suggest that they are comfortable assuming a leadership role. Low scores suggest that the students are uncomfortable in a leadership role. To help the students develop greater confidence in their leadership skills, you may want to encourage them to join a campus organization and gradually assume some responsibilities. College allows people to get a fresh start in their social life, and they often discover greater acceptance than they experienced in the narrower world of high school. In developing leadership skills, the students should try to a) look at situations from the perspective of the other people involved, b) be patient with delays and obstacles, and c) assert themselves in a balanced manner when the situation calls for it.

General Coping:

1. **Ease of Transition:** Measures the degree to which students feel comfortable with the various changes brought on by college life. High scores suggest that the students will be able to adapt to college life with little or not difficulty. Low scores suggest that they are experiencing considerable stress at the present time. A personal counselor will be able to offer the student a lot of help with the situation.
2. **Family Emotional Support:** Measures the satisfaction students feel with the communication that occurs in their family. High scores suggest that the students feel emotionally accepted and supported by their family. Low scores suggest that the students are experiencing high levels of stress, which may be producing some negative effects on other areas of their life. It is hard to concentrate on school, for example, if one is preoccupied with family problems. A personal counselor can help the students understand their family situation and discover some solutions.
3. **Openness:** Measures the students' receptivity to new ideas and to the sensitive, sometimes threatening aspects of our complex world. High scores suggest the students feel comfortable with the unfamiliar and unconventional ideas often

found at college. Low scores suggest a strong tendency to reject unpleasant information without giving it full consideration. These students may also go to excessive lengths to avoid interpersonal stress. In considering these tendencies, encourage the students to remember that we grow by sifting through a variety of perspectives on life. Upsetting ideas sometimes contain important truths, and facing conflicts is the first step in resolving them.

4. **Career Planning:** Measures the amount of serious thought students have given to their career choice. High scores suggest that they have a fairly serious and mature attitude toward their occupational plans. Low scores suggest that they need to give more careful thought to the type of work they value and enjoy, to the current availability of jobs for college graduates, and to the specific training they will need to find a satisfying job. The career planning office on campus can be very helpful.
5. **Sense of financial Security:** Measures the students' satisfaction with the amount of money available to them while at college. High scores suggest they feel very satisfied with their financial situation. Low scores suggest a lack of satisfaction with finances. If the student has not already done so, the student may wish to discuss the financial situation with someone in the financial aid office.

Receptivity to Support Services:

All scales measure receptivity in the different areas. High scores indicate greater receptivity, while lower scores suggest that the students are not likely to be receptive to assistance in each area.