

LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Feedback on Your Learning Style

Thank you for completing **The Learning Styles Questionnaire**. The purpose of this information is to provide you with an understanding of the importance of learning, and how understanding your preferences for learning can assist in maximising the benefit you can gain from the whole range of learning experiences you are bound to encounter during your lifetime.

Why Focus on Learning?

The reason we focus on learning is because it is the basis of change and development for both individuals and organisations. The ability to learn is one of the most important skills an individual is ever likely to acquire. We are often confronted with new experiences and situations that provide learning opportunities. In fact, learning is such a fundamental process that sometimes we take it for granted. We assume that by adulthood we have learned all there is to know about learning.

What *is* Learning?

Learning is a continuous process that occurs every day of our lives from formal learning (for example education at school or university) to informal learning (for example using a bank ATM for the first time). This learning results in the development of new skills and knowledge.

Individuals learn in different ways – by reading a book, trying a new activity or making a mistake. As we keep learning throughout our lives, we develop preferences for particular '*styles*' of learning.

Learning Styles

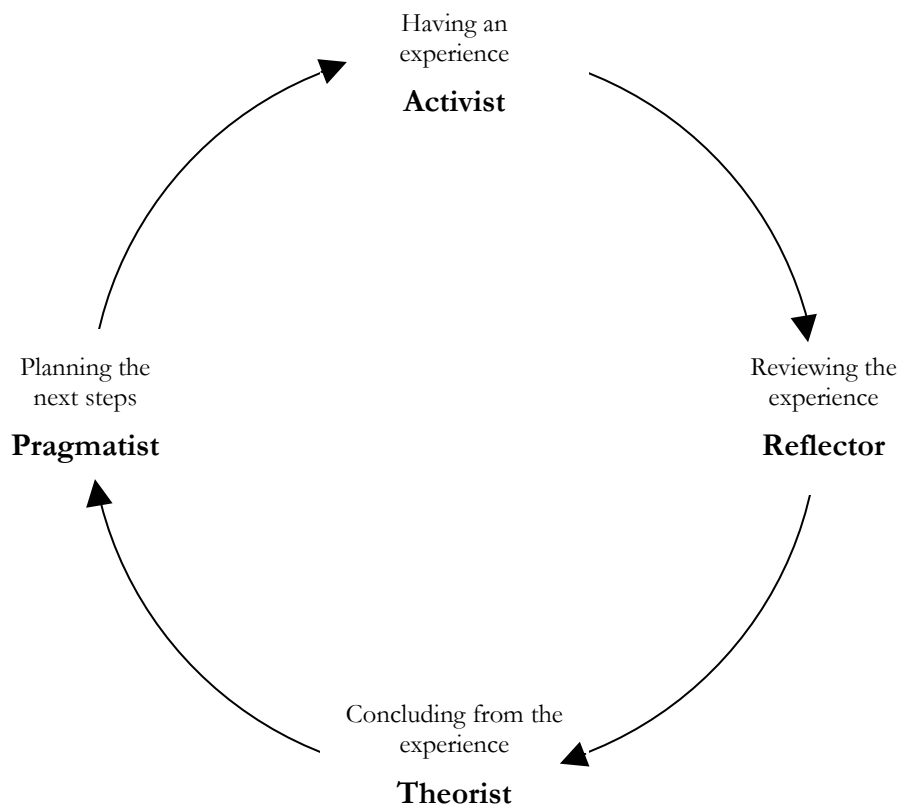
It is easy to assume that everybody learns in the same way. Surprisingly, we don't. People learn in different ways. The efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process depends on the attitudes and behaviours that an individual brings to a particular learning opportunity. These attitudes and behaviours form an individual's learning style. An individual's preference for a particular learning style will tend to be reinforced over time and in this way becomes a habit. Understanding your learning style is the first step in improving your '*learning power*' and gaining the most from the learning opportunities you encounter.

Knowledge about the four types of learning styles is the key to understanding these different preferences. A general description of the four learning styles is useful for understanding about your specific learning style preferences.

Learning Style Descriptions

<p>Reflector <i>Reflectors prefer to view things from different perspectives with an opportunity to plan ahead, attend to detail and look for the meaning of things.</i></p>	<p>Activist <i>Activists enjoy new and challenging activities, and benefit most from learning through experience and working with others.</i></p>
<p>Theorist <i>Theorists benefit most from learning through models, theories or concepts, and analysing ideas logically within structured environments.</i></p>	<p>Pragmatist <i>Pragmatists learn most easily through immediate practical application of activities, with an obvious link between subject matter and 'real life' applications.</i></p>

The four Learning Styles are linked with the steps we go through when we learn:



Realising that people can be more effective learners if they are aware of their learning style preferences, Peter Honey and Alan Mumford developed the Learning Style Questionnaire in 1982 to identify learning style preferences. The questionnaire results are designed to help people understand how they might learn best, and how they can develop and enhance their learning skills.

You and Your Learning Style

This outline is designed to provide you with information about your learning style and how you can apply this to a range of learning situations such as formal learning, informal learning and on-the-job learning. The benefits you gain could assist you in your personal growth and in your career progression.

Knowing how you think about issues and learn from your experiences is an important process in self-management. We believe that through discovering more about your learning preferences through **The Learning Styles Questionnaire** and this Feedback Report, such insights will place you in a better position to develop a range of personal and work-related skills.

Individuals can use The Learning Styles Questionnaire to help them:

- Learn how to learn more effectively;
- Learn how to develop and use existing learning strengths more effectively;
- Develop additional learning skills;
- Understand their natural preferences for gathering, organising and using information to make decisions;
- Predict how they might respond to certain supervisory, management or team challenges;
- Decide the best way they can make a contribution to a team; and
- Develop their careers.

Organisations can use The Learning Styles Questionnaire to:

- Assist trainers understand individual preferences in learning styles;
- Provide training which complements individual learning styles;
- Help trainers and training programs to achieve maximum results;
- Tailor learning experiences for individuals by emphasising learning methods, not teaching methods;
- Predict and appropriately manage trainee behaviour;
- Help managers create formal and informal learning opportunities for staff;
- Assist staff to effectively develop new skills and knowledge;
- Create personal development plans;
- Maximise the impact of development centres or development workshops;
- Develop teams or project groups that can learn and apply knowledge and experience quickly and effectively; and
- Assist in the development of learning organisations which use knowledge as a sustainable competitive advantage.

Learning Styles Descriptions

Your preferred learning style is one of the four learning styles or a combination of these learning styles. A description of the four learning styles is detailed below.

Activists

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical and this tends to make them enthusiastic about trying anything new. Their philosophy is "I'll try anything once". Activists tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down, they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others and in doing so, may seek to centre all activities around themselves.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all the possible angles and implications before making a move. Reflectors prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before contributing their own opinions and thoughts. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant and unruffled air about them. Their actions culminate from a '*big picture*' which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

Theorists

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step, logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, models and systems thinking. Their philosophy revolves around rationality and logic. "If it's logical, it's good". Questions they frequently ask are; "Does it make sense?", "How does this fit with that?" or "What are the basic assumptions?" Theorists tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is their '*mental set*' and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen to try out new ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on new ideas that attract them. Pragmatists tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down-to-earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities ‘*as a challenge*’. Their philosophy is: “There is always a better way” and “If it works, it is good”.

Interpreting Your Results

The results come from your responses to statements that asked you about how you typically approach a range of different learning situations.

In order for you to best understand your results, it is important to remember that **The Learning Styles Questionnaire** compares your results against a group drawn from the general population. Because the maximum score for each scale is 20, at first you might conclude that the highest of your four scores is your predominant learning style. However this is not necessarily so. The number of questions you agree with has been compared with the results of a sample group who also completed the questionnaire. In this way, your score will show your preference for a particular learning style compared to other people. For instance, a temperature of 22 might be cool or hot, depending on whether you are in Alice Springs or Antarctica. It is the comparison which is important.

The graph below displays your current scores on each of the four major learning styles: Activist, Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist.

Learning Styles

Learning Style	Score	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Activist	18					
Reflector	4					
Theorist	10					
Pragmatist	15					

As seen above, your learning styles, in order of most preferred to least preferred, are:

- Activist;
- Pragmatist;
- Theorist; and
- Reflector.

Matching Learning Activities to Styles

Preferred Learning Styles

Having read and understood your preferred learning styles, Activist and Pragmatist, it might be useful to consider the range of activities which are most likely to fit with these styles. You will probably learn more, and more quickly, by matching your proposed learning activities with your preferred learning styles.

Activist

Your preference for the Activist style was identified as **Very Strong**. Below we list learning activities that suit this style, along with learning activities that may not be as effective. By practising the activities that suit Activists, you may increase your ability in this learning style.

Activists are likely to learn best from:

- Opportunities to work with other people, or as part of a team
- Flexible situations without the constraint of rules and guidelines
- The opportunity to tackle problems 'head-on'
- New challenges and experiences

Activists may learn less efficiently from:

- Having to take a passive role
- Working alone
- Repetitive, monotonous tasks
- Situations where there are inflexible rules or instructions
- Theoretical explanations of a problem

Pragmatist

Your preference for the Pragmatist style was identified as **Strong**. Below we list learning activities that suit this style, along with learning activities that may not be as effective for the Pragmatist learner.

Pragmatists are likely to learn best from:

- Understanding the 'real world' application
- The opportunity to 'try things out'
- Having a clear structured plan with a definable purpose

Pragmatists learn less efficiently from:

- Tasks where the practical application is not obvious
- Having to work in a group
- Tasks where discussion and interaction are required

Weaker Learning Styles

Certain activities will be less compatible with your preferred Learning Style. Although the first reaction might be to “avoid this approach at all costs”, sometimes you may be faced with a need to learn in a manner not suited to your natural Learning Style. When this occurs, you might need to consciously adopt a different approach, give yourself more time or make other adjustments to make the learning activity more comfortable.

Theorist

Your preference for the Theorist style was identified as **Low**. Below we list learning activities that suit this style, along with learning activities that may not be as effective. By practicing the activities that suit Theorists, you may increase your ability in this learning style.

Theorists are likely to learn best from:

- Information that is presented in a theoretical framework
- Opportunities to analyse information and develop a plan
- Being able to explore the associations and relationships between things

Theorists may learn less efficiently from:

- Tasks where objectives are not clearly stated
- Having to interact or discuss with others
- The practical aspects

Reflector

Your preference for the Reflector style was identified as **Very Low**. Below we have listed learning activities that suit this style, along with learning activities that may not be as effective for the Reflector learner.

Reflectors are likely to learn best from:

- Opportunities to think about what has been learned
- Listening to and observing others
- Thinking ideas through before acting on them
- Working at their own pace which allows them to be thorough and careful

Reflectors learn less efficiently from:

- Activities that lack planning
- Having to work under the pressure of time
- Being forced to take shortcuts

Other Areas Which Can Be Affected by Learning Styles

Communicating with Others

By understanding the learning style of another person, you will be able to present information in a more useful and efficient manner. This knowledge can assist you in being more efficient, and more persuasive. Communication is particularly relevant in sales roles.

Psychologists have conducted considerable research in sales environments and concluded that different personality types need to be approached in different ways. It is very likely that the same would hold true for Learning Styles. At the very least, understanding learning styles can shift the focus from the product or service being sold, to the buyer and the best way to form a relationship with them. The interpersonal interaction between a buyer and seller has been found to have the most impact on the outcome of sales scenarios.

In our lives we are constantly interacting with and influencing others as we operate at home at work and with friends. The lessons from business and sales are very relevant to how we manage our personal lives.

Working in Teams

Knowledge of your Learning Style can also help you to increase your effectiveness and level of contribution as a team member. Knowledge of individual Learning Style preferences can assist a group to work more productively.

You will find Learning Styles helpful in understanding how people like to contribute, their possible influence on other team members and how the overall effectiveness of the team can be improved. You may also like to consider the best way you can make a contribution to the team, and how you might respond to team challenges.

In group problem-solving contexts, knowledge of learning style preferences can assist by providing a guide to how the problem can be viewed from different perspectives by involving others with different learning styles. This approach will invariably yield a range of different responses. This approach can be used by either an individual or a team, where the objective is to avoid a '*group think*' and when generating the widest range of possible solutions and approaches is required.

Used in this context, you will find **The Learning Styles Questionnaire** a valuable tool to assist individuals form the most high-value and productive teams that can contribute to the development of an organisation's competitive advantage.

Next Steps

It is hoped that this Feedback Report is a useful introduction to understanding and using Learning Styles in your chosen context. Honey and Mumford have been researching and writing about learning styles since well before the first publication of **The Learning Styles Questionnaire** in 1982. The various publications that have resulted from this work are listed below, should you wish to explore this area in greater detail. Some of these resources are particularly useful if you are responsible for developing or managing others, or creating an organisation which bases its competitive advantage on learning ... about new markets, new methods, new products, new processes ... and new ways of thinking. If you would like further information about any of the products below, please contact us.

If we can assist in linking you with other individuals or companies who have used the instruments in contexts similar to yours, please contact us as we would be delighted to help. If you are planning any research or have ideas or experiences to offer, we would be delighted to listen ... and learn. Please just call.

Additional Resources

The Manual of Learning Styles, by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford

An introduction to learning styles with advice on how to administer and interpret **The Learning Styles Questionnaire**. /

The Learning Environment Questionnaire: How to Manage Your Learning Environment, by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford

A practical manual to help any manager become better at creating and sustaining a learning environment. It includes advice on how to use and interpret the two versions of the learning environment questionnaire, one for the individual and one for upward feedback.

101 Ways to Develop Your People, Without Really Trying! by Peter Honey

This book is a practical guide to work based learning. It is packed with ideas that any manager, in any function, at any level, in any organisation, can use to help people learn and develop.

How to Choose the Right Development Method, by Alan Mumford

This substantive manual gives expert advice to trainers and developers on how to choose methods that suit different needs and learners' learning style preferences. Coaching, distance learning, role playing, technology based training, case studies are among the sixteen methods examined in detail.

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