



Preferred Learning Style

This questionnaire is designed to find out your preferred learning style(s). Over the years you have probably developed "habits" that help you benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably unaware of this, this questionnaire will help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your style. There is no time limit to this questionnaire. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you can be. There are no right or wrong answers.

For each item below that you enjoy or are attracted by, tick the box on that line.

Being in the limelight such as making presentations or chairing meetings

Producing carefully considered analysis or reports

Questioning and probing methods, logic or facts to gain a clear understanding

Being shown or finding out about information or techniques that have practical advantages

Methodically exploring the associations between ideas, events and situations

Having new problems or opportunities to tackle

Making decisions in my own time without being rushed or pressured

Having immediate opportunities to put into practice new information or techniques

Coming across interesting or complex ideas and concepts that aren't immediately relevant

Fire fighting or crisis management where things suddenly change and I have to think on my feet

Improving efficiency or effectiveness through making improvements

Being involved in problem solving or projects with a team

Listening or reading about ideas and concepts that are well argued and emphasise logic

Spending time thinking about things that have happened

Recognising the links between a subject and a job issue

Having the opportunity to watch/think over other activities

Trying out new things with coaching from an expert

Having time to think before acting e.g. reading a report in preparation for a meeting

Working within a tight structured environment with a clear purpose

Self-Checks

Being thrown in at the deep-end of a difficult task
 Being intellectually stretched

Concentrating on making things work through careful planning
 Being involved in generating ideas without constraints
 Exchanging views with other people in a non-threatening environment

Now total the number of statements you have ticked in each column:

Write your preferred learning style below:

Pragmatist	Activist	Reflector	Theorist

General Descriptions

Pragmatists:

- Are keen to try out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practise.
- Search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to use them.
- Like to get on with things.
- Tend to be impatient.
- Are practical, down-to-earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems.
- Respond to problems and opportunities as a challenge.
- Believe that 'There's always a better way' and 'If it works it's good'.

Pragmatists learn best from activities when:

- There is an obvious link between the subject matter and problem or opportunity on the job.
- They are shown techniques for doing things with obvious practical advantages, i.e. how to save time, how to make a positive first impression.
- They have the chance to try out and practice techniques with coaching feedback from a credible expert who can demonstrate the techniques themselves.
- They are exposed to a model they can emulate – a respected boss, examples from the real world and anecdotes.
- They are given techniques currently applicable to their role.
- They are given opportunities to implement what they have learnt.
- They can concentrate on practical issues, drawing up action plans, suggesting short cuts.

Activists:

- Involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences.
- Are open-minded.
- Are enthusiastic about anything new.

- Tend to act first and consider consequences afterwards.
- Fill their days with activities.
- Like to be in the middle of things.
- Believe that you should try anything once.

Activists learn best from activities when:

- There are new experiences/problems/opportunities from which to learn.
- They can engross themselves in short 'here and now' activities such as business games, competitive teamwork tasks and role-plays.
- There is excitement/drama/crisis and things chop and change with a range of diverse activities to tackle.
- They have high visibility – chairing meetings, lead discussions or give presentations.
- They are allowed to generate ideas without constraints
- They are shown in at the deep end with a task they think is difficult, or set a challenge with inadequate resources and adverse conditions.
- They are involved with other people, bouncing ideas off of them and solving problems as part of a team.
- It is appropriate to have a go.

Reflectors:

- Like to stand back and ponder on experiences.
- Like to collect data and analyse it before coming to conclusions.
- Tend to postpone reaching a definitive conclusion because of data collection.
- Like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move.
- Prefer to take a back seat and watch others in action.
- Act with a view to the wider context.
- Believe in being cautious.

Reflectors learn best from activities when:

- They are allowed or encouraged to watch/think or chew over activities.
- They are able to stand back from events and listen/observe, taking a back seat in meetings, or watch a video.
- They are allowed to think before acting, assimilate before commenting, when they have time to prepare or read about the subject in advance.
- They can carry out detailed research
- They have the opportunity to review what has happened and what they have learnt.
- They are asked to produce considered analysis and reports.
- They are helped to exchange views with others in a safe environment – by prior arrangement.
- They can reach a decision in their own time without pressure and tight deadlines

Theorists:

- Adapt and integrate observations into complex but logical theories.
- Think problems through in a step-by-step, logical way.
- Tend to be perfectionists.
- Are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories, and models.

- Tend to be detached, analytical, and prefer rational objectivity.
- Prefer to maximise certainty and are uncomfortable with subjective judgement and lateral thinking.
- Believe in rationality and logic, and that 'If it's logical it's good'.

Theorists learn best from activities when:

- What is being offered is part of a model/concept or theory.
- They have time to explore methodically the associations and interrelationships between ideas, events and situations.
- They have the chance to question and probe assumptions or the logic behind something, a question and answer session.
- They are intellectually stretched, teaching others analysing a complex situation.
- They are in a structured situation with a clear purpose.
- They can analyse and then generalise the reasons for success or failure

Further Development

Consider the following questions and note your thoughts. There are no right or wrong answers, this is to give you food for thought.

- Which styles did you score the highest and lowest for?
- How well balanced are your preferences?
- What are the implications for your learning style at work?
- Do you need to work to adapt to any of the other styles?
- How will you make the most of every opportunity that comes along?