Learning Styles Inventory: Exploring Your Learning Preferences

Revised: January 2018

Understanding How People Learn

Instructions: Please complete this learning styles inventory prior to attending your workshop.

Understanding how and why people learn will help you in your role as a preceptor.

The study of how people learn is called learning theory. The study of why people learn is called motivational theory. A learning style is defined as:

Learning Styles

Research* indicates that all people have well-established ways that they prefer to learn. These preferences are collectively called an individual's “learning style”.

“A composite of characteristics – the cognitive, affective and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with and responds to a learning environment” (Keefe, 1979).

*Some scholars do not support learning styles per se, but do believe in learning preferences.

Through and understanding of different learning styles (or preferences), a preceptor can design learning experiences so that they will address a variety of different approaches to learning. As well, if problems arise with individual preceptees, considering their learning preferences may be the first step in finding appropriate solutions.

There are many tools available to identify an individual's learning style/preferences. Most tools evaluate at least three distinct components – the sensory component, the social component and the cognitive component.

The sensory component identifies the sense that the individual most prefers when receiving, processing and attempting to retain information.

The social component refers to an individual's preference to process information internally – through reflection, or externally – through discussion. It is also an indicator of an individual's preference for learning by themselves, or in groups.

The cognitive component refers to the process an individual uses to gather information, process it and then retain it. The cognitive component identifies whether an individual learns sequentially or globally.
What is The Sensory Component of Your Learning Style?

This questionnaire has been adapted from O'Brien (1985). Respond to each of the following statements using the following responses: (1) - The statement never applies to you, (2) - The statement sometimes applies to you, (3) - The statement often applies to you.

1. I enjoy doodling and often my notes have pictures and arrows in them.
2. My written work is often messy.
3. I don’t like to read directions; I’d rather just start doing.
4. Studying at a desk is not for me.
5. When studying I prefer to read out loud rather than silently.
6. People tell me I have nice handwriting.
7. I remember something better if I write it down.
8. I remember better things that I hear, rather than things I see or read.
9. Writing is tiring. Often I press too hard with my pen or pencil.
10. I need frequent breaks when I am studying.
11. I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
12. I visualize things to remember them better.
13. I am better with names than with faces.
14. If I am trying to concentrate noise is a distraction for me.
15. Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
16. I prefer to show people how to do something, rather than tell them.
17. When I read I underline, highlight, or make notes in the margin.
18. I like to use a diagram to explain things.
19. I sometimes talk to myself or sub-vocalize.
20. I have a very good sense of direction.
21. I can easily understand charts, flow sheets and blueprints.
22. I remember better things that I do, rather than things I’ve seen or heard.
23. When I have to concentrate I often close my eyes.
24. I find repeating things out loud a good way to remember things.
25. I rely on a word “looking right” to tell if it is spelled correctly or not.
26. When I read I sometimes don’t bother to look at the illustrations.
27. I am a poor speller.
28. I tend to fidget quite a bit when sitting for any length of time.
29. I remember faces better than names.
30. If I am reading I often skip long descriptions.

Now transfer the score for each of your responses to the corresponding numbered space using the table on the next page.
### Summary – Sensory Component of Learning Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISUAL = A.</th>
<th>AUDITORY = B.</th>
<th>KINESTHETIC = C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>26.</td>
<td>27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>30.</td>
<td>28.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total:     Total:     Total:
What is the Social Component of Your Learning Style?

Which of the following statements better describes you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Or</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I like to talk things through to understand them</td>
<td>☐ I like to think things through before talking about them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I prefer to interact with people while learning</td>
<td>☐ I prefer to learn in a private, individual way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I like to try new things out right away</td>
<td>☐ I like to take plenty of time before I act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I prefer to study with a group of people</td>
<td>☐ I prefer to study by myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I prefer to study in a place where there is lots of activity</td>
<td>☐ I prefer to study in a quite place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I tend to ask a lot of questions and participate freely during classroom training</td>
<td>☐ I tend to sit back and listen, preferring to ask questions during breaks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I usually volunteer quickly even if I am not sure what I am volunteering for</td>
<td>☐ I seldom volunteer unless I know exactly what will be involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I make it a point to talk to and introduce myself to my fellow trainees</td>
<td>☐ I usually wait to be introduced rather than initiating contact with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I usually seek out and chat with my fellow trainees at lunch or during break time</td>
<td>☐ I often spend breaks or my lunch time on my own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I like group work – the more the better</td>
<td>☐ I often prefer to work on my own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Column A:** _____  
Extroverted Learning Style  

**Total Column B:** _____  
Introverted Learning Style
What is the Cognitive Component of Your Learning Style?

Would you rather…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Start with the big picture and work down to the details</td>
<td>Or □ Start with the details and build up to the big picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Learn about things that catch your interest or imagination</td>
<td>Or □ Learn about something with a practical value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Learn things that are interesting</td>
<td>Or □ Learn things that are useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Think about ideas</td>
<td>Or □ Remember facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Understand theories</td>
<td>Or □ Understand practical applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Find original ways to solve problems</td>
<td>Or □ Follow tried and proven methods to solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Learn new skills rather than practice familiar ones</td>
<td>Or □ Practice familiar skills until they are habit, then learn new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Start with the general and move to the specific</td>
<td>Or □ Start with the specific and move to the general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Consider many different ways to do things</td>
<td>Or □ Be advised of the best way to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Find your own way through new material</td>
<td>Or □ Go step-by-step through new material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Column A:** _________
**Total Column B:** _________

Global Learning Style
Sequential Learning Style
Worksheet – Learning Styles

This is an example of a completed worksheet. You will have an opportunity to fill out your own worksheet on the next page.

The most dominant characteristics of my learning style are:

- Auditory
- Introverted
- Global

Therefore, when learning I tend to like:

- A well-organized lecture
- A class discussion – if it stays on track
- Time to reflect on new materials
- Beginning with the big picture and then working to details
- Understanding the theory behind the facts

And, I dislike:

- Too much group work
- Role plays
- Excessive use of power point
- Too many details
- A predictable step-by-step approach
Worksheet – Learning Styles/Preferences

Instructions: Complete this sheet filling in your personal information.

The most dominant characteristics of my learning style/preferences are:

•
•
•

Therefore, when learning I tend to like:

•
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•

And, I dislike:

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•
•