LEARNING STYLES
I N D E X

■ R E P O R T

Susan B. Williams, Barbara P. Rudyk and Donna Dunning

Joe Sample

8-February-2013

Understanding
Your Learning Style

The Learning Styles Index summarizes how you learn. By becoming aware of how you now learn, you can become a more effective learner. The inventory sorts your responses into four pairs of preferences, summarizing the learning environment that energizes you, how you gather and use information, your approach to receiving feedback and making decisions, and how you organize and manage your time.

Most individuals develop a preference for some of these styles and avoid using others in their learning. To engage in effective learning, you must become aware of the strengths and weaknesses, and when it may be more effective to use an alternative style to reach your objectives. This report will help you describe your preferred learning style. Using your preferred style will usually help you achieve the best results. However, it is appropriate to expose yourself to different methods and to develop your non-preferred styles.

Your learning style preferences will interact. For example, if interactive environments energize you, and you prefer to gather and use abstract-theoretical information, you will likely enjoy discussions that provide opportunities to brainstorm about ideas and theories.

It is important to remember that the Learning Styles Index only measures your preferences for each learning style. It is not a measure of your ability to learn.

Learning Styles Index Profile

Environments that Energize

Environmentally-Interactive: prefer being with others when learning | 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 | Environmentally-Reflective: prefer to explore in-depth and reflect when learning

Gathering and Using Information

Factual-Practical: focus on facts, details and relevant data | 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 | Abstract-Theoretical: prefer to focus on theories and ideas

Making Decisions

Analytical-Logical: prefer a rigorous analytical approach to learning | 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 | Personally-Valued: prefer a situational and personal approach to learning

Organization and Time Management

Organized-Planful: prefer organized and structured learning activities | 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 | Open-Ended: prefer flexibility and less structured learning activities

Environments that Energize

This section of the report considers how, when, and with whom you prefer to carry out your learning activities. Your preferred style is **Environmentally-Reflective.** Learners who prefer Reflective environments find it helpful to explore in-depth and reflect when learning. The chart below highlights your preferences and will help you better understand your learning style as well as appreciate how your style might differ from that of others.

Environmentally-Interactive	Environmentally Reflective
• Discussing facts or ideas with others • Building understanding about something by talking • Thinking out loud • Changing tasks frequently • Working on more than one thing at a time • Asking or answering questions • Acting immediately on what is being learned • Carrying out group work • Having a learning partner, coach or mentor • Researching by contacting people • Focusing on breadth over depth of information • Learning by trying things out and making mistakes	• Getting information as far ahead of time as possible • Listening carefully • Building understanding by thinking about information • Taking time to reflect on information before responding • Working on one thing at a time • Focusing on depth over breadth of information • Researching information by reading, listening and observing • Uninterrupted, quiet study time • Working on individual projects • Interacting in one-to-one or small group situations • Concentrating for extended periods of time • Listening and observing before acting or interacting

Tips and strategies for your Reflective Style

- Find a quiet study spot. You will assimilate information best if you can work on one topic for an extended period of uninterrupted time. Find opportunities to work by yourself. Learn by listening, observing, reading and then reflecting.
- If you have the possibility to choose, consider a lecture style where you can listen and assimilate information or learning settings that provide opportunities for one-to-one or small group interactions.
- Discussions may sometimes help you deepen your understanding of information, but this style of learning will not be as helpful unless you have had a chance to think about the information before the discussion.
- When possible, learn about a topic in depth. If the course does not provide enough detail you may want to find alternative sources of information. However, there will be times when going too deep into one topic will create a situation where you don't have enough time or energy to study other topics or courses. In these cases you need to balance your desire to understand something in depth with the practical demands of the situation.
- Take time alone to clarify and consolidate what has been learned. Avoid moving forward and learning new information until previous information is completely understood. This may require talking to your instructor or another subject area expert. If you find it difficult to formulate questions on the spot, write down what you need to know and then arrange a time to ask your questions.
- Group projects and highly interactive classes can be a challenge. Prepare for these by studying ahead of time and by being prepared to discuss the topic. Write down and rehearse key points. Be aware of your preference to think before speaking and use fillers such as "Let me think about that for a moment". This will cue others to the fact that you are interested in and thinking about the topic, since others can mistakenly interpret your pause as a lack of interest or expertise.

Gathering and Using Information

This section of the report considers how you prefer to take in information when studying or learning. Your preferred style is **Abstract-Theoretical.** Learners who prefer gathering and using abstract-theoretical information are interested in theories and ideas. The chart below highlights your preferences and will help you better understand your learning style as well as appreciate how your style might differ from that of others.

Factual-Practical	**Abstract-Theoretical**
• Engaging in hands-on activities	• Grasping new ideas and possibilities
• Relating information to realities and past experiences	• Generalizing and summarizing information
• Finding practical applications for learning	• Learning about theories and models
• Organizing information sequentially	• Organizing information conceptually
• Understanding processes using a step-by-step approach	• Setting broad long-term learning goals
• Setting short-term practical learning goals	• Focusing on abstract ideas rather than real data and facts
• Building on existing knowledge	• Seeing trends and patterns in facts and data
• Finding concrete examples and illustrations	• Integrating information from a variety of sources
• Using senses when learning; seeing, hearing and touching materials	• Looking for a general overview before understanding specifics
• Dealing with real data and facts rather than abstract concepts or ideas	• Moving between ideas and thoughts in a non-sequential manner
• Memorizing known facts and relevant details	• Enjoying metaphors, analogies and other symbolic representations of ideas
• Taking information at face value rather than seeking abstract interpretations	• Originating and innovating new ways to think about topics

Tips and strategies for your Abstract-Theoretical Style

- Integrate information from many sources and focus your learning on generalizations, abstract ideas and concepts. Link and transfer what you are learning in one course or topic to similar ideas and concepts in another. Use study techniques such as mind mapping that provide a non-sequential way to summarize information.
- Although linking information and thinking of alternative perspectives can be helpful learning strategies, these activities can also result in general breadth rather than specific depth of understanding in a topic or course. Specifically define what level of detail you need to learn to avoid situations where you are penalized for not supporting ideas and theories with facts and details.
- Memorizing facts and details may seem mundane and uninteresting. Develop strategies for memorizing details, such as using mnemonics, tables, charts, flashcards or detailed study notes. Use repetition to learn and assimilate the details.
- It can be difficult at times to limit the scope of what you are learning. Although it will be interesting to make connections, avoid being distracted by tangentially related ideas and alternative ways of interpreting data. Focus on what you need to know.
- Sometimes it is essential to follow a step-by-step approach to solving a problem or tracing a process. Practice writing down all the steps when completing these types of activities. This will ensure you don't miss any steps and allow you to go back and check your work.
- You might take on more tasks and responsibilities than you can realistically manage. Take the time to do a reality check and consider how much time and energy each of your commitments will require. Remember you have a tendency to see what could be and may underestimate how difficult a task really is or the time needed to complete it.

Making
Decisions

This part of your report examines how you prefer to evaluate information and make decisions. Your preferred style is **Analytical-Logical.** Learners who evaluate information and make decisions using an analytical-logical approach will demonstrate an objective and rigorous learning style. The chart below highlights your preferences and will help you better understand your learning style as well as appreciate how your style might differ from that of others.

Analytical-Logical

- Working with highly competent cohorts and teachers
- Spotting flaws and inaccuracies in materials and ideas
- Examining and evaluating data and/or data trends
- Looking for cause and effect relationships
- Finding logical reasons for learning
- Debating and critiquing what is learned
- Appraising the source and credibility of information given
- Considering logical consequences and implications
- Asking questions; especially "why"
- Judging information rather than simply accepting it
- Placing information into a logical framework to increase understanding
- Receiving clear, objective, corrective feedback

Personally-Valued

- Linking to others within learning situations
- Identifying personal reasons for learning the material
- Hearing and reading about personal stories and examples
- Ensuring the learning will benefit or meet the needs of others
- Receiving and giving positive supportive feedback
- Developing rapport, nurturing and coaching other learners
- Being treated with respect and consideration
- Using unique talents, characteristics or abilities
- Relating what is being learned to personal situations and needs
- Accepting and affirming other viewpoints and perspectives
- Building a positive relationship with instructors
- Allowing personal likes and dislikes to influence the learning process

Tips and strategies for your Analytical-Logical Style

- It will be difficult to learn from someone when you have doubts about their expertise or competence. Assess the competency of the instructor before choosing courses. In a similar way, find competent individuals to work with if you are required to do group projects.
- You will likely not accept information at face value and will want to be convinced about something before you are willing to accept it. Find opportunities to ask questions and validate information as a way to further your understanding.
- Use logical analysis and critical thinking to evaluate and understand the information you are learning. Seek information from credible sources and assess underlying biases and assumptions.
- Consider logical consequences and implications of information. This will help you assimilate and process what you are learning. Be sure to find logical reasons for why you need to learn something.
- Create challenges for yourself in the learning setting. Seek opportunities to compete with others or to improve your past accomplishments when learning. Debating, arguing or challenging accepted ideas could also hone your learning. Some learners don't like to compete, so choose competitors carefully.
- Ask for clear and direct feedback. This will provide you with the information you need to correct errors and improve grades. Seek courses that provide learners with clear criteria for evaluation.
- Although you will be comfortable being objective and task-focused in your learning, some instructors and students will want to establish rapport and focus on the learning atmosphere. Demonstrate some patience with this and build rapport with instructors and other students.

Organization
and Time Management

This part of your report examines how you prefer to structure and organize your learning environment. our preferred style is **Open-Ended.** Learners using an open-ended approach will prefer flexibility and less structured learning activities. The chart below highlights your preferences and will help you better understand your learning style as well as appreciate how your style might differ from that of others.

Organized-Planful	**Open-Ended**
- Making and following plans and schedules - Taking charge, coordinating actions and achieving results - Organizing and structuring both learning materials and course content - Defining manageable, achievable results - Seeking clear learning objectives and timelines - Clarifying and defining assignments and instructor expectations - Completing one task before starting on another - Using study time efficiently - Defining the scope and time required for studying a specific topic - Starting early on projects and completing work before deadlines when possible - Seeking order and being methodical - Deciding and moving forward in the pursuit of getting things done	- Exploring ideas and generating options and possibilities - Being curious and interested in gathering more information - Finding information from a variety of sources - Taking in additional new information without needing to come to closure - Planning as little as possible so as not to miss spontaneous opportunities - Using a last minute burst of energy to get things done "just in time" - Adapting easily to changing learning situations - Having variety and flexibility in activities and deadlines - Engaging in non-routine and novel learning activities - Modifying and changing projects as they evolve - Enjoying the moment and deferring less interesting tasks - Looking for fun and wanting to be playful and casual in a learning situation

Tips and strategies for your Open-Ended Style

- Variety and flexibility will be comfortable for you. Do a variety of activities and, when possible, keep your options open when choosing projects. Multiple sources of information and a variety of perspectives will be more interesting than a single one. Work on what is most interesting whenever possible (without avoiding tasks you will never have any interest for).
- Avoid situations where you will be forced to follow a highly rigid or routine schedule. Keep your options open and be spontaneous in your approach. At the same time, ensure you are aware of and prepared for specific course requirements and deadlines.
- Look for opportunities to explore new information or ideas. You will enjoy seeking new information, but be careful not to divert too far from what you need to study. Tangential pieces of information can distract you from studying the required material.
- You will likely find yourself most energized to complete projects just before they are due. Allow yourself time to accommodate this style. At the same time be careful not to start too late so that your performance is negatively affected.
- Watch out for possible conflicts in deadlines and surges in workload. Adjust your work accordingly rather than becoming overwhelmed by multiple deadlines.
- Make your study time as playful as possible. Be spontaneous, active, practical as well as insightful in coming up with unique and effective ways to study a topic.