

## LEARNING STYLE ASSESSMENT

### What is a Learning Style?

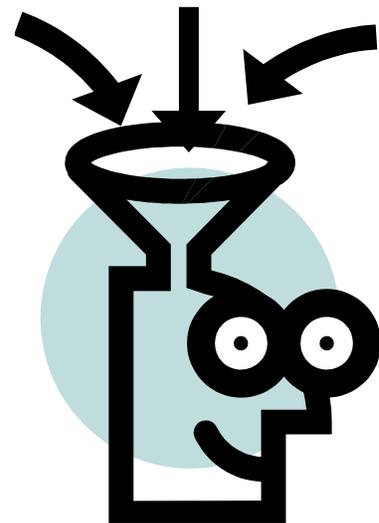
A learning style is a preferred method for obtaining information and acquiring knowledge. It is important to be aware of your personal learning style to ensure that you are choosing development activities that will take the best advantage of your preferred, natural learning style. There is also value in flexing your learning style to accommodate different activities and to ingrain the new behaviours. However, if possible, having the first contact with the new information or behaviour is easiest when you rely on your preferred style.

There are many dimensions to a learning style, including internal preferences such as personality type, thinking styles and previous learning experiences. External factors or the physical environment also impact how a person learns. Light, sound, temperature and design preferences are all external factors that impact how readily an individual will learn a new skill.

Probably the simplest way to think about learning styles is to focus on how you most readily take in information through your senses. That is, do you prefer to learn through listening, the auditory channel, through reading or watching, the visual channel, or through a hands-on approach, the kinesthetic modality? By understanding how you prefer to learn physically, you can choose which senses you want to use when first interacting with new information. Also, you can then ensure that you have experiences through all of the senses in order to cement the new learning via this variety of different senses and experiences. There has been a great deal of research that underscores the effectiveness of using all our senses to learn new information. Below, William Glasser sums up the power of using all of our senses when adopting new skills and learning. These are not exact percentages but a framework for showing that as we take in and process information through more of our senses and actively put the learning into practice, we cement our learning better.

#### We Learn:

- 10% of what we **READ**
- 20% of what we **HEAR**
- 30% of what we **SEE**
- 50% of what we **SEE** and **HEAR**
- 70% of what is **DISCUSSED** with **OTHERS**
- 80% of what is **EXPERIENCED PERSONALLY**
- 95% of what we **TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE**



## Assessing Your Preferred Learning Style

A quick and easy Learning Style Assessment follows. Complete the questionnaire and notice your preferences. Use your learning style preference information to tailor appropriate development activities and to expand your repertoire of how you take in and work with new information. Specific tips for maximizing each learning style preference are also included to support you in creating your own development activities.

*Assign yourself points for each question below based on how often you engage in the behaviours described (from almost never to almost always). Total the points in each section and use this total to determine your primary, preferred learning style. This is not a scientific test but was loosely inspired by the learning style research of Walter B. Barbe, and Raymond Swassing.*

### Assessment Questions

Use the following rating scale to answer the questions below, indicating how often you do the behaviour described in the question.

Rating Scale	
Almost never	1
Sometimes	2
Most of the time	3
Almost Always	4

Section 1	
Behaviour	Rating
1. Do you doodle when listening in a meeting or talking on the phone?	
2. Do you stare into space when you are bored?	
3. Do you prefer to use a map rather than hearing directions?	
4. Do you see pictures in your mind when people explain something to you?	
5. Do you prefer to read about something rather than hear about it?	
6. Do you need to see a phone number, name, etc. written down to remember it?	
7. Do you enjoy reading?	
8. Are you neat and tidy in your appearance, writing, etc.?	
9. Do you remember faces but forget names?	
10. Do you make written lists to remember things?	
<b>TOTAL SCORE out of 40 possible points</b>	



Section 2	
Behaviour	Rating
1. Do you like listening but can't wait for your turn to talk?	
2. Do you talk to yourself or hum frequently?	
3. Do you prefer to hear directions rather than use a map?	
4. Do you tend to think in sounds or words?	
5. Do you prefer to hear about something rather than read about it?	
6. Do you easily remember phone numbers, names, etc. after hearing them or repeating them to yourself?	
7. Do you mouth the words or say the words quietly when reading?	
8. Do you tend to talk your problems out to yourself or with others?	
9. Do you remember names but forget faces?	
10. Do you tend to repeat things to yourself over and over to remember them?	
<b>TOTAL SCORE out of 40 possible points</b>	

Section 3	
Behaviour	Rating
1. Do you like to jump in and try new things to learn them?	
2. Do you tend to fidget when bored or when listening to others?	
3. Do you need to write directions down or draw your own maps?	
4. Do you think better when you are walking or moving around?	
5. Do you tend to lose interest easily when listening?	
6. Do you remember phone numbers best after writing them down or dialing the number?	
7. Do you avoid reading unless it is a comic book or an action story?	
8. Do you tend to dive into your problems impulsively or with quick action?	
9. Do you think of yourself or are described by others as “antsy” or “restless”?	
10. Do you need to actually do something to remember it?	
<b>TOTAL SCORE out of 40 possible points</b>	

Now, tally your scores in the boxes below.

<b>Section 1:</b> ____/40	<b>Section 2:</b> ____/40	<b>Section 3:</b> ____/40
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## Identifying Your Preferred Learning Style

The scores you received on the previous questionnaire reveal some information about your preferred style. The higher your score in a section, the more likely you are to use that physical modality as your preferred or natural style for learning and taking in new information. You may have one score that was much higher than the others, two high scores and one low score, or fairly similar scores in all sections. There is no right or wrong style. No style is better or worse than another. The preferred styles just indicate which senses you rely on most when learning and offer you information about how to capitalize on your style to adopt and integrate new information and behaviours.

As you've probably already guessed, the sections correspond to these learning modalities:

Section 1 = **Visual** (learning through seeing, reading, watching)

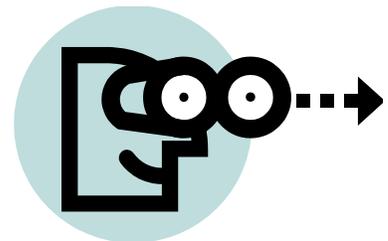
Section 2 = **Auditory** (learning through hearing, listening)

Section 3 = **Kinesthetic** (learning through engaging your body, activity, doing)

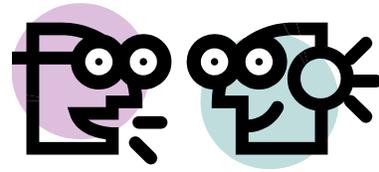
Now that you know your preferred style, you can use this information to your advantage when developing new skills and learning new things. Remember, the more physical modalities you use when developing a new capability, the better. It is most helpful if you read the tips for all of the different learning styles and incorporate ideas from all sections to ensure that you are taking a balanced approach to how you learn new things. Start with your natural style if possible, though, to make it easier for yourself.

### Tips for the Visual Learner

1. Read about the topic of interest.
2. Visualize the details of what you are reading as you read it.
3. If pictures and graphs aren't available to go with your reading material, create some of your own to illustrate the concepts.
4. Use highlighters when reading to draw your attention to important details in the material.
5. Be on the lookout for role models so that you can observe the new behaviour that you want to integrate.
6. Create lists of steps or key points that you want to remember and keep them visible in your day book / agenda, near your phone, or easily in sight of your workspace.
7. Visualize yourself doing the new behaviour successfully.
8. Take notes when listening in meetings or seminars so that you have something to look at after the session as a reminder of what you heard.

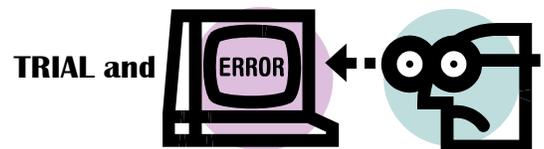


## Tips for the Auditory Learner



1. Listen to books on tape on your topic of interest, particularly when driving or hanging around the house.
2. Remember details of discussions or meetings by trying to replay or “hear” them in your head.
3. Repeat or paraphrase what you are hearing soon after you hear it.
4. Read out loud to yourself.
5. Go to meetings, workshops or seminars to hear about new ideas and strategies.
6. Ask questions and engage in a discussion about the topic.
7. Interview role models to hear what they have to say about the area of expertise that you want to integrate.
8. Engage in lively, interactive discussions with others about new ideas and strategies.
9. Talk with others or out loud to yourself about how to handle a challenging or new situation.

## Tips for the Kinesthetic Learner



1. Actively try out new ideas and strategies as soon as possible after discovering them.
2. Write notes while in meetings, seminars, discussions to keep yourself engaged, active and tuned into the information.
3. Write down important information and tack it in a visible place for reminder.
4. Walk around as you read or try walking and reading out loud at the same time.
5. Rehearse new strategies and skills by actually practicing them or taking yourself physically through the motions of doing them as a simulation.
6. Draw pictures or “maps” to illustrate the steps or key points of what you are learning.
7. Quietly tap your toes, squeeze a stress ball or manipulate some other small object while in meetings, seminars, etc. to keep yourself active while listening.
8. Create physical models to represent what you are learning (e.g., a poster of pictures representing the key concepts, a small model out of household objects or craft items, etc.).
9. Move around when you are trying to think or learn something.

## Next Steps

Write down and/or reflect upon what you have learned as a result of identifying your learning style. Ask yourself how you can best use this information in your everyday work. Feel free to add your own strategies and tips to the above lists.

Consider using this assessment with others to better understand and flex to their preferred learning style.