

# Identifying your learning style and ways you can approach learning

Identify your dominant learning styles (see Table: Learning styles and Table: Honey and Mumford's four learning styles<sup>1</sup>), but recognise that by using a variety of learning methods, they reinforce each other.

Learning styles			
Read the statement in bold in the left column and then for each statement choose which column contains the most answers that suit you. This will be your dominant style of learning.			
	Visual	Auditory	Action
<b>When you cannot spell a word, do you:</b>	Try and visualise the word	Sound out the word	Write down the word to see if it looks right
<b>Talking – do you use words like:</b>	See, picture, imagine	Hear, tune, think	Feel, touch, hold
<b>Are you distracted by:</b>	Looking at your surroundings or by untidiness?	Sounds and noises?	Activity and movement?
<b>You prefer to contact people:</b>	Face-to-face or in writing	By telephone	While walking or participating in an activity
<b>You remember people best when you recall:</b>	Where you met or what they were wearing	What you talked about	What you were doing
<b>When reading, do you prefer:</b>	Descriptive scenes or imagining the scene	Dialogue or plays	Lots of action, to do things rather than reading
<b>When you do something new at work, do you prefer to have:</b>	A demonstration or see it written on a poster or diagram	Verbal instructions or to talk it through with someone	To try it out yourself
<b>When you are assembling something, do you prefer to:</b>	Look at the instructions and pictures	Have someone to read out the instructions	Just put it together and only use the instructions if you are stuck
<b>If you need help with a computer programme, you:</b>	Look for pictures or diagrams	Phone a helpline or ask someone	Keep trying different ways

Honey and Mumford have done an enormous amount of work on learning styles and have a learning style questionnaire that you can complete yourself to help you identify your main styles of learning.<sup>1</sup>

Most people find that they are a combination of two or more of the four main styles (see the following Table: Honey and Mumford's four learning styles) in varying proportions. You can use this information to identify how you might approach your learning.

## Honey and Mumford's four learning styles

Type	Characteristics	How to use the information
<b>Activist</b>	Likes to be fully involved in new experiences. Open-minded, will try anything once, thrives on the challenge of new experiences, but soon becomes bored and wants to move on to new things. They like to be with other people, and to be the centre of attention	New experiences, short activities with plenty of variety, situations where you are in the spotlight, allowed to talk about new ideas, have a go at things or brainstorm ideas
<b>Reflector</b>	Likes to stand back, think about things and not be involved until they are clear about everything. They are cautious and often keep quiet at meetings and discussions, listening to others. When they do act, they have a wide picture of their own and other's views	Situations where you can watch and think about activities. Carry out investigations or research before acting, review the evidence, and produce your own considered report or action plan. Allow plenty of time for decisions
<b>Theorist</b>	Tend to be perfectionists, detached, analytical and objective. They dislike superficial and emotional remarks or suggestions that do not follow a logical pathway. They often prefer to follow step-by-step reasoning algorithms or pathways	Look out for activities where there are plans, maps or models to describe what is happening. Allow time to explore carefully so that you understand how things are done in detail and look for structured information
<b>Pragmatist</b>	Like to try out ideas, techniques or theories to see if they work in practice. They act quickly and become impatient with people who want to have long discussions or go over things several times. They respond to problems as a challenge and may try several solutions in quick succession rather than stepping back and thinking deeply about the problem	Look for practical courses where there is an obvious link between your job and the learning offered. Try out things with coaching and feedback. Link any theory you have learnt into immediate practice so you can see its relevance

## Exploring learning from different angles

There are additional ways in which you might be able to bring your particular type of learning styles into play. Try looking at materials in different ways:

- *describe the material out loud, or use a question and answer format*
- *use a flowchart or diagram for the material*
- *make an image or model of the material*
- *play background music as you learn or sing important points out loud*
- *teach someone else*
- *reflect on the material*
- *use index cards with important points sorted in different ways.*

### References

1. Honey P and Mumford A. *The manual of learning Styles*. 3rd edition. Maidenhead; 1992.