

How People Learn

Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning

The different experiential learning modes – active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation, and abstract conceptualization.

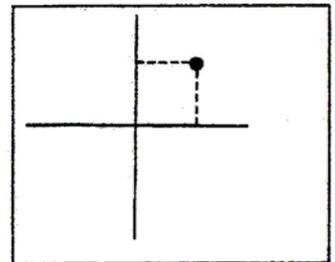
<div data-bbox="145 555 422 696" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Learning Mode: Active Experimenter</p> </div> <p data-bbox="165 786 767 1061">You like to try different things and learn from the different effects of each. You react well to the “applying” phase of the ELC, and really want to know “how will this work for me”.</p>	<div data-bbox="1187 562 1453 703" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Learning Mode: Concrete Experiencer</p> </div> <p data-bbox="820 741 1437 1111">You like to participate more than watch and act more on feeling and intuition. After you do something, you focus on how that made you feel, and learn from that. You will respond well to the “experiencing” and “publishing” segments of the ELC.</p>
<p data-bbox="150 1323 783 1648">You really like to think things through, and draw general conclusions from available data. You can put pieces of the puzzle together, and make sense of it. The “generalizing” stage of the ELC is a good one for you.</p> <div data-bbox="153 1697 430 1854" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Learning Mode: Abstract Conceptualizer</p> </div>	<p data-bbox="826 1323 1433 1648">You act more on feeling and intuition. You like to watch what’s going on around you, noticing the patterns and trends in behavior, and draw your own conclusions from that. You respond well to the “processing” stage of the ELC.</p> <div data-bbox="1150 1686 1433 1839" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Learning Mode: Reflective Observer</p> </div>

The Four Learning-Style Types

DIVERGER

Combines learning steps of Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation

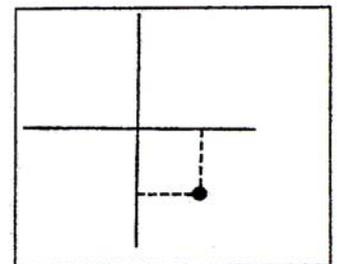
People with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different points of view. Their approach to situations is to observe rather than take action. If this is your style, you may enjoy situations that call for generating a wide range of ideas, as in brainstorming sessions. You probably have broad cultural interests and like to gather information. This imaginative ability and sensitivity to feelings is needed for effectiveness in arts, entertainment, and service careers.



ASSIMILATOR

Combines learning steps of Abstract Conceptualization and Reflective Observation

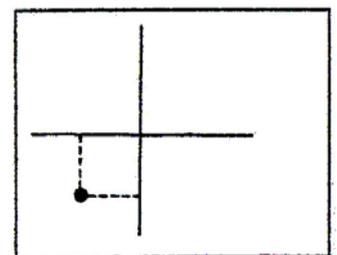
People with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into concise, logical form. If this is your learning style, you probably are less focused on people and more interested in abstract ideas and concepts. Generally, people with this learning style find it more important that a theory have logical soundness than practical value. This learning style is important for effectiveness in information and science careers.



CONVERGER

Combines learning steps of Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation

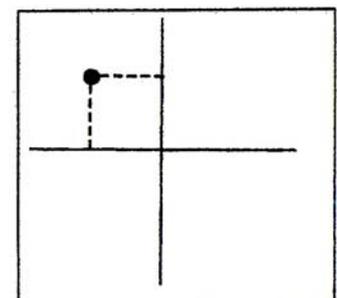
People with this learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. If this is your preferred learning style, you have the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on finding solutions to questions or problems. You would rather deal with technical tasks and problems than with social and interpersonal issues. These learning skills are important for effectiveness in specialist and technology careers.



ACCOMMODATOR

Combines learning steps of Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation

People with this learning style have the ability to learn primarily from "hands-on" experience. If this is your style, you probably enjoy carrying out plans and involving yourself in new and challenging experiences. Your tendency may be to act on "gut" feelings rather than on logical analysis. In solving problems, you may rely more heavily on people for information than on your own technical analysis. This learning style is important for effectiveness in action-oriented careers such as marketing or sales.



Learning Styles – Strengths and Weaknesses

The chart below identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each learning style with notes about how the weaknesses could be improved.

<i>Concrete Experience</i>		<i>Reflective Observation</i>	
ACCOMMODATOR		DIVERGER	
Strengths: Getting things done Leadership Risk-taking		Strengths: Imaginative ability Understanding people Recognizing problems Brainstorming	
Too much: Trivial improvements Meaningless activity		Too much: Paralyzed by alternatives Can't make decisions	
Not enough: Work not completed on time Impractical plans Not directed to goals		Not enough: No ideas Can't recognize problems and opportunities	
To develop your Accommodative learning skills, practice:		To develop your Divergent learning skills, practice:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing yourself to objectives • Seeking new opportunities • Influencing and leading others • Being personally involved • Dealing with people 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being sensitive to people's feelings • Being sensitive to values • Listening with an open mind • Gathering information • Imagining the implications of uncertain situations 	
<i>Active Experimentation</i>		<i>Abstract Conceptualization</i>	
CONVERGER		ASSIMILATOR	
Strengths: Problem-solving Decision-making Deductive reasoning Defining problems		Strengths: Planning Creating models Defining problems Developing theories	
Too much: Solving the wrong problem Hasty decision-making		Too much: Castles in the air No practical application	
Not enough: Lack of focus No shifting of ideas Scattered thoughts		Not enough: Unable to learn from mistakes No sound basis for work No systematic approach	
To develop your Convergent learning skills, practice:		To develop your Assimilative learning skills, practice:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new ways of thinking and doing • Experimenting with new ideas • Choosing the best solution • Setting goals • Making decisions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing information • Building conceptual models • Testing theories and ideas • Designing experiments • Analyzing quantitative data 	

SEVEN STYLES OF LEARNING

TYPE	LIKES TO	IS GOOD AT	LEARNS BEST BY	NEUROLOGICAL SYSTEMS (primary area)	DEVELOPMENTAL FACTORS	WAYS THAT CULTURES VALUE
LINGUISTIC LEARNER "The Word Player"	read write tell stories	memorizing names, places, dates, and trivia	saying, hearing, and seeing words	Left temporal and frontal lobes (e.g. Broca's/Wernicke's areas)	"Explodes" in early childhood; remains robust until old age	Oral histories, storytelling, literature, etc.
LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL LEARNER "The Questioner"	do experiments figure things out work with numbers ask questions explore patterns and relationships	math reasoning logic problem solving	categorizing classifying working with abstract patterns and relationships	Left parietal lobes; right hemisphere	Peaks in adolescence and early adulthood; higher math insights decline after age 40	Scientific discoveries, mathematical theories, counting and classification systems, etc.
SPATIAL LEARNER "The Visualizer"	draw, build, design, and create things daydream look at pictures/slides watch movies play with machines	imagining things sensing changes mazes and puzzles reading maps and charts	visualizing dreaming using the mind's eye working with colors and pictures	Posterior regions of right hemisphere	Topological thinking in early childhood gives way to Euclidean paradigm around age 9-10; artistic eye stays robust into old age	Artistic works, navigational systems, architectural designs, inventions, etc.
MUSICAL LEARNER "The Music Lover"	sing and hum tunes listen to music play an instrument respond to music	picking up sounds remembering melodies noticing pitches and rhythms keeping time	rhythm melody music	Right temporal lobe	Earliest intelligence to develop; prodigies often go through developmental crisis	Musical compositions, performances, recordings, etc.
BODILY/KINESTHETIC LEARNER "The Socializer"	move around touch and talk use body language	physical activities such as sports, dance, acting, and crafts	touching moving interacting with space processing knowledge through bodily sensations	Cerebellum, basal ganglia, motor cortex	Varies depending upon component (strength, flexibility, etc.) Or domain (gymnastics, baseball, mime, etc.)	Craft works, athletic performances, dramatic works, dance forms, sculpture, etc.
INTERPERSONAL LEARNER "The Socializer"	have lots of friends talk to people join groups	understanding people leading others organizing communicating manipulating mediating conflicts	sharing comparing relating cooperating interviewing	Frontal lobes, temporal lobe (esp. Right hemisphere), limbic system	Attachment/bonding during first three years critical	Political documents, social institutions, etc.
INTRAPERSONAL LEARNER "The Individual"	work alone pursue own interests	understanding self focusing inward on feelings and dreams following instincts pursuing interests and goals being original	working alone individualized projects self-paced instruction having own space	Frontal lobes, parietal lobes, limbic system	Formation of boundary between self and other during first three years critical	Religious systems, psychological theories, rites of passage, etc.