
CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE

C*f*AP

04 LEARNING SKILLS

L6 LEARNING STYLES

Instructions

There are nine sets of four words listed below. Rank the order of the words in each set by assigning a 4 to the word which best characterises your learning style, a 3 to the word which next best characterises your learning style, a 2 to the next most characteristic word and a 1 to the word which is least characteristic of you as a learner.

You may find it hard to choose the words that best characterise your learning style. Nevertheless, keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers - all the choices are equally acceptable. The aim of the inventory is to describe how you learn, not to evaluate your learning ability.

Be sure to assign a different rank number to each of the four words in each set; do no make ties.

1. discriminating	tentative	involved	practical
2. receptive	relevant	analytical	impartial
3. feeling	watching	thinking	doing
4. accepting	risk-taking	evaluative	aware
5. intuitive	productive	logical	questioning
6. abstract	observing	concrete	active
7. present-orientated	reflecting	future-orientated	pragmatic
8. experience	observation	conceptualization	experimentation
9. intense	reserved	rational	responsible

Scoring

The four columns of words above correspond to the four learning style scales: CE, RO, AC, and AE. To compute your scale scores, write your rank numbers in the boxes below only for the designated items. For example, in the third column (AC), you would fill in the rank numbers you have assigned to items 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9. Compute your scale scores by adding the rank numbers for each set of boxes.

Score items:

2 3 4 5 7 8

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CE= _____

Score items:

1 3 6 7 8 9

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RO= _____

Score items:

2 3 4 5 8 9

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AC= _____

Score items:

1 3 6 7 8 9

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AE= _____

Activists (Concrete Experience: CE)

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is: 'I'll try anything once'. They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and long term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others but in doing so they seek to centre all activities around themselves.

Problems which an excessively CE-type learner might experience include:

- They may be satisfied with moderate achievement or trivial improvements;
- They may accomplish the wrong thing tremendously well;
- They will not have a theoretical basis for their work;
- They may be unable to learn from their mistakes.

Try developing an AC-style or an RO-style.

Reflectors (Reflective Observation: RO)

Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others, and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definite conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat at meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant, unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

Problems which an excessively RO-type learner might experience include:

- They may be daunted by having to make a choice among many alternatives;
- Their work may lack focus;
- Their theories may remain untested;
- Their experiments may be poorly designed.

Try developing an AE-style or a CS-style.

Theorists (Abstract Conceptualisation: AC)

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step-by-step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories models and systems. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic. 'If it's logical it's good'. Questions they frequently ask are: "Does it make sense?" , "How does this fit with that?" , "What are the basic assumptions?" They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical. This is the 'mental set' and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subject judgments, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Problems which an excessively AC-type learner might experience include:

- They may over-theorise (*Castles in the air*);
- They will not be able easily to apply their theory to practice;
- Work may not be completed on time;
- Their work may not be directed towards goals.

Try developing a CE-style or AE-style.

Pragmatists (Active Experimentation: AE)

Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient open-ended discussions. They are essentially practical, down to earth people who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities 'as a challenge'. Their philosophy is: 'There is always a better way' and 'If it works it's good'.

Problems which an excessively AE-type learner might experience include:

- They may jump to conclusions prematurely;
- They may solve the wrong problems;
- They may have no theoretical basis for their work;

Try developing an RO-style or A C style.