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# WHAT'S YOUR LEARNING STYLE?



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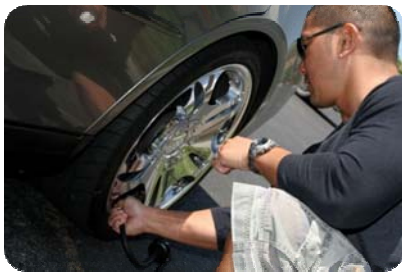
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## Contents

Introduction .....	4
The VAK Learning Styles Model .....	5
The VAK Learning Styles Questionnaire .....	6
Your Results .....	11
VISUAL Learners .....	12
AUDITORY Learners.....	12
KINESTHETIC Learners.....	12

## Introduction

We are all natural learners; it is a trait unique to the human race. As learners, we come in a variety of sizes and shapes and from many different cultural backgrounds. In addition, your past experiences and existing methods of learning may be very different to other learners. Some of us will like to process information through text, others will prefer visual support and images. Some of us like to physically get involved in our learning or bring emotions and social discussions to the table to help us learn. In the end, the only thing you can be certain of is that every individual learns in his or her own particular way.



Understanding your particular learning style can help you understand why you learn more easily in certain situations than in others. It can also give you an insight into the delivery styles of trainers and other educators and why you prefer some styles to others.

Most of us are unaware of our learning styles and if left to our own means, we are unlikely to start learning in new ways. Therefore, knowledge of your learning styles can be used to increase self-awareness about your strengths and weaknesses as learners.

As professionals in the field of teaching, training, facilitating and assessing it can be easy for us to forget that we are learners too. One of the best ways to sharpen your skills is to stay humble and keep thinking of yourself as a learner! Once you know your learning style preference you must be very careful that your training delivery does not focus heavily on your own preference. You must ensure you are providing a variety of learning styles within your training in order to cater to everyone in your group. This can be a hard habit to break and one that can make you feel uncomfortable in the way that you teach – but it is better that you feel you are teaching in a way that is maybe not your natural preference rather than having your learners feel uncomfortable because they are having to learn in a way that does not suit them! So think about it, does the way you teach match the way you learn or match the way your learners learn?

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we come in a  
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## The VAK Learning Styles Model

Your learning style (or learning preference) is the way you tend to learn best. It involves your preferred method of taking in, organising and making sense of information.

The VAK Model

More than 80 learning style models have been proposed by researchers. One family of models, the VAK models emphasise the importance of the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) to your preferred learning style.

VAK models describe three basic learning styles:

- VISUAL learning (learn by seeing and reading)
- AUDITORY learning (learn by listening and speaking)
- KINESTHETIC/PRACTICAL learning (learn by touching and doing)



According to the VAK model, most people possess a dominant or preferred learning style, however some people have a mixed and/or evenly balanced blend of the three styles.

The following VAK assessment provides a quick and easy way to assess your own or other people's preferred learning styles. Please note the assessment following is a simple indicator of preferred learning styles. It is a good basic guide to personal learning styles, but it's not a scientifically validated instrument. As with any assessment tool, use this VAK assessment with care. It is a guide as to the mixture of preferences, strengths and learning styles of an individual, not a basis for deciding on one exclusive preference or approach to the exclusion of everything else.

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## The VAK Learning Styles Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help you gain an understanding of learning styles so that you can incorporate the various learning styles into your training and learning delivery.

When finding out about your strengths and weaknesses as a learner it will hopefully encourage you to reflect on your current training delivery methods. Do you tend to focus heavily on one style to the exclusion of all else? Does every single one of your training deliveries contain a balanced combination of all three VAK styles? If not, you are in danger of disengaging at least two thirds of all of your learners!

The most powerful method of learning is to use a combination of all three of components of the VAK model in every single training delivery that you run.

Circle or tick the answer that most represents how you generally behave.

*Note: It's best to complete this questionnaire before reading the accompanying explanations.*

1. When I operate new equipment I generally:
  - a) Read the instructions first
  - b) Listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before
  - c) Go ahead and have a go, I can figure it out as I use it
  
2. When I need directions for travelling I usually:
  - a) Look for a map
  - b) Ask for spoken directions
  - c) Follow my nose and maybe use a compass
  
3. When I cook a new dish, I like to:
  - a) Follow a written recipe
  - b) Call a friend for an explanation
  - c) Follow my instincts, testing as I cook

This questionnaire is designed to help you gain an understanding of learning styles so that you can incorporate the various learning styles into your daily work and learning activities.

4. If I am teaching someone something new, I tend to:
  - a) Write instructions down for them
  - b) Give them a verbal explanation
  - c) Demonstrate first and then let them have a go
  
5. I tend to say:
  - a. Watch how I do it
  - b. Listen to me explain
  - c. You have a go
  
6. During my free time I most enjoy:
  - A. Going to museums and galleries
  - B. Listening to music and talking to my friends
  - C. Playing sport or doing DIY (Do it yourself)
  
7. When I go shopping for clothes, I tend to:
  - a) Imagine what they would like on
  - b) Discuss them with the shop staff
  - c) Try them on and test them out
  
8. When I am choosing a holiday I usually:
  - a) Read lots of brochures
  - b) Listen to recommendations from friends
  - c) Imagine what it would be like to be there
  
9. If I was buying new car, I would:
  - a) Read reviews in newspapers and magazines
  - b) Discuss what I need with others
  - c) Test-drive lots of different types
  
10. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable:
  - a) Watching what the trainer is doing
  - b) Talking through with the trainer exactly what I'm supposed to do
  - c) Giving it a try myself and work it out as I go

I tend to say:

- a. Watch  
how I do it
- b. Listen to  
me explain
- c. You have a  
go

11. If I am choosing food from a menu, I tend to:
- Imagine what the food will look like
  - Talk through the options in my head or with my partner
  - Imagine what the food will taste like
12. When I listen to a band, I can't help:
- Watching the band members and other people in the audience
  - Listening to the lyrics and the beats
  - Moving in time to the music
13. When I concentrate, I most often:
- Focus on the words or the pictures in front of me
  - Discuss the problem and the possible solutions in my head
  - Move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch things
14. I choose household furnishings because I like:
- Their colours and how they look
  - The descriptions the sales people give me
  - Their textures and what it feels like to touch them
15. My first memory is of:
- Looking at something
  - Being spoken to
  - Doing something
16. When I am anxious, I:
- Visualise the worst case scenarios
  - Talk over in my head what worries me most
  - Can't sit still, fiddle and move around constantly
17. I feel especially connected to other people because of:
- How they look
  - What they say to me
  - How they make me feel

This questionnaire is designed to help you gain an understanding of learning styles so that you can incorporate the various learning styles into your daily work and learning activities.

18. When I have to revise for an exam, I generally:
- Write lots of revisions notes and diagrams
  - Talk over my notes, alone or with other people
  - Imagine making the movement or creating the formula
19. If I am explaining to someone, I tend to:
- Show them what I mean
  - Explain to them in different ways until they understand
  - Encourage them to try and talk them through my ideas as they do it
20. I really love:
- Watching films, photography, looking at art or people watching
  - Listening to music, the radio or talking to friends
  - Taking part in sporting activities, eating fine foods and wines or dancing
21. Most of my free time is spent:
- Watching television
  - Talking to friends
  - Doing physical activity or making things
22. When I first contact a new person, I usually:
- Arrange a face to face meeting
  - Talk to them of the telephone
  - Try to get together whilst doing something else, such as an activity or meal
23. I first notice how people:
- Look and dress
  - Sound and speak
  - Stand and move

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24. If I am angry, I tend to:
- Keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me
  - Raise my voice and tell people how I feel
  - Stamp about, slam doors and physically demonstrate my anger
25. I find it easiest to remember:
- Faces
  - Names
  - Things I have done
26. I think that you can tell if someone is lying if:
- They avoid looking at you
  - Their voice changes
  - They give me funny vibes (feelings)
27. When I meet an old friend;
- I say, "It's great to see you!"
  - I say, "It's great to hear from you!"
  - I give them a hug or a handshake
28. I remember things best by:
- Writing notes or keeping printed details
  - Saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head
  - Doing and practising the activity or imagining it being done
29. If I have to complain about faulty goods, I am most comfortable:
- Writing a letter
  - Complaining over the phone
  - Taking the item back to the store or posting it to head office

I find it easiest  
to remember:

- Faces
- Names
- Things I  
have done

30. I tend to say:

- a) I see what you mean
- b) I hear what you are saying
- c) I know how you feel

### Your Results

Now add up how many A's, B's and C's you selected

A's	
B's	
C's	

If you mostly chose A's you have a VISUAL learning style

If you mostly chose B's you have an AUDITORY learning style

If you mostly chose C's you have a KINESTHETIC learning style

Some people find that their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles, in this case read about the styles that apply to you in the explanations below.

Some people find their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles.

### **VISUAL Learners**

Someone with a VISUAL learning style has a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, handouts, films, flip charts etc. These people will use phrases such as 'show me', 'let's have a look at that', and will be best able to perform a task after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first. These are the people who will work from lists and written directions and instructions.

### **AUDITORY Learners**

Someone with an AUDITORY learning style has a preference for the transfer of information through listening; to the spoken word, of self or others, of sound and noises. These people will use phrases such as, 'tell me', 'let's talk it over' and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from an expert. These are the people who are happy being given instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs they hear!

### **KINESTHETIC Learners**

Someone with a KINESTHETIC learning style has a preference for physical experience – touching, feeling, holding, doing, practical hands-on experiences. These people will use phrases such as, 'let me try', 'how do you feel?' and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment, hands-on and never look at instructions first!

When you know your preferred learning style(s) you understand the type of learning that best suits you.

People commonly have a main preferred learning style, but this will be part of a blend of all three. Some people will have a very strong preference; other people have a more even mixture of two or less commonly, three styles.

When you know your preferred learning style(s) you understand the type of learning that best suits you. This enables you to choose the types of learning that works best for you. It also enables you to be more aware of the differing learning styles of your learners and to ensure you are catering to all types.

There is no right or wrong learning style. The point is there are types of learning that are right for your own preferred learning style.

Now you can be more aware of what works best for you. Take advantage of your preferred learning style to optimise your learning efficiency. However, think about trying to improve on the styles you didn't score highly on as you can further improve your learning capabilities by being able to use a blend of all three.



I'll ask it one more time because it is so important – does your training match your learning style or match the learning styles of your learners?

Good luck with your learning and training endeavours!

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