

# Feedback Report

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Обратная связь

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HayGroup

Kolb learning style inventory 4.0

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# Table of contents

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory 4.0	3
I. The cycle of learning and your learning style	4
II. Interpreting your learning style	7
III. Learning flexibility	17
IV. Applying your learning style to everyday life	21
V. Other useful resources	27

# The Kolb Learning Style Inventory 4.0

## Personal Report

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory (KLSI) was created to help you understand your unique way of learning and to use the insights gained to improve your learning power. This personal report describes your learning strengths and will lead you through a process of applying them to learning in your everyday life.

In this report you will learn about:

- the cycle of learning from experience
- your learning style; the unique way you prefer to learn, and how to use your preferences to maximize your learning
- your learning flexibility; your ability to fully use the learning cycle and modify your approach based on what you are learning about
- how to strengthen and develop your learning style
- how to apply what you have learned about yourself in your life; in your approach to problem-solving and decision making, dealing with conflict and disagreements, teamwork, communicating at work and at home, and your career development.

### The research behind how we learn:

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory is based on a theory of learning from experience that draws on the work of prominent 20th century scholars who gave experience a central role in their theories of human learning and development – notably William James, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers and others. From this Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) perspective, learners construct knowledge by experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting.

# I. The cycle of learning and your learning style

## The cycle of learning from experience

The KLSI can help us make sense of the experience that we often take for granted. It does this by helping us to interpret the different kinds of experiences we encounter and the different ways in which we respond to them and learn from them.

It portrays this process as a learning cycle, through which we 'touch all of the bases' in a learning situation: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences (See Figure 1 below).

The learning cycle shows that there are two ways in which we can grasp or take in experience – by Concrete Experience or Abstract Conceptualization. There are also two ways we can transform or deal with experience – by Reflective Observation

or Active Experimentation. We may begin a learning process in any of the four phases of the learning cycle. And we may find that we sometimes skip a phase in the cycle or focus primarily on just one or two.

However, when we use both the concrete and abstract phases to take in our experience, and when we both reflect and act on that experience, we can fully engage in a learning process and expand our learning power.

We resolve the conflict between being concrete or abstract and between being active or reflective in patterned, characteristic ways, based on our preferences for the four learning phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

Previous research has shown that our approach to learning is shaped by many factors: culture, personality type, life experiences, educational specialization, career choice, our current job role and tasks and even our genetic makeup. And our preferred approach, in turn, can shape the course of our personal development and everyday choices.

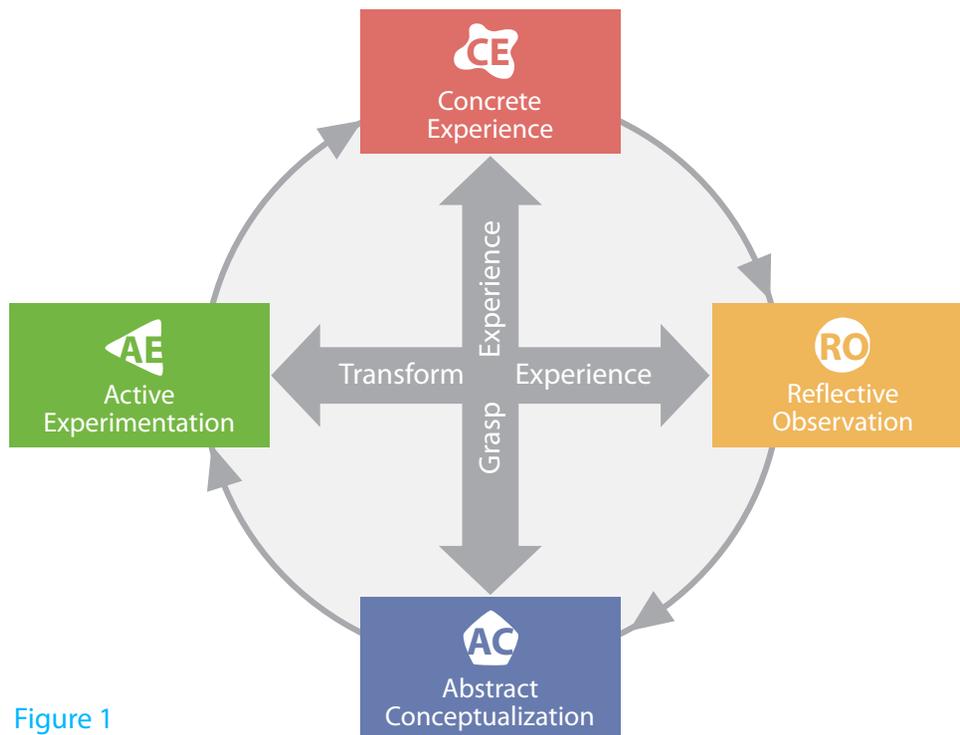


Figure 1

## Your learning style

The graph below captures your own learning style. Drawn from your responses to the KLSI, it indicates how much you rely on each of the four different learning phases: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE).

You have scored in the 81 percentile for CE. This means that you scored higher than 81% of the norm population. Similarly, you have scored in the 47 percentile for RO, in the 10 percentile for AC and in the 92 percentile for AE.

### How are the scores determined?

The percentile labels on the concentric circles represent the norms on the four basic scales (CE, RO, AC, AE) for 10,435 men and women ranging in age from 17-75. This sample group includes college students and working adults in a wide variety of fields. It is made up primarily of US residents (80%) with the remaining 20% of users residing in 64 different countries with the largest representations from Canada, UK, India, Germany, Brazil, Singapore, France, and Japan. A wide range of occupations and educational backgrounds is represented. For complete information about the normative comparison group and other validity research consult the LSI Technical Specifications available at: [www.learningfromexperience.com](http://www.learningfromexperience.com).



## Understanding each learning phase

Each phase in the learning cycle is described below. You'll also find suggestions about how to recognize when you're in a particular phase, and how you can move into it.

As you read each one ask yourself:

- Does my score on this phase match the way I see myself?
- Is it easy or hard for me to get into this phase?
- Do I find myself getting stuck in this phase? If so, why?
- Do I find myself avoiding this phase? If so, why?
- Would I like to be in this phase more or less often?

### Concrete Experience (CE)

Learning by experiencing involves:

- learning from specific experiences
- relating to people
- being sensitive to feelings and people

Concrete experience exists only in the here-and-now. This phase is a preference for people who enjoy the feeling of being fully open to the present moment.

Engagement in concrete experience can be enhanced by being aware and by attending to direct sensations and feelings. In fact, the opposite phase, being too much 'in your head', can inhibit the ability to directly sense and feel your immediate experiences.

The presence and attention that comes with concrete experience are particularly important for how we handle our interpersonal relationships, communicate, work with and lead others, and give and receive help.

### Reflective Observation (RO)

Learning by reflecting involves:

- carefully observing before making judgments
- viewing issues from different perspectives
- looking for the meaning of things

Reflection takes time and space. This phase is a preference for people who find themselves wondering about the things they observe in life: events, other people's actions or their own experiences.

Reflective observation can be enhanced by taking time to view things from different perspectives and by practicing empathy.

It can be inhibited by our impulsive desires or by the pressure to take action.

Stillness and quieting the mind foster deep reflection, and support the information skills of sense-making, information gathering and information analysis.

### Abstract Conceptualization (AC)

Learning by thinking involves:

- logically analyzing ideas
- planning systematically
- acting on an intellectual understanding of the situation

Abstract conceptualization describes the ability to weigh things up. This phase is a preference for people who make comparisons between new experiences and ideas and their past experiences and accepted ideas.

Engagement in thinking can be enhanced by evaluating ideas, theories and events, by forming practical generalizations and by creating scenarios for action. It can be distracted by intense, direct emotion and sensations, as well as by the pressure to make decisions or act quickly.

Abstract conceptualization supports the analytical skills of explaining ideas or situations, theory building, quantitative data analysis and technology management.

### Active Experimentation (AE)

Learning by doing involves:

- showing ability to get things done
- taking risks
- influencing people and events through action

Active experimentation is the 'bottom line' of the learning cycle, the place where experiencing, reflecting and thinking are tested in reality. This phase is a preference for people who are drawn to the practical world of real consequences.

Active experimentation can be enhanced by courageous initiative-taking and the creation of cycles of goal-setting and feedback to monitor performance. It can be inhibited by too much internal processing.

Active experimentation supports the action oriented skills of initiative, goal setting and action taking.

## II. Interpreting your learning style

You have seen how your scores form a 'kite' shape. Because each person's learning style is unique, everyone's kite shape is a little different. The shape of your kite tells you about your own particular learning style, which is defined by the combination of your preferences for the four phases of the learning cycle.

### The nine most common learning styles

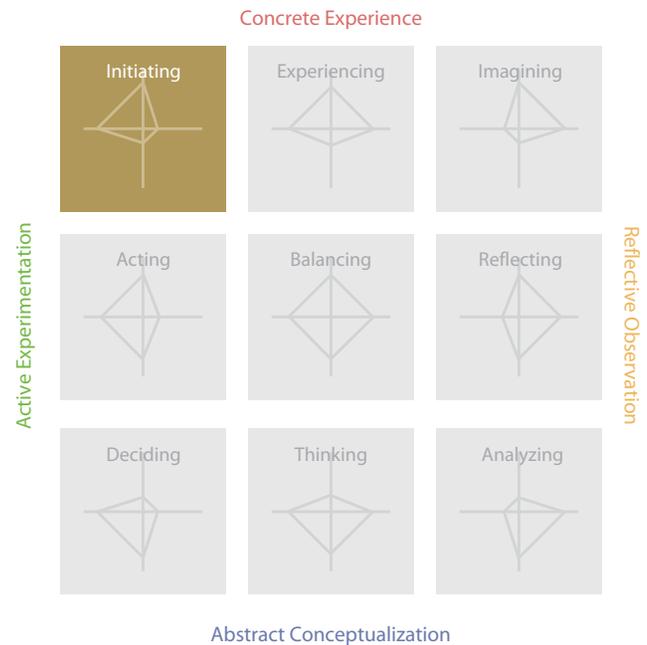
Years of research on the learning styles of many thousands of individuals have led to the identification of nine types of learning style, each of which is characterized by a specific ability:

- The **Initiating** style – initiating action to deal with experiences and situations.
- The **Experiencing** style – finding meaning from deep involvement in experience.
- The **Imagining** style – imagining possibilities by observing and reflecting on experiences.
- The **Reflecting** style – connecting experience and ideas through sustained reflection.
- The **Analyzing** style – integrating ideas into concise models and systems through reflection.
- The **Thinking** style – disciplined involvement in abstract reasoning and logical reasoning.
- The **Deciding** style – using theories and models to decide on problem solutions and courses of action.
- The **Acting** style – a strong motivation for goal directed action that integrates people and tasks.
- The **Balancing** style – adapting by weighing the pros and cons of acting versus reflecting and experiencing versus thinking.

These learning styles can be systematically arranged around the learning cycle in a grid. **Your learning style as highlighted in the following grid is Initiating.**

### Making sense of your learning style

Your learning style is your 'comfort zone' for learning. It is influenced by the physical settings you choose for learning, the people you learn from and with, and even the wider organizational and cultural environment. In turn, your learning style to some extent determines your choices and what you pay attention to.

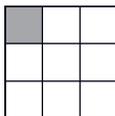


For example, imagine you are in a mathematics class. The teacher lays out a formula on the board and explains the logical steps to derive an answer. If you are an abstract learner you may pay attention to the rationale of the concept explained by the teacher (thinking), whereas if you are a concrete learner you may tune into the teacher as a person and whether you like her, or not, and can relate to her as a person (experiencing). If you are an active learner, you may have an urge to do something with the formula to see how it works (acting).

Your learning style indicates your preference for how you go about learning. For example, if you are an imagining learner, you're likely to engage in experiencing and reflecting and tend to avoid thinking and acting.

Note that these styles are not meant to be stereotypes. They are derived from clusters of individuals whose KLSI scores place them in the same region of the learning cycle. Each style shares some characteristics with those nearby in the grid. For example the Experiencing style shares a strong emphasis on Concrete Experience with the Initiating and Imagining styles and a balancing of action and reflection with the Balancing style.

These nine types of style are described in detail within this report. Each description shows the characteristics of the style and its region in the learning cycle based on previous research and observation. Learning strengths and challenges for individuals with the style are summarized. Finally, individuals with each style describe themselves in their own words.



## Your learning style is Initiating

The Initiating style is characterized by the ability to initiate action in order to deal with experiences and situations. It involves Active Experimentation (AE) and Concrete Experience (CE).

People with an Initiating learning style are likely to:

- prefer to learn from hands-on experience and real life situations
- be willing to jump in and try out new and challenging experiences
- volunteer for leadership on tasks
- be able to act quickly and decisively in a changing environment without being caught in excessive deliberations
- be comfortable thinking on their feet
- be willing to take risks and able to identify new opportunities and generate possibilities for success at work and life in general
- take initiative in starting new projects, putting ideas into practice and identifying a new course of action
- learn best by tuning into the present circumstances and less from reflections about past events or planning for future actions
- have the tendency to act on 'gut' feelings rather than on logical analysis, relying on others for information more than on their own technical analysis
- be seen as spontaneous, energetic, persuasive, and courageous
- thrive in dynamic learning situations where they can work with others to get assignments done, set goals and try out different approaches to completing a project
- prefer teachers who take the role of coach or mentor in helping them learn from their life experiences.

### Learning strengths

Committing yourself to objectives

Seeking new opportunities

Influencing and leading others

### Learning challenges

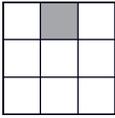
Controlling the impulse to act

Listening to others' views

Impatience

### Rosalyn, human resources manager

In one simple word...yes, I agree with the label Initiating for my learning style. My peers, leaders, family members and friends would all be able to quickly identify me as action oriented. I tend to be impatient with waiting for decisions and more than likely will jump in with a plan to take action. In my work as a human resources manager this bias for action has served me extremely well. The retail business is constantly changing. Amidst that change some people can be caught spinning with indecisiveness and an inability to act based on the excessive speed in which the business is moving. I, on the other hand, make decisions quickly. A day without action is extremely rare. The ability to identify needs, and act on those needs quickly, is essential to my success in the corporate environment. My manager has mentioned how I have an amazing ability to seek out new information and apply it. I think this relates to my curiosity and willingness to take risks.



## Information about the other eight learning styles

### The Experiencing learning style

The Experiencing style is characterized by the ability to find meaning from deep involvement in experience. It draws on Concrete Experience (CE) while balancing Active Experimentation (AE) and Reflective Observation (RO).

People with the Experiencing learning style are likely to:

- learn from their deep involvement in their life experiences and contexts
- rely on their feelings and reactions to people and situations to learn
- be sensitive to other people's feelings and particularly adept in building meaningful relationships
- be open minded and accepting, which can lead to difficulty in making independent judgments
- be innovative and unconventional in their approach to problem-solving
- approach a problem intuitively rather than logically and to seek validation later through reflection and action
- be seen as sensitive, empathetic, helpful, and intuitive
- prefer learning situations which are rich in interactions and ongoing communications with their friends and co-workers
- enjoy working in groups, but also need time to work alone to get things done
- seek out constructive feedback on their progress at work and in their personal life
- want to build and maintain a personal relationship with their teacher.

#### Learning strengths

Building deep personal relationships

Strong intuition focused on reflection and action

Open to new experiences

#### Learning challenges

Understanding theory

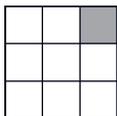
Systematic planning

Critical evaluation

#### Susan, human resources director

Over the years I have often questioned why I enjoyed beginning new relationships so much and felt exhilaration when brainstorming, planning, and implementing projects. Rarely have I found pleasure in working alone and I've felt stifled in situations when I must do so.

Engaging in conversation and learning about and from others is exciting and sometimes I am surprised when people with whom I've had little involvement have shared very personal information. I have been told I ask questions of people and engage others in such a way as to generate rich discussion and debate in a non-threatening, thoughtful manner. This may be why they open up so easily.



## The Imagining learning style

The Imagining style is characterized by the ability to imagine possibilities by observing and reflecting on experiences. It combines the learning steps of Concrete Experience (CE) and Reflective Observation (RO).

People with the Imagining learning style are likely to:

- learn by stepping back to observe and reflect on their experiences and feelings
- have the ability to see things from many different points of view
- demonstrate sensitivity to people's feelings
- be able to consider diverse opinions and views and bridge the differences
- be comfortable with ambiguity and avoid seeing situations in black and white
- approach situations by observing rather than taking action
- be a good listener, able to recognize patterns in events, relationships and group interactions and make sense of what they mean
- have broad cultural interests and enjoy gathering information
- be good at imagining the implications and possibilities of a particular course of action and at creating alternative paths and approaches
- be seen as caring, accepting, creative, sensitive, and open-minded
- learn by working in groups where there is open and free flowing conversation through which they can gather information, listen with an open mind and receive personal feedback
- enjoy situations that call for generating a wide range of ideas, such as brainstorming sessions
- appreciate teachers who take a facilitating role and are sensitive and creative.

### Learning strengths

Awareness of people's feelings and values

Listening with an open mind

Imagining the implications of ambiguous situations

### Learning challenges

Decision making

Taking leadership

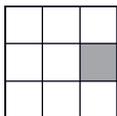
Timely action

### Lorain, non-profit organization manager

As an Imagining learner, I have the ability to take a multiple perspective 'helicopter view,' allowing me to notice when patterns of emotional energy surface between individuals, and among and within groups, systems and events.

My ability to see the big picture allows me to anticipate the likelihood of what may happen if a particular decision or action is taken. As a result, I am often able to redirect individual, group, system, or event energy in new directions.

The downside of my style is that, because of my extreme imaginative tendency, I can be distracted by all the possibilities and views that I see. I often receive feedback from people around me that I am 'a big picture planner', or 'have ability to see things globally'.



## The Reflecting learning style

The Reflecting style is characterized by the ability to connect experience and ideas through sustained reflection. It draws on Reflective Observation (RO) while balancing Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC).

People with the Reflecting learning style are likely to:

- use observation and reflection as their primary basis for learning
- enjoy situations that call for generating different alternatives and perspectives and identifying problems
- have a keen sense of observation and be able to make sense of and recognize the deeper meaning that underlies events, facts and people's interactions
- have the capacity for deep reflection while balancing the ability to engage in both feelings and thoughts
- value the process of talking about their reflections with others to debrief events
- organize information or analyze data in a manner that is meaningful and orderly
- excel in creating processes that produce healthy communication and effective outcomes when working with teams and organizations
- be good at coming up with creative ideas and solutions to problems, but prefer leaving the implementation to others
- be sensitive to people's feelings, thoughts and needs and able to find common ground by bringing together different ideas and perspectives
- be seen as quiet, insightful, thorough, sensitive and deep
- thrive in learning situations which are rich in dialogue and discussions, but also feel comfortable learning from lectures, independent projects and from reading
- need time to reflect and make sense of their experience on their own
- value teachers who provide opportunities for individual and group reflection and who are open to exploring ideas.

### Learning strengths

Understanding others' points of view

Seeing 'what's going on' in situations

Converting intuitions into explicit explanations

Gathering information

### Learning challenges

Taking action

Rumination

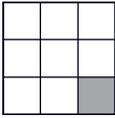
Speaking up in groups

### Jerry, human resources manager

The Reflecting learning style has been particularly well suited to the traditional teaching methods I've experienced in my educational career. I have enjoyed classroom lectures and I work well independently. I am able to process a wide variety of information, find patterns and themes and easily understand the underlying theories. As a result, my academic performance has been strong. I am an avid note-taker. My textbooks and professional reading include numerous margin notes about ideas sparked by the reading. These represent the reflecting, brainstorming and conceptualizing that accompany my learning.

This opportunity to reflect and organize information is critical to my ability to retain what I have learned. To move into Active Experimentation, I am most successful when I can partner with a colleague who demonstrates that strength. Using observation, I am able to learn from role models whose strengths are different from my own.

I have always had many interests, often more intellectual in nature. As I have grown older, my interests have often related to concepts and theories. My health and fitness goals are more motivated by a commitment to the concept of good health than by any external or social factor.



## The Analyzing learning style

The Analyzing style is characterized by the ability to integrate and systematize ideas through reflection. It combines Reflective Observation (RO) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC).

People with the Analyzing learning style are likely to:

- be good at taking in a wide range of information and putting it into concise, logical form
- be less focused on people and more interested in abstract ideas and concepts
- find it more important that a theory has logical soundness than practical value
- carefully analyze and assess each step and weigh its consequences before taking action
- plan ahead and be able to minimize mistakes and anticipate potential problems and pitfalls
- rely on their logical and objective understanding of the situation when dealing with people or events
- avoid allowing their feelings to get in the way of their sound judgments
- be seen as logical, organized, reliable, careful, and thoughtful
- thrive in learning situations in which they can use and develop their analytical and conceptual skills
- prefer lectures, reading, exploring analytical models and having time to think things through
- work alone rather than in groups
- prefer teachers who model their thinking and analysis process in their lectures and interactions with them.

### Learning strengths

Organizing information

Being logical and rational

Building conceptual models

### Learning challenges

Risk taking

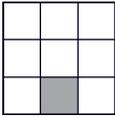
Socializing with others

Dealing with lack of structure

### Michelle, College student

I understand why I enjoy making sense of things. I am able to gather all kinds of data and information and pull it together to make sense. My classmate pointed out to me that although this may be my strength, this is also where one of my weaknesses becomes evident. She told me, "you oftentimes develop great points in your mind during class, but then you don't openly share them." This is because I am more comfortable discussing an idea with a small group of people or one on one, and it becomes harder for me to find that same comfort in a large class.

I am a very individual thinker. Reflecting and analyzing an idea comes easily to me, but not right away in a classroom. I am better off working alone outside of a crowded and intimidating atmosphere. Along the same line, I prefer to study alone as opposed to studying in groups because I have always been a strong individual learner. I always enjoyed mathematics, because solving equations is a purely rational exercise which does not require communication.



## The Thinking learning style

The Thinking style is characterized by the capacity for disciplined involvement in abstract and logical reasoning. It draws on Abstract Conceptualization (AC) while balancing Active Experimentation (AE) and Reflective Observation (RO).

People with the Thinking learning style are likely to:

- learn primarily by deep involvement in abstract ideas, theories and concepts
- value thinking things through and enjoy fitting a wide a range of data and information into concise ideas and models
- enjoy working with numbers and engaging in mental activities that require abstract reasoning and analytical skills
- rely on quantitative information to support their argument or predict outcomes
- prefer working with quantitative rather than qualitative information
- work by themselves and prefer to deal with technical tasks rather than personal issues
- be good at planning and goal-setting, but concentrate more on the quality of their plan rather than on achieving the actual goals
- strive for consistency and accuracy in their world views and ideas
- be controlled in their emotional expression and speak precisely and concisely
- take action after much thought
- work hard to avoid mistakes
- be seen as thorough, precise, reliable, consistent and introspective
- learn best in well-structured situations with clear directions and learning agendas
- thrive in environments in which they can design or conduct experiments or manipulate data
- prefer to work alone and take time to think things through
- value a teacher's expertise in their field.

### Learning strengths

Logical analysis

Rational decision making

Analyzing quantitative data

### Learning challenges

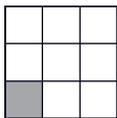
Working with people

Keeping an open mind about their ideas

'Lost in thought'

### Marianne, financial analyst

I like to solve problems, make decisions and I have a slight preference for technical tasks versus personal issues. In a learning setting, I need to see the practical application of the topic or theory. I need time to absorb information and think through it, planning and organizing information. I absolutely want to know exactly what I have to do to meet and exceed the standard. In fact, when I don't have this information or when others in the group move forward without the information, or don't allow me the time I need to assimilate it, I get frustrated. I need to know what success and failure look like in the eyes of the person who is judging. I need time alone to process information and rejuvenate. I make 'to-do' lists for everything from tasks at work, to the grocery store, packing for a trip. Doing this helps me to feel organized and focused. I don't like to be responsible for certain types of decisions for fear that I will make the wrong one: decisions such as which direction to take when driving, giving advice or which gift to purchase. Being so centered in thinking perhaps causes me to struggle between planning and developing options and making the decisions.



## The Deciding learning style

The Deciding style is characterized by the ability to use theories and models to decide on problem solutions and courses of action. It combines Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE).

People with the Deciding learning style are likely to:

- be good at finding practical uses for ideas and theories
- have the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on evaluating solutions to questions or problems rationally
- identify flaws and mistakes in concepts and ideas by testing them in the real world
- set clear goals, evaluate and then decide on the best path to achieve them
- be efficient and focused and avoid being distracted by what they consider to be tangential facts or information, but sometimes missing important information or solving the wrong problem
- focus on technical problem-solving when working with others
- concentrate on helping others to solve their problems efficiently and effectively, rather than on their feelings and interpersonal issues
- be seen as focused, pragmatic, rational and decisive
- learn best in situations in which they can experiment with new ideas, simulations, laboratory assignments and practical applications
- prefer teachers who set clear standards and goals and evaluate with problems and questions that have right or wrong answers.

### Learning strengths

problem-solving

Evaluating ideas and solutions

Setting goals

Making decisions

### Learning challenges

Thinking 'out of the box'

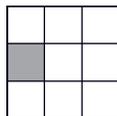
Sensitivity to people's feelings

Dealing with ambiguity

### George, sales manager

My preferred learning style is Deciding and I believe this to be a good fit in terms of how I see myself. In addition to my regional sales management responsibilities, I also oversee the sales productivity function. My sales productivity team focuses on how to help the organization become more effective and efficient through the practical application of various tools, technology and training. Given my preference, I tend to enjoy gathering information from sources both internal and external to the organization. I like to solve problems and make decisions to help the sales team succeed in creating a competitive advantage.

As an example of this, I actively experiment, taking the new ideas that are generated by my sales productivity team and finding practical applications related to organization structure, incentive compensation, performance recognition and enabling tools and technology. But as I am an introvert by nature, and therefore prefer to deal with technical tasks and problems versus social and interpersonal issues, I need to understand people better and be more open-minded. Also, I use little reflection in my work and life in general. In my case I can learn from my wife, who has 'Imagining' learning style tendencies, and I hope to improve our communication knowing now that we approach problems on opposite ends of the spectrum.



## The Acting learning style

The Acting style is characterized by a strong motivation for goal directed action that integrates people and tasks. It draws on Active Experimentation (AE) while balancing Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC).

People with the Acting learning style are likely to:

- be goal oriented and focused on getting things done
- be good at implementing plans or testing ideas by combining their experience of the immediate situation with ideas and concepts for dealing with it
- excel in identifying and integrating task and human requirements, using their ability to resolve questions or problems through technical analysis while paying attention to people's needs
- be equally comfortable functioning in a practical world that can make use of their feelings and actions, as well as in a technical world that requires their conceptual abilities
- work at improving existing operations and systems and producing results
- excel in leadership positions that call for co-ordinating complex operations and systems
- prefer action over reflection and sometimes commit to an idea without considering its consequences and alternative options or solutions
- be seen as dynamic, strategic, personable and responsible
- learn best on the job through discussions with colleagues and working in teams
- prefer teachers with practical real world experience that they can emulate.

### Learning strengths

Combining technical knowledge and personal relationships

Focused on getting things done

Leading work teams

### Learning challenges

Taking time to reflect

Solving the right problem

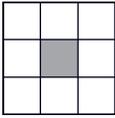
Gathering and analyzing information

### Elizabeth, retail store manager

As an Acting learner, I do find that I move easily to the doing stage, and I'm more comfortable plunging in to get things done. When I have a task ahead, I am eager to get started.

Usually I will have a strong gut feeling about the best course of action. My next step will be to look for data to validate my intuition. I do think about why my intuition is pointing in a certain direction and I like to get my conceptual 'arms' around the topic. I look for a few pieces of information to back up my perception using people and other sources. I don't spend an enormous amount of time gathering data, although if it is an important decision and I am unsure I will spend time talking to people I respect. Once ready to act, I do. I am comfortable learning by doing and taking risks.

On the positive side, I am able to get lots done, moving from one thing to another, switching gears easily. I don't get overwhelmed that easily by work. On the negative side, sometimes I am surprised by something that I haven't researched thoroughly, or when results are not as perfect as I might like.



## The Balancing learning style

The Balancing style is characterized by the ability to adapt; weighing the pros and cons of acting versus reflecting and experiencing versus thinking. It balances Concrete Experience (CE), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), Active Experimentation (AE) and Reflective Observation (RO).

With the Balancing learning style you are likely to:

- switch your approach to learning from feeling to thinking, and from reflecting to acting
- change your approach to learning based on the situation
- be open to new experiences and equally adept at identifying and solving problems
- see diverse perspectives on issues and bridge the differences between people with different styles
- find it difficult to make decisions about issues or choose between different alternatives
- adapt and fill in the missing style in a team in order to get the task done and help the team learn more effectively
- pursue a variety of interests which may lead you to change jobs and careers many times over the course of your life
- be seen as curious, open, flexible, multi-talented and resourceful
- be more satisfied in situations in which you can work through all four phases of the learning cycle: learning from lectures, discussions groups, brainstorming sessions, labs and on-the-job learning
- be able to learn from teachers with different approaches because of your ability to adapt.

### Learning strengths

Flexibility in moving around the learning cycle

Ability to work with diverse groups of people

Creative insights

### Learning challenges

Indecisiveness

'Jack of all trades, master of none.'

Sustained commitment

### Mark, non-profit organization executive

I had a difficult time answering the KLSI questions, and I have had a difficult time with other questionnaires in the past. I have wondered at times if maybe I don't know myself very well, but I prefer to think that I am a well-balanced person. In my work life, I need a wide variety of activities to keep me stimulated. I love learning new things and I look for new challenges, but it is the variety of activities that I enjoy.

I'm not striving for mastery of any particular activities. I'm driven to pursue many different interests and learn in a variety of ways. I find that I am able to adapt my learning style to meet the demands of the task at hand.

Because I am comfortable learning in a variety of ways, I am adaptable to different situations and contexts, which makes me a versatile team member. I'm generally able to do whatever is needed to get the job done. In addition, I tend to pick up new skills or concepts quickly. I have learned that if I give conscious thought to my learning processes and I'm deliberate about moving through the stages, from experience to reflection to thinking to acting, I will become a more proficient learner. I am able to take different perspectives and bridge differences between people with different styles. In group settings, I can relate to those who want to jump right into action, as well as those who want to spend time processing and planning. I am fairly creative, and in the professional environment I often come up with new ideas and solutions to common problems. This skill has earned me the appreciation of colleagues and supervisors. I do at times have difficulty making decisions because my ability to understand different perspectives often makes it challenging to commit to one of my own.

## III. Learning flexibility

### Moving around the learning cycle

Your learning style describes how you generally prefer to learn. However, another important aspect of your learning is how flexible you are in adapting your learning style to the situations you face. Many individuals feel that their learning style accurately describes how they learn most of the time; they are consistent in their approach to learning. Others, however, report that they tend to change their approach depending on what they are learning or the situation they are in. They may say, for example, that they use one style at work and another at home with their family. These are flexible learners.

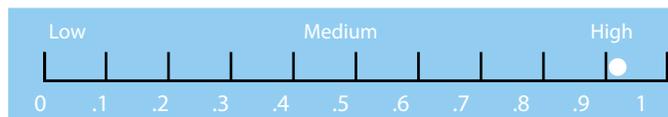
Learning flexibility is your ability to move freely around the learning cycle and to modify your approach to learning to suit all the situations you encounter. Learning flexibility expands your comfort zone; your readiness to engage fully in experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting enable you to deepen and enrich your knowledge and understanding.

You may recall that the final questions of the Kolb Learning Style Inventory asked you to describe how you learn in eight different learning situations, while thinking of examples of these situations in your life. These questions assess your learning flexibility by measuring how much you change your learning style in response to different learning situations. The resulting Learning Flexibility Index indicates your ability to draw upon the skills used in different phases of the learning cycle.

### Your learning flexibility score

Your learning flexibility score is calculated by how much your learning style varies from situation to situation.

Your learning flexibility score is .92 which indicates that you tend to modify your learning style to meet the demands of different situations.



### Understanding your pattern of learning flexibility

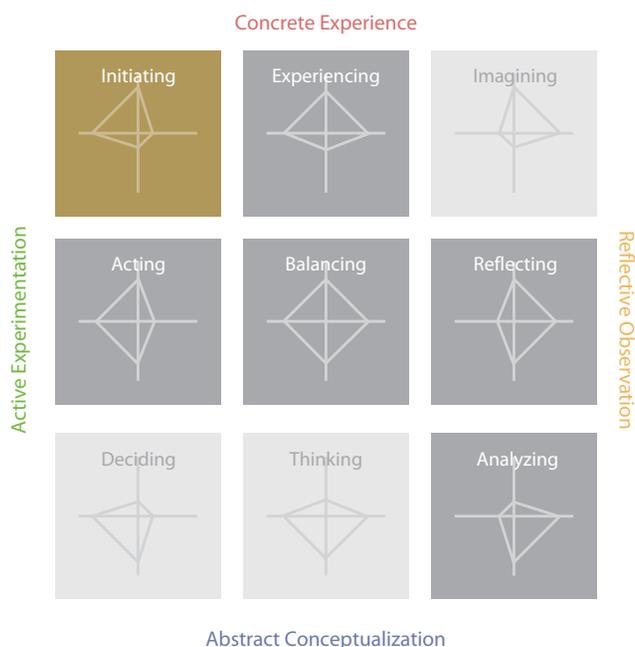
The following grid gives an overview of your learning flexibility. While your general learning style is Initiating, you show flexibility toward Experiencing, Balancing, Reflecting, Analyzing, Acting.

Generally there is a relationship between the number of regions that are shaded and your learning flexibility score, i.e. the more regions that are shaded, the higher the learning flexibility score. Flexible learners often move into the balancing region which encompasses all four learning phases.

### Your learning flexibility profile

As you review your learning flexibility profile, ask yourself:

- Does my learning flexibility profile match the way I see myself?
  - What do I gain from using these styles?
  - What do I miss out on when using these styles?
- Which learning styles do I feel most comfortable using?
  - What do I gain from using these styles?
  - What do I miss out on when using these styles?
- Which learning styles do I seem to avoid using?
  - What do I gain from avoiding these styles?
  - What do I miss out on when avoiding these styles?
- Which learning styles would I like to use more often? Why?
- To what extent am I using the Balancing learning style?



## Developing your learning flexibility

The exercise below is designed to help you practice your learning flexibility in a real situation where you are learning in your life. Along with your learning flexibility score, this exercise can help you see where you are most comfortable in learning and where you have difficulties. You can use it as a planning tool to improve your learning effectiveness.

Think of a situation in your life where you are currently learning or a project that you are currently working on. It could be, for example, a course you are taking, a person or team that you need to get to know better, a project, activity or event you are planning, or something new that you are starting.

The learning style grid shows questions that people tend to ask themselves when using each learning style. These questions can help you anticipate how you might approach your situation using a different learning style.

### Now follow these steps:

- 1 On a blank sheet of paper draw a large grid to create the nine learning styles.
- 2 Decide which learning style or styles you are using in your current project or learning situation.
- 3 In each part of the grid, write some notes to capture how you are applying your chosen learning style(s) to your project or situation.
- 4 Next, using these questions as a guide, jot down other approaches you might take to enhance your learning.

### Ask yourself:

- Am I using only my preferred learning style(s)?
- Am I moving around the learning cycle and using learning styles that are not typical for me? Or staying close to my preferred learning style(s)?
- What difficulties am I encountering in using other learning styles?

### My learning goal plan for:

<p><b>Initiating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What action should I take now?</li> <li>■ How do I start?</li> <li>■ Where are the opportunities?</li> <li>■ Can I take a chance on this?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Experiencing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Am I experiencing the issue in the present?</li> <li>■ What is my intuition telling me?</li> <li>■ What are the others feeling about this?</li> <li>■ Where is my attention now?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Imagining</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What are the possibilities?</li> <li>■ What is my vision?</li> <li>■ How do I feel about this situation?</li> <li>■ What do others think?</li> <li>■ What do I imagine will happen?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How can I implement this plan?</li> <li>■ How much time do I have?</li> <li>■ What resources do I need?</li> <li>■ What are the next steps?</li> <li>■ Who can help me in moving this forward?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Balancing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Is there a blind spot?</li> <li>■ Have I considered all possibilities, and weighed all options?</li> <li>■ Do I need to change my approach?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflecting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is another way of looking at this?</li> <li>■ What are my assumptions?</li> <li>■ What information is most meaningful?</li> <li>■ What else do I need to consider?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deciding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is my goal?</li> <li>■ What is the cost/benefit analysis?</li> <li>■ How can I solve this problem?</li> <li>■ What is my decision?</li> <li>■ What is working, or not working?</li> <li>■ What is the bottom line?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Am I being objective?</li> <li>■ What do the numbers tell me?</li> <li>■ Am I accurate? And thoughtful?</li> <li>■ Have I put my feelings aside?</li> <li>■ Is this a logical approach?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Analyzing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can I create a scenario about what will happen?</li> <li>■ What strategies do I need?</li> <li>■ What is my plan?</li> <li>■ Is my reasoning conceptually sound?</li> </ul>

Continued

- When I look at things from the perspective of different learning styles, how does it change my understanding of my project or learning situation? Does it reveal other factors or issues that I can address?
- What can I do to increase my ability to use different learning styles?
  - What three things can I start doing?
  - What three things should I stop doing?
  - What three things can I do differently?

## Learning flexibility and your learning effectiveness

As you know, learning goes on in every aspect of your life. By developing learning flexibility in all the situations you find yourself in you can make full use of the learning cycle and increase your learning power.

Those of us with a strongly consistent learning style can feel comfortable that we have developed that style to a considerable extent. At the same time our skills in other learning styles may not be so strong. For example, someone comfortable using the thinking style may feel uncomfortable in the non-logical world of concrete feelings.

When a situation arises that demands skills outside our learning style we face a dilemma; do we approach the situation with our comfortable learning style or try another? There is no absolute answer about when to 'flex' and when to go with your strengths. Over time we resolve this dilemma best by developing our strengths across all the learning styles. Most of us, however, are working towards that goal, so we approach life with some combination of using our preferred learning style and moving through those that are closer.

Overall learning effectiveness is improved when individuals become highly skilled in engaging all four phases of the learning cycle. One way to do this is to develop the skills associated with each of them.

### Developing learning skills

The Learning Skills Profile was created to help learners assess the learning skills associated with the four phases of the learning cycle: interpersonal skills for CE, information skills for RO, analytic skills for AC and action skills for AE. It gives you an assessment of your learning skills and a corresponding analysis of the requirement for these skills in your life situation, providing a useful starting point for prioritizing your skill development goals.

## Strategies for developing learning flexibility

Many who take the KLSI decide that they want to use more of the learning cycle in their everyday life: experiencing (CE), reflecting (RO), thinking (AC) and acting (AE). In some cases this is based on a desire to increase their learning flexibility by developing a weaker learning style. In others it may be to increase capability in a style that is particularly important for their learning tasks. Specialists in different fields often find that they need to focus their style to maximize effectiveness. Engineers, for example, need highly developed problem-solving skills grounded in thinking and acting. Choose from the following strategies to increase your flexibility:

1. Develop learning and work relationships with people whose learning strengths lie in areas that are different from your own.

This is the easiest way to improve your learning skills. While you can begin by recognizing and building on your own strengths, it is essential to value different learning styles as well. We are often drawn to people who have similar learning styles to ourselves – indeed we can find it hard (even frustrating) to work with people who have different styles to our own. However, learning power is increased and problems are solved more effectively by working with others.

2. Improve the fit between your learning style strengths and the kinds of learning experiences you encounter.

This strategy can help you to achieve better learning performance and satisfaction by playing to your preferences. Try re-organizing activities in your learning situations, concentrating on those tasks that lie in your areas of learning strength and relying on other people where you have weaknesses. For example, if your preferred learning style is Imagining, spend your time thinking of all the options and gathering information, and rely on someone with the Deciding style to choose the best solution.

*Continued*

3. Practice and develop learning skills in areas that are the opposite of your present strengths.

This strategy is the most challenging, but it can also be the most rewarding. Try to become a more flexible learner by consciously using the skills associated with the learning style opposite to your own. For example, if you have an Analyzing style, focus on using skills associated with the Initiating style (taking risks, getting things done, being adaptable). This approach may seem awkward to you at first, but over time your increased flexibility will allow you to cope with challenges of all kinds.

*Remember:*

- Develop a long term plan. Look for improvements and payoffs over months and years, rather than right away.
- Look for safe ways to practice new skills. Find situations that test them but will not punish you if you fail. Take time to consciously learn from your mistakes.
- Return to your learning flexibility profile regularly. Each time you face a new learning situation or take on a new project, use the grid to anticipate different approaches you can take that will help you develop new learning skills.
- Reward yourself; becoming a flexible learner is hard work.

## IV. Applying your learning style to everyday life

You have now discovered a lot about yourself as a learner: about your learning style, the implications for how you approach different situations and about your flexibility as a learner. How can you use this information to improve your learning and your life?

### Solving problems

Understanding your learning style can make you an effective problem solver. Nearly every problem that you encounter on the job or in your life involves the following processes:

- identifying the problem
- selecting the problem to solve
- seeing different solutions
- evaluating possible results
- implementing the solution.

These processes mirror those in the learning cycle. Each process, or each piece of the problem, needs to be approached in different ways. Use the diagram below to identify your potential strengths as a problem solver.

Take some time to think about situations where your strengths as a problem solver have emerged in the past, and then identify areas you want to develop further in the future.

Notice the area that is the opposite of your area of strength. Are there ways that you can develop your problem-solving skills in this area?



## Working in teams

Teams are an increasingly popular vehicle for getting things done in the classroom and in the workplace. You have probably belonged to a number of teams and can easily identify those that were effective and those that were ineffective. While a number of factors contribute to team effectiveness, learning styles, specifically a team's learning style profile, is a prominent factor.

Consider a team that creates an advertising campaign for a new product. Nearly all the team members prefer the Initiating style. Consequently, they share a preference for action and rarely disagree. They quickly create and place an advertisement in an industry magazine. However, since the team lacks the more reflective Imagining, Reflecting and Analyzing styles, research and analysis that would have provided support for a targeted, direct mail campaign, for instance, is never considered.

Knowledge of learning styles can help you, as a team member, to assume a leadership role and guide the group through all the phases of the learning cycle. If you are a manager responsible for creating teams, this knowledge helps you ensure that all styles are represented and, therefore, all angles considered. In either role, you contribute to a more successful outcome.

Try teaming up with one or two of your colleagues or classmates. Choose an actual work- or school-related problem for the team to solve. During the process note which team member is contributing ideas, who focuses on feelings and values, who tries to identify the problem, and who focuses on solutions. Are you missing any of the strengths associated with the learning cycle? If so, which ones? Who might develop these strengths? How might they best be developed to serve the team? How can you adapt your group process to ensure that all phases of the learning cycle are included?

## Resolving conflict

Conflict can be useful. The conflict that arises from differing perspectives holds creative ideas and the potential for looking at old issues in new ways. Conflict can, however, become negative and burdensome when disagreements are written off as 'personality conflicts' or 'I just can't get along with that person.'

Consider the employee who publicly chastises a co-worker for constantly holding up the department's progress by analyzing every detail of the job at hand. The co-worker retaliates, saying that her accuser acts rashly, thereby jeopardizing the department's project. The two refuse to work together. Ultimately, the conflict extends beyond the two co-workers to affect the entire department.

An appreciation for different learning styles can alleviate this situation. Both employees may be right, but their learning preferences lie at the opposite extremes of the active-reflective continuum. They need to realize that the combination of their two styles is more effective than either style alone.

When you find yourself in a situation where there is a difference in perspectives, remember what you have learned about the nine different learning styles. Use this information to elicit ideas, experiences, and reflections from the other people involved.

## Communicating at work

Effective communication must overcome all kinds of potential static. At work, this holds true for communication with your boss, co-workers, clients, and vendors.

Consider the Analyzing style employee who is constantly frustrated by encounters with his Initiating style manager. As far as he can see, she pays little attention to the detailed facts and figures he carefully prepares for each of their meetings. She, on the other hand, is completely frustrated by the amount of detail and extraneous information he provides.

In this situation, the employee would be better off presenting information to the manager in a bulleted, highlighted, this-is-what-I-suggest manner. In doing so, he would appeal to her learning preferences and get through to her in a way he never thought possible. On the flip side, the manager would benefit from an appreciation of different learning styles. She should acknowledge the work that the employee has put into preparing for the meeting and assure him that, although she is quite busy at the moment, she will make a point of looking through the information as soon as she has time.

Think of a situation where you could improve communication with another person at work. Perhaps the two of you have learning style differences. Do you prefer thinking things through while the other person prefers thinking on their feet? How can you combine your styles for a more effective outcome? How can you work together to develop each other's weaker styles?

## Communicating at home

Work isn't the only place where communication can be a challenge. Different learning styles between family members can benefit, or hinder, the relationship. An awareness of your own and other family members' learning styles will help you appreciate the styles' strengths and understand their weaknesses.

Consider a couple assembling a bike. She has an Analyzing style and prefers to read the instructions, account for all the parts, and lay out the tools before she begins. He has an Initiating style; he scatters all the parts around the room, immediately begins assembling the handlebars, and has no idea where the instructions are.

To successfully assemble the bike, they need to combine their reflective and active styles. When both are represented, the couple can efficiently assemble a bike that is safe to ride.

Think about your own home situation. Is a family project (wallpapering, painting, cleaning out the garage, etc.) coming up? Can you find a way to combine your styles so that you can carry out the project more effectively? Can you help develop each other's weaker styles?

## Considering a career

Understanding your learning style can help you in your career. Whether you are deciding what career you want to prepare for in school, choosing a career path, seeking to maximize success in your chosen career or considering a career change, learning is an important part of the process.

**Preparing for a career.** Career preparation is centered on finding what you are interested in and connecting those interests to educational experiences, jobs and career paths that relate to them. This process starts with looking inward to understand yourself, paying attention to often fleeting and ambiguous feelings, reflecting on their meaning and acting to explore each interest further. At the same time you look outward for opportunities and situations in which you can test your skills and interests. The more you repeat the cycle, exploring your interests and expressing your talents, the clearer your career choice will become.

Your learning style also reveals important clues about your interests and potential careers. You may, at some point, have taken a vocational test such as the Strong or Holland interest inventories to help you become aware of your interests and their connections to career paths. These tests are based on Holland's model of six career types and their relationship to each other – Enterprising, Social, Artistic, Investigative, Realistic, and Conventional.

Research has shown that the career type model and the learning cycle share similarities, as shown in the adjoining figure, which can help you make more sense of your interests.

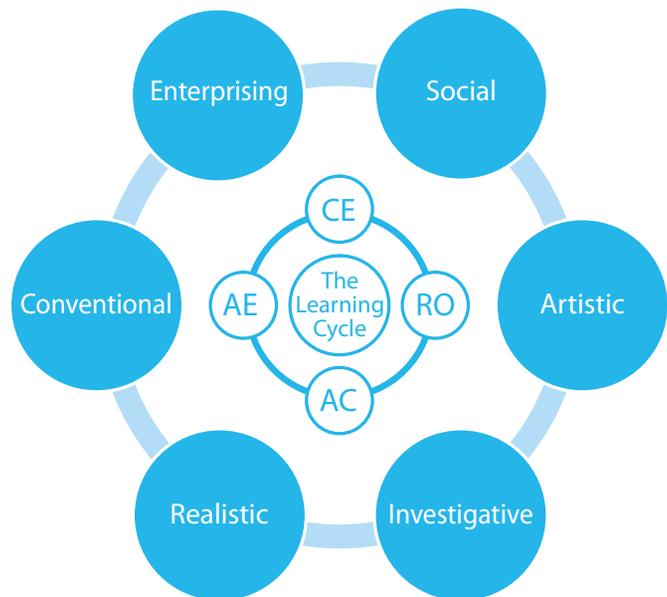
**Choosing a career path.** Numerous research studies have shown that individuals with certain learning styles tend to gravitate toward certain career types. However, people follow many different patterns. Even within a particular career, there may be sub-patterns of learning styles and interests to consider. The next chart summarizes some of these patterns.

Remember, in any career field there are jobs that include a spectrum of learning styles.

For example, a person with an Initiating style who is practicing medicine may prefer the personal interactions and the active problem-solving that a family practice entails. In contrast, someone with an Analyzing style may enjoy the medical science field, where thorough research on medical problems yields the solutions that a practitioner may one day use.

You can use the chart not only to explore new career opportunities but to enrich your present career path.

The biggest mistake that people can make when comparing their career with their learning style is to think that there is a formula that says, "My learning style is X, so my career should be Y." A better way to use the Learning Style Inventory is to think about which aspects of certain jobs might best fit your learning style. You may also be interested in finding ways that your career can challenge you to stretch your learning strengths and help you to develop new ones.





**Maximizing success in your career.** Many have suggested that the definition of career success is doing what you love and getting paid for it. This is why finding a job that is compatible with your interests and talents is so important. When the demands of your jobs greatly exceed your skill levels, stress results. When your skills exceed your job demands, you're likely to feel boredom and lack of challenge. Jobs that demand learning and skill improvement are those that produce just enough challenge to make work satisfying and fulfilling.

Consider your present career situation:

- Are you able to use your learning strengths in your present job?
- Do the demands of your job help you to develop other learning strengths?
- Do you have future career goals in mind?
- How do you picture yourself accomplishing those goals, given your learning strengths?

The Learning Skills Profile was developed to help answer these questions. This instrument measures the learning skills required by your job and your current level of skill in four general areas – Interpersonal skills, Information skills, Analytic skills and Action skills. Gaps between skill level and job demand help to suggest goals for learning and development.

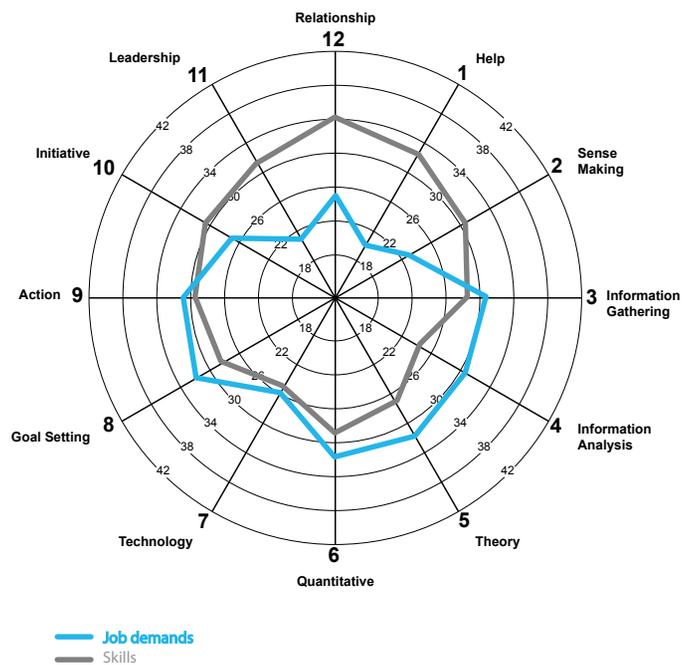
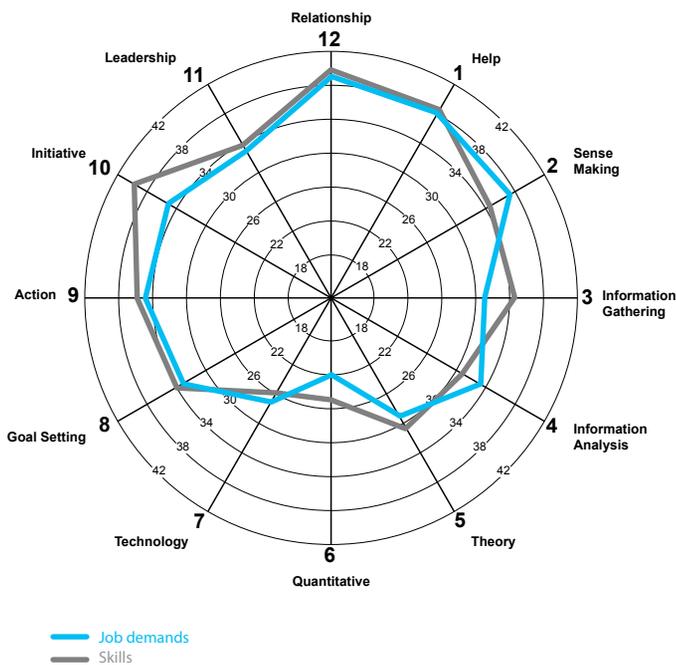
The spider graphs shows the learning skill profiles for two individuals. The woman on the left is a senior human resource development manager who is successful and loves her job. Note the correspondence between her job demands and learning skills and the high levels of both.

The profile on the right is an undergraduate man who is mapping the demands of his prospective biomedical engineering qualification with his learning skills. Note both the match between his analytic skills and job demands and the mismatch between his high interpersonal skills and low job demands. This may be why he was questioning his choices.

**Changing careers.** There was a time when career change was infrequent and often accompanied by feelings of failure. In today's rapidly changing world, changing careers is seen as a way to broaden one's experience and develop professionally.

When individuals take the Learning Skills Profile they sometimes discover that their job is not using many of their highly developed skills. They are bored and restless, and that is their sign to search for new opportunities.

Understanding your learning style and the corresponding demands of different careers can help you find that challenging match and a job you love.



## V. Other useful resources

Available from [www.haygroup.com](http://www.haygroup.com) (click on assessment and development tools):-

Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development

By David A. Kolb. © 1984 Prentice Hall PTR. The theory of experiential learning, with applications for education, work, and personal development. Contains information on the validity of the Kolb Learning Style Inventory.

Facilitator's Guide to Learning

© 2000 Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc. A manual for teachers and trainers.

The Kolb Learning Style Exercise (Stuck Truck)

© 2009 Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc. An exercise that identifies the impact of learning styles on group problem-solving situations.

The Kolb learning Skills Profile

© 1993, 2008 Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc. An instrument to compare your learning skills to your job skill demands.

The Kolb Team Learning Experience: improving team effectiveness through structured learning experiences.

© 2004 Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc.

The Kolb Learning Style reference cards: a quick guide to the strengths and challenges of each style, along with tips for improvement.

© 2007 Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc.

At the Kolbs' website-  
[www.learningfromexperience.com](http://www.learningfromexperience.com)

Bibliography of research on experiential learning and the Learning Style Inventory. Updated regularly.

Kolb Learning Style Inventory version 3.1 technical specifications. Updated regularly.

Additional information on experiential learning is also available on the website.