Learning Styles

The subject of Learning Styles and the way adults learn used to be the somewhat-exclusive domain of educational theorists and designers of training programs. Today, adults are turning away from being passive receptors of instructional expertise and becoming more self-directed in their pursuit of information and advanced skills. To do this effectively, each individual must have an understanding of how people learn, and more specifically how they learn *best*. This One Page Coach® provides a simple overview of how an individual can identify his or her own preferred learning style, and then use that understanding when dealing with others. The approach uses four factors: CONTEST, RELIANCE, PERCEPTION, and SYNTHESIS.

1. CONTEXT — What is the learning climate?

2. RELIANCE — On whom do you rely?

3. PERCEPTION — How do you receive information?

4. SYNTHESIS — How do you assimilate information?

1. CONTEXT

▶ The mood and the environment

Determine the mood and the environment in which you will work best, including:

- Levels of ambient noise/distraction.
- Level of brightness/light.
- The temperature/comfort level.
- Space and design layout.

Before you order, please select the conditions you prefer for your learning space!

SELECT ENVIRONMENT AMBIENCE
① Sound level
② Light level
③ Temperature
④ Work space design

LEARNING CAFÉ

▶ The methodology and structure

Determine how you like to approach the process of receiving new information:

- How much direction do you need?
- In what format do you like to receive training/instruction?
- How much "structure" do you prefer?

May I inquire madam—what brought you to our Café?

HUNGER for knowledge—APPETITE for opportunities—TASTE for success!

LEARNING CAFÉ

▶ The motivation

Determine your overall level of learning motivation.

- How great is your overall interest in learning?
- How generally persistent are you?
- What support do you normally need in order to maintain your motivation?

Select your preferred Information "package"!
Live instructors
Printed text
Audio
Video
CD rom

▶ The parameters

Determine how you like your learning to be structured.

- Do you like information to be presented in short bursts or in long bursts?
- How much "signposting" or learning-outcome information do you prefer?
- How explicit and practical do you need instruction to be?

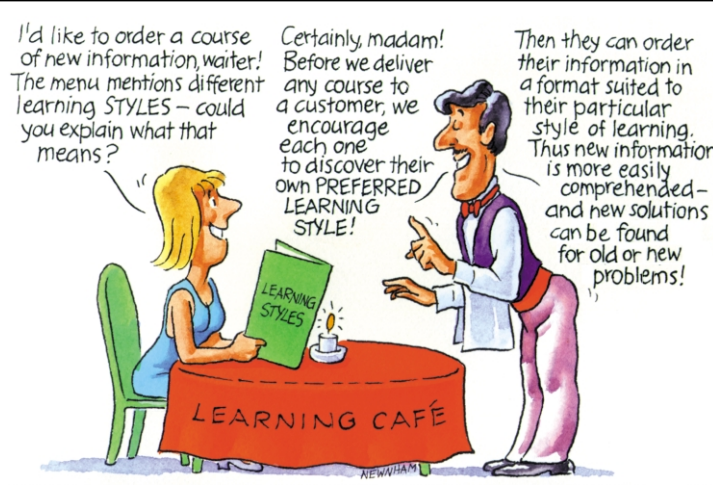*Does madam prefer her knowledge served in large or small portions?*

Large, with periodic tests to check my retention..

LEARNING CAFÉ

2. RELIANCE

▶ Interactive dependency

So! Will madam be learning alone à la autonomous?

That's not my style—I learn better with an expert tutor, and a few fellow students!

Determine whether you prefer to be:

- A dependent learner.
- A collaborative learner.
- An autonomous learner.

I'd like to order a course of new information, waiter! The menu mentions different learning STYLES – could you explain what that means?

Certainly, madam! Before we deliver any course to a customer, we encourage each one to discover their own PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE!

Then they can order their information in a format suited to their particular style of learning. Thus new information is more easily comprehended—and new solutions can be found for old or new problems!

LEARNING CAFÉ

▶ Level of expertise

Quite frankly, madame—some customers like their learning SPOON-FED!!

Determine in what ways you prefer:

- Expertise to help answer **"why"** questions
- Expertise to help answer **"what"** questions
- Expertise to help answer **"how"** questions
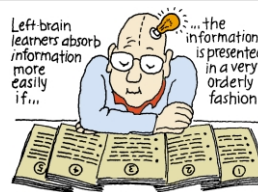- Expertise to help answer **"what if"** questions

3. PERCEPTION

▶ Left-brain bias

Determine how much "left-brain" learning bias you have, including:

- Listening to reasoned argument.
- Reading ordered information.
- Logically analyzing concepts.

Left brain learners absorb information more easily if...

...the information is presented in a very orderly fashion!

▶ Right-brain bias

Determine how much "right-brain" learning bias you have, including:

- Watching visual images, charts, diagrams, etc.
- Listening for analogies or metaphors.
- Getting involved in physical learning interactions.

Right-brain learners like to use pictures...

...diagrams, computer models, & charts to enhance learning!
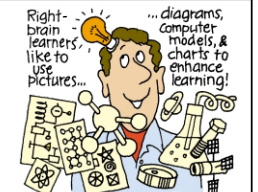
4. REVIEW

▶ Learning perspective

Might I recommend a large platter of broad concepts, madam?

Hmm!... I think I'd prefer the feast of detailed information served step-by-step!

Determine how much you like your information to be pulled together, including:

- Summaries of broad concepts or ideas (the big picture).
- Step-by-step information carefully explained (strong on detail).

▶ Information evaluation process

Your information, madam! Shall I present it logically & clearly, quickly & randomly, or...?

Please! Just put it down— I'm HUNGRY!!

Determine how you prefer to evaluate what you see, hear, and experience:

- Focus on attention
- Knowledge encryption
- Relational storage
- Knowledge retrieval
- Reflection before action

▶ Awareness and strategy

Thanks for the learning lesson! Now that I know my learning style, I can create my own learning recipes!

Determine your own overall "recipe" for effective learning, including:

- Understanding
- Internalizing
- Adapting
- Applying

ONE PAGE COACH

Learning Styles: Template

Act:
Apply
Extrapolate
Build

HOW?
_____
_____
_____

Attend:
To context
To motivation levels
To core message

HOW?
_____
_____
_____

Reflect:
Positive
Negative
Re-thinking

HOW?
_____
_____
_____

Translate:
Language
Style
Delivery

HOW?
_____
_____
_____

Checklist questions to help maximize personal learning

ATTEND	**1.** Are the mood and environment for the learning appropriate?	
	2. Are the methodology and structure of the learning best for purpose?	
	3. Am I sufficiently motivated to want to learn? (If not, why?)	
	4. What are the learning-delivery styles that work best for me?	
RELATE	**5.** Am I a Dependant, Collaborative or an Independent Learner?	
	6. What type of questions help me to learn the most (why, what, how, or what-if questions)?	
TRANSLATE	**7.** Do I tend to be left-brain biased (more interested in learning structure, order and logic)?	
	8. Do I tend to be right-brain biased (more interested in visuals, analogies, and physical learning interactions)?	
UNDERSTAND	**9.** Do I think learning should be presented in broad summary, or in detailed form?	
	10. How do I best synthesize and come to understand learning concepts (by quiet internal reflection, adapting or changing the information, applying or practicing it for real, etc.)?	

Understand:
Core information
Wider applications
When to apply

HOW?
_____
_____
_____

Relate:
To existing knowledge
To analogies
To linked concepts

HOW?
_____
_____
_____