

## SECTION 4

### The 80-item Learning Styles Questionnaire

This questionnaire will help you discover your learning style preferences. We all develop learning 'habits' that make us happier to learn in some ways and less happy to learn in other, less familiar, ways. Most people are only vaguely aware of their learning preferences. This questionnaire will clarify your preferred ways of learning so that you are in a better position to select experiences that suit your style and/or to broaden your scope by strengthening under-utilised styles.

There is no time limit for the completion of this questionnaire. It will probably take you 10 to 15 minutes. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you are. There are no right or wrong answers. If you agree more than you disagree with a statement put a tick (✓) in the box. If you disagree more than you agree with a statement put a cross (✗) in the box. Be sure to mark each item with either a tick or a cross.

- 1 ☐ I often act without considering the possible consequences.
- 2 ☐ I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation.
- 3 ☐ I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.
- 4 ☐ I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly.
- 5 ☐ I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people.
- 6 ☐ I take pride in doing a thorough job.
- 7 ☐ I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach.
- 8 ☐ What matters most is whether something works in practice.
- 9 ☐ I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis.
- 10 ☐ I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions.

- 11 ☐ I regularly question people about their basic assumptions.
- 12 ☐ When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice.
- 13 ☐ I actively seek out new experiences.
- 14 ☐ I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives.
- 15 ☐ I am keen on self-discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.
- 16 ☐ I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done.
- 17 ☐ I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones.
- 18 ☐ I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion.
- 19 ☐ I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous, 'irrational' people.
- 20 ☐ In discussions I like to get straight to the point.
- 21 ☐ I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different.
- 22 ☐ I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly.
- 23 ☐ I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern.
- 24 ☐ I believe in coming to the point immediately.
- 25 ☐ I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people.
- 26 ☐ I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better.
- 27 ☐ I like to relate my actions to a general principle.
- 28 ☐ I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programmes, contingency planning, etc.

- 
- 29 ☐ I tend to be open about how I'm feeling.
- 30 ☐ I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward.
- 31 ☐ I tend to have distant, rather formal relationships with people at work.
- 32 ☐ I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits.
- 33 ☐ I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance.
- 34 ☐ In discussions I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants.
- 35 ☐ I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse.
- 36 ☐ In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas.
- 37 ☐ Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy.
- 38 ☐ It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline.
- 39 ☐ Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me.
- 40 ☐ I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done.
- 41 ☐ It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future.
- 42 ☐ I often get irritated by people who want to rush things.
- 43 ☐ I tend to be a perfectionist.
- 44 ☐ I think written reports should be short and to the point.
- 45 ☐ In discussions I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas.
- 46 ☐ I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition.

- 47 ☐ I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments.
- 48 ☐ I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically.
- 49 ☐ More often than not, rules are there to be broken.
- 50 ☐ I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives.
- 51 ☐ I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day.
- 52 ☐ In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions.
- 53 ☐ On balance I talk more than I listen.
- 54 ☐ I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion.
- 55 ☐ I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach.
- 56 ☐ I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice.
- 57 ☐ I enjoy being the one that talks a lot.
- 58 ☐ If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version.
- 59 ☐ In discussions with people I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective.
- 60 ☐ In discussions I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations.
- 61 ☐ When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and put it down to experience.
- 62 ☐ I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind.
- 63 ☐ I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer-term bigger picture.
- 64 ☐ I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical.

- 65 ☐ I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling.
- 66 ☐ In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a 'low profile' than to take the lead and do most of the talking.
- 67 ☐ I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach.
- 68 ☐ Most times I believe the end justifies the means.
- 69 ☐ I'm usually one of the people who puts life into a party.
- 70 ☐ It's best to think carefully before taking action.
- 71 ☐ I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events.
- 72 ☐ I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done.
- 73 ☐ I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work.
- 74 ☐ On balance I do the listening rather than the talking.
- 75 ☐ I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda, etc.
- 76 ☐ I do whatever is expedient to get the job done.
- 77 ☐ I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation.
- 78 ☐ I'm always interested to find out what people think.
- 79 ☐ I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics.
- 80 ☐ People often find me insensitive to their feelings.

In the following section you will find descriptions of the four learning styles. After reading them, complete the Score Key in Section 6 to find out your learning style preferences.

---

# SECTION 6

## Score Key

You score one point for each item ticked (✓). There are no points for items you crossed (\*).

You will find a score key attached to the back cover of this booklet. This is designed to make it easy to transfer your scores from the questionnaire on pages 14-18.

Simply fold out the score key and record your responses in the boxes provided.

Then plot your scores on the profile chart on page 23 to get a relative feel for the strength of your preferences.

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist	
20	20	20	20	
19		19	19	
18				
17	19	18		Very Strong Preference
16			18	
15		17		
14				
13	18	16	17	
12	17	15	16	
	16			Strong Preference
11	15	14	15	
10	14	13	14	
9	13	12	13	Moderate Preference
8				
7	12	11	12	
6	11	10	11	
5	10	9	10	Low Preference
4	9	8	9	
3	8	7	8	
	7	6	7	
	6	5	6	
2	5	4	5	
	4		4	Very Low Preference
	3	3	3	
1	2	2	2	
	1	1	1	
0	0	0	0	

# SCORE KEY

For each question you have ticked on the other sheets put a tick in the box beside the question number on this sheet. Add up the ticks in each column.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	8
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	16
<input type="checkbox"/>	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	20
<input type="checkbox"/>	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	23	<input type="checkbox"/>	24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26	<input type="checkbox"/>	27	<input type="checkbox"/>	28
<input type="checkbox"/>	29	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31	<input type="checkbox"/>	32
<input type="checkbox"/>	33	<input type="checkbox"/>	34	<input type="checkbox"/>	35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36
<input type="checkbox"/>	37	<input type="checkbox"/>	38	<input type="checkbox"/>	39	<input type="checkbox"/>	40
<input type="checkbox"/>	41	<input type="checkbox"/>	42	<input type="checkbox"/>	43	<input type="checkbox"/>	44
<input type="checkbox"/>	45	<input type="checkbox"/>	46	<input type="checkbox"/>	47	<input type="checkbox"/>	48
<input type="checkbox"/>	49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51	<input type="checkbox"/>	52
<input type="checkbox"/>	53	<input type="checkbox"/>	54	<input type="checkbox"/>	55	<input type="checkbox"/>	56
<input type="checkbox"/>	57	<input type="checkbox"/>	58	<input type="checkbox"/>	59	<input type="checkbox"/>	60
<input type="checkbox"/>	61	<input type="checkbox"/>	62	<input type="checkbox"/>	63	<input type="checkbox"/>	64
<input type="checkbox"/>	65	<input type="checkbox"/>	66	<input type="checkbox"/>	67	<input type="checkbox"/>	68
<input type="checkbox"/>	69	<input type="checkbox"/>	70	<input type="checkbox"/>	71	<input type="checkbox"/>	72
<input type="checkbox"/>	73	<input type="checkbox"/>	74	<input type="checkbox"/>	75	<input type="checkbox"/>	76
<input type="checkbox"/>	77	<input type="checkbox"/>	78	<input type="checkbox"/>	79	<input type="checkbox"/>	80
Totals	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>			
	Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist			



---

# SECTION 5

## Learning style descriptions

### Activists

Activists like to take direct action. They are enthusiastic and welcome new challenges and experiences. They are less interested in what has happened in the past or in putting things into a broader context. They are primarily interested in the here and now. They like to have a go, try things out and participate. They like to be the centre of attention.

So, in summary, Activists like:

- to think on their feet
- to have short sessions
- plenty of variety
- the opportunity to initiate
- to participate and have fun.

### Reflectors

Reflectors like to think about things in detail before taking action. They take a thoughtful approach. They are good listeners and prefer to adopt a low profile. They are prepared to read and re-read and will welcome the opportunity to repeat a piece of learning.

So, in summary, Reflectors like:

- to think before acting
- thorough preparation
- to research and evaluate
- to make decisions in their own time
- to listen and observe.

---

## **Theorists**

Theorists like to see how things fit into an overall pattern. They are logical and objective systems people who prefer a sequential approach to problems. They are analytical, pay great attention to detail and tend to be perfectionists.

So, in summary, Theorists like:

- concepts and models
- to see the overall picture
- to feel intellectually stretched
- structure and clear objectives
- logical presentation of ideas.

## **Pragmatists**

Pragmatists like to see how things work in practice. They enjoy experimenting with new ideas. They are practical, down to earth and like to solve problems. They appreciate the opportunity to try out what they have learned/are learning.

So, in summary, Pragmatists like:

- to see the relevance of their work
- to gain practical advantage from learning
- credible role models
- proven techniques
- activities to be real.

---

## SECTION 8

### How to choose learning activities to suit your learning style

Different learning activities tend to be more compatible with certain learning style preferences. Where individual preferences and activities match, learning is more likely. If there is a mismatch you are less likely to learn and/or will find learning more of a struggle.

This section will show you how you can choose activities that are likely to dovetail with your style. We also indicate the activities it may pay you to avoid, unless you are given special help in coping with them.

Here are four checklists to guide you towards learning activities that suit your style. You do not have to study the detail on all of them. Just concentrate on the parts that are relevant to you in the light of your Learning Styles Questionnaire result.

We hope these checklists will guide you towards suitable learning experiences. The checklists will also help you identify the kind of work experiences from which you are most likely to learn and benefit.

These checklists are followed by some key questions that you should ask before engaging in any learning activity. Whenever the answer to some (or all) the questions in each batch is 'no', the activity is not a good fit with your preferred learning style.

If you have a preference for the **Activist** style:

*you will learn most easily from activities where*

- there are **new** experiences/problems/opportunities from which to learn
- you can engross yourself in short 'here and now' activities
- there is excitement/drama/crisis
- things chop and change and there are diverse activities to tackle
- you have a lot of the limelight
- you are allowed to generate lots of ideas
- you are thrown in at the deep end with a task you think is difficult/challenging
- you are involved with other people, e.g. bouncing ideas off them, solving problems as part of a team
- it is appropriate to 'have a go'.

*you will find it more difficult to learn from activities where*

- learning involves a passive role, e.g. listening to lectures, monologues, explanations, statements of how things should be done, reading, watching
- you are asked to stand back and not be involved
- you are required to engage in solitary work, i.e. reading, writing or thinking on your own
- you are asked to repeat essentially the same activity over and over again, e.g. when practising
- you have precise instructions to follow with little room for manoeuvre
- you are asked to do a thorough job, e.g. attend to detail, tie up loose ends, dot i's and cross t's.

#### **Key questions if you have strong Activist preferences**

- Will I be likely to learn something new, i.e. that I didn't know/couldn't do before?
- Will there be a wide variety of different activities?  
(I don't want to sit and listen for more than an hour at a stretch!)
- Will it be OK to have a go/let my hair down/make mistakes?
- Will I encounter tough problems and challenges?
- Will there be other like-minded people to mix with/have fun with?
- Will there be lots to do/lots of opportunities to participate?

If you have a preference for the **Reflector** style:

---

*you will learn most easily from activities where*

- you are allowed or encouraged to watch/think/chew over activities
- you are able to stand back from events and listen/observe, e.g. take a back seat in a group activity, watch a film or video
- you are allowed to think before acting, e.g. time to prepare, a chance to read background information in advance
- you can carry out some painstaking research, e.g. investigate, gather information, probe to get to the bottom of things
- you have the opportunity to think about what has happened, what you have learned
- you are asked to produce carefully considered analyses and reports
- you can reach a decision in your own time without pressure and tight deadlines.

*you will find it more difficult to learn from activities where*

- you are 'forced' into the limelight, e.g. to act as leader, to role-play in front of onlookers
- you are involved in situations that require action without planning
- you are pitched into doing something without warning, e.g. to produce an instant reaction, to produce a spontaneous idea
- you are given insufficient information on which to base a conclusion
- you are given cut and dried instructions of how things should be done
- you are worried by time pressures or rushed from one activity to another
- you are not given time to do a thorough job.

### **Key questions if you have strong Reflector preferences**

- Will I be given adequate time to consider, assimilate and prepare?
- Will there be opportunities/facilities to gather relevant information?
- Will there be opportunities to listen to other people's points of view?  
(Preferably a wide cross-section of people with a variety of views.)
- Will I have adequate time to prepare and not be under pressure to be slapdash or to think on my feet?
- Will there be useful opportunities to watch other people in action?

If you have a preference for the **Theorist** style:

*you will learn most easily from activities where*

- you have time to be methodical and to explore the associations and inter-relationships between ideas, events and situations
- you have the chance to question and probe the basic methodology, assumptions or logic behind something, e.g. by taking part in a question and answer session, by checking a newspaper for inconsistencies
- you are intellectually stretched, e.g. by analysing a complex situation, being tested in a tutorial session, by working with people who ask searching questions
- you are in structured situations with a clear purpose
- you can listen to, or read about, ideas and concepts that emphasise rationality or logic and are well argued/watertight
- you are offered interesting ideas and concepts, even though they may not be immediately relevant
- you are required to understand and participate in complex situations.

*you will find it more difficult to learn from activities where*

- you are required to do something without enough background information or an apparent purpose
- you have to participate in situations emphasising emotions and feelings
- you are involved in unstructured activities where uncertainty is high
- you are asked to act, or decide, without proper guidelines
- you are faced with a hotchpotch of alternative/contradictory techniques/methods
- you doubt that the subject matter is methodologically sound, e.g. where questionnaires haven't been validated, where there aren't any statistics to support the argument
- you find the subject matter banal, shallow or gimmicky
- you feel yourself out of tune with other participants, e.g. when with lots of Activists or people of lower intellectual calibre.

### **Key questions if you have strong Theorist preferences**

- Will there be lots of opportunities to ask questions?
- Will there be clear objectives and a plan/structure to achieve them?
- Will I encounter complex ideas and concepts that are likely to stretch me?
- Will the approaches used and concepts explored be 'respectable', i.e. sound and valid?
- Will I be with people of similar calibre to myself?
- Will this experience give me the chance to develop a general view or model?

*you will learn most easily from activities where*

- there is an obvious link between the subject matter and a current problem or opportunity at work
- you are shown techniques for doing things with obvious practical advantages, e.g. how to save time, how to make a good first impression, how to deal with awkward people
- you have the chance to try out and practise techniques with coaching from someone you trust, who is successful and can do the techniques themselves
- you have the opportunity to learn from a demonstration by someone with a proven track record or a film showing how it is done
- you are shown techniques that apply to what you are trying to achieve
- you are given immediate opportunities to implement what you have learned
- you can concentrate on practical issues, e.g. by drawing up action plans with an obvious end product, suggesting short cuts, giving tips.

*you will find it more difficult to learn from activities where*

- the learning is not related to an immediate need you recognise/see or an immediate relevance/practical benefit
- organisers of the learning or the event itself seem distanced from reality, i.e. 'ivory towered', all theory and general principles, pure 'chalk and talk'
- there is no practice or clear guidelines on how to do it
- you feel that people are going round in circles and not getting anywhere fast enough
- there are political, managerial or personal obstacles to implementation
- you can't see sufficient reward from the learning activity.

### **Key questions if you have strong Pragmatist preferences**

- Will there be ample opportunities to practise and experiment?
- Will there be lots of practical tips and techniques?
- Will I be addressing *real* problems and will it result in action plans to tackle some of my current problems?
- Will I be exposed to experts who know how to/can do it themselves?
- Will this really improve my immediate performance?