Activity One – Learning Styles .... KNOW THYSELF

You are required to complete the questionnaire given below, plot your results and briefly comment on your findings. Use the template given at the end.

What is your predominant learning style?

Honey and Mumford (1982; http://www.peterhoney.com/main/) devised an influential self-test, which indicates whether you are predominantly an activist, a reflector, a theorist, or a pragmatist. There are websites where you can take the test (for a price!). Below is an alternative to the Honey and Mumford questionnaire - which is free of charge! This questionnaire allows you to create a profile of yourself as a learner, and so provide you with information which could help you to design ways of learning particularly suitable to your own needs and personality.

Read the explanation below for advice on completing the first part of the questionnaire.

You can find out by taking the test at the end of this section. It is worth noting that the test should not be regarded as diagnostic, but more as a guide to understanding yourself, particularly as a learner.

The alternative terms for each learning style are listed below:

Alternative Learning Style References				
Concrete	=	Accommodator	=	Activist (Doer)
Active	=	Diverger	=	Reflector (Watcher)
Reflective	=	Assimilator	=	Theorist (Thinker)
Abstract	=	Converger	=	Pragmatist (Feeler)

Knowing your own preferred learning style might help to explain why you face difficulties in learning certain subjects (but remember motivation and discipline play important roles too). For example, some subjects are by nature more theoretical, which may contradict your own preferred activist learning style. What should you do then?

LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following learning style questionnaire is adapted from
<u>Preferred Learning Style</u>
Look at the four statements (a – d) in each section and decide how they refer to you. Allocate marks to each statement in the corresponding boxes (a – d), using the scale 1– 4 as follows:

- 4 marks for the statement which best refers to you
- 3 marks for the second best
- 2 for the third
- 1 for the statement which describes you least well

Complete this section before looking at the summary section or the information on evaluation.
<u>*For convenience you can also produce your own printable plot, online.*</u>
<u>Questions</u>

1.   a I like to get involved   a =
        b I like to take my time before acting   b =
        c I am particular about what I like   c =
        d I like things to be useful   d =

2.   a I like to try things out   a =
        b I like to analyse and break things into parts b =
        c I am open to new experiences   c =
        d I like to look at all sides of issues   d =

3.   a I like to watch   a =
        b I like to follow my feelings   b =
        c I like to be doing things   c =
        d I like to think about things   d =

4.   a I accept people and situations the way they are a =
        b I like to be aware of what is around me   b =
        c I like to evaluate   c =
        d I like to take risks   d =

5.   a I have gut feelings and hunches   a =
        b I have a lot of questions   b =
        c I am logical   c =
        d I am hard-working and get things done   d =

6.   a I like things that I can see, feel, touch or smell a =
        b I like to be active   b =
         c I like to observe   c =
         d I like ideas and theories   d =

7.   a I prefer learning in the here and now   a =
        b I like to consider and think about things   b =
        c I tend to think about the future   c =
        d I like to see the results of my work   d =

8.   a I have to try things out for myself   a =
        b I rely on my own ideas   b =
        c I rely on my observations   c =
        d I rely on my feelings   d =

9.   a I am quiet and reserved   a =
        b I am energetic and enthusiastic   b =
        c I tend to reason things out   c =
        d I am responsible about things   d =

Summary

The grid below is used to summarise your scores. Complete it by writing in the mark 1- 4 you gave for each question a-d. In the first box in the first column, for example, you write the mark which you gave to each sentence. Please not that not all the marks are recorded here; this is to prevent patterning and to allow for the inclusion of distractors.
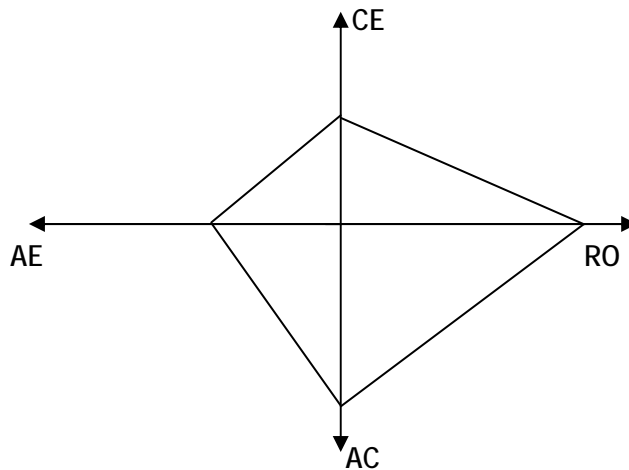
CE	RO	AC	AE
1a =	1b =	2b =	2a =
2c =	2d =	3d =	3c =
3b =	3a =	4c =	6b =
4a =	6c =	6d =	7b =
8d =	8c =	8b =	8a =
9b =	9a =	9c =	9d =
Total =	Total =	Total =	Total =

Total scores:
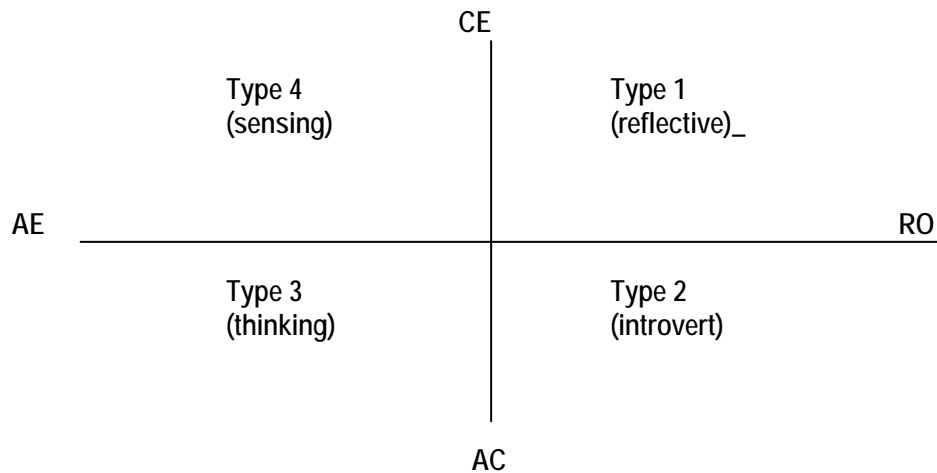
CE =☐   RO =☐   AC =☐   AE =☐

Now plot the total scores on the four axes in the personal diagram given at the end of this Section. You can then produce your own personal "kite" by joining the four scores, as shown in the example diagram, below.

Example of kite

For convenience you can produce your own printable plot, online.

The four axes provide us with four quadrants which indicate the kind of person you are (Kolb D.A. 1976).

```
                              CE
                              |
            Type 4            |    Type 1
            (sensing)         |    (reflective)_
                              |
   AE  _____|_____  RO
                              |
            Type 3            |    Type 2
            (thinking)        |    (introvert)
                              |
                              |
                             AC
```

The four axes:

CE – Concrete experience
You are more interested in experiencing reality than looking at theory. You are good at relating to others and are good at making intuitive decisions. You are open-minded about life.

RO – Reflective observation
You prefer to understand rather than apply ideas. You prefer to know what is true or how things happen rather than how things work. You value patience, impartiality and thoughtful judgement.

AC – Abstract conceptualisation
You are logical and like new ideas. You prefer to think a situation through rather than rely on instinct. You like precision and the discipline of organised life.

AE – Active experimentation
You like to influence people and change situations. You prefer to learn things that have a practical application. You are willing to take a risk to achieve your goals. You like to influence people and see results.

Take the quadrants in which your two highest scores occur and read the appropriate passages below.

Learner type 1: the reflective learner
You seek hidden meaning and need to be involved personally. You learn by listening and sharing ideas. You are interested in people. You excel in viewing concrete situations from many perspectives and model yourself on those you respect.
> *Strength:* innovation and imagination
> *Goal:* self-involvement in important issues, bringing unity
> *Favourite question:* Why? /Why not?
> *Careers:* counselling, personnel and humanities

Your preferred strategies may include:
➢ organisation in advance
➢ allowing time for reflection
➢ self-management
➢ self-evaluation
➢ group work

- ➢ discussion group
- ➢ deduction

Learner type 2: the analytic learner
You seek facts. You learn thinking through ideas. You perceive information abstractly and process it reflectively. You are particularly interested in ideas and concepts. You are thorough and industrious. You function by adapting to the experts.

Strength: creating concepts and models.
Goal: self-satisfaction and intellectual recognition.
Favourite question: What?
*Career*s: basic sciences, maths, research, planning departments

The strategies you might like include:
- ➢ organisation in advance
- ➢ directed teaching
- ➢ systematic note-taking
- ➢ testing yourself regularly
- ➢ receiving regular feed-back from experts
- ➢ constructive research

Learner type 3: the common-sense learner
You need to know how things you are asked to do will help in real life. You learn by testing theories in ways that seem sensible. You perceive information abstractly and process it actively. You use factual data to build designed concepts; you need hands-on experiences and enjoy solving problems by yourself.

Strength: practical application of ideas.
Goal: to bring your view of the present into line with future security.
*Favourite questio*n: How does this work?
*Career*s: engineering, physical sciences, nursing, technicians.

The strategies you might like include:
- ➢ practical work
- ➢ project work
- ➢ working towards
- ➢ self-evaluation
- ➢ experimenting
- ➢ deduction/inferencing

Learner type 4: the dynamic learner
You need to know what can be done with things. You learn by trial-and-error and self-discovery. You like variety and excel in situations calling for flexibility. You tend to take risks, are at ease with people and sometimes can be pushy. You often reach accurate conclusions in the absence of logical justification.

Strength: action, carrying out plans.
Goal: to make things happen, to bring action to concepts.
Favourite question: What can this become?
*Career*s: marketing, sales,

The strategies you prefer may include:
- ➢ concrete project work
- ➢ setting short-term targets
- ➢ interacting with tutors and peers
- ➢ physical activities
- ➢ variety of learning environments and activities
- ➢ independent work

What type of learner am I?

How can you maximise your learning?

Once you are aware of your own preferences you can work at adapting the course presentation or content to suit your own learning styles. The following are some examples taken from The Study Skills Handbook published by Macmillan (Cottrell: 54)

Example 1
If you prefer to work with others, organise a study group, or arrange to work with a friend. Work in libraries and get involved in student activities.

Example 2
If you like to work to your own agenda, focus on time management so that your time feels like your own. Look for articles that nobody else is likely to use. Find examples that others might not think of.

Example 3
If you prefer to work by ear, tape lectures and read extracts from books onto tape, listen to them on the bus, record your own ideas onto tape, form a support group so that you can learn through discussion.

Last but not least!

Don't forget to use your awareness of your learning style to make a conscious effort to work at **developing the skills that do not come naturally to you.**

On-line Learning Style Questionnaires

There are many learning style questionnaires available on-line- a comprehensive list can be obtained by simply typing the phrase "learning style questionnaire" in the Google Search Engine. A couple of good sites are given below:
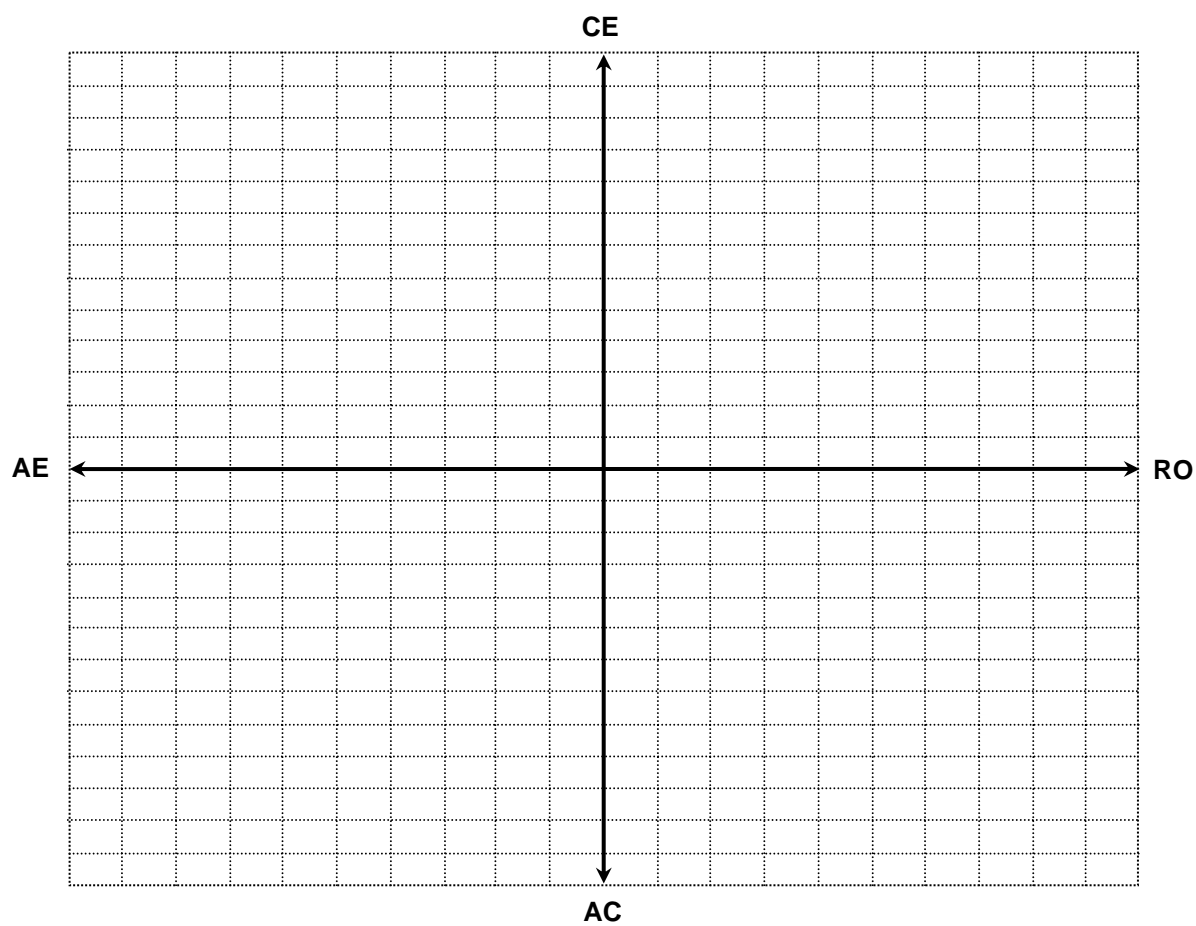
http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html
http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp
http://adulted.about.com/library/weekly/aa110799.htm

Northampton 101 Learning Styles Questionnaire

Student Name:

Personal Learning Style Diagram

CE

AE ← → **RO**

AC

Briefly reflect on your own Learning Style

You will have probably realised that you do not fit neatly into one particular category. You are more likely to have strong tendencies and preferences rather than being a typical activist or analytic learner. In order to help you to build up your own profile write down about ten short statements that express the way you feel you learn best.
e.g. *I like working in groups. I like discussing ideas.*