

We all learn in different ways.
We all have preferences for how
we tackle new experiences.
Understanding the learning
cycle, and how you go through
it, can help explain how you deal
with problems, people and new
situations. And understanding
the differences between yourself
and others can give

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Kolb Learning Style Inventory

insights into your personal and
professional relationships.

We're always learning. The question is, how are we learning?

Even when you think you know everything there is to know about a certain job or certain people there are always surprises. How we react to these surprises and what we take out of the situation will vary tremendously between individuals. Just as we each deal with situations differently, so we each learn differently. We demonstrate preferences and personal styles in our approach to learning, just as we do in other aspects of our behavior.

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is a paper based or online questionnaire developed by David A. Kolb, Ph.D. Based on Experiential Learning Theory, the LSI helps you understand your preferred learning styles and think through the implications for:

- how you solve problems
- your approach to team work
- how you handle conflict
- how you communicate with others – at work or at home
- considering a career that fits your preferences

“ Why is it important to understand learning styles? ”

If we can gain some insight into the way we learn, we can answer the kind of questions that really matter in life:

- Why does my colleague really frustrate me?
- Why do I always misunderstand what my tutor is saying?
- Why do we never manage to resolve that issue in our team?
- Why did I really enjoy that particular project?
- Why do I always struggle to explain a new idea to my boss?

The what, where, who and why of learning

The LSI enables people to identify which phases in the learning cycle they prefer and which they tend to avoid. It helps them understand their preferred learning style and the implications for other behaviors. It also helps them develop practical strategies to develop weaker learning styles.

Each of us has a tendency to operate from a preferred phase. But we learn most effectively – most completely – when we work through a full cycle, phase by phase. When this happens, our learning starts to have a long term, sustained impact on our capabilities.

Extensive research shows there are four principle phases to learning

- **Experience:** learning from specific experiences, being sensitive to feelings and people
- **Observation:** observing before making judgments, viewing issues from different perspectives, looking for the meaning of things
- **Thinking:** logically analyzing ideas, planning systematically, acting on an intellectual basis
- **Action:** showing an ability to get things done, taking risks, influencing people

Anyone using the Kolb Learning Style Inventory extensively will find the Facilitator's Guide to Learning invaluable. It gives a thorough overview of the LSI and its research background, as well as ideas and guidance on a range of processes for group and individual sessions.

What's the value to your business?

The Kolb Learning Style Inventory will help you to create a learning environment and learning experiences that really work for others – anticipating, and heading off, the barriers that they are likely to encounter, while encouraging them to 'stretch' safely into less preferred learning styles.

We all learn in different ways and have preferences for how we manage new experiences. Understanding learning styles is essential for everyone:

- senior and middle managers in development programs
- participants in one-to-one coaching relationships
- team members wanting to improve their communications or effectiveness
- professionals involved in supporting or managing the development of others
- students in schools, higher education and the learning and skills sector

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