**Guidance note no. 4**

Learning styles were developed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford, based upon the work of Kolb, and they identified four distinct learning styles or preferences: **Activist**, **Theorist**; **Pragmatist**and **Reflector**. These are the learning approaches that individuals naturally prefer and they recommend that in order to maximise one's own personal learning each learner ought to:

* understand their learning style
* seek out opportunities to learn using that style

To understand your particular learning style Honey and Mumford have developed a Learning Style Questionnaire (distributed to participants) and with this information you will be in a far better position to do three really useful things [quoting P. Honey]:

1. "Become smarter at getting a better fit between learning opportunities and the way you learn best. This makes your learning easier, more effective and more enjoyable. It saves you tackling your learning on a hit-and-miss basis. Equipped with information about your learning preferences, you'll have many more hits and fewer misses."
2. "Expand the 'band width' of experiences from which you derive benefit. Becoming an all-round learner, increases your versatility and helps you learn from a wide variety of different experiences - some formal, some informal, some planned and some spontaneous."
3. "Improve your learning skills and processes. Increased awareness of how you learn, opens up the whole process to self-scrutiny and improvement. Learning to learn is your most important capability since it provides the gateway to everything else you want to develop."

**Note**: However, to be an effective learner (and trainer!) you should also develop the ability to learn in other styles too.

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| Learning style | Attributes | Activities |
| Activist | Activists are those people who learn by doing. Activists need to get their hands dirty, to dive in with both feet first. Have an open-minded approach to learning, involving themselves fully and without bias in new  experiences.  They are not afraid of try-and-error. | brainstorming  problem solving  group discussion  puzzles  competitions  role-play |
| Thinkers/listeners | These learners like to understand the theory behind the actions. They need models, concepts and facts in order to engage in the learning process. Prefer to analyse and synthesise, drawing new information into a systematic and logical 'theory'. | models  statistics  stories  quotes  background information  applying theories |
| Pragmatist | These people need to be able to see how to put the learning into practice in the real world. Abstract concepts and games are of limited use unless they can  see a way to put the ideas into action in their lives.  Experimenters, trying out new ideas, theories and  techniques to see if they work. | time to think about how to apply learning in reality  case studies  problem solving  discussion |
| Reflector/observer | These people learn by observing and thinking about what happened. They may avoid leaping in and prefer  to watch from the sidelines. Prefer to stand back and  view experiences from a number of different  perspectives, collecting data and taking the time to  work towards an appropriate conclusion. | paired discussions  self analysis questionnaires  personality questionnaires  time out  observing activities  feedback from others  coaching  interviews |

**Additional category: Feelers (often cross-cutting)**

Feelers learn through focusing on human values and needs. They are quick to recognize human consequences to knowledge and information as well as swiftly relating ideas and concepts to personal experiences. They are quick to forgive, being peacemakers, and excel in counseling situations. They search for opportunities to praise others.

* These learners need solid and well established relationships with teachers and other learners. Feelers work hardest in an atmosphere of personal relationships built on compassion, trust and respect. Information and facts are learned most efficiently by relating and connecting ideas and concepts to personal experiences.
* Feelers are persuasive. They prefer to study what appeals most to them but also strive to please others.
* Feelers prefer to learn in a positive, harmonizing environment. They prefer to learn from a personable educator than an organized teacher. The relationship with the teacher needs to be personal and warm. Contentions within the classroom derail this type of learner.
* These students learn best when connecting with others. Group work and partner work are essential components of successful learning for them.

**Feelers are most comfortable:**

* Having a harmonious classroom
* Enjoying personal, close relationships with teachers and other students
* Information best retained with interpersonal connections
* Study well with others -craving that interaction such as groups and partner work
* Enjoy teaching others
* Feelers are least comfortable:
* With discord and competition
* Criticism or critical feedback
* Studying topics with do not relate to people and interpersonal aspects
* Learning from impersonal instructors

**Teacher and classroom tips**

* As an educator, provide feeling students with opportunities to learn within relationships. When using group activities, give students guidelines on how to increase effective production, communication and collaboration within their groups.
* Reciprocal teaching is a magnificent opportunity to help feelers integrate new knowledge into existing scaffolds. This preference is most fulfilled when helping others or mentoring.
* The most essential piece of information to remember when teaching feelers is correction. All correction must be completed in a personal atmosphere, done with tact, understanding and compassion. Criticism is difficult for feelers which can result in putting up walls to further learning experiences.

**Teaching methods**

* Aesthetics included
* Choice board
* Close relationship with instructor
* Collaboration/cooperative
* Discussion
* Engage emotion
* Group activities
* Pace of instruction: moderate
* Partnership
* Positive feedback
* Relationships/patterns
* Teamwork activities