

GETTING TO KNOW

YOUR LEARNING STYLE

DLC TRAINING

**AN OVERVIEW OF
THE VARK
METHODS OF
LEARNING AND
IDENTIFYING
YOUR OWN**



LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

Lots of research has gone into learning styles over the years, and there's a good reason for this. Learning, at its essence, is the acquisition of new knowledge. Without the ability to acquire new knowledge, we wouldn't be able to grow in our personal or professional lives. It's important for us to hone our skill of learning, and work out which methods work best for us, to continue to grow as much as we can.

When we leave full-time education, our major source of new knowledge is no longer available. Therefore it is crucial for us to know how to go about learning for ourselves. By understanding the different learning styles, we can determine which methods work best for us as individuals. When we then try to learn something new, we can put in place the most suitable learning method to optimise our learning.

Research suggests that although we may partake in all types of learning, everyone has a preferred learning style above the rest (whether they are aware of this or not). By understanding your preference, you can put in place the most relevant activities to enhance your learning.



"Wisdom.... comes not from age, but from education and learning"

Anton Chekhov

THE VARK SYSTEM

The VARK model is one of the most popular and straightforward models created to understand learning styles. Developed in 1987 by Neil Fleming, the model focuses on four key learning styles and suggests that every person has their preference.



Visual

Visual learners retain information best by seeing. To take in new knowledge, they need the information to be presented in an appealing, often illustrated or graphical way, rather than in a simple written format.



Auditory

Auditory learners retain information best by hearing it. To take in new information, they need to be able to sit back and have information presented to them.



Reading and Writing

To take in new knowledge and information, those who lean towards the reading and writing style need to be able to absorb information from written materials and also make their own notes to reflect on.



Kinaesthetic

Kinaesthetic learners retain information best by doing. To take in new information, they need to be able to get involved with activities and demonstrations.

YOUR LEARNING STYLE

The following questions may seem simple but will help establish what kind of learner you are. Once you know your style it can help increase several things such as:

- Increase personal and professional growth
- Open up opportunities for promotion
- Build confidence
- Support the brain's cognitive functions
- Improve your mental health

Read on and take our quiz to find out what type of learner you are...

1

When assembling flat-pack furniture, which of the following would you generally do first?

1. Look at all the diagrams.
2. Ask for verbal advice from someone who has built the same piece of furniture before.
3. Read all the written instructions.
4. Put the instructions to one side and try to work it out for yourself.

2

When attending a workshop, I get the most out of?

1. Being presented with diagrams, maps or watching videos.
2. Listening to the speaker talk, or engaging in a group discussion.
3. Reading through the handouts provided.
4. Getting involved with demonstrations and practical elements of the workshop.

3

You're learning how to play a new board game with your friends. The first thing you do is:

1. Look through the diagrams on the instruction booklet.
2. Listen to someone explain the game and then ask questions.
3. Read the instructions in the booklet.
4. Start playing and work it out as you go.

YOUR LEARNING STYLE

4

You take more interest in a website that has:

1. A nice design and is visually pleasing to look at.
2. Has music or discussions for you to listen to while you're browsing the site.
3. Informative articles for you to read.
4. Something interactive that you can click on and do.

5

You're going on a mini-island hopping tour and want to know more about what's involved. The first thing you do is?

1. Look at the map to see where the islands are.
2. Talk to somebody who has done it before, or the travel company organising it for you to find out more.
3. Read the full itinerary.
4. Watch a video.

6

You're going somewhere you have never been before and need some directions. What do you?:

1. Look on maps on your phone.
2. Ask a friend to give you the directions.
3. Read the directions from Google maps and write them down.
4. Find out where you need to be in relation to somewhere you've already been before.

7

You have to make an important speech at a conference. You would:

1. Make diagrams or graphs to help you explain things.
2. Write a few keywords on a cue card and practice saying your speech out loud.
3. Write out your speech and read it several times over to try and remember it.
4. Gather different stories and examples that you can use in the speech, to make it real and practical.

ANSWERS

Now that you've answered each of the questions, work out which number you have the most of and that will tell you your learning style. Each style has a range of methods that can help you use your individual style to your advantage.

1

Mostly 1s - Visual:

You are a visual learner. You learn best by seeing pictures, diagrams and charts. You can also better understand spoken information if the story includes a lot of imagery. You can picture what you are learning clearly in your head, and remember things by sight. Some activities that will optimise your learning include:

- Flashcards
- Colour-coded notes
- Drawing pictures to learn new concepts
- Creating diagrams and charts
- Mind maps
- Flowcharts

2

Mostly 2s - Auditory:

You are an auditory learner, which means you learn best by hearing and listening. You are more likely to understand and remember spoken instructions than written ones. If you are presented with written instructions, you are likely to read them out loud to try and comprehend them. Some activities that will optimise your learning include:

- Reading notes out loud
- Listening to lectures or presentations
- Listening and taking part in discussions about the subject
- Audiobooks
- Associating music with ideas
- Use mnemonics

ANSWERS

3

Mostly 3s - Reading and Writing:

You are a read-and-write learner, which means you learn best by reading and writing. You are more likely to understand information if you can read what you need to learn and make your own notes on the information. Some activities that will optimise your learning include:

- Reading textbooks on the subject
- Reading articles and blogs around the subject area
- Writing notes on the subject
- Converting notes into a condensed learning package
- Completing written tasks
- Reading other people's notes on the subject

4

Mostly 4s - Kinaesthetic:

You are a kinaesthetic learner, which means you learn best by doing. You are more likely to understand information when the learning consists of physical activity. You may need to take regular breaks in order to stay engaged. Some activities that will optimise your learning include:

- Hands-on activities such as art projects or role play
- Walk around while reading or listening to an audiobook
- Sort revision cards into groups to understand the relationships between the ideas
- Create a memory game
- Create a presentation and teach others what you have learned
- Complete any activity suggestions in textbooks

We hope the information provided can help you better understand the way you (and those around you) learn, and thus maximise your knowledge base and potential. Don't forget to look at the DLC Resources page regularly for more useful guides like this one.

