**Your Learning Preferences**

As part of your preparation for the programme you may want to consider how you learn best and what your preferred style and approach to learning might be.

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford are best known for their learning styles questionnaire. This questionnaire is self-administered and determines people’s preferred learning styles. Knowing your own and your team members’ learning styles can accelerate learning. People undertake activities that best fit their preferred way of taking in and working with information. But there is also much to be gained from challenging yourself by trying out new styles. For example, you can help avoid repeating mistakes by undertaking activities that strengthen other styles. If someone tends to “jump in at the deep end”, they could consider spending time reflecting on experiences before taking action.

***Learning Styles Preferences: please tick (✓) the statements you agree with and cross (X) those you disagree with.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **Response** |
| 1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad |  |
| 2. I often act without considering the possible consequences |  |
| 3. I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach |  |
| 4. I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people |  |
| 5. I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly |  |
| 6. I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis |  |
| 7. I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation |  |
| 8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions |  |
| 9. What matters most is whether something works in practice |  |
| 10. I actively seek out new experiences |  |
| 11. When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice |  |
| 12. I am keen on self-discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc. |  |
| 13. I take pride in doing a thorough job |  |
| 14. I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous, 'irrational' people |  |
| **Statement** | **Response** |
| 15. I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions |  |
| 16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives |  |
| 17. I'm attracted more too novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones |  |
| 18. I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern |  |
| 19. 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 |  |
| 20. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives |  |
| 21. In discussions I like to get straight to the point |  |
| 22. I tend to have distant, rather formal relationships with people at work |  |
| 23. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different |  |
| 24. I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people |  |
| 25. I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion |  |
| 26. I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse |  |
| 27. I believe in coming to the point immediately! |  |
| 28. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly |  |
| 29. I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better |  |
| 30. Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me |  |
| 31. I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward |  |
| 32. I tend to be open about how I'm feeling |  |
| 33. In discussions I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants |  |
| 34. I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things in advance |  |
| 35. I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programmes, contingency planning etc. |  |
| 36. It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline |  |

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| **Statement** | **Response** |
| 37. I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits |  |
| 38. Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy |  |
| 39. I often get irritated by people who want to rush things |  |
| 40. It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future |  |
| 41. I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition |  |
| 42. I tend to be a perfectionist |  |
| 43. In discussions I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas |  |
| 44. In meetings I put forward practical realistic ideas |  |
| 45. More often than not, rules are there to be broken |  |
| 46. I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives |  |
| 47. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments |  |
| 48. On balance I talk more than I listen |  |
| 49. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done |  |
| 50. I think written reports should be short and to the point |  |
| 51. I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day |  |
| 52. I tend to discuss specific things rather than engaging in social discussion |  |
| 53. I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically |  |
| 54. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions |  |
| 55. If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version |  |
| 56. I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice |  |
| 57. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach |  |
| 58. I enjoy being the one that talks a lot |  |
| 59. In discussions I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations |  |

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| **Statement** | **Response** |
| 60. I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind |  |
| 61. In discussions with people I often find I am the most dispassionate & objective |  |
| 62. In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a 'low profile' than to take the lead and do most of the talking |  |
| 63. I like to be able to relate current action to a longer-term bigger picture |  |
| 64. When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and 'put it down to experience' |  |
| 65. I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical |  |
| 66. It is best to think carefully before taking action |  |
| 67. On balance I do the listening rather than the talking |  |
| 68. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach |  |
| 69. Most times I believe the end justifies the means |  |
| 70. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done |  |
| 71. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling |  |
| 72. I'm usually one of the people who put life into a party |  |
| 73. I do whatever is expedient to get the job done |  |
| 74. I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work |  |
| 75. I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events |  |
| 76. I'm always interested to find out what people think |  |
| 77. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda etc. |  |
| 78. I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics |  |
| 79. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation |  |
| 80. People often find me insensitive to their feelings |  |

**Scoring for Learning Styles Preferences:**

1. You score one point for each item you ticked (✓)
2. You score zero for items you crossed (X)
3. Simply indicate on the list overleaf which items scored 1 and which items scored 0.

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

You should now have four scores, ranging from 0-20 for Activist, Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist.

**So what does it mean?** Since the maximum score for each style is 20, at first sight you might conclude that the highest of your four scores indicates your predominant learning style. This is not necessarily so. Before drawing a conclusion, you need to view your scores in relation to other people who have completed the questionnaire. Norms have been calculated from groups who have completed the questionnaire previously and the general norms from these groups, with their level of preference for each learning style are set out below:

A: Highest scoring 10% of people Very strong preference

B: The next 20% of people Strong preference

C: The middle 40% of people Moderate preference

D: The next 20% of people Low preference

E: The lowest scoring 10% of people Very low preference

For example, you may have scored 14 for both Reflector and Activist and so at first sight it appears that you have the same level of preference for each style. However, when you look at the table below you can see that you actually have a strong preference for the Activist style, and only a moderate preference for the Reflector style.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Style** | **Very strong preference** | **Strong preference** | **Moderate preference** | **Low preference** | **Very low preference** |
| **ACTIVIST** | 13-20 | 11-12 | 7-10  (mean 9.3) | 4-6 | 0-3 |
| **REFLECTOR** | 18-20 | 15-17 | 7-14  (mean 3.6) | 4-6 | 0-3 |
| **THEORIST** | 16-20 | 14-15 | 11-13  (mean 12.5) | 8-10 | 0-7 |
| **PRAGMATIST** | 17-20 | 15-16 | 12-14  (mean 13.7) | 9-11 | 0-8 |

**Learning Preferences**

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| **If you are an Activist you:** | |
| Enjoy new experiences. Tend to jump in at the deep end. Will not respond well to a theoretical approach or one requiring book learning and working alone. | |
| You learn most from... | You learn least from... |
| 1. new experiences 2. role playing exercises 3. chairing meetings, leading discussions 4. giving presentations 5. teamwork tasks and working with others 6. bouncing ideas around | 1. lectures 2. reading 3. watching demonstrations 4. analysing lots of data 5. working alone on detailed, precise tasks 6. repeated practising |
| **If you are a Reflector you:** | |
| Like time to observe and digest information before acting. Will respond best to a chance to observe others and to analyse a situation. Project work could be useful; being thrust into the limelight or given insufficient time to prepare will impede learning. | |
| You learn most from... | You learn least from... |
| 1. watching and observing 2. videos/films 3. reviewing activities and events 4. preparation or careful research 5. analysing information 6. producing reports 7. structured learning | 1. taking a leading role 2. no chance to plan 3. given insufficient data 4. under pressure 5. following instructions with no flexibility |
| **If you are a Theorist you:** | |
| Prefer a logical structured approach. Like to analyse the situation and to have a lot of information to evaluate. Not happy in unstructured or unplanned situations. | |
| You learn most from... | You learn least from... |
| 1. following systems, models, theories 2. opportunities to probe and examine the methodology 3. being intellectually challenged 4. analysing idea and information 5. complex ideas and situations 6. logical or rational concepts and methods | 1. situations involving emotion and feelings 2. unstructured activities 3. activities with no clear purpose 4. activities lacking sound research 5. shallow concepts and ideas, not properly explained 6. working with less intelligent people |
| **If you are a Pragmatist you:** | |
| Like to get down to brass tacks and try something out rather than examine the theory. Learn best from dealing with real problems, not theory or formal training. | |
| You learn most from... | You learn least from... |
| 1. learning directly related to their job 2. practising new skills and techniques 3. following a role model 4. immediately implementing new techniques 5. practical exercises | 1. learning not immediately relevant to the job 2. theoretical approaches 3. talk and chalk 4. no clear guidelines and examples 5. learning with no immediate benefits |

**Reflections on your learning preferences:**

Please use the space below to note any reflections you may have after completing the Learning Styles Preferences. In particular, how can you use this information to help you release your own capability and that of your team?