

Learning Styles

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All those present filled the [Checklist of Learning Styles](#) and the results were tabulated ([see below](#)). The main learning points are that different people have different preferred learning styles and that some people are more flexible in this respect than others.

PILE – Practical, Imaginative, Logical, Enthusiastic

We then reviewed the handout [Learning Styles and Training Mismatches](#). This reinforced the above point using different labels (PRAT – Pragmatist, Reflector, Activist, Theorist)

and pointed for the need of trainers to (a) be aware of their own preferences and (b) to design training sessions with a range of activities so that they will please all of the trainees at least some of the time.

Table: BPL Staff Piles

	Practical	Imaginative	Logical	Enthusiastic
GC	5	10*	5	7
DB	3	11*	6	9
AS	8	7	9	7
BP	10*	6	10*	5
AM	10*	6	7	6
DL	9*	7	7	7

Checklist of Learning Styles

The following checklist has four learning styles. Put a tick opposite each statement which you think applies to you. Count up the ticks within each style section and put the total in the appropriate box.

Logical Learning Style		Imaginative Learning Style	
I work systematically on subjects I don't enjoy as well as on ones I do		I would not describe my approach to work or learning as systematic	
I check through everything I write to ensure its flow and accuracy		I like to spend a lot of time just thinking	
I pay great attention to detail in all I do		I enjoy making connections between different topics, and enjoy finding out how ideas link together	
I like to understand how things work and how ideas have been developed		I can spend a lot of time thinking about work without actually getting down to it	
I enjoy solving problems and posing new questions		I prefer thinking and talking to written assignments	
I like tackling one task and completing it before undertaking another		I like to find new and original ways of completing and presenting work	
I am a good critic, asking searching questions and raising doubts		I like to work in bursts of energy	
I prefer to work through problems for myself		I like to float ideas with other people	
I like to make lists, work out timetables and have clear action plans		I am comfortable working without timetables or plans	
I prefer to listen to ideas rather than talk		I enjoy working out new questions and alternatives	
I rework any project until I get it right		I would rather work from, and produce, creative diagrams than straightforward lists	
I stick to timetables and action plans I have made		I don't like detail; I prefer seeing the whole picture	
I learn best by studying things for myself		I enjoy challenging ideas	
I like reading for ideas and coming to my own conclusions		I like daydreaming. For me it's fruitful	
Total		Total	

Practical Learning Style		Enthusiastic Learning Style	
I like clear purpose and direction		I get bored easily and enjoy moving on to new things	
I like planning my work		I enjoy working in groups	
I like to know exactly what is required or expected before starting a project		I am not interested in detail	
I know what is important to me and what I want to achieve		I learn by talking ideas through with other people	
I like working on my own		I like variety and prefer to flit from task to task	
I like to get on with a task and not be sidetracked by new approaches and alternatives		When I'm interested I get totally involved; when I'm not I shy away from topics	
I respect deadlines and am impatient with those who don't		I prefer to skip read; trying to absorb everything is a waste of time	
I am usually very well organised		I enjoy writing freely, letting ideas flow rather than thinking through things first	
I think in advance about equipment and resources I need for work		I don't read through or check my work once its completed	
I use lists, charts and graphs that give data rather than attempt to be works of art		I like asking lots of questions to find out all I need to know	
I enjoy getting down to work		I like new ideas and approaches	
I read instructions carefully and work methodically like timetables and agendas		I like to take life as it comes and be spontaneous	
Total		Total	

You are likely to have scores in each category but your highest score will indicate you main learning style. There is no single best style. Each style has its advantages and disadvantages. Knowing about the styles will help you to build on your strengths and perhaps work on some of your weaknesses. And, perhaps even more importantly as an Adviser, it will help you to be more sensitive in giving support to other people whose learning styles are different from your own.

Learning Styles and Training Mismatches

There is the idea of *different strokes for different folks*. Different people learn in different ways and therefore a training programme that suits one type of person might not suit another.

As a trainer you will have your own preferred learning style and you will tend to assume that what is good enough for you is good enough for everybody else - but this is a selfish rather than a professional attitude. Your training courses should be designed with plenty of variety so that although you may not please all of the people all of the time you will please all of them some of the time and, in the process, you will help them to understand each other's differences so that they become more tolerant and understanding of other people in their `.

Example of a training mismatch	Learning Styles
Activist	
A lively outgoing individual always keen to try new experiences, was sent on a course that involved listening to lectures, reading the accompanying notes in a manual, and watching videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns best from short here-and-now tasks • Tries anything once and is enthusiastic about new activities • Throws herself into action based courses, games and exercises, especially anything competitive
Reflector	
A quieter, more cautious, individual, has a preference for sitting back and watching others, preferring to think before acting. He was sent on an outdoor leadership event. The course involved being selected at short notice to lead a team. Feedback on his performance was given by both instructors and fellow team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns best from standing back and observing what's happening • Prefers to collect and analyze data before coming to a conclusion • Enjoys watching people in action
Theorist	
Could be described as a perfectionist, with a tendency to think things through in a logical step-by-step way, while questioning and probing basic assumptions behind something. She was asked to attend a sensitivity training programme. An integral part of this involved opening up to situations she was facing and talking through her feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns best when reviewing content in terms of a system, model or theory • Tends to be detached and analytical • Puts great stock on rationality and logic
Dramatist	
Is practical and is always looking for new techniques or ideas to try out in the job. He was sent on training where individuals were not encouraged to make links between the content and their own jobs. Consequently he described it as too 'ivory tower' and of little practical value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns when there is an obvious link between the subject matter and a problem or opportunity on the job • Searches for new ideas and the chance to apply them to a relevant situation • Likes to get on with things, rather than having long, open-ended discussions