



# Exploring Different Learning Styles

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# Exploring Different Learning Styles

Throughout your career in management you're going to encounter many different types of people. One of the main differences between each one is going to be their method of learning, so as someone in a management position you're going to need to recognise that different learning styles exist so that you can adapt to them effectively.

Within this report, we are going to explore four of the most popular learning models within personal development, which include the Sudbury Model of Democratic Education, Anthony Gregorc's model, The Honey And Mumford Learning Model and David Kolb's model.

So, on with the first model...

## The Sudbury Model Of Democratic Education

The Sudbury Model of Democratic Education was actually formed as a critical response to the way our educational systems treat those with learning disabilities, the way our special education systems are developed, and the responses we take when forming an intervention.

The Sudbury Model asserts that there are several unique and distinctly different ways to learn and that each person needs to find his own best method. Education is something you must participate in; not something that can be shoved down your throat.

## Anthony Gregorc's Learning Model

Anthony Gregorc's learning model is based upon his theories describing exactly how the mind works. He believes we all base our learning experiences on either concrete or abstract perception and that we each operate under one ordering ability, either random or sequential. There are four different combinations of perceptions and ordering abilities and each person will focus on his or her dominant strengths.

## The Honey And Mumford Learning Model

The Honey and Mumford learning cycle states that an individual won't actually learn anything from an experience until the teacher has come full circle and illustrated the ultimate conclusion. Therefore, showing an employee a series of steps in a process will mean nothing to him if he is unable to see first-hand what the end results are going to be.

There are, of course, different types of leaning styles. According to Honey and Mumford, these include the following:

- **Activists** are ready and willing to perform shorter tasks in the present. They enjoy lectures, reading, exercises, and activities in which they don't have to be immediate leaders.
- **Reflectors** don't like to participate while they are learning. They'd prefer to sit and watch first, let the information absorb, plan their own course of action, and then implement the new techniques they've learned.

- **Theorists** prefer models, theories, and anything that presents an idea in an organised fashion. The models don't even have to be realistic as long as they make a point.
- **Pragmatists** search for realistic examples that relate directly to the task at hand. They don't want to waste time with hypothetical situations when they could be learning how to apply something directly to their own job tasks.

Most people lean strongly towards one style of learning or another while maintaining the ability to learn from others. You must simply be prepared to work with your employees to determine which method of learning is best, especially if you see that they don't understand a concept as it was presented.

## David Kolb's Learning Model

According to David Kolb, there are four main stages to any learning cycle. When all four stages are met, an individual has the ability to assimilate new information.

When an individual attempting to learn something new touches on all four steps of the cycle he or she will then have the experience necessary to retain information.

These cycles include:

- Concrete experience
- Reflective observation
- Abstract conceptualisation
- Active experimentation

Most individuals will lean towards a preferred style of learning based on the two learning cycles they were most responsive to. For example, one who learned best from concrete experience and reflective observation may find that their learning style is diverging.

The four main learning styles are:

- Diverging
- Assimilating
- Converging
- Accommodating

David Kolb's learning cycle can also be connected to the Honey and Mumford Model we have just discussed, as they both have similar ideas surrounding how individuals retain information.

The Kolb learning cycle can be a bit complicated when you attempt to determine which learning cycles and styles are best for each person, so we have created a questionnaire to help you determine not only your own preferred learning style, but also uncover which learning style each of your team members lean most towards.

We often use this questionnaire as part of our Management Courses, as it offers some really useful insights as to how each of our delegates prefers to learn by combining both the work of David Kolb and the Honey And Mumford Learning Model.

# Kolb's Learning Styles Questionnaire

## What kind of learner are you?

Read each of the following statements carefully.

If you agree with the statement, put a tick (✓) in that box. If you disagree with the statement, put a cross (✗).

Answer honestly as there are no correct or incorrect answers. It is best if you do not think about each question too long, as this could lead you to the wrong conclusion.

Number	Statement	✓ / ✗
1.	I often produce off-the-cuff ideas that at first might seem silly or half-baked.	
2.	I am thorough and methodical.	
3.	I am normally the one who initiates conversations.	
4.	I enjoy watching people.	
5.	I am flexible and open-minded.	
6.	I am careful and cautious.	
7.	I like to try new and different things without too much preparation.	
8.	I investigate a new topic or process in depth before trying it.	
9.	I am happy to have a go at new things.	
10.	I draw up lists up possible courses of actions when starting a new project.	
11.	I like to get involved and to participate.	
12.	I like to read and observe.	
13.	I am loud and outgoing.	
14.	I am quiet and somewhat shy.	
15.	I make quick and bold decisions.	
16.	I make cautious and logical decisions.	
17.	I speak slowly, after thinking.	
18.	I speak fast, while thinking.	
19.	I ask probing questions when learning a new subject.	
20.	I am good at picking up hints and techniques from other people.	
21.	I am rational and logical.	
22.	I am practical and down to earth.	
23.	I plan events down to the last detail.	

24.	I like realistic, but flexible plans.	
25.	I like to know the right answers before trying something new.	
26.	I try things out by practicing to see if they work.	
27.	I analyse reports to find the basic assumptions and inconsistencies.	
28.	I rely upon others to give me the basic gist of reports.	
29.	I prefer working alone.	
30.	I enjoy working with others.	
31.	Others would describe me as serious, reserved and formal.	
32.	Others would describe me as verbal, expressive and informal.	
33.	I use facts to make decisions.	
34.	I use feelings to make decisions.	
35.	I am difficult to get to know.	
36.	I am easy to get to know.	

## SCORING PROCEDURES

Transfer the ticks from the previous questions on the table below and then add the total columns up.

AE		RO		AG		CE	
1		2		19		20	
3		4		21		22	
5		6		23		24	
7		8		25		26	
9		10		27		28	
11		12		29		30	
13		14		31		32	
15		16		33		34	
17		18		35		36	
TOTAL							

Each preference (high score) from the two sections on the previous page are used to determine your learning style:

If you are a AE and CE then you are an <b>Activist</b>	If you are a RO and CE then you are a <b>Reflector</b>	If you are a RO and AG then you are a <b>Theorist</b>	If you are a AE and AG then you are a <b>Pragmatist</b>
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Note that you learn in **ALL** four styles, but may lean more towards one or two as a preference.

## About MTD



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Sean McPheat is the **Chief Executive Officer** of the multi-award winning **MTD Training Group**.

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