

VAK(t) LEARNING STYLES TEST

Everybody has a preferred learning style. Knowing and understanding our learning style helps us to learn more effectively. Through identifying your learning style, you will be able to capitalize on your strengths and improve your teaching skills.

Directions: Place a check in all the boxes that describe you. The list with the greatest number of checks is your dominant learning style.

List 1 – Visual learning style

- Asks for verbal instructions to be repeated
- Watches speakers' facial expressions and body language
- Likes to take notes to review later
- Remembers best by writing things down several times or drawing pictures and diagrams
- Is a good speller
- Gets lost with verbal instructions
- Prefers information to be presented visually (e.g. flipcharts or chalk board)
- Skillful at making graphs, charts, and other visual displays
- Can understand and follow directions on maps
- Feels the best way to remember something is to picture it in their head
- Follows written instructions better than oral ones.
- Good at solving jigsaw puzzles
- Gets the words to a song wrong
- Good at the visual arts

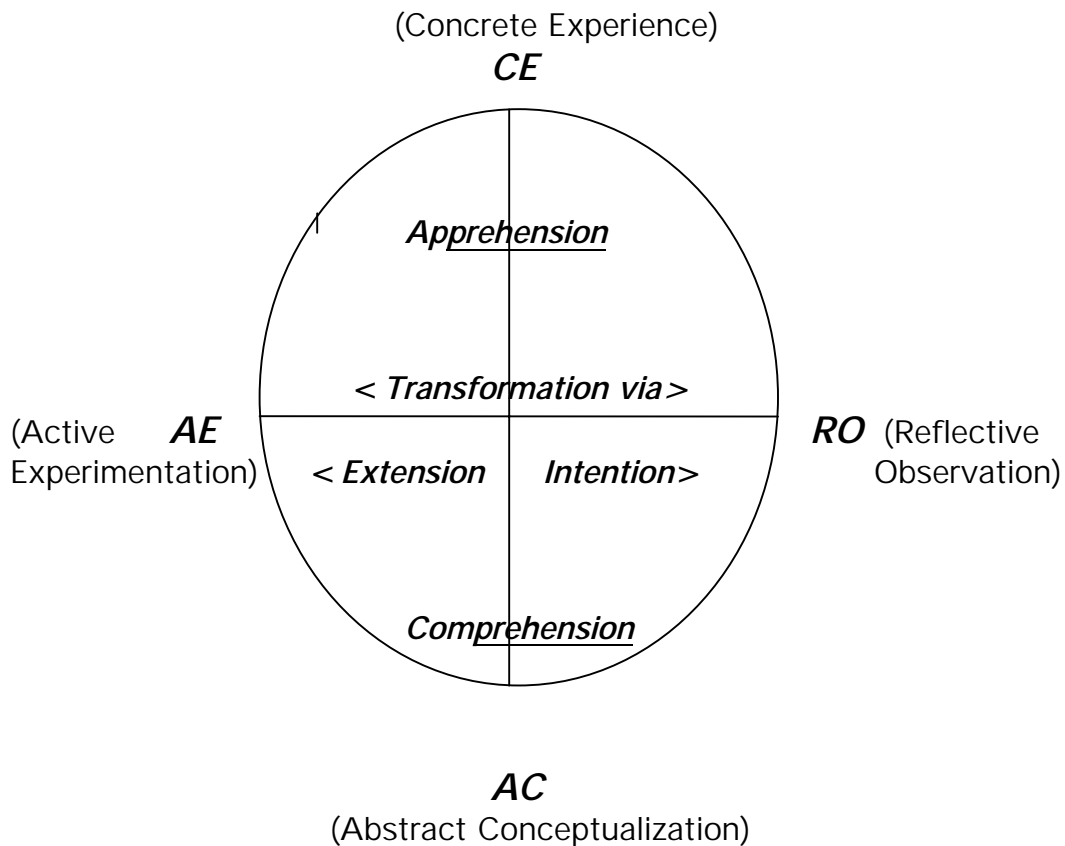
List 2 – Auditory Learning Style

- Follows oral directions better than verbal ones
- Would rather listen to a lecture than read the material in a textbook
- Understands better when they read aloud
- Struggles to keep notebooks neat
- Prefers to listen to the radio rather than read a newspaper
- Frequently sings, hums or whistles to themselves
- Dislikes reading from a computer screen especially when the backgrounds are fussy
- When presented with two similar sounds, can tell if sounds are the same or different
- Requires explanations of diagrams, graphs, or maps
- Enjoys talking to others
- Talks to self
- Uses musical jingles to learn things
- Would rather listen to music than view a piece of artwork
- Likes to tell jokes and stories and makes verbal analogies to demonstrate a point

List 3 – Kinesthetic/Tactile learning style

- Reaches out to touch things
- Collects things
- Talks fast using hands to communicate what they want to say
- Constantly fidgeting (e.g. tapping pen, playing with keys in pocket)
- Good at sports
- Likes to take things apart, put things together
- Prefers to stand while working
- Enjoys working with hands and making things
- Likes to chew gum or eat in class
- Learns through movement and exploring the environment around them
- May be considered hyperactive
- Good at finding their way around
- Comfortable touching others as a show of friendship (e.g. hugging)
- Prefers to do things rather than watching a demonstration or reading about it in a book

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF KOLB'S MODEL



KEY:

* Cycle moves from CE to RO to AC to AE

* Process of knowledge also includes dialectical intersections between gaining experience (*prehending*) and transforming experience into knowledge

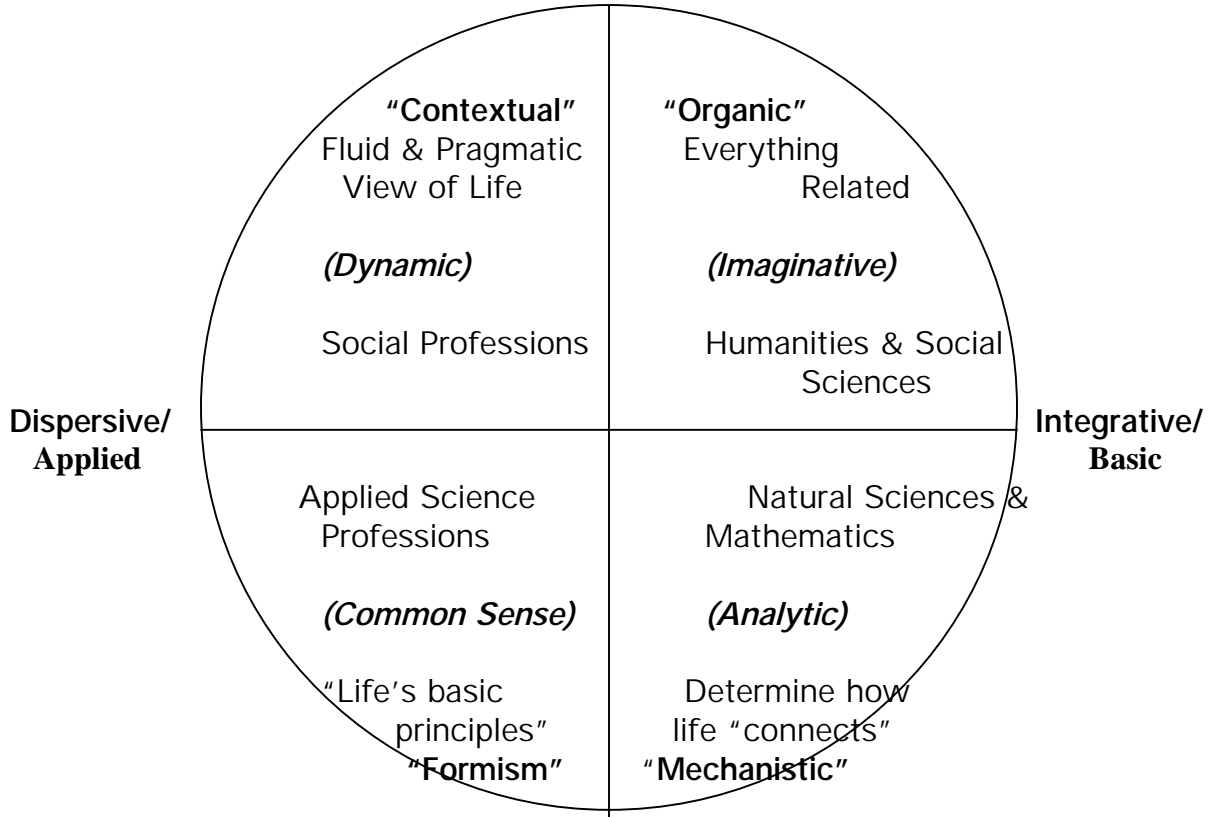
CE---AC continuum is "prehending" experience through perception (apprehension) or insight (comprehension)

RO---AE continuum is "transforming" experience through internal organization ("intention") or external manipulation ("extension")

Knowledge & Learning Approaches Based on Kolb's Model (*McCartney Categories included*)

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Synthetic/Qualitative (Humanistic)



Analytic/Quantitative (Scientific)

Worldviews & Orientation	Organic	Mechanistic	Formism	Contextual
Inquiry Questions	Why?	What?	When & Where?	How?
Inquiry Strategy	Integrative Synthesis	Integrative Analysis	Discrete Analysis	Discrete Synthesis
Units of Knowledge	Processes	Underlying Structures	Natural laws	Events
Method of portraying knowledge	Images	Symbols	Things	Actions
Theory of Truth	Coherence: how things hold together	Finding the primary cause(s)	How things correspond	Verifying the validity of "what works"
McCartney's Version	Imaginative	Analytic	Common Sense	Dynamic (Application)

David Kolb (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall PTR

Kolb's Model of Prior Learning Questions*

A. Concrete Experience

1. What did I do? Where? When? For how long? Why?
2. How many other people were involved? Is my role, responsibility and contribution clear, from what of the group or committee?
3. What was the extent of my involvement?
4. What techniques, methods, or procedures did I use? Why?
5. What were my goals and objectives? How did they influence my approach?
6. What resources did I use?

B. Observations and Reflections

1. What were my thought processes? What were the considerations, decisions, and rationale?
2. What did I notice? Trends? Patterns? Differences? Similarities?
3. What was important, significant, different, unique?
4. What worked and what did not work?
5. What can I say in retrospect?
6. What relationships have I noticed?

C. Formation of Abstract Concepts and Generalizations

1. What ideas, insights have I had?
2. What hypotheses, rules, laws, theories, principles have I formed to explain why this is, why this happens, why this works, or does not work, why this is the same or different, why this trend pattern or relationship exists?
3. Is this explanation or theory appropriate for more than one situation?
4. What would also be true or relevant for other persons or situations? How can this be applied?
5. Can I look at my learning experience from a broader perspective and make generalizations from it?
6. Are there theories/concepts from other writings that challenge or confirm my own insights?
7. Are there ways to synthesize or modify my ideas to acknowledge the experience/insight of other writers?

D. Active Experimentation

1. Would my knowledge be useful in other situations? How?
2. Based on this knowledge, what have I done, or what would I do?
3. Can I make predictions based on my knowledge?
4. Have I tested my ideas, concepts, or those of others that I have learned? If not, can I guess what would happen? Why?
5. How does my knowledge affect or apply to other situations? Is it relevant or significant?

Information Process & Action/Reflection Strategies

Herbart's method of education by association.

- **Preparation:** the student is prepared for learning by recalling past experiences and concepts.
- **Presentation:** the new body of information is made available and explained to the student.
- **Association:** the student explores the relationship between the new information and past experiences.
- **Generalization:** the student discerns from what was learned in the previous step as a principle.
- **Application:** the student experiments with the principle through application in real-life simulations

James Reed & Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education*
(Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993).

Critical Thinking Skills (sample questions)

- What general themes or topics does the argument/writing cover?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What are the major claims or assertions in the writing?
- What evidence is offered to back up these claims?
- How is the evidence arranged or ordered to support the argument?
- Is the evidence valid? (coherent, consistent and pertinent to the claim?)
- What assumptions are made in accepting these claims?
- Why are these assumptions made?
- How would the claim change if we did not agree with the assumptions?

AAAR method

- **Awareness:** name problem or challenge
- **Analysis:** careful & thorough assessment
- **Action:** develop and implement plan
- **Reflection:** observe outcomes and implications

Groome's Shared Praxis

(Used in Critical Thinking and Action/Reflection)

- "Participants name their own activity (practice) concerning the topic for attention
- They reflect on why that do what they do and the consequences (critical reflection)
- They "hear" how "story" of the writer (Bible, ministry concepts, etc) addresses the topic
- They earnestly dialog with the narrative account and their "story"
- They choose a personal response for future actions

Criteria for Portfolio Assessment

David Kolb's model of experiential learning demonstrates first a healthy tension between the comprehension of theoretical concepts and apprehension of experiential expressions of nascent or fully formed theory building. There are times when theorists interpret Kolb's cycle of learning in such a way as to negate the organic unity between practices (experience) and theoretical constructs which support and inform practice. Newer research indicates that the narrative quality of experience compels portfolio assessors to discern not only individualized concepts, but the overall theoretical structure ("meta-narrative") which informs practice and is subsequently informed by the practice itself. Progress can be charted by focusing on the dynamic flow of ideas, the constructive process of theory building, the support of a learning community, in the midst of practice. The quality of the experience is important (for skills-based competency and self-confidence) as practical knowledge, but this knowledge ultimately takes some consistent theoretical form.

Assessment will then attend primarily to the following domains:

- Evidence of explicit or implicit **comprehension of the theoretical concepts and competencies in actions** that resource and reinforce practice.
 - Comprehension of various readings reflecting current ministry thought and practice offered through an annotated bibliography.
 - Experiential expressions that demonstrate skills competencies and information how readings and conceptualizations are used in ministry. Documentation of experiential practices (photos, guides, feedback from parishioners) should be presented with commentary on the importance of these practices.
- Evidence of an **overarching schema** (approach, model, typology) that guides reflection and practice.
 - A written philosophy of ministry and specific objectives or rationales should be offered to demonstrate how the portfolio practices relate to the philosophy.
 - Reflective writing or journaling can demonstrate how this philosophy is assisted, reinforced, changed, or discarded through the practices offered.
 - Assessors should look for a consistency in the presentation and application of ideas in the portfolio by relating them to the over-arching philosophy of ministry.
- Evidence of a **learning community** that resources, guides, or informs practice and theory building.
 - The portfolio should include feedback, testimonies or assessments by peers concerning the student's ministerial practice.
 - The portfolio should also include a plan maintaining a learning community beyond the assessment.
- Evidence in the actual **implementation and reflection** upon theory and practice.
 - A section demonstrating how future concepts, ideas, theories will be explored.
 - Include suggestions for future ministry practices.

Youth Ministry Portfolio Assessment (Sample)

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CRITERIA

Clear Understanding of the Context	_____/40
Clear description of social conditions of context	
Clear understanding of developmental issues	
Clear description of role of youth minister	
Specificity in describing context	
Mission Statement	_____/40
Philosophical/Theological Foundations	
Clarity and Realistic	
Goals	_____/40
Reflect Mission Statement	
Clarity and Realistic	
Model	_____/40
Comprehensiveness	
Rationale	
Clarity	
Lesson Plans & Worship Plans	_____/40
Clear Outline & Direction of plan	
Sufficient Scope (covers necessary steps)	
Appropriate Sequence (timing of activities)	
Curriculum Assessment	_____/40
Depth of Analysis	
Consistency of Analysis	
Ability to recognize key issues	
List of Denomination/Community Resources	_____/30
Range of resources (covers both)	
Appropriate to Context	
Reasonable One Year Calendar	_____/50
Depth/ including Budget	
Major (cyclical) components repeated	
Representative of Goals and Model of ministry	
Leadership	_____/30
Clear & Defined Model of Leadership	
Characteristics of Leaders (include youth?)	
Organization (team?)	
Resource Bibliography	_____/20
Range, Rationale, & Clarity (Categories and annotation, reason for inclusion)	

OTHER FACTORS

Responsive to Field Examiners' Input	_____/30
Timeliness (<u>all</u> sections completed on due date)	_____/20
Use of Academic Resources (this and other classes)	_____/20
Presentation Quality	_____/30

TOTAL 450 (470) _____

Teaching Families: Purpose, Learning Styles, Strategies

Teaching Family	Purpose	Learning Styles	Strategies	Content/Context
Information Processing	Help Learners structure data in order to comprehend, recall and associate with new ideas. "Making sense" of ministry	Emphasis on Visual & Auditory; Resonates with Assimilators & Convergents (Analytic & Common Sense Thinkers)	Scientific Method, Advance Organizer, Critical Thinking, Herbartian approach, Six Journalist Questions, Inductive Method. Includes library research, reports, book analysis, etc. Learning activities that call for grouping, naming, recall, analysis, acquiring & organizing information	Content demands understanding before any reasonable application. Material is assumed to be complex and emphasis on cognitive process. Context encourages both passionate and dispassionate engagement, challenging but not competitive.
Group Interaction	People learn from interpersonal & "constructive" interaction. Primary focus on group problem solving, secondary on interaction.	Multiple VAK; resonates primarily with Convergents, Accommodators & Divergers (Common Sense, Dynamic Application, & Imaginative Thinkers)	Group Investigation, Simulation- Role Play, Depth Study (study circle), group project presentations & reports. Learning activities that promote communal learning through investigation and problem solving.	Content both conceptual and relational. Often new content is "constructed" or discovered during group process. Context includes trust & collegiality. Context must include time for group process to complete investigation for meaningful results.
Indirect Communication	Learning crosses boundaries that involve the whole person through identification and confrontation	Multiple VAK; resonates with Divergers & Assimilators (Imaginative & Analytic Thinkers)	Sculpting, "left-hand" drawing/writing, stories, parables, music, special writings. Learning activities that include unexpected, open-ended communication "events."	Content is transformative and often surprising (multivalent in nature). Context often encourages exploration, openness and mutuality.
Personal Development	"Becoming" aware of self and environment so that one feels accepted & empowered to function as a fully actualized self	Primary Visual and Kinesthetic; resonates with Accommodators and Divergers (Dynamic Application & Imaginative Thinkers)	Personal Portfolios, journals, self-portraits, learning contracts, mentoring, metaphorical thinking, interpersonal skills. Learning activities that encourage self-exploration and awareness.	Context has more to do with intra-personal issues along with interpersonal competencies. Content seen as "means" for self empowerment
Action/ Reflection	Ideas/theory best understood through action. Action best understood through active reflection upon the assumptions that guide ongoing practices.	Primary Kinesthetic but engages V/A senses also; resonates with Accommodators & Divergers (Dynamic Application & Imaginative Thinkers) but should challenge others as well.	Ministry Portfolios, field ed. covenants, service/servant learning, and ministry groups; AAAR method and Shared Praxis. Learning activities that foster active engagement and reflection on practice.	Content is often the practices themselves but should explore theory behind practices as well. Theoretical content explored through engagement. Context both enhances and challenges consistent reflection of day-to-day activity.

Adapted from *To Set One's Heart: Belief and Teaching in the Church* by Sara Little (Atlanta: John Knox Press) by Dean G. Blevins

