

LSI

The Learning Style Inventory (Kolb, 1984) is a simple test to measure an individual's intrinsic learning style or predisposition in any given learning situation: a preference for one of four stages of the learning process. These are grouped by how learners take information in (concrete experience (CE) / abstract conceptualisation (AC)) and how they process information (active experimentation (AE) / reflective observation (RO)).

Theorists (or **Assimilator**) like to learn using abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation (lecture, papers, analogies) and like to ask such questions as "How does this relate to that?"

Training approach - case studies, theory readings, and thinking alone.

Their strengths lie in their ability to create theoretical models. They tend to be less interested in people and less concerned with practical applications of knowledge.

They are often more concerned with abstract concepts. Theorists are often found in research and planning departments. This learning style is more characteristic of basic science and mathematics than applied sciences.

Pragmatists (or **Converger**) like to learn using abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (laboratories, field work, observations). They ask "How can I apply this in practice?"

Training approach - peer feedback; activities that apply skills; trainer is coach/helper for a self-directed autonomous learner.

The pragmatist's greatest strength is in the practical application of ideas. They tend to be relatively unemotional. They prefer to deal with things rather than people. They tend to have narrow technical interests and quite often choose to specialise in the physical sciences.

Activists (or **Accommodator**) like to learn using concrete experience and active experimentation (simulations, case study, homework). They tell themselves "I'm game for anything."

Training approach - practicing the skill, problem solving, small group discussions, peer feedback; trainer should be a model of a professional, leaving the learner to determine her own criteria for relevance of materials.

Their strengths lie in doing things and involving themselves in new experiences. They are called accommodators because they excel in adapting to specific immediate circumstances.

They tend to solve problems intuitively, relying on others for information.

Accommodators are often found working in marketing and sales. The accommodator is at ease with people but is sometimes seen as impatient and pushy. This learner's educational background is often in technical or practical fields such as business.

Reflectors (or **Diverger**) like to learn using reflective observation and concrete experience (logs, journals, brainstorming). They like time to think about the subject.

Training approach - lectures with plenty of reflection time; trainer should provide expert interpretation - taskmaster/guide; judge performance by external criteria.

Their strengths lie in an imaginative ability. They tend to be interested in people and emotional elements. People with this learning style tend to become counsellors, organisational development specialists and personnel managers. They have broad cultural interests and tend to specialise in the arts. This style characterises individuals from humanities and liberal arts backgrounds.