



LSI Feedback Report

Learning Styles Inventory

Susan Sample



Learning Styles Feedback Report

Learning Styles Inventory - Version IW

Susan Sample

Introduction

This report gives an indication of your style and preferences based on the answers you gave when completing the Learning Styles Indicator. The questionnaire is designed to identify fundamental differences in the way people think, communicate and learn.

Understanding more about your learning style might help you to

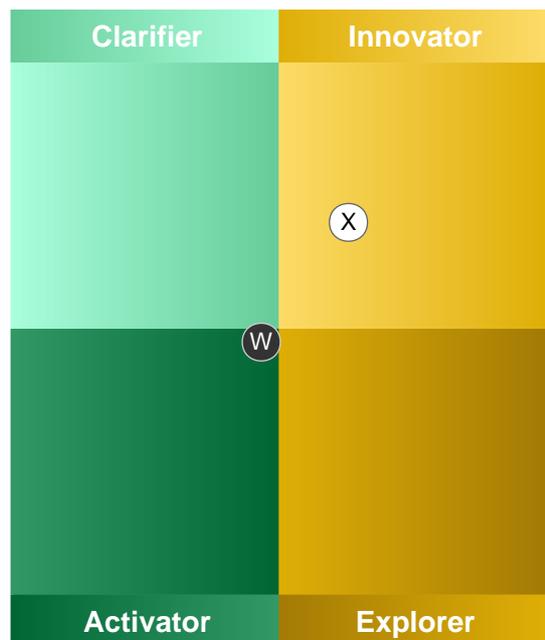
- choose topics, areas and qualifications which are more likely to interest you
- understand how you communicate, how this might come across and how you learn best
- select the teaching style and learning environment that most suits you and keeps you motivated
- judge which situations require you to adapt your style

Results

The diagram on the right shows your results. The X shows the Innovator as your most likely style in your current situation based on your answers to "the way it is". The W shows the Activator as your preferred or ideal style based on your answers to "the way I want". Differences between the two styles are worth careful consideration.

Sometimes we wish to be different because we are frustrated by life's opportunities to date and we have a natural inner style waiting to come out. Sometimes the difference reflects pressures and wishes from earlier in our life but which may no longer be relevant.

If you find the difference confusing you should talk it over with a friend, tutor, manager or the facilitator who asked you to complete the questionnaire. It can also be useful to consider whether your preferences are borderline, as explained on the following page.



Interpretation

If your 'X' or 'W' is near one of the outer corners you have indicated a clear preference and the identified style is more likely to be noticeable and characteristic. If they are near the borderline of two boxes it can indicate that you show greater flexibility in using the style from both boxes. Alternatively it may mean that you are less clear about your preferred learning style at this point in time.

Whatever the results, there is neither good nor bad. The results may be most useful if you use them to consider whether they truly reflect your style and preferences. This may help you clarify how you learn best, how you choose what to learn, why you make the choices you do, what environments suit you best and what you could do to improve and enjoy learning more. You may also like to consider how much the questionnaire reflects your natural or dominant style and under what circumstances you use the other three styles.

A summary of all four styles is shown below.

<h3>Clarifier</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reflects on what is happening• learns by collecting facts and details• checks what is presented for accuracy and clarity• reduces ambiguity and uncertainty• gives practical examples• wants time and space to reflect, prepare and research• prefers details to be specific and related to own experience	<h3>Innovator</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoys theories and models• learns best by considering the 'big picture'• sees links and inter-relationships• thrives on ideas, possibilities and considers 'what if'• has insights and turns up the unexpected• reflection can be more important than action• driven to create something novel or different
<h3>Activator</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• gets on with things – turns ideas into actions and outcomes• learns best by activity and 'doing'• works best with tangible ideas and practical activities• needs interaction• brings a sense of urgency and enjoys a fast pace• likes to create a buzz• jumps in when others hold back ('hands on' and 'have a go')	<h3>Explorer</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoys exploration, flexibility and discovery• learns best by active discovery and trial & error• seeks stimulus from the outside• craves variety and options• seeks novelty through action• enjoys discussion, debate and experimentation• moves on to new topics quickly

IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION OF YOUR STYLE



The way it is - your questionnaire results indicate a current preference for learning using the Innovator style. This style is described in detail in the following pages.

The way I want - your questionnaire results indicate an ideal preference for learning using the Activator style. This style is described in detail in the following pages. Do bear in mind that your scores demonstrated a borderline preference and that you also showed some tendency towards the Explorer, Clarifier and Innovator styles.

Because you indicate different preferences in "the way it is" and "the way I want" this report will help you explore the characteristics of both. The styles are described alongside each other and you are encouraged to identify those descriptions that are clearly "you" - the style with which you are most comfortable and which you enjoy. Any description that seems less like you may help you clarify why your scores are borderline.

You may find that you gain more insight into why there is a discrepancy between "the way it is" and "the way I want" if you discuss your thoughts with someone trained in the use of these questionnaires. This will enable you to get the maximum benefit from the results.

THE WAY IT IS - Innovator

Summary Description

Innovators are characterised by the desire to understand complex ideas, generate new ideas and produce innovative solutions. On the previous page, you can see a summary of the four main learning styles so that you can see how the Innovator differs from others.

Some of the key characteristics of the Innovator:

- enjoys complex problems requiring innovative solutions
- craves opportunities to generate new ideas and options
- explores and builds theories to help own understanding
- prefers dealing with abstract concepts than practical realities
- values novelty and insight
- needs opportunities to reflect
- identify core issues and see links and inter-relationships
- likes ideas and concepts and enjoys redefining and visualising
- enjoys learning by reading, researching and thinking
- likes learning to be part of a long term vision or goal

What Innovators might choose to study

People choose to learn things for many different reasons. Sometimes this is because they have had particular experiences; sometimes they are influenced by friends, parents or have particular career interests. However, your learning style can help you to recognise how certain topics could be more naturally and immediately interesting for you. People with the Innovator learning style preference often prefer subjects which:

- are intellectually challenging
- require theoretical models for better understanding
- involve abstraction, ambiguity and complexity
- allows personal interpretation, creativity and

THE WAY I WANT - Activator

Summary description

Activators are characterised by the desire to relate extensive and accumulated experience to the learning so that it becomes concrete reality.

Some of the key characteristics of the Activator:

- wants learning to have some practical application
- prefers subjects that require a common-sense and matter-of-fact approach
- wants action, realism and does not want change for change sake
- enjoys organising facts, situations and people
- creates order and efficiency and delivers results
- dislikes “woolly” thinking and procrastination
- attends to immediate and practical issues and details
- learns best from direct experience and practice

What Activators might choose to study

People choose to learn things for many different reasons. Sometimes this is because they have had particular experiences; sometimes they are influenced by friends, parents or have particular career interests. However, your learning style can help you to recognise how certain topics could be more naturally and immediately interesting for you. People with the Activator learning style preference often prefer subjects which:

- are structured, contain facts, are practical and useful
- demand high standards
- have consequences rather than just interesting theories

insight

This generally means that very practical topics requiring immediate application or implementation are not natural choices for Innovators.

Innovators can learn to enjoy almost any subject. In particular, they tend to enjoy academic subjects such as pure mathematics, astronomy, nuclear physics, theology, humanities, philosophy, writing and art. However, they can also enjoy many other subjects which are not so obvious a fit to their style as these, perhaps because of an interest in specific aspects of a subject or because they like a particular teacher or learning environment.

If they find that they are studying a particular subject but do not enjoy it, then they should consider why they chose to study that subject and whether in fact it is a subject that fits their most natural style of learning.

The learning environment Innovators usually prefer

When Innovators use their preferred learning style they usually seek an environment where they can step back, obtain an in-depth understanding and generate new ideas. They appreciate opportunities to reflect and can find it very frustrating when deadlines are imposed which means they must concentrate on fast and furious delivery without the opportunity to conceptualise new and better ways of working. You may like to consider previous learning situations that you found motivating and stimulating. Innovators usually describe situations which involve:

- opportunities to research subjects thoroughly and explore ideas and concepts
- discussions with selected experts and mentors
- a chance to be “intellectual” or “philosophical”
- learning by individual thought and reflection
- opportunities to express individual ideas – perhaps in writing rather than through presentation and debate
- challenging orthodoxy
- learning is not sacrificed for the immediate and short term

You are therefore unlikely to find learning rewarding when you are expected to act now and think later. You may find interactive workshops unrewarding. As a colleague you are probably seen as thoughtful and insightful with a tendency to bring in new ideas and ways of understanding. At the right time this can be extremely valuable for your colleagues. At other times

- can be related to their own experience
- provide problems requiring solutions

This generally means that highly academic or theory-based topics which deal with concepts rather than applications are not natural choices for Activators.

Activators can learn to enjoy almost any subject. In particular, they tend to enjoy subjects which result in practical results such as engineering, applied mathematics, project management, law, history, accounting, business studies, health studies, marketing and practical skills. However, they can also enjoy many other subjects which are not so obvious a fit to their style as these, perhaps because of an interest in specific aspects of a subject or because they like a particular teacher or learning environment.

If they find that they are studying a particular subject but do not enjoy it, then they should consider why they chose to study that subject and whether in fact it is a subject that fits their most natural style of learning.

The learning environment Activators usually prefer

When Activators use their preferred learning style they usually seek an environment which is practical, exciting and which has a clear framework and rules. Too much theory, listening and absence of doing things is likely to make them restless. You may like to consider previous learning situations that you found motivating and stimulating. Activators usually describe situations which involve:

- tangible ideas which they can relate to their own experience
- learning through doing, practising and opportunities to “have a go”
- working with others to discuss and bounce ideas around
- fast pace with lots of interaction
- clear direction and priorities
- specific instructions
- practical activities and useful outcomes

You are therefore unlikely to find learning rewarding when you are expected to be passive, unable to try things or test the practical aspects of the topic. You may also feel uncomfortable when instructions are ambiguous or unclear, or when you are left alone without sufficient directions and objectives. As a colleague you are probably seen as practical, quick, decisive and driven to get results. This is an appropriate and valuable attribute but it also means that, sometimes, you may not always listen actively and you may decide and jumping to conclusions too

this may become frustrating because you are too theoretical and do not attend sufficiently to the issues and ideas of the present.

Your **ideal teacher**: this will be someone who can generate respect by their knowledge and intellect. You want them to stimulate you by introducing ideas you hadn't considered which help you think in new ways. You want them to invite you to develop your own ideas which can be challenged but respected and you want them to value your creative - and sometimes "off the wall" - ideas.

What motivates Innovators to learn something new

Everyone needs a purpose and some kind of outcome or benefit from their learning. However, people with different learning styles are likely to have very different reasons and rewards. Innovators are likely to want to feel that they have:

- contributed something different
- learnt something new
- pushed the boundaries of knowledge and expression
- created a neat way of describing or explaining complex ideas
- been recognised for their originality

An Innovator's most natural talents

Innovators have a style that makes them particularly good at:

- understanding and suggesting new ideas and solutions
- finding out new things and turning up the unexpected
- making intuitive leaps, thinking broadly, introducing a wide range of ideas, options and information
- considering abstract ideas and divergent solutions
- stimulating others to consider more possibilities
- encouraging interaction, participation, sharing and discussion

quickly before enough information is available.

You may sometimes benefit from being a little more patient, suspend your judgement, adopt a more questioning style and encourage contributions from others before offering your own views. This may particularly be the case when you are required to help others to learn when it is important to work at their pace rather than yours.

Your **ideal teacher**: this will be someone who is practical, realistic and structured. They involve you in the learning process by letting you contribute, discuss, question and try things out. They give you clear instructions and objectives and they deliver with pace and energy. When teaching you "the theory" they give clear, concrete and practical examples. Your best teachers understand your tendency to jump to conclusions and rush into things. They help you avoid unnecessary effort and mistakes by checking that you have listened and understood.

What motivates Activators to learn something new

Everyone needs a purpose and some kind of outcome or benefit from their learning. However, people with different learning styles are likely to have very different reasons and rewards. Activators are likely to want to feel that they have:

- learned something which has an application
- practised sufficiently to make it tangible and useful
- feel they have acquired some new skill
- produced something that is complete and useful
- adequate opportunity to put the learning into practice

An Activator's most natural talents

An Activator's style can make them particularly good at:

- working with real issues
- converting ideas into action
- grasping basic issues and seeing their practical implications
- being involved and interacting with others
- grasping the facts, handling the detail and engaging in practical activities
- giving or responding to clear instructions and structure

- remaining flexible and adapting to new ideas and information

An Innovator's least natural talents

Innovators have to work harder to:

- switch from designing elegant or innovative solutions to putting them into practice
- deal with routine and practical matters
- remain effective when noise and deadlines mean there is insufficient time to reflect
- deal with interruptions and changed priorities introduced by others
- communicate ideas in simple and concrete terms
- giving careful consideration which is sometimes a luxury
- accept that group discussion and debate can be a necessary forum for decision making

Innovators get criticised for:

- taking too long thinking about wonderful models and solutions
- not getting on with it quickly enough
- favouring a novel or innovative approach when a traditional solution works well
- failing to express their ideas
- being too intellectual or over complex

Developmental suggestions for Innovators

If you have a need to improve your learning and have to adapt your style in order to do so you may like to consider trying some of the following:

- Take a fairly complex idea, topic or plan. Find someone whom you consider to be practical and precise. Explain your idea to them without letting them interrupt or ask questions. Ask them to write down what they have understood. Discuss differences between what you were trying to convey and what they have understood. Together, write down as many things as possible which would have helped the person to understand your idea more easily. Choose another topic and write down what you will say to communicate it – write down as much detail as you can.
- Next time you are in a group discussion write

An Activator's least natural talents

Activators have to work harder to:

- see the value in an abstract idea
- be innovative and consider alternatives before moving into action
- deal with ambiguity and incomplete information
- work and study on their own
- suspend judgement

Activators get criticised for:

- attending to the obvious and missing the bigger picture
- jumping in too quickly before all the information is known
- trying things out too soon
- not listening
- becoming frustrated if the pace is too slow
- having pre-conceived ideas which make them less flexible
- being impatient

Development suggestions for Activators

If you have a need to improve your learning and have to adapt your style in order to do so you may like to consider trying some of the following:

- Consider an activity or piece of work you need to produce. Write down a summary of how you would normally approach it? Does this involve minimal research and getting stuck in early? Does it involve starting at the beginning and working through? Now consider an alternative approach. Activators can sometimes benefit if they:
 - make an overall plan of what is involved
 - consider the bigger picture
 - explore novel ideas and how to make it different

down any ideas and contributions that occur to you which you don't express. Choose at least one of them, even if it is insufficiently thought through and ask the group to help you think it through aloud.

- Prepare yourself for your next interactive learning opportunity (i.e. where you will be learning through interaction and discussion). Imagine yourself as a fly on the wall observing yourself contributing in that environment. Do you:
 - talk too little
 - fail to express your ideas
 - fail to get others to listen, understand or be convinced of its value
 - talk in abstractions and fail to explain the practical steps and details
 - Write a list of reminders for recognising some of these failings and write down a list of suggestions for what you will do differently next time.
- do more research and preparation on their own
 - Now try to complete this piece of work using a different approach from the one you use normally.
 - Prepare yourself for your next interactive learning opportunity (i.e. where you will be learning through interaction and discussion). Imagine yourself as a fly on the wall observing yourself contributing in that environment. Do you:
 - talk too much and interrupt others
 - ignore the concepts or theories
 - insist on the facts being provided and justified
 - get too involved in the detail irrespective of the need to do so
 - show your frustration when others do not work or learn at your pace
 - allowing your attention to wander and not listen when you are not involved
 - Write a list of reminders for recognising each of these failings and write down what you will do differently next time.
 - Identify a new project where you will need several people to be involved and where you will need to learn and implement something new. Select someone with a different style to work with or advise you. At each stage of the project, produce what you think is needed separately and then compare and discuss the following:
 - what is different in each approach and specification
 - what is valuable in one approach which has been left out by the other
 - what would be needed if you were now to involve more people in the project
 - Give a presentation combining your approaches to the other people you want to involve.

LEARNING STYLES AND THE LEARNING CYCLE

Linking your learning style to the learning cycle can be very useful and make you a more effective learner. The principle behind the link is that all learning benefits from being consolidated by all the stages – act, reflect, construct and practice. Greater awareness of your strengths and preferences can therefore help you to make better use of the full cycle. Below is a description of the 4 stages and the style which feels most natural at each stage:

Stage 1 - ACT:

This is the active experience, a period where there is opportunity to learn by involvement, practical activity and “getting on with it”. Activators are keen to move into this stage

Stage 2 – REFLECT:

This is a period of contemplation and reflection where there is an opportunity to review, understand and personalise the experience. Clarifiers are keen to move into this stage.

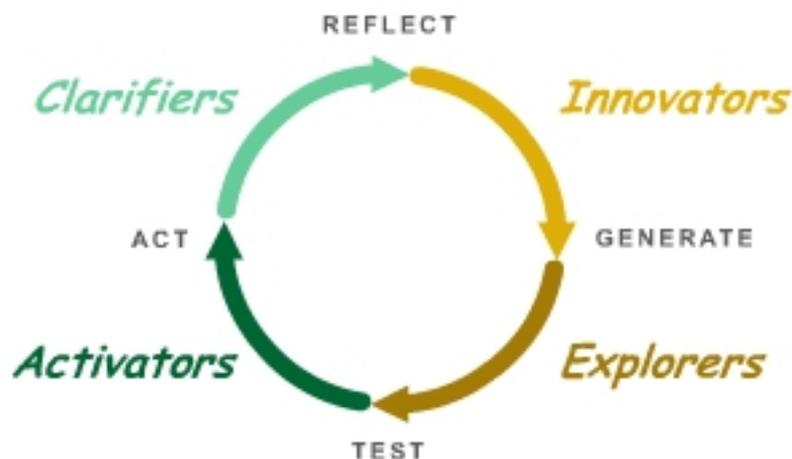
Stage 3 – GENERATE:

This is a period where the implications can be explored and new ideas or theories can be created. Innovators are keen to move into this stage.

Stage 4 – TEST:

This is a period where the new ideas are explored more actively, perhaps with some trial and error. It is the stage where plans or scheme emerge with designs implementation. Explorers are keen to move into this stage.

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the way the cycle and the styles link. It shows how each style has a tendency to move the learning process onto a stage that suits its own particular preferences and frustrations.



Learning to use each stage of the cycle in a more conscious way can make learning both more enjoyable and more effective. This does not mean that everyone would use each style or stage in equal measure, but it does suggest that there can often be a more appropriate balance that is influenced by your preferences and the situation. Greater awareness of your learning style preferences can also help reduce tension when you are learning and working with others. This is because people with different styles want to spend more time at a different part of the cycle. The recognition that people have different preferences can help all those involved to manage learning to fit the individuals concerned and their colleagues and also to use the most appropriate balance to fit the learning environment which can all lead to a more useful and harmonious learning experience.

Date tested: 30/4/2010