

Exploring the match between the student and field instructor

The exploration of learning preferences should begin as early as possible. The matching interview is an ideal place to begin to at least verbally explore this area. It is critical, however, that field instructors take an active, explicit role in explaining that differences in learning styles can develop into a complementary learning relationship when preferential or developmental matching occurs.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PREFERRED LEARNING STYLES*

Rate each statement, with '4' being the most accurate for you and '0' being not accurate at all.

I prefer to learn by...

1. Discussing my work with colleagues, because it helps me to think about what I am doing.....0 1 2 3 4
2. Accurately recalling, but keeping an open mind about what I heard or saw in a situation such as observation of someone else's work.0 1 2 3 4
3. Reasoning out logically for myself the relationship between events, or experience 0 1 2 3 4
4. Testing out my own ideas0 1 2 3 4
5. Participating in group thinking and discussion, contributing my ideas, receiving the group's reactions and achieving consensus about what to do0 1 2 3 4
6. Developing my ideas through interacting in the situation with lots of people such as colleagues, friends and family0 1 2 3 4
7. Reading textbooks or articles and arriving at the meaning for myself - I like an intellectual challenge0 1 2 3 4
8. Doing something concrete, like actually interviewing rather than reading about theory0 1 2 3 4
9. Deriving ideas by reflecting critically on my past experience, for example, in my career, or when I was learning the skills I now use, or even referring to past writing of mine0 1 2 3 4
10. Deriving my ideas and concepts from experts, or using resource books prepared by qualified specialists0 1 2 3 4
11. Relying on my gut reaction to the overall picture of a situation, for example, in my Work place0 1 2 3 4

12. Experimenting with new methods or ideas about practice0 1 2 3 4
13. Working from a set of principles or recognized theory as the guidelines in my own practice and in my supervision of trainees.....0 1 2 3 4
14. Observing impartially what happens in my own place of work0 1 2 3 4
15. Working in groups where I am expected to throw in ideas which may be creative or imaginative, but may not appear strictly logical.....0 1 2 3 4
16. Being challenged to explore new experiences and ideas or take on a new role despite the uncertainties and possibility of criticism0 1 2 3 4
- Based on Kolb, D. (1976) Learning style inventory: Technical manual. Boston: McBer & Co. Revised by Chable, B. Australia: La Trobe University. (Unpublished). Also see Raschick, M. et al (1998) Improving field education through Kolb learning theory. Journal of Social Work Education, 34 (1), 31-42.

Scoring

Total possible score for any category is 16.

Concrete Experience (CE): Add Question Numbers 1, 6, 8, 11.

Reflective Observation (RO): Add Question Numbers 2, 9, 14, 15.

Abstract Conceptualization (AC): Add Question Numbers 3, 7, 10, 13.

Active Experimentation (AE): Add Question Numbers 4, 5, 12, 16.

CE

RO

AC

AE

Basic Learning Strategies

Concrete Experience (CE)

Cue Word: 'Feeling'

1. **Using the sense to actively participate in a situation.**
2. **Developing emotional rapport with others in a situation**
3. **Using intuition to explore the events around a situation.**
4. **Availability for here-and-now exploration of a situation.**
5. **Concern with practical outcomes.**

Reflective Observation (RO)

Cue Word: 'Watching'

1. **Accurate recall of observation/reactions - to both individual and transactional contexts.**
2. **Distinguishing between essential and trivial information.**
3. **Impartiality in collection of data: keeping an open mind.**
4. **Withholding judgment until accounting for all possible sources of data.**
5. **Emphasis on reflection rather than action.**

Abstract Conceptualization (AC)

Cue Word: 'Thinking'

1. **Identification of relationships between concepts.**
2. **Drawing conclusions from the analysis of data.**
3. **Development of tentative explorations.**
4. **Development of principles of generalizations.**
5. **Development of plan/proposal to address the identified issues.**

Active Experimentation (AE)

Cue Word: 'Doing''

1. **Testing of ideas/concepts already developed.**
2. **Willingness to attempt new activities in testing the ideas/concepts.**
3. **Testing hypotheses in active experimentation.**
4. **Identification of outcomes that have immediate application.**
5. **Emphasis on practical application rather than reflective understanding.**

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT*

AFFECTIVELY COMPLEX: personal experiences

1. Individualized feedback
2. Sharing feelings about the subject matter
3. Trainer as colleague
4. Self-direction
5. Likely inhibitor of learning: theoretically oriented assignments

PERCEPTUALLY COMPLEX: understanding concepts

1. Observation and appreciation
2. Expert interpretations
3. Guiding and limiting discussions by trainer
4. Performance judged by external criteria
5. Likely inhibitor of learning: task-oriented assignments

SYMBOLICALLY COMPLEX: a preferred or correct answer

1. Case studies
2. Thinking alone
3. Theory reading and discussion
4. Likely inhibitor to learning: simulations, group interaction

BEHAVIOURALLY COMPLEX: application of knowledge and skills

1. Small group discussions
2. Projects
3. Peer feedback
4. Trainer modelling
5. Likely inhibitor to learning: lectures

*** From Barbara Chable, La Trobe University, Australia.**