

Facilitator's Guide

People Learn with a Purpose

Understanding Learning Styles

I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.

—Winston Churchill

Rationale:

People learn for different purposes. Some common reasons are to gather information to make an informed decision, to learn toward a specific goal or just to increase knowledge. Understanding why and how you learn best is essential, especially if you are trying to teach others.

Program Goal:

To recognize the importance of engaging different learner styles for creating a positive learning situation

Program Objectives:

- To examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience
- To evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles
- To choose different learning activities to enhance specific learner styles for a positive learning environment

Pre-Program Preparation/Materials:

Prepare copies of the publication *Understanding Learning Styles* and the adapted *Learning Styles Assessment*.

Materials needed:

- Chalkboard, whiteboard, flip chart or removable sticky posters and markers to record answers as part of learning activities
- Seven learning style wall banners: Visual, Auditory, Verbal, Physical, Logical, Social, Solitary
- Adult learning style preferred activity cards, with prepared descriptor words related to each style. (Randomly place on tables; provide enough cards for each learning style and all participants.)
- Paper and pen/pencils

- DVD player (or computer for small groups); DVD "Happy Feet"; optional wireless access for Mickey Mouse Club, Sesame Street, YouTube video clips

Introduction:

People are motivated to learn for different purposes. They may see that a better understanding of facts will help them make better decisions for reaching a set goal. Some may just love the fun or social aspect of the learning process or group activity and find the content less important. Others may not really have a learning goal but have a strong interest in increasing knowledge though the content discussed. Regardless of the purpose, you MUST maintain interest and feel engaged for your learning to be successful. Understanding why and how you—or your learners, if you are leading a group—learn best is the key to a positive learning experience.

Introductory Activity:

Visualize one of your most positive learning experiences as an adult. Why was it so enjoyable and memorable? Examples: "It was so much fun! I met new friends, and the teacher was so kind."

(Listen for words that describe or reflect different learning styles, write them on sticky notes and place on whiteboard, flip chart or sticky posters so everyone can see. You will refer to these words later with learning activities.)

This leadership curriculum was developed by Family & Consumer Science (FCS) agents with University of Kentucky specialists. Examples in the guide are geared toward an FCS audience such as Kentucky Extension Homemakers. This guide may be reproduced or modified for educational or training purposes and used with other audiences.

Objective 1: Examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience

What motivates us to learn? The primary motivation to learn is governed by emotions. How are you feeling right now? Are you eagerly anticipating what is coming next or are you wanting the session to end so you can get on to other things? If you feel comfortable talking in front of a group of people you probably would not be embarrassed if I called on you for an answer. However, if you shy away from situations that draw attention to yourself, you may be trying to avoid making eye contact so I will not call on you. People will seek to emotionally preserve themselves regardless of how much they want or need to learn.

Learning Activity 1:

Ask the participants to think back on a negative learning experience and share with another participant. How did you feel in that situation and why? What emotions did you feel and how were they different from your earlier positive learning experience? Ask for volunteers to share differences with the larger group.

(**Alternative:** Share a personal negative learning experience story; discuss the negative emotions resulting and the possible impact on the learner.)

Objective 2: Evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles

Positive emotions govern the motivation to learn. We all prefer learning styles that create these positive experiences. There are seven primary styles of learning and when we participate in learning activities geared to our preferred learning styles, we experience positive emotions and the motivation to continue learning. Do you know your preferred learning styles?

Learning Activity 2:

Place the Seven Learner Style Banners on the wall, naming each style. Ask members to determine their own style preferences. Ask individuals to select preferred descriptors and score. Once the assessments are completed and self-scored, share characteristics of each learning style and have participants stand under their top two of the seven Learner Style Banners. Ask learners to reflect on their personal learning preferences.

- **Auditory/musical**—You prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information for meaning through sounds and will say, “Tell me, let me listen to what you mean.”

- **Logical /mathematical**—You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. Logical learners process information using numbers, data and problem solving with specific reasoning and detailed processes and will say, “Let me use the data to show what I mean.”
- **Physical /kinesthetic**—You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch. Physical learners process information for meaning through touch and actual use of content with interactive demonstrations and will say, “Let me try this to show what I mean.”
- **Social /interpersonal**—You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Social learners love to talk and work with others for best learning and accomplishment and will say, “Let’s meet face-to-face and brainstorm solutions.”
- **Solitary/intrapersonal**—You prefer to work alone and use self-study. Solitary learners love to silently think about what they are learning and process for meaning alone and will say, “Let me think about this and get back to you with ideas.”
- **Verbal/linguistic**—You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information for meaning through language, either talking or writing with words and will say, “Let me tell you what I’ve learned.”
- **Visual/spatial**—You prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding. Visual learners process information for meaning with illustrations and diagrams and will say, “Show me what you mean.”

Objective 3: Choose different learning activities to enhance specific learner styles for a positive learning environment

Now that you have assessed your learning style, let’s look at the best learning activities for each style—the activities most likely to engage the participants and create positive learning experiences. Learners and those leading learning experiences need to understand that individuals process information in different ways.

Learning Activity 3:

Show Video Clip from “Happy Feet” DVD special features segment (teacher in penguin “classroom”). Discuss the differences in learning preferences and the types of emotions created by the teacher.

(**Alternative:** Show YouTube video clips of Mickey Mouse Club or Sesame Street learning songs.)

Quickly review the characteristics of learning styles. Ask participants to draw a learning activity card from those stacked on each table and share which learning style this activity would reinforce.

- **Auditory/musical**—To reach an auditory learner, lecture, discuss instructions and musical performances to make points; ask them to create an expressive song, use music videos, songs/lyrics with CDs, online video, radio, television to express ideas.
- **Logical/mathematical**—To reach a logical learner, use problem-solving situations involving formulas and equations; ask for the development of flow charts, cost benefit analysis, timelines, logic models, word puzzles, recipes, numbers and measurements.
- **Physical/kinesthetic**—To reach a physical learner, use high touch and movement found in physical “hands-on” or movement activities such as dance, arts and crafts, building projects, role play, active games, scavenger hunts, foods tasting, experiments; ask them to create arts and crafts projects, conduct puppet shows, go on scavenger hunts, create role play, use games for demonstrations.
- **Social/interpersonal**—To reach a social learner, plan teamwork projects, group activities, interviews, committee assignments, and include social aspects and relationship building opportunities with learning situations such as service projects; ask learners to do group presentations, develop a community project.
- **Solitary/intrapersonal**—To reach a solitary learner, plan internet research and other technology activities such as electronic discussions, personal writing projects, blogs, reading assignments and personal interpretations such as artwork. Ask learners to keep a reflective journal, create personal philosophy, and explain hunches.
- **Verbal/linguistic**—To reach a verbal learner, hold group discussions, use personal demonstrations; ask for speeches, debates, essays, telling or writing poetry and stories, papers, journaling and other writing experiences.
- **Visual/spatial**—To reach a visual learner, show PowerPoint slides, hold up a picture, conduct a demonstration, or use a graph to make a point; ask for creation of posters, photo albums, scrapbooks, charts, or scale models.

Learning Activity 4:

Read the following learning situation and ask group participants to share which learning activities they would choose to best relay content if they were the learning facilitator:

“You are the lesson leader for your next Extension Homemaker club program. You attend the leader training for the topic “Don’t Let Falls Get You Down.” What types of learning activities could you use to reach the most preferred learning styles of your members while relaying your content?” (Answers will vary with the different individuals in each club.)

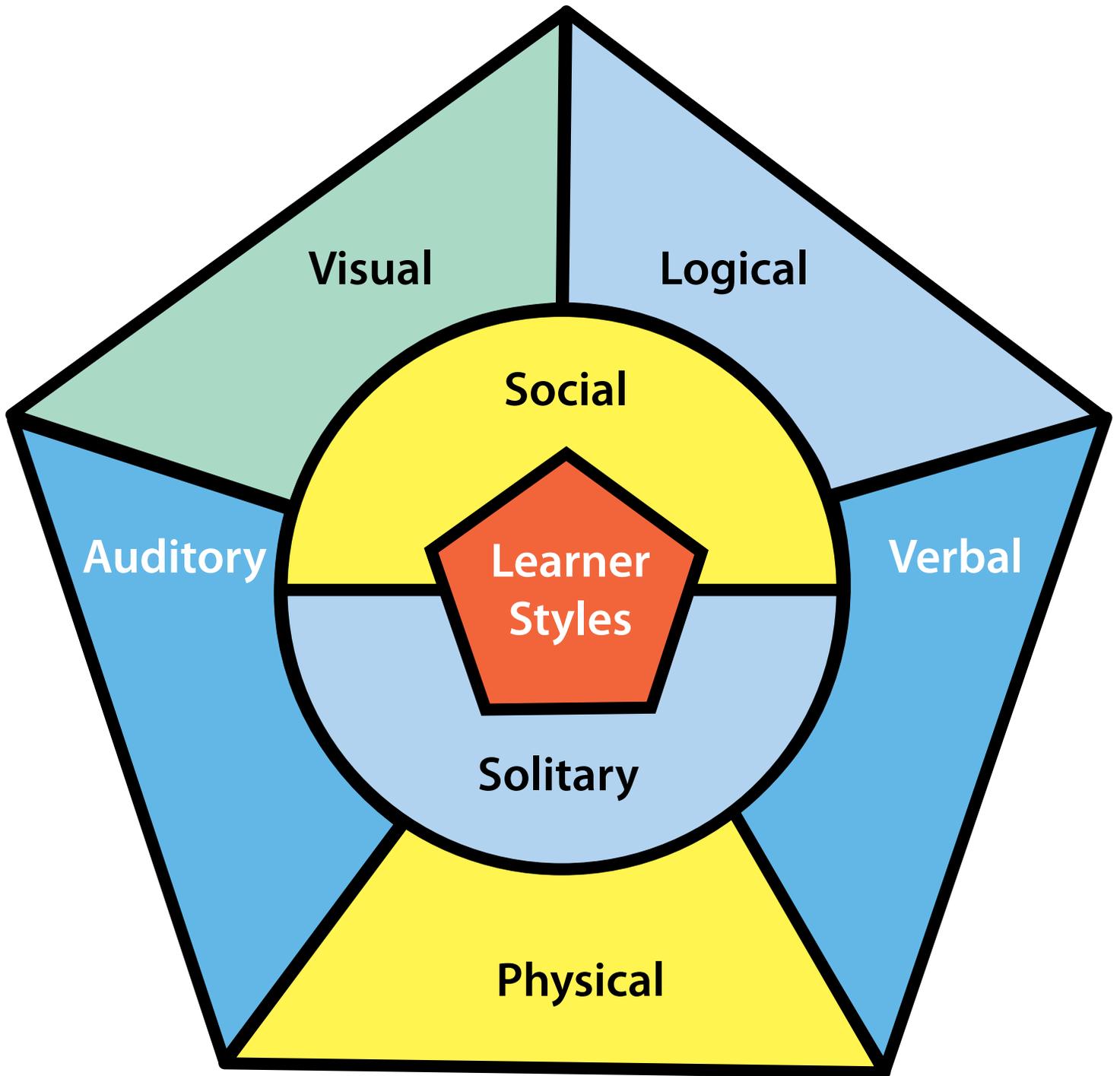
Summary:

Thinking back on your personal positive or negative learning experiences, what have you learned about whether your preferred learning styles were a part of these experiences? People learn with a purpose! Those purposes are enhanced when learning takes place in an environment that brings out positive emotions and joy in learning. Designing learning activities with different learning styles in mind creates an atmosphere in which participants react positively and feel successful while acquiring knowledge to improve the quality of their lives.

References:

- Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons*. New York: Basic Books.
- Learning-styles-online.com (2010). Overview of learning styles. Retrieved June 2, 2010 from: <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>.
- Quote Garden. (2010). Learning quotes and sayings. Retrieved September 14, 2010 from: <http://www.quotegarden.com/learning.html>.
- Woldkowski, R. J. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults* (3rd ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Developed by Janet H. Johnson, Allen County Extension Agent–FCS; Laura F. Stephenson, Kentucky FCS Extension Program Leader; and Jennifer Bridge, Meade County Extension Agent–FCS



Learning Styles Assessment

Learning-Style Assessment

Now that you have completed the learning style assessment, let's find out how you learn. Enter your total from each column (A-G) from the previous page to the corresponding letter below. The letter with the highest number is probably your most dominant learning style.

- A. _____ **Auditory (auditory-musical).** You prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information for meaning through sounds. They will say "tell me; let me listen to what you mean."
- B. _____ **Logical (mathematical).** You prefer using logic, reasoning, and systems. Logical learners process information using numbers and data and solving problems with specific reasoning and detailed processes. They will say "let the data show what I mean."
- C. _____ **Physical (kinesthetic).** You prefer using your body, hands, and sense of touch. Kinesthetic learners process information for meaning through touch and actual use of content with interactive demonstrations. They will say "let me try this to show what I mean."
- D. _____ **Verbal (linguistic).** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information for meaning through language, either talking or writing with words. They will say "let me tell you what I've learned."
- E. _____ **Visual (spatial).** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. Visual learners process information for meaning with illustrations and diagrams. They will say "show me what you mean."
- F. _____ **Solitary (intrapersonal).** You prefer to work alone and use self-study. Intrapersonal learners love to silently think about what they are learning and process for meaning alone. They will say "let me think about this and get back to you with ideas."
- G. _____ **Social (interpersonal).** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Interpersonal learners love to talk and work with others for the best learning and accomplishment. They will say, "let's meet face-to-face and brainstorm solutions."

Adapted by Janet Johnson, Allen County FCS agent and Jennifer Bridge, Meade County FCS agent from What Type of Learner Are You? – A Learning Styles Inventory found at www.learning-styles-online.com. Copyright and permissions are as follows:

All material © 2003-2007 Advanogy Trust (Advanogy.com) and its licensors, except where noted. All rights reserved. This includes (but is not limited to) text, images, illustrations, colors, layout, and code. You may view or download publicly accessible materials, or materials for which you have obtained a license, to your local workstation for your personal use. However, you may not further copy or distribute (by any means) any part of the materials, including the Memletics Manual and any derivative or summary material without written permission from Advanogy.com.

If you wish to use this material for commercial purposes or purposes other than allowed for under fair use, please contact Advanogy.com. We license material for use in instruction, training, education and commercial organizations.