

LEARNING STYLES WORKBOOK

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This document contains what you need to:

- a) **Establish your learning style preferences**
- b) **Understand from what you learn most and least**
- c) **Decide how you might improve your learning effectiveness by strengthening styles you are "weak" on, thus enabling you to maximise your opportunities to develop**

WHAT DOES LEARNING MEAN TO YOU?

1. If you think about what you have learnt in the past 1-2 years, what types of things have you learnt that have been important to you in your work?

Please tick as many of the following as are relevant.

- Basic facts or technical knowledge needed for decisions
- Information gathering skills
- Problem solving or decision making skills
- Skills for working with and through people
- An increased ability to remain open to what is going on and to work effectively, under pressure
- An increased ability to come up with new approaches to situations and to recognise and take up useful approaches from elsewhere
- An increased ability to think about several things at once, to switch rapidly from one problem or situation to another and to "think on my feet"
- An increased ability to think both abstractly and concretely and to relate one to the other
- Other (please specify):

2. From which of the following have you learned the things you ticked in Question 1?

Tick the ones most important to you.

- Boss
- Personal friend
- A senior manager
- Partner
- Colleague/peer inside the organisation
- Other family member
- Member of staff
- "Expert" in your field
- Colleague/peer outside the organisation
- Books/journals/papers/TV
- A trainer or tutor
- New experiences at work
- Everyday work experience
- Other (please specify):

3. If you think about what you have learned from the people and activities in Question 2, in what ways have you learned from them?

Tick the ones most important to you

- By watching what they do
- By listening to or hearing what they say
- By reading
- By practising something repeatedly
- By getting feedback or comments on what I am doing
- By discussion or argument
- By working on a task with them
- By being aware of my feelings
- By being aware of other people's feelings
- By doing what I was told to do
- By just getting on and doing something without thinking too much about it beforehand
- By analysing what others are doing
- By reflecting on what I am doing
- By testing out some general principles which I have developed
- By taking risks
- Others (please specify):

To Be An Effective Learner You Need To:

- Establish effectiveness criteria for yourself
- Measure your effectiveness
- Identify your own learning needs
- Plan personal learning
- Take advantage of learning opportunities
- Review your own learning process
- Listen to others
- Accept help
- Face unwelcome information
- Take risks and tolerate anxieties
- Analyse what successful performers do
- Share information with others
- Review what has been learned
- Know yourself well

The following pages represent an ideal opportunity for you to better understand yourself as a learner. We all have preferences as to how we like to learn - find out what yours are and use this awareness to become a more effective learner.

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire contains 80 items; it is designed to find out your preferred learning style(s). Over the years, you have probably developed learning habits that help you to benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably aware of this, this questionnaire will help you to pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your style.

There is no time limit to this questionnaire. It will probably take you 10-15 minutes to complete.

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS

Read the questions carefully before attempting them. Start at the beginning and work your way through to the end.

If you agree more than you disagree with a statement, put a tick in the AGREE BOX.

If you disagree more than you agree, put a tick in the DISAGREE BOX.

REMEMBER: ANSWER EACH ITEM

		Agree	Disagree
1	I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad		
2	I often act without considering the possible consequences		
3	I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach		
4	I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people		
5	I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly		
6	I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis		
7	I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation		
8	I regularly question people about their basic assumptions		
9	What matters most is whether something works in practice		
10	I actively seek out new experiences		
11	When I hear about a new idea or approach, I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice		
12	I am keen on self discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.		
13	I take pride in doing a thorough job		
14	I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous, "irrational" people		
15	I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions		
16	I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives		
17	I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones		
18	I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern		
19	I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done		
20	I like to relate my actions to a general principle		
21	In discussions I like to get straight to the point		

		Agree	Disagree
22	I tend to have distant, rather formal relationships with people at work		
23	I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people		
24	I am impulsive when making decisions		
25	I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion		
26	I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse		
27	I believe in coming to the point immediately		
28	I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly		
29	I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better		
30	Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me		
31	I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward		
32	I tend to be open about how I'm feeling		
33	In discussions, I enjoy watching the manoeuvres of the other participants		
34	I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance		
35	I tend to be attached to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programmes		
36	It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline		
37	I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits		
38	Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy		
39	I often get irritated by people who want to rush things		
40	It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future		
41	I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition		
42	I tend to be a perfectionist		

		Agree	Disagree
43	In discussion, I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas		
44	In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas		
45	More often than not, rules are there to be broken		
46	I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives		
47	I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments		
48	On balance, I talk more than listen		
49	I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done		
50	I think written reports should be short and to the point		
51	I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day		
52	I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion		
53	I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically		
54	In discussions, I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions		
55	If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version		
56	I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice		
57	I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach		
58	I enjoy being the one that talks a lot		
59	In discussion I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations		
60	I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind		
61	In discussion with people I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective		
62	In discussion I'm more likely to adopt a "low profile" than take the lead and do most of the talking		
63	I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture		
64	When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and "put it down to experience"		

		Agree	Disagree
65	I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical		
66	It is best to think carefully before taking action		
67	On balance I do the listening rather than the talking		
68	I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach		
69	Most times I believe the end justifies the means		
70	I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done		
71	I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling		
72	I'm usually one of the people who puts life into a party		
73	I do whatever is expedient to get the job done		
74	I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work		
75	I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events		
76	I'm always interested to find out what people think		
77	I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda, etc		
78	I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics		
79	I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation		
80	People often find me insensitive to their feelings		

LEARNING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE SCORING GUIDE

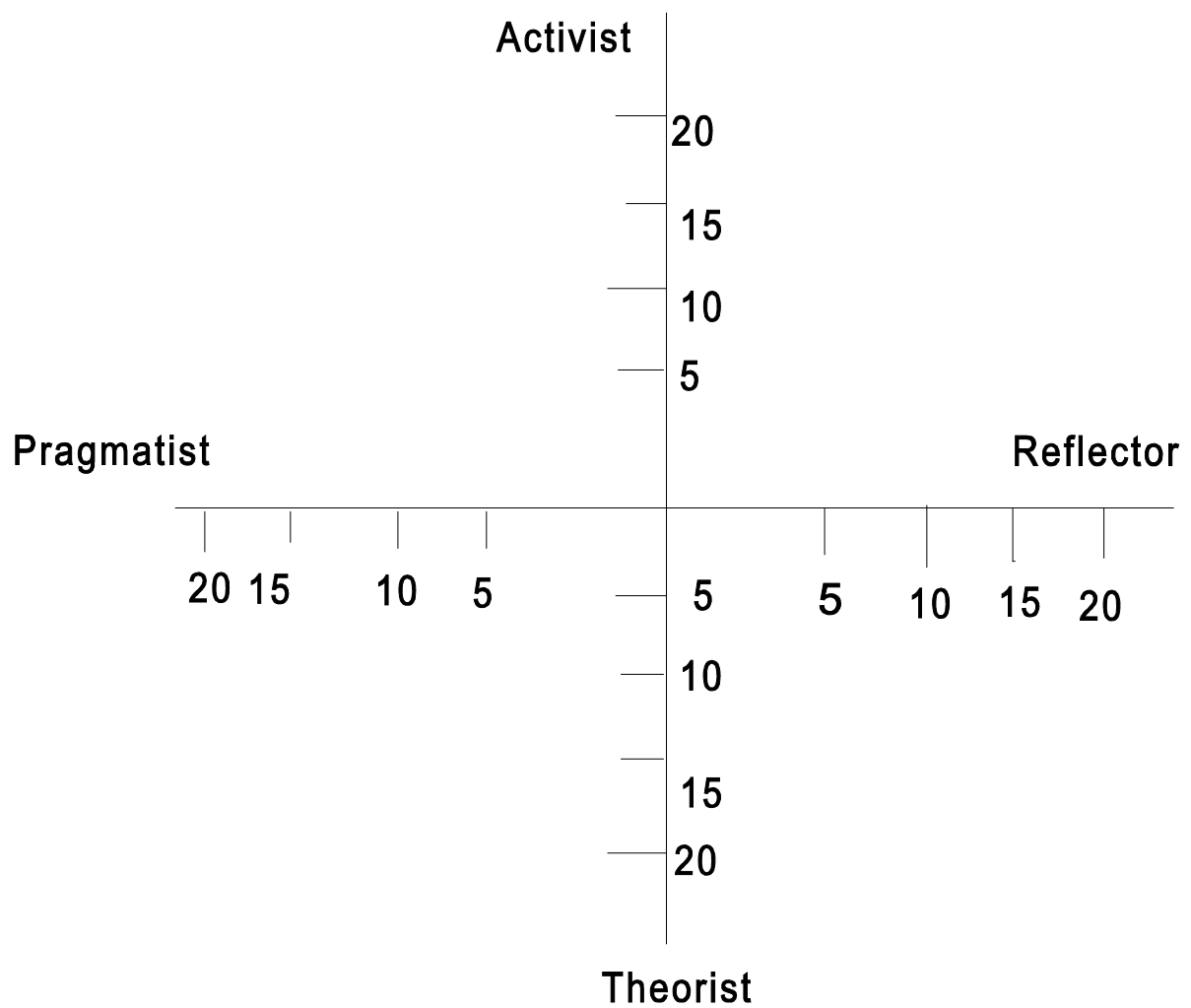
You score one point for each item with a tick in the AGREE box. There are no points for items you ticked in the DISAGREE box.

Indicate on the lists below, which items you agreed with.

Total the items with which you agreed.

2		7		1		5	
4		13		3		9	
6		15		8		11	
10		16		12		19	
17		25		14		21	
23		28		18		27	
24		29		20		35	
32		31		22		37	
34		33		26		44	
38		36		30		49	
40		39		42		50	
43		41		47		53	
45		46		51		54	
48		52		57		56	
58		55		61		59	
64		60		63		65	
71		62		68		69	
72		66		75		70	
74		67		77		73	
79		76		78		80	
Activist Total		Reflector Total		Theorist Total		Pragmatist Total	

Plot the scores on the arms of the cross below. The shape of the diamond is indicative. What does it suggest to you?



Cross refer to the norm table on the next page and understand the relative strength or otherwise for your preferred styles.

LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE BASED ON GENERAL NORMS FOR 1302 PEOPLE

Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist	<i>Preference</i>	
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13	20 19 18	20 19 18 17 16	20 19 18 17	Very strong preference	
12 11	17 16 15	15 14	16 15		
10 9 8 7	14 13 12	13 12 11	14 13 12		Moderate preference
6 5 4	11 10 9	10 9 8	11 10 9		Low preference
3 2 1 0	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0		Very low preference

LEARNING STYLES - GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS

Activists - Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, not sceptical, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. Their philosophy is, "I'll try anything once". They tend to act first and consider the consequences afterwards. Their days are filled with activity. They tackle problems by brainstorming. As soon as the excitement from one activity has died down they are busy looking for the next. They tend to thrive on the challenge of new experiences but are bored with implementation and longer term consolidation. They are gregarious people constantly involving themselves with others but, in doing so, they seek to centre all activities around themselves.

Reflectors - Reflectors like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives. They collect data, both first hand and from others and prefer to think about it thoroughly before coming to any conclusion. The thorough collection and analysis of data about experiences and events is what counts so they tend to postpone reaching definitive conclusions for as long as possible. Their philosophy is to be cautious. They are thoughtful people who like to consider all possible angles and implications before making a move. They prefer to take a back seat in meetings and discussions. They enjoy observing other people in action. They listen to others and get the drift of the discussion before making their own points. They tend to adopt a low profile and have a slightly distant, tolerant unruffled air about them. When they act it is part of a wide picture which includes the past as well as the present and others' observations as well as their own.

Theorists - Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. They think problems through in a vertical, step by step logical way. They assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories. They tend to be perfectionists who won't rest easy until things are tidy and fit into a rational scheme. They like to analyse and synthesise. They are keen on basic assumptions, principles, theories models and systems thinking. Their philosophy prizes rationality and logic "If it's logical it's good". Questions they frequently ask are "Does it make sense?" "How does this fit with that?" "What are the basic assumptions?" They tend to be detached, analytical and dedicated to rational objectivity rather than anything subjective or ambiguous. Their approach to problems is consistently logical., This is their "mental set" and they rigidly reject anything that doesn't fit with it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

Pragmatists - Pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. They positively search out new ideas and take the first opportunity to experiment with applications. They are the sort of people who return from management courses brimming with new ideas that they want to try out in practice. They like to get on with things and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. They tend to be impatient with ruminating and open-ended discussion. They are essentially practical, down to earth people

who like making practical decisions and solving problems. They respond to problems and opportunities " as a challenge". Their philosophy is "There is always a better way" and "If it works it's good".

LEARNING BEST LEARNING LEAST

<i>Pragmatists</i> <i>Pragmatists learn best from activities where:-</i>	<i>Reflectors</i> <i>Reflectors learn best from activities where:-</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an obvious link between the subject matter and a problem or opportunity on the job • They are shown techniques for doing things with obvious practical advantages, i.e. how to save time, how to make a good first impression, how to deal with awkward people. • They have the chance to try out and practice techniques with coaching/feedback from a credible expert, i.e. someone who is successful and can do the techniques themselves. • They are exposed to a model they can emulate, i.e. a respected boss, a demonstration from someone with a proven track record, lots of examples/anecdotes, a film showing how its done. • They are given techniques currently applicable to their own job. • They are given immediate opportunities to implement what they have learned. • There is a high face validity in the learning activity, i.e. a good simulation, 'real' problems. • They can concentrate on practical issues, i.e. drawing up action plans with an obvious end product, suggesting short cuts, giving tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are allowed or encouraged to watch/think/chew over activities. • They are able to stand back from events and listen/observe i.e. observing a group at work, taking a back seat in a meeting, watching a film or video. • They are allowed to think before acting to assimilate before commenting i.e. time to prepare, a chance to read in advance a brief giving background data. • They can carry out some painstaking research, i.e. investigate, assemble information, probe to get to the bottom of things. • They have the opportunity to review what has happened, what they have learned. • They are asked to produce carefully considered analyses and reports. • They are helped to exchange views with other people without danger, i.e. by prior arrangement, within a structured learning experience. • They can reach a decision in their own time without pressure and tight deadlines.

<i>Pragmatists learn least from , and may react against, activities where:-</i>	<i>Reflectors learn least from, and may react against, activities where:-</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning is not related to an immediate need they recognise/they cannot see, an immediate relevance/practical benefit. • Organisers of the learning, or the event itself, seem distant from reality, i.e. 'Ivory Towered', all theory and general principles, pure 'chalk and talk'. • There is no practice or clear guidelines on how to do it. • They feel that people are going round in circles and not getting anywhere fast enough. • There are political, managerial or personal obstacles to implementation. • There is no apparent reward from the learning activity, i.e. more sales, shorter meetings, higher bonus, promotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are 'forced' into the limelight, i.e. to act as leader/chairman, to role play in front of on-lookers. • They are involved in situations which require action without planning • They are pitched into doing something without warning, i.e. to produce an instant reaction, to produce an off-the-top-of-the-head idea. • They are given insufficient data on which to base a conclusion. • They are given cut and dried instructions of how things should be done. • They are worried by time pressures or rushed from one activity to another. • In the interests of expediency they have to make short cuts or do a superficial job.

LEARNING BEST LEARNING LEAST

<i>Theorists</i> <i>Theorists learn best from activities where:-</i>	<i>Activists</i> <i>Activists learn best from activities where:-</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being offered is part of a system, model, concept, theory. • They have time to explore methodically the associations and inter-relationships between ideas, events and situations. • They have the chance to question and probe the basic methodology, assumptions or logic behind something, i.e. by taking part in a question and answer session, by checking a paper for inconsistencies. • They are intellectually stretched i.e. by analysing a complex situation, being tested in a tutorial session, by teaching high calibre people who ask searching questions. • There are structured situations with a clear purpose. • They can listen to or read about ideas and concepts that emphasise rationality or logic and are well argued/elegant/watertight. • They can analyse and then generalise the reasons for success or failure. • They are offered interesting ideas and concepts in complex situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are new experiences/problems/opportunities from which to learn. • They can engross themselves in short 'here and now' activities such as business games, competitive teamwork tasks, role-playing exercises. • There is excitement/drama/crisis and things chop and change with a range of diverse activities to tackle. • They have a lot of the limelight/high visibility, i.e... They can 'chair' meetings, lead discussions, give presentations. • They are allowed to generate ideas without constraints of policy or structure or feasibility. • They are thrown in at the deep end with a task they think is difficult, i.e. when set a challenge with inadequate resources and adverse conditions. • They are involved with other people, i.e. bouncing ideas off them, solving problems as part of a team. • It is appropriate 'have a go'.

<i>Theorists learn least from, and may react against, activities where:-</i>	<i>Activists learn least from, and may react against, activities where:-</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are pitchforked into doing something without a context or apparent purpose. • They are involved in unstructured activities where ambiguity and uncertainty are high, i.e. with open-ended problems. • They are asked to act or decide without a basis in policy, principle or concept. • They are faced with a hotchpotch of alternative/contradictory techniques/methods without exploring any in depth. • They doubt that the subject matter is methodologically sound, i.e. where questionnaires haven't been validated, where there aren't any statistics to support an argument. • They find the subject matter platitudinous, shallow or gimmicky • They feel themselves out of tune with other participants, i.e. when with lots of Activists or people of lower intellectual calibre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning involves a passive role, i.e. listening to lectures, monologues, explanations, statements of how things should be done, reading, watching. • They are asked to stand back and not be involved. • They are required to assimilate, analyse and interpret lots of 'messy' data. • They are required to engage in solitary work, i.e. reading, writing, thinking on their own. • They are asked to assess beforehand what they will learn, and to appraise afterwards what they have learned. • They are offered statements they see as 'theoretical'. i.e. explanation of cause or background. • They are asked to repeat essentially the same activity over and over again i.e. when practising • They have precise instructions to follow with little room for manoeuvre.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are asked to do a thorough job, i.e. attend to detail, tie up loose ends, dot the I's, cross t's. |
|--|--|

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PRAGMATIST STYLE

If you want to improve your Pragmatist style because your Pragmatist score was, say, 14 or less, the first task is to decide what aspects you would like to develop. A useful starting point is to do an analysis of the Pragmatist items that you disagreed with. This is because items disagreed with indicate things you do not do or believe in, and are therefore pointers to what you will need to practice. Indicate on the list below what Learning Style Questionnaire items are disagreed with.

5. I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly.
9. What matters most is whether something works in practice.
11. When I hear about a new idea of approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice.
19. I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done.
21. In discussion I like to get straight to the point.
27. I believe in coming to the point immediately.
35. I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programmes, etc.
37. I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits.
44. In meetings I put forward practical, realistic ideas.
49. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done.
50. I think written reports should be short and to the point.
53. I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically.
54. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions.
56. I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice.
59. In discussion I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations.
65. I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical.
69. Most times I believe the end justifies the means.
70. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done.

73. I do whatever is expedient to get the job done.

80. People often find me insensitive to their feelings.

Of the cross items indicate which are:

A Definitely not like you (ie. you rarely, if ever, do them)

B More marginal (ie. Sometimes like you but only in specific situations)

Mark disagreed with items with an A or B accordingly.

Now decide which items you most want to practice in order to develop your Pragmatist style. It might be sensible to start with some of the B items since these are likely to be easier to tackle and get some early successes with. Whether you choose to go for A or B items or a mixture of the two, we strongly recommend that you focus on a **maximum** of three items. If you aim for more it is likely to prove ambitious. The three items you select are best converted into your own words rather than merely copying out the original Learning Styles Questionnaire wording.

Write the items you most want to develop in the space below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

You have now, in effect, set your objectives. The next step is to commit yourself to some actions that will give you practice in developing your Pragmatist style. Before planning these actions it is best to take account of the blockages that are currently inhibiting you from being more of a Pragmatist. Common blockages are:

- A preference for perfect (rather than practical) solutions to problems
- Seeing even useful techniques as over simplifications or gimmicky
- Enjoying interesting diversions (and being side-tracked)
- Leaving things open-ended rather than committing to specific action
- Believing that someone else's ideas will not work in your situation

The actions you plan to improve your pragmatist style must be feasible rather than "pie in the sky" and specific rather than "airy fairy". The plans are commitments to encourage yourself to do something which you don't normally do. Feasibility and specificity help to ensure that the plan will be successful in prodding you into action. Clearly you are more likely to follow your action plan if you avoid flinging yourself in at the deep end and graduate to deeper water. Depending on your starting point, some of the suggestions that follow might strike you as too ambitious. If so, you might like to break them down into smaller, more feasible steps. Since your development plans need to be tailor made to suit circumstances, we can only offer a variety of suggestions in the hope that they act as useful thought-starters. Here then are a few ideas for the strengthening of the Pragmatist style.

Collect techniques ie. practical ways of doing things. The techniques can be about anything potentially useful to you. They might be analytical techniques such as critical path analysis or cost benefit analysis. They might be interpersonal techniques such as Transactional Analysis, or Assertiveness or Presentation techniques. They might be Time Saving techniques or Statistical techniques or techniques to improve your memory or techniques to cope with stress and reduce your blood pressure!

In meetings and discussions of any kind (progress, problem solving, planning, appraisal, negotiations, sales calls etc.), concentrate on producing action plans. Make it a rule never to emerge from a meeting or discussion without a list of actions either for yourself or for others or both. The action plans should be specific and include a deadline (eg. "I will produce chapter 4 by 31st May" - "Bill will produce a 2 page paper listing alternative bonus schemes by 1st September").

Make opportunities to experiment with some of your new found techniques. Try them out in practice. If your experiment involves other people then tell them openly that you are conducting an experiment and explain the technique which is about to be tested. (This reduces embarrassment if, in the event, the technique is a flop!) Choose the time and place for your experiments. Avoid situations where a lot is at stake and where the risks of failure are unacceptably high. Experiment in routine settings with people whose aid or support you can enlist.

Study techniques that other people use and then model yourself on them. Pick up techniques from your boss, your boss's boss, your colleagues, your subordinates, visiting salesmen, interviewers on television, politicians, actors and actresses, your next door neighbour. When you discover something they do well - emulate them.

Subject yourself to scrutiny from "experts" so that they can watch your technique and coach you in how to improve it. Invite someone who is skilled in running meetings to sit in and watch you chairing one, get an accomplished presenter to give you feedback on your presentation techniques. The idea is to solicit help from people who have a proven track record - it's the equivalent of having a coaching session with a golfing professional.

Tackle a do-it-yourself project - it doesn't matter if you aren't good with your hands. Pragmatists are practical and, if only for practice purposes, DIY activities help to develop a practical outlook. Renovate a piece of furniture, build a garden shed or even an extension to your house. At work, calculate your own statistics once in a while instead of relying on the printout, be your own organisation and methods an, go and visit the shop floor in search of practical problems to solve. Learn to type. Learn a foreign language.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR REFLECTOR STYLE

If you want to improve your Reflector style because your Reflector score was, say 14 or less, the first task is to decide what aspects you would like to develop. A useful starting point is to do an analysis of the Reflector items that you disagreed with. This is because items disagreed with indicate things you do not do, or believe in, and are therefore pointers to what you will need to practice. Indicate on the list below which Learning Style Questionnaire items you disagreed with.

7. I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation.
13. I take pride in doing a thorough job.
15. I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions.
16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives.
25. I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion.
28. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly.
29. I prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better.
31. I listen to other people's point of view before putting my own forward.
33. In discussion I enjoy watching the manoeuvring of the other participants.
36. It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline.
39. I often get irritated by people who want to rush things.
41. I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition.
46. I prefer to stand back from a situation and consider all the perspectives.
52. I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion.
55. If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version.
60. I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind.
62. In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a "low profile" than to take the lead and do most of the talking.

- 66. It's best to think carefully before taking action.
- 67. On balance I do the listening rather than the talking.
- 76. I'm always interested to find out what people think.

Of the crossed items, indicate which are:

- A definitely not like you (ie. You rarely, if ever, do them)
- B more marginal (ie,. Sometimes like you but only in specific situations)

Mark crossed items with an A or B accordingly.

Now decide which items you most want to practice in order to develop your Reflector style. It might be sensible to start with some of the B items since these are likely to be easier to tackle and get some early successes with. Whether you choose for A or B items, or a mixture of the two, we strongly recommend that you focus on a **maximum** of three items. If you aim for more it is likely to prove too ambitious. The three items you select are best converted into your own words rather than merely copying out the original Learning Style Questionnaire wording.

Write the items you most want to developing the space below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

You have now, in effect, set your objectives. The next step is to commit yourself to some actions that will give you practice in developing your Reflector style. Before planning these actions it is best to take account of the blockages that are currently inhibiting you from being more of a Reflector.

Common blockages are:

- Being short of time to plan or think
- Preferring to move quickly from one activity to another
- Being impatient for action
- A reluctance to listen carefully and analytically
- A reluctance to write things down

The actions you plan to improve your Reflector style must be feasible rather than "pie in the sky" and specific rather than "airy fairy". The plans are a commitment to encourage yourself to do something which you do not normally do. Feasibility and specificity help to ensure that the plan will be successful in prodding you into action. Clearly you are more likely to follow the action plan if you avoid flinging yourself in at the deep end. If you are a beginner it is best to start in the shallow end and graduate to deep water. Depending on your starting point, some of the suggestions that follow might strike you as too ambitious. If so, you might like to break them down into smaller, more feasible steps. Since your development plans need to be tailor-made to suit your circumstances, we can only offer a variety of suggestions in the hope that they act as useful thought-starters. Here then are a few ideas for the strengthening of the Reflector style.

- Practice observing, especially at meetings where there are agenda items that do not directly involve you. Study people's behaviour. Keep records about who does the most talking, who interrupts whom, what triggers disagreements, how often the chairman summarises and so on. Also study non-verbal behaviour. When do people lean forward and lean back? Count how many times people emphasise a point with a gesture. When do people fold their arms, look at their watches, chew their pencils and so on.
- Keep a diary and each evening write an account of what happened during the day. Reflect on the day's events and see if you can reach any conclusions from them. Record your conclusions in the diary.
- Practice reviewing after a meeting or event of some kind. Go back over the sequence of events identifying what went well and what could have gone better. If possible, tape record some conversations and play back the tape at least twice, reviewing what happened in great detail. List lessons learned from the activity.
- Give yourself something to research, something that requires the painstaking gathering of data from different sources. Go to your local library and spend a few hours in the reference section.
- Practice producing highly polished pieces of writing. Give yourself essays to write on various topics (something you have researched?) Write a report or paper about something. Draft watertight policy statements, agreements or procedures. When you have written something put it aside for a week then force yourself to return to it and do a substantial re-write.
- Practice drawing up lists for and against a particular course of action. Take a contentious issue and produce balanced arguments from both points of view. Whenever you are with people who want to rush into action, caution them to consider alternatives and to anticipate the consequences.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ACTIVIST STYLE

If you want to improve your Activist style because your Activist was, say, 10 or less, the first task is to decide what aspects you would like to develop. A useful starting point is to do an analysis of the Activist items that you disagreed with. This is because crossed items indicate things you do not do, or believe in, and are therefore pointers to what you will need to practice. Indicate on the list below which Learning Style Questionnaire items you disagreed with.

2. I often act without considering the possible consequences.
4. I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people.
6. I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis.
10. I actively seek out new experiences.
17. I'm attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones.
23. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different.
24. I enjoy fun loving, spontaneous people.
32. I tend to be open about how I'm feeling.
34. I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance.
38. Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy.
40. It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future.
43. In discussions, I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas.
45. More often than not, rules are there to be broken.
48. On balance, I talk more than I listen.
58. I enjoy being the one that talks a lot.
64. When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and "put it down to experience".
71. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling.
72. I'm usually one of the people who puts life into a party.
74. I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work.

79. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation.
Of the crossed items, indicate which are:

- A definitely not like you (ie. You rarely, if ever, do them)
- B more marginal (ie,. Sometimes like you but only in specific situations)

Mark crossed items with an A or B accordingly.

Now decide which items you most want to practice in order to develop your Activist style. It might be sensible to start with some of the B items since these are likely to be easier to tackle and get some early successes with. Whether you choose for A or B items, or a mixture of the two, we strongly recommend that you focus on a **maximum** of three items. If you aim for more it is likely to prove too ambitious. The three items you select are best converted into your own words rather than merely copying out the original LSQ wording.

Write the items you most want to develop in the space below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

You have now, in effect, set your objectives. The next step is to commit yourself to some actions that will give you practice in developing your Activist style. Before planning these actions it is best to take account of the blockages that are currently inhibiting you from being more of a Activist.

Common blockages are:

- Fear of failure and of making mistakes
- Fear of ridicule
- Anxiety about trying new or unfamiliar things
- Strong wish to have things well throughout in advance
- Self-doubt - lacking self confidence
- Taking life very seriously/very earnestly

The actions you plan to improve your Activist style must be feasible rather than "pie in the sky" and specific rather than "airy fairy". The plans are a commitment to encourage yourself to do something which you do not normally do. Feasibility and specificity help to ensure that the plan will be successful in prodding you into action. Clearly you are more likely to follow the action plan if you avoid flinging yourself in

at the deep end. If you are a beginner it is best to start in the shallow end and graduate to deep water. Depending on your starting point, some of the suggestions that follow might strike you as too ambitious. If so, you might like to break them down into smaller, more feasible steps. Since your development plans need to be tailor-made to suit your circumstances, we can only offer a variety of suggestions in the hope that they act as useful thought-starters. Here then are a few ideas for the strengthening of the Activist style.

- Do something new, ie. Something that you have never done before, at least once each week. Hitch a lift to work, visit a part of your organisation you have neglected, go jogging at lunch time, eat something outrageous to work one day, read an unfamiliar newspaper with views that are diametrically opposed to yours, change the layout of furniture in your office, etc.
- Practice initiating conversations (especially small talk) with strangers. Select people at random from your internal telephone directory and go and talk to them. At large gatherings, conference or parties, force yourself to initiate and sustain conversations with everyone present. In your spare time go door to door canvassing for a cause of your choice.
- Deliberately fragment your day by chopping and changing activities each half hour. Make the switch as diverse as possible, For example, if you have had half an hour of cerebral activity, switch to doing something utterly routine and mechanical. If you have been sitting down, stand up. If you have been talking, keep quiet, and soon.
- Force yourself into the limelight. Volunteer whenever possible to chair meetings or give presentations. When you attend a meeting set yourself the challenge of making a substantial contribution within 10 minutes of the start of the meeting. Get on a soapbox and make a speech at Speaker's Corner.
- Practice thinking aloud and on your feet. Set yourself a problem and bounce ideas off a colleague (see if between you, you can generate 50 ideas in 10 minutes). Get some colleagues/friends to join in a game where you give each other topics and have to give an impromptu speech lasting at least 5 minutes.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR THEORIST STYLE

If you want to improve your Theorist style because your Theorist score was, say, 13 or less, the first task is to decide which aspects you would like to develop. A useful starting point is to do an analysis of the Theorist items that you disagreed with. This is because items disagreed with indicate things you do not do, or believe in and are therefore pointers to what you will need to practice. Indicate on the list below which Learning Style Questionnaire items you disagreed with.

1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.
3. I tend to solve problems using a step by step approach.
8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions.
12. I am keen on self discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine etc.
14. I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous "irrational" people.
18. I don't like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern.
20. I like to relate my actions to a general principle.
22. I tend to have distant, rather formal relationships with people at work.
26. I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse.
30. Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me.
42. I tend to be a perfectionist.
- 47/. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments.
51. I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day.
57. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach.
61. In discussions with people I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective.
63. I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture.
68. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach.
75. I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events.

77. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda, etc.
78. I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics.

Of the crossed items, indicate which are:

- A definitely not like you (ie. You rarely, if ever, do them)
B more marginal (ie,. Sometimes like you but only in specific situations)

Mark crossed items with an A or B accordingly.

Now decide which items you most want to practice in order to develop your Theorist style. It might be sensible to start with some of the B items since these are likely to be easier to tackle and get some early successes with. Whether you choose for A or B items, or a mixture of the two, we strongly recommend that you focus on a **maximum** of three items. If you aim for more it is likely to prove too ambitious. The three items you select are best converted into your own words rather than merely copying out the original LSQ wording.

Write the items you most want to develop in the space below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

You have now, in effect, set your objectives. The next step is to commit yourself to some actions that will give you practice in developing your Theorist style. Before planning these actions it is best to take account of the blockages that are currently inhibiting you from being more of a Theorist.

Common blockages are:

- Taking things at face value
- A preference for intuition and subjectivity
- A dislike of a structured approach to life
- Giving high priority to fun loving/spontaneity

The actions you plan to improve your Theorist style must be feasible rather than "pie in the sky" and specific rather than "airy fairy". The plans are a commitment to encourage yourself to do something which you do not normally do. Feasibility and specificity help to ensure that the plan will be successful in prodding you into action. Clearly you are more likely to follow the action plan if you avoid flinging yourself in at the deep end. If you are a beginner it is best to start in the shallow end and

graduate to deep water. Depending on your starting point, some of the suggestions that follow might strike you as too ambitious. If so, you might like to break them down into smaller, more feasible steps. Since your development plans need to be tailor-made to suit your circumstances, we can only offer a variety of suggestions in the hope that they act as useful thought-starters.

Here then are a few ideas for the strengthening of the Theorist style.

- Read something "heavy" and thought provoking for at least 30 minutes each day. Try philosophy, especially linguistic analysis, logic or the theory of relativity. If this seems a tall order, try tackling a text book on management. Whatever you elect to read, afterward try to summarise what you have read in your own words.
- Practice spotting inconsistencies/weaknesses in other people's arguments. Go through reports highlighting inconsistencies. Analyse organisation charts to discover overlaps and conflicts. Take two newspapers of different persuasions and regularly do a comparative analysis of the differences in their points of view.
- Take a complex situation and analyse it to pinpoint why it developed in the way it did, what could have been done differently and at what stage. The situations could be historical or something drawn from current affairs, or something you have been involved in personally. You could, for example, do a detailed analysis of how you spend your time or of the work flow in and out of your department, or of all the people you interact with and with what frequency in the course of your work.
- Collect other people's theories, hypotheses and explanations about events; they might be about environmental issues, theology, the natural species, human behaviour - anything providing it is a topic with many different, preferably contradictory, theories. Try to understand the underlying assumptions each theory is based upon and see if you can group similar theories together.
- Practice structuring situations so they are orderly and more certain to proceed in the way you predict. You might, for example, plan a conference where delegates are going to work in different groupings. Structure the timetable, the tasks the plenary sessions. Or try structuring a meeting by having a clear purpose, an agenda and a planned beginning, middle and end. Invent procedures to cope with problems such as too many people speaking at once or failure to reach a consensus.
- Practice asking probing questions - the sort of questions that get to the bottom of things. Refuse to be fobbed off with platitudes or vague answers. Particularly ask questions designed to find out precisely why something has occurred: "Why do you think the machine has gone down again?", "Why is absenteeism increasing?", "Why do more women than men smoke?", "Why is heart disease higher in the UK than in Japan?".