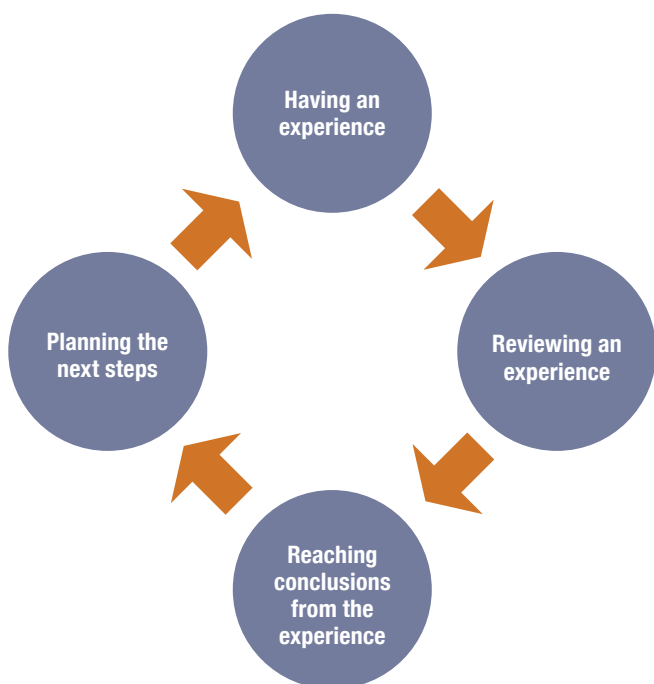


Honey and Mumford Model

Honey and Mumford adapted Kolb's experiential model. They renamed the stages of the cycle and related the styles to the stages in the cycle. So they changed the stages to the following:



They also changed the styles so that they were aligned with the stages of the cycle. So they were changed to Activist, Reflector, Theorist and Pragmatist. Honey and Mumford however assumed that the preferences were not fixed, but could be changed by the person's choice or through changed personal circumstances. The Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Questionnaire encourages people to complete a checklist.

They are then encouraged to strengthen their underutilised styles to better learn from everyday experiences.

Bernice McCarthy's 4 MAT System

Another example is McCarthy's 4MAT System. McCarthy determined four types of learners as follows:

1. **Those who ask Why** –These people want reasons, they represent around 35% of the population, and will learn best through discussion.
2. **Those who ask What** –These people just want factual information, and may expect to be "spoon fed". They account for around 22% of people. The value of their learning experience may be limited by their over emphasis on the facts. Traditional teaching works better here than with the other three types.
3. **Those who ask How** –Representing around 18% of people, these learners are pragmatic and want to know how things work, then do things with what they learn.
4. **Those who ask What If** –These people want to explore all the consequences and possibilities. They learn through self-discovery. They represent around 25%



Why Do We Need to Know People's Learning Styles?

We have touched briefly on some learning styles models, but why do we need to know a person's learning style. Their learning style is their natural pattern of acquiring and processing information. Individuals are all different in how they learn, so the idea that each individual had their own learning style was developed in the 1970's. This greatly influenced how education is delivered.

Supporters of the learning styles models argue that educators should assess the learning style of their students and adapt their classroom methods to suit each student's learning style.

Neil Fleming's VARK/VAK model is one of the most common categorisations of learning styles. It was developed from earlier neurolinguistic programming models. Fleming argued that learners have a **preference** for the way they learn. He discovered that learners can be divided into visual, auditory and tactile/ kinaesthetic learners. (More on this in Chapter 3)

1. **Visual learners** prefer to see, so they think in pictures and prefer diagrams, hand outs, slides, overhead projections, any form of visual aid.
2. **Auditory learners** prefer to learn through listening, such as listening to podcasts, online discussions, cds, audio eBooks, lecture notes etc.

3. **Reading/writing learners** – take notes, read books, summarise with writing.
4. **Tactile/Kinaesthetic learners** prefer to learn through the experience of touching, doing, moving things. So they may prefer science projects and experiments for example.

Looking at students and learning styles in this way can help teachers to prepare classes to ensure that the different learning styles are used and the educational experience for each student is maximised.

Criticisms of the Learning Styles Models

Critics have argued there is little valid research on learning styles in education. There is little evidence that identifying a student's learning style results in better learning outcomes. Also, in a classroom situation with thirty students, for example, it would be hard to ensure that the teaching matched the individual requirements of all of the students in that room.

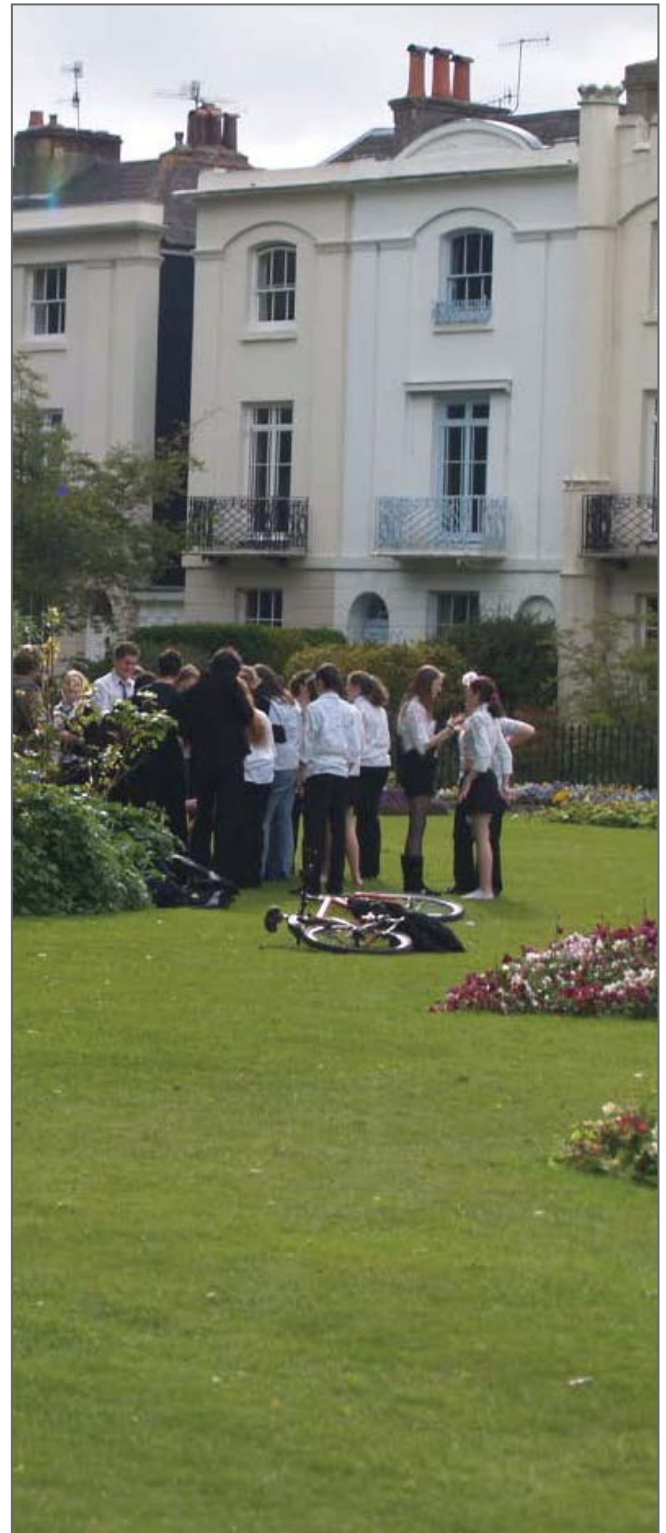
Educational psychologists have also argued that there is little evidence to suggest that learning styles models are effective. Claxton, for example, has suggested that models, such as VARK can actually label children and therefore restrict their learning.

However, Dunn and Dunn did argue that teachers should try to make their classrooms work in such a way that it was beneficial to every learning style. This may include the use of small group techniques, redesign of exercises, and redesign of the room. Marilee Sprenger

argues that there are ways to teach using tactile, auditory and visual, which can ensure students use different methods of learning, such as hands-on projects, experiments, debates, listening to books on tape, reading books, oral reports and so on.

There is still much debate on learning styles, but when considering your own learning, think about how you like to learn. At a most basic level, if you find you learn best by listening, then try recording your course notes or textbook and listen back to them. Many learners today will listen to books and notes via devices such as iPods. If you feel you learn best visually, then read the books, look at notes on paper or on your computer. If you feel you work best by doing and touching, then try different methods of developing your notes, creating diagrams, models and so on. It is good to consider how you learn and how these techniques can help you with your learning.

I challenge my mind and expand ways of learning and thinking by also incorporating some of the other styles that aren't my preferred style, for variety to stimulate new ways of lateral thinking and problem solving.



CHAPTER 2 WHAT TO LEARN



“The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think—rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men.”

JOHN DEWEY

Everyone learns. Some things we learn are good for us. Some things we learn may be of little consequence and other things may be bad for us.

You learn both formally and informally, every day of your life; whenever you play a game, read a book, watch TV, use a computer, visit a new place or talk with someone. Regardless of age, you will have learned many things over the last 24 hours. Some of these things may be trivial and insignificant and others could be valuable later in life.

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; Second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

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Often there can be multiple dimensions to something you learn, for example:

1. When confronted with a disassembled toy or piece of furniture that you purchased, you need to learn how to assemble it. You may try to assemble it without following instructions and discover difficulty. You will then start following the instructions. In going through this process you might be learning not only how to assemble this item but also reinforcing an awareness that it can be more efficient to follow instructions than to try and do something without following instructions.
2. When learning to drive, you may observe someone else driving and think that you can do it, but when you are actually put in the car and have to learn how to control the brake, the clutch, and the steering wheel and so on, it is not always so easy. So you may realise that you need instruction from someone, someone telling you what to do, then you practice, receive constructive criticism, try again, until finally you are able to drive well.

3. Think of something simple like making a sandwich. You may observe someone else make a tuna and mayonnaise sandwich. You give it a try. You put too much mayo in, or put too much filling in and it escapes from the sandwich. You try again and finally learn to make the sandwich in the way that suits you. So you are learning by trial and error.
4. A teacher shows you diagrams of how to wire an electricity circuit. The teacher then shows you what to do. You then try wiring it. The teacher comments on how you do this until you learn how to do it well. So you listen to the academic knowledge, you observe, you try and then you learn to perform.

So when we learn, we may learn through academic learning and listening, observations, trying and retrying tasks.

Knowing What to Avoid

As we already know, young children learn through conditioning and modelling from their parents. Even before they are even aware of their environment, the people and common influences around them, neonates will distinguish between having a need and it being responded to. From there they will learn cravings and aversions i.e. seeking food (through the hunger sensation) or avoiding a wet nappy (through sensations of discomfort).

The influences and stimulations of the environment in which children are raised and the responses from parents and