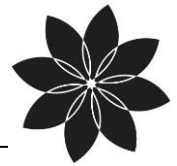


Preparing for Effective Learning



Introduction

This course is an opportunity for learning. IMA International uses a range of techniques suitable to the needs of a diverse group of people. You can expect a variety of formal and informal methods designed to maximize the learning with the IMA International trainers and other participants, both inside and outside the classroom.

Adults learn most effectively when they are self-motivated, comfortable, stimulated and actively participating in the learning process.

Focus

Adults learn selectively. It helps to deliberately focus on aspects of the material that are directly relevant to your work or special interests. Learning is also enhanced by consciously making links between sessions and with your real life experiences. In order to help you focus your energies on learning, you will be given an opportunity to share your initial hopes and concerns with the trainers and the group.

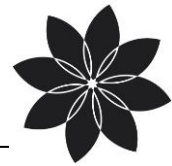
Learning Styles

Different people tend to prefer to learn in different ways even if they are highly motivated. For example, some people enjoy role-plays and others find them daunting. We develop 'habits' to help us get the most out of certain learning situations. By being aware of your own preferences you can manage your reactions to a variety of learning opportunities.

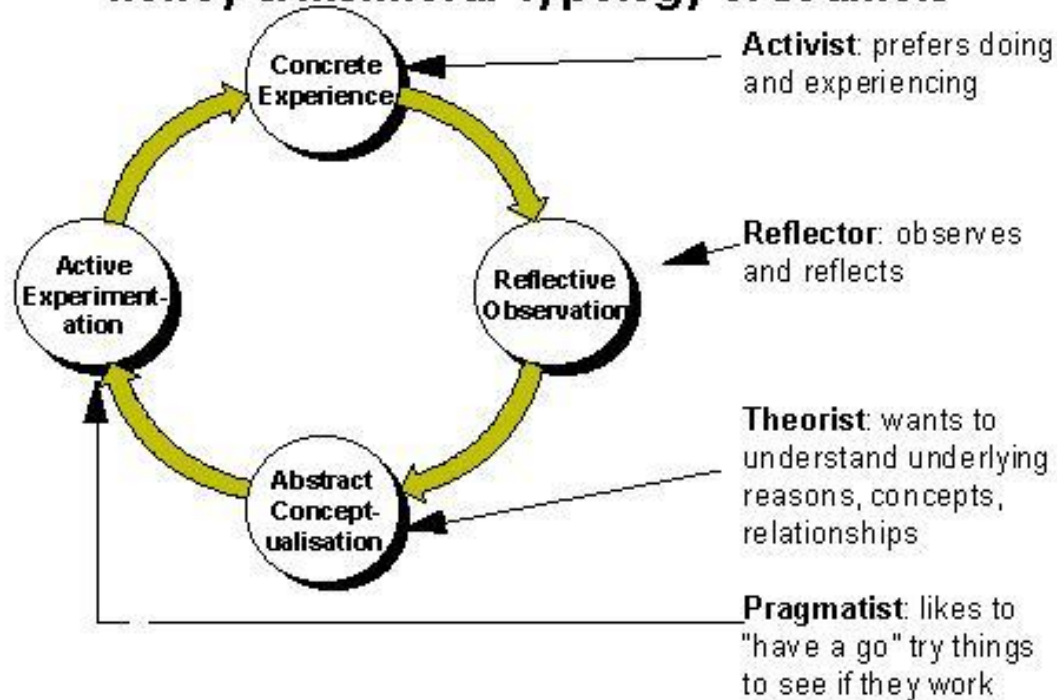
Honey and Mumford identified four learning styles that describe different ways people prefer to learn. These are Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists. Generally, people tend towards the learning styles they find easiest. These learning styles are not fixed and most people can adapt from one to another, given experience and practice.

Learning from Experience

It is common to associate 'learning' with an increase in knowledge, at university or in some other formal setting. However, most of our learning takes place informally, even unconsciously, through everyday experiences. For example, through solving problems, making decisions, and our actions and interactions with others. Real learning often results in changed behaviour and was called 'experiential learning' by Kolb. He demonstrated that the learning styles can be represented on a continuum of necessary stages. These are shown alongside the learning styles in the diagram on the next page.



Honey & Mumford: Typology of Learners

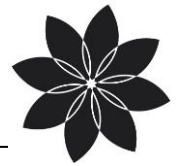


- Concrete experience: being involved in a new experience
- Reflective observation: watching others or developing observations about own experience
- Abstract conceptualization: creating theories to explain observations
- Active experimentation: using theories to solve problems, make decisions

Hartman (1995) took Kolb's learning styles and gave examples of how one might teach to each them:

- For the concrete experiencer (activist) field work, games, role-play, brainstorming, energizers, experiments, unstructured activities
- For the reflective observer (reflector) journals, observation, laboratories, video, review activities
- For the abstract conceptualizer (theorist) lectures, question & answers, detailed & structured handouts, ideas and concepts, presentations, analysis of information
- For the active experimenter (pragmatist) simulations, real case studies, practical homework, demonstrations, practical action planning

Preparing for Effective Learning



- Detailed Descriptions of the Four Learning Styles

No single learning style is more effective than another; however each tends to have related strengths and weaknesses. Individuals can practice their learning techniques in order to benefit from the *strengths* of each style.

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, non-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 on themselves.

Strengths:

- Flexible and open-minded.
- Happy to be exposed to new situations.
- Happy to have a go.
- Optimistic about anything new and therefore unlikely to resist change.

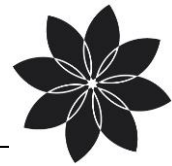
Weaknesses:

- Tendency to take the immediately obvious action without thinking.
- Often take unnecessary risks.
- Rush into action without sufficient preparation.
- Tendency to do too much themselves and hog the limelight.
- Get bored with implementation/consolidation.

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.

Preparing for Effective Learning



Strengths:

- Careful.
- Thorough and methodical.
- Rarely jump to conclusions.
- Thoughtful.
- Good at listening to others and assimilating information.

Weaknesses:

- Tendency to hold back from direct participation.
- Slow to make up their minds and reach a decision.
- Tendency to be too cautious and not take enough risks.
- Non-assertive – not particularly forthcoming with little 'small talk'

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 within it. They prefer to maximise certainty and feel uncomfortable with subjective judgements, lateral thinking and anything flippant.

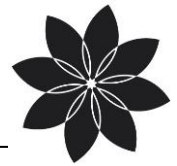
Strengths:

- Logical 'vertical' thinkers.
- Rational and objective.
- Good at asking probing questions.
- Disciplined approach.

Weaknesses:

- Restricted in lateral thinking.
- Full of 'shoulds, oughts and musts'
- Low tolerance for uncertainty, disorder and ambiguity.
- Intolerant of anything subjective or intuitive.

Preparing for Effective Learning



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 discussions. 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'.

Strengths:

- Keen to test things out in practice.
- Practical, down to earth, realistic.
- Businesslike – gets straight to the point.
- Technique oriented.

Weaknesses:

- Tendency to reject anything without an obvious application.
- Not very interested in theory or basic principles.
- Tendency to seize on the first expedient solution to a problem.
- Impatient with waffle.
- On balance, task oriented, not people oriented.

Training Methods

The training methods used by IMA International are carefully chosen to give variety of pace and style which compliment people's learning styles as well as the technical content of the session.

Ice breakers and energizers

Our attention and energy levels fluctuate throughout the day because of internal and external factors. On occasions, short physical activities may be introduced to liven up a tired group, or relaxing activities if anxiety levels are very high. These activities have a proven effect on enhancing people's attention and ability to engage in the learning process in a class environment.

Preparing for Effective Learning



TRAINING STYLES/ LEARNING STYLES

<p>Activists are more likely to favour...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games and role-play • Brainstorming • Icebreakers and energisers • Problem-solving activities • A wide range of different activities • Experiential activities • Unstructured "play-it-by-ear" activities 	<p>Theorists are more likely to favour...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of theories, models, concepts, systems • Relating the training activity to the relevant theory/model • Ideas; stretching the intellect • Question & answer sessions • Analysis of information • Structures situations • Handouts with detailed background information
<p>Reflectors are more likely to favour...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation activities • Video • Research; analysis • Structured group discussions • Exchange of information • Reviewing process; reflecting on group activities and learning from them • Activities building on pre-course work 	<p>Pragmatists are more likely to favour...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies closely linked to participant's own experience • Demonstrations • Practical exercises: giving participants the opportunity to try things out • Simulations of "real" issues/problems • Actions planning with an obvious end product • Anything with an immediate, practical application • Activities whose end result is quantifiable

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