Learning Style Survey: Assessing Your Learning Styles*
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Format:
Self-administered

Target Audience:
This activity is designed to be used with students in a second/foreign language classroom with facilitation by the teacher and/or second/foreign language teachers, researchers, and administrators in an SSBI workshop/course.

Purpose:
The *Learning Style Survey* assesses your general approach to learning. It does not predict your behavior, but it is a clear indication of your overall style preferences.

Instructions:
For each item circle the response that represents your approach. Complete all items. There are eleven major activities representing twelve different aspects of your learning style. When you read the statements, try to think about what you generally do when learning.

Time:
It takes about 30 minutes to complete the survey. Do not spend too much time on any item. Indicate your immediate response (or feeling) and move on to the next item.

For each item, circle your immediate response:

0 = Never   1 = Rarely   2 = Sometimes   3 = Often   4 = Always

Part 1: How I Use My Physical Senses	0 1 2 3 4
1. I remember something better if I write it down.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I take detailed notes during lectures.	0 1 2 3 4
3. When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I prefer to learn with TV or video rather than other media.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I use color coding to help me as I learn or work.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I need written directions for tasks.	0 1 2 3 4
7. I have to look at people to understand what they say.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I understand lecturers better when they write on the board.	0 1 2 3 4
9. Charts, diagrams, and maps help me understand what someone says.	0 1 2 3 4
10. I remember people's faces, but not their names.	0 1 2 3 4
A	**0 1 2 3 4**
11. I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.	0 1 2 3 4
12. I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture rather than reading.	0 1 2 3 4
13. I need oral directions for a task.	0 1 2 3 4
14. Background sound helps me think.	0 1 2 3 4
15. I like to listen to music when I study or work.	0 1 2 3 4
16. I can understand what people say even when I cannot see them.	0 1 2 3 4
17. I remember people's names, but not their faces.	0 1 2 3 4
18. I easily remember jokes that I hear.	0 1 2 3 4
19. I can identify people by their voices (e.g., on the phone).	0 1 2 3 4
20. When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more than watch the screen.	0 1 2 3 4
B	**0 1 2 3 4**

* Adapted from Oxford (1995), Ehrman & Leaver (1997, 2003); last revised in 2002.

	0 1 2 3 4
21. I'd rather get started than pay attention to the directions.	0 1 2 3 4
22. I need frequent breaks when I work or study.	0 1 2 3 4
23. I need to eat something when I read or study.	0 1 2 3 4
24. If I have a choice between sitting and standing, I'd rather stand.	0 1 2 3 4
25. I get nervous when I sit still too long.	0 1 2 3 4
26. I think better when I move around (e.g., pacing or my tapping feet).	0 1 2 3 4
27. I play with or bite on my pens during lectures.	0 1 2 3 4
28. Manipulating objects helps me to remember what someone says.	0 1 2 3 4
29. I move my hands when I speak.	0 1 2 3 4
30. I draw lots of pictures (doodles) in my notebook during lectures.	0 1 2 3 4

C _____

Part 2: How I Open Myself to Learning Situations

	0 1 2 3 4
1. I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I learn better in the classroom than with a private tutor.	0 1 2 3 4
4. It is easy for me to approach strangers.	0 1 2 3 4
5. Interacting with a lot of people gives me energy.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I experience things first, and then try to understand them.	0 1 2 3 4

A _____

7. I am energized by the inner world (what I'm thinking inside).	0 1 2 3 4
8. I prefer individual or one-on-one games and activities.	0 1 2 3 4
9. I have a few interests, and I concentrate deeply on them.	0 1 2 3 4
10. After working in a large group, I am exhausted.	0 1 2 3 4
11. When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen.	0 1 2 3 4
12. I want to understand something well before I try it.	0 1 2 3 4

B _____

Part 3: How I Handle Possibilities

	0 1 2 3 4
1. I have an inventive imagination.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I try to find many options and possibilities for why something happens.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I plan carefully for future events.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I like to discover things myself rather than have everything explained to me.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I add many original ideas during class discussions.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I am open-minded to new suggestions from my peers.	0 1 2 3 4

A _____

7. I focus on a situation as it is rather than thinking about how it could be.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I read instruction manuals (e.g., for computers or VCRs) before using the device.	0 1 2 3 4
9. I trust concrete facts instead of new, untested ideas.	0 1 2 3 4
10. I prefer things presented in a step-by-step way.	0 1 2 3 4
11. I dislike it if my classmate changes the plan for our project.	0 1 2 3 4
12. I follow directions carefully.	0 1 2 3 4

B _____

Part 4: How I Deal With Ambiguity and Deadlines

	0 1 2 3 4
1. I like to plan language study sessions carefully and do lessons on time or early.	0 1 2 3 4
2. My notes, handouts, and other school materials are carefully organized.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I like to be certain about what things mean in a target language.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I like to know how rules are applied and why.	0 1 2 3 4

A _____

5. I let deadlines slide if I'm involved in other things.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I let things pile up on my desk to be organized eventually.	0 1 2 3 4
7. I don't worry about comprehending everything.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I don't feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic.	0 1 2 3 4

B _____

Part 5: How I Receive Information	0 1 2 3 4
1. I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I ignore details that do not seem relevant.	0 1 2 3 4
3. It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I get the main idea and that's enough for me.	0 1 2 3 4
5. When I tell an old story, I tend to forget lots of specific details.	0 1 2 3 4
A	
6. I need very specific examples in order to understand fully.	0 1 2 3 4
7. I pay attention to specific facts or information.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I'm good at catching new phrases or words when I hear them.	0 1 2 3 4
9. I enjoy activities where I have to fill in the blank with missing words I hear.	0 1 2 3 4
10. When I try to tell a joke, I remember details but forget the punch line.	0 1 2 3 4
B	

Part 6: How I Further Process Information	0 1 2 3 4
1. I can summarize information easily.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I can quickly paraphrase what other people say.	0 1 2 3 4
3. When I create an outline, I consider the key points first.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I enjoy activities where I have to pull ideas together.	0 1 2 3 4
5. By looking at the whole situation, I can easily understand someone.	0 1 2 3 4
A	
6. I have a hard time understanding when I don't know every word.	0 1 2 3 4
7. When I tell a story or explain something, it takes a long time.	0 1 2 3 4
8. I like to focus on grammar rules.	0 1 2 3 4
9. I'm good at solving complicated mysteries and puzzles.	0 1 2 3 4
10. I am good at noticing even the smallest details regarding some task.	0 1 2 3 4
B	

Part 7: How I Commit Material to Memory	0 1 2 3 4
1. I make an effort to pay attention to all the features of new material as I learn.	0 1 2 3 4
2. When I memorize different bits of language material, I can retrieve these bits easily – as if I had stored them in separate slots in my brain.	0 1 2 3 4
3. As I learn new material in the target language, I make distinctions between speech sounds, grammatical forms, and words and phrases.	0 1 2 3 4
A	
4. When learning new information, I may clump together data by eliminating or reducing differences and focusing on similarities.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I ignore distinctions that would make what I say more accurate in the given context.	0 1 2 3 4
6. Similar memories blur in my mind; I merge new learning experiences with previous ones.	0 1 2 3 4
B	

Part 8: How I Deal With Language Rules	0 1 2 3 4
1. I like to go from general patterns to the specific examples in learning a target language.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I like to start with rules and theories rather than specific examples.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I like to begin with generalizations and then find experiences that relate to them.	0 1 2 3 4
A	
4. I like to learn rules of language indirectly through being exposed to lots of examples of grammatical structures and other language features.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I don't really care if I hear a rule stated since I don't remember rules very well anyway.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I figure out rules based on the way I see language forms behaving over time.	0 1 2 3 4
B	

Part 9: How I Deal With Multiple Inputs

1. I can separate out the relevant and important information in a given context even when distracting information is present.	0 1 2 3 4
2. When I produce an oral or written message in a target language, I make sure that all the grammatical structures are in agreement.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I not only attend to grammar, but check for appropriate level of formality and politeness.	0 1 2 3 4
	A _____
4. When speaking or writing, a focus on grammar would be at the expense of attention to content.	0 1 2 3 4
5. It is a challenge for me to focus on communication in speech or writing while paying attention to grammatical agreement (e.g., person, number, tense, or gender).	0 1 2 3 4
6. When I am using lengthy sentences in a target language, I get distracted and neglect aspects of grammar and style.	0 1 2 3 4
	B _____

Part 10: How I Deal With Response Time

1. I react quickly in language situations.	0 1 2 3 4
2. I go with my instincts in a target language.	0 1 2 3 4
3. I jump in, see what happens, and make on-line corrections if needed.	0 1 2 3 4
	A _____
4. I need to think things through before speaking or writing.	0 1 2 3 4
5. I like to look before I leap when determining what to say or write in a target language.	0 1 2 3 4
6. I attempt to find supporting material in my mind before I start producing language.	0 1 2 3 4
	B _____

Part 11: How Literally I Take Reality

1. I find that building metaphors in my mind helps me deal with language (e.g., viewing the language like a machine with component parts that can be disassembled).	0 1 2 3 4
2. I learn things through metaphors and associations with other things. I find stories and examples help me learn.	0 1 2 3 4
	A _____
3. I take learning language literally and don't deal in metaphors.	0 1 2 3 4
4. I take things at face value, so I like language material that says what it means directly.	0 1 2 3 4
	B _____

Understanding Your Totals

Once you have totaled your points, write the results on the blanks below. Circle the higher number in each part. If they are close, circle both and read about your learning styles on the next page.

Part 1: A _____ Visual B _____ Auditory C _____ Tactile/Kinesthetic	**Part 7:** A _____ Sharpener B _____ Leveler
Part 2: A _____ Extraverted B _____ Introverted	**Part 8:** A _____ Deductive B _____ Inductive
Part 3: A _____ Random-Intuitive B _____ Concrete-Sequential	**Part 9:** A _____ Field-Independent B _____ Field-Dependent
Part 4: A _____ Closure-Oriented B _____ Open-Oriented	**Part 10:** A _____ Impulsive B _____ Reflective
Part 5: A _____ Global B _____ Particular	**Part 11:** A _____ Metaphoric B _____ Literal
Part 6: A _____ Synthesizing B _____ Analytic	

Before reading the next section, understand that this is only a general description of your learning style preferences. It does not describe you *all of the time*, but gives you an idea of your tendencies when you learn. Note that in some learning situations, you may have one set of style preferences and in another situation, another set of preferences. Also, there are both advantages and disadvantages to every style preference.

If on the sensory style preferences (visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic) you prefer two or all three of these senses (i.e., your totals for the categories are within 5 points or so), you are likely to be flexible enough to enjoy a wide variety of activities in the language classroom. On the other dimensions, although they appear to be in opposition, it is possible for you to have high scores on both, meaning that you do not have a preference one way or the other. Here are three examples: On the extroverted-introverted distinction, you are able to work effectively with others as well as by yourself; on the closure-open distinction, you enjoy the freedom of limited structure and can still get the task done before the deadline without stress; on the global-particular distinction, you can handle both the gist and the details easily.

Furthermore, learning style preferences change throughout your life, and you can also stretch them, so don't feel that you are constrained to one style.

Part 1: How I Use My Physical Senses

If you came out as more visual than auditory (i.e., closer to the maximum 40 points on visual than on auditory), you rely more on the sense of sight, and you learn best through visual means (books, video, charts, pictures). If you are more auditory, you prefer listening and speaking activities (discussions, debates, audio tapes, role-plays, lectures). If you have any tactile/kinesthetic style preference, you benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around (games, building models, conducting experiments).

Part 2: How I Open Myself to Learning Situations

If you came out more extraverted on this survey, you probably enjoy a wide range of social, interactive learning tasks (games, conversations, discussions, debates, role-plays, simulations). If you came out more introverted, you probably like to do more independent work (studying or reading by yourself or learning with the computer) or enjoy working with one other person you know well.

Part 3: How I Handle Possibilities

If you scored more random-intuitive, you are most likely more future-oriented, prefer what can be over what is, like to speculate about possibilities, enjoy abstract thinking, and tend to disfavor step-by-step instruction. If your style preference was more concrete-sequential, you are likely to be more present-oriented, prefer one-step-at-a-time activities, and want to know where you are going in your learning at every moment.

Part 4: How I Deal With Ambiguity and Deadlines

If you are more closure-oriented, you probably focus carefully on most or all learning tasks, strive to meet deadlines, plan ahead for assignments, and want explicit directions. If you are more open in your orientation, you enjoy discovery learning (where you pick up information naturally) and prefer to relax and enjoy your learning without concern for deadlines or rules.

Part 5: How I Receive Information

If you have a more global style preference, you enjoy getting the gist or main idea, and are comfortable communicating even if you don't know all the words or concepts. If you are more particular in preference, you focus more on details, and remember specific information about a topic well.

Part 6: How I Further Process Information

If you are a synthesizing person, you can summarize material well, enjoy guessing meanings and predicting outcomes, and notice similarities quickly. If you are analytic, you can pull ideas apart, do well on logical analysis and contrast tasks, and tend to focus on grammar rules.

Part 7: How I Commit Material to Memory

If you are a sharpener, it is your tendency to notice differences and seek distinctions among items as you commit material to memory. You like to distinguish small differences and to separate memory of prior experiences easily from memory of current ones. You can easily retrieve the different items because you store them separately. You like to make fine distinctions among speech sounds, grammatical forms, and meaningful elements of language (words and phrases). If you are a leveler, you are likely to blend material together in order to remember it, by eliminating or reducing differences and by focusing almost exclusively on similarities. You are likely to blur similar memories and to merge new experiences readily with previous ones.

Part 8: How I Deal With Language Rules

If you are a more deductive learner, you like to go from the general to the specific, to apply generalizations to experience, and to start with rules and theories rather than with specific examples. If you are a more inductive learner, you like to go from specific to general, and prefer to begin with examples rather than rules or theories.

Part 9: How I Deal With Multiple Inputs

If you are more field-independent in style preference, you like to separate or abstract material from within a given context, even in the presence of distractions. You may, however, have less facility dealing with information holistically. If you are more field-dependent, you tend to deal with information in a more holistic or "gestalt" way. Consequently you may have greater difficulty in separating or abstracting material from its context. You work best without distractions.

Part 10: How I Deal With Response Time

If you are a more impulsive learner, you react quickly in acting or speaking with little or no thinking the situation through. For you, thought often follows action. If you are a more reflective learner, you think things through before taking action and often do not trust your gut reactions. In your case, action usually follows thought.

Part 11: How Literally I Take Reality

If you are a metaphoric learner, you learn material more effectively if you conceptualize aspects of it in metaphorical terms. You make the material more comprehensible by developing and applying an extended metaphor to it (e.g., visualizing the grammar system of a given language as an engine that can be assembled and disassembled). If you are a more literal learner, you prefer a relatively literal representation of concepts, and like to work with language material more or less as it is on the surface.

Tips for the Learner

Each style preference offers significant strengths in learning and working. Recognize your strengths to take advantage of ways you learn best. Also, enhance your learning and working power by being aware of the style areas that you do *not* use and by developing them. Tasks that do not seem quite as suited to your style preferences will help you stretch beyond your comfort zone and expand your learning and working potential. You may, in fact, wish to ask your teacher to suggest some language learning and, use strategies for dealing with tasks outside your comfort zone.

For example, if you are a highly global person, you might need to learn to pay more attention to detail in order to learn more effectively. If you are an extremely detail-oriented person, you might be missing out on some useful global characteristics, like getting the main idea quickly, and you can develop such qualities in yourself through practice in using strategies that call for a global (e.g., "big picture") approach to the task at hand. You won't lose your basic strengths by trying something new; you will simply develop another side of yourself that is likely to be very helpful to your language learning.

If you aren't sure how to attempt new behaviors that go *beyond* your favored style, then ask your colleagues, friends, or teachers to give you a hand. Talk with someone who has a different style from yours, and see how that person does it. Improve your learning or working situation by stretching your style!