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Learning Styles

An Evaluation of Learning Styles

Report For: **Natalie Grant**

Date: **8/14/2026**

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Introduction to Learning Styles

How we learn is a topic that is covered in thousands of books and articles written on the subject from hundreds of different perspectives. One particular, but large, foundational part of this subject area is learning styles.

Not everyone agrees on a common definition of learning styles. Some prefer to see it as part of overall perception and memory, some see it as part of human cognition and understanding, and some see it as a unique human "stream" of understanding or process for collecting information.

All learners are not equal. They come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and from many cultural backgrounds. In addition, their past experience and existing methods of learning may be quite different. Apart from differences in general background or culture, some people like to process information through text, while others want visual support and images. Some assimilate information individually, while others prefer to work in groups. Some grasp information intuitively and quickly, while others prefer to see a strong sequential path and time to reflect. In the end, the only thing you can say for sure is that every individual learns in their own particular way.

The Learning Styles Questionnaire simply helps individuals understand their relative preferences as they learn and to better manage their transfer process in the future.

It is intended to help determine where people's general preferences, or natural learning biases, might lie. Although this is far from an exact science, the simple view is that the more we can understand about how we perceive new information or new learning, the better and more successful our learning transfer will be. This means using our whole brain to learn, as is illustrated in the diagram on the next page.

Remember:
This is not a test.
There are no right or wrong answers.

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CEREBRAL LEFT

ANALYTICAL (LOGICAL & RATIONAL)

Learns By

Quiet Reflection

Ordered offering of facts

Wholistic models of information

Logical, planned discussions

Type of Person

Technical
Intellectual
Mathematical
Problem Solver
Quantifier
Organizer

Interests

Performance
Efficiency
Function
Value

CEREBRAL RIGHT

INTUITIVE (OPEN-MINDED)

Type of Person

Visionary
Risk-Taker
High impulse
Synthesizer
Creative
Artistic

Learns By

Self discovery

Concept construction

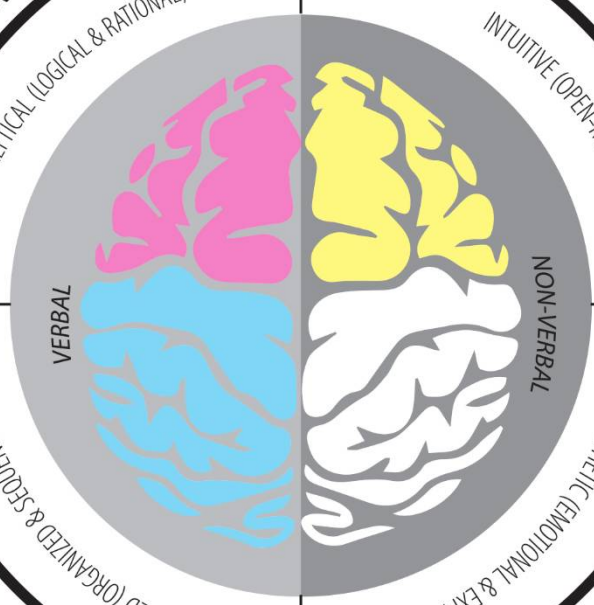
Discovering hidden possiblilities

Involvement

Experimental learning

Interests

Exploration
Strategy
Concepts
Fun



LIMBIC LEFT

DETAILED (ORGANIZED & SEQUENTIAL)

Interests

Quality
Security
Reliability
Standards

Learns By

Theory testing

Practice

Sequential presentation of information

Programmed and structured

Learning experiences

Type of Person

Detailed
Conservative
Traditional
Controlled
Planner
Evaluator

LIMBIC RIGHT

KINESTHETIC (EMOTIONAL & EXPRESSIVE)

Interests

Love
People
Communication
Selflessness

Type of Person

Soft hearted
Personable
Musical
Helpful
Emotional
Spiritual

Learns By

Listening and sharing ideas

Harmoniously working together

High interactivity

Open discussion

Experiential learning

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Your Results

Learning Styles Report For: Natalie Grant

Note: The thin gray bars that appear beneath each of your scores reflect the average score or "norm" for all individuals that have completed this instrument in the past.

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Using Learning Styles

This instrument is designed to measure the learning style of an individual in most situations. This is done in four categories:

In this instrument, individuals will score in all four categories and most, if not necessarily all, of the sub-scales. Let's look at these four categories in more detail:

1. ATTENDING

The **ATTENDING** category looks at an individual's motivation to learn in the first place, and the levels of commitment or concentration they tend to give when new information is presented to them. This category has two sub-scales: "Telescopic" and "Wide-angled". Telescopic means that they are generally effective at concentrating and keep their mind on the information being shared without worrying about the physical context. Wide-angled means that the individual is often easily affected by environmental factors such as noise, low light, and other physical influences that can easily interfere with any information being shared.

2. TRANSLATING

The **TRANSLATING** category looks at who an individual relies on most in managing the transfer of learning, and to make sense of what they see, hear, or sense. This category has three sub-scales: "Dependent", "Collaborative", and "Autonomous". Dependent means that the individual mainly favors relying on the trainer or facilitator for information. Collaborative means the individual mainly favors relying on group discussions or team activities for learning. Autonomous means that self-reliance is favored to manage the learning transfer process personally.

3. RELATING

The **RELATING** category looks at an individual's perception of data or information, and how it is related to existing knowledge. This has three sub-scales: "Visual", "Auditory", and "Kinesthetic". Visual means that the preference is for information that can ideally be seen with the eyes. Auditory means that the preference is for information that can ideally be heard. Kinesthetic means that the preference is for information that can ideally be physically experienced (mainly through touch, smell, or taste).

4. UNDERSTANDING

The **UNDERSTANDING** category looks at an individual's preferences for synthesizing data or information that they receive. This category has two sub-scales: "Global" and "Analytical". Global means a preference for understanding at a conceptual or "big picture" level. Analytical means a preference for understanding at a detailed or step-by-step level.

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Your Individual Score

Once you have plotted your individual score (as long as this has been done honestly and accurately) you should be in a position to:

1. **Review the balance of learning styles that you draw upon.**
2. **Compare your mix of learning styles with other average scores (shown on the graph).**
3. **Consider the implications for your future learning and how you might look to adjust your own approach to look to influence the way that future learning is delivered to you.**

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers in learning styles. In analysis, the essential value in any measurement is the extent to which it provides a useful indicator of your personal way of operating. Ideally, this should help us reflect upon and judge whether any adjustments or changes are necessary or desirable to build effectiveness.

By completing this profile, your scores should provide a useful basis for such a review to take place. Whatever your results, you may want to reflect on your scores on all of the scales. Consequently, on the following pages, you will find some broad information to consider about each category.

Interpreting Your Scores on the Learning Style Instrument

The following pages provide some general information for both high and low scores in each of the four learning style categories, and all ten of the sub-scales. This information provides a broad guide as to how an individual might learn or absorb new information given their score (all other things being equal).

Your scores have translated into four main categories. These are:

1. Attending - How an individual focuses or concentrates on new information or learning: They can be "Telescopic" or "Wide-angled"

2. Translating - How individuals prefer to manage what they see, hear or sense in the learning environment: They can be "Dependent", "Collaborative", or "Autonomous"

3. Relating - How individuals like to relate new knowledge to old knowledge: They can be "Visual", "Kinesthetic", or "Auditory"

4. Understanding - How individuals like to synthesize the learning they receive: They can be "Global" or "Analytical"

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Attending

Attending

Telescopic: 4/8

Wide-Angled: 4/8

Attending characteristics focus on how an individual focuses or concentrates on new information or learning. Some individuals have a Telescopic perspective. This means that they can focus on the core message without noticing or being distracted by some of the ambient interference. They may, however, miss some of the relevant wider signals. Wide-angled individuals tend to notice the whole learning environment, and can let side issues and distractions interfere with the core message.

Telescopic
(55% of People)

Physical Climate

- Is likely to ignore most minor physical distractions without much difficulty
- Will seek to adjust their learning climate themselves, wherever possible
- Usually happy to work in any learning design format and training room design, as long as the course leader can be clearly seen and heard

Motivation

- Telescopic individuals are likely to set their own learning goals or objectives and tell others about them
- Motivation is self-generated and paced, and is quickly formed. However, it can just as quickly disappear when not challenged

Level of Concentration

- High if there is a clear link with personal desires or aims, but potentially low if too much time is taken in straying from the core messages of the learning
- Prefers learning goals and objectives, and a clear path to be described to reach them

Wide-Angled
(45% of People)

Physical Climate

- Is likely to find all but the most minor noises and interruptions irritating and distracting
- Will expect the course leader to adjust the whole learning climate to be optimal
- Will prefer a comfortable and appropriate learning format and layout, with lots of light, air, and a room design that is "fit for purpose"

Motivation

- Wide-angled individuals are likely to look for pre-specified holistic learning objectives and goals to be explained early in proceedings
- Motivation is driven by a coordinated effort to get the entire learning environment right, not just the content

Level of Concentration

- High if the complete training event is managed as a whole and care is taken to deal with all of the learning style issues (not just trying to process participants)
- Prefers learning to be nurtured in many ways with the most appropriate environment possible

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Translating

Translating

Dependent: 6/8

Collaborative: 3/8

Autonomous: 3/8

Translating characteristics focus on individual preferences for managing their own personal method for translating what they see, hear, or sense in a learning environment, and make intelligible in terms of their own existing mental models. Dependent learners expect the learning course leader to help them do this; Collaborative learners like to do this by talking about issues raised in groups; Autonomous learners like to challenge assumptions and reflect upon information given by themselves.

The Dependent Learner
(52% of people)

Characteristics
Dependent learners prefer course leader directed information, high structure, and clear focus. Lectures or tutorials are, therefore, more favored. Dependent learners tend to like large groups because the learning format has to be more formal.

Likes
- Tutorials
- Lectures
- Presentations
- Bulletins
- Manuals
- Procedures
- Work instructions
- Guidelines
- Outlines
- Summaries

Dislikes
- Conceptual models
- Doodles
- Complex charts
- Data without notes
- Unsupported ideas/opinions

The Collaborative Learner
(22% of people)

Characteristics
Collaborative learners tend to favor discussion-oriented sessions, small group seminars, or even project work that can provide assignments and a chance for social interaction. Games, simulations, case studies, and role plays are, therefore, more favored.

Likes
- Seminars, Workshops
- Group discussions
- Role plays
- Think tanks
- Brainstorming
- Sessions
- Projects
- Games
- Simulations
- Clubs

Dislikes
- Working alone
- No interaction
- Long lectures
- Individual reading
- Distance learning

The Autonomous Learner
(26% of people)

Characteristics
The autonomous learner prefers to exercise an influence over the content and structure of the program and see the course leader/facilitator as a broadly guiding resource. Guided reading and distance learning are, therefore, comfortable formats.

Likes
- Reading
- Writing
- Distance learning
- Simulations
- One-to-one counseling
- Models
- Individual
- Assignments
- Loose idea
- Big picture concepts

Dislikes
- Technical presentations
- Detailed lectures
- Policies and procedure
- Fixed procedures and work instructions
- Workbooks/manuals

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Relating

Relating

Visual: 5/8

Auditory: 2/8

Kinesthetic: 5/8

Relating characteristics focus on how individuals like to relate what is taught to their existing shared knowledge (both in short and long-term memory). The three primary methods are "Visual", "Kinesthetic", and "Auditory". It should be noted that individuals use all three methods, but given a preference will elect to use one more than the other two.

Visual Learners
(45% of people)

Characteristics

- When relaxing, prefer to watch a film or video, go to the theatre, or read a book
- Prefer to talk to people face-to-face
- Are often fast thinkers and talkers
- Forget names, remember faces
- If lost or need directions, prefer a map
- When inactive, tend to doodle or watch someone/something
- Reward people with a note, letter, or card

Learn best by

- Writing down key facts
- Visualizing what they are learning
- Creating pictures/diagrams from what they are learning
- Using time lines for remembering dates
- Creating their own strong visual links
- Using pictures, diagrams, charts, film, video, graphics, etc.

Kinesthetic Learners
(25% of people)

Characteristics

- When relaxing, prefer to play games and sports
- Prefer to talk to people while doing something else
- Slow talkers, use gestures and expressions
- Shake hands with people they meet
- If lost or need directions, prefer to be shown the way
- Reward people with a pat on the back
- Cannot sit still for long periods of time

Learn best by

- Copying demonstrations
- Making models
- Recording information as they hear it, perhaps in a Mind Map
- Walking around while they read
- Underlining/highlighting new information/key points
- Putting key points on index cards and sorting them into order
- Getting physically and actively involved in their learning

Auditory Learners
(30% of people)

Characteristics

- When relaxing, prefer to listen to music or radio
- Prefer to talk to people on the phone
- Enjoy listening to others, but impatient to talk; talk in a rhythmic voice
- Forget faces, remember names
- If lost or need directions, prefer to be told
- When inactive, tend to talk to themselves or others
- Reward people with oral praise

Learn best by

- Hearing a seminar, presentation, or explanation
- Reading aloud to themselves
- Reading with emotion or accent
- Making a tape of key points to listen to in the car, while ironing, etc.
- Verbally summarize in their own words
- Explain the subject to someone else
- Use their own internal voice to verbalize what they are learning

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Understanding

Understanding

Global: 6/8

Analytical: 2/8

Understanding characteristics focus on how individuals like to ultimately synthesize the learning that they receive, and the way in which they extrapolate it for their own theoretical or practical use. The two styles by which most people do this synthesizing is either "Globally", in which case they are likely to take a big picture and conceptual view and broadly absorb information, or "Analytically", in which case they are likely to make sense of learning by breaking it down logically and in step-by-step fashion.

Global
(53% of people)

Strengths

- Seeing the big picture
- Seeing relationships
- Co-operating in group efforts
- Reading between the lines
- Seeing many options
- Paraphrasing
- Doing several things at once
- Reading body language; getting others involved

Style

- Often more sensitive to other people's feelings
- Flexible
- Goes with the flow
- Learns by discussion and working with others
- Needs reassurance and reinforcement
- Future focused and expansive in thinking
- Tries to avoid conflict
- May skip steps and details

Frustrations

- Having to explain themselves analytically
- Not getting a chance to explain themselves
- Not knowing the meaning for doing something
- Having to go step-by-step without knowing where they'll end up
- Not being able to relate what they are learning to their own situation
- Having to show the steps they used to get an answer

Analytical
(47% of people)

Strengths

- Details
- Focus
- Organization
- Remembering specifics
- Direct answers
- Consistency
- Objectivity
- Individual competition
- Doing one thing at a time

Style

- Likes things ordered in a step-by-step way
- Pays close attention to details
- Must be prepared
- Needs to know what to expect
- Often values facts over feelings
- Prefers to finish one thing at a time
- Rarely becomes personally or emotionally involved
- Logical
- Finds the facts but sometimes misses the main idea

Frustrations

- Having opinion expressed as fact
- Not understanding the purpose for doing something
- Listening to an overview without knowing the steps involved
- Listening to an explanation when all that's needed is a "yes" or a "no" answer
- Dealing with generalities
- Having to find meaning in all that they learn
- Not finishing one task before going to the next

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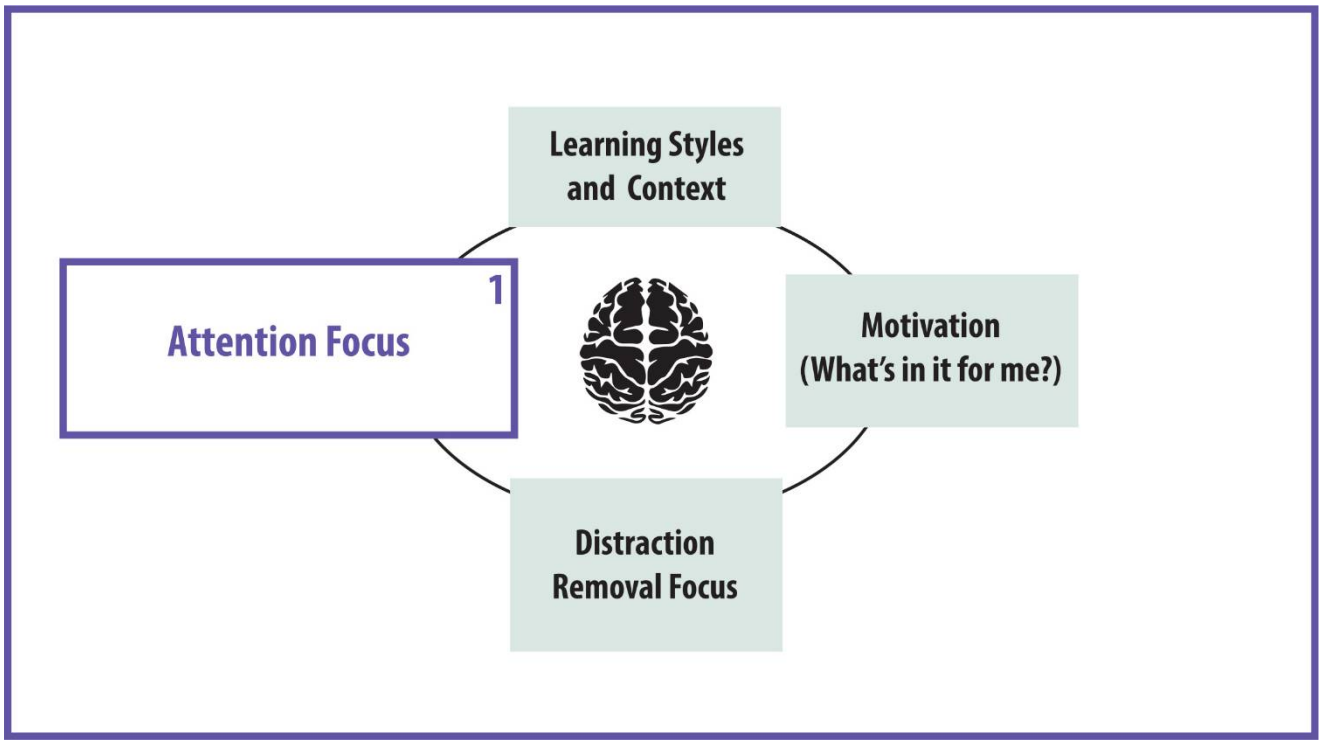
The Effective Learning Cycle in Four Steps: Attending

Actually, evaluating what we hear, see, or experience is a complex process for every individual who will bring their own past history, preferences, biases, skills, and many other factors to bear in each new situation. However, we have suggested that this mental learning evaluation cycle is a four-step process:

Step 1: ATTENDING

A pre-condition of learning is an ability on the part of the individual to filter out inhibitors and attend to the subject with their full attention. This is predominantly a right-brained activity in which we appraise the broad context within which the information should be evaluated (ATTENDING).



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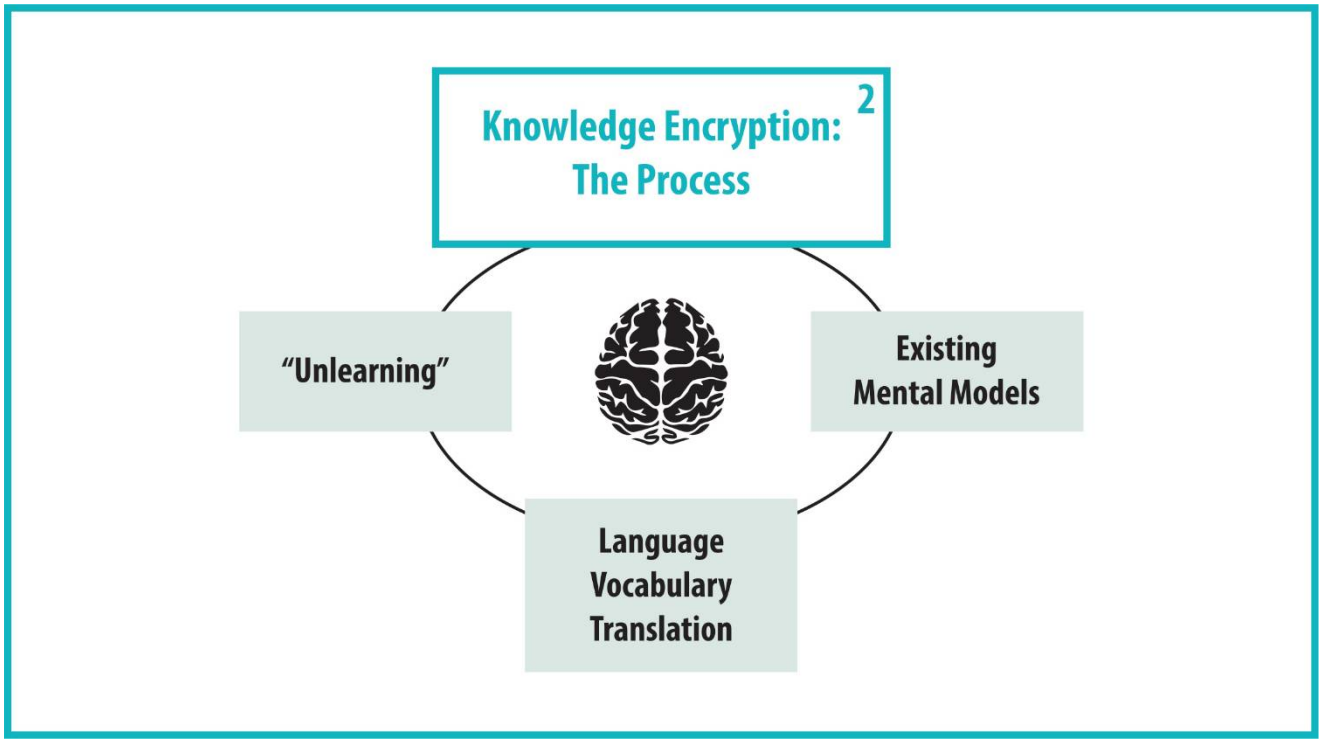
The Effective Learning Cycle in Four Steps: Translating

Step 2: TRANSLATING

We need to translate the information in a way that matches our existing knowledge or mental models of the way things work. In some cases, we may have to unlearn something before we can encode or encrypt the new learning to be meaningful. This is predominantly a left-brain activity connected with logic and reason (TRANSLATING).



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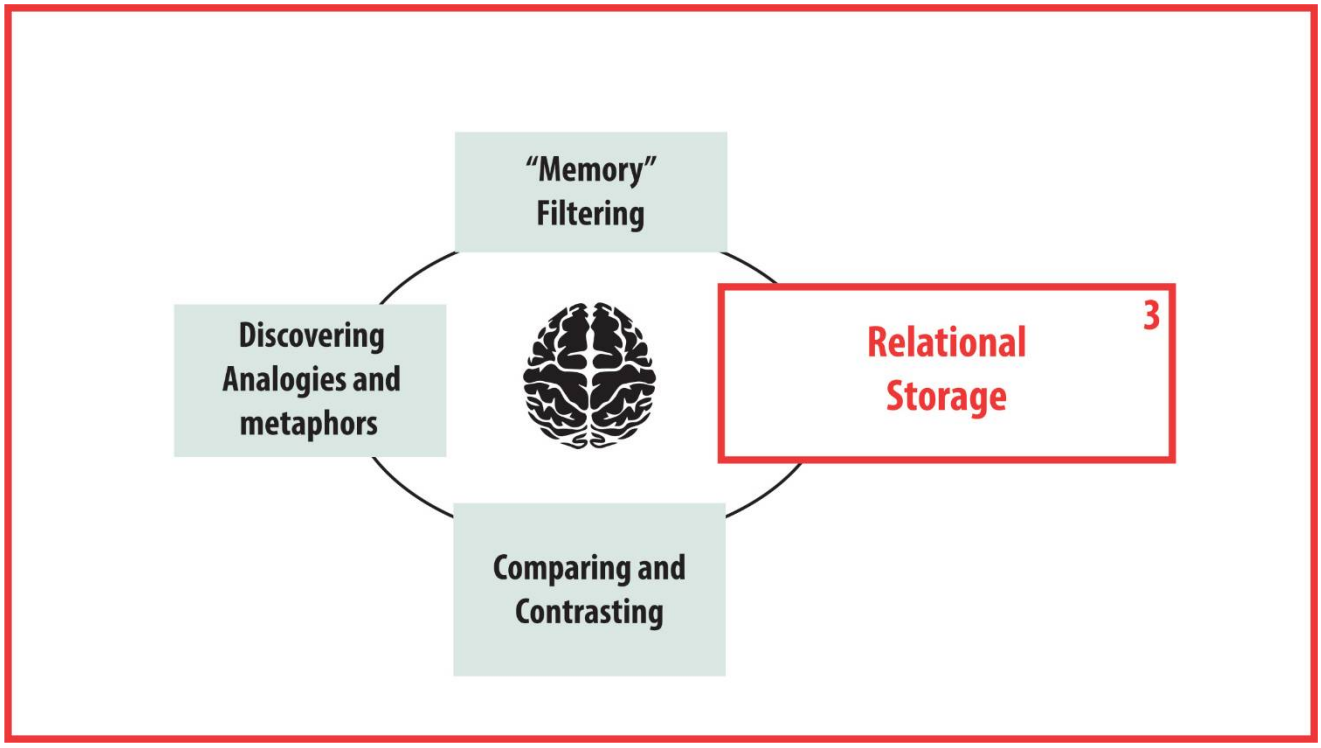
The Effective Learning Cycle in Four Steps: Relating

Step 3: RELATING

We need to relate the information to existing patterns or "blocks" of knowledge, in either short or long-term memory, in order to connect new information with old information in the same place. This is predominantly a right-brained activity connected with associated general ideas and relationships (RELATING).



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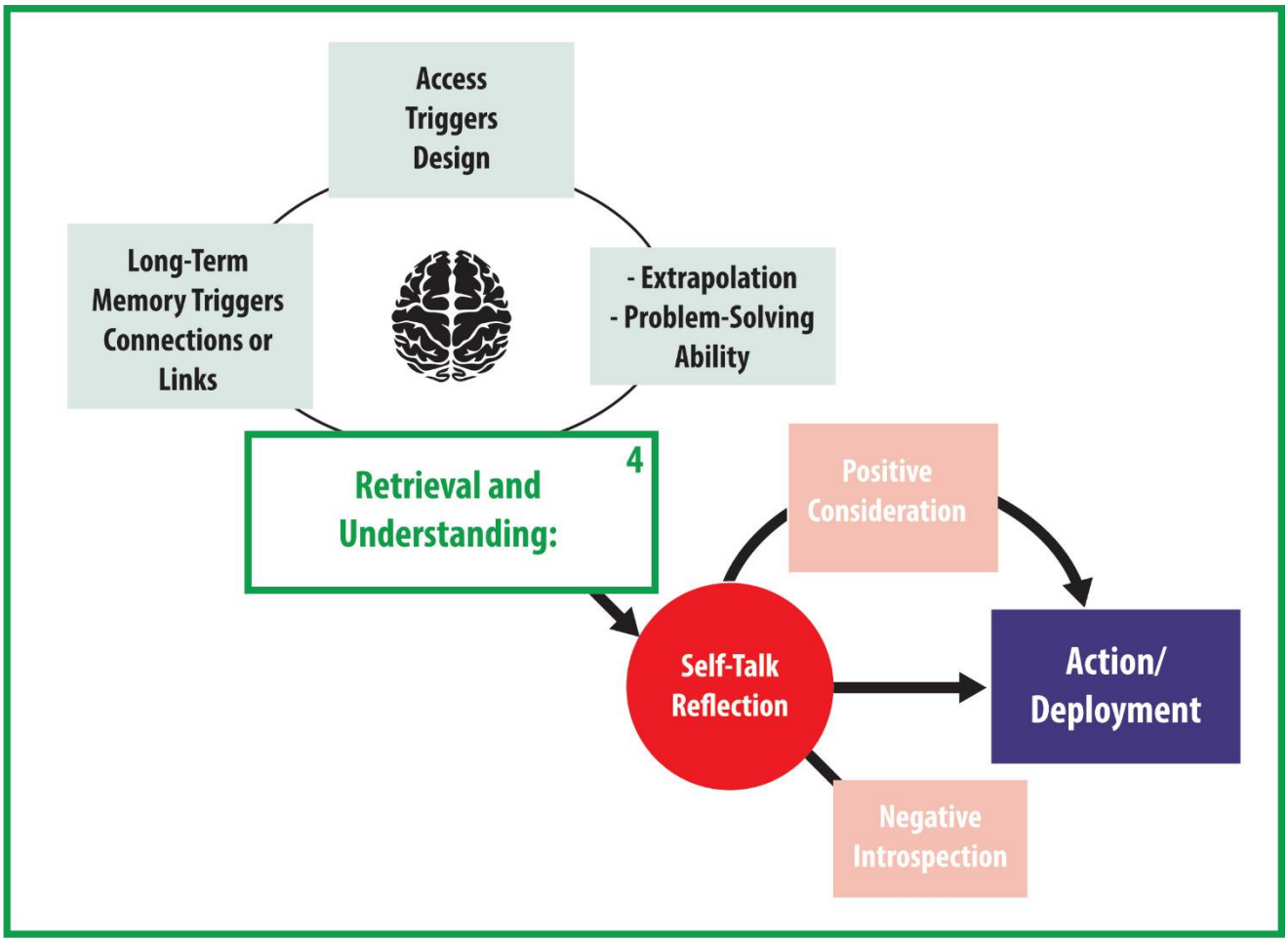
The Effective Learning Cycle in Four Steps: Understanding

Step 4: UNDERSTANDING

We need to summarize the new information in connection with the old, and to refine it for access and use when we need it. This is predominantly a left-brain activity connected with induction and deduction processes (UNDERSTANDING).



This learning evaluation cycle may be travelled in a few seconds in many cases, or may take much longer if the information is complex or confusing. If we travel the cycle successfully, our "self-talk," or internal reflection, is positive, and we can add it to our knowledge and action if we so choose. However, if we stall at any of these steps or travel this cycle with difficulty, our self-talk may be negative, or at least confused, and we introspectively travel the cycle again to see if we can work out the problem.

Hopefully, this instrument will have provided some useful guidance to every individual on how they personally travel through these four steps in their learning cycle.

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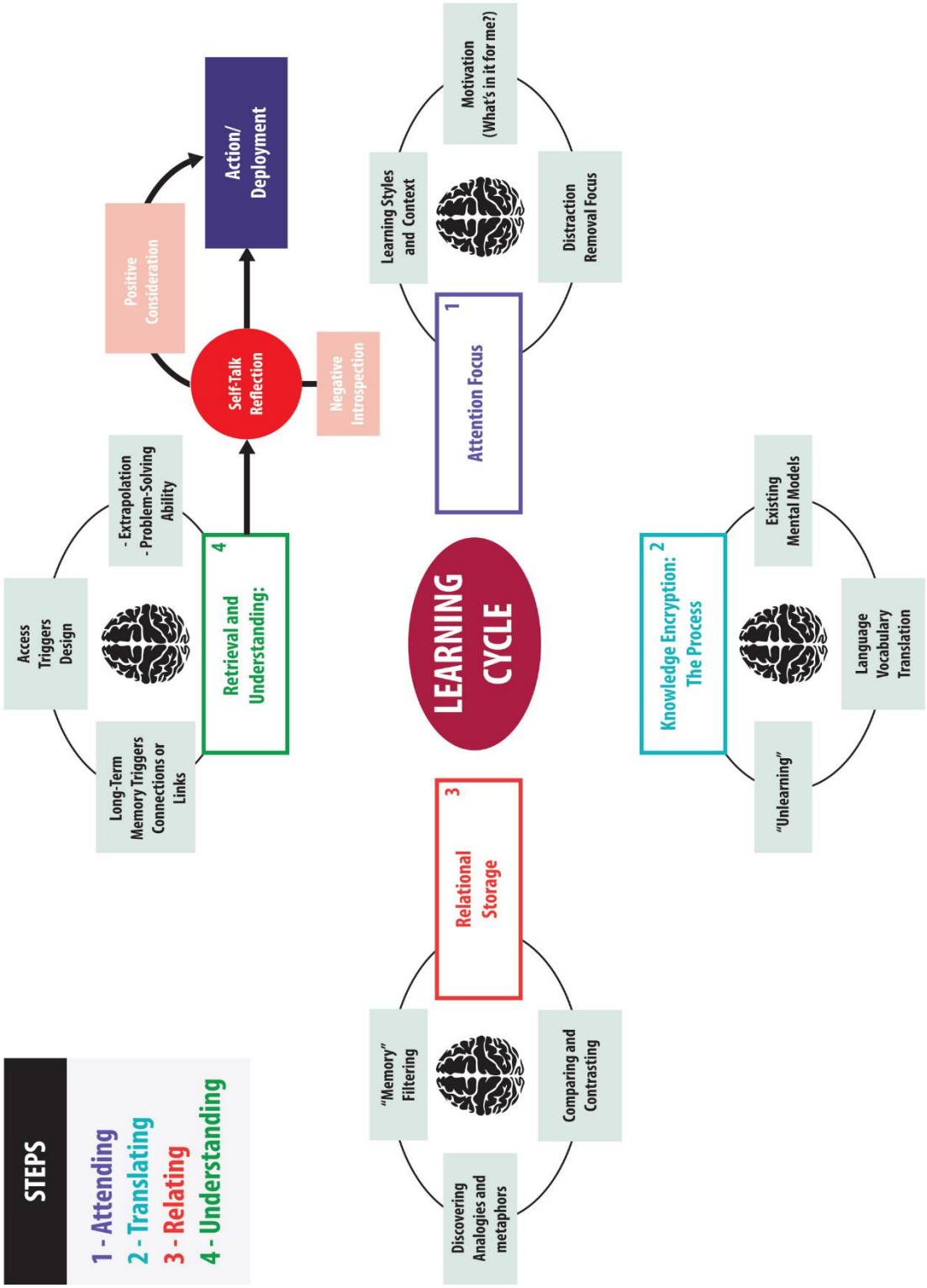
The Effective Learning Cycle Summary



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Pulling It All Together – Facilitating Learning Transfer

Our simple point in this profile has been that if individuals understand their overall learning cycle and their individual strengths and weaknesses, biases, and preferences, they will more readily be able to adjust their whole approach to learning and building knowledge. Some individuals may still want more information than we have been able to cover here. The desire to further understand learning styles is the first step in determining your own personal "recipe" for effective learning in the future.

- Once your level of understanding about the subject is as broad and as deep as you would like it to be, the next step will be to consider how much of this thinking fits or is relevant to you, and what appeals less or does not seem to apply at all. This means looking at all four of the stages in the Learning Styles Questionnaire carefully, and at the results in all ten of the sub-scales.

- Because most of the learning style theory and research is based on large groups of people which provides averaged and generalized results, even concepts that have been internalized and accepted may need to be modified to be as effective for you as possible. Adapting these concepts to more accurately reflect how people learn or like to be taught individually is the next step toward effectiveness and applicability.

- With any luck, some learning style concepts will be of sufficient interest to individuals to try out or experiment. Deploying some of the recommended approaches and activities is the final step in developing the right recipe for an individual to use and gain future benefit. In this sense, it is understanding ourselves that is suggested to be the most important consideration in managing our learning journey in the future.

There are many metaphors and analogies that are often used for the training or the learning process. Such analysis usually reflects that individuals are "filled up" with information in some way, such as a computer that progressively fills its memory with information until it is full. While we can buy more memory for our computers, as humans when we have more information than space, our only alternative is to free up some space in order for new learning to take place. This is typically referred to as the "unlearning" process. The unlearning process simply means identifying what information or previous training might now be redundant or conflicting with the new, and having clear strategies to address it. While this is a simple concept in mechanical or non-complex learning (like learning to complete a new task), it can become more complex when seeking behavioral-type changes.

Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, writing in the 1940's and 50's, suggested that the most appropriate learning change model should be as follows:

UNFREEZE ▶ **CHANGE** ▶ **REFREEZE**

In this model, he suggested that energy should be directed towards clearing the path, or unfreezing old habits and notions, in the most direct way possible. The trick is to "delete" what is no longer needed or to relate new knowledge to existing knowledge or experience. This cannot happen by accident; it must be planned.

There are two ways in which this whole process of effective learning transfer can be planned:

- Either the learning facilitator or trainer can take account of individual learning styles and vary their delivery styles and formats to optimize the transfer;
- Alternatively, the individual learner can recognize their own preferred learning styles and make the necessary interventions and adjustments.

While both approaches performed together are likely to create the best overall approach, it is the second of these two options that each individual can always control as they seek to learn something new or different.

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My Contract for Change

1. My personal goals to learn more effectively in the future are:

a) _____
b) _____
c) _____

2. As a result, I will make more time to achieve the goals by giving less priority to:

a) _____
b) _____
c) _____

3. Each week I will record my progress by:

_____
_____
_____

4. My support person(s) will be:

_____
_____
_____

5. My support person(s) will help me by:

_____
_____
_____

6. I will use the following methods to maintain my momentum and learn along the way:

a) _____
b) _____
c) _____

7. I will reward myself for achieving my milestones by:

_____
_____
_____

8. My end reward will be:

_____
_____
_____

Signed _____ Dated _____

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So Now What?

This report is filled with information about each of your four learning style categories. Now you have a learning profile that will truly help you understand your own unique learning style patterns.

There are many suggestions in each of the four sections of this report, presenting opportunities for you to apply this valuable information. Take the next action steps required to make improvements in the specific learning styles sections most important to you and your success.

Do not put this report on a shelf or in a file. You have the opportunity to use this information to open a meaningful dialogue with others and improve the way you learn new information. Use this report as a reference tool. It contains a lot of information and it wasn't designed to be digested in a single reading.

Have fun making the minor changes in the way you attend, translate, relate and understand new material and immediately experience improved results. You will be pleasantly surprised!

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