

THE 7 TYPES OF LEARNERS: FIND OUT WHICH ONE YOU ARE



Introduction

Benjamin Franklin, Woody Allen, and brilliant authors Mark Twain and Bernard Shaw are examples of men we'd describe as having brilliant minds. Their great successes probably came as a surprise to their teachers because they were far from brilliant at school. In fact, they did very poorly in the academic setting.

When Albert Einstein was a young boy, he was expelled from school for his appalling academic performance. The teachers bluntly told his parents that he was just plain stupid and would never amount anything. So, what happened? Did Einstein develop genius over time? No, his genius was there all along but he wasn't learning in a way that was optimal for him.

All of us are born ignorant but nobody's born stupid. It's education and the way we learn that shape us. If we learn the right way, our brilliance will be shaped early on. If we're not learning the right way, we can really struggle and be told by others (and convince ourselves) that we're dumb.

The above examples have driven some radical scholars to argue that formal education can actually kill intelligence rather than foster it. It's a compelling argument because oftentimes, formal education systems don't address the ways in which people learn. However, intelligence never dies. It can be revived when we start learning the way we should.

IQ has nothing to do with it!

Learning has nothing to do with IQ. Whether you're learning a new skill, a new language, or anything else, how fast you learn or how well you retain information isn't related to intelligence. Learning is a very personalized process. Just as each and every one of us is singular and unique, so are the ways in which we learn best.

There is a variety of common learning 'types' and this book will discuss 7 of them. Even so, not everyone can be boxed into one specific type. Some people combine a number of these methods, while others learn best according to just one. Some people combine all of these types to learn at their best. Others rely on one main type of learning while incorporating smaller bits from the other methods. In a nutshell, how you learn is totally unique to you.

All of this will become clearer as you read on and begin to understand how the 7 types of learning work. You'll also be able to identify what type or types you are. This awareness will help you apply your learning type to all of your future endeavors - and you'll be pleasantly surprised! The bottom line: Regardless of your age, profession, or academic status, you'll never have to struggle with learning again.

Chapter 1: The 4 Stages of the Learning Process

Have you ever wondered how we learn something new? The learning process is often thought to be difficult and complex. Perhaps this is why so many of us have negative associations with learning.

How often have you found yourself thinking, "I'm not doing this right! Why do I keep making so many mistakes? I'm never going to learn this!" Ironically, initial clumsiness and making mistakes is a vital part of learning.

Understanding the stages of the learning process can help you overcome your negative associations and fear of judgment. The four stages of learning, also known as the four stages of competence, describe the stages that each person goes through when learning something new.

Stage 1: Unconscious incompetence

This is described as the stage of 'blissful ignorance' before learning begins. It's when you don't realize that you don't know how to do something. Here's an example to illustrate this:

A child receives a new bicycle for his birthday. Eyes shining with excitement, he runs to the bike, jumps on it... and immediately falls over. Up to this moment, the child had no idea that riding a bike is a skill that needs to be learned.

Another example is a student who's just joined a yoga class. The instructor asks the students to take the 'palm tree pose.' The new student looks around at the older ones and tries to imitate them. She realizes that she's not doing it right because up to that moment, she never thought that pose existed. She keeps trying until the instructor walks her through the pose and asks her to practice it.

In this first stage of learning, you are simply not aware that a gap in your knowledge exists, and this leads to the next stage.

Stage 2: Conscious incompetence

You guessed right! This is when you become aware that a gap exists in your knowledge or skills. You become conscious of the importance of learning that skill or information.

In the previous example, the child understands that bikes don't run on their own. He becomes conscious of his incompetence, namely, his lack of bike-riding skills. Therefore, if he wants to ride his new bike, he needs to learn how it's done. Likewise, the yoga student thinks to herself, "I know that I don't know how to do this pose yet."

This stage is where the learning process begins in earnest. It's also the most difficult stage because mistakes are made and your self-talk can be brutal. Not surprisingly, it's also the stage where most people just give up.

Stage 3: Conscious competence

This is the stage where practice makes perfect! It's where you actively work to bridge the knowledge/skill gap through consistent practice.

This stage is easier than the previous one but you still feel a little uncomfortable and your self-judgment may still nag you when you make mistakes. But on the whole, your self-talk is more positive and encouraging because you're telling yourself, "I know that I know how to do this."

The child learning to ride a bike has learned all the basics and although still a bit clumsy, he's on his way to mastering the art of bike-riding. Likewise, the yoga student knows how to do the pose but is still struggling to do it with fluidity and ease. She knows that she looks clumsy but understands that with practice, she'll be able to master the pose.

Stage 4: Unconscious competence

The final stage of the learning process is when you've mastered a skill so that it comes naturally, or when a piece of knowledge becomes completely clear and is retained in your mind. In other words, you've mastered what you set out to learn! In fact, you've mastered it so well that you do it unconsciously and perfectly every single time! To sum up, let's use the analogy of driving a car to illustrate the 4 stages of learning as and how they progress:

- As a child watching your mother or father drive, you thought that by merely turning the steering wheel back and forth, the car would run. You didn't realize that it required driving skills and that you had a learning gap in that area. You were blissfully ignorant in your unconscious incompetence.
- When you're old enough to start taking driving lessons, you're stunned to discover how much there was to learn. You become conscious of your incompetence. There are dozens of skills and concepts to learn and the process is extremely daunting. But you understand that you need to learn these skills if you're ever going to drive a car. This is also the process where you make a lot of mistakes and feel very frustrated.
- As you practice and immerse yourself in the new skills, you make fewer mistakes and begin to feel more comfortable driving a car. You gain self-confidence and self-pride and are aware that you're consciously competent.
- Today, driving comes so naturally to you that you do it unconsciously. All those daunting skills you thought you'd never master are now second nature to you. Now, as you drive your child to school, he or she is looking at you and thinking that turning a steering wheel is all it takes to drive a car. His/her own learning process has begun!

Chapter 2: The 7 Types of Learning

We all know that one coworker, classmate, or friend who doesn't have to struggle with learning. He/she is the person who doesn't need to spend late nights studying for exams, can write a brilliant presentation after one glance at the material, or who's always the star pupil in class. Let's be honest. We're jealous of those people because they seem to effortlessly ace what we struggle hard to achieve. You'd love to know what their secret is.

Well, the answer's very simple. It's most likely due to the type of learners they are and their awareness that they learn best in a certain way. Everyone has a specific learning style that allows them to progress through the learning process faster and more efficiently. The secret to your own peak learning ability lies in identifying the type of learner you are.

The coworker who can write an amazing copy after one glance at the material is probably a visual learner. The classmate who's always on the ball and engages the teacher with questions is

probably an aural learner. The college student who aces exams with apparently the least amount of studying is probably also an aural learner and thus, better able to retain what was said in lectures. Now, this doesn't mean that you're not a high achiever and a great learner but you feel that you just struggle harder. Now, you don't have to! Understanding your learning style can make that a thing of the past.



Here are 7 types of learning that you can identify with. Knowing your own style will transform learning, studying, and retaining knowledge into an easy, stress-free, and enjoyable task.

1.Spatial (visual) learning

65% of the world's population are visual learners, which is probably why we think that everyone learns best visually. This isn't true. It's just that it applies to more people.

Don't immediately put yourself into this category because of the statistic. Read on to discover the other 6 learning types first. Visual learners learn faster and retain knowledge better when they rely on visual aids. These include gestures and facial expressions (by school teachers and college professors) as well as images and color. Their strong spatial skills help them absorb, assimilate, and retain knowledge through graphs, maps, and charts. Visual learners struggle when no visual aids are used in the learning process.

If you identify yourself as a spatial learner, you want to surround yourself with as many visual aids as you can. These include:

- Photos and images
- Colored layouts
- Highlighting keywords and phrases in text with bright markers
- Charts and diagrams
- Mind maps

- Bright colors
- Videos.

Action step: Try learning something new; for example, a new feature in Microsoft. Watch instructional videos on YouTube and read illustrated manuals and see if you feel comfortable and are able to learn how to use the feature quickly.

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5. You'll use this rating to compare it to the other types as we go along.

2. Aural (Auditory) learning

Aural learners find that their ears serve them best when it comes to gaining new knowledge and retaining it. This type of learner relies on sound to make visual associations.

Aural learners can quickly recall information they learned by thinking of the sound or voice associated with it.

Aural aids include:

- Music
- Rhyme

- Podcasts
- Audiobooks
- Voice recordings to themselves
- Recording lectures and class discussions.

Action step: Take this aural learning quiz to see if you're an aural learner.

#1: You prefer to listen to audiobooks rather than read.

This could be your subconscious mind signaling that you're an aural learner. You gravitate towards audiobooks because, without images or text to read, you find that you focus better on the information.

#2: You speak out loud or move your lips when learning from text or images

If you find that you process information better when you read words out loud or move your lips when writing or taking notes, then you're an aural learner. This may also include repeating information to yourself in a low voice as you hear it spoken.

#3: You close your eyes when listening to auditory information

If you find yourself listening to someone like a podcast with your eyes closed, this is because you want to block out all other visual sources that may distract you.

#4: You find it easy to remember people's names

In addition to making you popular, easily recalling people's names indicates that you're an aural learner. This is because names are usually spoken out loud when you meet people for the first time.

#5: You prefer quiet learning environments

Visual learners are better able to adapt to noisy environments because sound is not their main source of processing information. If you dislike noisy environments and prefer to do your learning in quiet places, then you're an aural learner.

Give yourself 1 point for each item you answered yes to and zero points if you answer in the negative. Add up your total score out of 5.

3. Physical Learning

Physical learning involves movement and touch. It's also known as tactile (touch) and kinesthetic (movement) learning.

People who love turning things over in their hands, taking things apart, and putting them together again are usually physical learners.

Physical learners process knowledge most effectively through touch and movement, which can make learning in a formal academic setting not ideal for them.

By physically fiddling with something, they learn how it works and why. If the same information is illustrated in a diagram or a video it won't help them process knowledge as quickly or as efficiently. All children are born as physical learners. This explains why they love to grasp things, put them in their mouths, and stick their fingers into power sockets! This is also why preschool education incorporates lots of physical movement like dancing, clapping, and playing games that rely on movement.

Some possible learning aids for physical learners are:

- Creating and giving presentations.
- Creating collages and posters.
- Drawing.
- Using the hands and whole-body learning, such as perhaps pacing while reading or watching a video.
- Flashcards are technically a visual aid but they can help a physical learner when they handle them and turn them over in their hands.
- Frequent breaks while learning can be a great help. Physical learners feel uncomfortable sitting for long periods of time. They find it very helpful to take frequent breaks where they can stretch their legs and move around.
- Drawing diagrams or making models to see how things fit together.

Action Step: Take apart a small toy or gadget, noticing the different parts and how they fit together. Try putting the item back together and see if you can easily replicate the steps in your head or better yet, list them in writing. Give yourself a rating from 1 to 5 depending on how easy you found the process, with 1 being the most difficult.

4. Interpersonal (Solitary) learning

As the name implies, solitary learners process information best when they're on their own. A solitary learner may learn well in an academic environment but requires quiet time to study and process the information on their own.

It comes as no surprise that since solitary learners prefer personalized learning, they need to decide the end goal of what they're learning and why it's important to them. Therefore, identifying goals and objectives as, as well as structuring study time keeps this type of learner motivated and focused.

Most solitary learners are introverts and are quite content to spend time on their own without feeling bored or lonely. But the drawback is that an academic setting makes them feel uncomfortable and they have difficulty asking questions or participating in group discussions. Does this bring back childhood memories of that quiet classmate who never raised his or her hand? Perhaps it was you!

A solitary learner is a very sharp observer and can almost 'read' the people around him or her. He/she is keenly aware of the nuances in every situation or discussion.

If you're a solitary learner, you're blessed with amazing concentration skills as well as a remarkable ability to hone in on your goals.

Learning aids for interpersonal learners include:

- Keeping a journal or a log can help this learner outline objectives and ideas and better connect them to their goals. Personalizing the skill or topic to be learned in a journal makes it easier to grasp.
- Planning solitary study time where the learner can be on their own will help them learn more effectively.
- Using cool supplies like colored pens, markers and unique notebooks makes the learning process more personalized and, therefore, more effective.

Action step: Schedule solitary quiet time for yourself and try to learn something on your own. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 according to how easy it was to process the information and retain it.

5. Logical learning

Logical learners are the worst memorizers in the world. If they fail to understand the reason behind something, it'll never stick.

A logical learner is extremely detail-oriented and analytical. They can more effectively grasp and retain a piece of information when they understand the details behind it. The best way to describe this learning process is to compare it to putting together a puzzle. Logical learners like to examine all the small pieces and see how they all fit together to create a bigger picture.

The only problem a logical learner may encounter is that they can get too analytical and waste a lot of time poring over details. So, if it turns out that you're a logical learner, don't get too carried away!

If you're a logical learner, then you're probably brilliant at writing things like book analyses and reviews. The best learning aids for this type are:

- Using lists and graphs when possible.
- Using statistics.
- Making associations with something illogical. This may help the learner better grasp the logic of what's being learned by comparison.

- Avoiding mental blocks by taking care not to overanalyze.
- Using visual aids like charts, maps, and graphs.
- Creating mind maps to help them track their thought process and 'connect the dots'.

Action step: Search for simple logic puzzles online and try solving a few. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 based on how much you struggled and whether you enjoyed the experience. If you're not new to logic puzzles and love solving them, give yourself a 5!

6. Verbal learning

Verbal learners grasp information most effectively through a combination of speech and writing. This type is similar to aural learning except that the emphasis is more on the words rather than the sounds. This is why verbal learners learn much better through rhythm, rhyme, and other word-based techniques.

However, verbal learners also find it more effective to read aloud in order to remember information. They then repeat what they read several times to themselves without looking at the text to make sure that they've retained the information.

Verbal learners can boost their learning by using:

- Mnemonics, which means creating acronyms for important concepts and ideas.
- Scripting information
- Finding synonyms for keywords.

7. Social learning

Social learners are at their best when they're learning in a group setting. A classroom environment where group interaction and discussion are encouraged is ideal for them. In a work setting, this type of learner grasps information more effectively through meetings, brainstorming sessions, and focus groups.

Any sort of collaborative setting works best for the social learner and this includes reviewing the work and ideas of others such as teammates or peers.

Learning aids for this type include:

- study groups;
- focus groups;
- brainstorming sessions;

- discussion groups and seminars.

Action Step: Try learning something new using one of the aids suggested above. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 based on how well you were able to grasp the information and whether you were able to engage in discussion comfortably and actively.

The bottom line: Compare your scores for each of the 7 learning types and note the one (or ones) that you scored the highest on - that's the type of learner you are!

Any score from 3 and up means that that specific type applies to you. You could also be one of the very rare people who combines all 7 learning styles. If your score is higher than 3 on all 7 types, focus on the types with the highest score, especially a score of 5.

You may find that you are a combination of learning types, such as visual and physical, visual, aural, and solitary, logical and social, or any other combination.

Once you've identified your learning style, start focusing on them and watch your learning skyrocket!

Chapter 3: 7 Lifehacks for Better Learning

There's always room for improvement! No matter what your learning style, these 7 lifehacks will help boost your brainpower to make your learning even more effective.

1. Use SMART goals

Before you begin, take a moment to identify what it is you want to learn. Always use the SMART goals method to help structure your learning process. SMART goal is an acronym for:

- **Specific:** Don't aim for something vague and don't try to do everything at once but break things down into smaller goals that your brain considers easier to achieve.
- **Measurable:** Measure your progress (by setting small timeframes) to see if you're struggling. In this case, you may need to modify goals or break them down further.

- **Attainable:** This means setting a realistic goal such as studying one chapter daily or one or two steps when learning a new skill). This will allow your brain to better comprehend the goal and help you achieve it.
- **Relevant:** Your goal should be meaningful for your overall learning objective.
- **Time-bound:** Set a loose deadline for finishing the learning goals. Make sure it's realistic and doesn't put pressure on you.

The SMART goal framework allows your brain to clearly visualize the outcome and keep you focused and motivated.

Whether your goal is learning to speak German, memorize a presentation or speech, or learning to play the piano, you can't go wrong!

2. Play brain games

Everybody loves puzzles. Whether your favorites are crosswords, brainteasers, jigsaws, or logic puzzles, play them regularly to boost your overall cognitive function, improve memory, and keep your brain sharper and more focused when you learn.

3. Sleep well

Sleep is the most powerful nutrient and regenerator for the brain. A good night's rest improves blood and oxygen flow to the brain and allows it to heal damaged cells and produce new ones. A good night's sleep is your guarantee against energy crashes and brain fog at times when you need to focus.

4. Join like-minded group

Join an online community of people who share your learning style. It's a wonderful way to exchange tips and advice. It's the best way to learn from others and gain insight into your own learning process. What's more, it's an opportunity to make some new like-minded friends.

5. Chew gum while learning or studying

This sounds completely counterintuitive. Won't gum-chewing distract the mind? Apparently not. Studies have shown that chewing gum boosts focus and concentration.

Some studies also suggest that if you study while chewing gum then chew gum during an exam, your brain will make the

association and help you remember what you studied. Stock up on that gum!

6. Get some caffeine

Caffeine is good for you if consumed in moderation (2-3 times a day at most). It gives the brain a good kick-start when you want to start learning something and keeps it energized and alert.

7. De-stress

High stress levels can make you forget what you had for breakfast, much less retain any kind of information. Make sure that you de-stress every day by taking a few minutes to engage in a relaxing activity or hobby. A stress-free brain is sharper, there's better organization of thoughts and more effective learning.

Conclusion

Throughout our lifetimes, we never stop learning. Understanding your learning type will empower you to approach learning challenges with ease and efficiency, making learning an enjoyable activity rather than a dreaded task.

In fact, learning doesn't have to be a sanity-challenging struggle for anybody. It should be fun, engaging and empowering as part of a lifelong process of growth.

Whether you're a student, in a career or anywhere else in life, knowing your learning type can better help you solve problems, retain information, and expand your mind almost effortlessly. So, what type of learner are you?