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People Learn with a Purpose: Understanding Learning Styles

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Facilitator's Guide

People Learn with a Purpose

Understanding Learning Styles

I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.

—Winston Churchill

Rationale:

People learn for different purposes. Some common reasons are to gather information to make an informed decision, to learn toward a specific goal or just to increase knowledge. Understanding why and how you learn best is essential, especially if you are trying to teach others.

Program Goal:

To recognize the importance of engaging different learning styles for creating a positive learning experience for all types of learners

Program Objectives:

- Examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience
- Evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles
- Choose different learning activities to enhance specific learning styles for a positive learning environment

Pre-Program Preparation/Materials:

- Read and make copies of the KELD publication *People Learn with a Purpose: Understanding Learning Styles* (CLD1-2) for each participant.
- Copy *Learning Styles Cards* onto cardstock. Cut apart the cards on the dotted lines. Make enough sets for each participant (see Learning Activity 2).
- Copy *Suitable Learning Style Activities—Activity Cards* onto cardstock; cut cards apart (see Learning Activity 3). One set for entire group.
- Copy the *How Do You Like to Learn? A Learning-Styles Inventory*, one for each participant.
- Secure a whiteboard or flip chart and markers.

- Have the following materials set up for everyone to see to improve participation and interaction:
 - Small chemical sprayer with multiple nozzles
 - Pesticide applicator manual
 - Sprayer owner manual
 - Diagram of a sprayer

Introduction:

People are motivated to learn for different reasons. Some individuals see that a better understanding of facts assists them in making better decisions, in order to reach a specific goal; some love the fun or social aspect of the learning process, while others may not really have a learning goal but love the content area. Regardless of the purpose, as a learner you need to maintain interest and feel engaged for your learning to be successful. Understanding why and how you—or your learners—learn best is the key to a positive learning experience.

Introductory Activity:

Demonstrate how to calibrate a sprayer. (If actual situation, calibration will have to be done.)

With the group of participants, randomly select one person from the group to calibrate the sprayer. Simply request that person to calibrate the sprayer; have options available for different methods (pesticide applicator manual, sprayer owner manual, diagram

This leadership curriculum was developed by Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) agents along with University of Kentucky specialists. Therefore, the examples used in the facilitator's guides are geared toward an ANR/Horticulture audience, such as Master Gardener groups. Please feel free to modify and reproduce the facilitator's guide for any appropriate educational or training purposes with other audiences.

of the sprayer and nozzles.) After that person has calibrated the sprayer by following their method of choice, ask them the following questions:

- Why did you choose that method to calibrate the sprayer?
- Is this the method you generally use when problem solving (i.e. when putting together furniture, fixing machinery or equipment, etc.)? If not, why did you use this specific method for this example?

Next, ask for a show of hands of the participants as to which method they would choose and why. Let this lead you into the discussion of the different learning styles and how they relate to how different people learn. (Example: Some would rather follow a diagram; others would rather follow detailed script for instruction.)

Alternate Introductory Activity:

Show *How to Calibrate a Sprayer* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0shwWW1d4zY>.

Pose this question to the audience: What type of learning style is demonstrated in that video clip? (Auditory).

Finish the activity by presenting that everyone has a preferred way to learn and so we must teach in different ways to reach each learner effectively.

Objective 1: Examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience

What motivates us to learn? The primary motivation to learn is governed by emotions. How are you feeling right now? Are you looking forward to the next activity or are you checking your watch, waiting to finish up so you can move on to working on your to-do list? Do you dread being called upon by the facilitator or are you always waving your hand, eager to share your experiences, eagerly anticipating what is coming next, or do you want the session to end so you can get on to other things? If you feel comfortable talking in front of a group of people you probably would not be embarrassed if I called on you for an answer. However, if you shy away from situations that draw attention to yourself, you may be trying to avoid making eye contact so I will not call on you. People will seek to emotionally preserve themselves regardless of how much they want or need to learn.

Learning Activity 1:

Discuss openly a positive learning experience like learning how to drive a tractor/truck. How did you feel in this situation? Why?

Ask what type of learning experience this would be (Hands-On) and discuss why it is considered a hands-on learning experience.

Discuss a negative learning experience (i.e. for some it may be studying the book for the CDL test, even though they would be comfortable doing the driving portion of the test). Have other individuals provide their own personal negative learning experience examples.

The reasoning for these discussions is to make the point that people learn better if they are taught in the way they prefer (or like) to learn. Pose a final question to the audience:

Consider your personal negative learning experience. Do you think you would have learned the information better if taught differently? Why?

Objective 2: Evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles

Positive emotions govern the motivation to learn. Everyone prefers learning styles that create positive experiences and encourage motivation. There are seven primary styles of learning that encourage us to continue learning. Do you know your preferred learning style?

- **Auditory/musical**—You prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information for meaning through sounds and will say, “Tell me, let me listen to what you mean.”
- **Logical/mathematical**—You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. Logical learners process information using numbers, data and problem solving with specific reasoning and detailed processes and will say, “Let me use the data to show what I mean.”
- **Physical/kinesthetic**—You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch. Physical learners process information for meaning through touch and actual use of content with interactive demonstrations and will say, “Let me try this to show what I mean.”
- **Social/interpersonal**—You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Social learners love to talk and work with others for best learning and accomplishment and will say, “Let’s meet face-to-face and brainstorm solutions.”
- **Solitary/intrapersonal**—You prefer to work alone and use self-study. Solitary learners love to silently think about what they are learning and process for meaning alone and will say, “Let me think about this and get back to you with ideas.”

- **Verbal/linguistic**—You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information for meaning through language, either talking or writing with words and will say, “Let me tell you what I’ve learned.”
- **Visual/spatial**—You prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding. Visual learners process information for meaning with illustrations and diagrams and will say, “Show me what you mean.”

Learning Activity 2:

Discuss with your audience how different personalities learn through different teaching methods. Provide examples of how individuals may learn in different situations (Examples: demonstrations, reading then doing, auditory etc.).

Distribute the *Learning Styles Self Assessment* to each participant and ask them to take the next five to seven minutes to complete and score it. Once individuals are finished, have them refer to the fact sheet (CLD1-2) and silently read through their preferred learning style (the one identified through the self-assessment just taken). Once the assessments are completed and self-scored, share characteristics of each learning style and have participants stand up as their preferred learning style is read. (Note: If this step is too embarrassing or inappropriate for the group, skip this step.) Ask learners to reflect on their personal learning preferences.

Give one set of the *Learning Styles Cards* to each participant and have them place the cards in order (most relative to least relative) of what they think their preferred learning style is.

- What learning style best describes you? Why?
- How would you work or interact with someone with a different learning style?

Objective 3: Choose different learning activities to enhance specific learner styles for a positive learning environment

Now that you have determined how you learn best, let’s look at the best activities for every style—activities that are most likely to engage the learner and create a positive learning environment. The bottom-line: Individuals process information in different ways, so it important to understand how to develop learning experiences that appeal to a variety of learners.

Learning Activity 3:

From the stack of *Suitable Learning Style Activities—Activity Cards* (you should already have these copied and cut apart), have audience members draw a card one-by-one, and tell you what learning style is appropriate for the activity found on their card. Finish by discussing why each example corresponds to its relative learning style.

Answers:

Auditory/musical

- Lecture and give verbal directions.
- Play CD that gives directions.

Logical/mathematical

- Equations of how calibrating sprayers will improve profits by better crop coverage.
- Only 80 percent of the nozzles are working properly, which means 20 percent of the crop isn’t being sprayed. By cleaning and inspecting nozzles, coverage can be 100 percent.

Physical/kinesthetic

- A person from the audience is asked to demonstrate how to remove the nozzles from a sprayer.
- Participants are asked to inspect a field to identify where the sprayer missed by appearance of weeds.

Social/interpersonal

- Participants are split up into groups and asked to present what percentage of weeds and what types of weeds are found in field.
- Pairs of participants are asked to go out in their community and survey neighbors about their knowledge of agriculture.

Solitary/intrapersonal

- Participants are given a particular weed to research on the Internet and write a summary about.
- Participants are asked to write up a personal farm management plan.

Verbal/linguistic

- Participants are asked to read journal entries of farmers who utilized a sprayer on a regular basis and asked to start a journal of their own.
- Participants are asked to debate on their views of utilizing herbicides for crop use.

Visual/spatial

- Illustrate how to calibrate a sprayer by showing pictures on a PowerPoint presentation or watching a YouTube clip.
- Doing a hands-on demonstration of how to calibrate a chemical sprayer.

Discussion Question:

So now after recognizing which learning style you are, how would you give directions to an individual with a learning style different than your own?

Summary:

Thinking back now on what you know about learning styles, what have you learned? That people learn with a purpose. It is especially important to realize that these purposes are deepened when learning occurs in a positive learning environment. Keeping different learning styles in mind allows us to encourage positive educational situations for all—ideally leading to success and improved quality of life.

References:

- Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons*. New York: Basic Books.
- Johnson, J. (2010). *People Learn with a Purpose (CLD1-2)*. Kentucky Extension Leadership Development (KELD). Lexington, KY: Kentucky Cooperative Extension, 3 pp.
- Overview of Learning Styles by [advanology.com](http://www.advanology.com) (2004). Accessed from <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/index.php>.

Developed by: Michelle Simon, Scott County ANR agent

Learning Styles Cards

Auditory/musical—You prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information for meaning through sounds and will say, “Tell me, let me listen to what you mean.”

Logical/mathematical—You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. Logical learners process information using numbers, data and problem solving with specific reasoning and detailed processes and will say, “Let me use the data to show what I mean.”

Physical/kinesthetic—You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch. Physical learners process information for meaning through touch and actual use of content with interactive demonstrations and will say, “Let me try this to show what I mean.”

Social/interpersonal—You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Social learners love to talk and work with others for best learning and accomplishment and will say, “Let’s meet face-to-face and brainstorm solutions.”

Solitary/intrapersonal—You prefer to work alone and use self-study. Solitary learners love to silently think about what they are learning and process for meaning alone and will say, “Let me think about this and get back to you with ideas.”

Verbal/linguistic—You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information for meaning through language, either talking or writing with words and will say, “Let me tell you what I’ve learned.”

Visual/spatial—You prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding. Visual learners process information for meaning with illustrations and diagrams and will say, “Show me what you mean.”

Suitable Learning Style Activities—Activity Cards

Lecture and give verbal directions.

Pairs of participants are asked to go out in their community and survey neighbors about their knowledge of agriculture.

Play a CD that gives directions.

Participants are given a particular weed to research on internet and write a summary about.

Present equations of how calibrating sprayers will improve profits by better crop coverage.

Participants are asked to write up a personal farm management plan.

Present the fact - Only 80% of the nozzles are working properly, which means 20% of the crop isn't being sprayed. By cleaning and inspecting nozzles, coverage can be 100%.

Participants are asked to read journal entries of farmers who utilized a sprayer on a regular basis and asked to start a journal of their own.

A person from the audience is asked to demonstrate how to remove the nozzles from a sprayer.

Participants are asked to verbally debate on their views of utilizing herbicides for crop use.

Participants are asked to inspect a field to identify where the sprayer "missed" by appearance of weeds.

Participants are asked to verbally debate on their views of utilizing herbicides for crop use.

Participants are split up into groups and asked to present what percentage of weeds and what types of weeds are found in field.

Illustrate how to calibrate a sprayer by showing pictures on a power-point presentation or watching a Youtube clip.

How Do You Like to Learn?

Directions: Read each statement below and rate each statement as it pertains to you, using the following scale:

0- Describes nothing about me

1- Partially describes me

2- Definitely describes me

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. ___ Enjoy singing and playing my favorite instrument. | 8. ___ Enjoy the company of many intimate friends. |
| 2. ___ Preferred classes include: cooking, woodworking, etc. | 9. ___ Like reconciling bank statements and developing financial goals. |
| 3. ___ Like working through problems using a step-by-step process. | 10. ___ Like putting together jigsaw puzzles and model cars. |
| 4. ___ Would rather read books that include charts and pictures. | 11. ___ Am aware of my own strengths and weaknesses. |
| 5. ___ Enjoy taking gadgets apart just to see how they work. | 12. ___ Make use of large words and understand their meaning. |
| 6. ___ Have a preference for studying by myself. | 13. ___ Often hear conversations or noises others do not. |
| 7. ___ Give exact and clear-cut directions to others. | 14. ___ Seek opportunities to be the leader and direct others. |

(Turn over this sheet to score.)

Once you rate the statements, transfer your responses to the blanks below beside the number that correlates to the question number. For example, if above, you placed a 2 beside question 11, below next to #11 pencil in "2". Once you have completed all the questions, add each column, then transfer each total to the blanks at the bottom of the page to learn more about your learning style.

	1. _____	3. _____	5. _____	7. _____	10. _____	11. _____	8. _____
	13. _____	9. _____	2. _____	12. _____	4. _____	6. _____	14. _____
Totals	A _____	B _____	C _____	D _____	E _____	F _____	G _____

Learning-Styles Self-Assessment

Now that you have finished scoring yourself, let's find out how you learn. Enter your total from each column (**A-G**) above in front of the corresponding letter below. The letter with the highest number is how you prefer to learn.

- A. _____ Auditory (auditory-musical):** You prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information for meaning through sounds.

- B. _____ Logical (mathematical):** You prefer using logic, reasoning, and systems. Logical learners process information using data and solve problems with specific reasoning and detailed processes.

- C. _____ Physical (kinesthetic):** You prefer using your hands and sense of touch. Kinesthetic learners process information for meaning through touch and actual use of content with interactive demonstrations.

- D. _____ Verbal (linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information for meaning through language, either talking or writing with words. They will say "let me tell you what I've learned."

- E. _____ Visual (spatial):** You prefer using pictures and images. Visual learners process information for meaning with illustrations and diagrams.

- F. _____ Solitary (intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self-study. Intrapersonal learners love to silently think about what they are learning and process for meaning alone.

- G. _____ Social (interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Interpersonal learners love to talk and work with others for the best learning environment.

Adapted by Michelle Simon, Ag & Natural Resources, Scott County FCS agent from What Type of Learner Are You? – A Learning Styles Inventory found at www.learning-styles-online.com.