

# **15. Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice**

**The National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance**

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**Note: For the sake of brevity, ‘child’ and ‘children’ will be used to refer to both children and young people in this topic.**

**The term ‘setting’ will be used to refer to any institution that provides educational and childcare provision e.g. PRU, school or Children’s Centre.**

**‘Parent’ refers to any adult with responsibility for caring for the child.**

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# Session leader information

## Aims

- To consider different learning theories including multiple intelligences, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles
- To consider how different teaching and learning styles can influence children and young people's attitudes to school, affecting their behaviour, attendance and interpersonal relationships
- To consider how you can influence the use of appropriate teaching and learning styles in your place of work
- To plan strategies to address these issues

## Aspects of leadership

The study of this topic will help you to reflect on how you:

- develop effective communication that values the opinions of others and strives for mutual understanding
- develop effective teamwork in addressing relevant issues
- support staff to develop skills that promote positive behaviour and relationships and regular attendance
- support the development of a dynamic learning environment, both within and beyond the classroom, that encourages positive behaviour and relationships and regular attendance.

**You will want to share this information with the group.**

# Session outline

<b>Previous session</b>	Review of work-based activities	10 minutes
<b>Overview</b>	Applying learning theories to B & A practice	10 minutes
<b>Activities</b>		105 minutes
	1. Get the picture?	
	2. What type of learner are you?	
	3. How learning experiences affect learning and behaviour	
	4. Planning for staff development	
<b>Reflective log</b>		
<b>Selecting work-based activities</b>		20 minutes
<b>Forward look</b>		5 minutes
		<b>Total</b> 150 minutes

You might want to adapt these activities or use alternative materials to help you meet the particular needs of your group.

## Overview

This session is concerned with theories about how people learn. It looks at some of the theories such as multiple intelligences (MI), visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles (VAK) and other cognitive styles. We will consider how these affect children and young people's behaviour and attendance and you will have opportunities to plan approaches to address these issues in your places of work.

The first two activities build directly upon the preparatory activity, the preparatory reading and the 'multiple intelligence quiz' and learning styles inventory. There are a great many websites available that offer a range of approaches to the themes presented here – some group members may well have accessed these as part of their preparatory activity. It would be useful to have internet access available during the session in order to explore what is available online.

The third activity focuses upon the relevance of learning theory to practice in teaching and learning, and the fourth activity explores ways in which staff development in this area might be further developed.

All the activities link directly to the work-based activities.

# Preparatory reading and reflection

## Suggestions

Read carefully the preparatory reading, noting any references or points of particular interest.

Bring along any notes you make to the cluster meeting.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- How far are these learning theories understood and taken into consideration in your place of work?
- How do different learning styles affect children and young people's attitudes to school and learning including the impact on their relationships and social skills?

There are many theories that seek to explain the way people learn. Many of them have been developed during the last 20 years. The theories considered in this topic are multiple intelligences (MI), visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning styles (VAK), and research into the functions of the brain relating to learning. Website links are given within the text and in the resource section, which give further information about a wider range of theories and approaches to learning.

Leaders in behaviour and attendance will find it helpful to understand how the brain functions and how different people access and process information. Through this knowledge, leaders will be in a better position to support others in designing suitable learning experiences for children and young people. Understanding how styles are linked to memory and learning can help us to provide suitable learning environments and interact effectively with the children and young people with whom we work.

Despite knowledge of these learning theories, in many schools the majority of lessons still involve the teacher talking and the children and young people listening for a vast proportion of the time. This seriously disadvantages visual and kinaesthetic learners.

When teaching styles do not match learning styles, some children and young people cannot access the learning and begin to have negative attitudes about themselves as learners. These feelings may in turn affect future learning, producing a vicious circle. As the child or young person becomes more stressed in the learning situation, this affects brain function, which in turn may trigger different behaviours that prevent rational and logical thought and inhibit learning. These behaviours may very well be unacceptable in a school environment or may lead the child or young person to avoid the situation by staying away from school. Children and young people who are stressed and frustrated about their learning may also find it difficult to develop and sustain positive relationships and instead resort to aggressive behaviour. Conversely, frustrated learners will have low self-esteem, resulting in feelings of vulnerability.

The more teachers, and those working with children and young people in educational situations, understand the relationship between learning theories and the behaviour and attendance of children and young people, the better they can plan suitable learning experiences for them. Similarly, the more children and young people understand how they,

themselves, learn best, the better they can adapt to the learning environment. Motivating staff to develop a fuller understanding of the different learning styles that children and young people employ is an important role for those in leadership roles.

The materials in the following three sections are not intended to provide a definitive list, nor do they pretend to cover every aspect of the topics touched on. Particularly if group members are intending to undertake a more extended piece of work, it is essential that they explore sources beyond those that are suggested here.

## Learning theories

This is a digest of writing by many educational theorists and has been greatly simplified. If at all possible, find time to read the extracts referenced below.

There have been many new theories and discoveries over the last 20 years that affect our understanding of human development and the way that people learn. These have great implications for the way we teach, how schools function and how individual children and young people can be affected by their learning experiences.

Research in cognitive and developmental psychology has deepened our understanding of the nature of competent performance and the principles of knowledge organisation that underlie the ability of children and young people to solve problems and understand. There has also been a growing understanding that we tend, on the whole, to underestimate the learning potential of children and young people and their ability to transfer learning to new situations and settings.

Work in social and cognitive psychology, as well as anthropology, makes it clear that all learning takes place in settings that are permeated by particular norms and that cultural and social influences play a very powerful role in learning.

Neuroscience has also provided a wealth of insights into how the brain processes and retains information.

## The brain

The brain has three parts: the reptilian brain, the limbic system and the neo-cortex.

The *reptilian brain* deals with:

- basic survival functions such as hunger, thirst, risk, fight or flight responses under threat
- defensiveness about territory, friends and possessions
- hierarchies – being the leader or a member of the leader's group
- mating rituals – showing off or attention-seeking
- repetitive ritualistic behaviours.

This part of the brain is the oldest and, under stress, it comes to dominate, sending chemicals such as adrenaline into the bloodstream and closing down such functions as problem solving, flexibility and higher-order thinking. A stressed learner may well have their learning potential restricted by high levels of arousal in this area and may resort to aggressive, defensive or attention-seeking behaviours.

The *limbic system* controls the emotions and the long-term memory. It also filters information and sorts it according to whether it is useful or not. As this function is sited where the long-term memory and emotions are, there must be an emotional connection to place new knowledge in the long-term memory. Hence, issues of safety and well-being in the learning environment are important in maximising learning potential.

The *neo-cortex* is responsible for higher-order processing of information and has two halves (the right and left hemispheres). The two halves interact in a complex system but, in simple terms, parts of the left hemisphere control analysis, language, pattern recognition, logic and sequence while the right hemisphere is concerned with visualisation, imagination, rhythm and spatial manipulation. People tend to favour one side of the brain over the other. So, for example, a learner who favours the left hemisphere may prefer to have learning broken down into small parts which build up, while a learner who favours the right side will prefer to learn from an overview of the whole.

Hence we know from research into the functioning of the brain that:

- emotional well-being and safety is important for learning
- high levels of stress impair 'openness' to learning
- physiological factors, which affect the nutrition and functioning of the brain, are important, for example nutrition, regular sleep patterns, hydration
- personality and differing learning experiences in development mean that children and young people present with a range of styles for the processing of information in the brain.

## The key principles of whole-brain learning

Whenever learning a topic or theme, it is important that children and young people get the whole picture and its relevance to them. They need to know where it belongs in their current matrix of knowledge and understanding and make some personal connection with it. They need to see the links to what they have already learned and experienced.

The input needs to maximise use of sensory and perceptual channels – using auditory, visual, tactile and emotional means to reinforce learning.

In order for the material to be retained, it needs to be made sense of and organised in a meaningful way. The long-term retention of information requires that it is structured readily for access when required. This also often involves an aspect of reflection on what has been learned and how that has been done.

## Multiple Intelligences (MI)

Howard Gardner, of Harvard University, developed a model of intelligence that was not fixed but that proposed there were many forms of intelligent behaviour. He saw the intelligences as being influenced by and developing in different social and cultural contexts. The intelligences proposed by Gardner are:

- *linguistic*: the ability to communicate well and make sense of the world through language
- *logical–mathematical*: the ability to use abstract thinking
- *visual–spatial*: uses maps, charts and diagrams; visualises and thinks in pictures
- *bodily–kinaesthetic*: skilled at handicrafts, physical movement, control and expression; likes to do and to touch
- *musical*: enjoys rhythm; understands complex organisation of music; creates and communicates meaning through sound and music
- *interpersonal*: relates well to others; recognises others' feelings and emotions
- *intrapersonal*: has a high degree of self-knowledge, strong sense of values; reflective
- *naturalist*: understands the environment and relationships in the natural world.



Most learners are stronger in some areas than others and some may show very marked 'highs' and 'lows' in particular areas, which will influence their learning preferences. Gardner believes that each intelligence is not fixed but can be expanded.

## **Learning style preferences**

We receive information about the world through our senses and tend to have an individual preference for which sense we use to process the information. Although we can use any of the five senses to process information, most people will have a preference for either visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. This is often termed VAK.

A predominantly visual learner will be able to easily visualise imagined scenes, to see images of words or feelings. They may 'see' the shape of the whole word when spelling.

A learner with an auditory preference may remember things best when told them and be a confident language user. They may 'hear' the sound of a word being spelled and sound it out.

A kinaesthetic preference will mean that a learner will enjoy tactile sensations and remember things best by actually making and doing them. They will often feel emotions as strongly as tactile feelings and relate physical sensations to emotions.

Staff need to be aware of different learning preferences and provide a variety of activities so that all learners can access the learning. If learners become aware of their own preferred learning styles, they can be helped to know how best to proceed with their learning and helped to develop their skills in using other learning styles when they need to.

## Preparatory activity: Thinking about learning styles

### Purpose

- To investigate theories about how people learn
- To study various learning styles and their affects on the behaviour and attendance of children and young people

### Suggestions

#### Either:

Complete the *multiple intelligence quiz* (Preparatory activity Resource A)

#### Or:

Search on line for a questionnaire to identify your preferred learning styles.

Entering 'learning style' or 'multiple intelligence' in a search engine will draw down a host of inventories – all of them differ. For example:

- [www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/mitest.html](http://www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/mitest.html)
- [www.ldpride.net/learning\\_style.html](http://www.ldpride.net/learning_style.html)

Have a 'surf' around and bring back your inventory results to the session.

Are there any discrepancies here? Do they tell you anything new?

You will need to bring the completed questionnaires or graphical results table to the next meeting.

## Preparatory Activity Resource A: *The multiple intelligence quiz*<sup>1</sup>

### Scoring

Allocate a score of 1 to each statement that is 'like you' and total them for each section.

### Linguistic

1. You enjoy wordplay. Making puns, tongue-twisters, limericks. You enjoy poems, stories and rhymes.
2. You read everything – books, magazines, newspapers, even produce labels.
3. You can easily and confidently express yourself either orally or in writing, i.e. you're a persuasive debater and a good storyteller or writer.
4. You pepper your conversation with frequent allusions to things you've read or heard.
5. You like to do crosswords, play scrabble, or have a go at other word puzzles. You can spell well.
6. You have such an excellent vocabulary that people sometimes have to ask you to explain a word you've used. You enjoy using the precise word in context.
7. In school you preferred subjects such as English (language and literature), history and social studies. You are conscious of the need to build your child's vocabulary.
8. You can hold your own in verbal arguments or debates, and you give clear directions and explanations.
9. You like to 'think aloud', to talk through problems, explain solutions, ask questions.
10. You can readily absorb information by listening to the radio or audio cassettes or lectures. The words are easily imprinted in your mind.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

### Logical–mathematical

1. You enjoy working with numbers and can do mental calculations.
  2. You're interested in new scientific advances and like to experiment with things to see how they work.
  3. You can easily balance your chequebook; do the household budget. You create numerical targets in your business and private life.
  4. You like to put together a detailed itinerary for holidays or business trips. You often prepare, number and implement a to-do list.
  5. You enjoy the challenge of brainteasers or other puzzles and games that require logical and statistical thinking, e.g. draughts and chess.
  6. You tend to readily identify the logical flaws in things people say and do.
  7. Maths and science were among you favourite subjects in school.
- 

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8. You can find specific examples to support a general point of view, and feel comfortable analysing situations and arguments.
9. You take a systematic, step-by-step approach to problem solving. You like to find patterns and relationships between objects or numbers.
10. You need to categorise, group or quantify things to properly appreciate their relevance.

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Visual-spatial**

1. You have an appreciation of the visual arts and enjoy painting and sculpture. You have a good colour sense.
2. You tend to make a visual record of events with a camera or camcorder.
3. You find yourself doodling when taking notes or thinking something. You can draw quite accurately.
4. You have no problem reading maps and navigating. You have a good sense of direction.
5. You enjoy games such as jigsaw puzzles and mazes.
6. You're quite adept at taking things apart and putting them back together. You can assemble kits quite easily and can follow diagrams to do so.
7. In school you liked lessons in art and preferred geometry to algebra.
8. You often make your points by providing a diagram or drawing and can interpret charts easily.
9. You can visualise how things look from a different perspective or how a building might look from a plan.
10. You prefer reading material that is heavily illustrated.

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bodily-kinaesthetic**

1. You take part in a sport or regularly perform some kind of physical exercise. You enjoy walks, swimming and the sensation of using your body.
2. You're quite adept at 'do-it-yourself'.
3. You like to think through problems while engaged in a physical pursuit such as walking or running.
4. You don't mind getting up on the dance floor.
5. You like the most thrilling, body-contorting rides at the fun fair.
6. You need to physically handle something, to grasp it and manipulate it, to fully understand it. You enjoy jigsaws and model-making.

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7. The most enjoyable classes in school were sports, PE and any handicrafts lessons. You enjoy sculpture as an art form.
8. You use hand gestures or other kinds of body language to express yourself.
9. You like rough and tumble play with children.
10. You need to tackle a new learning experience 'hands on' rather than by reading a manual or watching a video.

**Total:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Musical**

1. You can play a musical instrument.
2. You can manage to sing in key.
3. Usually you can remember a tune after hearing it just a couple of times.
4. You often listen to music at home and in your car, and you sometimes go to concerts, you like – even need – a musical background when you're working.
5. You find yourself tapping in time to music. You have a good sense of rhythm.
6. You can identify the sounds of different musical instruments.
7. Theme music or commercial jingles often pop into your head.
8. You can't imagine life without music. You find that music easily evokes emotions and images for you as you listen to it.
9. You often whistle or hum a tune.
10. You often use rhythm (or rhyme) to remember things, e.g. saying a telephone number rhythmically.

**Total:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Interpersonal**

1. You enjoy working with other people as part of a group or committee.
2. You take great pride in being a mentor or advisor to someone else.
3. People tend to come to you for advice. You could describe yourself as sympathetic.
4. You prefer team sports – such as basketball, softball, football, rugby – to individual sports such as swimming and running.
5. You like games involving other people – bridge, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit.
6. You're a social butterfly. You would much prefer to be at a party than home alone watching television.
7. You have several very close personal friends.

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8. You communicate well with people and can help resolve disputes.
9. You have no hesitation in taking the lead; showing other people how to get things done.
10. You talk over problems with others rather than trying to resolve them by yourself.

**Total:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Intrapersonal**

1. You keep a personal diary or log to record your innermost thoughts.
2. You often spend 'quiet time' reflecting on the important issues in your life.
3. You have set your own goals, you know where you're going.
4. You are an independent thinker; you know your own mind, make up your own mind.
5. You have a private hobby or interest that you don't really share with anyone else.
6. You like to go fishing by yourself or take a solitary hike. You're happy with your own company.
7. Your idea of a good vacation is an isolated hilltop cabin rather than a five-star resort and lots of people.
8. You have a realistic idea of your own strengths and weaknesses.
9. You have attended self-improvement workshops or been through some kind of counselling to learn more about yourself.
10. You work for yourself – or have seriously contemplated 'doing your own thing'.

**Total:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Naturalist**

1. You keep or like pets.
2. You can recognise and name many different types of trees, flowers and plants.
3. You have an interest in and good knowledge of how the body works – where the main internal organs are, for example, and you keep abreast of health issues.
4. You are conscious of tracks, nests and wildlife on a walk and can 'read' weather signs.
5. You can envision yourself as a farmer, or maybe you like to fish.
6. You are a keen gardener and are familiar with the effects of the seasons.
7. You have an understanding of, and interest in, the main global environmental issues.
8. You keep reasonably informed about developments in astronomy, the origins of the universe, and the evolution of life.

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9. You are interested in social issues, psychology, and human motivations.
10. You consider that conservation of resources and achieving sustainable growth are two of the biggest issues of our times.

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_**

Compare the totals from all eight intelligences and you will readily see your greatest strengths and weaknesses. The higher your score, the more you favour that particular intelligence.

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# Activities

## Activity 1: Get the picture?

(20 minutes)

### Purpose

- To help the group share understanding of multiple intelligences

### Resources

- Activity 1 Resource A: *Get the picture?* – pictures of Stephen Hawking, Tracey Emin, Bill Oddie, Nelson Mandela, Rolf Harris, Judi Dench, Claire Rayner and Rudolph Nureyev, with their names printed underneath
- Activity 1 Resource B: *Multiple intelligence quiz display sheets* – eight separate sheets, each displaying information about one of the ‘intelligences’

### Suggestions

The group should consider which is the most relevant question for their work with children and young people:

‘How intelligent are you?’

or

‘How are you intelligent?’

The group should then look at the pictures of famous people in Activity 1 Resource A and decide *how* each is intelligent – referring back to the dimensions of the multiple intelligence quiz in the preparatory materials:

- linguistic
- logical–mathematical
- visual–spatial
- bodily–kinaesthetic
- musical
- interpersonal
- intrapersonal
- naturalist

The session leader should ask group members to share their answers with each other, explaining the reasons for their choice.

The session leader then pins Activity 1 Resource B around the room and asks group members to stand next to the ‘intelligence’ that most suits them. Some may choose more than one.

The group is then invited to discuss the following questions:



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- What were the issues raised in trying to match yourselves with an intelligence?
- Are particular intelligences regarded as more important than others?
- What has been the experience of group members in terms of their talents being valued or not?
- Does 'society' value one type of intelligence over others?
- Do schools and the education system value one type over another?
- What relevance does this have for leadership in behaviour and attendance?

Activity 1 Resource A: *Get the picture?*



Rudolph Nureyev



Judi Dench



Bill Oddie



Rolf Harris



Stephen Hawking



Tracy Emin



Claire Rayner



Nelson Mandela

Photographs of Bill Oddie, Rolf Harris, Judi Dench, Nelson Mandela, Claire Rayner, Rudolf Nureyev, Tracey Emin & Stephen Hawking © PA 2010. Used with kind permission.

## **Activity 1 Resource B: *Multiple intelligence quiz display sheets*<sup>2</sup>**

Resource B: 1/8

### **Linguistic**

- 1. You enjoy wordplay. Making puns, tongue-twisters, limericks. You enjoy poems, stories and rhymes.**
- 2. You read everything – books, magazines, newspapers, even produce labels.**
- 3. You can easily and confidently express yourself either orally or in writing, i.e you're a persuasive debater and a good storyteller or writer.**
- 4. You pepper your conversation with frequent allusions to things you've read or heard.**
- 5. You like to do crosswords, play scrabble, or have a go at other word puzzles. You can spell well.**
- 6. You have such an excellent vocabulary that people sometimes have to ask you to explain a word you've used. You enjoy using the precise word in context.**
- 7. In school you preferred subjects such as English (language and literature), history and social studies. You are conscious of the need to build your child's vocabulary.**
- 8. You can hold your own in verbal arguments or debates, and you give clear directions and explanations.**
- 9. You like to 'think aloud', to talk through problems, explain solutions, ask questions.**

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10. You can readily absorb information by listening to the radio or audio cassettes or lectures. The words are easily imprinted in your mind.

Resource B: 2/8

## Logical-mathematical

1. You enjoy working with numbers and can do mental calculations.
2. You're interested in new scientific advances, and like to experiment with things to see how they work.
3. You can easily balance your chequebook; do the household budget. You create numerical targets in your business and private life.
4. You like to put together a detailed itinerary for holidays or business trips. You often prepare, number and implement a to-do list.
5. You enjoy the challenge of brainteasers or other puzzles and games that require logical and statistical thinking, e.g. draughts and chess.
6. You tend to readily identify the logical flaws in things people say and do.
7. Maths and science were among your favourite subjects in school.
8. You can find specific examples to support a general point of view, and feel comfortable analysing situations and arguments.

- 9. You take a systematic, step-by-step approach to problem solving. You like to find patterns and relationships between objects or numbers.**
- 10. You need to categorise, group or quantify things to properly appreciate their relevance.**

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**Resource B: 3/8**

## **Visual-spatial**

- 1. You have an appreciation of the visual arts and enjoy painting and sculpture. You have a good colour sense.**
- 2. You tend to make a visual record of events with a camera or camcorder.**
- 3. You find yourself doodling when taking notes or thinking something. You can draw quite accurately.**
- 4. You have no problem reading maps and navigating. You have a good sense of direction.**
- 5. You enjoy games such as jigsaw puzzles and mazes.**
- 6. You're quite adept at taking things apart and putting them back together. You can assemble kits quite easily and can follow diagrams to do so.**
- 7. In school you liked lessons in art and preferred geometry to algebra.**
- 8. You often make your points by providing a diagram or drawing and can interpret charts easily.**
- 9. You can visualise how things look from a different perspective or how a building might look from a plan.**
- 10. You prefer reading material that is heavily illustrated.**

Resource B: 4/8

## **Bodily-kinaesthetic**

- 1. You take part in a sport or regularly perform some kind of physical exercise. You enjoy walks, swimming, and the sensation of using your body.**
- 2. You're quite adept at 'do-it-yourself'.**
- 3. You like to think through problems while engaged in a physical pursuit such as walking or running.**
- 4. You don't mind getting up on the dance floor.**
- 5. You like the most thrilling, body-contorting rides at the fun fair.**
- 6. You need to physically handle something, to grasp it and manipulate it, to fully understand it. You enjoy jigsaws and model-making.**
- 7. The most enjoyable classes in school were sports, PE and any handicrafts lessons. You enjoy sculpture as an art form.**
- 8. You use hand gestures or other kinds of body language to express yourself.**
- 9. You like rough and tumble play with children.**
- 10. You need to tackle a new learning experience 'hands on' rather than by reading a manual or watching a video.**

**Resource B: 5/8**

## **Musical**

- 1. You can play a musical instrument.**
- 2. You can manage to sing in key.**
- 3. Usually you can remember a tune after hearing it just a couple of times.**
- 4. You often listen to music at home and in your car, and you sometimes go to concerts, you like - even need - a musical background when you're working.**
- 5. You find yourself tapping in time to music. You have a good sense of rhythm.**
- 6. You can identify the sounds of different musical instruments.**
- 7. Theme music or commercial jingles often pop into your head.**
- 8. You can't imagine life without music. You find that music easily evokes emotions and images for you as you listen to it.**
- 9. You often whistle or hum a tune.**
- 10. You often use rhythm (or rhyme) to remember things, e.g. saying a telephone number rhythmically.**



Resource B: 6/8

## Interpersonal

1. You enjoy working with other people as part of a group or committee.
2. You take great pride in being a mentor or advisor to someone else.
3. People tend to come to you for advice. You could describe yourself as sympathetic.
4. You prefer team sports – such as basketball, softball, football, rugby – to individual sports such as swimming and running.
5. You like games involving other people – bridge, Monopoly®, Trivial Pursuit®.
6. You're a social butterfly. You would much prefer to be at a party than home alone watching television.
7. You have several very close personal friends.
8. You communicate well with people and can help resolve disputes.
9. You have no hesitation in taking the lead; showing other people how to get things done.
10. You talk over problems with others rather than trying to resolve them by yourself.

**Resource B: 7/8**

## **Intrapersonal**

- 1. You keep a personal diary or log to record your innermost thoughts.**
- 2. You often spend 'quiet time' reflecting on the important issues in your life.**
- 3. You have set your own goals; you know where you're going.**
- 4. You are an independent thinker; you know your own mind, make up your own mind.**
- 5. You have a private hobby or interest that you don't really share with anyone else.**
- 6. You like to go fishing by yourself or take a solitary hike. You're happy with your own company.**
- 7. Your idea of a good vacation is an isolated hilltop cabin rather than a five-star resort and lots of people.**
- 8. You have a realistic idea of your own strengths and weaknesses.**
- 9. You have attended self-improvement workshops or been through some kind of counselling to learn more about yourself.**
- 10. You work for yourself - or have seriously contemplated 'doing your own thing'.**

**Resource B: 8/8**

## **Naturalist**

- 1. You keep or like pets.**
- 2. You can recognise and name many different types of trees, flowers and plants.**
- 3. You have an interest in and good knowledge of how the body works - where the main internal organs are, for example and you keep abreast of health issues.**
- 4. You are conscious of tracks, nests and wildlife on a walk and can 'read' weather signs.**
- 5. You can envision yourself as a farmer, or maybe you like to fish.**
- 6. You are a keen gardener and are familiar with the effects of the seasons.**
- 7. You have an understanding of, and interest in, the main global environmental issues.**
- 8. You keep reasonably informed about developments in astronomy, the origins of the universe, and the evolution of life.**
- 9. You are interested in social issues, psychology, and human motivations.**
- 10. You consider that conservation of resources and achieving sustainable growth are two of the biggest issues of our times.**

## Activity 2: What type of learner are you?

*(20 minutes)*

### Purpose

- To enable group members to reflect on their knowledge and understanding of learning styles and to relate this to their own life experiences as learners

### Resources

Each group member should bring the result of their trawl on websites recommended in the preparatory activity brief.

It would help to have some spare copies of a questionnaire in case some group members have not had the time or opportunity to complete one before the session. It would also be helpful to have internet access available to access some of the sites identified through a search engine under the key words 'learning styles' and 'multiple intelligences'.

### Suggestions

The session leader should invite the group to divide into pairs to discuss with their partner their experiences of identifying their preferred learning styles when completing the preparatory activity. Each person should take five minutes to respond to the questions below.

Were you already aware of your preferred learning style?

- In what ways has your preferred learning style impacted upon your learning situation?
- What adaptations have you had to make to succeed in different areas?

The group should then reconvene and together share the key points that have emerged from this activity and to reflect, through their work-based activities or reflective logs, on how this knowledge and understanding will impact on their role and practice in the workplace.

## Activity 3: How learning experiences affect learning and behaviour

(45 minutes)

### Purpose

- To enable group members to extend the link between preferred learning styles, experience of the education system and behaviour and attendance. Part 2 of the activity extends the link to consider implications for their leadership roles in behaviour and attendance. (This follows on directly and group members need not be made aware that the activity is in two parts.)

### Resources

- Blank playing cards or small pieces of card (10 per group)

### Suggestions

#### Part 1

(20 minutes)

The session leader should ask group members to think of a particular child or young person they have worked with who has not enjoyed school, allowing them a few moments to reflect individually on the following:

- At what stage or in which areas did they become most disaffected?
- Could this be linked to their experience of learning?
- What different teaching and learning styles would have made a difference?

Group members should then share these observations.

The session leader can draw the discussion to conclusions about how children's learning experiences affect their behaviour and attitude to school.

*Does the group believe that colleagues in their own settings are generally aware of or concerned about this issue?*

Individuals rate their responses to this question using a solution-focused scale where 1 represents 'Not aware and don't care' and 10 represents 'fully aware and all issues successfully addressed'. The session leader can ask group members to 'line up' across the room, placing themselves according to the rating of their own setting – one side represents 1, the other 10. Together, participants then explore why different settings have different levels of awareness.

#### Part 2

(20 minutes)

On the basis of the 'line up' activity, the session leader should form some 'mixed' groups of three or four – so that low raters and higher raters are represented in each. The point of this exercise is to allow for an exchange of practice and key leadership issues in different settings.

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Participants should share examples of effective practice in using learning theories to enhance learning and teaching. They should think of as many examples as possible, including examples of their own practice or that of other educational professionals as appropriate.

The session leader then gathers the whole group together (or forms two groups, depending on numbers). The group(s) are then asked to draw up a list of top ten tips for applying VAK, MI or EI to produce effective learning experiences.

Approaches might include:

- the use of games and simulations
- ensuring that visual input is always available
- mind mapping
- use of revision posters, collages
- role-plays
- providing opportunities to teach others
- ICT-based input
- group work
- enhancing the learning environment with colour, music, aroma and so on
- promoting creativity through visual and auditory means
- using visualisation
- brain breaks, brain gym, energisers
- making use of media – audio and visual taping
- allowing some children and young people to move around or be active while learning
- addressing nutrition, fatigue and restlessness through various interventions (breakfast club, parental liaison, 'stress balls', etc.).

The session leader should give the blank playing cards to group members for them to record the ideas individually for easy reference and future use.

Group members themselves will be conversant with these approaches and techniques, but how can they work with colleagues and the schools as a whole to reduce the barriers to learning that arise in this area? Group members should gather together on a flipchart the range of strategies they might pursue to ensure that a wider range of learning opportunities becomes available in their setting.

*What challenges arise in working with colleagues in this area and how might they overcome them?*

Some strategies might include:

- developing working groups of interested staff to develop approaches in particular subject areas
- promoting or supporting INSET in this area
- promoting team-teaching opportunities
- initiating learning style audits and disseminating the results
- engaging children and young people in dialogue around the ways in which teaching meets their learning styles.

## Activity 4: Planning for staff development

(20 minutes)

### Purpose

- To enable group members to link theory to changes in practice and to consider the group members' role in influencing change

### Resources

- Activity 4 Resource A: *Staff development action plan*

### Suggestions

The session leader should invite group members to reflect on an area of teaching and learning in their own setting that could be improved by applying an aspect of learning theory.

In pairs, participants should consider Activity 4 Resource A: *Staff development action plan* for this particular area.

They should share their plan with a partner and identify in their professional roles an area in which they feel they could influence others to improve practice in applying learning theory.

As a group, participants discuss what opportunities they have for influencing others' practice in this area and to encourage them to identify the skills needed to make this happen. The session leader should promote a solution-focused discussion using questions that look for solutions, for example 'What would be a first step you could take?'.

Finally, the session leader should list the leadership skills the group has identified and remind them to practise these skills in their workplace.

**Activity 4 Resource A: Staff development action plan**

	Current situation	Action required	Resources and training needs	Time scale	Evaluation
<p>an area where            that there is a            of change,            are unhappy            s as they are            .            e area you are            f, wherever            o a Work-            ivity.</p>	<p>1. What makes the current situation less than satisfactory?            2. What are the key elements for change?</p>	<p>Make sure that these are framed in terms of SMART targets.</p>	<p>1. Again, any considerations here need to fit into overall INSET plans for your setting.            2. They need to be realistic in terms of time frame and resourcing.</p>	<p>Is this a short-term or long-term goal?            When would be an opportune time to implement your plan (probably near the start of a year/term rather than at the end)?</p>	<p>How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the development?</p>



# Work-based activities

The following activities are examples of work-based activities you could undertake. You may choose to use existing work to consolidate impact, or extend activities you are already being asked to do. You may undertake your own activity if it is relevant to the topic and your context.

## Work-based activity 1: Developing a preferred learning styles questionnaire

### Purpose

- To give group members the opportunity to lead the development and implementation of a learning styles questionnaire
- To obtain feedback from staff, children and young people as to the usefulness of the questionnaire

### Audience

All group members

### Use of expert

None required

### Links to the learning process

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### Notes

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

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### Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice

Collect samples of questionnaires for VAK, multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence. See examples in: Brearley (2001) and Smith (1996). There is also a host of websites – enter ‘learning style’ or ‘multiple intelligence’ in to a search engine.

Work with a colleague to:

- Consider how you could adapt the questionnaires to suit the children and young people you work with.
- Trial the adapted questionnaires.
- Evaluate both the format of the questionnaires and the children’s and young people’s reaction to it.
- Adapt the questionnaires and trial them until you are satisfied that they suit your purpose.
- Suggest that colleagues use the questionnaires to inform them of the preferred learning styles of the children and young people they work with.

This work-based activity links with Work-based activities 2 and 4, allowing two group members to collaborate.

Finalised questionnaires will become a resource shared between both group members and their colleagues at work.

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

## Outcomes

- Questionnaires developed and used with three groups of children and young people
- Questionnaires are accepted by staff as useful indicators of children’s and young people’s preferred learning styles
- Children and young people give positive feedback on having completed questionnaires and outcomes

## Reporting

- Summary report on how the questionnaires were received and used by staff, children and young people
- Copies of the various drafts of the questionnaire

## Work-based activity 2: Monitoring teaching and learning styles

### Purpose

- To provide the opportunity to lead in developing a system for monitoring teaching and learning styles in lessons

### Audience

All group members

### Use of expert

None required

### Links to the learning process

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### Notes

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Work with colleagues to devise a way of monitoring planning to ensure an appropriate range of teaching and learning styles are used in all lessons.

Introduce the system to be trialled by a volunteer group of staff members who have an interest in and awareness of teaching and learning styles.

Ask staff to evaluate its effectiveness in raising awareness of different teaching and learning styles.

Lead a meeting to discuss your findings and any teaching and learning implications.

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

## Outcomes

- Monitoring system developed and trialled by volunteer of staff
- Evaluation of system, if completed
- Evaluation discussed at informal meeting of staff involved
- Recommendations for school policy made to senior leadership team

## Reporting

- Minutes of meeting to discuss monitoring system
- Recommendations for SLT

## **Work-based activity 3: Analysis of teaching and learning styles**

### **Purpose**

- To provide the opportunity to develop an observation checklist that collects information about the impact of different teaching and learning styles on different children and young people

### **Audience**

All group members

### **Use of expert**

None required

### **Links to the learning process**

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### **Links to other study topics**

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### **Notes**

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Devise a checklist to use when observing lessons to analyse the teaching and learning styles used and the impact on different children and young people.

Trial the checklist with a colleague and evaluate its potential effectiveness.

Using the checklist, observe the work of a colleague and note different teaching and learning styles used and how effective they were with different children and young people.

Swap roles with your colleague so that both have observed and been observed.

Feed back to each other. Discuss whether the checklist is a useful tool and how it could be used more widely.

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### **Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice**

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

## **Outcomes**

- Checklist is produced and trialled with a minimum of 10 children and young people in a minimum of five different lessons
- Feedback between colleagues indicates the instrument is useful
- Future use of instrument is planned

## **Reporting**

Report on development, use of and implications for future use of observational checklist

## Work-based activity 4: A presentation to colleagues

### Purpose

- To give group members the opportunity of considering the relevance to and impact on children and young people's behaviour and attendance of different styles of teaching and learning
- To give the opportunity to present to colleagues the relevance of their work on VAK, MI and EI to their teaching styles

### Audience

All group members

### Use of expert

None required

### Links to the learning process

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### Notes

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Plan and lead a staff meeting at your place of work. It should outline the importance of VAK, MI and other cognitive styles on the behaviour and attendance of children and young people, including the possible impact on their interpersonal relationships.

Make time for discussion on the implications you have identified for planning and teaching in whole-class or personalised learning programmes in your setting. Include an evaluation in the session for feedback and ideas for future work.

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### **Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice**

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

### **Outcomes**

- Meeting convened and carried out
- Positive response from staff involved

### **Reporting**

- Summary of evaluation sheets
- Summary of ideas for future work



## Work-based activity 5: Understanding the views of children and young people

### Purpose

- To give group members the opportunity to prepare a presentation to staff, senior leadership and children and young people about the benefits of adopting a more personalised approach to children and young people and their learning styles
- To base the presentation on information from children and young people about their learning experiences

### Audience

All group members

### Use of expert

None required

### Links to the learning process

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### Notes

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Try the following activity with an individual or group of children and young people. Consider how you could adapt it for use with different age groups and abilities.

Divide the whole group into two and provide each with the labelled sheet of flipchart paper and two different-coloured marker pens.

Ask the group to imagine a child who likes to learn through 'hands on' activities and has had negative school experiences in the past. Ask them to take a brief moment to gather ideas on what these negative experiences might have been.

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### **Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice**

Ask them to imagine this child's first day at a new school. When the child arrives at school, there are two identical gates. One gate leads to a school experience tailored to suit their social and learning needs; the other gate leads to an opposite experience.

Make sure that those children and young people who have behaviour problems and whose behaviour seems to stem from frustration in accessing the curriculum are included in the group. You may also want to include any child or young person who may have been the subject of bullying behaviour or who may have bullied other children.

How do they visualise a school in which they could feel comfortable and learn?

Analyse the results and see whether any changes are practicable. Could any of the children's or young people's ideas be adapted or alternative strategies be used?

Prepare a display or presentation of your own suggestions and the children's or young people's visualisations for use in your place of work.

Decide on ways to disseminate your work:

- Could you present ideas to staff or senior management?
- Could it be presented to other children and young people or school council?
- Could other children and young people be involved in their visualisation for a 'learning-friendly' school?

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

## **Outcomes**

- Display generated and/or presentation made
- Suggestions from children and young people used on a pilot basis in school
- Further dissemination planned

## **Reporting**

- Photographic evidence of display
- Recorded suggestions from children and young people with an action plan for those suggestions implemented or planned to be implemented

## Work-based activity 6: Using visual or kinaesthetic approaches

### Purpose

- To give group members the opportunity to lead a small team of staff in planning a variety of learning activities suited to different learning styles
- To evaluate the impact of the application of the activities
- To disseminate findings to staff in a way likely to engage their interest

### Audience

Staff in teaching or learning support situation

### Use of expert

None required

### Links to the learning process

- Practical application
- Feedback and reflection
- Embedding the experience

### Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced on Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

### Notes

Before you begin this activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Form a team of three or four staff who are interested in developing approaches to teaching and learning:

- Plan different lessons or learning activities using more visual or kinaesthetic learning opportunities.
- Trial the activities and assess their impact on the learning, attendance and behaviour of the children and young people involved. You will also want to give consideration to any impact on their ability to make and sustain personal relationships.
- Evaluate the activities with the children and young people.

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### **Applying learning theories to behaviour and attendance practice**

- Disseminate your findings to other colleagues.

At the end of the work-based activity, you should meet with senior colleagues to discuss any impact this has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

## **Outcome**

- Group formed and a minimum of five different learning activities planned
- Activities trialled with three separate groups of children and young people
- Impact on children and young people evaluated through children and young people's views, staff views and any measurable impact on learning, attendance and behaviour
- Positive impact on any of the above
- Findings disseminated to staff in a way likely to engage their interest

## **Reporting**

- Results of children's and young people's feedback
- Summary of recommendations to colleagues

# References

## Acknowledgements

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### Websites

Entering 'learning style' or 'multiple intelligence' in a search engine will draw down a host of inventories, all of which differ, for example:

- [www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/mitest.html](http://www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/mitest.html)
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