

Pre-Intermediate – Understand Your Learning Style

Aim: to help students recognise what their learning style is.

Lead-in: Discuss with students what they believe are their best subjects at school or subjects that they really like. Allow students to call out and put a list of subjects across the top of the board.

Now write the following pointers on the board:

- *I remember facts I hear.*
- *I love music.*
- *I am sporty and/or good at dance.*
- *I love listening to great stories.*
- *I can make things.*
- *I like the laboratory.*
- *Learning languages is easy for me.*
- *Art and fashion are beautiful.*
- *Numbers are easy for me.*
- *Technology and design is interesting.*
- *Studying how the Earth works is interesting.*

Get students to think about why they like some subjects but don't like others, using the pointers listed. Elicit their opinions and then ask them to rate the pointers in terms of what is really true for them (1 = not really true; 5 = very true).

Ask students to draw a table in their notebooks with three columns. Elicit the three main learning styles and discuss with students what they understand by them. Have students head their columns with these three learning styles. Put students in pairs and get them to try to match each pointer to a learning style; some pointers might match more than one style.

Note: some sources may cite four main learning styles, adding *Reading & Writing* to the styles provided in this exercise.

Auditory learner (understands better by listening)	Visual learner (understands better by looking at images and diagrams)	Kinaesthetic learner (understands better by moving around while learning)
<i>I remember facts I hear.</i>	<i>Art and fashion are beautiful.</i>	<i>I am sporty and/or good at dance or movement.</i>
<i>I love music.</i>	<i>Numbers are easy for me.</i>	
<i>I love great stories.</i>	<i>Technology and design are interesting.</i>	<i>I can make things.</i>
<i>I learn other languages easily.</i>		<i>I like doing experiments in the laboratory.</i> <i>Studying how the Earth works is interesting.</i>

Encourage students to work out what their learning styles are based on the pointers that they've rated. Remind them that they might have more than one style. Find out from students whether they think the pointers are true for indicating learning styles. Why(not)?

Choose A Scenario: Ask students to work in pairs and choose one of the three scenarios (A–C). Get the students to discuss the scenario and decide which is the person's learning style. They could have more than one. Make sure students are able to explain why they think this is true. Then get students to think about the kinds of things that might be difficult for this student and how they could learn better in situations that don't suit their learning style. Encourage students to refer to the Reflection Point while they are working.

Reflection Point: Explain to students that everybody learns in different ways and that most people use a variety of learning styles because it's unusual for one person to learn in just one way. However, once they know what kind of learning styles are best for them they can learn faster and more easily. Point out to students that learning styles show us that there isn't just one correct way to do things; there are lots of ways. Encourage students to find their ways so that they can help themselves and recognise how they can help others.

Class discussion: Put each pair with another pair that chose the same scenario and ask them to compare their conclusions and suggestions for help. Discuss with students whether or not the person described in the scenario was similar or very different from themselves. Find out what some of the similarities and differences were. Discuss some of the following questions with students:

- Do you think there are some learning styles that cause problems in the classroom?
- Why are different learning styles helpful when you work in a group or a team?
- Do *you* believe that you are good at some subjects because of your learning style?
- Do you think that to know your learning style makes learning easy?
- What can you do in class to help yourself learn in your learning style?

Work alone: Now ask students to choose a second scenario (A-C) and approach the scenario individually, following the same steps as in section 2.

Go around checking students' progress and encouraging them to express their opinions, even if not always grammatically accurate. When students have finished, invite some of them to present their conclusions and suggestions.

Extension: Explain to students that most lessons at school include something for each type of learner. Get them to choose three lessons at school that they like and to think of the ways in which they include something for each type of learner. Example: *Science – read the lesson in your text book (visual), listen to the teacher (auditory), do experiments (kinaesthetic), project work (all three).*

Encourage students to think of useful tips for themselves based on their learning style and try these techniques while they're studying for exams or doing homework.

After a couple of weeks, do a follow-up activity and ask them to share their experiences.