

## Learning styles

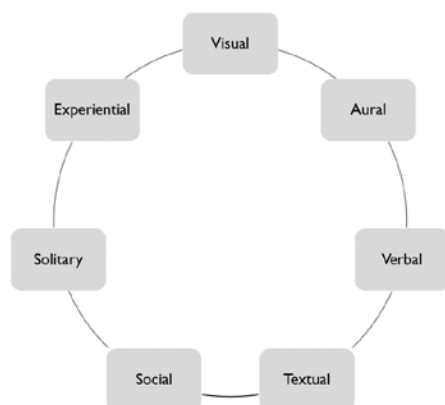
This guide is about the way you, as an individual, learn. Identifying your preferred method of learning is very important if you are going to be successful at university. It will also help you in the workplace, long after leaving university, as you build a successful career in your chosen profession. Thinking about the way you learn also provides a great opportunity to practice reflection: how do you currently learn? Is it effective? If not, what can you do differently?

### Learning styles

You might think that all learning takes place in a classroom, involves a tutor or teacher talking at you for at least an hour, and that you, as a student, are expected to write down and remember everything you are told. However, whilst this traditional scenario is not uncommon, not all learning follows this pattern. Indeed, research has shown that we all learn in different ways; a successful student will have a good understanding of what works for them, as an individual.

As an independent learner, you can take control of your learning by identifying which learning styles work for you and then finding ways of using each of these styles routinely in your studies.

Many different styles have been identified by researchers under a variety of names. In this guide, we have decided to highlight seven:



Each one of these learning styles is explained in more detail below:

#### Visual

Visual learners find it easier to learn when information is presented through graphics or

images as opposed to text. For example, understanding a process or how something works will be much easier for a visual learner if it is displayed in a diagram rather than explained in a paragraph of text. Another good example of visual learning is the use of spider diagrams or mind-maps when planning a piece of work.

#### Aural

Aural learners learn by listening: it is easier for them to listen to someone explaining a process or how something works rather than reading about it in a textbook.

#### Verbal

Verbal learning refers to the process of learning by discussing something with another person.

#### Textual

Textual learning alludes to the traditional way of learning outlined at the beginning of this guide: it is text based and involves a lot of reading (e.g. of textbooks).

#### Social

Social learning is similar to verbal learning in that it involves learning through interaction with others. A good example is group work, which is very common at university; here, you learn from each other as you work on a task.

#### Solitary

Solitary learning, as its name suggest, is about learning most effectively on your own, removed from the distractions of being around others.

#### Experiential

Experiential learning is about learning through experience. For example, as part of your course, you might have to undertake a placement in order to learn from real, more relevant experience.

Which learning styles work for you? How you might apply these styles to your own studies?

For more information on Academic Skills, visit: <http://study.cardiffmet.ac.uk/AcSkills/Pages/Writing.aspx>.