

What's Your Learning Style?

Understanding your preferred learning style will help you study more efficiently and effectively.

You can determine your learning style by taking the ESS Quick-Start Learning Styles Inventory printed below. In answering the inventory questions, consider situations when you found learning to be easy. Once you've completed the inventory, discuss the results with an ESS staff member.

THE ESS QUICK-START LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY

QUESTION 1: Preferred Learning Modality

When learning new information, are you a/an

- **Visual Learner** because you like to read your textbook or other course-related material?
- **Auditory Learner** because you like to listen to a lecture or have someone explain it to you?
- **Active Learner** because you like to learn by constructing a model, solving problems, etc?

QUESTION 2: Individual or Group Work

When studying, do you prefer to work alone?
Work in small groups?

QUESTION 3: Examples or Big Picture

When introduced to new information, do you prefer to: examine the *big picture* or main idea before considering specific examples. Think about examples that then lead to the *big picture* or main idea.



Think about your learning style when seeking help from your professor. Ask the professor to show you how to link the examples presented in class with your conceptual understanding of the material.

HOW TO USE THE RESULTS OF THE ESS LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY

Visual Learners

- read the textbook before class
- highlight lecture notes after class, adding reading notes, summary sheets, arrows, diagrams

Auditory Learners

- skim the textbook before class; then follow up after class with more in-depth reading
- study lecture and reading notes by “talking” through the information or by discussing the material with a study group or tutor

Active Learners

- work with a study group to develop summary/review sheets when preparing for an exam
- underline and take marginal notes when reading

Individual Study or Small Group Work

While you may prefer working alone, participating in a small group project or forming a study group has certain advantages. Small Groups Can:

- help you master difficult material
- motivate you to study when you feel frustrated with a course
- divide up the work of preparing review sheets for exams
- prepare you for collaborative work that you'll do in your professional career

Big Picture or Examples

Professors use their preferred learning style when presenting course material. If you're having difficulty understanding a professor's lectures, it may be that your learning style doesn't match the professor's style. For instance, you may be expecting the *big picture* in a lecture while your professor introduces new material through examples.