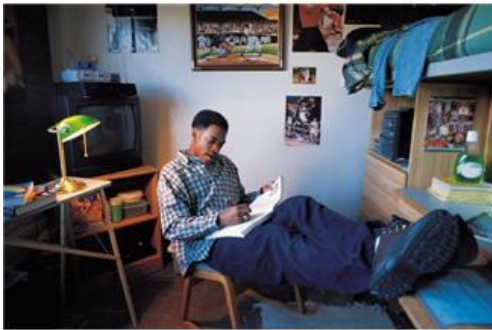


Know your learning style!

Different trainees are doing their work placement in a hotel, at the reception. When starting their work placement, the first one started directly behind the reception. When she has a question, she asks her supervisor. The second one first observed how the job is done by the employees/ professionals before starting herself. Another trainee has prepared herself thoroughly by reading what is expected from her (competence profiles) and has done some research on techniques on customer-friendliness.



The example proves that there are different ways and preferences of learning and thus different routes to reach the same goal. Every trainee has its own natural preference of gathering and processing information in his/her mind. Respecting the differences between the styles of learning and creating the opportunity for the trainee to develop their competences according to their own learning preference, will lead automatically to the best results!

The different ways of gathering and processing information will lead to **four different learning styles**.

During training or work placements, you will probably have trainees with different learning styles. Insight in different learning styles makes you able to make the best fit of didactical and coaching method with the trainees.

In order to get more insight in the different learning styles, a questionnaire is developed. This test can be done by you as a trainer or mentor, but it can also be done by the trainees. By doing the test, you will be more capable of recognizing the different learning styles into practice.

The four learning styles of Kolb

The model of Kolb with the four learning styles is based upon the principle that a learning process includes four phases. Every trainee goes through each learning phase. Depending on the natural learning style of the trainee he starts in a certain phase and goes then through the other phases as well. In general the trainee will spend most of the time in the phase of his preference.

Someone who is theoretically oriented will spend most of the time in the study, the preparation and the investigation of the information. Someone who is more practically oriented prefers to start with trial and error and uses his/her experiences of former situations.

The four phases of an effective learning process correspond with the ways information is gathered and processed to knowledge and experiences. In short there are four different possibilities for gathering information:

- by experimenting,
- by observing and reflecting,
- by understanding
- by experiencing

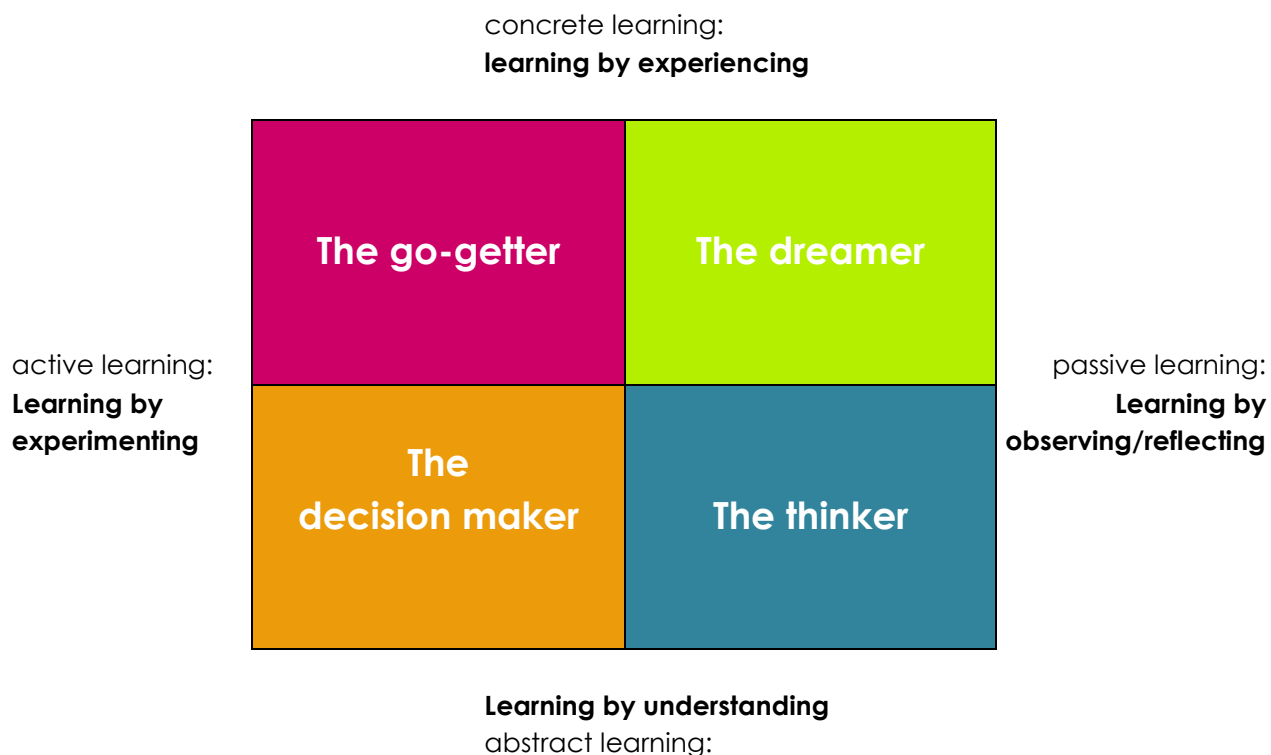
These four styles differ from each other in the following way:

- active learning (experimenting) versus passive learning (observing/reflecting)
- abstract learning (understanding) versus concrete learning (experiencing)

Putting these together, four quadrants appear. In these quadrants four learning styles will be distinguished.

- **the go-getter,**
- **the dreamer,**
- **the thinker,**
- **the decision maker.**

For each learning style, the strengths, weaknesses and most effective working methods are distinguished. When you as a trainer have insight in the learning style of a trainee, you can get the best out of the trainee!



The natural learning styles of a person:	Strengths	Weaknesses	Effective working methods
The go-getter: Prefers to gather information by experiencing. Processes information by experimenting. Is open to new experiences and follows often intuition and feelings. Learns by trial and error and prefers working in practical situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practical orientation - adaptability/ flexibility - problem solving ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impatient, - constantly looking for new challenges - easily bored - tiresome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexible working methods - variation in working methods - time for feed-back - time for humor
The dreamer: Prefers to gather information by seeing, hearing and feeling, thus being experienced. Processes information by observing and reflecting at distance. Takes time to over think information and studies all possible options and solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imaginary ability - generating new ideas - opinion making - listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decision making (slow) - cautiousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time to express feelings - time for reflection - visual presentation - time for discussion
The thinker: Prefers to gather information by understanding. Processes information by observing and reflecting. Is a theoretical based person and prefers to learn by reading and studying. Creates theories and structures in order to connect new information with existing knowledge and experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thinking logically/ rationally - creating concepts/ theories - new challenges - acting consequently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working in practice - vagueness - inflexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clear structure - time to pose questions - time for observations in theory - challenges, problems to solve
The decision maker: Prefers to gather information by understanding. Processes information by experimenting. Prefers to read and listen, but is more practically oriented than the Thinker. Applies new ideas for solving problems. Is always looking for more and better information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting himself targets - taking decisions - solving problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social contacten and relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time making conclusions by themselves - connection with the practice - time for experimenting - new challenges