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# Introduction

The way in which students learn best is related to the context in which they do their learning. They learn *how* to learn through particular learning contexts or situations.

As students mature as learners, they approach learning situations in reasonably consistent ways; that is, students tend to develop a particular *learning style*.

We can define learning style as:

**any observable pattern in the way in which a person accomplishes a learning task of a particular type.**

As teachers work with students in problem-solving (or learning) situations, they will be well aware that students display very similar approaches to solving these problems. As learners, we have inherently predictable ways of responding to learning situations. However teachers will also observe—within the similarity of approach—that there is variety in the way individual learners actually go about solving problems. Different students show different preferences in the way they choose to go about learning tasks. These different preferences are called *learning styles*.

**Note:** Learning style is **not** the same as intelligence. Howard Gardner, who talks about multiple intelligences, says that an intelligence is a **capacity** while a learning style is **an approach that an individual can apply to his or her learning content**.

## TEACHING FOR GOOD LEARNING

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Students go to school to learn; not just to learn content, but also to learn *how* to learn. It is important for students to know how they learn. Students should develop an understanding of their own and others' styles of learning. This knowledge will help students take control of their learning so that they become more effective and efficient learners.

Teachers should be aware of students' preferred learning style so that they can provide learning activities where students are best able to learn and, as well, provide activities where students are supported in strengthening their less preferred styles.

The activities suggested in this book offer teachers a variety of ideas that relate to different learning styles.

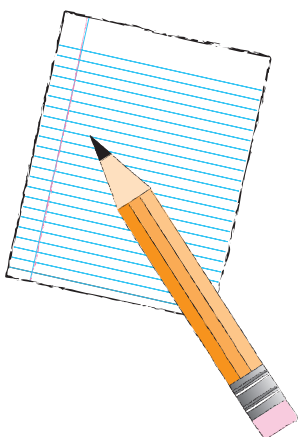
The following activities relate to a **Divergent** learning style.

## Lower Primary Activities

### Activity 1

#### Preparation

Students will need thick pencils and sheets of paper.



#### Cartoons

**Not everyone is good at making their drawings look exactly like they want them to look, but we can all do sketches of things around us.**

**Work with a partner. Look at your partner's face. Look at the important parts, like eyes and nose, mouth and chin. Use a thick pencil to make a drawing of your partner's face using just lines to show those important parts.**

### Activity 2

#### Preparation

**Make a selection of rectangular cards of various colours (red, blue, yellow, violet, orange, green, white, black); make a second set of cards with 'emotions' written on them (happy, sad, frightened, calm, worried, joyful, curious, cross).**

#### Colour My Feelings

**If we think about our feelings, we sometimes match feelings with certain colours. Choose a feeling card and see which colour best matches that feeling for you. See if you can match up other feeling and colour cards.**

## Some more activities related to style - Teacher's Cards

- These activities can be modified to be used with students at any level.
- The activities take a wider perspective on learning style than activities in section 1. The style is noted with each activity.

### Circle Talk

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**Learning Style: Environmental elements of the classroom such as design are important for effective learning.**

Plan an area in the classroom that can be used for small group conversations. Use a screen to divide this area off from the rest of the classroom. Arrange three or four bean bag chairs in a circle for the students to sit on. Place a colourful mat in the middle of the circle. Encourage students to use this area for times such as discussions about group work activities, planning, settling differences.

### Listening to Learn

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**Learning Style: Environmental elements of the classroom such as sound are important for effective learning for some learners.**

Some students find it very effective to work with music playing. Plan an area where students can play music as they carry out on-line research tasks. This could be done by placing one of the computers (with CD capacity) in an area where the sound will not disturb other activities.

### I'm a Scientist

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**Learning Style: Impulsive learners may need encouragement in adopting reflective practices.**

Have the children find out about things by conducting experiments. When they ask questions about how things work or why things happen, rather than tell them, say 'let's find out'.

Have lists of some good 'Experiment Starters' displayed around the room, for example,

What would happen if .....

But if this happened before that .....

What if I .....

What would be the difference if we .....

If I did this again .....