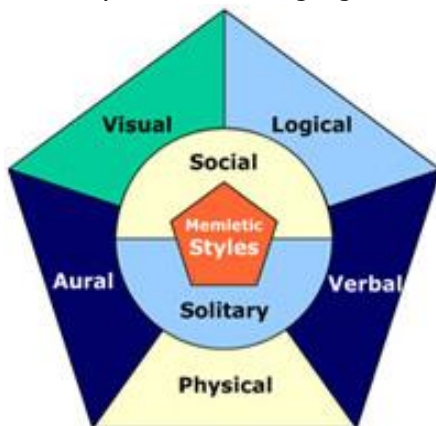


# WE ARE ALL LEARNERS

As human beings, we all learn about our environment and how to think and behave through a number of sources such as seeing, hearing and touching. Each of us has a different way of learning about our world and these ways of learning have been called 'learning styles'. Most people have a mix of learning styles, and some may prefer one style of learning over another style. There is no one right way to learn but our learning style may influence how we remember experiences, how we recall information and even what part of our brain we use!

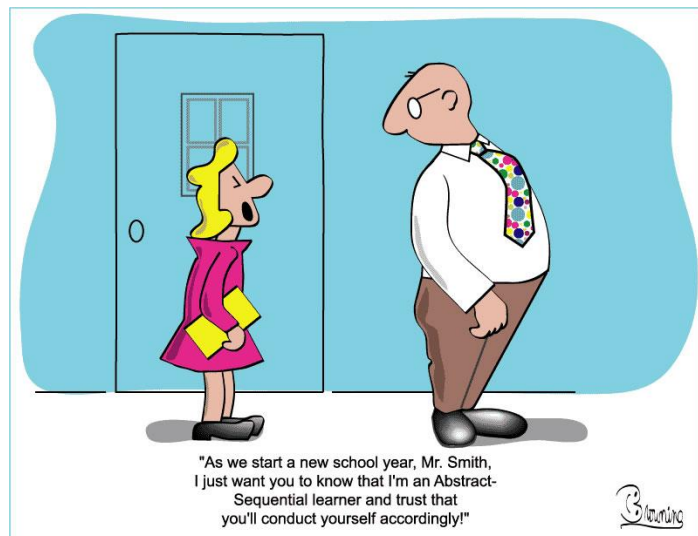
There are many learning style models. One of the most common is The Seven Learning Styles. These are (click on each highlighted style to learn more about it and learning styles in general):



- **Visual (spatial):** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- **Aural (auditory-musical):** You prefer using sound and music.
- **Verbal (linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- **Physical (kinesthetic):** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch (also called tactile).
- **Logical (mathematical):** You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- **Social (interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- **Solitary (intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

We also know that there are members of our team who are more skilled with seeing the 'big picture'; who are naturally able to link together a number of seemingly unrelated events in order to bring clarity to the situation at hand, while others are particularly skilled with managing detail and can be very precise. Again, both of these ways of understanding information are useful. [Which are you?](#)

When you combine and include the various styles, personalities and talents, on your team, it can result in a very positive impact on the outcome of products and services delivered to the citizens of Calgary.



## Know Your Audience

It is important to know your audience and their needs when developing a learning organization or a training opportunity as seen from this experience:

*I was asked to do a presentation for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. I went in, dimmed the lights and proceeded to go through a power-point presentation. At the end of the session, I was told that 90% of my audience was visually impaired! I was mortified, but I learned from it to be aware of my audience and their optimum learning modalities. The next time I was invited back, I was prepared with handouts printed in braille and teaching tactics that were more appropriate for this group [A consultant's story].*

The City of Calgary is dedicated to enabling all its employees with all learning styles to achieve their full potential.

## Tips for Inclusive Behaviours

- When developing professional development opportunities or on-the-job training, consider different learning styles and how you can incorporate a variety of learning methods in your sessions, e.g. diagrams, speech, text, discussion, practical tasks, etc.
- Determine what works best for your employee's productivity, e.g., teamwork vs. independent tasks.
- Use multimedia technologies such as videos, podcasts, screencasts, etc.
- Consider whether your learning material can be accessible for different needs, e.g. persons with a visual or hearing impairment.
- Remember, human beings are flexible and can learn in different ways! So you can challenge yourself to learn through a learning method you don't usually use.
- In meetings use clear, jargon-free language: Avoid abbreviations and acronyms unless they are clearly explained.
- Conduct a team building exercise to determine what strengths your employees bring to the table and brainstorm as a group on how to capitalize on these.
- Allow different ways for people to contribute to a project.
- Learn how different members of your team have been schooled. You'll be surprised at the variety!

## More information?

### External resources:

[Different Learning Styles](#)

[Learning Modalities](#)

[The Power of Introverts by Susan Cain, Ted Talk](#)