
Theory-Oriented Learners

These people gather data abstractly and process it reflectively. They begin with a concept or idea, and then think around it. They use their minds well and think with logical precision and value sequential thinking. They value intellectual competence and like to know what the experts think. They're impatient with subjective judgment. Facts are more important than feelings, and theirs is a constant quest for knowledge. Their danger is that they spend too much time in the ivory tower. Their favorite question is: "what?"

When learning: They are comfortable with a factual and analytical style of teaching. They are independent learners, and if their quest for knowledge is not met they may be off "doing their own thing." They can underachieve if not stimulated sufficiently. They will follow up classroom work with their own reading and/or research. They may be seen as cold and not having sufficiently developed social skills. They tend to interact only with the teacher and other "bright" students, whom they see as their intellectual equals. Recreation and social activities may be seen as a waste of time by them.

Recognition: Theory-oriented learners need to succeed since competence is of very high value to them. Failure can be devastating, and yet they set higher and higher standards for themselves. They can accept criticism from those they view as competent, providing they can see the validity of it. Justice is important to them and they take it very hard if they feel they are treated unjustly. They will examine their evaluations to check their accuracy.

When teaching others: Their basic aim is to transmit knowledge and to share their own love of knowledge. They do this by presenting the information in a systematic and orderly fashion that should fit in the students' existing theoretical framework. There will be lots of facts and data. They will enjoy the outstanding student but may get frustrated with the slow student. In the classroom they are fair but authoritative.

People with this learning preference are often found among researchers, scientists and mathematicians. They tend to choose careers where logical thought is required.