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AchieveWorks®
Learning & Productivity

Counselor Handbook

A counselor/advisor's guide for using
AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity
to understand, counsel and advise students

Contents

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Introduction

This handbook has been written specifically for *you* – the counselor or advisor who uses *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* with students. It is our hope that this resource will help both you and your pupils get the maximum benefit from this program.

In preparation for using *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* with students, we suggest you begin by first reading this handbook in its entirety and then taking the assessment yourself. This will help you to understand the theory behind the program and provide you with experience and practical advice, ensuring the best possible results when administering *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* to your students.

We hope you enjoy *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* and that you find this handbook informative and a helpful resource in using the program with your students. If you have feedback, questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Background

More than 40 years of research has proven that, through employing their preferred modes of learning and by engaging all of their senses, students are better able to absorb and retain information.

AchieveWorks® Learning & Productivity shows students what their sensory, environmental and mindset preferences are, and helps them understand how those 16 preferences relate to their learning and productivity. By helping students recognize their traditional sensory learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic) and 12 productivity preferences, they can maximize their learning potential. *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* creates an awareness and understanding of personal preferences and assists in the development of multi-modal learning strategies.

Reading Level

The readability of the *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* assessment questions and report content has been measured with the ReadablePro analysis tool, available online at readable.com. The tool provides scores for the following five recognized tools, each of which uses a unique formula to determine the readability of a piece of text:

- The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, which rates one's comprehension of the text on a U.S. school grade level
- The Gunning Fog Index, which estimates the years of formal education one requires to understand the text upon first reading it
- The Coleman-Liau Index, which provides an approximation of the U.S. grade level one requires to comprehend the text
- The SMOG Index, which estimates the years of education one requires to understand the text
- The Automated Readability Index, which produces an approximation of the U.S. grade level one needs to comprehend the text

Additionally ReadablePro provides the "Readability Rating", a bespoke rating system that factors in all of the scores from the other algorithms to create an overall score, displayed as a letter grade.

Item Measured	Readability Rating	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Gunning Fog Score
Assessment	A	4.1	6.5
Individual report	A	6.4	7.9

Item Measured	Coleman-Liau Index	SMOG Index	Automated Readability Index
Assessment	5.0	7.7	2.6
Individual report	9.7	9.6	6.0

Overview of Learning Styles and Preferences

A Proven Method of Improving Student Achievement

Learning styles theory is based on the premise that people learn best in different ways. When taking in new information, one person may naturally rely on a strength in visual learning (preferring to view photos, drawings or presentations, for example) while another may respond more favorably to tactile learning (touching and handling objects related to the information). Still others may prefer to discuss and hear things explained, using their strength in auditory learning.

A student's learning environment can have a significant effect on their productivity. Adjusting aspects of their environment to suit their preferences, such as raising or lowering the room temperature, or introducing the presence or absence of sound, can help to create more favorable conditions in which to work.

An understanding of their attitude toward learning and how they learn best can lead students to greater achievement and more satisfying educational experiences. For example, a student with a preference for more structure may struggle in situations where they are not provided with detailed steps with which to complete their tasks. However, by recognizing this preference in themselves, the student can adopt strategies to help them cope with unstructured learning activities *and* learn how their preference for structure can be advantageous in other situations.

Numerous studies indicate that students whose learning mode and environment are suited to their personal preferences and learning styles are able to achieve more and have a more satisfying educational experience. These students have demonstrated statistically significant increases in academic achievement, improved attitudes toward school, less tension in classes, and significantly increased school retention.

Consider, for example:

- The implementation of a learning styles program has been shown to result in significant gains in reading and math achievement on standardized achievement tests (Spires, 1983).
- Referring to the standard normal curve … students whose learning styles are accommodated should achieve 75% of a standard deviation higher (Dunn & Griggs, 1995).
- Study indicates students' academic performance is related to the way they learn (Torres, 2013).

AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity helps students understand their learning styles and preferences, and how they can use them for greater academic success.

For further examples of supporting research, see:
https://assets.humanesources.com/materials/AWLP_Supporting_Research.pdf

For a statistical analysis of the psychometric properties of the *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* assessment, see:
https://assets.humanesources.com/materials/AW_Learning_and_Productivity_Statistical_Analysis_2017.pdf

The Preference Scales

The 16 learning and productivity styles measured by *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* are grouped into three categories. Each style is represented on a scale that ranges between two possible preferences at either end of the scale (see Table 1). Extended definitions of all 16 styles are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 - Learning Styles, Categories and Preferences

Category	Style	Preference A	Preference B
Sensory	Auditory Learning	Low Auditory	High Auditory
	Kinesthetic Learning	Low Kinesthetic	High Kinesthetic
	Tactile Learning	Low Tactile	High Tactile
	Visual Learning	Low Visual	High Visual
Environmental	Intake Level	Low Intake	High Intake
	Light Level	Low Light	Bright Light
	Temperature	Cool Environment	Warm Environment
	Mobility	Stillness	Mobility
	Sound	Quiet in Background	Sound in Background
	Setting	Casual	Traditional
	Time of Day	Late in the Day	Early in the Day
Mindset	Teacher Motivation	Low Teacher Motivation	High Teacher Motivation
	Collaborative or Independent	Collaborative	Independent
	Structure	More Structure	Less Structure
	Focus	High Focus	Low Focus
	Self-Motivation	Low Self-Motivation	High Self-Motivation

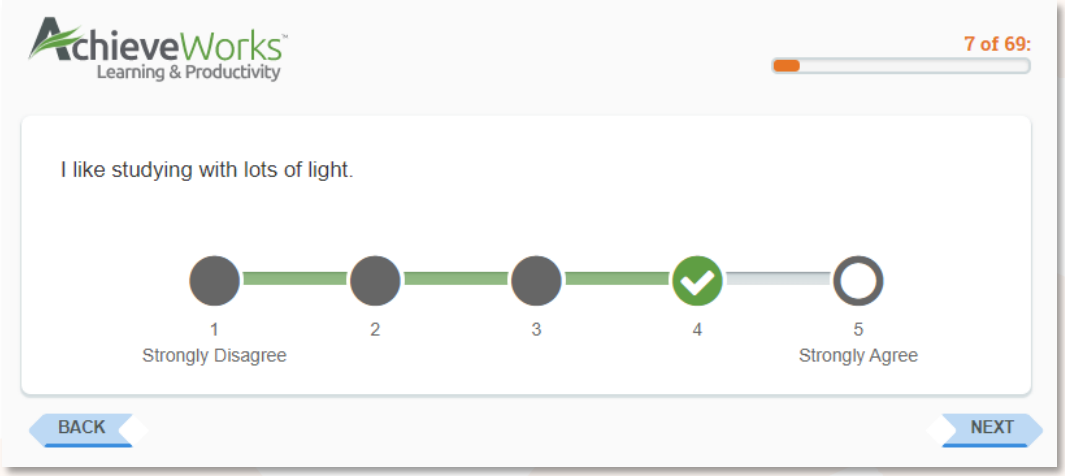
Table 2 - Learning Style Definitions

Style	Definition
Auditory Learning	Preference for learning information through auditory perception: listening to others speak or audio recordings.
Kinesthetic Learning	Preference for learning information through kinesthetic perception: activities that involve significant movement and use of the body in the learning activity. For example, role playing, interactive "learning stations", laboratory procedures, and building physical objects.
Tactile Learning	Preference for receiving information through touch and manipulation with the hands. A good example of a tactile preference is taking notes when hearing a lecture or receiving instructions.
Visual Learning	Preference for receiving information through visual perception. This includes text, pictures, charts, video and physical objects.
Intake Level	Preference for intake when studying or learning new or difficult material. Many students are able to learn better if they're able to chew or nibble on something when they are learning. Other students are distracted by intake and prefer to study or learn without having intake available.
Light Level	Preference for learning environments that have a lot of light versus more dimly lit conditions.
Mobility	Preference for having the freedom to move during the learning activity. Rather than the movement directly related to the learning activity, this refers to movement such as pacing, fidgeting and adjusting position.
Sound Level	Preference for working and learning in an environment that contains some background sounds versus an environment that is very quiet.
Design	Preference for formal or informal study environment. Identifies whether students prefers a formal learning environment (chair and desk) or a more relaxed setting (couch or bed) in terms of the physical space.
Temperature	This preference indicates whether the student prefers cool or warm environments.
Time of Day	Preference for working and learning earlier in the day versus later in the day. Students are more productive during their preferred time of day. It is important to allow students to learn their most difficult material during their preferred time of day.
Collaborative or Independent	Preference for learning while alone or interacting with peers.
Self-Motivation	Motivation for learning which is academic or school-based: involves classrooms, instructors, textbooks, assignments, tests, and other school-related activities.
Structure	Preference for work and assignments that have a lot of structure versus work that is more open-ended. Structured work would have detailed steps to follow, whereas open-ended work would allow student to make more decisions about what is learned and how it is learned.

Focus	Amount of follow-through, seeing work to its completion and ability to stay focused and on-task. Also, the ability to focus for long periods in the face of difficulty.
Teacher Motivation	Amount of motivation derived from the student's teacher(s). This preference identifies whether the student learns to please their teacher.

The Assessment

AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity is a 20-minute (or less) online survey of a student's learning styles and productivity preferences. It consists of 54 statements: students indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Their responses are used to calculate the results, which are instantly available in a personalized report. The reports can be used by students, educators and parents to help adapt the student's environment and approach to learning.



It is crucial that individuals read the introduction to the assessment. It will assist them in providing the most accurate responses possible and, correspondingly, result in a more reliable evaluation of their preferences. Additionally, just prior to starting the *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* survey, students can be briefed on a few things to ensure they receive optimal results. This should only take five minutes or less.

In brief, students should be advised to:

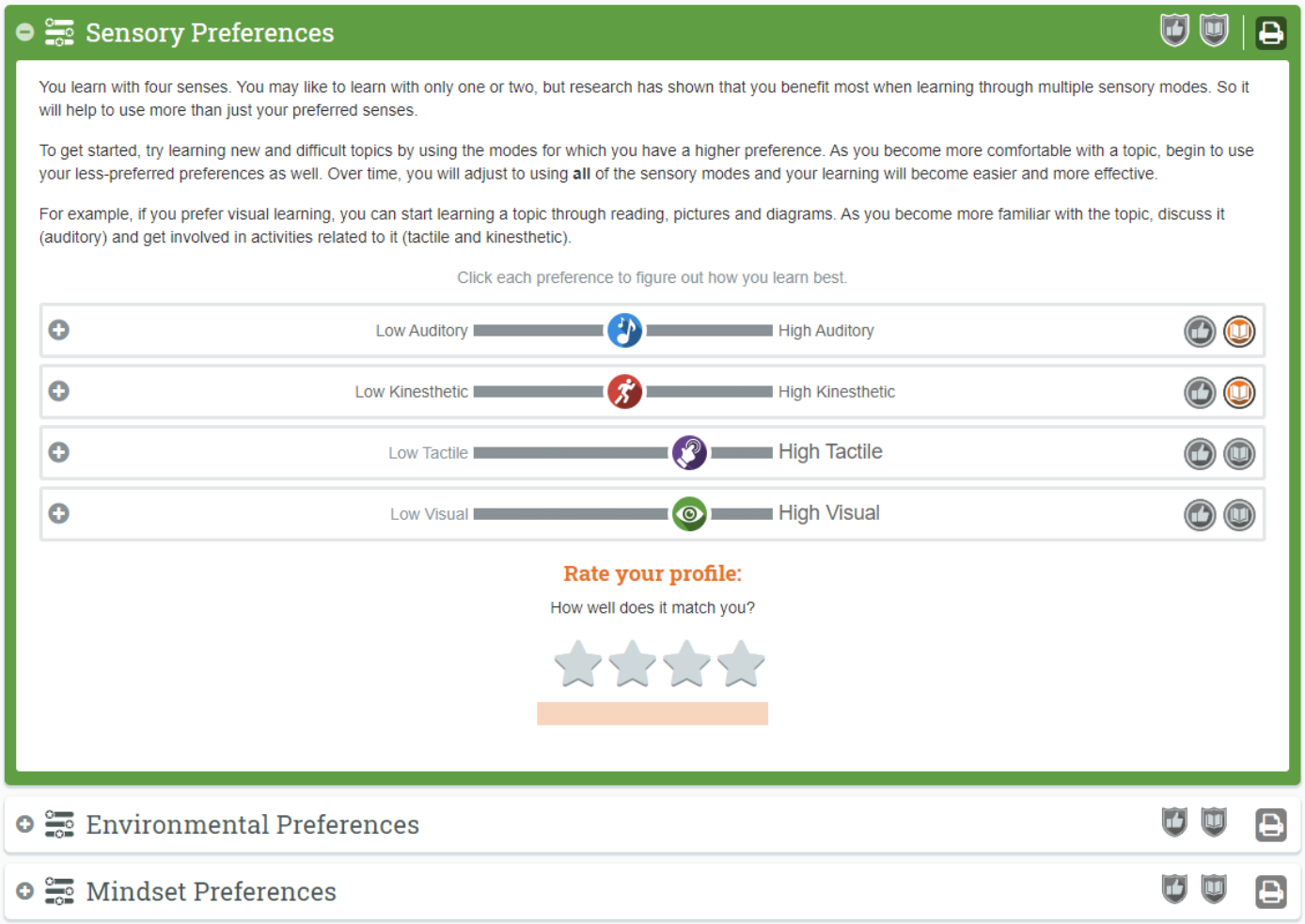
- Relax. This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. Explain it is a survey of their personal preferences, to help them understand how they learn and work best.
- Be completely honest with responses. They should not respond with what they think is appropriate or best for all students. They should respond with their true preference.
- Be aware that some statements may seem to be very similar or opposite to others. This is intentional and assists with the accuracy of the results. They should continue to be honest with every response.

Tell students that their individual responses are considered private and should not be discussed or shared during the exercise. They can go back and change responses to previous statements while completing the survey. However, once they have submitted their response to the final question, the results are locked.

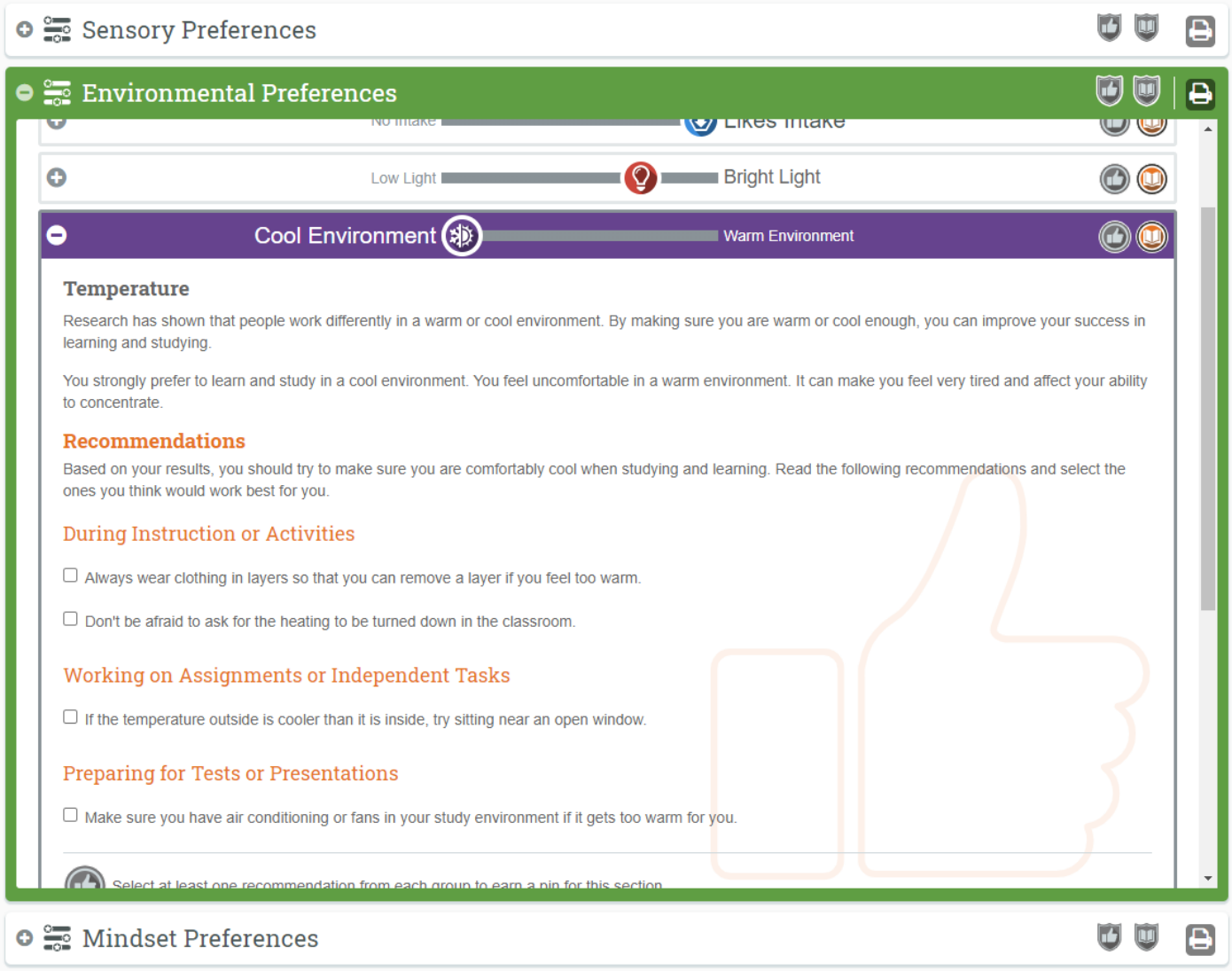
The student's responses to the survey are analyzed to determine where on the scale the student is for each style. For each style, the students may be at one end of the scale or the other, or they may be in the middle, which means they have no significant preference for that style.

The Results

Upon completion of the *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* assessment, the student's results are scored and they receive a report based on their responses to the questions. The results generated for the student will display their level of each preference in a chart. The strongest preferences are shown along the continuum, from low to high. Preferences are grouped into three categories: **Sensory**, **Environmental**, and **Mindset**.



By clicking the + sign in each of the headings, students can expand the section and receive recommendations that relate to utilizing that preference.



Using the Report with Students

Once students have their results they should prioritize which tips and strategies they want to implement over the next few weeks. Tips under the students' strongest preferences (closest to a preference) are a good starting place, as they have the potential to provide the most benefit.

The following information provides some general guidance on implementing the strategies in the report. The guidance is divided up among the three **Sensory**, **Environmental** and **Mindset** categories.

Category	Style	General Guidelines for Implementing Results
Sensory	Auditory	While students may have a preference for one or two sensory types, research has shown that students benefit most from using multiple sensory learning styles. A good approach is for students to start learning new and difficult topics using their preferred style(s). As they become more comfortable with a topic, they can begin to use their less preferred sensory styles. This will help develop their abilities in all sensory styles.
	Kinesthetic	
	Tactile	
	Visual	
Environmental	Intake	These styles are simple preferences that don't require any development like sensory styles do. For these styles, students should simply make modifications to their learning environments to accommodate their existing preferences. They should also be aware, however, that sometimes they may be in situations where they *cannot* make certain modifications.
	Light	
	Temperature	
	Mobility	
	Sound	
	Design	
	Time of Day	
Mindset	Collaborative or Independent	While students may prefer *either* learning and working in a collaborative way, *or* independently, they should develop their abilities for both. When learning something new and difficult, they should try to go with their preference. As they become more comfortable with a topic, they should try to learn in the opposite way. If a student starts with no strong preference either way, that student should alternate learning styles as it suits the situation.
	Teacher Motivation	Neither end of the scale has any advantage over the other. As best as possible, students should be accommodated based on their preference and do NOT need to change their position on the scale. Teacher-motivated students benefit from plenty of feedback and interaction with their teachers. Low teacher-motivated students benefit from minimal interaction with teachers. *However*, students at the low end of the scale may have issues because of a negative past experience. This scale is not designed to measure or address this type of issue. Something like this should be addressed independently of this assessment.

Mindset cont'd	Structure	While students may prefer *either* learning and working in a structured way, *or* in a more open style, they should work toward developing their abilities for both. When learning something new and difficult, they should try to go with their preference. As they become more comfortable with a topic, they should try to learn in the opposite way. If a student starts with no strong preference either way, that student should alternate their learning style as it suits the situation.
	Focus	More focus is an advantage for academic performance. The tips in the report provide guidance for developing more focus. Developing focus occurs when students clearly identify their priorities. They should also identify what tends to distract them and create plans to avoid those distractions. It is important to remember, however, that it is possible for a student to have too much focus on academic studies. Research shows that some leisure time is important for brain development in the areas of creativity.
	Self-Motivation	Higher self-motivation is an advantage for academic performance. The tips in the report provide guidance for developing more self-motivation. The key to developing self-motivation is for students to find something they care about in their studies and to make the connection between what they learn in school and what their goals are. If students clearly see how school can help them accomplish their goals, they will be more self-motivated to learn.

Guided Activity

Use the following activity, **Applying Learning Styles**, to help students begin to learn how to apply the strategies and advice described in their reports.

Applying Learning Styles

Learning Outcome(s):

Learn how to apply specific learning and productivity strategies to school situations

Time Needed: 60 minutes

Prerequisites: Completion of *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity*

Materials Needed: Applying Learning Styles handout - attached

Each student should have their printed *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* report with them (or access to a computer that can display it).

Introductory Activity:

Tell students they will be using their *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* results to learn how to apply the strategies and advice described in the report. They will be given school-based scenarios in which to apply their learning and productivity styles.

At this point you can decide whether you want students to do this individually, in small groups, as a class, or some combination thereof. If you are using groups, styles will differ - the assignment could require each group to produce varied strategies while identifying which learning and productivity styles each of those strategies would suit.

Core Activities:

Distribute the Learning Styles handout and give the students enough time to complete it (approximately 30-40 minutes). Allow enough time at the end of class to share answers and discuss the rationale behind their answers.

Variations/Extensions:

Have each student commit to actually carrying out one or two of their strategies in any of their courses over the next two weeks and to be prepared to talk about the results of using their strategies.

Applying Learning Styles: Handout

How would you use the knowledge of your learning and productivity styles to deal with the following learning situations? Your instructor may use this exercise for a group activity and class discussion. Record your answers on a separate sheet.

1. You have just been given an assignment that requires you to research a topic and write at least five pages on it.
2. You have to study for a challenging math test.
3. You have to write up a lab report for a science class. The report must include drawings or diagrams related to the experiment.
4. You are taking a required course that is taught in an open, unstructured manner. It requires you to take initiative and to make decisions on what and how you learn.
5. You have been assigned a group project to design a small business.
6. Your P.E. class is starting a unit on gymnastics in which you have to create and perform a gymnastics routine.
7. A new construction project has started next to where you live. A lot of noise comes from there during the hours you normally study and do your schoolwork.
8. You have to prepare a five-minute oral presentation for your history class.
9. In the corner of the classroom where you normally sit, the ceiling light is out and cannot be fixed for the next two weeks.

Implementation and Support

Before You Begin

Step 1: Prepare Yourself

Start this step about three to four weeks prior to the time you plan to have students complete the assessment.

- Take time to familiarize yourself with *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* and its underlying theory. Use the information in this handbook to learn about learning styles and productivity preferences and how the assessment can help your students develop an awareness and understanding of their preferences.
- Access the assessment and try it yourself. It takes less than 20 minutes to complete the questions and scan through the report.
- Consider, and discuss with colleagues, ideas for following up after students complete the assessment. The information in this handbook can assist with guidance and suggestions.
- This is also an opportunity to test your Internet connection and ensure there are no access issues with the website.

Step 2: Prepare Students

Start this step about one week prior to the time you plan to have students complete the assessment.

- Students should be given a very brief (no more than five to 10 minutes) explanation of the purpose of the assessment and what it measures. Allow students to ask questions about the assessment *before* they take it.
- Advise students that:

  ✓ All results are equal; ***no*** choices are any "better" than others.

  ✓ They should answer with their true feelings; they should ***not*** try to answer the way they think they are *supposed* to answer.

  ✓ They should respond in a way that reflects how they feel when they have *any* option, ***not*** how they feel in school, at work, or when others are judging their actions.

  ✓ They should avoid completing the assessment when they are unwell, very tired, or emotional.

  ✓ To help them answer accurately, they should think about what they *have actually done* in the past rather than what they *would do* in the future.

  ✓ They should remember that answering honestly and carefully is the best way of ensuring they will get accurate results—and that these results can really help them.

For further help and advice on getting started, see:

AchieveWorks Strategies for Assessment Implementation

https://www.humanesources.com/AchieveWorks-implementation/

AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity **Criteria Checklist**

https://assets.humanesources.com/materials/AWLP-CriteriaChecklist-withIntro.pdf

To discover how *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* helps students develop the competencies outlined in the American School Counselor Association **(ASCA) Mindsets & Behaviors** standards, see the grid at:

https://assets.humanesources.com/materials/HeS_ASCA_Mindsets&Behaviors.pdf

To learn how the sections in *AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity* can be mapped to the **CASEL Core SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Competencies**, see the crosswalk at:

https://assets.humanesources.com/materials/CASEL_SEL_AchieveWorks_Crosswalk.pdf

For a selection of **guided activities** for the AchieveWorks assessments, see:

https://www.humanesources.com/AchieveWorks-guided-activities/

For more information and support, visit our **support portal** at:

https://support.humanesources.com

Appendix: Additional Resource Materials

Websites

Listed below is a selection of websites that provide additional information about learning styles and productivity preferences:

IEQ and Productivity: Is there a link?
Linking environmental conditions to productivity
http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/Conferences/EECE_IEQ%20and%20Productivity_ABBR.pdf

The Science of How Temperature and Lighting Impact Our Productivity
Environment's impact on productivity
https://buffer.com/resources/the-science-of-how-room-temperature-and-lighting-affects-our-productivity

Are Learning Styles Invalid? (Hint: No!)
The validity of incorporating learning styles into instructional design
https://www.engr.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/drive/10S5mLkGElsN8NTsYgOe_f0taEdlSpbJD/2010-LS_Validity(On-Course).pdf

The Neural Correlates of Visual and Verbal Cognitive Styles
Correlation with modality-specific neural activity in visual and verbal brain regions
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2697032/

Articles

Andrews, R.H. (1991). Insights into education: An elementary principal's perspective. Hands on approaches to learning styles: Practical approaches to successful schooling. New Wilmington, PA: The Association for the Advancement of International Education, 50-52.

Braio, A., Dunn, R., Beasley, M.T., Quinn, P., & Buchanan, K. (in-press). Effects of Incremental Implementation of Learning-Styles Strategies on Urban Low-Achievers' Structural Analysis and Attitude Test Scores. Journal of Educational Research.

Dunn, R. (1990, Winter). Teaching underachievers through their learning style strengths. International Education. New Wilmington, PA: Association for the Advancement of International Education, 16(52), 5-7.

Dunn, R. (1995). Teaching students to teach themselves. International Education. Wilmington, PA: Association for the Advancement of International Education, 23(75), 4-6, 14.

Gardiner, B. (1986). An experimental analysis of selected teaching strategies implemented at specific times of the school day and their effects on the social studies achievement test scores and attitudes of fourth-grade, low achieving students in an urban school setting. (Doctoral dissertation, St. John's University, Dissertation Abstracts International, 47, 3307A.

Hodges, H. (1985). An analysis of the relationships among preferences for a formal/informal design, one element of seventh- and eighth-grade students in remedial mathematics classes in a New York City junior high school. (Doctoral dissertation, St. John's University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 45, 2791A.