

40 Professional development and finding a job

A Warm-up

Tick the three things that will most influence you in looking for a teaching job.

- Earning lots of money
- Staying near family and friends
- Travelling
- Learning about a new culture and a new language
- Working in a school with a good reputation
- Gaining any kind of teaching experience

Now walk around the room and find someone who has chosen the same three things.

D Professional development

Research suggests that different people are disposed to different orientations on the learning cycle. We can characterise these dispositions in this way:

the activist:	'I'll try anything once.'
the reflector:	'I'd like time to think about it.'
the theorist:	'What's the theory behind it?'
the pragmatist:	'How can I apply this in practice?'

(adapted from *The Manual of Learning Styles*
Honey and Mumford)

In terms of your future teacher development, your learning style will influence the way you respond to different learning opportunities. For example, an activist would probably respond positively to this situation:

Your school has been asked by a leading ELT publisher to pilot some new teaching materials that they are trialling. They are looking for volunteers to try out the materials in their classes ...

However, the activist may feel less enthusiastic about this aspect of the deal:

... Teachers will be asked to complete a questionnaire and write a short report on their experience using the materials.

- 3 Read the text above and decide which of the following teacher development activities would suit an activist, a reflector, a theorist, and a pragmatist:
 - a keeping a teaching journal, or web-log (blog)
 - b learning a foreign language
 - c reading and discussing articles about language learning
 - d asking learners to complete feedback questionnaires
 - e observing other teachers
 - f team-teaching
 - g collaborative planning and materials production
 - h attending conferences
 - i being observed by a director of studies
 - j conducting a small-scale research study
 - k joining an on-line discussion group that focuses on a particular aspect of teaching
 - l taking special responsibility for an aspect of the school's teaching programme
- 4 Which of the above activities would suit *you*? What does this say about your preferred learning style?

E Practical steps

Work in pairs or groups. Prepare some questions about any of the following topics. How can you find out the answers?

- professional teaching organisations
- professional newspapers, journals, etc.
- websites, discussion groups
- books about teaching/language
- Diploma/MA courses

REFLECTION

Draw up an 'action plan' for your first six months of teaching. Then work in groups and compare your plans.