

Communicating in Colours – Questionnaire

This questionnaire is an adaptation and refined conflation of many different and simple ‘personality style’ surveys and is made freely available.

The emphasis is on how individuals communicate and the identification of their preferences for both given and received information. It is designed to specifically help Learning and Development professionals improve their effectiveness with learners, across different circumstances.

It is not, was never intended to be – and probably never could be – a scientifically proven system with empirical evidence to prove its reliability.

However, its usefulness has been anecdotally supported over an extended period of time.

Instructions

Choose **one** description from each row that you feel best describes you as an individual and put a tick in the relevant box. Answer honestly and quickly.

A	B	C	D
<input type="checkbox"/> Moves fast and uses angular, definite gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> Moves quickly and uses large expressive gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> Moves calmly and smoothly, any gestures flow	<input type="checkbox"/> Moves slowly and carefully, gestures are controlled
<input type="checkbox"/> Wants results	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants prestige	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants friendship	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants security
<input type="checkbox"/> Decisive	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious
<input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined about time & critical of those who aren't	<input type="checkbox"/> Undisciplined about time – may be late	<input type="checkbox"/> More flexible about time, gives allowances to others	<input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined about time & worries if others aren't
<input type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic	<input type="checkbox"/> Fun loving	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic
<input type="checkbox"/> Dresses conservatively & with muted style	<input type="checkbox"/> Dresses colourfully & flamboyantly	<input type="checkbox"/> Dresses tastefully & informally	<input type="checkbox"/> Dresses neatly and traditionally
<input type="checkbox"/> Candid	<input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/> Co-operative	<input type="checkbox"/> Thorough
<input type="checkbox"/> Efficient	<input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal	<input type="checkbox"/> Prudent
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal workspace tidy and functional	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal workspace open, bold, & disorganized	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal workspace informal with family pictures	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal workspace tidy and organized
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing	<input type="checkbox"/> Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/> Logical
<input type="checkbox"/> Fact-orientated	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> People and team orientated	<input type="checkbox"/> Detached and factual
<input type="checkbox"/> Active leisure time, often competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Social leisure time with friendly competition	<input type="checkbox"/> Social leisure time with close family or friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure time spent alone or with selected friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Disinterested in stories or jokes	<input type="checkbox"/> Tells stories and jokes	<input type="checkbox"/> Listens enthusiastically to stories and jokes	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to stick to facts but tolerant of others

A	B	C	D
<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses facts and opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> Draws attention to him/herself	<input type="checkbox"/> The larger the group, the quieter	<input type="checkbox"/> Chooses words carefully and with authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Intense eye contact when making a point	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes eye contact and uses facial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes eye contact and smiles	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses eye contact and facial expression sparingly
<input type="checkbox"/> Vocally intense, even when speaking quietly	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks louder than most	<input type="checkbox"/> Soft voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Softly spoken but authoritative
<input type="checkbox"/> Often speaks rapidly	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks rapidly	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks at a measured pace	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks at a appropriate speed for the subject
<input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing is direct and down to earth	<input type="checkbox"/> May wander from the topic	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses opinions or proposals tentatively	<input type="checkbox"/> May stop and start in order to make a point precisely
<input type="checkbox"/> Takes calculated risks with ease	<input type="checkbox"/> Explores fearlessly	<input type="checkbox"/> Wants guarantees	<input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis is on quality and precision
<input type="checkbox"/> Wants decisions quickly	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiates projects easily but finds completion harder	<input type="checkbox"/> Team worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Researcher, focused on detail
<input type="checkbox"/> Gestures are definite but limited in variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Gestures are large and free flowing	<input type="checkbox"/> Gestures are flowing and non-threatening	<input type="checkbox"/> Gestures are disciplined and precise
<input type="checkbox"/> Interactions tend to be brief and sometimes abrupt	<input type="checkbox"/> Interactions are flowing and dramatic	<input type="checkbox"/> Waits for others to finish before interacting	<input type="checkbox"/> Waits for others to finish and then speaks with planned precision
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers brief reading material	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading material needs to capture attention quickly	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys reading at all levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys reading, especially detailed and challenging works
<input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes lack of professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes routine	<input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes conflict and debate	<input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes missing details or mistakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Little emotional expression in voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Greatest range of vocal inflection, tone and volume	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate range of vocal inflection	<input type="checkbox"/> Little variation in vocal inflection
<input type="checkbox"/> Often looks in a bad mood – which is actually concentration	<input type="checkbox"/> Moods fluctuate and are unpredictable	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed, mostly in a good mood	<input type="checkbox"/> Looks in control and measured
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspires and intimidates in equal measure	<input type="checkbox"/> Leads others through verbal dexterity	<input type="checkbox"/> Works with others; may lead or follow	<input type="checkbox"/> Respected by others but often misunderstood
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong fact-based opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong intuition-based opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> Opinions are often a synthesis of others' ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Opinions are expressed and then justified
<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column A	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column B	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column C	<input type="checkbox"/> Total Column D

When you've finished making your choices, add up each column and put those figures in the total boxes above.

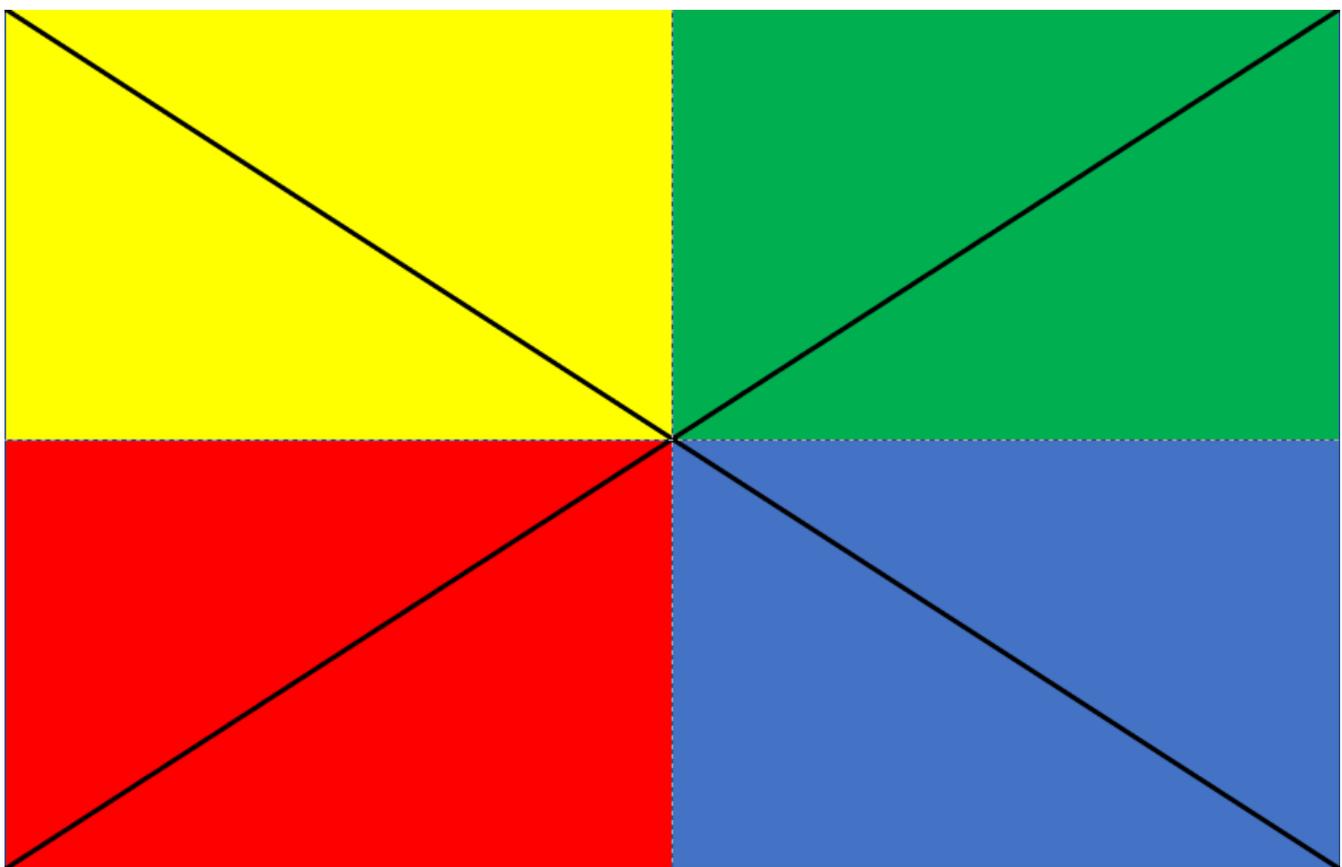
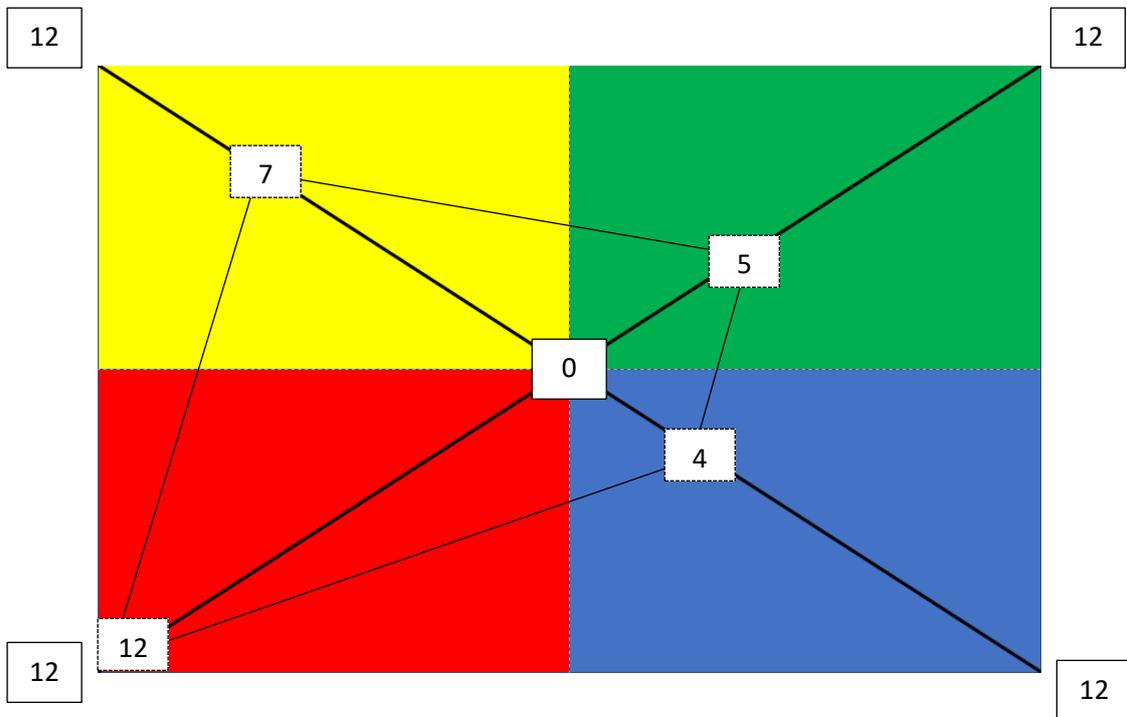
All four totals should add up to 28. You can now plot and review your results, as described next.

The black diagonal line in each coloured quadrant are your scales, which you will create so that the final result is as visual as possible. The centre point of the diagram is 0 and the corner of each rectangle should be the highest of the questionnaire column totals. Plot all four column totals and then join them together to see your distribution across the four colours.

For example:

If results are: A = 12 (highest score, so this forms the limit of the scales) B = 7 C = 5 D = 4

Plotted results would be:



Communication Styles

It needs to be stressed that these are short sketches of key points, focused on their relevance to training situations, and are not intended to be full descriptions of any particular communication style.

RED – Descriptor: Boss (see column A of the questionnaire)

Truly RED individuals want facts, figures, and concise justification. They may ask many challenging questions (you can often feel interrogated). They want short, direct answers with as little detail as possible whilst still being comprehensive (a demanding requirement!). Although the descriptor is 'Boss', they may not be a senior person at all; however, they tend to dominate groups if allowed. If asking for written information they might typically request a 'bulleted list' or 'one pager'.

The good news about REDS is that, once you have their respect and they understand (and agree with) what you're trying to achieve, their innate wish to succeed will mean that they are actually great learners and very appreciative of your efforts (and will publicise this to others). They're also decisive and focused on getting results and can therefore be instrumental in successful outcomes to group activities.

The downside of REDS is that they can be assertive to the point of aggression and have little patience with others who wish to take more time to consider points raised. This can be softened by giving them extra (controlled) responsibility or appealing to their sense of self. They can actually surprise you by 'turning on the charm' and working very effectively with others, as long as they are secure in the knowledge that their efforts are appreciated and worthwhile.

REDS who are softened by other colours can be truly inspirational to others and quickly gain their admiration. Use this and try not to feel threatened!

YELLOW – Descriptor: Entertainer (see column B of the questionnaire)

There are some similarities between REDS and YELLOWS that can become very competitive in a group situation as both want attention. YELLOWS also want key facts and short explanations. However, they do respond extremely well to experiential situations, particularly if they can take centre stage and tell their own stories. (If you need to interrupt or close down a YELLOW in order to move on, you may find that asking them to 'hold that thought' and thanking them for their contribution will give you control without offending. Try to return to their ideas later, if appropriate and time permits.)

They can lighten an otherwise serious group and provide much needed humour. Fire their imagination and control it to your own needs and you will have an asset to your face-to-face training. Like REDS, they will tell others of their experiences, both good and bad.

YELLOWS also wish to succeed and thrive on recognition. They have great energy and produce ideas in abundance – the difficulty may be in getting them to work through concepts to logical conclusions. They are generally resilient so you can push for this using open questions and setting challenges.

The downside of YELLOWS is that they can become easily distracted and demotivated; because of their 'big' personalities this can affect other more sensitive members of a group. Keep them focused with encouragement and appropriate praise. If they need to read longer texts YELLOWS will appreciate short paragraphs and periodical summaries.

GREEN – Descriptor: Friend (see column C of the questionnaire)

GREENS are social people with friends and family being their most important focus. They may share personal information to an extraordinary extent (if allowed). They view everyone as potential friends, wanting to be liked, and therefore often take a back seat until they feel confident to act without offence.

GREENS generally prefer facts to be presented gently rather than boldly and can be intimidated if they perceive others to be 'cleverer' or more verbally agile as they often need time to absorb new information.

GREENS are dependable, loyal, and supportive of others. Often easily influenced by stronger personalities, they need encouragement to think for themselves and understand their own intrinsic value. They have a strong sense of 'justice' and may surprise you by strongly defending others, which may feel 'out of character'. They are co-operative in a training situation, wanting to learn as well as they can, and will persevere if things don't make sense immediately.

As GREENS are 'people pleasers' you may need to consider carefully how you measure their learning success. They will often commit information to short-term memory (to achieve the results they perceive others want them to) and require repetition and consolidation to fully assimilate and apply new knowledge or skills.

BLUE – Descriptor: Scientist (see column D of the questionnaire)

BLUES are often acknowledged as 'experts in their field' by colleagues. They are often 'revered' and seen as a little remote because of their superior knowledge. They are thinkers who consider every possible angle before making a decision. They gather facts and figures and analyse carefully, checking for accuracy and looking from different viewpoints. They require details and justification and will often be those who actually read any Resources you attach to eLearning modules. Appreciative of effort, precision, and order, they can be completely dismissive if they perceive information to be loose or badly thought-through.

BLUES will pay attention as long as you appeal to their logical nature, switching off if they feel points are being 'dumbed down'. However, they bring measure and diplomacy to the party and can often give others a unique insight – they don't have to be boring (and can often show a real sense of humour) – exhibiting genuine patience as long as others are trying to understand the information under discussion and paying attention to their explanations.

Like REDS, BLUES will keep you on your toes intellectually; however BLUES will often express their initial doubts with diplomacy and in private, rather than seeking to undermine you publicly. Answer their questions successfully and you will have model learners; fail to convince and you'll lose both their respect and willingness to participate (they can be very stubborn).