



CHAPTER 5: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Review the learning environments discussed in Chapter 5. Use the following chart as a reminder of some of the key features of each. Then see the tips below to adapt your virtual classroom to your preferred learning environment.

	Externalized	Internalized	Regulated	Flexible
Is it important to you to interact with other people?	X			
Do you like to talk through the learning process?	X			
Do you enjoy hands-on experience?	X			
Do you need private time to process your thoughts?		X		
Do you seek a mental retreat?		X		
Is it important to you to work independently?		X		
Do you like structure?			X	
Do you seek details, facts, and logic?			X	

Do you prefer a step-by-step approach?			X	
Is it important to you to express yourself?				X
Do you seek the essence of issues rather than isolated facts?				X
Do you prefer trial and error learning to a step-by-step approach?				X

Excelling in Online Learning Environments

Finding the right learning environment is as important as choosing a field of study. Your personality and learning style should be coordinated with the appropriate learning environment. In the right environment, a student can flourish.

The Externalized Learning Environment

The externalized learning environment is a place to interact with people and things. Online students who prefer an externalized learning environment should try:

- Joining a social network like MySpace or FaceBook
- Interacting in a chat room or on a bulletin board
- Getting involved in group projects
- Asking the instructors for opportunities to study in the field

The Internalized Learning Environment

The internalized learning environment emphasizes private time for thinking. It supports the generation of concepts and ideas. Online students who prefer an internalized learning environment should try:

- Independent or self-directed study programs
- Downloading and listening to lectures
- Reading activities
- Writing activities, such as blogging

The Regulated Learning Environment

The regulated learning environment is a structured, step-by-step environment. Online students who prefer a regulated learning environment should try:

- Following instructions as laid out by the instructor
- Outlining and memorizing important information
- Creating detailed charts and graphs
- Keeping in regular contact with the instructor

The Flexible Learning Environment

The flexible learning environment gives you room to express yourself as an individual. Creative activity and originality are encouraged. Online students who prefer a regulated learning environment should try:

- A program emphasizing spontaneity over deadlines
- A program emphasizing creative expression
- Trial and error experimentation
- Asking the instructor “why?”