

**An investigation into the learning styles of University of Southampton Medical School entrants and outcomes of first year primary BM exams.**

**Miss V.Haley and Miss C. Bugler - June 2004**

This mini-project aims to determine whether students entering the University of Southampton Bachelor of Medicine programme are preferentially from one learning style group, whether their learning styles change throughout the first year and how learning style compares with success in the BM primary exam and demographic data.

**Progress**

At the start of the academic year all new entrants were required to complete a Honey and Mumford learning style inventory (LSI) as part of the Interprofessional Learning Programme. As part of the LTSN mini-project the students were asked to provide copies of their LSI scores along with consent to access their personal files.

109 students out of the BM1 cohort of 219 provided details of their LSI score and consent, a total of 49.77% of the year.

The percentage of students at the beginning of the year showing a preference in each of the 4 learning styles groups (activist, theorist, pragmatist and reflector) are:

Activist – 30.28% (n=33)

Theorist – 15.60% (n=17)

Reflector – 40.37% (n=44)

Pragmatist – 4.59% (n=4)

Equal preference for more than one learning style – 9.17% (n=10)

At the end of their first year, the students were asked to complete the same learning styles inventory, give demographic details and consent to use their BM primary results for the research.

165 students completed the LSI and gave consent, a total of 75.34% of the year.

The percentage of students at the end of the first year showing a preference in each of the 4 learning styles groups (activist, theorist, pragmatist and reflector) are:

Activist – 38.18% (n=63)

Theorist – 13.93% (n=23)

Reflector – 30.30% (n=50)

Pragmatist – 4.24% (n=7)

Equal preference for more than one learning style – 13.33% (n=22)

Of the 109 students that completed the LSI at the start of the year, 91 completed it at the end. Of these 52.75% (n = 48) had a different learning style at the end of the year whilst 47.25% (n = 43) had remained the same.

Whilst we are awaiting the BM primary results and demographic data, initial analysis shows that over 40% of students entering the BM course at the University of Southampton had a preference as reflectors. At the end of the first year the predominant group has changed to activist, with a significant number of students changing their preference.