

# Learning Styles

How do you learn best? Have you ever thought that you might be more effective in your classes if you fully understood the methods for learning and studying that work best for your learning style? This section is designed to allow you to assess your learning style and provide some ideas for strategies that will help you to be more effective in the classroom. Remember, we all learn in different ways but everyone can learn effectively.

## Assessing Your Learning Style

The first step in the process is to assess your learning style. Please take one of the following inventories. These inventories are meant to give you valuable feedback about your learning style but should not be considered diagnostic or predictive.

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>

## Learning Style Strategies

Once you have completed one of the inventories (or both!), you'll have an indication of your learning style preferences. Though most of us are able to learn in all of the modes, we tend to have preferences for certain styles. The following information may then be helpful as you work to modify how you study, prepare for exams, read your assignments or take notes during lectures in relation to your preferred learning style.

### VISUAL LEARNERS

- Organize work and living space to avoid distractions.
- Sit in the front of the room to avoid distraction and away from doors or windows where action takes place. Sit away from wall maps or bulletin boards.
- Use neatly organized or typed material.
- Use visual association, visual imagery, written repetition, flash cards, and clustering strategies for improved memory.
- Reconstruct images in different ways - try different spatial arrangements and take advantage of blank spaces on the page.
- Use note pads, Post-Its, to-do lists, and other forms of reminders.
- Use organizational format outlining for recording notes. Use underlining, highlighting in different colors, symbols, flow charts, graphs or pictures in your notes.
- Practice turning visual cues back into words as you prepare for exams.
- Allow sufficient time for planning and recording thoughts when doing problem-solving tasks.

- Use test preparation strategies that emphasize organization of information and visual encoding and recall.
- Participate actively in class or group activities.
- Develop written or pictorial outlines of responses before answering essay questions.

#### AUDITORY LEARNERS

- Work in quiet areas to reduce distractions, avoiding areas with conversation, music, and television.
- Sit away from doors or windows where noises may enter the classroom.
- Rehearse information orally.
- Attend lectures and tutorials regularly.
- Discuss topics with other students, professors and GTAs. Ask others to hear your understanding of the material.
- Use mnemonics, rhymes, jingles, and auditory repetition through tape recording to improve memory.
- Practice verbal interaction to improve motivation and self-monitoring.
- Use tape recorders to document lectures and for reading materials.
- Remember to examine illustrations in textbooks and convert them into verbal descriptions.
- Read the directions for tests or assignments aloud, or have someone read them to you, especially if the directions are long and complicated.
- Remind yourself to review details.
- Use time managers and translate written appointment reminders into verbal cues.
- Use verbal brainstorming and tape recording writing and proofing.
- Leave spaces in your lecture notes for later recall and 'filing'. Expand your notes by talking with others and collecting notes from the textbook.
- Read your notes aloud.
- Practice writing your answers using old exams and speak your answers.

#### READING/WRITING LEARNERS

- Use a combination of handouts, textbook and lecture notes when studying.
- Rewrite the ideas and principles into other words.
- Make lists and organize them into categories and sections.
- Turn charts and flows into words.
- Seek to explain pictures and examples in words.
- Seek out professors who use words well and provide lots of information in their lectures.

- Read and write your notes again and again.
- Organize diagrams and graphs into statements.
- Imagine your lists arranged as multiple choice questions and distinguish one from the other.
- Make use of extra information recommended by instructors such as manuals, dictionaries, and glossaries.

#### KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

- Keep verbal discourse short and to the point.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Use all of your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing.
- Use direct involvement, physical manipulation, imagery, and "hands on" activities to improve motivation, interest, and memory.
- Organize information into the steps that were used to physically complete a task.
- Seek out courses that have laboratories, field trips, etc. and lecturers who give real life examples.
- Use case studies and applications (example) to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Allow for physical action in solving problems.
- Read or summarize directions, especially if they are lengthy and complicated, to discourage starting a task without instructions.
- Use taped reading materials.
- Use practice, play acting, and modeling to prepare for tests.
- Allow for physical movement and periodic breaks during tests, while reading, or while composing written assignments.
- Role play the exam situation.
- Teach the material to someone else.
- Write practice answers, paragraphs or essays.

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