

Learning Styles – Accelerate Your Capacity to Learn

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There are three basic types of learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. The style by which an individual learns can be used to further enhance one's capacity to learn; for, individuals who comprehend, focus and adapt to their own particular learning style have a greater chance for success when learning new things.

Visual learners learn things by sight or by watching demonstrations; “however, they must see the entire picture of what they are to learn before they begin.” (Kent State University) For auditory learners, they learn by discussing materials or attending a lecture or training in which they listen to a speaker. Finally, kinesthetic learners learn well when physical activity; such as, an activity that allows them to learn by working with their hands. Kinesthetic learners may also find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time.

By acknowledging and accepting your particular learning style, you can accelerate your learning process by focusing your learning activities on methods that are related to your particular style. The image of a text document, in Figure 1, is a questionnaire that will help you to identify your particular learning style.

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Figure 1: Learning Style Assessment

Learning Styles from the Reading/Writing Lab at Trenton State College

DIRECTIONS: Check the statements that apply to you. Use the scoring key at the end of the inventory to find out what your primary learning style is.

- 1. z I keep a written record of homework, things to do, etc.
- 2. x I would rather have someone read instructions to me aloud, step by step when I assemble something.

- 3. y I like to build things or do crafts and handiwork.
- 4. y I am an out-of-doors person.
- 5. x I keep up with the news by listening to the radio.
- 6. z I can put things together correctly by following written directions and/or illustrations.

- 7. x I talk to myself.
- 8. y I can't sit still for too long without becoming restless.
- 9. z I usually read billboards and signs when driving or riding.
- 10. x I would learn more if I could hear textbook material on a cassette rather than read the book myself.

- 11. z I like to rewrite notes or write summaries to prepare for tests.
- 12. y I could learn the touch typing system easily.
- 13. y Keeping physically fit is not difficult for me.
- 14. x In my Spare time I like to talk to others.
- 15. z I can learn zip codes or phone numbers best if I write them down a few times.
- 16. x It helps me to "talk out" my problems aloud.
- 17. x In my spare time I like to do physical activities.
- 18. x I can easily concentrate on what others are saying.
- 19. x I could learn to play a musical instrument "by ear" faster than by reading music.
- 20. z I prefer a map to oral directions when trying to find my way to an unfamiliar place.
- 21. y I learn new physical skills rapidly.
- 22. z I prefer a written job description and directions from an employer.
- 23. x I prefer that my employer or instructor gives me oral directions.
- 24. y When walking through stores, I like to feel the textures of fabrics or other materials.
- 25. z I can easily follow written recipes when I cook.
- 26. x I prefer to stop and ask directions when in unfamiliar places.
- 27. x I learn zip codes and phone numbers best when I say them aloud a few times.
- 28. y I am, generally speaking, well coordinated.
- 29. z When waiting around for appointments, etc., I tend to read anything that is around.
- 30. z I like to read in my spare time.
- 31. x I can remember names and places by rhyming words and sounds.
- 32. y I doodle and draw on available paper.

Add up the number of Xs, Ys, and Zs.

- X – Auditory
- Y – Kinesthetic/Tactile
- Z – Visual

The largest number is your primary learning style.

(Image courtesy of Southeastern Community College)

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A research report initiated by the U.S. Department of Education validates the importance of understanding and adapting to a particular learning style. “Research shows that student motivation and performance improves when instruction is adapted to student learning preferences and styles.” (Miller, 2001) Although this report is focused on educating teachers in how to teach students, comprehension of ones own learning style is a fantastic asset to any student, in any educational setting.

The following list is an asset for any individual who would like to accelerate there particular learning style by using relevant methods of learning.

- Auditory Learners:

Identify sounds related to an educational experience.

(What did you hear while listening to the experience?)

- Visual Learners:

Keep a sharp, clear picture of the experience.

(Did you make a picture in your head of the experience?)

- Kinesthetic Learners:

Develop a strong feeling towards the experience.

(How do you feel about the experience?)

(List courtesy of the University of South Dakota)

All students have struggled to learn about a particular subject or concept. Many of those students may have felt that they simply were not capable of comprehending the material set

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before them. Although this may or may not be the case, they may have also utilized methods not related to their particular learning style. The amount of research data available related to learning styles is overwhelming. Obviously, this validates the benefit of utilizing auditory, visual and kinesthetic learning styles in an educational setting. Considering this, it certainly is worth one's time and effort to understand your own learning style. With just a little effort, you may be able to: improve your own capacity to learn, improve the speed at which you learn, and improve the level of satisfaction you receive while learning.

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