

Learning Styles and Ways to Support Them

Have you ever wondered why you have difficulty learning from a particular instructor, whereas another seems to explain things in just the right way? To put it simply, your learning style (or learning preference) is the way you tend to learn best. It involves your preferred method of taking in, organizing, and making sense of information. Learning styles do not tell us about a person's abilities or intelligence, but they can help us understand why some tasks seem easier for us than others.

The ideas are not meant to be the absolute best strategy for each student in all situations. Rather, if you're looking to improve your effectiveness as a student, choose the learning preference category that you feel best matches the way you like to learn (e.g. visually), and check to see if you follow the suggested strategies (e.g. enhancing visual learning). Then, look at the strategies for the other two learning styles, and try to implement some of these ideas into your repertoire as well.

If My Preference is Hearing (Auditory)	
When I am reading I should...	In the classroom I should...
✓ Repeat information silently in my head or out loud.	✓ Listen to information and instructions.
✓ Study with a partner & take turns reading to each other.	✓ Sit towards the front of the room.
✓ Work in quiet areas.	✓ Sit away from sources of noise.
✓ If I use music to study choose something without words.	✓ Repeat information silently to myself.
✓ Use rhymes and jingles to help with key points.	✓ Repeat information to myself as a quiet "mumble"
✓ Talk to myself about pictures and diagrams.	
✓ Read instructions & questions out loud.	

If My Preference is Seeing (Visual)	
When I am reading I should...	In the classroom I should...
✓ Reduce visual distractions in my study space	✓ Watch for key words written on the board, PowerPoint slides or transparencies to help organize notes.
✓ Make notes colorful	✓ Sit towards the front of the room.
✓ Use flash cards to help rehearse	✓ Choose a seat where I can see the instructor and all visual aids well.
✓ Make an outline of key topics in a chart or diagram	✓ Try to listen and write down what I hear. Review my notes and check for understanding after class.
✓ Make pictures in my mind	
✓ Draw boxes or circles around terms/concepts and draw lines to show how they are related to each other	
✓ Highlight all things related to each other in the same color.	

If My Preference is Doing (Kinesthetic)

When I am reading I should...	In the classroom I should...
✓ Do something physical before sitting down to read or study	✓ Take a small object to class to play with in one hand while the other takes notes.
✓ Highlight, underline or take notes.	✓ Use class breaks to stand up and stretch.
✓ Use my fingers or a piece of paper to help keep track of where I am.	✓ Choose shorter class times when possible.
✓ Break reading tasks into small chunks.	✓ Ask questions and participate in discussions whenever possible.
✓ Move a body part or walk around if it helps me concentrate.	
✓ Write processes on cards, mix them up, then practice physically arranging them.	
✓ If I use my hands when I talk also use them when I study to explain things to myself.	