



Learning Styles



Capitalizing on your Best Learning Style

Recommendations for Visual Learners:

Make your work as visual as possible. Make charts, graphs, tables. Take detailed notes during lectures, and compare them with someone else's to be sure you have gotten down all the important points. Leave lots of extra space in your notes so you can add ideas or details later. Highlight important information in your notes and books. Write down anything that is important for you to remember.

Ask instructors to repeat statements whenever necessary. Tape record important lectures whenever possible (Record all of them, then save and label only those you feel are important. Tape over the others.).

Look at teachers when they are speaking. Your attention will tend to be where your eyes are. Make it easy to keep your eyes on your work by arranging your study space so that you don't look directly out the door or window.

Participate in classes. Ask questions. Contribute your ideas. This will keep you involved and alert in an otherwise very auditory situation.

Work in a quiet place. Many visual learners, however, do find that they can do much better with music in the background.

Think on paper. Before you begin a project or a study session, write down your goals and the steps you must go through to achieve them.

Work alone. Visual learners often find it difficult to think or work and at the same time carry on a dialogue, even when the dialogue is about what they are thinking about or working on.

Recommendations for Auditory Learners

Think out loud. Talk to yourself. Before beginning a project or study session, state aloud your goals and the steps that you must go through to achieve them. It's also probably a good idea to write them down.

Before reading, set a purpose and verbalize it. Underline or highlight main points you are reading. Afterwards, summarize what you have read.

Read aloud, especially when proofreading or when you're tired. You will understand the material better if you can hear it. You can even read silently while moving your lips slightly and "hear the words in your head."

Play music in the background. Whatever kind of music you like, at whatever volume you like. If it disturbs others, wear headphones.

Read whole-to-part. When reading a textbook chapter, long article or report, first skim through the whole thing to get a feel for what it is about, take a look at the summary and questions at the end of the chapter, then go back and read it carefully.

Use spatial note-taking techniques such as mind-mapping or clustering. These allow for non-sequential production of sequential material.

Visualize complex projects from start to finish before beginning. This will allow you to keep the big picture while working on the details. If you begin to feel swamped by the project, re-visualize the entire sequence from start to finish to see what should be done next. You'll also find that visualization is a powerful tool for keeping a positive attitude during a demanding task.

From: Learnings: An Irregular Newsletter by Kevin Dohman, Feb. 1990

LEARNING STYLES CHECKLIST

Read each statement carefully. On the line, write the number that best describes how each statement applies to you. Answer honestly: there are no "right," "wrong," "good," or "bad" answers. Total your score at the end of each section.

- | 1
Almost Never
Applies | 2
Applies Once
in a While | 3
Sometimes
Applies | 4
Often
Applies | 5
Almost Always
Applies |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. | I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures, arrows, etc., in them. | | |
| _____ | 2. | I remember things better if I write them down, even if I don't go back to see what I've written. | | |
| _____ | 3. | When trying to remember a phone number, it helps me to get a picture in my head. | | |
| _____ | 4. | When recalling information during a test, I can see in my mind's eye the textbook page and the information on it. | | |
| _____ | 5. | Unless I write down the direction to a place, I'm likely to get lost or arrive late. | | |
| _____ | 6. | It helps me to look at a person when he or she is speaking. It helps keep me focused. | | |
| _____ | 7. | It's hard for me to concentrate on what is being said if there is background noise. | | |
| _____ | 8. | It's difficult for me to understand a joke when I hear it. | | |
| _____ | 9. | It's easier for me to get work done in a quiet place. | | |

VISUAL TOTAL _____

- | | | | | |
|-------|----|--|--|--|
| _____ | 1. | When reading, I read aloud, "hear the words in my head." | | |
| _____ | 2. | When memorizing something, it helps me to recite it over and over. | | |
| _____ | 3. | If I want to understand something, it helps me to try to explain it to someone else. | | |
| _____ | 4. | During lectures, I don't need to take notes to remember what was said. Sometimes taking notes even makes it harder for me to listen. | | |
| _____ | 5. | I remember what people have said rather than what they were wearing. | | |
| _____ | 6. | I would rather listen to the news on the radio than read it in the paper. | | |
| _____ | 7. | I like tape recording memos to myself or sending and receiving messages on an answering machine rather than using written notes. | | |

- _____ 8. I can easily understand what a speaker is saying, even though my eyes are closed or I'm staring out the window.
- _____ 9. I talk to myself when problem solving or writing.
- _____ 10. I prefer to have someone tell me how to do something rather than have to read the directions.

AUDITORY TOTAL _____

- _____ 1. I don't like to read or listen to directions; I'd rather just start doing.
- _____ 2. I learn best when I'm shown how to do something and then have the opportunity to do it.
- _____ 3. I can study better with music playing in the background.
- _____ 4. Instead of trying to solve problems with a definite plan in mind, I like to try different things until I hit on something that works.
- _____ 5. My desk looks disorganized.
- _____ 6. I move my lips when I read.
- _____ 7. I take notes but seldom go back and read them.
- _____ 8. I can easily find my way around, even in strange surroundings.
- _____ 9. I think better when I have the freedom to move around. I get fidgety and feel trapped when sitting behind a desk.
- _____ 10. When I don't think of a specific word, I'll use my hands a lot and call something a "whatchamacallit" or a "thingamajig."

HAPTIC TOTAL _____

The area in which you have the highest score represents your best learning style. If you have a second or even a third high score, this represents your next best learning style(s). Capitalize on your best learning style to improve your academic performance.