

LEARNING STYLES

Learning style has to do with how people bring new information into their knowledge base. Knowing your learning style enables you to use your strengths as you study for courses. One of many instruments for determining learning style is the VARK questionnaire, developed by Neil Fleming. The VARK system categorizes learners into four styles: Visual, Aural, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic. Many learners show strength in more than one learning style.

Visual learners learn best from visual images that do not include writing. Graphs and diagrams are easy for them to understand. They remember faces and places and tend to recall information by picturing it in their minds. If you want to invite a visual learner to come to your house, draw a map. In college, a visual learner is going to find it relatively easy to “read” a pie chart in a business class or perceive differences between artists’ painting styles.

Aural or auditory learners do well with hearing information. They remember words to songs and can recall conversations in detail by hearing them in their minds. If you want an aural learner to come to your house, just tell him or her how to get there. In college, an aural learner will remember lecture material in a variety of classes and may be skilled at memorizing things like music or lines for a theatrical production.

Reading/Writing learners are at home with written material. They comprehend and remember what they read, and they often enjoy writing. If you want a reading/writing learner to come to your house, provide written directions. College classes have traditionally been geared to the reading/writing learning style; these learners can take notes in most classes and will benefit from reading them as a method for study.

Kinesthetic learners learn by doing. Hands-on activities and real-life experiences help them remember. If you want a kinesthetic learner to come to your house, the simplest way is to take him or her there yourself or get someone else to do so. Another way to give directions to a kinesthetic learner would be to provide details about what to look for on the way there, making your directions as experiential as possible. College classes like science labs, acting, or sports teach to the strengths of kinesthetic learners.

Learning Styles Tips and Strategies

VISUAL

- Doodle diagrams of your written information in the margins
- Create a flowchart for the progression of your notes and ideas
- Make flashcards that include pictures or diagrams as visual clues
- Highlight key information in your texts or notes
- Create a chart or a series of boxes to remind you how to complete math equations
- Use a computer to convert data and notes into charts, tables, graphics, pictures, etc.
- Vocabulary mnemonics
- Hangman game
- Timelines

AURAL/AUDITORY

- Use a computer to record your notes read aloud. Convert this information to download for iPod using iTunes
- Read your notes aloud when studying (mind your surroundings!)
- Work with a regular study partner to review out loud
- Work in a group where you can discuss the information
- Tape lectures. If available, set the counter to zero when it begins and note the number at difficult times during lecture. Review these recorded times later for extra review.
- When learning new material, especially equations, talk your way through the material.
- Singing/ creating a song
- Use of metaphors/similes to compare and remember (as long as they are voiced)
- Use Internet resources like YouTube.com
- Invent acronyms
- Mnemonic devices

READING/WRITING

- Re-write your notes after class.
- Use colored pens and highlighters to focus in on key ideas
- Write notes to yourself in the margins
- Write out key concepts and ideas
- Compose short explanations for diagrams, charts, graphs
- Write out instructions for each step of a procedure or math problem
- Print out your notes for later review
- Post note cards/post-its in visible places (when doing dishes, on the bottom of the remote, etc.)
- Vocab mnemonics
- Organize your notes/key concepts into a Powerpoint slideshow
- Compare your notes with someone else's
- Repetitive writing
- Hangman game

KINESTHETIC

- Type your notes after class -Create a YouTube video as a group to study later individually
- Write your notes onto flashcards - Scrabble -Make posters
- Review flashcards while walking, at gym, etc.
- Dog-ear pages in the reading where you can find critical information
- Sit near the front of the room
- Walk back and forth, move in some way, when studying notes
- Read your notes out loud
- As much as possible, create models for the information at hand
- Use the internet to research your subject material
- When possible, visit locations for your material (library, museum, historical sites, etc.)
- To learn a sequence or equation, use one note card for each step.
- Highlight material when reviewing/studying
- Use a dry-erase or chalk board to study or review
- Taboo-type game/ charades
- Correlate physical movements with ideas/terms