



LEARNING STYLES & ASSESSMENT

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LEARNING STYLES

Learning style assessments are important tools to learn how individuals take in information (receptive sense) and how information is processed and displayed (expressive sense). Self knowledge allows an individual to understand and access his/her strongest style for effective and efficient learning. No one uses one style exclusively, and there is significant overlap in the three styles.

The three main learning styles are:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic/tactile

Visual Learners

Visual learners relate most effectively to written information, notes, diagrams, and pictures. Typically they will be unhappy with a presentation where they are unable to take detailed notes – to an extent information does not exist for a visual learner unless it has been seen written down. This is why some visual learners will take notes even when they have printed course notes on the desk in front of them. Visual learners will tend to be most effective in written communication, symbol manipulation, etc. Visual learners make up around 65 percent of the population.

- They like books, handouts, blackboard writing, and notes.
- They learn best alone.
- They organize information by categorizing (like a mental spreadsheet).

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners relate most effectively to the spoken word. They will tend to listen to a lecture and then take notes afterwards or rely on printed notes. Often information written down will have little meaning until it has been heard – it may help auditory learners to read written information out loud. Auditory learners may be sophisticated speakers and may specialize effectively in subjects like law or politics. Auditory learners make up 30 percent of the population.

- They like lecture classes, discussions with others, and reciting to themselves.
- They learn best within a group.
- They organize information by relationships between facts.

Kinesthetic/tactile Learners

Kinesthetic/tactile learners learn effectively through touch, movement, and space. They learn skills by imitation and practice. Predominantly kinesthetic/tactile learners can appear slow, when in fact information is normally not presented in a style that suits their learning methods. These learners make up five percent of the population.

- They like not taking, recopying notes, and outlining the book.
- They learn best with one other person.

- They organize information with the big picture or overall plan.

IF YOU PREFER A ...

Visual Learning Style – You learn by seeing and looking.

- Take numerous detailed notes
- They tend to sit in the front of the class
- Are usually neat and clean
- Pay close attention to body language of others
- Often close their eyes to visualize or remember something
- Can make “movies” in their minds of information as they read, often vivid and detailed
- Find something to watch if they are bored
- Like to see what they are learning
- Benefit from illustrations and presentations that use color
- Are attracted to written or spoken language rich in imagery
- Have a keen awareness of aesthetics, beauty of the physical environment, and the arts
- Prefer stimuli to be isolated from auditory and kinesthetic distraction
- Find passive surroundings ideal

Auditory Learning Style – You learn by hearing and listening.

- Sit where they can hear but needn't pay attention to what is happening in front
- May not coordinate colors or clothes, but can explain why they are wearing what they are wearing and why
- Hum or talk to themselves or others when bored
- Acquire knowledge by reading aloud
- Remember by verbalizing lessons to themselves (if they don't they have difficulty reading maps or diagrams or handling conceptual assignments like mathematics).
- Can remember quite accurately details of information they hear
- Strong language skills which include a well-developed vocabulary and appreciation for words

Kinesthetic/tactile Learning Style – You learn by touching and doing.

- Need to be active and take frequent breaks
- Speak with their hands and with gestures
- Remember what was done, but have difficulty recalling what was said or seen
- Find reasons to tinker or move when bored
- Rely on what they can directly experience or perform
- Activities such as cooking, construction, engineering, and art help them perceive and learn
- Enjoy field trips and tasks that involve manipulating materials
- Sit near the door or someplace where they can easily get up and move around
- Are uncomfortable in classrooms where they lack opportunity for hands-on experience
- Communicate by touching and appreciate physically expressed encouragement, such as a pat on the back
- Often do well as athletes, actors, dancers, or by working with tools
- Well coordinated with a strong sense of timing and body movements
- Tend to pace when learning something difficult
- Often wiggle, tap their feet, or move their legs when they sit

INVENTORY CHECKLIST

Directions: To gain a better understanding of yourself as a learner, you need to evaluate the way you prefer to learn or process information. By doing so, you will be able to develop strategies which will enhance your learning potential. The following evaluation is an easy, quick way of assessing your learning style. This is not timed. Answer each question as honestly as you can. See the next page for scoring instructions.

STATEMENTS:		Often	Some-times	Seldom
1	I can remember more about a subject by listening to a lecture that includes information, explanations, and discussions rather than by reading about it.			
2	I prefer to see information written on a board and supplemented by visual aids and assigned readings.			
3	I like to write things down or take visual notes for review.			
4	I prefer to use posters, models, or actual practice and other activities in class.			
5	I need explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions.			
6	I enjoy working with my hands or making things.			
7	I am skillful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.			
8	I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.			
9	I remember best by writing things down several times.			
10	I can easily understand and follow directions on a map.			
11	I do best in academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes.			
12	I play with keys or coins in my pockets.			
13	I learn to spell best by repeating the words out loud than by writing the words on paper.			
14	I can understand a news article better by reading it in the newspaper than by listening to a report about it on the radio.			
15	I chew gum, smoke, or snack while studying.			
16	I think the best way to remember something is to picture it in your head.			
17	I learn the spelling of words by tracing them with my finger.			
18	I would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about the same material in a textbook.			
19	I am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.			
20	I grip objects in my hands during learning periods.			
21	I prefer listening to the news on the radio rather than reading about it in the newspaper.			
22	I learn about an interesting subject by reading about it.			
23	I feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, handshaking, etc.			
24	I follow oral directions better than written ones.			

Adapted from Barsch Learning Style Inventory by Jeffrey Barsch, Ed.D. and Sensory Modality Checklist by Nancy A. Haynie.

SCORING PROCEDURES

Directions: Place the point value on the line next to the corresponding item. Add the points in each column to obtain the total preference scores under each heading.

OFTEN = 5 points, SOMETIMES = 3 points, SELDOM = 1 point

VISUAL		AUDITORY		KINESTHETIC TACTILE	
NO.	PTS.	NO.	PTS.	NO.	PTS.
2		1		4	
3		5		6	
7		8		9	
10		11		12	
14		13		15	
16		18		17	
19		21		20	
22		24		23	
Total	=	Total	=	Total	=

Quick Facts:

If you are a **VISUAL** learner, then by all means be sure that you look at all study materials. Use charts, maps, filmstrips, notes, and flashcards. Practice visualizing or picturing words/concepts in your head. Write out everything for frequent and quick visual review. Consider “mapping” as a study tool.

If you are an **AUDITORY** learner, you may wish to use tapes. Tape lectures to help you fill in the gaps in your notes. But do listen and take notes, reviewing notes frequently. Sit in the lecture hall or classroom where you can hear well. After you have read something, summarize it, and recite it aloud. Use soft music as a background while studying (don’t want to be able to hear the words). Tape own thoughts as you learn new material and play back to study.

If you are a **KINESTHETIC/TACTILE** learner, trace words as you are saying them. Facts that must be learned should be written several times. Keep a supply of scratch paper for this purpose. Taking and keeping lecture notes will be very important. Make study sheets. Use manipulatives (models, hands-on materials, etc.) whenever possible; provide hands-on activities to reinforce visual and auditory information.