

Background Information Lesson 1: Improve your learning

Preparing to read, exercise 1

Learning styles – VARK system

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. At school, a visual learner is going to find it relatively easy to “read” a pie chart 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. At school, 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. 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.

School classes like science labs, acting, or sports teach to the strengths of kinesthetic learners.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seven Learning Styles

Visual (spatial): You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.

Aural (auditory-musical): You prefer using sound and music.

Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.

Physical (kinesthetic): You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.

Logical (mathematical): You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.

Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.

Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

You will find more information on this topic in the Background Information Appendix on page 95.