

# Different Learning Styles as the Method of Addressing Individual Child Needs

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**Introduction** - It is rightly said by Matshona Dhlwayo that “A garden’s beauty never lies in one flower” even it is true in the context of a classroom. A classroom consists of variety of students. It is difficult to address and explain these diversified students. Diverse needs of learners, matching instructions for diverse learning styles can be difficult. In earlier times it was more difficult because of the use of traditional method for teaching but now-a-days various teaching and learning styles are practiced while teaching. These styles help in fulfilling basic needs of all students. Reaching all students with a variety of learning styles is necessary for full academic growth.

The term “learning styles” speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individual’s learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. For example, when learning how to make the abacus, some students understand the process by following verbal instructions, while others have to physically manipulate the abacus themselves. This notion of individualized learning styles has gained widespread recognition in education theory and classroom management strategy. Individual learning styles depend on cognitive, emotional and environmental factors, as well as one’s prior experience. In other words: everyone’s different. It is important for educators to understand the differences in their students’ learning styles, so that they can implement best practice strategies into their daily activities, curriculum and assessments.

Over the past century, much interest in the subject of Psychology has been around education. This is important to conduct proper research on different learning styles and to better identify how people can learn best. Many theorists projected their ideas on understanding different learning styles.

One of the most prominent was developed by Neil Fleming in 1987. He set out to help students and teachers adapt their practices to better help them retain new information. Named the VARK Model of learning, Fleming theorized that we are all one of the four main types of

learners: visual, auditory, reading/writing and kinesthetic. Individuals are identified by the style they identify with the most when learning. The VARK model acknowledges that students have different approaches to how they process information, referred to as “preferred learning modes.”

Information that is accessed through students’ use of their modality preferences shows an increase in their levels of comprehension, motivation, and metacognition. Identifying your students as visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic, learners, and aligning your overall curriculum with these learning styles, will prove to be beneficial for your entire classroom. Keeping in mind, sometimes you may find that it’s a combination of all three sensory modalities that may be the best option. Allowing students to access information in terms they are comfortable with will increase their academic confidence. By understanding what kind of learner you or your students are, you can now gain a better perspective on how to implement these learning styles into your lesson plans and study techniques

**1. Visual Learners:** Visual Learners understand and retain information best by seeing. They would prefer to see information presented in a visually appealing way, rather than in a written format. Individuals that learn in this way tend to pay close attention to detail and body language and often imagine situations in their mind to help them process the information better; similar to how designers use visual hierarchy to emphasize specific design elements, visual learners thrive with clear pictures of information hierarchy. They retain information best by viewing pictures or images and respond well to colors and mind maps.

In terms of learning, graphic displays are most effective for visual learners. Some of these include:

- i. Charts, illustrations, graphs and diagrams
- ii. Animated videos, documentaries and other learning shows.
- iii. Paper hand-outs with lots of images.
- iv. Demonstrations
- v. Color-coded notes, incorporated with plenty of white space etc.

**2. Aural Learners :** Aural learners tend to learn information

best by hearing it rather than getting actively involved in class or writing out notes, they prefer to listen to others present the information and then are usually able to recite back to them. This is usually through the format of conversation, but can also include recordings and music. Some learners also find that reading information out loud to themselves can help them recall it better. Because of the need for auditory learners to listen intently to lectures or information, it's vital that they are able to study in a quiet environment, away from distractions and any other noises which could distract or disrupt their learning. They best understand new content through listening and speaking in situations. Aural learners use repetition as a study technique and benefit from the use of mnemonic devices. Some of the best ways to study which could benefit the aural learners include:

- i. Lectures or large classroom environments where tutors present information.
- ii. Transcribing hand written notes into recordings.
- iii. Listening to podcasts, audio books or class recordings
- iv. Personal one-to-one tutoring where new information can be talked through.

**3. Reading And Writing Learners:** There are always some students who have beautifully hand written, colour coded notes that have been divided perfectly topic by topic, such students benefit from writing new information. Tend to take in new information best when it's displayed as words and text. They'll often produce lists, read definitions and enjoy summarizing information in ways that best make sense to them. Students with a strong reading/writing preference learn best through words. These students may present themselves as copious note takers or avid readers, and are able to translate abstract concepts into words and essays. They best remember new information by:

- i. Reading textbooks and summarizing with notes.
- ii. Writing notes in class and highlighting important detail.
- iii. Creating presentations.
- iv. Story writing and getting creative with their notes.

**4. Kinesthetic Learners:** This type of individuals learns best by practically touching and doing things. Hands-on experience is an important component for kinesthetic learners, who have a "trial and error" approach to their learning. They enjoy having physical practice and directly manipulating objects and materials to better understand how it works. They enjoy and thrive at more practical based subjects, such as Arts Sports and Design and Technology. They understand information through tactile representations of information. These students are hands-on learners and learn best through figuring things out by hand (i.e. understanding how a clock works by putting one together). Taking a physically active role, kinesthetic learners are hands-on and thrive when engaging all of their senses during course work. These learners tend to work well in scientific studies due to the hands-on lab component of the course. Some of the best ways to study which could

benefit the kinesthetic learners include:

- i. Role playing, using things like flashcards or carrying out the action physically can help them learn things better.
- ii. Using real life examples, applications and case studies.
- iii. Redo lab experiments or projects.
- iv. Utilize pictures and photographs that illustrate your ideas.

In addition to the 'VARK' model of different styles of learning, some more categories of learners are included with these four types of learners. All of the styles capture an individual strength that likely helps a person retain information more effectively. They each focus on one of the five senses or involve a social aspect. This theory is popular because, by finding an individual learner's style and tailoring teaching to it, it was thought their efficiency could be improved. The types of different styles of learning are: Visual, Auditory, Verbal (Reading/Writing), Physical (Kinesthetic), Logical, Social, Solitary (Intrapersonal)

**Logical :** Logical, or mathematical learners use logic and structures in order to learn effectively. They use analytical skills to understand a certain subject. Logic, order and steps are the keys to success for logical learners. Such people are good with numbers, easily make connections and can spot patterns. Such learners can examine cause and effect and comprehend abstract material with ease. They make well-organized lists and groups of information. They are good at chess style games. In terms of learning, they may get involved when

- i. Questions are posed in such a way which needs interpretation.
- ii. Providing lessons that enable them to solve issues.
- iii. Pushing such learners to reach conclusion based on facts or reasoning.

**Social :** Due to preference for spending much time with others, social learners are frequently viewed as social butterflies. Such learners prefer group projects and teamwork activities since peer interaction helps children understand a subject more thoroughly, so they find it enjoyable. They gain knowledge by engaging with others. They are good in reading others' emotions and facial expressions. Majority of such learners excel at both verbal and non-verbal communication. They frequently have a good ear for listening and are good advisors. Such learners can learn more effectively by:

- i. Participating in study activities with other people such as quizzing each other or having a study group.
- ii. Engaging in role plays.
- iii. Asking them to bounce ideas off of each other and come their ideas with others.
- iv. Including them in group projects or assignments.

**Solitary :** Solitary or Intrapersonal learners are exactly opposite to that of social learners. These learners want to work independently and employ self-study. They have keen awareness of their emotions, personalities and strengths.

They spend a lot of time reflecting on themselves and improving themselves. Such learners should be provided with calm and silent environment. They work best by:

- i. Making notes and reciting them back.
- ii. Single student activities or experiments.
- iii. Silent or independent reading.

Understanding learners learning styles is crucial since it can increase their chances of academic success.

Teaching students according to their specific learning styles will result in improved learning. As rightly quoted by Robert John Meehan that "Every child has a different learning style and pace. Each child is unique, not only capable of learning but also capable of succeeding."

**Reference:-**

1. Personal Research

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