

Notes



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section *The Student 2.3*,
Summary.

2.3 Learning Styles

Not all students learn in the same way. Students have different learning styles that instructors must recognize in order to reach them. Learning styles are simply different approaches to learning. The types of learning styles are:

- Visual Learners—65%
- Auditory Learners—30%
- Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners—5%

When you become comfortable incorporating these different learning styles into the way you present material, you'll realize your full potential as an instructor.

Visual learners prefer to sit at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (for example, people's heads). They need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They think in pictures and learn best from visual displays such as diagrams, illustrated textbooks, PowerPoint presentations with lots of graphics/images/photos, videos and DVDs, and handouts.



Provide a book or handout and follow it in your presentation. This is very helpful to visual learners and reduces the need for them to take notes. They may still prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information during a lecture or classroom discussion. They like concise, good-looking presentations that are neat and orderly.

In the right setting, "Elmo" projection cameras can be used to display small parts and diagrams, and smart boards can provide a high level of interactivity to small groups for processes such as brainstorming. Anything visual can add to the experience for visual learners.

Auditory learners learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say.

In one case a young man sat through one of my seminars with his baseball hat pulled down over his eyes and his head in his hands. After the seminar he came up to me and said, “This was the best class I have ever had in my life.” Although he appeared to be disinterested, he was really focusing in the way he needed to so he wasn’t distracted.

Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed, and other nuances. Avoid speaking in a monotone as you’ll lose this type of learner. They learn better when the instructor doesn’t talk too fast. Presenting the same information three or four times in different ways helps students grasp what you’re saying if you have a tendency to become excited and speak quickly.

These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a recording device. Written words may have little meaning for them until they’re heard. They don’t like to spend time figuring out complicated charts. Keep background noise to a minimum. Extraneous noise makes it difficult for them to pay attention. Be aware of noises in the classroom. Take precautions to prevent the air-conditioner from cycling off and on excessively (have the fan turned to “on” instead of “auto”) and coordinate the timing of the caterer refreshing sodas, water, coffee, and other items, if this is a class at a hotel or banquet hall.

Tactile/kinesthetic learners are people who learn best through a hands-on approach; moving, doing, and touching. They actively explore the physical world around them. These students may find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time, and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration. These students will also benefit from writing notes in order to interact and absorb the information.

For all types of learners, structure your presentation so you:

- Tell them what you’re going to tell them.
- Tell them.
- Tell them what you told them.
- Then ask them, “What did I tell you?”

Knowing about and understanding student learning styles helps instructors develop coping strategies to compensate for students’ weaknesses and capitalize on their strengths. There are many excellent resources available on the internet; do a search on “learning styles” to help take your training to the next level.