

# LEARNING PREFERENCES

## Auditory, Visual, Kinesthetic, Read/Write



Unlock the knowledge... know your learning preference!

There are many models and theories about learning preferences, and many ways in which individuals learn. Basic learning preferences include, but are not limited to, Auditory, Visual, Kinesthetic, and Read/Write.

### ***Know your learning preference. Why?***

To find out if you process, learn, and retain information most effectively by listening, seeing, reading/writing, or through movement/touch (kinesthetic). Some individuals have more than one learning preference which is known as multimodal. One preference is not better than another, and, most importantly, having a preference does not mean you cannot learn in other ways; it is simply what may work best for you to process, learn, retain, and communicate information. Knowing a learning preference does not improve learning. However, you may become a better learner if you know your learning preference and use the respective strategies.

### **AUDITORY (OR AURAL)**

People with auditory preferences learn best when information is heard or spoken. You may learn best from lectures, discussions, by talking things through (either to others or out loud to self), and in listening to what others have to say. You may prefer talking out loud to sort out ideas. Also, repeating a question that was already answered is sometimes helpful as you hear it said or asked in your own way. You may also enjoy incorporating sound and music in preparing notes or studying for exams.

#### **Learning strategies:**

- Attend class, study groups, tutorial sessions, etc.
- Sit in the front of the classroom to avoid distraction of others talking
- Skim through reading material first to understand the theme or main idea
- Work with a study partner or group; i.e. discussions: listening, talking
- Read notes and textbook assignments **out loud**
- Recite information and/or explain (teach) to others
- Record notes, key information, and lectures, then listen to recordings regularly
- Use audio books when possible
- Incorporate sound, music and apply to study notes
- Create mnemonics and set to a rhyme, jingle, or part of a song

Learn through listening



### **VISUAL**

People with visual preferences generally see the whole picture. You may even think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrations, graphs, flow charts, maps, symbols, and use of interactive whiteboards and handouts. Your notes might include the use of symbols, pictures, underlining, colors, highlighting, designs, etc. You may prefer to study alone, in a quiet setting.

#### **Learning strategies:**

- Attend class, study groups, tutorial sessions, etc.
- Sit in front of classroom to avoid visual distractions
- Sit up front to observe instructor and his/her expressions, gestures, body language, etc.
- Skim through reading material first to understand the theme or main idea
- Color-code, underline, and/or highlight important points/info in textbook or notes
- Create flashcards for key notes; be concise
- Limit amount of words; allow for mental imagery; use mindmaps
- Convert notes and translate words into symbols, diagrams, and/or pictures
- Create visual reminders of information
- Practice turning visuals back into words
- Be creative with charts, diagrams, flowcharts, graphs, mind-maps

Learn through seeing



Continued →

## KINESTHETIC

Kinesthetic learners prefer a hands-on approach. You may rely on experience and/or practice to support your learning. You generally learn from doing, from being engaged: case studies, demonstrations, simulations, working applications, etc. The key for kinesthetic preference is the reality or concrete nature of the example—to hold, taste, touch, etc.

### Learning strategies:

- Attend class, study groups, tutorial sessions, etc.
- Sit in the front of the classroom to avoid distractions
- Skim through reading material first to understand the theme or main idea
- Stay actively engaged in class: take notes, write key points, draw charts
- Discuss notes with another individual with a kinesthetic learning preference
- Incorporate physical activity into study time
  - Take a walk while reviewing notes, move around or work in a standing position
- Take frequent short study breaks
- Create hands-on approach to learning when possible:
- Use models, extra lab time, visit places that connect to course material
- Role play: act out or simulate what you are learning

Learn through touching,  
moving, and doing



## READ / WRITE

Information displayed as words works best for Individuals with this learning preference. You prefer text-based input and output and enjoy reading and writing in all its forms; e.g. reports, essays, manuals, etc. People who prefer this modality love to use PowerPoint, the Internet, dictionaries, thesauri, words, and make lists.

### Learning strategies:

- Attend class, study groups, tutorial sessions, etc.
- Sit in the front of the classroom to avoid distractions
- Skim through reading material first to understand the theme or main idea
- Read notes over and over
- Rewrite your notes (lecture/textbook) in your own words
- Review and/or rewrite notes every day (or at least every other day)
- Change diagrams, charts, graphs, etc. into words/statements
- Predict exam questions and write answers
- Write lists (a,b,c,1,2,3,4)
- Arrange words into lists, hierarchies and/or outlines

Learn through reading/writing



## MULTIMODAL

Multimodal refers to individuals with two, three or even four preferences instead of one dominant preference. Multimodal is not unusual, but rather very common. There may be two different approaches to learning for those who are multimodal. First, the **context specific approach**. Individuals in this group are flexible and able to switch between modes, even choosing one mode for incoming information and a different mode for outgoing information. They generally approach learning by choosing the best mode for the specific task or situation. The second group, **whole-sense approach**, uses two or more modes in combination in their approach to learning or decision-making. These individuals feel the need to examine things from many perspectives. Additionally, they may take longer to act because they feel the need to gather information in more than one or two modes to fully comprehend. The advantage for this group is they generally have a deeper and wider understanding of material. However, if they are not able to use two or more modes to gather information, these individuals may be reluctant to act or make a decision for what they feel would be a lack of sufficient information.

Learning strategies: reading and applying the strategies for each of the preferred modes.

Link to discover your learning preference: <http://www.vark-learn.com>. VARK © Copyright 2001-2011. Neil Fleming.

### Sources:

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