Learning styles

5

Learning styles

Learning styles are the individual methods we have for absorbing and retaining information. They can be a point of focus for educators, learners, and even parents. There are several models, including the VARK model (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, Kinesthetic) and the Felder-Silverman Learning Styles Model. Each model identifies different styles and suggests how educators can adapt their teaching to accommodate these styles.

In a VARK model, for example, Visual learners prefer seeing information, Auditory learners prefer hearing it, Read/Write learners prefer reading and writing, and Kinesthetic learners prefer physical activities and hands-on learning. Understanding these styles can help educators create more effective learning environments.

In a Felder-Silverman model, the four primary learning styles are Active (learners who prefer hands-on learning) and Reflective (those who prefer to think about information before acting), and Sensing (learners who prefer concrete, observable data) and Intuitive (those who prefer abstract, conceptual ideas).

Educators can use these models to create more engaging and effective learning experiences. For instance, using a variety of teaching methods can cater to different learning styles, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn effectively.
Learning Styles

The construct of learning styles provides a framework for understanding how individuals process and acquire information. There are several models of learning styles that have been developed, each with its own unique characteristics. Here are two prominent models:

1. **Multiple Intelligences Theory** by Howard Gardner: This theory proposes that people have different intelligences or strengths in different areas. The seven intelligences are linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

2. **Sternberg’s Triarchic Theory** by Robert Sternberg: This theory focuses on three components of intelligence: analytical, creative, and practical. The analytical component involves the ability to solve problems, the creative component involves the ability to generate new ideas, and the practical component involves the ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations.

These models help educators understand how students learn best and tailor their teaching strategies accordingly.
Learning styles and multiple intelligences

Learning environments are dynamic and diverse, requiring educators to adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate the varied needs of students. The Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model (FSLSM) is a widely recognized framework that helps educators understand and cater to the different ways students process information and learn. This model identifies two primary dimensions: Active vs. Reflective and Sensor vs. Abstract.

1. Active learners prefer hands-on, interactive experiences, whereas Reflective learners prefer more contemplative, less engaging activities.
2. Sensor learners rely heavily on concrete experiences and tangible feedback, while Abstract learners prefer to work with ideas, concepts, and theories.

By recognizing and catering to these differences, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that meets the needs of all students.
Perceiving Learners

Strengths
- Need to know exactly what is expected of them
- Take school seriously
- Like rules and procedures
- Work in a steady, orderly way
- Like to have a plan and stick to it

Judging Learners

Strengths
- Like to see the big picture
- Like to know exactly what is expected of them
- Take school seriously
- Work in a steady, orderly way
- Like to have a plan and stick to it

Thinking Learners

Strengths
- Like clear and logical direction
- Can work on problems and analyze ideas
- Want to see a clear reason and goal
- Like teachers who are organized
- Want to be needed and liked

Feeling Learners

Strengths
- Need information
- Organize their materials in a logical order
- Look for ways to improve
- Like to hear from other people
- Like to share their feelings

Intuitive Learners

Strengths
- Look for ways to improve
- Like to hear from other people
- Look for ways to improve
- Like to share their feelings
- Need information

Sensing Learners

Strengths
- Pay more attention to practical facts and ideas
- Have a good memory for facts
- Like things that are clear
- Are accurate and pay attention to details
- Like clear goals
Auditory Learners

Visual Learners

Figure 1. A graph showing the relationship between learning styles and brain functions.

The four styles are auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and logical.
In the Classroom

Be open to the curriculum. When entering a learning situation, be open to the unexpected. Allow for multiple interpretations and understandings of the material. It may be necessary to move away from the end of the question, for a multiple interpretation to develop. In some ways, this approach may be addressed at the end of this chapter.

Summary

There are more ways to learn than can be made.