

Learning – My Preferred Way

You will often find upon entering college that classes and course work require a greater amount of effort and time. At first, the workload of college courses may seem overwhelming to many first year students. However, knowing the learning style which suits your personality will allow for you to increase the productivity and efficiency of your studying and allow for better academic results. Learning styles are individuals' unique approaches to learning based on strengths, weaknesses, and preferences (“Learning Style”). There are four main learning styles that are widely accepted in the world of academia:

- visual
- auditory
- read/write
- kinesthetic

You may be one of these styles, but often people are a combination of two, three, or all of these styles.

A visual learner, also referred to as a spatial learner, is a person that prefers using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. Visual learners tend to have good handwriting, spell correctly, read often, doodle on their papers, and be well organized. Some study techniques that will help a visual learner succeed are drawing out maps of history or events, outlining assignments, asking the professor to draw a diagram, taking notes and making lists, color coding, and making flash cards. Through utilizing these techniques for studying and better understanding your specific learning style, you will be better prepared for college level academics (Conway & Morten, 2005).

An auditory learner learns best when hearing the information that they are hoping to process. Auditory learners tend to recall details that they hear during conversations or lectures, have strong language skills, enjoy reading out loud, and are extremely verbal. Auditory learners also benefit in the classroom setting by watching videos, recording lectures, and using word association to recall information (Conway & Morten, 2005).

A read/write learner learns best with information displayed as words. They are often seen taking in information and providing information in written formats, such as textbooks, newspapers, manuals, PowerPoint, etc. Some strategies that are effective for studying include writing out lecture notes again and again, reading notes over and over, and translating diagrams or graphs into text. According to Fleming and Mills (1992), read/write learners benefit in the classroom by making lists, reading textbooks thoroughly, and tending to pay extra attention to individuals who are articulate.

A kinesthetic learner learns best with hands on activities. They are often referred to as being hyperactive, working well with their hands, and having a strong sense of timing and body movement. Some study techniques that may be helpful to a kinesthetic learner are studying in small blocks of time, spreading out work, reciting and pacing themselves while reading a text, using practical subjects to help study, role playing with peers, and using the computer and the internet while studying. If a kinesthetic learner takes advantage of these hands on approaches, they will be more likely to succeed in the college setting (Conway & Morten, 2005).

Just as there are many different learning styles, there are many different teaching styles as well. Sometimes a student's learning style is compatible with a professor's teaching style, while other students may find themselves struggling to adapt to the class.

For example, an auditory student would do well with a professor who lectures for the entire class period, while a visual learner may struggle. However, there are ways for students to adapt to a class if they are struggling with the professor's teaching strategies. If you are in this situation, the first step you should take is to meet with your professor outside of class. The two of you can discuss what may work best for you to better understand the class material and study more efficiently. Your professor will likely be willing to help and attempt to explain the material in a different way that is adapted to your learning style (Conway & Morten, 2005).

If this option does not prove successful or you feel that you may need a different perspective or additional help, there are many other resources on campus that may be beneficial. For example, Academic and Career Services are located on the second floor of Hall Campus Center and have faculty who are trained to help guide students to be more successful in their academic and professional careers. Meeting with one of these faculty members could help determine your own learning style and find specific study strategies that cater to your needs. Also, the tutoring centers on campus are a great resource where you can work with a peer to brainstorm some possible solutions that will help you better understand the material covered in class. These resources include the Wilmer Writing Center, the History and Math Labs, the Modern Language Resource Center, and Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS). By working with your professor and utilizing these resources, you should be able to use your specific learning style to become the most successful student you can be!

To further help you discover what studying techniques work best for you, there is a link to a quick online survey included below that informs you of what type of learner you are. Please take a few minutes to complete this quiz.

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>

Works Cited

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