

Learning Strategies – Based on Your Learning Style

Sensory Learning Styles

The Visual/ Verbal Learning Style

You learn best when information is presented visually and in a written language format. In a classroom setting, you benefit from instructors who use the blackboard (or overhead projector) to list the essential points of a lecture, or who provide you with an outline to follow along with during lecture. You benefit from information obtained from textbooks and class notes. You tend to like to study by yourself in a quiet room. You often see information "in your mind's eye" when you are trying to remember something.

Learning Strategies for the Visual/ Verbal Learner:

1. To aid recall, make use of "color coding" when studying new information in your textbook or notes. Using highlighter pens, highlight different kinds of information in contrasting colors.
2. Draw pictures, arrows, diagrams, or any other illustrations that help you make connections and understand concepts.
3. Write out sentences and phrases that summarize key information obtained from your textbook and lecture.
4. Make flashcards of vocabulary words and concepts that need to be memorized. Use highlighter pens to emphasize key points on the cards. Limit the amount of information per card so your mind can take a mental "picture" of the information.
5. When learning information presented in diagrams or illustrations, write out explanations for the information.
6. When learning mathematical or technical information, write out in sentences and key phrases your understanding of the material. When a problem involves a sequence of steps, write out in detail how to do each step.
7. Make use of computer word processing. Copy key information from your notes and textbook into a computer. Use the print-outs for visual review.
8. Before an exam, make yourself visual reminders of information that must be memorized. Make "stick it" notes containing key words and concepts and place them in highly visible places --on your mirror, notebook, car dashboard, etc..

The Visual/ Nonverbal Learning Style

You learn best when information is presented visually and in a picture or design format. In a classroom setting, you benefit from instructors who use visual aids such as film, video, maps and charts. You benefit from information obtained from the pictures and diagrams in textbooks. You tend to like to work in a quiet room and may not like to work in study groups. When trying to remember something, you can often visualize a picture of it in your mind. You may have an artistic side that enjoys activities having to do with visual art and design.

Learning Strategies for the Visual/ Nonverbal Learner:

1. Make flashcards of key information that needs to be memorized. Draw symbols and pictures on the cards to facilitate recall. Use highlighter pens to highlight key words and pictures on the flashcards. Limit the amount of information per card, so your mind can take a mental "picture" of the information.
2. Mark up the margins of your textbook with key words, symbols, and diagrams that help you remember the text. Use highlighter pens of contrasting colors to "color code" the information.
3. When learning mathematical or technical information, make charts to organize the information. When a mathematical problem involves a sequence of steps, draw a series of boxes, each containing the appropriate bit of information in sequence.
4. Use large square graph paper to assist in creating charts and diagrams that illustrate key concepts.
5. Use the computer to assist in organizing material that needs to be memorized. Using word processing, create tables and charts with graphics that help you to understand and retain course material. Use spreadsheet and database software to further organize material that needs to be learned.
6. As much as possible, translate words and ideas into symbols, pictures, and diagrams.

The Tactile/ Kinesthetic Learning Style

You learn best when physically engaged in a "hands on" activity. In the classroom, you benefit from a lab setting where you can manipulate materials to learn new information. You learn best when you can be physically active in the learning environment. You benefit from instructors who encourage in-class demonstrations, "hands on" student learning experiences, and field work outside the classroom.

Strategies for the Tactile/ Kinesthetic Learner:

1. To help you stay focused on class lecture, sit near the front of the room and take notes throughout the class period. Don't worry about correct spelling or writing in complete sentences. Jot down key words and draw pictures or make charts to help you remember the information you are hearing.
2. When studying, walk back and forth with textbook, notes, or flashcards in hand and read the information out loud.
3. Think of ways to make your learning tangible, i.e. something you can put your hands on. For example, make a model that illustrates a key concept. Spend extra time in a lab setting to learn an important procedure. Spend time in the field (e.g. a museum, historical site, or job site) to gain first-hand experience of your subject matter.
4. To learn a sequence of steps, make 3'x 5' flashcards for each step. Arrange the cards on a table top to represent the correct sequence. Put words, symbols, or pictures on your flashcards -- anything that helps you remember the information. Use highlighter pens in contrasting colors to emphasize important points. Limit the amount of information per card to aid recall. Practice putting the cards in order until the sequence becomes automatic. Use colored sticky notes on the walls so you will see them, in order, as you go from room to room.
5. When learning using models, close your eyes and use your fingertips to identify features such as depressions, ridges, and curves. Speak the name of the feature out loud and check your work immediately so your fingers will associate the correct label with the item touched.
6. When reviewing new information, copy key points onto a chalkboard, easel board, or other large writing surface.
7. Make use of the computer to reinforce learning through the sense of touch. Using word processing software, copy essential information from your notes and textbook. Create graphics, tables, and spreadsheets to further organize material that must be learned.

8. Listen to audio tapes on a Walkman tape player while exercising. Make your own tapes containing important course information.
9. Complete online interactive learning activities
10. Create educational games using three-dimensional objects (rather than on the computer) and body positions as cues and clues. Modifying a game of *Twister* (by Hasbro Games) is a good place to start.

The Auditory/ Verbal Learning Style

You learn best when information is presented in an oral language format. In a classroom setting, you benefit from listening to lecture and participating in group discussions. You also benefit from obtaining information from audio tape. When trying to remember something, you can often "hear" the way someone told you the information, or the way you previously repeated it out loud. You learn best when interacting with others in a listening/speaking exchange.

Strategies for the Auditory/ Verbal Learner:

1. Join a study group or work with a "study buddy" on an ongoing basis to review key information and prepare for exams. Listen carefully to others and ask questions if you get lost or confused.
2. When studying by yourself, talk out loud to aid recall. Get yourself in a room where you won't be bothering anyone and read your notes and textbook out loud. When you are learning technical terms, read the term out loud, then define it, then return to the text or study notes.
3. Tape record your lectures. Use the 'pause' button to avoid taping irrelevant information. Use a tape recorder equipped with a 3-digit counter. At the beginning of each lecture, set your counter to '000.' If a concept discussed during lecture seems particularly confusing, glance at the counter number and jot it down in your notes. Later, you can fast forward to that number to review the material that confused you during lecture. Making use of a counter and pause button while tape recording allows you to avoid the tedious task of having to listen to hours and hours of lecture tape.
4. Use audio recordings such as commercial books on tape or CD to aid recall. Create your own audio files by reading notes and textbook information into a tape recorder or into your computer using a music or audio file editing program. When preparing for an exam, review the audio tapes on your car audio system or your iPhone. Take your headphones and iPod with you to the gym or for a walk in the park.

5. When learning technical information, "talk your way" through the new information. State the new material in your own words. Explain the function or practical application that makes this information useful to you. To learn a sequence of steps, write them out in sentence form and read them out loud.

Social Learning Preferences

Solitary Learners

Solitary learners refer to study alone. They find the conversation of others to be distracting rather than helpful.

Strategies for the Solitary Learner:

- Find a quiet, isolated place to study
- Work through all of the exercises in the text or workbook, being sure to check your answers to correct any mistakes immediately
- Complete all available online or computer based exercises
- Create your own flashcards as well as using those provided

Social Learners

When social learners try to study alone, their minds tend to wander and they are easily distracted. They need to talk with other people and discuss issues in order to "think out loud". Exchanging ideas with others helps them to process the information and gain deeper understanding.

Strategies for the Social Learner:

1. Identify other social learners in your class and form study groups with them
2. Take turns "running" the flash cards with one another
3. Quiz one another using exercises from the text or study materials
4. Take turns looking things up and sharing them with the group
5. Assign a topic to each member of the group and have him/her "teach" the material to the group. It is especially important that the "teacher" be prepared to answer – or look up the answers to – questions from the group.
6. Enlist the aid of your family to help you study
7. Be sure to attend class so that you can:
 - Ask questions
 - Listen to the questions other students ask
 - Participate in activities every chance you get

How to Use Flashcards Effectively

Select and take 5-10 flashcards with you each day and review them when time allows.

You will get the greatest benefit by using them in the following way:

- Review them several times, reading the new information side first.
- Pause and see if you can remember the answer, translation, or explanation; then flip the card over to see if you are correct.
- Now review them several more times, reversing the cards – looking at the answer side first.

Adapted from:

- Learning Styles Survey – <http://www.metamath.com/lweb/fourls.htm>
- *Medical Terminology in a Flash* by Sharon Eagle
- Learning Styles Explained – <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#Learning%20Styles%20Explained>
- Three Different Learning Styles – <http://people.usd.edu/~bwjames/tut/learning-style/styleres.html>
- The VARK Helpsheets – <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=helpsheets>
- Learning Styles and Strategies – <http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/styles.htm>