

Coaching Corner

Using learning styles



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Whenever speakers give speeches, we are looking to educate, motivate, entertain, or some combination of the three. But it is a rare speech that doesn't educate at least a little. How do we design our speech content and delivery to do the best job of educating possible? Are there factors that make it more effective for our audience to learn? Yes! It's learning styles. But it may not be in the way you think.

Learning style research

An explosion of research into student learning styles began in the 1980s. Researchers proposed and demonstrated a variety of interesting learning style models. While that research did demonstrate that students often have different preferred learning modes, more recent research has shown that matching teaching styles to students' preferred learning styles may not significantly affect the overall learning achieved. However, the use of different

presenting modes may still have positive educational impact. While matching teaching styles to students' learning styles may not be particularly effective, matching them to the subject matter definitely will.

The VARK model

The most popular learning style model has been Fleming & Mills's VARK model. VARK is an



acronym that refers to four styles of learning: Visual, Auditory, Reading/writing, and Kinesthetic. The VARK model proposes that students have different

approaches to how they process information, their "preferred learning modes".

Here is a questionnaire to determine your own preferred learning style in the VARK model:

<http://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

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Full Length Research Paper

Difference in learning style preference of medical, dental and B pharma students

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Introduction: The aim of the study was to analyze the learning styles and the difference if any between medical, dental and B Pharmaceutical students.
Methods: 115 medical, 110 dental and 156 B pharma students were studied in each group. Each of the group completed the VARK (visual, auditory, read-write and kinesthetic) questionnaire and their learning style was analyzed. Then the values of each group were compared to get the result. The goal was to identify the preferred learning patterns and to attempt to improve the teaching methods.
Results: statistically one way ANOVA was applied to study the data generated. The results reflect that there is a predominance of kinesthetic learners individually though not significant. When multimodal group as a whole compared to unimodal groups there was significant difference.
Conclusion: This study corroborates the findings of previous studies done on this subject. The study also underlines the need to adopt varied pattern of teaching to cater different groups of learner in different as well as different groups.

Keywords: Dental, medical, B pharmaceutical, learning style and VARK

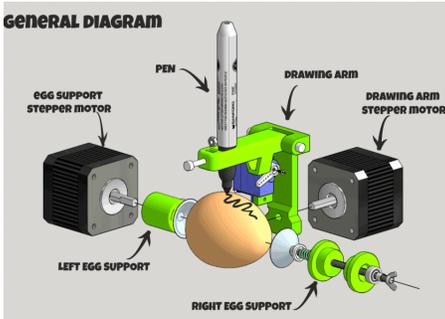
INTRODUCTION

Physiology is the foundation for many subjects and there are various students who need to be taught physiology like students of health, nursing, veterinary, dental and medical undergraduates.

There is a lot of variation in the learning style of students. There are several factors which influence the learning style of students like age, genetic, academic achievement, creative thinking, brain

Visual learning

Visual learning is based on seeing or observing things, including pictures, diagrams, videos, demonstrations, displays, and handouts. It



responds to requests like “show me”. Learning a new task may be helped by examining a diagram or watching someone else do it first.

Auditory learning

Auditory learning is based on listening and talking. It often takes the form of lectures, podcasts, or discussion groups. It responds to phrases



like “tell me” and “let’s talk it over”. Learning a new task may be assisted by talking about what to do, how to do it, and why it’s done that way.

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Read/write learning

Read/write learning is based on reading and writing the material being learned. Read/write learners are often copious note takers and avid readers. Learning a new task may be done by reading manuals, reports, essays, and doing written exercises.

Kinesthetic learning

Kinesthetic learning is based on physical experience - touching, holding, and doing. It responds to phrases such as “let me try”. Performing a new task may be best learned by

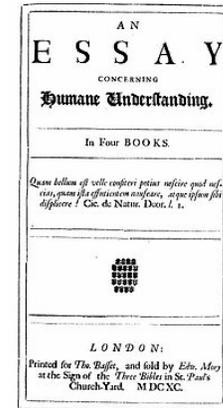


going ahead and trying it out, learning as you go. Role playing, visualization, lab experiments, and hands-on projects are good examples of kinesthetic learning.

Best style for the subject

Although your audience’s learning effectiveness may not always be affected by matching their preferred style of learning, certain subjects do lend themselves better to certain presentation styles. In showing an auto mechanic how to fix a complicated assembly, a blow-out (visual) diagram of that assembly is critical in finding and manipulating the parts involved. Learning and

developing radically new concepts are often best done in (auditory) brainstorming



discussion groups. It is mandatory in learning an athletic skill to experience (kinesthetic) performing the skill. And learning literary

concepts is nearly impossible without reading the literature itself.

Multi-modal learning

Some subjects may be best learned by a combination of presentation styles. Learning to speak a foreign language, for example, takes advantage of listening to it being spoken (auditory), reading it (read/write), and speaking it yourself (kinesthetic). The bottom line is that the best presentation and learning style is often dictated by its fit to what is being taught.

Summary

While your audience can learn in a variety of ways, they will most likely learn the best if your presentation style matches that dictated by your subject matter. Always give thought to this factor when designing your speech and then use the best-fit styles for presenting that subject matter.

Style really does matter!