

LEARNING STYLES

PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

Mini project

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LEARNING STYLES

Introduction

The literature provides many useful definitions of learning styles and related ideas which we could consider.

Definitions:

1. A particular way in which an individual learns is known as learning styles.
2. A mode of learning an individual's preferred or best manner(s) in which to think process information and demonstrate learning.

A learning style is a preferred way of learning and studying for example using pictures instead of texts working in groups or opposed to working alone.

Learning styles are not fixed traits which an individual will always display. Learners are able to adopt different styles in different contexts. Honey and Mumford (1986) suggest that we need to be able to adopt one of four different styles.

The four styles described in Honey-Mumford model are:

1. Activists
2. Reflectors
3. Theorists
4. Pragmatists.

1. Activists: they are bored by repetitions, and are most open-minded and enthusiastic. They prefer to learn by doing rather than by reading or listening. They like to immerse themselves in wide range of experiences and activities and like to work in groups so that ideas can be shared and ideas tested. They thrive on novelty and they will give anything try.

2. Reflectors: they prefer to look at the big picture including previous experiences and the perspectives of others. Their strength is their painstaking data collection and its subsequent analysis, which will take place before any conclusion is reached.

Reflectors slow to make up their minds, but when they do, their decisions are based sound consideration of both their own knowledge information before making any decision. They are always keen to look before they leap.

3. Theorists: they prefer to adopt and integrate all of their observation into frame work. They work towards adding new learning into existing frameworks by questioning and assessing the possible ways that new information might fit into their existing frameworks of understanding. They have tidy and well- organized minds. Theorists are uncomfortable with anything subjective

or ambiguous. They are usually sound in their approach to problem solving, taking a logical, and one step at a time approach.

4. Pragmatics: they are keen to seek out and make use of new ideas. Pragmatists look for the practical implications of any new ideas or theories before making a judgment on their value. Strength of pragmatists is that they are confident in their use of new ideas and will incorporate them into their thinking. They are most at home in problem solving situations. They will take the view that if something works, all is well and good, but if it doesn't work there is a little point in spending time on the analysis of its failure.

As we know that there are different kinds of students in the class rooms. They differ in their understanding ability, shapes and sizes and also in physical appearance, I mean dressing style, color and occasions. Therefore we need to find out that their likes and dislikes. So in class rooms, we need to know the learners so that we can make sure the curriculum first.

It is important to look into the reality in our classrooms, recognizing that each learner is unique and what would engage or intrigue one learner wouldn't have the slightest chance of capturing the attention of another student. The student should focus on every student.

Robert Sylvester (1995) said that “students' brains differ as much as their fingerprints and faces do”

Students learning styles and the fact that they all learn in different ways, process information differently, and have distinct preference about where, when, and how we learn.

Thus, each learner has different learning styles. Now let us look at some kind of learning styles.

Knowing how one learns is necessary information if one is to learn throughout the life. Generally the teacher who helps students to develop and internalize metacognitive strategies through direct instructions, modeling, and practice promote learning. To know the students access, process, and express information most easily we have to look at theories of learning styles and multiple intelligence. As more information about each students learning styles, modalities, multiple intelligences, and thinking styles is gathered.

Rita Dunn and Ken Dunn classify learning styles as:

- 1) Auditory
- 2) Visual
- 3) Tactile

4) Kinesthetic

1. Auditory learners: auditory learners always used to auditing. They easily absorb spoken and heard material and they like to be involved in oral questioning rather than reading materials. They used to prefer listening to lectures, stories and songs and also they enjoy variation such as voice inflection and international pitch. They always like to audit because they feel that it is the easy way to learn. They like to discuss and use opportunities to talk about their learning with their fellow students. They usually use video tape to auditing or listening.

2. Visual learners: visual learners learn best from information that they see or read. They usually see illustrations, pictures, and diagrams, graphic organizers are useful tools for them to construct meaning visually. They generally learn from watching movies, television, etc. color has an impact on their learner on their learning, they usually use video, movies, CD-Rom, modeling, charts, diagrams, etc. The learners prefer to learn by seeing. They have good visual recall and prefer information to be presented visually. They often use hand movements when describing or recalling events or objects and have a tendency to look upwards when thinking.

3. Tactile learners: tactile means using the sense of touch they used to learn best from handling or touching materials, writing, drawing and also being involved with concrete experience. They generally use role- play, mime, CD-Rome, hands-on immersion to learn effectively.

4. Kinesthetic: it means movement. This kind of learner learns best by doing and moving. They physically involved in their learning activities so that are meaningful and relevant in their lives. These kinds of learners are also use hands on immersion, CD-Rom, role play, mime to learn. They prefer to learn by doing. They enjoy physical activities, field trips, manipulating objects and other practical, first-hand experience. The following are the factors that affect learning styles.

- A. Noise level:** the teacher has to consider that to students prefer noise or quiet. Generally the students prefer noise. So the teacher should maintain noise and quiet according to the circumstances.
- B. Design structure:** here the class room design structure is the classroom is too hot or cold? What is the preferred room arrangement?
- C. Motivation and persistence:** the teacher should motivate the students. Then the students are able to engage for long or short period of time.

- D. Responsibility:** the teacher has to that the students are self directed and fairly independent or do they need guidance. Students also should have the responsibility of what they learning throughout the year.
- E. Structure:** the teacher has to know that whether the students prefer to have more flexibility, or do they need detained structure? And has to do according to the students' willingness.
- F. Individual/peer:** the teacher should know that weather the students like to work with others or do they prefer to learn alone. Generally most of the students want to learn with each other, but some students prefer to learn alone.

THINKING STYLES

Actually different kinds of students have different kinds of thinking styles. But in the year 1982 Anthony Gregorc (1982) at the University of Connecticut has developed the theory of thinking styles based on two variables. They are:

- The way we view the world. Whether we see the world in an abstract or concrete way.
- The way we order the world. Here, in a sequential or random order.

Anthony Gregorc combines this variable to create four styles of thinking. They are:

- i. Concrete random thinking
- ii. Concrete sequential thinking
- iii. Abstract sequential thinking
- iv. Abstract random thinking

1) Concrete random thinking: These are also known as divergent thinkers.

They use to enjoy experiments and also experimentation. They have a need to find alternate ways of doing things. That is why concrete random thinkers need to be allowed in the classroom to have opportunities to make choices. These choices are about their learning and also about how they demonstrate understandings. They are eager to take intuitive leaps in order to create. Not only that they enjoy creating new models and practical things that result from their new learning and concept development. It is easier to think in concrete terms rather than abstract. Concrete object is one that you can see and feel.

2) Concrete sequential thinkers: concrete sequential thinkers slightly differ from concrete random thinkers. They are based on in the physical world identified through their senses. They like lectures, speeches, and teacher directed activities. They require structure, frameworks, timelines and also

organization to their learning. Finally they are detail oriented, notice details, and recall them with ease.

3) Abstract sequential thinkers: abstract means based on general ideas and not on any particular thing or situation. Abstract sequential thinkers are happy when involved with their own work and investigation. Their thinking processes are rationale, logical and intellectual. These learners need to have the time to examine fully the new ideas, concepts and theories with which they have been presented. They delight in the world of theory and abstract thought. I mean here general ideas, or thoughts. They would like to support the new information by investigating and analyzing so that the learning makes senses and has real meaning for them.

4) Abstract random thinkers: abstract random thinkers organize information through self reflection and also prefer working in people oriented, fluid situations. They would like to discuss and also interact with others as they learn: cooperate group learning, centers or situations, and partner work facilitate their understanding. These learners live in a world of feelings and demotions they will learn best when they can personalize information.

These four kinds of thinking styles were developed by Anthony Gregorc (1982) at the University of Connecticut.

David Kolb (1964) also developed a learning style profile based on experimental learning, which included the following four groups.

1) Accommodators: accommodators like to be creative, they are flexible risk takers. They always like to try and new things and shake us their own and others creativity.

2) Converges: 'converge' means to move towards a place from different directions and meet. Here converges value and want to know only what is useful and relevant to the immediate situation or question. They like clear goals, and specific timelines. Converges are good at pulling out and organizing essential information.

3) Assimilators: 'assimilate' means to fully understand an idea or some information so that you are able to use it yourself. So assimilators have the patience and tenacity to search deeply into information and they enjoy abstract content. Their belief is that they learn from past experiences and from experts.

They always want to investigate, read, research, and learn as much as possible about a topic.

4) Diverges: 'diverge' means to separate and go in different directions.

Diverges like to learn from others through conversation and dialogues. They want to explore and seek alternatives, and they are altruistic in their pursuit of learning. They value possibility and caring environments where their surroundings are comfortable.

Bernice McCarthy 4 Mat Model (McCarthy, 1990) identifies four learning styles. They are

- a) The imaginative learner.
- b) The analytical learner.
- c) The common-sense learner. And
- d) The dynamic learner

Learners are capable of working in all four areas. Some of them time, but most of us tend to favour one style over all others. The trick for teachers is to provide experience in the four areas to accommodate all learners and to increase their range of learning style. Now let us look at these four learning styles in detail.

A. The imaginative learner: (experiencing) the imaginative learners are

innovative, preferring to learn through feeling and reflecting. They always seek meaning. Their teacher needs to create a reason and provide a rationale for the learning that connects to their own lives and has relevance. Positive relationships and nurturing teachers are important aspects that need to be present in classroom. Because learners are very sensitive so that teacher should take care of it when he dealing with the learner.

B. The analytical learner: (conceptualizing) the analytical learners prefer to learn by watching and thinking. They always seek facts. They appreciate information and teacher lectures. They create concepts and models. By watching and thinking they inspired to create some new concepts and models. They are very honest. They use to praise speeches and lectures of the teacher

and information.

C. The common sense learner: (applying) the common sense learners trying to apply the common sense. They always seek usability and practical application. They use to prefer to learn through thinking and trying out. The common sense learners' process is experimentation and problem solving that intrigue this learners.

D. The dynamic learner: (creating) the dynamic learners always prefer for creating. They are risk takers and prefer self discovery. They dislike rigid routines and methodical tasks. The dynamic learners always seek to learn through trial and error and prefer to learn by trying and sensing. They would like to teach themselves and also others. They want to use the teacher as a resource.

Let us see briefly the kinds of learners/key points.

1) Imaginative learner: here teacher is motivator

- i. They seek meaning, innovative imaginative
- ii. They prefer to learn through sensing/ watching
- iii. Favourite question: why?
- iv. Teacher needs to create a reason and provide rationale.

2) Analytical learning: here the teacher is information provider

- i. They seek facts create concepts and models
- ii. Prefer to learn through watching/ thinking
- iii. Favourite question: what?
- iv. Teacher needs to facts

3) Common sense learner: here teacher is facilitator/ coach.

- i. They seek usability, practical application
- ii. Prefer to learn through thinking/ trying out

- iii. Favourite question: how does this work?
- iv. Teacher needs to encourage experimentation

4) Dynamic learner: here teacher is resource/ evaluator.

- i. They use trial and error, make it happen
- ii. Prefer to learn through trying out/ sensing
- iii. Favourite question: what can this become?
- iv. Teacher needs to let them teach themselves and others

[Silver Strong and Perini (2000) outline model of four learning styles derived from the theories of Carl Jung and Isabel Briggs Myers]

There are some other learners. They are

- 1) Self expressive learners
- 2) Mastery learners
- 3) Understanding learners and
- 4) Interpersonal learner

1. Self experienced learner: self experienced learners are innovative, creative learners. They always want to express so that they prefer opportunities for original, flexible and elaborative thinking. Self expressive learners appreciate teachers who give them choices and facilities their learning.

2. Mastery learning: mastery learners enjoy developing mastery of basic skills. They always prefer opportunities to observe, describe, memorize and practice new learning to reach mastery. They also appreciate teachers who present information and arrange for practice. So they always give importance to the mastery.

3. Understanding learners: they are good at understanding. They prefer opportunities to summarize, classify, compare, contrast, and analytically seeking evidence to support their learning. They appreciate teachers who provide information and then probe for explanation and reasons behind the

facts.

- 4. Interpersonal learners:** they prefer opportunities to socialize, describe feelings, emphasize, and provide support and approval. So they don't have anything as their personal and they describe every feeling at their own. They appreciate teachers who relate the content to them personally so that they can recognize relevance and add meaning to their work.

USING LEARNING AND THINKING STYLES IN THE CLASSROOM

The analogues use of four items with which most people are familiar [a beach ball, clipboard, microscope, and puppy] can help learners understand the attributes of each style and to remember that style by recalling those attributes that relate to the familiar items.

After the brain storming, students can link the profiles to what would be important to provide for these types of learners in the classroom in order for them to be successful in school.

Teachers can point out that we all have some characteristics of each type but those students' top two choices show the way they would prefer to learn. One group of teachers generated the following list containing things that they thought the four types would value in the classroom.

1) Beach ball

- Variety of resources

- Adaptive environment
- Various manipulates
- Spontaneity
- Extension to activities
- Personal freedom

2) Clip board

- Organization
- Structure
- Visual directions
- Clear closure
- Sequential learning
- Clear procedures
- Consistent routines
- Clear expectations

3) Micro scope

- Discovery learning
- Analyzing concepts
- Deep exploration
- discussion
- Focus on details
- Ownership

4) Puppy

- Comfortable environment

- Encouraging atmosphere
- Supportive grouping
- Safe climate
- Respectful colleagues
- Empathetic listeners
- Sensitive peers

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|-------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Beach Ball | Concrete Random ➤ Divergent ➤ Experimental ➤ Inventive | Accommodator ➤ Likes to try new ideas ➤ Values creativity, flexibility and risk takers. | Self Expressive ➤ Feelings to construct new ideas. ➤ Produces original and unique materials. | Type4 Dynamic ➤ Create and act. ➤ Usefulness and application of learning. |
| Clipboard | Concrete Sequential ➤ Task oriented ➤ Efficient ➤ Detailed | Converger ➤ Values what is useful and relevant, immediacy, and organizing essential information. | Mastery ➤ Absorbs information concretely, and processes step by step | Type3 Common sense ➤ Think and do. ➤ Active and practical ➤ Make things work. |
| Microscope | Abstract sequential ➤ Intellectual ➤ Analytical ➤ Theoretical | Assimilation ➤ Avid readers who seek to learn. ➤ Patience for research. | Understanding ➤ Refers to explore ideas and use reason and logic based on evidence. | Type2 Analytical ➤ Reflect and think. ➤ Observes who appreciate lecture methods. |

| Pup py | Abstract Random | Diverger | Interpersonal | Type1 |
|-----------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| | ➤ maginative | I ➤ positive, caring environments that are | ➤ ppreciates concrete ideas and | Imaginative ➤ f |
| | ➤ motional | E attractive, comfortable, and | social interaction to process and | eel and |
| | ➤ olistic | H people-oriented. | use knowledge. | reflect |
| | | | | ➤ c reate and reflect on an experience. |

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Howard Gardner and hatch describes the process unsurprisingly, in terms of multiple intelligences and in doing so, demonstrate the many overlaps between multiple intelligence theory and the area of study.

It is of the utmost important that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. We are so different largely because we all have different combination of intelligences.

Howard Gardner offer us eight ways of being smart:-

1. Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Ability to perceive the visual. These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Their skills include:

puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects, interpreting visual images.

Possible career interests:

Navigators, sculptors, visual artists, inventors, architects, interior designers, mechanics, engineers

2. Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

Ability to use words and language. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Their skills include:

listening, speaking, writing, storytelling, explaining, teaching, using humor, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

Possible career interests:

Poet, journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

3. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

Ability to use reason, logic and numbers. These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learners ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include:

problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, handling long chains of reason to make local progressions, doing controlled experiments, questioning and wondering about natural events, performing complex mathematical calculations, working with geometric shapes

Possible career paths:

Scientists, engineers, computer programmers, researchers, accountants, mathematicians

4. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

Ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. (e.g. ball play, balancing beams). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able

to remember and process information.

Their skills include:

Dancing, physical co-ordination, sports, hands on experimentation, using body language, crafts, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, expressing emotions through the body

Possible career paths:

Athletes, physical education teachers, dancers, actors, firefighters, artisans

5. Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

Ability to produce and appreciate music. These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps).

Their skills include:

Singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, recognizing tonal patterns, composing music, remembering melodies, understanding the structure and rhythm of music

Possible career paths:

Musician, disc jockey, singer, composer

6. Interpersonal Intelligence

Ability to relate and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

Their skills include:

seeing things from other perspectives (dual-perspective), listening, using empathy,

understanding other people's moods and feelings, counseling, co-operating with groups, noticing people's moods, motivations and intentions, communicating both verbally and non-verbally, building trust, peaceful conflict resolution, establishing positive relations with other people.

Possible Career Paths:

Counselor, salesperson, politician, business person

7. Intrapersonal Intelligence

Ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their Skills include:

Recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others

8. Naturalist: Spending time outdoors, sorting, classifying, and noticing patterns.

| Intelligence | Preferences |
|--|---|
| Linguistic/verbal learner: intelligence related to language and to the written and spoken word | Likes to: read, write and tell stories, work with riddles. Is good at: using descriptive language, memorizing places, dates and trivia. Learns best by: saying, hearing and seeing words. |

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|--|---|
| Logical/mathematical learner: intelligence related to reasoning, numbers, abstractions and patterns | Likes to: do experiments, work things out, work with numbers, ask questions and explore patterns and relationships. Is good at: maths, reasoning, logic and problem-solving, working from concrete to abstract. Learns best by: categorizing, classifying and working with abstract patterns and relationships. |
| Spatial/visual learner: intelligence related to anything visual and the creation of mental images | Likes to: draw, build, design and create things, daydream, look at pictures and slides, watch films and play with machines. Is good at: imagining things, sensing changes, mazes and puzzles, and reading maps and charts. Learns best by: visualizing, dreaming, using the 'mind's eye' and working with pictures. |
| Bodily/kinesthetic learner: intelligence related to physical movement and actions located in the brain's motor cortex (where movement is controlled) | Likes to: move around, touch, 'tinker', and talk, use body language and perform. Is good at: physical activities and crafts. Learns best by: touching, moving, interacting with space and processing knowledge through bodily sensations. |
| Musical learner: intelligence related to sounds and auditory patterns, to rhythm, beat and tempo | Likes to: play musical instruments, sing, drum. Likes the sound of the human voice. Is good at: listening, inventing tunes, keeping time (tempo), discriminating between different sounds. Learns best by: listening, especially if things are set to music or are rhythmical. |
| Interpersonal learner: intelligence related to relationships with others and various means of communication | Likes to: have lots of friends, talk to people, solve problems and join groups. Is good at: understanding other people's feelings, leading others, organizing and communicating. Learns best by: sharing, comparing, relating and talking. |
| Intrapersonal learner: intelligence related to self-reflection and self-awareness | Likes to: work alone and pursue own interests, daydream. Is good at: understanding self, focusing inwards on feelings and dreams, following instincts, pursuing interests/goals and being original. Learns best by: working alone, individualized projects, self-paced instruction and having own space. |

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| Naturalistic learner: intelligence related to observation and awareness of the natural world and the patterns to be found there | Likes to: work outdoors or at least close to the natural environment. Is good at: collecting and classifying, identifying natural artifacts. Learns best by: working outdoors, relating classroom ideas and activities to the natural world. |
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SUMMARY:-

Descriptions of learning styles are plentiful and some are complex. One description commonly immediate way is the visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. It is likely that one-third of any given class will have a preference for learning which is undertaken in one of these divisions. This means that teacher should be aware of and take into account the fact that some of their pupils will find it difficult to make headway with their learning.

It is very important that opportunities are given to learners of all types to take part fully in the planned learning activities in classrooms and that they should have full access to the curriculum whatever learning style preference might be.

FACTORS DETERMINING LEARNING STYLES:-

Each learner's desire to learn and his approaches to the process of learning are determined by his cognitive structure, attitudes and motivations. The cognitive structure is believed to represent cognitive semantic schemata which are derived from the individual's interactions with both the physical and culture environment. Both personal experiences and socially mediated experience and socially mediated experience determine the development of the cognitive structure and the schematic organization of knowledge. This cognitive structure, with the help of motivation variables, controls the modes of behavior exhibited by individuals. The modes of behavior the individual develops seem to determine his preferences in choosing learning styles.

More : <http://gk-dvr.blogspot.com>