HOW TO RECOGNIZE WHICH LEARNING STYLE A STUDENT NEEDS

Gulbakhor Tursunboyeva
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
E-mail: gulbahorislomovna@gmail.com

Abstract: Students are the unique entities with different characteristics to be paid attention by the teachers in teaching and learning process. Teachers can feed their students based on their unique characteristics. Students learning style is one of the entities which will contribute toward students' success in learning. This paper is aimed to identify and to prepare information about students' major perceptual learning style preferences and to identify and to prepare information about students' minor learning preferences.
Key words: *learning style, student needs, approach, VARK model, kinesthetic, SWOT ("Study without tears"), comprehend.*

Introduction

In recent years, the idea that learning styles are the best way to learn for a student has been debunked. However, learning styles are widely accepted in education as a way to promote the idea that every student learns differently. Learning styles are not a prescription for teaching students, but they help a teacher recognize the preferential way in which a student processes and retains information. An important idea in education is that individual students have different learning styles that are associated with the way that a student prefers to learn.

Learning style has been defined differently by experts and researchers in ESL/EFL learning. However, the literature on learning styles uses the terms learning style, cognitive style, personality type, sensory preference, modality, and others rather loosely and often interchangeably. Keefe proposes that learning style may be defined as the *"cognitive, affective and psychological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment"*. Meanwhile, Dunn & Griggs defined that learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others. In addition, Dunn defined learning styles as the way individuals begin to concentrate on, process, internalize, and retain new and difficult information.

On the contrary, Brown defined learning style as "a term that refers to consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preference within an individual. Similar to Dunn, Felder & Henriques define learning styles as "*the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retain, and retrieves information*". Grasha defined learning styles as "*personal qualities that influence a student's ability to acquire information, to interact with peers and the teacher, and otherwise participate in learning experiences."* Similar to Dunn, et al. and Felder & Henriques, Reid define learning style as individual's natural,habitual, and preferred ways of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills. Referring to the above definitions, in general, learning style can be concluded into three characteristics, namely (1)the way of absorbing, retaining, recalling, and retrieving information; (2)learning style is a set of characteristics and personal qualities that influence learners' ability to acquire information, interact with and respond to learning environment;

and (3) learning style is consistent and stable indicators. What is noticeable in all the definitions stated above is that language learners differ from one learner to another, that is a learner in learning English may prefer seeing and hearing to speaking and being actively involved in the activities. Another learner may, in contrast, be more interested in having an outstanding part in classroom

activities and being actively engaged in classroom debates. Therefore, language learners do not learn all in the same way.

Students, as one of the independent factors in education, are unique entity with distinct internal and external characteristics. The internal characteristics are, for instance, motivation, attitude, and belief, personality, learning style, and learning strategy, whereas the external characteristics are environmental factor, social background, physical differences, and past experiences. Since these characteristics are essential factors in determining the successful of language learning, they need to be optimized fully and paid more attention both by teacher and students .One of the most accepted understandings of learning styles is that student learning styles fall into three categories: Visual Learners, Auditory Learners and Kinesthetic Learners. These learning styles are found within educational theorist Neil Flemings VARK model of student learning. VARK is an acronym that refers to the four types of learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing Preference, and Kinesthetic. The VARK model acknowledges that students have different approaches to how they process information, referred to as "*preferred learning modes*." The main ideas of VARK are outlined in learning styles again: VARKing up the right tree!

The term "learning styles" speaks to the understanding that every student learns differently. Technically, an individuals learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. For example, when learning how to build a clock, some students understand the process by following verbal instructions, while others have to physically manipulate the clock themselves. This notion of individualized learning styles has gained widespread recognition in education theory and classroom management strategy. Individual learning styles depend on cognitive, emotional and environmental factors, as well as one's prior experience. In other words: everyone is different. It is important for educators to understand the differences in their students' learning styles, so that they can implement best practice strategies into their daily activities, curriculum and assessments. Many degree programs, specifically higher level ones like a doctorate of education, integrate different learning styles and educational obstacles directly into program curriculum.

Swot Strategies: Referred to as SWOT (Study Without Tears), Flemings provides advice on how students can use their learning modalities and skills to their advantage when studying for an upcoming test or assignment.

Visual SWOT Strategies

1. Utilize graphic organizers such as charts, graphs, and diagrams.
2. Redraw your pages from memory.
3. Replace important words with symbols or initials.
4. Highlight important key terms in corresponding colors.

Aural SWOT Strategies

➢ Record your summarized notes and listen to them on tape.
➢ Talk it out. Have a discussion with others to expand upon your understanding of a topic.
➢ Reread your notes and/or assignment out loud.
➢ Explain your notes to your peers/fellow "aural" learners.

Read/Write SWOT Strategies

• Write, write and rewrite your words and notes.
• Reword main ideas and principles to gain a deeper understanding.
• Organize diagrams, charts, and graphic organizers into statements.

Kinesthetic SWOT Strategies

➢ Use real life examples, applications and case studies in your summary to help with abstract concepts.

➢ Redo lab experiments or projects.
➢ Utilize pictures and photographs that illustrate your idea.

Education continues to promote learning styles as a way for teachers to support students and differentiate lessons. While there are multiple models related to learning styles, the VARK model is among the most widely used since it sufficiently addresses learner diversity and needs. The VARK model stands for: The following information goes into detail about the VARK learning styles, how to recognize these styles in learners and how to integrate the style into classwork. It is good to remember that not all learners fit exactly into one category. There is often overlap in learner preference when it comes to style, especially across subject matter and activity.

1. Visual Learning

Recognizing visual learners: The visual learners in your classroom like to see and observe the things that they are learning about. Visual learners like to use pictures, diagrams and written directions to access information. This learning style has also been known as "spatial. The students who are visual or spatial learners might draw, make lists or take notes in order to interact with and process information.

Supporting visual learners: Some of the more traditional styles of teaching support visual learners, such as whiteboards or projecting information onto a screen. Assignments could ask learners to make pictures or diagrams. In addition, providing class notes or handouts that students can follow along with are a great way to integrate visual learning into your curriculum. Visual learners may have a tough time with lectures and could need more time to process information that they hear auditorily.

2. Auditory Learning

Recognizing auditory learners: The auditory learners in your class learn best by listening and relating information to sound. These are students who prefer listening to a lecture or a recording rather than taking written notes. They may also be students who think out loud and speak through a concept in order to dive into it. Your auditory learners are most likely your most vocal students in class. They may also be the ones who read out loud to themselves.

Supporting auditory learners: Including a lot of time for discussion can support the auditory learners in your classroom. They want to hear what others have to say and share their own ideas in order to learn and process information. When you are giving a lecture, ask auditory learners to repeat what they have learned back to you. Call and response or question-and-answer processes can also benefit auditory learners.

3. Reading/Writing Learning

Recognizing reading/writing learners: This learning style is often confused with visual learning because reading/writing learners like to learn using the written word. This may seem like visual learning, but reading/writing preference learners can be discerned as those who express themselves through writing. They also enjoy reading articles and writing in diaries or journals. Your reading/writing learners may be experts with search engines and even old-school encyclopedias.

Supporting reading/writing learners: Most of the traditional educational system caters toward this type of learner. The reading/writing learner learns by researching, reading books and writing. They will usually be content to write an essay or create a written project. While these students may not be as vocal as auditory learners, they can express themselves well with the written word.

4. Kinesthetic Learning

Recognizing kinesthetic learners: Kinesthetic or tactile learners learn by experiencing and doing. They like to use their hands and bodies as learning instruments, often acting out events and using their hands when they talk. A kinesthetic learner may seem wiggly in the classroom. Students who are particularly good athletes or dancers may be kinesthetic learners because they are adept at following the directions of a game or a dance using their body.

Supporting kinesthetic learners: Since kinesthetic learners learn through movement, teachers may ask them to act out scenes from a book or use movement in other ways during the learning process. For example, a kinesthetic learner can benefit by walking in place or pacing in a small area while trying to memorize facts.

Learning style is about how students learn rather than what they learn. Determining students' learning styles provides information about their specific preferences. Understanding learning styles can make it easier to create, modify, and develop more efficient curriculum and educational programs.

Conclusion

Understanding students' learning styles is an essential component of effective teaching, as it allows educators to tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners. This research highlights the importance of identifying major and minor perceptual preferences through models such as VARK, which categorizes learners as Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, or Kinesthetic. Recognizing these preferences enables teachers to design lessons, activities, and assessments that align with how students process and retain information, ultimately enhancing engagement and academic performance.

By integrating strategies like SWOT (Study Without Tears) tailored to each learning style, educators can support students in maximizing their strengths and addressing potential challenges. It is also important to note that many students exhibit a combination of learning modalities, and flexible teaching approaches that accommodate multiple styles are often the most effective. Ultimately, awareness of learning styles fosters a more inclusive and responsive learning environment, empowering students to achieve their full potential and giving teachers the tools to implement differentiated instruction that supports long-term learning success.

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