

## Learning Styles

Learning styles relate to how one prefers to learn and is unique to need, preference, and situation. Most people will favour a particular method, or have a primary learning style. This style, or preference, is the method of learning particular to an individual that is presumed to allow that individual to learn best. But, it also may affect how a person acts in a group, participates in activities, relates to others, solves problems, and interacts in a work environment. When a learner understands their style they become practiced at completing material, helping others, and become enthusiastic contributors.

## Adapting Your Learning Style

As a trainer, it is important to learn what styles suit individuals in your audience, but equally important to understand your own preference; as it is critical to be able to address learning strategies for all participants. When learning preference does not match a learning environment, parties involved need to compensate. This is an important avenue to explore; but put simply here, a qualified trainer knows their own learning style and preference. As it is accepted that trainer's can have a tendency to favour their own style when presenting material, especially if unaware of this dynamic, which can inhibit the learner if not careful.

## Sensory Learning

Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic models emphasize the sensory approach to stimuli intake. It is most often described by four basic learning styles:

1. Visual learning (learn by seeing).
2. Auditory learning (learn by hearing).
3. Reading/writing (learn by processing text).
4. Kinesthetic or practical learning (learn by doing).

The term multi-modal, in this model, describes people who have more than one strong learning style; therefore, participants should not be labeled into only one preference. To follow is a list that provides insight into different activities for each style.

## Visual Techniques

1. Draw or sketch whatever it is you are trying to achieve. Having a concrete visual in mind that will help to progress towards a goal.
2. Brainmap it - brain maps or mind maps offer a compact way to get both an overview of a project as well as an easy way to add details.
3. Learn signs and symbols, to allow one to record information more efficiently.
4. Use information design – for information that has an inherent structure, applying information design helps convey that information more clearly.
5. Use visual learning techniques – webs, idea maps, concept maps, and plots.
6. Map your task flow - specific sequence to organize thoughts on what needs to be done or to help complete tasks or learn new topics.

## Verbal and Auditory Techniques

1. Stimulate ideas - play rhyming games, utter nonsense words it will loosen you up, making you more receptive to learning.
2. Brainstorm - this is a time-honored technique that combines verbal activity, writing, and collaboration – most effective in a group.
3. Learn by osmosis - got an iPod? Record a few of your own podcasts, upload and sleep on it. Literally. Put it under your pillow and playback.
4. Cognitive enhancers - Binaural beats to produce alpha, beta, delta, and theta waves: can produce sleep, restfulness, relaxation, alertness, or concentration.
5. Laugh - laughing relaxes the body to help generate and absorb new ideas.

## Kinesthetic Techniques

1. Write - writing by hand stimulates ideas. The simple act of holding and using a pen massages acupuncture points in the hand, which helps stimulate ideas.
2. Carry a quality notebook at all times - ideas may suddenly come to you. Record them immediately.
3. Keep a journal - tracking experiences over time - add in visual details, charts, brainmaps, etc. as a creative way to keep tabs on what you are learning.
4. Organize - use sticky colored tabs to divide up a notebook or journal. They are a great way to partition ideas for easy referral.
5. Use post-it notes - post-it notes provide a helpful way to record your thoughts about passages in books without defacing them.

## Training Considerations

1. Use techniques that best suits participant need by choosing a variety of activities.
2. Have awareness that each individual will have a primary preference when learning.
3. Gain knowledge, try different techniques to learn what best suits your audience.
4. Understand learning strengths and weaknesses, and share practical applications and knowledge of what works and what does not.
5. Examine personal skills that could be improved on, expand where necessary.
6. Adapt to and manage situations that don't always suit your training style.
7. Practice what will work for you and others in diverse situations.

Probably no greater honor can come to any man than the respect of his colleagues.

~ Cary Grant

