

Learning Styles

What is a learning style?

A learning style is our preferred way of taking in and putting out information in a learning setting (not in a work setting or social setting).

Learning styles ARE NOT strengths or weaknesses – they are preferences!

What are the benefits of knowing your learning style?

- Understand how you learn best
- Helps you identify study strategies that are helpful and those that might be a waste of time
- Develop study strategies that are more effective based upon your learning style resulting in greater academic success
- Because you are studying more effectively you will need less time for studying!

What is your learning style?

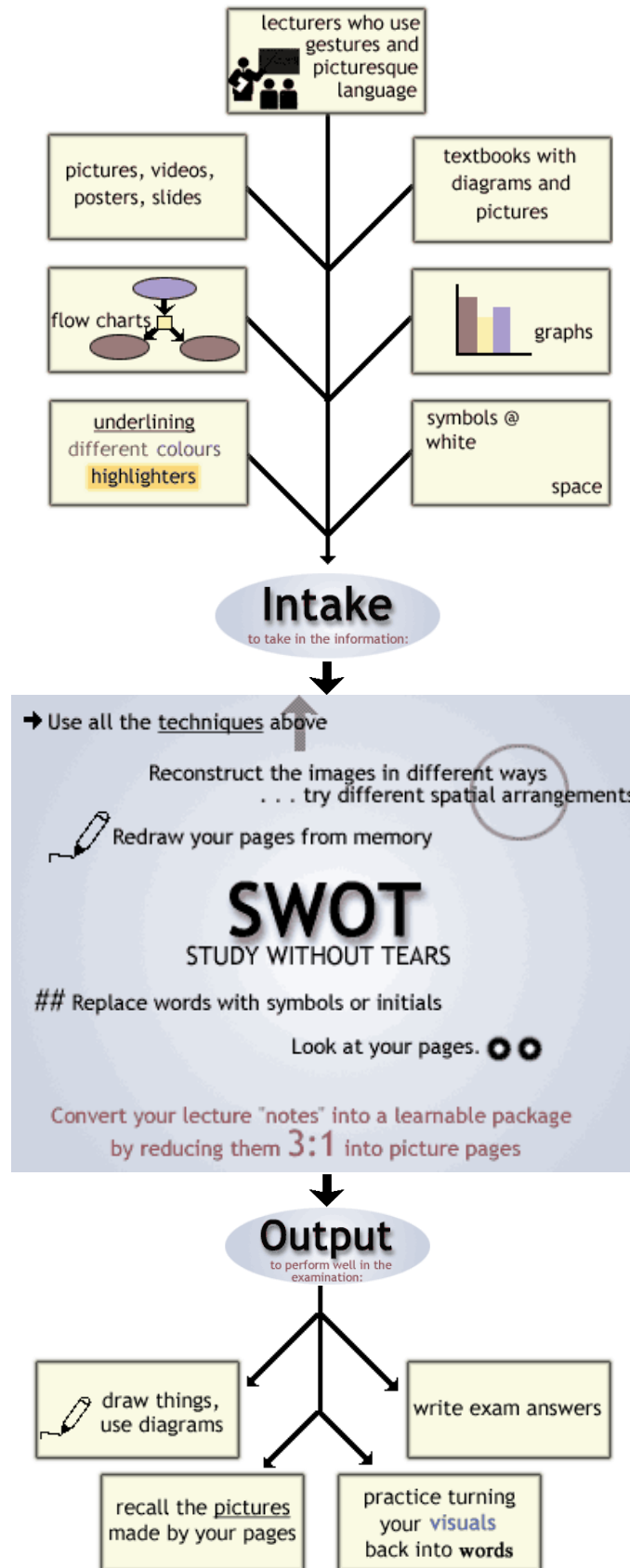
Take the VARK learning styles assessment by going to the following website:

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>

Make sure you print out your results. Review your results to identify your preferred learning style. Explore the study strategies to use for your preferred learning style.

Visual Study Strategies

V



If you are a visual learner, you want to see the whole picture when learning something. You are often influenced by the look of an object. Drawing things or seeing diagrams helps you to learn.

Auditory (Aural) Study Strategies

A

If you have a strong preference for learning by **Auditory** methods (**A** = hearing) you should use some or all of the following:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- attend classes
- attend discussions and tutorials
- discuss topics with others
- discuss topics with your teachers
- explain new ideas to other people
- use a tape recorder
- remember the interesting examples, stories, jokes...
- describe the overheads, pictures and other visuals to somebody who was not there
- leave spaces in your notes for later recall and 'filling'

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your notes into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1)

- Your notes may be poor because you prefer to listen. You will need to expand your notes by talking with others and collecting notes from the textbook.
- Put your summarized notes onto tapes and listen to them.
- Ask others to 'hear' your understanding of a topic.
- Read your summarized notes aloud.
- Explain your notes to another 'aural' person.

OUTPUT

To perform well in any test or assignment:

- Imagine talking with the instructor
- Listen to your voices and write them down.
- Spend time in quiet places recalling the ideas.
- Practice writing answers to old exam questions.
- Speak your answers aloud or inside your head.

If you are an auditory (aural) learner, you prefer to have things on handouts such as these explained to you. The written words are not as valuable as those you hear.

Read/Write Study Strategies

R & W

If you have a strong preference for learning by **Reading** and **Writing (R & W)** learning you should use some or all of the following:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- lists
- headings
- dictionaries
- glossaries
- definitions
- handouts
- textbooks
- readings - library
- notes (often verbatim)
- teachers who use words well and have lots of information in sentences and notes
- essays
- manuals (computing and laboratory)

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your notes into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1).

- Write out the words again and again.
- Read your notes (silently) again and again.
- Rewrite the ideas and principles into other words.
- Organize any diagrams, graphs ... into statements, e.g. "The trend is..."
- Turn reactions, actions, diagrams, charts and flows into words.
- Imagine your lists arranged in multiple choice questions and distinguish each from each.

OUTPUT

To perform well in any test, assignment or examination:

- Write exam answers.
- Practice with multiple choice questions.
- Write paragraphs, beginnings and endings.
- Write your lists (a,b,c,d,1,2,3,4).
- Arrange your words into hierarchies and points.

If you are a read/write learner, you like handouts that look like this one because the emphasis is on words and lists. You learn by seeing the words and the meanings of the words, so any talk is OK but a handout is better.

Kinesthetic Study Strategies

K

If you have a strong **Kinesthetic** preference for learning you should use some or all of the following:

INTAKE

To take in the information

- all your senses - sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing ...
- laboratories
- field trips
- field tours
- examples of principles
- lecturers who give real-life examples
- applications
- hands-on approaches (computing)
- trial and error
- collections of rock types, plants, shells, grasses...
- exhibits, samples, photographs...
- recipes - solutions to problems, previous exam papers

SWOT - Study without tears

To make a learnable package:

Convert your lecture "notes" into a learnable package by reducing them (3:1).

- Your lecture notes may be poor because the topics were not 'concrete' or 'relevant'.
- You will remember the "real" things that happened.
- Put plenty of examples into your summary. Use case studies and applications to help with principles and abstract concepts.
- Talk about your notes with another "K" person.
- Use pictures and photographs that illustrate an idea.
- Go back to the laboratory or your lab manual.
- Recall the experiments, field trip...

OUTPUT

To perform well in the examination:

- Write practice answers, paragraphs...
- Role play the exam situation in your own room.
-

If you are a kinesthetic learner, you need to experience the ideas so that you can understand them. You need to do things to understand. Ideas are only valuable if they sound practical, real, and relevant to you.

Multimodal Study Strategies

If you have multiple preferences you are in the majority as somewhere between fifty and seventy percent of any population seems to fit into that group.

Multiple preferences are interesting and quite varied. For example you may have two strong preferences V and A or R and K, or you may have three strong preferences such as VAR or ARK. Some people have no particular strong preferences and their scores are almost even for all four modes.

Multiple preferences give you choices of two or three or four modes to use for your interaction with others. Some people have admitted that if they want to be annoying they stay in a mode different from the person with whom they are working. For example they may ask for written evidence in an argument, knowing that the other person much prefers to refer only to oral information. Positive reactions mean that those with multimodal preferences choose to match or align their mode to the significant others around them.

If you have two dominant or equal preferences please read the study strategies that apply to your two choices. If you have three preferences read the three lists that apply and similarly for those with four. You will need to read two or three or four lists of strategies. One interesting piece of information that people with multimodal preferences have told us is that it is necessary for them to use more than one strategy for learning and communicating. They feel insecure with only one. Alternatively those with a single preference often "get it" by using the set of strategies that align with their single preference.

We are noticing some differences among those who are multimodal especially those who have chosen fewer than 17 options and those who have chosen more. If you have chosen fewer than 17 of the options in the questionnaire you may prefer to see your highest score as your main preference - almost like a single preference. You are probably more decisive than those who have chosen 17+ options.

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