

How Do You Learn?

We begin learning before we are even born, and we don't stop learning for the rest of our lives. But the way people learn comes differently to all of us-- some have it easier than others. Richard Felder said, "Students have different strengths and preferences in the ways they take in and process information--which is to say, they have different learning styles." In 1988, Richard Felder and Linda Silverman developed a series of questions to help students find out what type of learner they are. I, in fact, took this learning test and found out that I was a visual learner.

When learning new things, seeing pictures, diagrams, films, and especially demonstrations helps me to remember and learn new things.

Richard Felder's index of learning style has four types of learning.

Sensing (concrete thinker, practical, oriented toward facts and procedures) or intuitive (abstract thinker, innovative, oriented towards theories and underlying meaning); visual (prefer visual representations of presented materials, such as pictures, diagrams and flow charts) or verbal (prefer written and spoken explanation); active (learn by trying things out, enjoy working in groups) or reflective (learn by thinking things through, prefer working alone or with a single familiar partner); sequential (linear thinking process learn in small incremental steps) or global (holistic thinking process, leaning in larger leaps.)

Falling into the category of a visual learner, I like to see things--hence the word visual. As a visual learner, when teachers show visual things such as pictures, diagrams and demonstrations, this really helps me to understand what is being taught in the class room.

Richard Felder also said to, “Color-code your notes with a highlighter so that everything relating to one topic is the same color.” All these things play a big part in how I learn, and these things help me to understand and retain what I am learning, if I understand it in class that means I won’t go home and not know the assignment. So finding out that I am a visual learner has helped me a lot in my classes.

When I was about nine years old I started to play basketball, and one of the first fundamentals you learn is how to shoot a free throw. And I started off not the best at this, so my coach Miss. Morris showed me the right way to shoot a free throw. She said, “Stay on your toes,” so I did that. Then she said, “Shoot with one hand and use the other for support and to make a rainbow when you let the ball go, then imagine that your hand is a hook and hook your hand around the basket.” So I did exactly what my coach did, and I went on to win my schools free throw contest making 56 free throws in a row. Seeing her as an example, helped me to perfect the free throw. She always said, “free throws win games.”

Another time learning as a visual learner was in high school in my algebra class. Math was always a struggle for me, and this wasn’t any different. I knew that the only way I was going to pass this class was if I went to tutoring. And I went to tutoring every single day with Mrs. Millagan. She would write out the problem, and we would go through the steps together, then I would do it myself. After that, I would write out the problem and try to imagine the steps that we had gone through in my head. Step one, step two, step three and I would get it. Mrs. Millagan helped me to see what I was supposed to do to solve the problem.

Now that I’m in college I see why my learning style is so important. Since this is

my first semester back, I have been very lucky that all classes and teachers have something to offer me as a visual learner. In my freshman English class 1301, my teacher likes to give out plenty of hand outs and explains assignments on a over head projector, in my speech class he also likes to give hand outs, and in my sociology class he loves to draw diagrams on the chalk board and uses power points to explain each chapter. The writer of *Managing Your Own Learning* Mr. James R. Davis said it best, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we could get an education by having someone make a deposit in our account, pour it in our ear, or give us an injection? Learning in the new era requires that we cast off the old habit of passivity and take on with renewed vigor the role of active participant.” (47)It is because my teachers do these things to engage me as visual learners that help me learn and to do well in school.

Even though most people use all four types of learning, we usually favor one or two type mores than the other. Jill Perkin’s said, “But for personalized learning to be student-effective, our educational facilitators need to employ a variety of teaching and learning styles.” That is why we need teachers to teach students how to recognize what type of learner they are, while incorporating different learning styles in to there curriculum. Because as teachers it is your responsibility to provide the right tools for your students to succeed in life.

Works Cited

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