

Learning Modalities

There are three basic modalities to process information to memory: visual (learning by seeing), auditory (learning by hearing), and kinesthetic (learning by doing). Most people have one predominant modality, but some have a balance between two or even all three. Many students are aware of their preference, which helps them approach their own learning more efficiently.

Personality Characteristics of the Learning Modalities

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind wanders during verbal activities • Has trouble following or remembering verbal instructions • Doodles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is easily distracted • Quickly loses interest in visual demonstrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taps pencil or foot while thinking, studying, or writing tests • Enjoys doing experiments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers to observe rather than actively participate in group activities and discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys listening activities • Is active in group activities and discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys handling objects • Uses excessive hand gestures and body language • Makes physical contact with people when talking to them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to read silently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes to be read to • Prefers reading aloud to silent reading • Listens to music while studying or doing homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tends not to enjoy reading • Enjoys hands-on activities • Enjoys problem-solving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is neat and organized • Pays attention to detail • Has neat handwriting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has sloppy handwriting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unorganized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a good speller 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a poor speller
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily memorizes by seeing pictures and diagrams • May have a "photographic memory" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorizes lists and sequences easily • Remembers faces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have trouble memorizing lists, numbers, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is usually quiet, shy, or reserved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is fairly outgoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is outgoing • Easily expresses emotions

Depending on their preferred learning modality, different teaching techniques have different levels of effectiveness. Effective teaching requires a variety of teaching methods which cover all three learning modalities. No matter what their preference, students should have equal opportunities to learn in a way that is effective for them.

Effective Teaching Techniques for Each Learning Modality

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided Imagery • Demonstrations • Copying Notes • Highlighting Key Ideas in Notes/Textbooks • Flash Cards • Color Coding • Diagrams, Photographs, Charts, Graphs, Maps • Filmstrips, Movies, TV • Mind Maps, Acronyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditory Tapes • Reading Aloud • Oral Instructions • Lectures • Repeating Ideas Orally • Using Rhythmic Sounds • Poems, Rhymes, Word Association • Group Discussions • Music, Lyrics • TV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiments/Labs • Plays, Acting Scenes Out, Role Playing • Games • Problem-Solving • Field Trips • Writing Notes • Making Lists • Props, Physical Examples • Associating Emotions with Concepts