

Many Factors Affect Learning Learning Styles

About this Session

Teachers have been introduced to the idea that it is helpful to develop skills and character, along with knowledge, in each student. Now we will consider the question, how do I teach so that each student can reach the outcomes? The answer includes understanding how God has designed each student to learn. A brief overview of each learning style will help teachers understand how they can work with students' learning styles in their teaching. Teachers will identify their own preferred learning style and work with others who have the same learning style as themselves. As a class, teachers will develop many ideas on how to best work with students who are strongest in each learning style.

Main Ideas

Most people have one or two ways of learning that their brains prefer.

Teachers naturally teach from their own learning style and can also choose to teach other ways.

God used all learning styles to reach His people with truth.

Teachers should use all learning styles to help students learn through their learning strengths.

There are many ways to use learning styles to teach well in the classroom.

The core skills of reading and writing must be developed by all learners.

The challenges of teaching with many learning styles can be overcome.

Outcomes

Skills: Teachers are able to identify visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles in the students and include teaching strategies for each type of learning in their lesson plans.

Character: Teachers value the unique design of each student.

Knowledge: Different students have strengths in different learning styles, and it is very helpful to give students a chance to learn through their strengths.

Before Class Begins

If possible, photocopy enough copies of the quiz, one per person.

Have available whiteboard and markers, or similar.



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Main Purpose for Each Activity

Review

(slips of paper on measuring stick) 30 min

This activity gives the trainers feedback on where the group may need help in understanding and working with outcomes from session 1. It will help teachers to not feel discouraged or frustrated and get some immediate coaching in trouble areas.

Introduction (memorize Ps 1) 15 min

Teachers experience for themselves that people have different ways they learn best, as the entire class tries to memorize Psalm 1.

Describe learning styles – (optional)
(brainstorm ideas) 15 min

Teachers work from their experience to explore the different ways people work in their best learning styles.

Discover your learning style
(learning styles quiz) 45 min

Teachers discover their learning strengths, and recognize they will naturally teach this way. They can use this test to help their students discover their learning styles. This makes these new ideas personal and practical.

God communicates to all learning styles
(Bible study, discuss) 20/30 min

Looking at God's actions towards us demonstrates the value of using many ways to reach every student's learning strength. This can help teachers with the motivation to start using these new ideas.

Teaching ideas to use learning styles in the classroom (work in small groups) 45 min

This workshop time gives teachers the chance to work together and learn from each other to gain practical ideas for how to teach using all the learning styles.

Personal reflection (journal) 5 min

As teachers think about their own experience, it will add motivation to give students the chance to learn in their greatest strengths, and avoid discouragement and frustration teachers may have experienced.

Challenges to teaching with learning styles
(discuss, rotate small groups) 45 min

Teachers are able to problem solve the questions they either already have, or will discover, as they try to work with these new teaching ideas.

Close (make creative expression) 20 min

Teachers are able to use the new knowledge they have about their own learning strengths to worship; this can add another layer of meaning and value to using these teaching strategies with students.

Instructions for Session

Review 30 min

Post a line, or scale (a string strung like a clothes-line, or a line drawn on a whiteboard or other surface), divided into equal segments labeled from 1 to 10. Provide slips of paper and a way to attach the papers to the line.

Ask what it was like to write out the outcomes. Answer on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being easy and 10 being impossible.

On the paper, write one thing that was the most difficult, i.e. “didn’t know the right words,” or “couldn’t figure out what the goal was,” etc., and tape beside your mark on the scale.

Look at the scale. Identify most common 1-2 areas of difficulty, and lead a problem solving discussion on those points. Invite teachers to share experiences with each other.

Have students pray for each other.

Introduction 15 min

Ask everyone to turn to Psalm 100 and ask someone to read it.

Tell them they now have a few minutes to memorize the Psalm.

Tell them to go about memorizing it the same way they would if they were at home.

As they do this, observe what each person is doing to work on this task.

After 3-4 minutes, stop the activity.

Ask them what they did to help themselves learn the Psalm. They could invite teachers to stand when they describe the way(s) they worked on this task:

- Reading it over and over, writing it out or drawing pictures (seeing)
- Saying it over, perhaps by making it into a song or rhyme (hearing)
- Walking around the room, or using actions (doing)

Describe learning styles 20 min

Now ask a few people to share the learning method they preferred.

Write the following words on the board as headings for three columns:

- Visual learners (seeing)
- Auditory learners (hearing)
- Kinesthetic learners (doing)

Now ask the group to add words to describe HOW these learners would learn. Write the suggestions on the board under the headings. Add to their ideas with the following teaching. This list is included in the session notes the teachers will receive.

Visual learners: learn best when they can see what they are learning

- Visual learners respond well to a picture of what they are learning. They also learn well through the use of models, demonstrations and illustrations.
- They can seem to be distracted, drawing while you are teaching, but this can be a very helpful way for them to concentrate and capture what they are learning.
- Write key words on the board, draw a simple (even silly!) picture of the idea, or create a chart or “map” showing how one idea relates to another.
- Colors and shapes help them to learn, so use these when teaching. Allow them to use colored pencils and crayons and to draw their ideas while taking notes in class.
- Ask them to write lists of what they need to do.
- Give them books with pictures.
- Provide decorations and objects for them to look at; this can help them focus.

Auditory learners: learn best when they can hear what they are learning

- This includes songs, spoken word and speaking themselves.
- This is the student who can't stop talking in class!
- While they can be disruptive, often they are simply engaging with what they are learning – by talking about it!
- Allow them to work with others and discuss what they learning.
- They can also benefit from the use of music in the classroom. Allow students to listen to music while working on assignments.
- Use/invite them to make up songs or rhymes to help them learn.

Kinesthetic learners: learn best when they can move and touch while they are learning

- Some students can't seem to sit still in the classroom, and it is easy to be frustrated with what seems to be their unwillingness to behave. Often, these are kinesthetic learners who have a natural, strong desire to reach out and touch something related to the lesson, or to move around while they are learning.
- The harder these learners try to hold back from touching or moving, the less energy and attention they have for learning! These students learn by what they experience through their bodies.
- Allow these learners to quietly hold something in their laps or even stand in the back of the room for several moments. This may help them concentrate.
- Provide demonstrations, items to hold that are part of the lesson, and hand-on activities to help them fully participate in learning. They can be some of your best, most excited learners when they are allowed to work in these ways!

Note: Reading and writing are a primary means of learning. These are such core skills for all learners, and a main part of almost every teaching strategy, that we will not focus on them as a separate, fourth category of learning styles. Reading and writing will be incorporated into all three learning styles that we are focusing on.

Discover your learning style 45 min

You as a teacher will naturally teach the way you best learn. It's helpful to know what that is so you can work in your strength, and be sure you are also including other ways for your students who have a different strength from your own.

Ask the teachers to complete the quiz. Have them add up their scores.

Ask all those who scored as visual as their highest to stand, then auditory, then kinesthetic.

Quiz

Many tools have been made to help individuals identify their learning styles. Completing the questions provided in these pages is one simple way to explore learning styles.¹ Follow the instructions on the pages on how to take the quiz with the group. If it is difficult for teachers to have their own copies, you could consider reading the questions aloud and have teachers write down the letter that best describes their answers.

God communicates to various learning styles 20-30 min

Explain that God is the Master Designer who has created each person with a unique learning strength. He is the Master Teacher, who honors our design and communicates with His people in a variety of ways. Just about anything recorded in scripture includes multiple learning styles! God is VERY intentional in this way.

(1) These questions are based on a test posted on a website with many excellent resources on teaching with learning styles. <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>



In groups of three, have the teachers identify which learning styles God was using to communicate to His people in these Bible passages. (Remember that there are often multiple learning styles for each example.)

- Creation! (Rom 1: 19, 20; Ps 19: 1-4)
- Plagues on Egypt
- Pillar of fire and smoke to guide them in the wilderness (Exodus)
- The design of the temple (Ex 34)
- The 10 Commandments and the ark of the covenant (Ex 20)
- Write the word on doorpost, your clothing, speak it to kids as you walk, sit down
- The sacrifices ordered to be brought to the altar (Leviticus!)
- Feasts and festivals for them to celebrate throughout the year
- Rebuilding the wall with Nehemiah
- Ezra reading the Word aloud as they stood and listened
- Handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar
- Jeremiah going to the potter's house
- Isaiah lying on his side for a year
- Angels announcing Jesus' birth; star in the sky
- Last Supper
- Feeding 5000
- Paul: Address one another with songs, hymns; greet one another with a holy kiss
- Paul: Read my letters aloud to all the saints
- Glimpses of heaven in Revelation: elders throwing crowns, angels singing, the scroll, the lamb on the throne

Ask teachers to think of additional stories throughout the Old and New Testament where God spoke to His people in ways they could see, hear and touch or move.

Teaching ideas to use learning styles in the classroom

45 min

Explain that we are now going to consider how we as classroom teachers can help the three types of learners.

Ask teachers to team up with people of the same preferred learning style. Ask the groups to come up with ideas for teaching strategies in their particular area.

If there's time, teachers can shift to the table which represents their second strongest learning style to add new ideas.

Feedback: Each group reports back on their area (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). Write up their ideas. Add to the list any ideas that have not been covered.

Ideas for each learning style

Give teachers a few ideas if needed to get them started

Visual: (seeing)

- Give students bright colors and large spaces to draw and write.
- Encourage students to take notes or draw their own pictures to associations.
- Encourage them to make pictures in their minds as they learn something new.
- Make sure they can see you when you are teaching.
- Use colored markers to draw illustrations of what you are teaching (e.g. simple line drawings, arrows showing relationships, lists).
- Write out assignments and give them time to copy; hand out instructions and deadlines for multi-step projects.
- Use graphs and charts to teach; ask them to create as part of learning exercise.

Auditory: (hearing)

- Encourage them to repeat information by speaking it out loud, or to answer questions in class. This can be a helpful idea for their learning at home.
- Let students work with a partner – they can speak out the facts to be learned to one another, discuss new ideas, etc.
- For reading assignments, let them read aloud.
- Use music for learning: listen to music while reading or working on project; encourage them to compose songs and raps. NOTE: Music can also be distracting for some students.
- Organize a debate or group discussion.
- Invite them to create and perform a play/improvisation.

Kinesthetic: (doing)

- Give them frequent breaks when studying and learning.
- Offer big spaces to draw and write, such as paper on a wall or chalk on a sidewalk.
- Provide stories that are full of action, perhaps invite them to act out the story.
- Let them move while they are trying to memorize (march around room, up and down stairs as they look at flash cards, say spelling words, etc.).
- Encourage them to create a body movement associated with what they are trying to remember.
- Give a demonstration of what you're teaching and let them assist; let them repeat or come up with their own demonstration.
- Bring objects to class that represent or are a part of what you're teaching. Let students touch them before, during or after you teach. Simply put the objects out, let the students handle them, then get them to talk about what they observe about the objects, and include their ideas in your teaching.
- Give them something to touch when they need to listen; it's even more helpful if it's related to the topic you're teaching. They must hold the item quietly in their laps so they do not distract other students.

- Give them permission to stand in the back of the room for a few minutes if they need to, or to work in a different position, perhaps sitting on the floor, cross-legged on their chair, etc.
- Invite them to help with tasks in the classroom, such as handing out paper, moving chairs. This can give them a needed chance to move around so they can settle and focus when you are teaching.

Personal reflection 5 min
 Journal: what would it have been like to be able to learn according to your strengths?
 (finish for homework)

Challenges to teaching with
 learning styles 45 min

Set the chairs up in discussion circles, one for each question you decide to have the teachers discuss. Perhaps have one trainer sit with each circle to help the discussion. Invite teachers to discuss the question for 7-8 minutes. Then give a signal and have teachers rotate to a different group to discuss a different question. Teachers could answer each of the questions, or they could choose 3-4 they are most interested to discuss. Possible questions:

- What would the noise / activity level of the class be, when some students are working in groups or pairs? Is a silent classroom always the best classroom? Why or why not?
- What are the challenges for the teacher to teach using many learning styles, and how can these challenges be overcome?
- How can we ensure that the student who likes to work alone is not disrupted by the students who like to work in groups?
- What kinds of changes would you hope to see in the students if they were allowed to learn this way?
- How could we cater for different learning styles in the classroom at the same time?

Call the class back together and lead a discussion. The facilitator for each discussion could give the group feedback to begin a class discussion.

Points to bring out in large group discussions

What would the noise/activity level of the class be when some students are working in groups or pairs? Is a silent classroom always the best classroom? Why or why not?

- It IS noisy in a class when students are allowed to work with learning styles. This can be a very healthy learning environment when it is students talking and planning.
- Teachers want to make sure the talking and moving around is focused on learning, and not simply playing.

What are the challenges for the teacher to teach using many learning styles, and how can these challenges be overcome?

- Students can become quite excited and talkative. Give time limits to activities to help students stay focused.
- More materials can be needed in class. Parents can be invited to send in supplies, the class can create an activity to raise some extra money, students can use materials from outside the classroom such as pebbles, leaves, etc.
- It is harder to tell what students are learning if they are not all writing notes. Teachers can ask students to explain what they are learning, or to turn in a short written summary of what they are learning. When teachers listen to the students working together and when they explain/perform their final project, students demonstrate what they have learned in new ways.

How can we ensure that the student who likes to work alone is not disrupted by the students who like to work in groups?

- Teachers can give a choice of different kinds of learning activities.
- Teachers can have separate parts of the room for different activities, or even separate quiet and noisy projects, perhaps taking the noisy projects outside.

What kinds of changes would you hope to see in the students if they were allowed to learn this way? Students will be much more excited about learning.

- Students will learn much more than simply the knowledge.
- Students will remember more of what they have touched, spoken and seen rather than simply what a teacher spoke out or wrote for them.
- Students grow in confidence as they are successful in their learning and their way of learning is respected. This can be very helpful for kinesthetic learners, who often feel ashamed that they cannot seem to behave the way the teacher asks.

It is possible to have students working on several different types of activities at the same time. They can be given a choice of how to learn, creating opportunity for those who work better alone, and those who work better in a group:

- Give students a chance to work cooperatively in partners, teams.
- Give students a chance to work independently (journal, writing stories, doing research, art).

Let students make creative representation of what they're learning:

- Give them several types of materials to choose from: clay, paint, or even chalk on the ground outside to represent what they are learning.
- Allow them to choose between making a book cover, poster, collage, or diorama.

Let students work with language and sound:

- Invite students to choose between creating or acting out a short story or having a class debate.
- Invite them to create a game, song or poem about what they are learning.

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Close

20 min

Invite teachers to go to their strongest learning style table and create an expression of worship and thanksgiving for Ps 139: 14. They could do so individually or work in groups. If there's time, you could invite one person/group from each learning style to lead the class in worship in the way they have designed.

Note: From now on, every assignment, either in class or for homework, should include both outcomes and activities working with different learning styles. Teachers can begin to plan to use one learning activity that includes each learning style at least once each day. You may also want to ask them to include some input or response from God's Word, worship and prayer.



What's your learning style?

For these questions, choose the first answer that comes to mind and check a ,b, or c. Don't spend too much time thinking about any one question.

When you study for a test, would you rather

- a) read notes, read headings in a book, and look at pictures
- b) have someone ask you questions, or repeat facts silently to yourself
- c) write things out on index cards and make models or pictures

Which of these do you do when you listen to music?

- a) daydream (see things that go with music)
- b) hum along
- c) move with the music, tap your foot, etc.

When you work at solving a problem do you

- a) make a list, organize the steps, and check them off as they are done
- b) talk to friends or experts
- c) make a model of the problem or think about all the steps in your mind

When you read for fun, do you prefer

- a) a travel book with a lot of pictures in it
- b) a mystery book with a lot of conversation in it
- c) a book where you answer questions and solve problems

To learn how a new piece of equipment works, would you rather

- a) watch a movie or look at a picture of it
- b) listen to someone explain it
- c) take it apart and try to figure it out for yourself

You have just entered a museum, what will you do first?

- a) look around and find a map showing where you can find things you want to see
- b) talk to a museum guide and ask about what there is to see
- c) go into the first place that looks interesting, and read directions later

What kind of restaurant would you rather NOT go to?

- a) one with the lights are very bright
- b) one with the music is very loud
- c) one with uncomfortable chairs

Would you rather go to

- a) an art class
- b) a music class
- c) a sport class

Which are you most likely to do when you are happy?

- a) make a big smile
- b) shout or sing with joy
- c) jump or dance for joy

If you were at a party, what would you be most likely to remember the next day?

- a) the faces of the people there, but not the names
- b) the names but not the faces
- c) the things you did and said while you were there

When you see the word "d - o - g," what do you do first?

- a) think of a picture of a particular dog
- b) say the word "dog" to yourself silently
- c) think about the feeling of being with a dog (petting it, running with it, etc.)



When you tell a story, would you rather

- a) write it
- b) tell it out loud
- c) act it out

What is most distracting for you when you are trying to concentrate?

- a) things you can see around you
- b) noises you can hear
- c) feelings you have inside, like: being hungry, wearing tight shoes, or being worried about something

What are you most likely to do when you are angry?

- a) make an angry face
- b) shout or yell
- c) stomp off and slam doors

When you aren't sure how to spell a word, what are you most likely to do?

- a) close your eyes and try to think of what it looks like
- b) think of how it sounds in your mind
- c) tap your pencil or rock back and forth to try and remember

Which are you most likely to do when standing in a long line at the movies?

- a) look at posters advertising other movies
- b) talk to the person next to you
- c) tap your foot or move around in some other way

Add up all your questions that you answered with an

A _____

B _____

C _____

Your totals will tell you if your learning style preference is strongest in:

A – Visual learning (seeing)

B – Auditory learning (sounds)

C – Kinesthetic learning (move/touch)

Lesson Topic: Learning Styles

Module Two
Session 2

Time	Who is leading?	Topic	Activity	Notes
30 min		Review	Write questions about outcomes Discuss and review outcomes	Slips of paper Measuring stick
15 min		Introduction	Memorize Psalm 1	
15 min		Describe learning styles	Teach	
45 min		Discover your learning style	Take quiz	Learning style quiz in teacher manual
20/30 min		God communicates to all learning styles	Small groups discuss Bible verses	Bible verses in class session notes
45 min		Teaching ideas for each learning style	Small groups discuss ideas for each learning style	Notes from class session
5 min		Personal reflection	Journal on personal experiences	Blank paper
45 min		Challenges to teaching with learning styles	Small groups discuss questions Large group discussion	Circles of chairs Questions written on A4 sheet of paper
20 min		Close	Make creative expression of today's learning for worship	Supplies
10 min		Homework	Review homework questions	Session notes and homework questions