Learning styles

Adults learn differently from children. They have vocational and personal experience which they bring to their studying.

Adults tend to learn best when:

- they know why, what, and how they are learning.
- they are autonomous.
- they can do self-directed learning.
- they are solving problems.

Adults tend to be more motivated in their learning and can put pressure on themselves to do well.

How do you learn?
Become aware of how best you learn, ask yourself questions such as:

- Do I work best in the morning or at night or doesn’t it matter?
- Do I like quiet, or music, or discussing when I’m learning?
- Am I the sort of person who is energised by being with others, or do I need a bit more calm when I am learning?

The more you self-reflect the more you can create a learning environment which best suits you.

Learning styles
In order to learn efficiently it is important to know how you learn. There are many theories about the subject, but one of the most widely accepted is Fleming and Mills (1992) VARK theory. They identified four major ways of learning.

- V = visual learners
- A = auditory learners
- R = reading and writing learners
- K = kinaesthetic learners

The information below provides some information about each style. Once you know how best you learn you can arrange your learning around that information.

Visual learners
How to recognize if you are a visual learner.

When you are learning do you like using:

- pictures, diagrams, written directions, maps, lists, mind-maps, colours, post-its, posters?
- Do you doodle?
- Can you remember visual pictures more easily than spoken words?
If so, you may be a visual learner. It might be a good idea to make notes, make mind-maps, use colours and highlighters in class, when you are reading and revising.

**Auditory learners**

**How to recognize if you are an auditory learner.**

When you are learning do you,

- Like listening, speaking and discussing?
- Do you listen to music when you are reading, or listen to a podcast to learn something new?
- Do you prefer someone to tell you information rather than read it?
- Do you repeat information or instructions to make sure you have understood?

If so you are probably an auditory learner. To get the best from your studies it might be useful to have study groups where you discuss the work, or learn from watching videos or podcasts, don’t be afraid to ask questions and reinforce understanding by repeating information.

**Kinaesthetic learners**

**How to recognize if you are a kinaesthetic learner.**

- Do you like practical learning?
- Do you learn through doing things?
- Do you like getting up and having a go?
- Do you struggle to sit still for a long while and much prefer to be doing things rather than talking about them?

If so you are probably a kinaesthetic learner. To get the most from your studies you might like to try; volunteering to do things such as going to the board to answer questions, acting things out, pacing to help memorise information, using learning games to learn.

**Reading and writing learners**

**How to recognize if you are a reading/writing learner.**

- Do you learn from reading? If you need to know something is your first reaction to find a book about it or search the internet?
- Do you make lists and make notes?
- If asked to spell a difficult word do you take out a pencil to write it out before speaking?

If so, you are probably a reading/writing learner. You are the type of learner most resources are created for so read textbooks, do research online, make notes and keep files.

**Conclusion**

Recognising how you learn will allow you to plan your learning so that it works for your learning style. Most people can be adaptable, but the more you know about yourself the more you can create an environment which works for you.