

VAK Learning Styles: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic

The VAK learning Style uses the three main sensory receivers - Vision, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (movement and tactile or touch) to determine the dominant learning style. Learners use all three to receive information. However, one or more of these receiving styles are normally dominant. This dominant style defines the best way for a person to learn new information by filtering what is to be learned. This style may not always be the same for some tasks. The learner may prefer one style of learning for one task, and a combination of others for another task.

As trainers, we need to present information using all three styles. This allows all learners, no matter what their preferred style is, the opportunity to become involved. It also allows a learner to be presented with the other two methods for reinforcement. Just because we prefer one style, does not mean the other two do us no good. Quite the contrary, they help us to learn even faster. Some hints for recognizing and implementing the three styles are:

Auditory Learners usually talk to themselves a lot. They also may move their lips and read out loud. They may have difficulty with reading and writing tasks. They often do better talking to a colleague or a tape recorder and hearing what was said. To integrate this style into the learning environment:

- Begin new material with a brief explanation of what is coming. Conclude with a summary of what has been covered. This is the old adage of "tell them what they are going to learn, teach them, and tell them what they have learned."
- Use the Socratic method of lecturing by questioning learners to draw as much information from them as possible and then fill in the gaps with your own expertise.
- Include auditory activities, such as brainstorming, buzz groups, Jeopardy, etc.
- Have the learners verbalize the questions.
- Develop an internal dialogue between yourself and the learners.

Visual Learners have two sub-channels: linguistic and spatial.

Learners who are ***visual linguistic*** like to learn through written language, such as reading and writing tasks. They remember what has been written down, even if they do not read it more than once. They like to write down directions and pay better attention to lectures if they watch them.

Learners who are ***visual spatial*** usually have difficulty with written language and do better with charts, demonstrations, videos, and other visual materials. They

easily visualize faces and places by using their imagination and seldom get lost in new surroundings. To integrate this style into the learning environment:

- Use graphs, charts, illustrations, etc.
- Include outlines, agendas, handouts, etc. for reading and taking notes on.
- Include plenty of content in handouts to reread after the learning session.
- Leave white space in handouts for note taking.
- Invite questions to help them stay alert in auditory environments.
- Post flip charts to show what will come and what has been presented.
- Emphasize key points to cue when to take notes.
- Eliminate potential distractions.
- Supplement textual information with illustrations whenever possible.
- Have them draw pictures in the margins.
- Show diagrams and then explain them.
- Have the learners envision the topic or have them act out the subject matter.

Kinesthetic Learners do best while touching and moving. ***It also has two sub-channels: kinesthetic (movement) and tactile (touch)***. They tend to lose concentration if there is little or no external stimulation or movement. When listening to lectures they may want to take notes. When reading, they like to scan the material first, and then focus in on the details (get the big picture first). They typically use color highlighters and take notes by drawing pictures, diagrams, or doodling. To integrate this style into the learning environment:

- Use activities that get the learners up and moving.
- Play music, when appropriate, during activities.
- Use colored markers to emphasize key points on flipcharts or white boards.
- Give frequent stretch breaks (brain breaks).
- Provide toys such as Koosh balls and Play-Dough to give them something to do with their hands.
- To highlight a point, provide gum, candy, scents, etc. which provides a cross link of scent (aroma) to the topic at hand (scent can be a powerful cue).
- Provide highlighters, colored pens and/or pencils.
- Guide learners through a visualization of complex tasks.
- Have them transfer information from the text to another medium such as a keyboard or a tablet.