
The learning styles of students

When it comes to learning something new, we all have times when we “just don’t get it.” This is true with our student visitors as well and is easily observed in the groups that we lead on the trails. This often manifesting itself in students that aren’t paying attention, drifting off, or asking for a repeat of information you just presented. Such reactions are often signs that we are not connecting with the learning styles of those students. Styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

● Auditory Learners:

learn through listening...

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

● Visual Learners:

learn through seeing...

These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g. people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

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● **Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners:**

learn through, moving, doing and touching...

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

On the trail:

When it comes to presenting your information, offer it in a manner that addresses all three styles as often as possible. Tactics can be employed in succession or compliment each other simultaneously. While you may not be able to do this with every topic that arises, at least try to incorporate all three styles at various points during hike.

Examples:

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| Flyers
seeds | A: Ask the students to recall seeing seeds fly through the air
V: Demonstrating a flight with a few real seeds
T: The students throw up the seeds, or pretend to be seeds |
| Woodpecker
activity | A: Query students through reasons and uses for a hole
V: Showing holes or watching the a bird make a hole
T: Feeling the holes, breaking apart wood in search of bugs |
| Task
instructions | A: Explain how to complete a task
V: Demonstrate how to complete a task
T: Talk them through a task |
| Thorny
Plants | A: Describe thorns like claws of a tiger for protection
V: Look at different types of thorn, poke a hole in leaf
T: Let the students feel the thorns themselves, even get pricked! |