Learning Disabilities and Whole Life Learning

Professional Development for Adult Literacy Educators

Time for A Change

Learning Disabilities or Abilities?

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of Literacy and Learning Disabilities! Learning Disabilities are a confusing and complex subject ~ even the experts acknowledge this fact!

This small guide is to assist literacy tutors and their students with the topic of learning disabilities. If an adult is coming to see you for assistance with developing their literacy skills, more than likely they will feel as bewildered as you do when it comes to the subject!

While a basic understanding of learning disabilities is important and we provide further resources on page 7, this manual is designed to assist tutors and learners with the often hidden impacts of LD or unmet learning needs. Essentially, a learner's prior learning experiences and emotional reactions to learning can pose greater barriers to their success than the learning difference itself.

Adult learners may have a variety of challenges with literacy skills, and learning disabilities probably impact many of those learners. Research has suggested that between 30% - 80% of adults in literacy programs may have learning disabilities.

Throughout these handouts, we will suggest resources and ideas to assist the tutor with student's learning. However, we would like to humbly acknowledge that these are meant as guidelines only and more often than not, tutors and learners often develop far more creative and effective strategies when they are working together!

The resources can be used any time but may be helpful as an "introduction/relationship building" tool. We hope the information provided will assist both tutors and those individuals struggling with LD to redefine themselves as practitioners and learners!

This guide is organized into 2 sections: Part I Reframing the Past

Part II Reclaiming the Present

MY FIRST DAY IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

By: Dan Danforth

When I walked into the classroom, I could smell the chalk - the chalk that always seemed to trigger moments of fear. I could feel the words of teachers past pummeling me with their anger and expressing disappointment in my performance. I knew that feeling. In school the teachers would look at me and then look at the ceiling, as if there were some magic inscription written there that explained my total lack of involvement in the class. The school bells still ring through my head and send a tingle through my whole being. I am forever locked in a world where education equals pain.

Why am I here? Why would I walk into this place that seems so tortuous? I have to. I have to because I am lost in a sea of small jobs. I have to because the society will not see me as someone worth investing in. I have to because there is no hope, no future. In spite of the pain and feelings of uselessness, inadequacy and failure, I am here to confront my demons. I wish that it were not so. I wish that my ways of knowing would be recognized as valuable. I wish that the aching in my soul could be quenched in any other way. I am here.

The desks, at least, are tables. I don't have to wiggle into a green desk with a maple top that has scribbling proclaiming that ER loves SJ and a small indentation for a pencil at the upper edge. The chairs have cloth covers. I don't have to look forward to the constant wriggling to forestall the "numb-bum syndrome."

I see a teacher's desk tucked in the corner with the usual "teacher's stuff" - pens, papers, pictures of children, books and a sense of occupancy. This is a desk like those I sat at for many years explaining myself to various teachers. This is a desk where suspensions, expulsions, reprimands were meted out to me in an effort to get me to "behave." I knew this place as hostile and unpleasant. I feared it as much as the chalkiness of the air. Beyond this desk, I also saw the blackboards. The blackboards where my name was often inscribed as not turning in homework - emblazoned on the board for all to see my incompetence. The boards are empty now. Nothing there. Will it start again?

Other students enter the room. Some are nervously glancing about. Some are chattering to each other. Some are taking seats and staking out territory. I spy a seat near the back where I won't have anyone staring through the back of my head. A seat where people will have to turn completely around to look and laugh at me. A seat where I may escape the glare of the teacher and shrink into the wall - a speck of dust to be ignored.

The teacher enters. The teacher looks like all teachers. She has a sensible dress and sensible shoes and sensible hair. I feel myself gulping for air. I am back in the hell and torture. She speaks. She introduces herself. She hands out a piece of paper with the requirements for the class. She laughs. She makes a small joke. She asks us to interview someone in the class and introduce them to the rest of the class. I look at this woman beside me. She has long brown hair and a shy manner. She tells me she has been out of school for twelve years and has three children aged 3, 5 and 7. She tells me that her husband is gone and she must support herself and her kids. She speaks of the very fears that I have been agonizing over. I relate my story of fear and failure and endless jobs. She nods. She gets it. She knows. When the

introductions occur, I hear my story echoed by the others. I feel the weight of anonymity lifting from my shoulders. I study the face of this teacher for disapproval. There is none. She nods. She knows. She understands. I begin to feel the chalkiness disappear.

The teacher hands me a book. I open it and scan the first few pages. Ahh… this is also what I remember — the words seem to scramble together. The teacher stops and points at the words. She tells me, "It is OK not to understand. This is the first time you have seen some of these words. Use your finger and point to each word saying it aloud in your head." She tells me that I may have a learning disability and she will arrange to have me tested. She tells me that I am OK and that I can learn.

I feel calm. Maybe I have found someone who understands. Maybe I am in a place where my past will not haunt me. Maybe I am experiencing hope.

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REFRAMING THE PAST

In order to effectively assist a learner in the present, we must keep in mind the learner's past, present and future.

All learners bring a wealth of knowledge and experience with them – and this needs to inform our practice with adult learners. To assist a learner with understanding their past experiences, tutors can help them identify their strengths and reframe their negative experiences. Understanding this history will help the tutor and learner identify the next steps.

People with learning disabilities generally have average to above-average intelligence. Some famous people with learning disabilities include: Hans Christian Anderson, Harry Belafonte, Alexander Graham Bell, George Burns, Cher, Winston Churchill, Walt Disney, Albert Einstein, General George Patten, Nelson Rockefeller, W.C. Yeats.

Disability is a socially constructed concept. Imagine being defined or defining yourself by what you cannot do. Recent research shows that persons with disabilities that achieve "success" on their own terms felt good about themselves, their lives and are able to compartmentalize their disability. In other words, they see their disability as only one part of their identity and recognize their strengths and their potential in all aspects of their lives.

When you consider the ramifications of struggling throughout your life to learn a crucial skill such as reading and never having the assistance and acknowledgement of your struggles, with the exception of being labelled lazy, dumb or an underachiever etc., the impact to your self esteem, self worth and potential to learn is significant, perhaps even more so than your learning exceptionality.

It is important for tutors to:

- Gather information regarding a learner's past experiences
- Assist the learner to understand their history in the context of LD and its past treatment
- Identify learners thoughts and feelings regarding their strengths as people and learners

This section provides information and tools to assist tutors with gathering important information regarding the students past experiences as a learner using a strength based perspective.

In addition to the worksheets, tutors can share the information provided if it would be useful for the learners.

The section includes: Disabilities or Abilities?

LD: What You Need to Know

Worksheet: Learner's History & Experiences

DISABILITIES OR ABILITIES?

Julie, a 38 year old with learning disabilities experienced anxiety and frustration when learning to sound out new words. Her internal voice repeatedly told her she could not make mistakes and that she couldn't do it because it was too hard." Once she began addressing her negative voice and turned it into healthy statements, "I can learn and I have done so before", her energy was directed and focussed on sounding out the words. When she made an error she learned to self-correct and was able to say "mistakes are required to learn".

Rather than focus on a learner's challenges, we have found success in focussing on the strengths a learner brings to the learning environment. Through our work over the years and this project, we were told repeatedly that the strength based focus we work from is:

1. Rare: Often it is the first time adult learners have experienced looking at their strengths first and not focussing on "what is wrong with them". We explain how their negative past experiences with learning has contributed to their current challenges and how their current negative "internal" beliefs impact their inherent capacities to learn and change their lives.

2. A positive and growthful experience: This is important to our setting and to our success because change and learning occur when:
    a. We know what tools we have to work with and feel confident about our abilities (tutors and learners!)
    b. We foster a positive and safe culture (personal and organizational) that supports healthy development. Acknowledging strengths and addressing negative beliefs are key for success. In addition, learning requires risk taking and making mistakes. We must encourage learners to do so by addressing their negative self talk.
    c. We let go and don't focus on what we can't do or change. It is helpful to assist learners with LD to recognize that sometimes their negative past learning experiences were not their fault but continue to impact their experiences and beliefs about their abilities to learn.

A strength based perspective allows us to discover the learner in front of us. We are not the experts – learners bring a wealth of experience, skills, knowledge and strategies to the learning environment.

Nobody has ever succeeded while being told they failed or will fail. It is important to point out to learners what is right.

LEARNING DISABILITIES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Learning Disabilities are constructed. While first identified in 1963 as "learning disabilities", "brain damaged" children who couldn't read were identified as early as the 1800's. More correctly, if you couldn't read you were labelled as brain damaged. Science has still to prove and probably won't be able to pinpoint or clearly explain this mysterious condition that has afflicted more and more children each decade. Interestingly, diagnosis of this disorder increased significantly after it was discovered and an industry was created to identify and remediate the condition.

While the concept and very definition have been challenged by experts since the beginning, two significant factors continue to bring the concept of learning disabilities into question.

First, children and adults with LD who were told they would never read or not read well or not do this – end up doing it. These people are proof in the pudding that this condition is up for questioning. Consistent research has shown that when strategies and teaching methods are put into practice to assist learners who struggle, or shall I say learn differently, amazing things can happen. Sadly, for many, when you are told that you can't do something, very often you won't be able to.

Second, brain science is putting old beliefs to current tests. Neuroscientists are challenging some of our beliefs about the brain and about learning in general. The brain and its plasticity, or ability to change is shaking the theoretical foundations of brain science and the concept of the brain being "hard-wired". The more we know, the more we realize we don't know!

Having said all that, it is important to note:

Rather than get caught up in the debate, the evidence points to putting the learner and their strengths first and foremost. Learning disabilities, exceptionalities or difficulties are REAL, despite our questionable understanding.

The concept of and the work that has been done on behalf of those with LD had and continues to have good intentions. Understanding learning disabilities or differences and how they impact learning and the strategies that may assist learners is all useful information. The important thing to remember is that the learner will need to be reminded of their strengths, and taught how they learn. They will also require support in identifying the strategies that work for them.

More information on Learning Disabilities can be found at:

All Kinds Of Minds
http://www.allkindsofminds.org/

Whole Life Learning
http://www.ldandwholelifelearning.ca/

LD Online
http://www.ldonline.org/

National Adult Literacy Database
http://www.nald.ca/

LEARNER'S HISTORY AND EXPERIENCES

1. What prompted you to seek literacy assistance or become interested in our program?

2. What do you like to learn about? What do you want to learn about?

3. How have your past educational experiences changed you or impacted you?

4. What specific types of learning challenges and situations have you encountered in the past, and in what settings?

5. Can you identify your strengths? How about your strengths as learner? If so, what would they be?

6. Can you provide an example(s) of when you overcame a challenge in the past?

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7. Are you mostly comfortable in social or public situations, interactions, and relationships? When are you most comfortable?

8. Are you mostly able to express your wishes and ideas with others as you would like to?

9. What are your other responsibilities and interests at this time?

10. What do you feel you need to learn to meet your needs and fulfill your goals?

11. What can I or the organization do to assist you with your learning?

12. Who can you rely on for support?

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RECLAIMING THE PRESENT

In order to stay focussed in the present, learners may need additional assistance with addressing the past, negative self talk and false beliefs.

In this section we provide information about 2 strategies to help the learner stay in the present. The first strategy is to address negative self talk and false beliefs about one's self as a learner. The second strategy are exercises to identify how the learner learns and strategies to help with the learning process. Information and worksheets are provided for each strategy.

ADDRESSING NEGATIVE SELF TALK

The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook by Edmund J. Bourne is an excellent resource for understanding how negative thoughts impact our abilities to function and provides steps we can take to turn negative thoughts into positive, affirmative statements. The book can be bought or portions viewed online at http://bit.ly/epI4KM.

Bourne states that negative self talk (Chapter 8):

- Is so automatic and subtle you don't notice it or the effect it has on your emotions and behaviors.
- Appears in telegraphic form. A word, image or memory contains a whole series of thoughts, memories, or associations.
- Is usually irrational but almost always sounds like the truth.
- Negative self-talk perpetuates avoidance. Avoidance increases anxiety.
- Negative self-talk is a series of bad habits that are learned.

Bourne also categorizes self talk into "sub-personalities".

- The Worrier ("what if..." thoughts) promotes anxiety. "What if I fail?" "What if I make a mistake?"
- The Perfectionist ("I should, must, or have to…" thoughts) promotes chronic stress and burnout. "I should have known that." "I have to get this right".
- The Victim ("I can't ever learn to read". "I'll never be able to get a good job") promotes depression.
- The Critic ("Can't you ever get it right?") promotes low self esteem.

The important first step is to begin to "listen for" and recognize your negative self talk. When this is practiced and awareness is gained, the next step is to change the thoughts into positive counterstatements. If you feel you need more assistance, the workbook provides more details and exercises for addressing these difficulties.

NEGATIVE SELF TALK/ADDRESSING FALSE BELIEFS

Subpersonality: The Worrier	
NEGATIVE SELF TALK	POSITIVE COUNTERSTATEMENT
What if I can't reach my goals?	While anxiety is uncomfortable, it will not help me reach my goals. I can reach my goals if I take one step at a time.
What if the people in my class or teacher judge me?	The teacher is here to support me and my classmates have experienced similar situations as I have.
PROVIDE OWN EXAMPLES	

Subpersonality: The Perfectionist	
NEGATIVE SELF TALK	POSITIVE COUNTERSTATEMENT
I have to stop feeling this way.	My anxiety is based on past experiences and is a response to those experiences. With positive experiences the anxiety will subside.
I have to read because it is expected.	I want to improve my reading because I want to, not because someone else thinks I should.
PROVIDE OWN EXAMPLES	

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Subpersonality: The Critic	
NEGATIVE SELF TALK	**POSITIVE COUNTERSTATEMENT**
I am such a loser.	I am worthy of the respect of others, but especially of myself.
Everyone else seems to understand this, why can't I learn this.	I am worthy of the respect of others. I'm a unique learner and know many things. I may need more time or some different strategies to learn this.
PROVIDE OWN EXAMPLES	

Subpersonality: The Victim	
NEGATIVE SELF TALK	**POSITIVE COUNTERSTATEMENT**
I'm never going to finish this, it just isn't in the cards for me.	I have made progress before and I can do it again.
I can't figure this word out. It is just too hard.	I have not seen this word before. Sound it out.
PROVIDE OWN EXAMPLES	

INTRODUCTION TO LEARNING STYLES

A learning style is a student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning. Keefe (1979) defines learning styles as the "composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment." Stewart and Felicetti (1992) define learning styles as those "educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn." Thus, learning styles are not really concerned with "what" learners learn, but rather "how" they prefer to learn.

> *WARNING: Learning styles are points along a scale that help us to discover the different forms of mental representations; however, they are not good characterizations of what people are or are not like. We should not divide the population into a set of categories (i.e., visual and auditory learners). What these various instruments attempt to do is to allocate a person on some point on a continuum (similar to measuring height or weight). In other words, do not pigeonhole people as we are all capable of learning under almost any style, no matter what our preference is.*

The literature basically indicates that there is wide acceptance of the concept of learning styles, however, there is disagreement on how to best measure learning styles (Coffield, et. al., 2004). While the learning profession has long recognized the need for innovative instructional activities that relate to the diverse learning styles of learners, there is some question as to just how meaningful they are to the learning environment. That is, most researchers agree that we do have various learning styles and preferences, however, the research tends to agree that it is relative unimportant as it is far more important to match the presentation with the nature of the subject, such as providing correct learning methods, strategies, and context; than matching individual preferences (Coffield, 2004). For example, in a large meta-study, Marzano (1998) found that graphic and tactile representations of the subject matter had noticeable effects on learning outcomes, regardless of any attempt to match them with learners' modalities.

Perhaps David Merrill (2000) has the best philosophy for using learning styles -- instructional strategies should first be determined on the basis of the type of content to be taught or the goals of the instruction (the content-by-strategy interactions) and secondarily, learner styles and preferences are then used to adjust or fine-tune these fundamental learning strategies. Finally, content-by-strategy interactions take precedence over learning-style-by-strategy interactions regardless of the instructional style or philosophy of the instructional situation.

Merrill continued with the argument that most students are unaware of their learning styles and if left to their own means, they are UNLIKELY to start learning in new ways. Thus, knowledge of one's learning styles can be used to increase self-awareness about their strengths and weaknesses as learners. In other words, all the advantages claimed for metacognition (being aware of one's own thought and learning processes) can be gained by encouraging learners to become knowledgeable about their own learning and that of others (Coffield, 2004).

It seems at this point in time that learning styles are not really "styles," but rather "preferences" in that we do NOT learn best by using our style of learning. That is, we prefer one or more styles over others.

HOWARD GARDNER'S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Howard Gardner theorized that there are multiple intelligences, and that we all use one or two for the most effective learning. Our culture teaches, tests, reinforces and rewards primarily two kinds of intelligence: verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical. His theory proposes that there are at least eight other kinds of intelligence that are equally important. They are "languages" that most people speak, and that cut through cultural, educational, and ability differences.

The mind is not comprised of a single representation or a single language of representations. Rather, we harbour numerous internal representations in our minds. Some scholars speak of "modules of mind," some of a "society of mind," in this case it is "multiple intelligences." They include:

- **Verbal Linguistic intelligence** (sensitive to the meaning and order of words as in a poet): Use activities that involve hearing, listening, impromptu or formal speaking, tongue twisters, humor, oral or silent reading, documentation, creative writing, spelling, journal, poetry.

- **Logical-mathematical intelligence** (able to handle chains of reasoning and recognize patterns and orders as in a scientist): Use activities that involve abstract symbols/formulas, outlining, graphic organizers, numeric sequences, calculation, deciphering codes, problem solving.

- **Musical intelligence** (sensitive to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone as in a composer): Use activities that involve audio tape, music recitals, singing on key, whistling, humming, environmental sounds, percussion vibrations, rhythmic patterns, music composition, tonal patterns.

- **Spatial intelligence** (perceive the world accurately and try to re-create or transform aspects of that world as in a sculptor or airplane pilot): Use activities that involve art, pictures, sculpture, drawings, doodling, mind mapping, patterns/designs, color schemes, active imagination, imagery, block building.

- **Bodily Kinesthetic intelligence** (able to use the body skillfully and handle objects adroitly, as in an athlete or dancer): Use activities that involve role playing, physical gestures, drama, inventing, ball passing, sports games, physical exercise, body language, dancing.

- **Interpersonal intelligence** (understand people and relationship as in a salesman or teacher) and think by bouncing ideas off of each other (socializes who are people smart): Use activities that involve group projects, division of labor, sensing others' motives, receiving/giving feedback, collaboration skills.

- **Intrapersonal intelligence** (possess access to one's emotional life as a means to understand oneself and others exhibited by individuals with accurate views of themselves): Use activities that involve emotional processing, silent reflection methods, thinking strategies, concentration skills, higher order reasoning, "centering" practices, meta-cognitive techniques.

- **Naturalist** (connected to the intricacies and subtleties in nature such as Charles Darwin and Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame): Use activities that involve bringing the outdoors into the class, relating to the natural world, charting, mapping changes, observing wildlife, keeping journals or logs.

VISUAL, AUDITORY, AND KINESTHETIC LEARNING STYLES (VAK)

The VAK learning style uses the three main sensory receivers: Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (movement) to determine the dominant learning style. It is sometimes known as VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, & Tactile). It is based on modalities -- a channel by which human expression can take place and is composed of a combination of perception and memory.

VAK is derived from the accelerated learning world and seems to be about the most popular model nowadays due to its simplicity, however, its main weakness is that the research does not support it. This is probably because it is more of a preference, rather than a style.

Learners use all three modalities to receive and learn new information and experiences. However, according to the VAK or modality theory, one or two of these receiving styles is 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 to be the same for some tasks. The learner may prefer one style of learning for one task, and a combination of others for a different task.

Classically, our learning style is forced upon us through life like this: In grades kindergarten to third, new information is presented to us kinesthetically; grades 4 to 8 are visually presented; while grades 9 to college and on into the business environment, information is presented to us mostly auditory through the use of lectures.

According to the VAK theorists, we need to present information using all three styles. This allows all learners the opportunity to become involved, no matter what their preferred style may be.

While there is some evidence for modality specific strengths and weaknesses (Rourke, et al. 2002), what has has not been established is matching the instructional style to individual learning strength improves their learning abilities. For example, one study (Constantinidou and Baker, 2002), found that visual presentation through the use of pictures was advantageous for all adults, irrespective of a high or low learning-style preference for visual images. Indeed, it was especially advantageous for those with a strong preference for verbal processing.

Please complete the VAK Styles Survey with learners on the following pages. A listing of possible learning strategies is provided following the survey.

VAK STYLES SURVEY

Read each statement carefully. To the left of each statement, write the number that best describes how each statement applies to you by using the following guide:

1	2	3	4	5
Almost Never Applies	Applies Once in a While	Sometimes Applies	Often Applies	Almost Always Applies

Answer honestly as there are no correct or incorrect answers. It is best if you do not think about each question too long, as this could lead you to the wrong conclusion.

Once you have completed all 36 statements (12 statements in three sections), total your score in the spaces provided and review Learning Strategies for the 3 VAK Styles below.

Section One - Visual

_____ 1. I take lots of notes and I like to doodle.

_____ 2. When talking to someone else I have a difficult time understanding those who do not maintain good eye contact with me.

_____ 3. I make lists and notes because I remember things better if I write them down.

_____ 4. When reading a novel, I pay a lot of attention to passages that picture the clothing, description, scenery, setting, etc.

_____ 5. I need to write down directions so that I can remember them.

_____ 6. I need to see the person I am taking to in order in order to keep my attention focused on the subject.

_____ 7. When meeting a person for the first time, I notice the style of dress, visual characteristics, and neatness first.

_____ 8. When I am at a party, one of the things I love to do is stand back and people-watch.

_____ 9. When recalling information I can see it in my mind and remember where I saw it.

_____ 10. If I had to explain a new procedure or technique, I would prefer to write it out.

_____ 11. In my free time I am most likely to watch television or read.

_____ 12. If my boss has a message for me, I am most comfortable when she sends a memo.

_____ **TOTAL FOR VISUAL (NOTE: THE MINIMUM IS 12 AND MAXIMUM IS 60)**

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Section Two - Auditory

_____ 1. When I read, I read out loud or move my lips to hear the words in my head.

_____ 2. When talking to someone else I have a difficult time handling those who do not talk respond with me.

_____ 3. I do not take a lot of notes but I still remember what was said. Taking notes often distracts me from the speaker.

_____ 4. When reading a novel, I pay a lot of attention to passages involving conversations, talking, speaking, dialogues, etc.

_____ 5. I like to talk to myself when solving a problem or writing.

_____ 6. I can understand what a speaker says, even if I am not focused on the speaker.

_____ 7. I remember things easier by repeating them over and over.

_____ 8. When I am at a party, one of the things I love to do is talk in-depth about a subject that is important to me with a good conversationalist.

_____ 9. I would rather receive information from the radio, rather than read a newspaper.

_____ 10. If I had to explain a new procedure or technique, I would prefer telling about it.

_____ 11. With my free time I am most likely to listen to music.

_____ 12. If my boss has a message for me, I am most comfortable when he or she calls me on the phone.

_____ **TOTAL FOR AUDITORY (NOTE: THE MINIMUM IS 12 AND MAXIMUM IS 60)**

Section Three - Kinesthetic

_____ 1. I am not good at reading or listening to directions. I would rather just start working on the task or project at hand.

_____ 2. When talking to someone else, I have the hardest time handling those who do not show any kind of emotional or physical support.

_____ 3. I take notes and doodle, but I rarely go back a look at them.

_____ 4. When reading a novel, I pay a lot of attention to passages revealing feelings, moods, action, drama, etc.

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_____ 5. When I am reading, I move my lips.

_____ 6. I often exchange words, such as places or things, and use my hands a lot when I can't remember the right thing to say.

_____ 7. My desk appears disorganized.

_____ 8. When I am at a party, one of the things I love to do is enjoy the activities such as dancing, games, and totally losing myself in the action.

_____ 9. I like to move around. I feel trapped when seated at a meeting or a desk.

_____ 10. If I had to explain a new procedure or technique, I would prefer actually demonstrating it.

_____ 11. With my free time I am most likely to exercise.

_____ 12. If my boss has a message for me, I am most comfortable when she talks to me in person.

_____ **TOTAL FOR KINESTHETIC (NOTE: THE MINIMUM IS 12 AND MAXIMUM IS 60)**

SCORING PROCEDURES

Total each section and place the sum in the blocks below:

VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
number of points: _____	number of points: _____	number of points: _____

While you prefer to learn by using the highest score above, you will best learn by using all three styles, rather than your preferred learning style.

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LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR THE 3 VAK STYLES

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners often talk to themselves. 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 lean, 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, or Jeopardy. Leave plenty of time to debrief activities. This allows them to make connections of what they leaned and how it applies to their situation.
- Have the learners verbalize the questions.
- Develop an internal dialogue between yourself and the learners.

Visual 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 the 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, or other visual aids.
- Include outlines, concept maps, agendas, handouts, etc. for reading and taking notes.
- 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 takes notes.
- Eliminate potential distractions.
- Supplement textual information with illustrations whenever possible.
- Have them draw pictures in the margins.
- Have the learners envision the topic or have them act out the subject matter.

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Kinesthetic Learners

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 for the sake of moving their hands. 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.

WORKSHEET

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As stated previously, learners bring a wealth of experience to the learning environment and tutors can assist their learners by acknowledging their prior experiences, skills and knowledge.

The authors of the Adult Learners Goals Toolkit has provided us with authorization to link and host their Toolkit with our project. It is an excellent resource that assists adult learners to identify and reach their goals. http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/GoalsToolkitR.pdf

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"We must take all history seriously – the history of what we did right and the history of what we did wrong. People learn from both their successes and their failures".

- B. Blatt -