

Learning Styles

Knowing your learning style(s) can help you in your all aspects of your academic college experience. It can guide your studying, help you in discussions and lectures, even help you decide what kinds of classes to take. However, you should use your learning style(s) as a loose guide, rather than a strict rubric. Rarely does anyone fit perfectly into one category. But the more you think about how you learn (this is called **metacognition**) the better you will be able learn! Being able to talk about how you learn not only guides you in your own studies, but it helps when you communicate to professors or tutors. Take a look at these learning styles and think about which ones resonate most with you, keeping in mind that you will probably have different learning styles depending on the subject matter, or you might be a mix of learning styles.

Visual

As you might guess, this means you take in information best when it is presented visually. This can take a variety of forms, but it usually does not include heavy text, even though that is technically something you see. If graphs, images, videos, maps, and tables tend to make things click for you in a particular area, then you might be a visual learner. In your studying, try using flow charts and word maps to help you connect ideas.

Auditory

This category has to do with listening. If lectures help things solidify for you in class, or if listening to an audiobook helps keep you focused, you might be an auditory learner. In your studying, try talking things through out loud, either to yourself or to a friend, to help you understand new information. Also, many people are a combination of audio-visual learners, which means you understand material when it has an audio and video component, like videos.

Textual

This learning style is related to reading and writing. If reading things, either on a screen or in a physical book, and/or writing things out helps you learn best, you might be a textual learner. In your studying, try free writing exercises or active reading strategies to get your brain flowing.

Kinesthetic

This category is for people who prefer to learn by doing. If you feel you understand something best when you can physically do something, you might be a kinesthetic learner. In your studying, try to use something you can touch, like models (you can make a model out of anything), to get a tactile experience in your learning. If your subject matter is not conducive to a physical tool, try getting a fidget device to keep your tactile sense working while you study.

There is another aspect of kinesthetic learning that goes beyond physical movement. Kinesthetic learners can also do well when they are given an example or a real-world application. Rather than doing something with your body, you are doing something with the information. If you do well by seeing someone else perform a task, or by working to apply information to your own life, this type of kinesthetic learning might apply to you.

Conclusion

This is just a basic guide to learning styles to jumpstart your own metacognition. Don't pigeon-hole yourself into one category. Instead, use this as a jumping off point to start to think about how you learn. If you find that one learning style is harder for you, view it as a skill to improve rather than a fixed category.

**A note for faculty:* While it is always a good idea to keep learning styles in mind, studies have shown that catering your teaching to the learning style of individual students does not increase comprehension or test scores, which has led many scholars to call learning styles "a myth." While learning styles themselves are not a myth, the practice of teaching to them heavily is not recommended. This is both because certain material lends itself to specific teaching and learning styles, and because students do not fit neatly into one category. Rather, keep in mind that all students will understand material best when it is presented in multiple ways and when you encourage your students to develop learning skills in all areas.

[\(https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/enough-with-the-learning-styles-already/\)](https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/enough-with-the-learning-styles-already/)

[\(https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/learning-styles-preferences/\)](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/learning-styles-preferences/)