Proper use of learning styles in adult classes

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Abstract: There are many tests available to help you and your students discover your best learning style. Generally speaking, however, if you are someone who is more likely to think in pictures, prefer to meet with someone in person, and are more likely to want visual diagrams when completing a project you have tendencies towards visual learning. Similarly, if you are more likely to think in terms of sounds, prefer to speak on the phone with someone, and want verbal instructions then you tend towards auditory learning. Finally, if you are more likely to think in terms of moving images like mini-movies in your mind, prefer to participate in an activity when you meet to speak with someone, and tend to jump right into a project without reading directions you tend towards tactile/kinesthetic learning.

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Introduction:

Over the years definitions have evolved from provisions in federal law and initiatives of groups advocating particular methodologies or the needs of specific adult populations. The result is that definitions tend to merge statements about the goals to be achieved (e.g., improving the literacy of a particular population) with a particular means (e.g., adult basic education) to achieve the goal.

Therefore, it is helpful to distinguish between at least these dimensions of the issue:

1. "Literacy" refers to the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals. The federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of the Workforce Investment Act)1 defines literacy as "an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." Literacy is often defined in terms of specific domains such as "basic academic skills," "workplace skills," "life skills," "parenting skills," or skills

necessary to exercise one's rights and responsibilities for citizenship. Different dimensions of literacy are often categorized by terms that cluster several dimensions of literacy important for different clients. Examples include workplace literacy (combining both basic academic skills and workplace skills), and family literacy (combining basic academic skills and other skills essential for successful parenting).

2. "Education attainment" usually refers to the numbers of years of schooling completed or the level of credential (e.g., high school diploma or associate degree) an individual has obtained. Despite concerns about the meaning of credentials, there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and literacy.

3. "Literacy initiatives" often are defined in terms of the needs of a particular target group. These may be parents of young children, youth who have dropped out of high school without earning a high school diploma, welfare recipients, persons with limited English-speaking ability, incarcerated adults, or adults in the workforce.

4. Other literacy initiatives are defined in terms of a particular educational service, strategy, or means to address a target population's literacy problems. "Adult basic education" and "family literacy" are examples. These initiatives are often defined in terms of a particular configuration of services for the target population (e.g., assessment and information and counseling services).

Understanding and Using Learning Styles

Students, in fact all individuals, are most effective when they are taught in their personal learning style. In fact, there are three major types of learners: visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. While most individuals without disabilities can learn using any one of these styles, most people have one for which they show a stronger affinity.

A Look at the Three Learning Styles

1- Visual Learners - Visual learners are those who generally think in terms of pictures. They often prefer to see things written down in a handout, text or on the overhead. They find maps, graphs, charts, and other

visual learning tools to be extremely effective. They remember things best by seeing something written.

2- Auditory Learners - Auditory learners are those who generally learn best by listening. They typically like to learn through lectures, discussions, and reading aloud. They remember best through hearing or saying items aloud.

3- Kinesthetic Learners- Kinesthetic, also called tactile, learners are those who learn best through touching, feeling, and experiencing that which they are trying to learn. They remember best by writing or physically manipulating the information.

Learning Style Assessments:

There are many tests available to help you and your students discover your best learning style. Generally speaking, however, if you are someone who is more likely to think in pictures, prefer to meet with someone in person, and are more likely to want visual diagrams when completing a project you have tendencies towards visual learning. Similarly, if you are more likely to think in terms of sounds, prefer to speak on the phone with someone, and want verbal instructions then you tend towards auditory learning. Finally, if you are more likely to think in terms of moving images like mini-movies in your mind, prefer to participate in an activity when you meet to speak with someone, and tend to jump right into a project without reading directions you tend towards tactile/kinesthetic learning.

How to Effectively Use Learning Styles in Class:

In the best of all possible worlds, you would incorporate all three learning styles into each of your lessons. However, this is just not possible in the real world of teaching. In truth, it is often not hard to include both auditory and visual learning styles in your lessons. For example, you can have instructions written on the board and say them out loud. However, it is not always as easy to include the tactile/kinesthetic learning style into your lessons. The sad truth is that many students have this as their strongest learning style. It is best to not force the issue but instead find natural places to include kinesthetic learning. If your class warrants it, you could include simulations, role-playing, debates, or the use of manipulatives.

Concerns When Incorporating Learning Styles

Though rarer today then in the past, some teachers discount the importance of learning styles. They continue to teach in their one major method without trying to vary instructional methods. This is a mistake that will lead to less learning in the classroom.

On the other hand, many students and to a lesser degree some teachers make the mistake of thinking that they cannot learn using methods that are not focused on their learning style. This is also a huge mistake that in the end will result in less learning. If teachers do not help their students find ways to be successful learning information presented in any style, they are not helping them succeed in the future. The fact is that students will be faced with many different styles of teaching during the educational career. Only by finding ways to adapt and learn using other styles, will students end up succeeding.

Examples of ways that students can adapt:

- Kinesthetic learners would include writing down information that they are to learn.
- Visual learners could create word webs, venn diagrams, or other visual presentations of information.
- Auditory learners could read a passage out loud from their textbook or from handouts

1- Kinesthetic Learners:

A Look at Kinesthetic Learners:

Kinesthetic learners typically learn best by doing. They are naturally good at physical activities like sports and dance. They enjoy learning through hands-on methods. They typically like how-to guides and action-adventure stories. They might pace while on the phone or take breaks from studying to get up and move around. Some kinesthetic learners seem fidgety, having a hard time sitting still in class.

Key Learning Methods for Kinesthetic Learners:

Kinesthetic learners learn best through doing including manipulating items, simulations and role plays, and other methods that physically involve them in the learning process. They enjoy and learn well from experimenting and first hand experience. Further, they learn best when activities are varied during a class period.

Ways to Adapt Lessons for Kinesthetic Learners:

Vary instruction not only from day-to-day but also within a single class period. Provide students with as many opportunities as your curriculum warrants to complete hands-on work. Allow students to role-play to gain further understanding of key concepts. Provide students with the opportunity to work in small discussion groups as they study materials. If possible, plan a field trip that can help reinforce key concepts. Allow students to stretch partially through the class if they seem to become restless.

2- Auditory Learners

A Look at Auditory Learners:

Auditory learners learn best by listening and talking aloud. They typically notice and remember sounds. They are good at remembering things that they hear. They are also good with words and language. They often read to themselves as they study. They are also often distracted by noise and sounds.

Key Learning Methods for Auditory Learners:

Auditory learners learn best through hearing the information. They often need to read the written word aloud to help them remember key points. Verbal repetition is an effective means of study for auditory learners.

Ways to Adapt Lessons for Auditory Learners:

Provide students with oral along with written instructions for assignments. Include whole group discussion in your class. Provide students with videos to complement the written text. Allow time for students to read out loud or talk through problems they might be having. Provide breaks from silent reading periods. Also, realize that those who are strong in auditory learning typically take longer to read a passage.

3- Visual Learners

A Look at Visual Learners:

A typical visual learner uses visualization techniques to remember things. They often have a good sense of direction because they visualize maps and directions in their mind. Many prefer to read information in a textbook or on the whiteboard rather than listen to the teacher lecture. They also enjoy doodling and drawing. Visual learners typically use sight words in their everyday terminology. For example, they might say "Let's take a look at this." or "Let's look at this from a different perspective." They remember details including colors and spatial arrangements.

Key Learning Methods for Visual Learners:

Visual learners learn best by seeing what they are being taught. Visual learners typically prefer images, maps, graphs, and other visual representations over other forms of instruction. They will find that if they include images, mind maps, lists, and other visual techniques in their notes then they will have a better chance of remembering key information.

Ways to Adapt Lessons for Visual Learners:

Including diagrams, mind maps, word webs, visuals, and other forms of graphic organizers will help visual learners get the most from your instruction. Teach students to use highlighters when going through their notes and to create flashcards when studying for tests and learning information. Try not to give only oral instructions before requiring students to complete an assignment. Further, stay away from lecture without accompanying notes and/or visuals.

Conclusion:

Track materials (continued) which increased literacy skills and knowledge gained is also effective in enriching learning environment for learners are important. Participatory materials to ensure the participation of learners in the learning process and codification are included out of class activities, dialogue, role playing, etc.

In traditional programs that the principles of psychology and curriculum planning, less attention is the form of content presentation ie codification and providing books, original format and have the dominant form, while for adult content that could have valuable experience in addition to writing, other ways also be provided Affect the selection of pictures and images related to the concepts and content produced by including them.

Learning activities such as activities outside the classroom, dialogue, role playing and ... Another type of content is presented. Duties are placed on the learner, a resource for developing knowledge, skills and insights he considered.

The task force's policy recommendations are guided by these principles:

- Recognize that adult illiteracy is not an isolated problem but a fundamental barrier to every major challenge facing Kentucky. Without significant improvements in adult literacy the Commonwealth will be unable to make progress on issues such as early childhood education, education reform (elementary/secondary and postsecondary), economic development, and improving the health and well-being of Kentucky's families and communities.
- Shift from top-down implementation of a federal or state program to leading a statewide public campaign that depends fundamentally on a bottom-up commitment of communities, employers, and educational institutions. The campaign must engage all aspects of Kentucky life—all dimensions of state and local government, all education levels, the state's business and civic leaders, voluntary organizations, and all others whose work affects—or is affected by—the problem of adult illiteracy.
- The future of Kentucky depends on narrowing the disparities among counties by improving the adult literacy of the population in all regions of the state.
- Shift from an emphasis on providers to the needs of clients. Measure performance and progress in

terms of impact on the quality of life and economic well being of:

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