

CLD1-2-4H



Facilitator's Guide

People Learn with a Purpose

Understanding Learning Styles

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.
 – Winston Churchill

Rationale:

People learn for different purposes, and they process information and learn in very different ways. Some common purposes for learning are to be able to gather information for informed decisions, to achieve a specific goal or simply to increase knowledge. Understanding why and how you process information most effectively is essential to learning, and it is especially important to effectively teach others.

Program Goal:

Recognize the importance of engaging different learning styles for creating a positive learning environment.

Program Objectives:

- Examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience.
- Evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles.
- Choose different learning activities to enhance specific learning styles for a positive learning environment.

Pre-Program Preparation

- Prepare copies of the publication “Understanding Learning Styles” and the adapted Learning Styles Assessment.

Materials needed:

- Chalk/dry erase board, flip chart or flip chart post-it notes and markers to record answers as part of learning activities
- Seven learning style wall banners – Visual, Auditory, Verbal, Physical, Logical, Social, Solitary
- Adult learning style preferred activity cards, with prepared descriptor words related to each style randomly placed on tables and with enough cards for each learning style and participant
- Paper and pens/pencils
- DVD player (or computer for small groups); DVD “Happy Feet”; optional wireless access for Mickey Mouse Club and Sesame Street YouTube video clips

Introduction:

People are motivated to learn for different purposes. They may be motivated to develop a thorough understanding of facts as a means for making better decisions for reaching a set goal. Many persons may just love the fun or social aspect of the learning process or group activity, with the actual content being less important than the activity. People also learn in different ways. Regardless of the purpose, the presenter/educator must maintain interest and feel engaged in order for learning to be successful. Understanding how and why individuals (yourself or others) learn best is the key to a positive learning experience.

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Introductory Activity:

Think, remember and visualize one of your most positive learning experiences. Why was it so enjoyable? What made it so memorable? (Examples could include: “It was so much fun”; “I met new friends”; “the teacher was so kind”; “the information helped me solve a problem,” and so forth.)

Listen for words from comments that describe or reflect different learning styles. Write on post-it notes and place on dry erase board, flip chart or flip chart post-it notes so that everyone can see. You will refer to this later with learning activities.

Objective 1: Examine the role of positive emotions in a successful learning experience.

What motivates people to learn? The primary motivation to learn is governed by emotions. How are you feeling right now? Are you eagerly anticipating what is coming next? Are you anxious for the session to end so you can move on to other things? If you feel comfortable talking in front of a group of people it probably would not embarrass you to be called on for an answer. However, if you shy away from situations which draw attention to yourself, you may try to avoid making eye contact with the presenter so you will not be called on. People will seek to emotionally preserve themselves regardless of how much they want or need to learn.

Learning Activity 1:

Ask the participants to think back on a negative learning experience and share that experience with another participant. Ask them to explain how they felt in that situation and what caused them to feel that way. They should describe the emotions that they felt and how they were different from the earlier positive learning experience. Ask for volunteers to share their differences with the larger group.

(Alternative: Share a personal negative learning experience story; discuss the negative emotions resulting and the possible impact on the learner.)

Objective 2: Evaluate the differences in seven different learning styles

Positive emotions govern the motivation to learn. Every individual has a preferred learning style that created these positive experiences. There are seven primary learning styles. When people participate in learning activities that tap their preferred learning styles, they experience positive emotions and the motivation to continue learning. Do you know your preferred learning style?

Learning Activity 2:

Place the Seven Learning Style Banners on the wall, naming each style. Ask members to determine their own style preferences by taking the Learning Style Assessment, online or using paper copies. Ask individuals to select their preferred descriptors and score themselves. Once the assessments are completed and self-scored, share the characteristics of each learning style and have participants stand under the Learner Style Banner that best reflects their learning style. Ask learners to reflect on their personal learning difference preferences. Repeat this process for their second strongest learning style.

Auditory/Musical. Auditory or musical learners prefer using sound and music. Auditory learners process information and gather meaning through sounds and will say, “Tell me” or “Let me listen to what you mean,” or use they may use the expression, “What I heard you say was....”

Logical/Mathematical. Logical or mathematical learners prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. Logical learners process information by using numbers, data, statistics and problem solving with specific reasoning and detailed process involved. Logical learners will use expressions such as, “Let me explain the numbers”; “Let me show you what the data means”; “The numbers don’t lie”; or “Look at the bottom line.”

Physical/Kinesthetic. Physical or kinesthetic learners prefer using their body, hands and sense of touch to learn. Physical learners process information and gather meaning through touch, actually using the materials or content with interactive demonstrations. They may say, “Let me try this” or “Let me show what I mean.”

Social/Interpersonal. Social or interpersonal learners prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Social learners love to talk and interact with others. Their most effective learning takes place in face-to-face meetings. Social learners will use expressions such as, “Let’s meet face-to-face and brainstorm solutions.”

Solitary/Intrapersonal. Solitary or intrapersonal learners are introverts who prefer to work alone and use self-study. Solitary learners love to silently think about what they are learning, process for meaning alone and will use expressions such as, “Let me think about this and get back to you”; “I haven’t made my mind up yet”; or “I’m still thinking about it.”

Verbal/Linguistic. Verbal or linguistic learners prefer using words, both in speech and writing. Verbal learners process information and gather meaning through language, usually by talking. Verbal learners will say, “Let me tell you what I’ve learned (or read)” or “Let’s talk this through.”

Visual/Spatial. Visual or spatial learners prefer using pictures, images and spatial understanding. Visual learners process information and gather meaning from or with illustrations, diagrams, and will say “Show me what you mean.”

Objective 3: Choose different learning activities to enhance specific learner styles for a positive learning environment.

Now that you have assessed your own personal learning style, let’s take a look at the activities that create the most positive learning experiences for each learning style. Learners and those leading learning experiences (teachers and presenters) need to understand that individuals process information in different ways.

Learning Activity 3:

Show video clip from “Happy Feet” DVD special features segment (teacher in penguin classroom’). Discuss the differences in learning preferences and the types of emotions created by the teacher. (Optional activities could be showing YouTube video clips of the Mickey Mouse Club or Sesame Street learning songs).

Quickly review the characteristics of learning styles. Ask participants to draw a learning activity card from those stacked on each table and share which learning style this activity would reinforce:

Visual/Spatial Learners. To reach a visual learner, show PowerPoint slides, posters, pictures or photographs; give a demonstration or use a graph to make a point. Ask visual learners to create posters, photo albums, scrapbooks, charts, or scale models

Verbal/Linguistic Learners. To connect with a verbal learner, hold group discussions, tell stories or give personal demonstrations or illustrated talks. Ask

for speeches, debates, essays, telling or writing poetry and stories, papers, journaling and other writing experiences.

Logical/Mathematical Learners. To reach a logical learner, use problem-solving situations involving formulas and equations or numbers and statistics. Ask for the development of flow charts, cost benefit analyses, timelines, logic models, word puzzles, recipes, numbers and measurements.

Auditory/Musical Learners. To teach an auditory learner, use lecture, discuss instructions and musical performances to make points. Ask auditory learners to create an expressive song, use music videos, songs, lyrics, online videos, radio, television, You Tube and the internet to express ideas.

Physical/Kinesthetic Learners. To connect with a kinesthetic learner, use touch and movement such as found in physical ‘hands-on’ or movement activities such as dance, arts and crafts, building projects, role playing, active games, scavenger hunts, food tasting and experiments. Ask kinesthetic learners to create arts and crafts projects, conduct puppet shows, go on scavenger hunts, create a role playing scene, play learning games and give demonstrations.

Social/Interpersonal Learners. To teach an interpersonal learner, plan teamwork projects, group activities, interviews, committee assignments and include social aspects and relationship building opportunities with learning situations. Asking learners to participate in service projects, give group presentations and develop community projects are all effective teaching methods for this group.

Solitary/Intrapersonal Learners. To reach an intrapersonal learner, plan internet research and other activities involving technology such as electronic chats or discussions, personal writing projects, blogs, reading assignments and personal interpretations such as artwork. Ask learners to keep a reflective journal, create a personal philosophy, and explain their hunches.

Learning Activity 4:

Read the following learning situation. Ask the group to determine which learning activities they would choose to most effectively teach the content.

“You have been asked to teach a lesson on identifying breeds of livestock at the next 4-H Club meeting. You receive the lesson plans on “Identifying Breeds of Beef/Sheep/Dairy/Goat/Swine” and a variety of teaching aids from the Livestock Volunteer Certification Kit. What types of learning activities should you plan

to use in order to reach the most preferred learning styles of the members of the livestock club while teaching this content? (Note: The answers could vary due to different individuals in each club. Therefore, it is generally the best practice to plan a variety of teaching methods to accommodate a number of different learning styles.)

Summary:

Think back on your own positive and negative learning experiences. How have differences in learning styles impacted these experiences? People learn with a purpose. Those purposes are enhanced when learning takes place in an environment that brings out positive emotions and a joy (or reward) in learning. This can best be accomplished by designing learning activities with different learning styles in mind.

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My First 4-H Club Meeting

1. What year did you attend your first 4-H meeting? _____
2. Who invited you to attend your first 4-H meeting? _____
3. Where was your first meeting held? _____
4. What do you remember most about your first 4-H meeting? _____

5. What activities were conducted at your first 4-H meeting? _____

6. What business was discussed at your first 4-H meeting? _____

7. Were refreshments served? _____ And if so, what was served? _____

8. Who took you to your first 4-H meeting? _____

Did that person stay at the meeting with you? _____
9. Were you excited to attend the meeting? _____
Were you nervous about attending? _____
What do you remember most? _____

