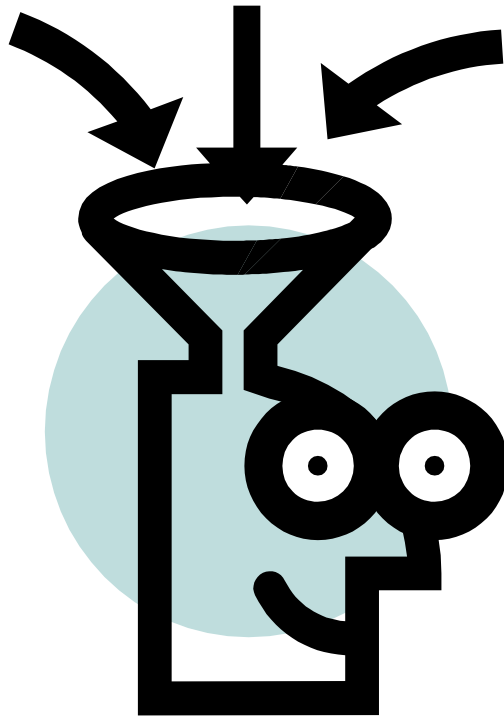


# Understanding Learning Styles



# Understanding Learning Styles

## Description

This is a brief overview of learning styles, their importance in supervision, and suggestions for staff development programs.

## Learning Outcomes

Participants in this workshop will be able to:

1. Integrate adult learning theory into their training programs
2. Identify five preferences for perceiving information
3. Identify four preferences for processing information
4. Assess their own learning preferences
5. Identify strategies to address different learning styles in staff development programs

## Principles of Adult Learning

- Andragogy vs Pedagogy
- Motivation, Reinforcement, Retention, Transference

## What are Learning Styles?

- Perceiving information
- Processing information
- Organizing and presenting information

## Perceiving Information

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic
- Olfactory
- Gustatory

## Processing Style

### Kolb's Experiential Learning Styles

- Concrete Experience
- Reflective Observation
- Abstract Conceptualization
- Active Experimentation

## How can I use this with adult learners?

- Teaching Strategies
- Activity Choices

# **Andragogy vs Pedagogy**

## **Adult learners:**

- Are autonomous and self-directed
  - Have accumulated life experience and knowledge
  - Are goal-oriented
  - Seek information that is relevancy-oriented
  - Are practical and want to focus on what is useful on the job
  - Must be respected as equals of instructor
- 
- Malcom Knowles, as cited in Lieb, 1991

# **Tips to Assist Your Perceiving Preference**

## **Advice for Visual Learners**

- Use visual materials such as pictures, charts, and maps
- Use color to highlight texts and personal notes
- Take notes while listening and/or readings
- Use patterns on hand-outs to structure learning (e.g., bold, headings)
- Brainstorm using illustrations, mind maps and models
- Use multi-media whenever possible (e.g., computers video, mind maps)
- Eliminate visual disturbances from your learning environment
- Visualize information as a graph or picture
- Skim readings to get a “big picture” overview before reading in detail

## **Advice for Auditory Learners**

- Participate in discussions and debates
- Make speeches and presentations
- Use a tape recorder if possible in addition to taking notes
- Read text aloud to yourself
- Create mnemonics (e.g., S.C.O.R.E.) or jingles to aid memory
- Discuss ideas verbally with a co-worker
- Dictate to someone else while they write your ideas down
- Speak into a tape recorder and listen to your own ideas played back

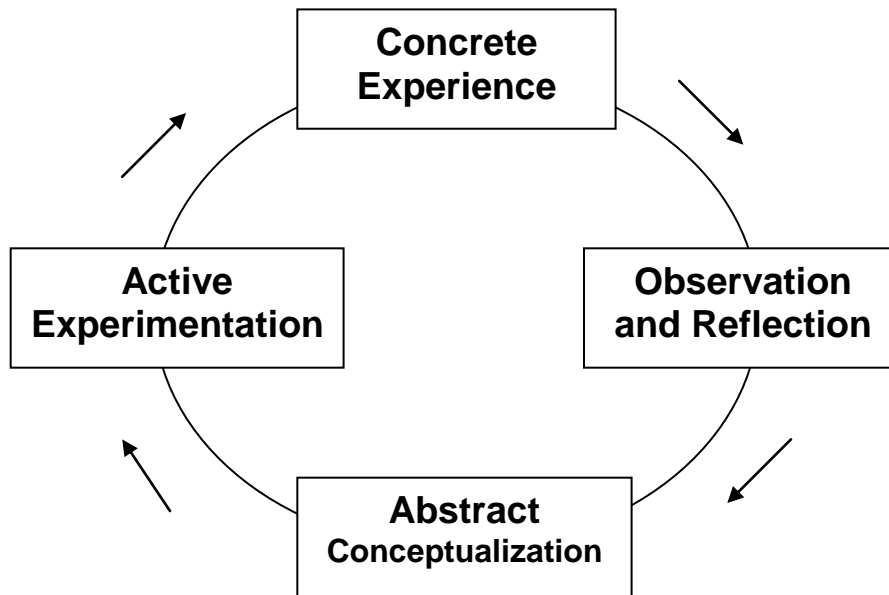
## **Advice for Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners**

- Take frequent study breaks
- Move around to learn new things (e.g. use your hands to demonstrate a concept, use art supplies to create a new concept)
- Stand up and move while learning
- Use bright colors to physically highlight reading material
- Use computer to transfer written and/or highlighted notes
- Turn notes into notecards for physical turning
- Skim-read before reading in detail
- Use physical objects to cue memories

## **Advice for Olfactory/Gustatory Learners**

- Pay attention to unconscious interpretation of scents & smells
- Talk with others about associations you make with specific smells
- Attend to your physical surroundings while learning
- Use positively associated scents to create positive learning environment (e.g., peppermint gum or oil)

# Kolb's Learning Styles



## **Concrete Experience:**

- Learning by *intuition*
- Learning from specific experiences
- Relating to people
- Sensitivity to people
- Sensitivity to feelings

## **Reflective Observation:**

- Learning by *perception*
- Careful observation before making judgments
- Viewing things from different perspectives
- Introversion – looking inward for the meaning

## **Abstract Conceptualization:**

- Learning by *thinking*
- Logical analysis of ideas
- Systematic planning
- Deductive thinking – acting on the basis of one's understanding of a situation

## **Active Experimentation:**

- Learning by *doing*
- Ability to get things done
- Risk taking
- Extroversion – acting to influence people and events

Source: Adapted from Smith and Kolb (1986) as cited in Anderson & Adams (1992), "Acknowledging the Learning Styles of Diverse Student Populations: Implications for Instructional Design." *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, Volume 49

## **Tips for Teaching/Learning Strategies**

When developing staff development programs, it is important to include activities and materials that reach *all* of the people *some* of the time. The following are examples of strategies that will teach to various learners' preferred processing styles.

### **Concrete Experience**

- Real Life Examples
- Videos
- Shadowing and Observation of Practice
- Simulations and Applied Games
- First Person Readings

### **Reflective Observation**

- Personal Logs
- Journals
- Discussion
- Brainstorming
- Critical Reflection Questions

### **Abstract Conceptualization**

- Presentations
- Articles
- Research
- Models and Analogies
- Theory Behind Best Practices

### **Active Experimentation**

- Teamwork with Specific Tasks
- Projects
- Homework
- Case Study
- Role Playing

Adapted from Svinicki and Dixon (1987), as cited in Anderson & Adams (1992) "Acknowledging the Learning Styles of Diverse Student Populations: Implications for Instructional Design." *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, Volume 49