LEARNING-STYLE TIPS

The way you perceive and process information is called your learning style. The majority of Americans are visual learners: they have to see information to know it, and they remember best when they write something down. Auditory learners make up about a third of Americans: they acquire information best through listening and speaking. The final group is tactile learners who learn by doing. Your learning style could even be a combination of two or all three channels. Experiment with the tips below, and find what works best for you.

VISUAL CHANNEL

Perceiving:

- ✓ Sit in the front of the room, avoiding action from doors or windows.
- ✓ Take good notes, using organizational formats such as the Cornell method.
- ✓ Participate in class or group activities.

Processing:

- ✓ Summarize your notes, or go through and highlight them.
- ✓ Look at all study materials.
- ✓ Use charts, maps, doodles, flash cards and clustering.
- ✓ Practice visualizing or picturing words/concepts in you head.
- ✓ Write everything out for frequent and quick visual review.
- ✓ Organize work space to avoid distractions.
- ✓ Use sticky notes and other reminders.
- ✓ Allow enough time for planning and problem solving.
- ✓ Jot outlines down before answering an essay question.

AUDITORY CHANNEL

Perceiving:

- ✓ Tape lectures to help you fill in the gaps in your notes, but do listen and take notes, reviewing them frequently.
- ✓ Sit in the lecture hall or classroom where you can hear well.

Processing:

- ✓ After you have read something, put it in your own words and recite it aloud.
- ✓ When reading directions and exam questions or when proofreading, mouth the words to yourself. (Ask a friend to read aloud short texts that you find confusing.)
- ✓ Memorize information by making up jingles, songs, rhymes, etc.
- ✓ Work in areas with sounds that help you to study.
- ✓ Explain aloud to yourself the illustrations in textbooks.
- ✓ Remind yourself to review details.
- ✓ After studying on your own, discuss your work with someone else.

TACTILE CHANNEL

Perceiving:

- ✓ Write down facts on scratch paper several times.
- ✓ Participate in discussions.
- ✓ Tape and write lecture notes.

Processing:

- ✓ Make study sheets.
- ✓ Use physical actions to help process and memorize material.
- ✓ Summarize directions for yourself.
- ✓ Use role playing and other actions to prepare for exams.
- ✓ Trace terms you need to know as you say them aloud.
- ✓ Study with a group after working on your own.
- ✓ Take short breaks after studying at least an hour or two.

Another way to understand your learning style is to know whether you are field independent or field dependent. If you're field independent, you're a doer, who likes to attack a project on your own, investing your creativity in it and considering all the essential details. If your field dependent, you want feedback from the teacher throughout the project. You also find the give-and-take of group work helpful.

FIELD INDEPENDENCE

- ✓ Work on your own first, and then study with a group.
- ✓ Learn to talk with your teachers about their expectations.
- ✓ Ask your teachers how you're progressing.
- ✓ Talk with other students about assignments; there may be something you're missing.
- ✓ Jot down the big picture of an assignment before you start it.
- ✓ Take breaks, pull back and look at the whole project and the expectations again.
- ✓ Double check your work and visit the tutors.

FIELD DEPENDENCE

- ✓ In class, structure your notes. Write comments about interesting connections in the margins.
- ✓ Work on your own first, marking where you have questions, and then study with a group.
- ✓ Find good students to study with, but hold up your end of the work.
- ✓ Keep at task. Make a plan to get the project done, and start working on it.
- ✓ In your plans, title a section "details," and jot down considerations that would affect your project.
- ✓ Double-check an assignment's directions for the expected format and other specifics before handing it in.
- ✓ Double check your work and visit the tutors.