

# **Learning Styles in the Classroom**

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March 18, 2015

# Outline

- History
- Definition
- Importance
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- Classification
- Strategies

# History

*In general psychology*, interest in learning styles goes back to the **1920s** when the theory of psychological types was proposed (Sternberg and Grigorenko 1997).

*In the field of education*, the learning style concept has been recognized since the **mid-1970s** (Griffiths 2012).

Since then many classification were proposed based on conceptual and empirical investigations for describing how people think and learn.

# Definition

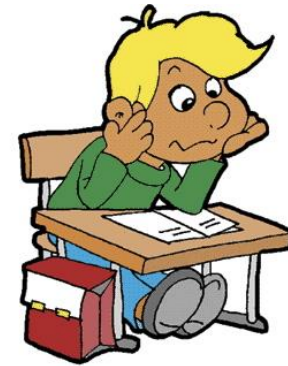
We all organize our thoughts, our responsibilities, and our lives in general according to the methods and processes with which we are comfortable (L. C. Sarasin, 1999).

What do you prefer?



# Definition

*Learning style refers to the particular ways in which individuals engage in learning.*



Learning process is very complex and research is growing in this area  
(L. C. Sarasin, 1999).

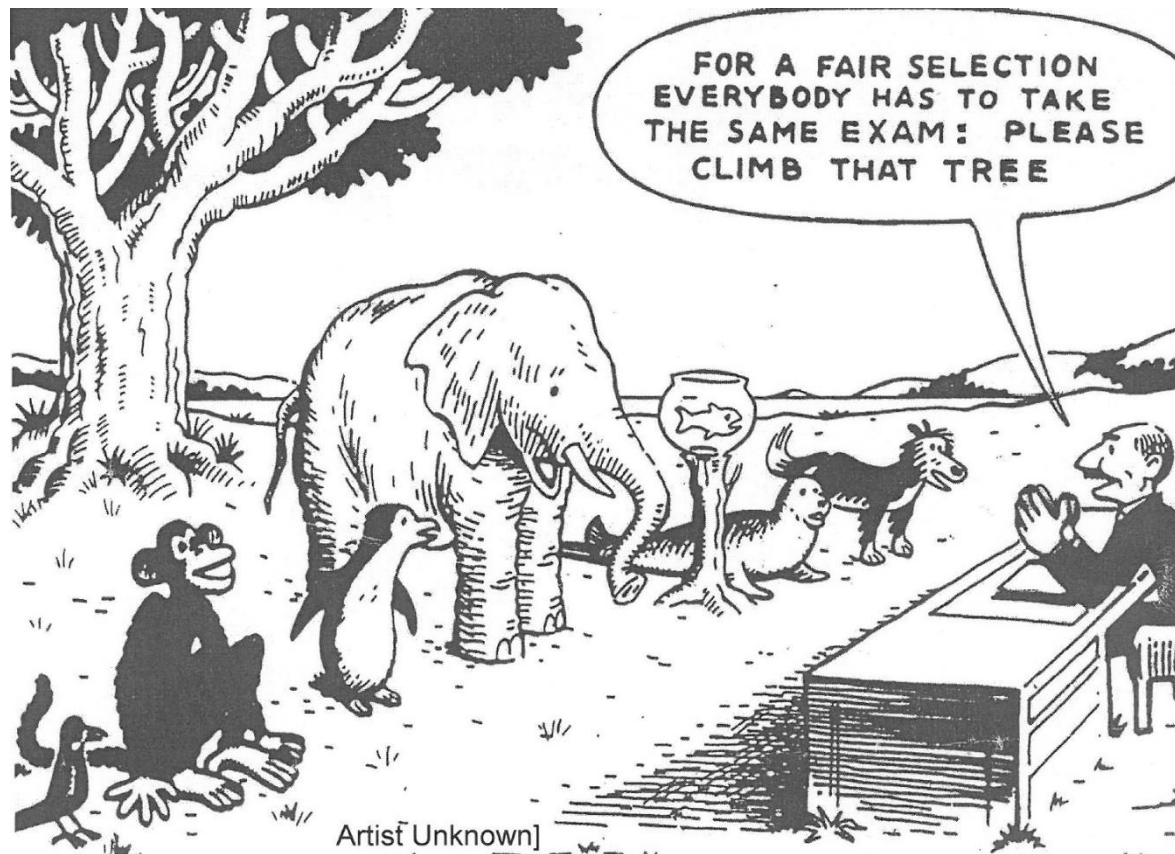
***“Everybody is a genius. But, if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it’ll spend its whole life believing that it is stupid.”***

***– Albert Einstein***

# Importance

Traditionally certain types of learners succeeded and went to higher education.

These days there are more diversity and more representative of general population.



# Importance

- Understanding a student's learning style puts the focus on that student's strengths, rather than on his or her weaknesses (O'Neil, 1990).
- Students must feel free to take risks without fear of negative consequences. If they feel safe they are more likely to open up to new experiences, information, concepts and activities (L. C. Sarasin, 1999).



# Importance

Main motivations for the interest in the study of learning styles  
(Sternberg and Grigorenko, op.cit.: 702) :

- Providing a link between cognition and personality;
- Understanding, predicting, and improving educational achievement;
- Improving vocational selection, guidance, and possibly, placement;

# Facts

- A learning style is not in itself an ability but rather a preferred way of using one's abilities (Sternberg 1994).
- Individuals have different learning styles, that is, they differ in their 'natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills' (Reid 1995: viii).
- where a learner falls on the continuum is value neutral because each extreme has its own potential advantages and disadvantages (Dörnyei 2005).
- Learning styles are not fixed modes of behaviour, and, based on different situations and tasks, styles can be extended and modified (Reid 1987; Oxford 2011).

# Classification

- According to the primary sense involved: visual, auditory, and tactile or kinesthetic.
- According to the method of processing information: Analytic, Imaginative, Dynamic

(L. C. Sarasin, 1999)

# Auditory Learners

- Messages are taken in through the ears.
- Prefer to learn by listening.
- Prefer to follow verbal instructions rather than written ones.
- Benefit from listening to lecture.
- Enjoy discussing information with others.
- When trying to remember something, they can often "hear" the way someone told them the information.



# Visual Learners

- Messages are taken in through the eyes.
- Prefer to learn using their eyes.
- Enjoy reading books for knowledge.
- Can easily follow written directions.
- Prefer maps to verbal directions when trying to find a place.
- Learn best when information is presented visually and in a picture.
- When trying to remember something, they can often visualize a picture of it in their mind.



# Tactile Learners



- Messages are taken in by the skin through touch or physical contact.
- Prefer to learn through touch.
- Work well using typewriters, computers or audio/visual equipment.

# Kinesthetic Learners

- Messages are taken in by the muscles through body movement.
- Prefer to learn by doing.
- Writing things down helps to clarify thoughts.
- Work well with their hands.
- Learn best when they can be physically active in the learning environment.
- Benefit from a lab setting where they can manipulate materials to learn new information.



## **Activity (L. C. Sarasin, 1999).**

- Think about a typical day in your life. Think of six typical tasks that you might have to remember to do in your personal/professional life.
- Think about the process that you use to remember them.
- Would you make a list, would you memorize them, would you assign a number to each task.
- Share your process with a colleague



# Strategies to teach auditory learners

- Verbal questioning
- Focusing/directive questioning
- Continued verbal sharing
- Verbal rewording
- Lecture
- Discussion
- Activities that involve memory

# Strategies to teach visual learners

- Adding visual aids to instructions
- Graphic organizers (Diagrams, charts and graphs)
- Putting material in visual format
- Models and demonstrations
- Group interactions
- Field trips

# Strategies to teach Tactile/Kinesthetic learners

- Interaction with objects
- Questioning based on physical interaction with objects
- Practical experiences
- Providing hands-on activities
- Simulations of real examples
- Field trips

# Assessment Strategies



<http://classroom-assessment-theory-into-practice.wikispaces.com/Assessment+Strategies+in+Differential+Learning>

# Activity

*If you want to teach like one of your favorite teacher which one do you choose?*

It is likely that this favorite teacher was somebody whose teaching style worked well with your learning style.

# Strategies to teach effectively

- As an instructor know your learning style.
- Consider how you teach.
- Add components to your teaching that that was missing from your teaching.

*“Naturally, we tend to teach in ways that are consistent with how we learn”*

# Wrap-Up Activity

- Think about some of your recent classes ...
- How did you present new material to your students?
- By what methods did you determine how well they understood the material?

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***Thank you ...***

***Any questions?***