

Pedagogical Implications of VARK Model of Learning

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Abstract

Current study aims at to analyze phenomenal features of an illustrious learning style VARK. The study categories four types of learners i.e. visual, auditory, kinesthetic and read write learners on the basis of individual differences bearing in mind the chief traits of each category of learners along with what strategies are imperative as far as effective and productive learning with respect to their need and essentialities are concerned. The study underlines the fact that all the learners can't learn in the same fashion. Each one has one or the other striking factor which dominates and directs their modes of learning that discrete them from others at one hand and unearths the mode and medium the instructors require getting them practice in a productive and systemic fashion. For the said intent, amalgam of skills and techniques are essential to keep in view as for as teaching learning process is concerned.

Keywords: Learning, VARK, visual, aural, kinesthetic, learners, style

1. Introduction

Learning style is the manner or fashion how someone acquires, attains, retains and uses imagination to attain skills or information. Due to its variable nature it can be termed as individual style of learning based on individual and intrinsic differences and the mode they prefer to learn new things. Style focuses on the strengths and not on the weaker aspects. For better learning it is preferred to use a fusion of certain styles and strategies rather than being stick to just a single strata. Style aids a learner to be more productive individual with enhancement of his potential caliber. It can assist a leaner to be more creative, genuine, effective manager, timely decisional and problem solver. VAK model of learning is a chief pedagogical approach and a dominant learning style that was initially proposed by psychologists in 1920 to categorize the ways and means how people learn. VAK is primarily an acronym of three words visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Variation in the original acronyms was added by Neil D. Fleming in 1992 and called it VARK.

The four features reflect the experiences of both learners and teachers for the acquisition of new-fangled information. This model is based on the utilization of basic sensory receivers as a mean to receive and learn new things. Later it was customized by Fleming and Mills in 1992. The modification was intended to affix yet an additional attribute in the original acronym and it is now termed as VARK. This model of learning is regarded as an illustrious mode of learning due to its simplicity and efficacy. According to these theorists one or two receiving styles are typically conspicuous and these delineate the most effective and beneficial approach to learn what is preferred to be learnt. It may vary from person to person and situation to situation. If one style exerts in one task the other or amalgamation of them can be handy in some other assignment. The most momentous persona of this model is that it engrosses and permits all learners to partake irrespective of their preferred and opted style of learning.

2. Review of Related Literature:

The history of learning style can be traced from the research work based on two psychologists of the 20th century named as Jean Piaget 1968 and Carl Jung 1976. The work devoted to learning styles and language teaching especially that of English marks its appearance in the last few decades on the horizon through Kinsella 1995, Oxford 1990, Reid 1995 and Anderson 1995. In Larkin and Budny's (2005) views "learning style is a biologically and developmentally imposed set of personal characteristics that make the same teaching and learning methods effective for some and ineffective for others". These cultivating styles have lent to have a genuine impact on the accomplishment of students (Cassidy, 2004). These are the individual merits and preferential modes of approaching, assembling, organizing and contemplating about certain information. Learning style is phrased as "an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organizing, and thinking about information. VARK is in the category of instructional preference because it deals with perceptual modes" (Fleming, 2011). "Teaching style" indicates teacher's personal decorum and media utilized either to transmit or receive data from the learner as illustrated by Kaplan (1995) with respect to mode of teaching and learning course of action.

It is of the essence to shrink the gap amid learning and instructing approach as learning styles facilitate instructors to attain insight to their explicit vicinity of interest and additionally urbanized it consequently (Cuaresma, 2008). It is moreover delineated "as the characteristic of cognitive, affective, social, and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment" (MacKeracher, 2004, p. 71). As per Brown (2000) learning styles function

as ways and means which persons perceive and put into practice in attainment of information. To Celcia-Murcia (2001) learning styles is the broad-spectrum perception that students exploit in acquisition of new-fangled language or a novel subject. It is a preferential stratagem that any personage consumed while studying. To Zhang (2004) innovative thoughts patterns determine teaching either student focused or teacher focused medium. Piping (2005) delineated that VARK style of learning can reinforce students' intellectual capacity and endow stimulus and inquisitiveness among learners.

According to Fleming (2011) "VARK is in the category of instructional preference because it deals with perceptual modes" (p.1). Miller (2001) epitomized VAK learning style as the preferential instructional replica which categorized learners by means of their sensory fondness. Dreeben (2010) hinted that the empirical vista of VAK mode of assessment, along with the very channel they get hold of information is the rationale in the wake of it educational efficacy. Byrnes (2010) avowed that "the VAK model can be utilized to assist in incorporating different learning techniques into classroom instruction and activities" (p. 4). Mackay (2007) anticipated VAK learning style as an impressive medium that may be allied with other essentialities. Murphy et al. (2004) supplemented that learning pedestal on VARK model assists as a means for "self-knowledge and exploration as productive and pleasurable experience". Drago & Wagner (2004) are of the notion that students seized diversity with respect to learning style as indicated by their interests and wants. Virleen (2010) accredited that distinctiveness in VARK learning model can consent to fabricate teaching materials i.e. software for multimedia programs footed on VARK model of learning for dynamic and productive teaching and learning.

3. Division of Learners or Learning Styles:

This model is alienated into three and later into four learning styles focusing on the modes through which each learner receives and processes novel information known as learning or knowledge. These include;

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic
- Read & write

3.1 Visual Learners:

"Visual learners are those that learn best things seeing them" (Fleming, 2011). These are those learners who discover by seeing and watching. In order to enhance their level of knowledge they prefer to observe things such as snaps, films, demonstrations, painting, charts and graphics. By and large their learning comes to pass through their dominant sense 'sight'. Stash (2007) convoluted visual learners as people who favor pictographic illustration. Mayzler & McGann (2010) elucidated that the visual learner is someone who ascertains best when she or he is witnessed the objects and the brain extracts the information preeminent when the sequence of event is transported in the course of the eyes. Learners having visual aptitude are characteristically affluent with imagination and are liable to be creative and inventive (Piping 2005).

3.1.1 Chief Traits:

- Written instructions help them in better understanding as compare to oral.
- Pay heeds to physical movement such as gestures, corporal language and facial expressions.
- Require calm and nonviolent surrounding to concentrate.
- Visualize novel concepts through color coding.
- Learn best through sketches and other visual tools which involve sense of sight.
- Highlight important points during learning.
- Hasty at forgetting acoustic information, they opt to witness.
- In an alien environ they monitor and inspect their surroundings.
- During first manifestation they spotlight on physiognomy and dress rather than names as hint to distinguish and to memorize others.
- Discern the use of dictionary when spellings are known.

3.1.2 Pedagogical Implications:

Teachers in order to culture visual learners can bring into play subsequent tools and techniques;

- Graphical material to enhance their learning.
- Use of color coding can be imperative in adding them to organize notes.
- Highlighter to make the points prominent in texts and other study materials.
- To draw concepts through images on the frame of mind rather than writing down.
- Drawing for conceptual clarity.
- Word searching, matching activities and puzzles can be effective for such learners.
- Use of visual is essential for teaching lessons i.e. images, maps, pictures and diagrams.

3.2 Auditory Learners:

They have down pat what they hear more evidently than what they perceive and witness. They acquire knowledge through hearing the things. They jump at the ideas and concepts when hear those things. They can grasp by listening tapes, audio discussion or lectures. Moreover, they can easily commit to memory and retain when information are presented before them in the form of melody, poem or a song. Such learners at times fell unease with boring reading because they are unable to visualize well. Aural students become skilled at something by listening (Drago & Wagner 2004). Acoustic learners thrash out on answers or by listening to recording over the assessment topics (Murphy et al. 2004). Students who gain knowledge by this mode are easily interrupted by noise (Drago & Wagner 2004).

3.2.1 Chief Traits:

- Verbal motivation manifolds their learning.
- Group study and read the notes aloud can be their accustomed trend of leaning.
- They prefer to investigate and find out the concepts rather than being told to look up something.
- Ask people for guidance when are distracted.
- Use rhymes for recollecting things in a better way.
- Lectures, audio and speaking books can enhance their learning capacity.
- Are talkative and enjoy gossips when are free.
- They are music lovers.
- Consult others before finalizing plan of action.
- Related to rhythmic and musical intelligence.

3.2.2 Pedagogical Implications:

Instructors so as to renovate auditory learners can make use of consequent devices and skills;

- Grouping in small or larger magnitude can be beneficial for their enhanced learning.
- Motivation to learn autonomously can be a handy tactic.
- Inculcate beats, melodies, songs and rhythms into curriculum to teach skills.
- Encourage to conceive information.
- Arrange discussion among learners.
- Let them the freedom for queries and promote group discussion.
- Make possible audio streaming.
- Foster activities such as brainstorming, jingles, songs, jokes and tales.

3.3 Kinesthetic Learners:

“Bodily kinesthetic have the ability to understand and solve problems in the world through body or parts of the body” (Armstrong, 2004). They learn through moving, touching and doing. Their expression is always based on bodily movement. For that intent they have exceptional balance and eye-hand collaboration. Usually such learners are active and can’t sit idle for a longer period of time. Further, they express their emotions through dance and bodily movements. In this regards miming, acting, performing, crafting and composing are the exceptional tools and techniques for better and fertile learning. Consistent with Armstrong’s (2004) observation pupils that grasp this type of intelligence are affectionate to travel and are dynamic, quick in accomplishing physical skills, fond of thinking while are on move and execute well in certain athletic meadow. Wolfman & Bates (2005), on the contrary, outlined kinesthetic learning style as to *increase students’ learning motivation*.

3.3.1 Chief Traits:

- Active learners rather than being passive.
- Hands up even though unaware of the answers.
- Use pointing technique while reading.
- Demonstrate gestures while talking.
- They prefer closeness with others even touch fellows to gain attention.
- Remember things through writing again and again.
- Use hands to execute things.
- Are well organized and coordinated.
- Have curious nature.
- Acting, miming, performing and crafting are their chief traits.

3.3.2 Pedagogical Implications:

Educationalists with the aim to facilitate kinesthetic pupils can draw on successive gears and methods;

- Arrange activities such as dance, athletics, drawing, sculpting and drafting.
- Inculcate role playing drill, field trips and other physical activities.
- Utilize skimming, drilling and memorizing strategies.

- Illustrate information by means of diagrams.
- Focus on practical work rather than theory.
- Use card games and board.

3.4 Read/write Learners:

It is a style of learning that centered round repetition of written words. Such learners learn and retain information well by having notes of the material in their mind. They preferred on the display of words and signs. Those who are able to read and write well they opt for this learning style. These students are familiar to organize lecture notes into draft form, restate classroom notes and cram multiple choice exam (MCQS) questions (Murphy et al. 2004). Besides that, according to Drago and Wagner (2004), “these students are note takers”. In view of Miller (2001) this brand of apprentices can commit to memory information via piercing reading or mouthing when reading, principally when learning somewhat new.

3.4.1 Chief Traits:

- These learners are adductors of PowerPoint, quotations, dictionaries and internet.
- Good at arranging notes during class.
- Enjoy reading and writing.
- They belong to the category of traditional studiers.
- Follow the method of textbook reading as a conventional mode of learning.
- Perform well in quiet atmosphere to avoid distraction.
- Learn well through interaction with what is written.

3.4.2 Pedagogical Implications:

Tutors with the intention to cultivate read/write learners can resort to following tricks and mechanism;

- Use of PowerPoint presentations.
- Use of reading textbook method.
- Develop habit of note writing.
- Promote textbook culture.
- Need to incorporate activities such as reading, reflecting, displaying and doing.

3.5 Results and Discussion:

Keeping in view the pros and cons of all the four styles related with learning it has been brought to light that each type of learner is quite different from others. Visual learners can learn better when they see, observe and are in contact with the things through the predominant sense i.e. sense of sight. So it is imperative for instructor to foster such activities and strategies that involves their visual sight for better, effective and fruitful learning environs. Quite opposite to visual are the auditory learners who learn best when they listen or hear things. It is underlined that their sense of hearing is predominant and for beneficial results in term of their effective learning marked the need to inculcate auditory aids such as songs, melodies and audio tapes to effectively teach such learners.

The other two brands are comparable in the sense that they involve the physical activities and strategies for fruitful teaching and learning. As far as kinesthetic learners are concerned they only learn best when they do things based on concepts empirically. They practically enact certain things apart from getting in touch with those ideas conceptually. So in order to get them on right track of learning analogous activities matching their temperament are compulsory to include. Read write learners are those who are concerned with the conventional way of learning. Repetition of written work is fundamental for such learners to master any concept. Moreover they oblige calm and quiet environ to learn and retain the concepts. Instructors have to bring into play distraction free settings for such learners.

3.6 Conclusion

This model is regarded as a famous mode of learning due to its simplicity and effectiveness in consistent with its pedagogical implications. Identification of style aids in an effective and systemic mode of learning. According to such theorists one or two styles are usually striking which filter what is needed to be learnt. If one has a developed and more matured sense he/she can have a mixture of distinctive leaning styles. It promotes learners to attain process and retain new information as a learning process. Teachers can interact with learners through these individual modes. He can effectively teach them keeping in view their preferred style of learning. Finally, it is an admitted fact that everyone can't learn and remember in the same fashion so it's up to teacher to be full of tricks and strategies to assist his learners in befitting manners.

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