

Policy and Procedures for Learning styles and Learner Profiles

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Introduction

Every teacher witnesses learners learning in different ways. For example, when learning about pipe bending or cold water systems, learners will turn to a variety of resources. Like watching videos, read articles, talk to peers in class, work place or via social networking. And then look over models that make sense to me. Learners have a better chance of learning and use a combination of these learning modalities rather than using just one.

Offer an Entry to Learning

Oxford Energy Academy has similar experiences when teaching. Some learning approaches simply work better for some learners than others.

Learners learn through a variety of ways, Therefore, Oxford Energy Academy’s lesson planning should reflect a variety of ways to offer entry to learning by all learners.

If the teacher/assessor knows that a learner builds understanding best when he/she can watch a demonstration and then dialog about the content and its implications, the lesson plan should provide that experience. While each learner has different approaches to learning, learning preferences do overlap in groups of learners. The result is activities that are accessible for small and large learner groups.

Oxford Energy Academy can start using learning profiles when we know the various ways that each of our learners makes sense of content. The more we understand our learners, the [more efficient we can ensure their learning successes](http://openingpaths.org/blog/2014/03/formative-assessment-cycle/). When we have in-depth understanding for how our learners learn, there is a major impact on diagnosing learner needs and planning effective supports. Multiple intelligences and thinking styles inventories can be effective tools for gathering data about learners.

As soon as this learner data is collected, the teacher/assessor can start differentiating lessons in ways that intentionally and strategically improve learner learning.

Cross-Train Learning

Everyone learns through a variety of approaches. Placing learners into a single learning style container ignores the reality of the whole person. Teachers need to cross-train learners by using two or more approaches to thinking styles profiles when planning differentiation. The more we know about our learners, the more we can be effectively strategic in meeting everyone’s needs. This is where learning profile cards, learner profile surveys, and learner learning perceptual quick surveys can provide detailed insight about learners that spans across multiple thinker processing categories.

[Learning profile cards](http://openingpaths.org/blog/2014/01/learning-profile-cards/):

Completed by learners, these cards can give teachers rich detail to inform instructional planning of [content, process, and product](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/differentiated-instruction-ways-to-plan-john-mccarthy) based on interests and learning profiles.

Learner profile survey:

Families or guardians complete this survey about their child. Involving the child in the conversation creates a richer response for teachers to support them.

The [learner learning perceptual quick survey](http://openingpaths.org/blog/2014/07/slp-quick-surveys/)

A simple and quick five to 15-minute activity to get a classroom view of the learners’ learning styles. Learners appreciate when the results are posted in a location where they can reflect on them anytime.

Plan Three-Dimensional Lessons

Three-dimensional lessons incorporate a variety of different experiences in a lesson. For example, revise a lesson to teach content in three different ways. This will help all learners find ways to connect and delve into key concepts and skills. Here’s one lesson format example:

* Content: Show a video that gives an overview.
* Process: Summarize the video’s key points in learner groups of three, and then share out.
* Content: Jigsaw an article or chapter reading while completing a graphic organizer. Groups share their findings.
* Process: Use think-pair-share to reinforce learner understanding.

Embed Choices

When using learning profiles, one guarantee is that all learners fall somewhere on the learning styles range. Design versions of an activity or product that incorporates different aspects of a learning profile. For example, use Sternberg’s MI to create three product options that reflect analytical, practical, and creative. Let learners decide which pathway option they want to take. Sometimes, learners will choose an option that may not "align” with their learning profiles. This is okay because they are making the choice. Consider letting learners design products based on modes of their own choosing. This approach signals to learners that their input matters.

The belief that learning profiles have no place in education fails to understand formative assessment data, [absent assessment fog](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/differentiated-instruction-eliminating-assessment-fog-john-mccarthy), that shows how not all learners are achieving. For challenges like large class sizes, high-stakes testing, and intense focus on teacher and administrative accountability, increasing success by all learners means we must engage them into the learning dialog. The mindful use of learning profiles keeps the light on and the door open for them to learn.

The Method that Oxford Energy Academy has adopted is the VAK/VARK model which is a small 15-minute activity. It is given out to the learners to complete normally on the first day at oxford Energy Academy as part of the learners induction.

The [Neil Fleming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Fleming)'s VARK modelexpanded upon earlier notions of sensory modalities.

The four sensory modalities are;

1. [Visual learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_learning)
2. [Auditory learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auditory_learning)
3. Read/write learning
4. [Kinaesthetic learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinesthetic_learning)

[Visual learners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_learning) have a preference for seeing (visual aids that represent ideas using methods other than words, such as graphs, charts, diagrams, symbols, etc.).

[Auditory learner’s](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auditory_learning) best learn through listening (lectures, discussions, tapes, etc.).

Read/write learning need to read text books, manufacturer’s instructions etc.

[Tactile/kinaesthetic learners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinesthetic_learning) prefer to learn via experience—moving, touching, and doing (active exploration of the world, science projects, experiments, etc.). Learners can use the model to identify their preferred learning style and, it is claimed, maximize their learning by focusing on the mode that benefits them the most. Fleming's model also posits two types of multimodality.

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