Republic of Iraq

University of Tikrit

College of education for women

English department/Higher Studies

Subject : Learning Styles and Active Learning

Class: M.A. Studies

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Learning Styles and Active Learning
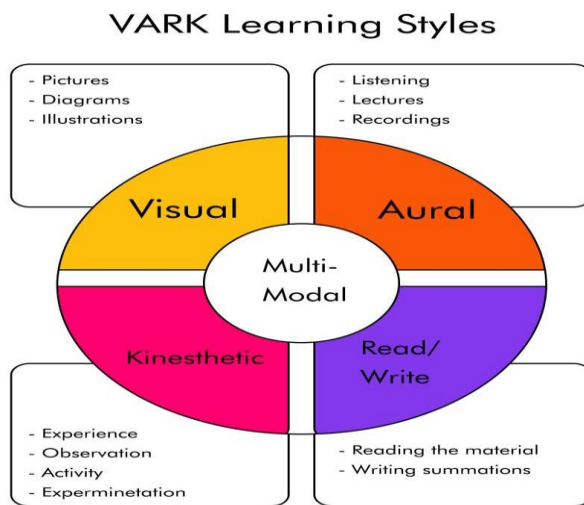
Introduction

Understanding learning styles is key to effective teaching. Every student has a unique way of learning, whether through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or reading/writing. Recognizing these preferences helps teachers adjust their approaches to meet the needs of all students. Active learning encourages students to participate directly in their learning through activities like discussions, group projects, and problem-solving. This method keeps students engaged and helps them apply what they've learned in real-life situations. When teachers combine learning styles with active learning, they create a more dynamic and inclusive environment that enhances student understanding and motivation.

1.1 Definitions of Learning Styles

Learning styles refer to the different ways in which people prefer to learn and process information. Understanding these styles helps educators tailor their teaching methods to improve learning outcomes.

Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the ways people perceive and process information in learning situations. He suggests that learning style preference is one part of a person's learning style, which involves choosing one way of learning over another.

According to Rahman (2016) is a specific behavior in receiving new information and developing new skills, as well as the process of storing new information or skills

VARK Learning Styles

- Pictures - Diagrams - Illustrations	- Listening - Lectures - Recordings

Visual — Aural

Multi-Modal

Kinesthetic — Read/Write

- Experience - Observation - Activity - Experminetation	- Reading the material - Writing summations

1.2 Types of Learning Styles:

1. Visual Learning Style

Is a learning process that relies on vision as a recipient of information and knowledge by using diagrams, charts, and images. Activities that include visual aids, like watching videos or drawing mind maps, it helps students remembering faster and stronger by seeing.

2. Auditory Learning Style

Is a learning process that relies on hearing as a recipient of information and knowledge**.** It focuses more on hearing the teacher or lecturer's conversation well and clearly without needing a visual display when studying, or listening to audio recordings.

3.Kinesthetic Learning Style

Refers to a preference for learning through physical activity and hands-on experiences. People with this learning style tend to understand and retain information better when they can move,

touch, or physically engage with the material. Kinesthetic learners often enjoy activities like experiments, role-playing, building models, or engaging in interactive tasks.

4. The reading/writing learning style

Refers to a preference for learning through reading and writing activities. Individuals with this learning style tend to absorb and retain information best when they can read textbooks, articles, or notes, and then express their understanding through writing. They prefer tasks such as note-taking, writing essays, creating lists, or summarizing key points. Reading/writing learners are often very organized and benefit from written materials, such as articles, reports, or written instructions, to process and internalize information.

5. Social Learning Style refers to a preference for learning through social interaction, observation, and collaboration with others. Learners with this style thrive in environments that encourage group discussions, peer interactions, and learning from role models. Individuals learn by observing the behavior of others and imitating those actions, especially when they observe positive outcomes (Bandura, 1977).

1.3 Applications of learning styles in the classroom

Dunn and Dunn (1978) explored how learning styles affect students in the classroom. They identified four factors that influence learning: 1) the immediate environment (sound, light, temperature, design), 2) emotional needs (motivation, persistence, structure), 3) sociological needs (self, pair, peers, team), 4) physical needs (perceptual strengths, intake, time, mobility). They argue that students perform better and have a

more positive attitude when taught in a way that aligns with their learning preferences. Therefore, educators should aim to teach in ways that accommodate different learning styles.

To support this, they recommend several strategies: redesigning classrooms to fit various needs, using small-group techniques like "circle of knowledge" or team learning, and implementing Contract Activity Packages. These packages include clear learning goals, multisensory resources, creative activities, small-group interactions, and assessments such as pre-tests, self-tests, and post-tests.

1.4 Benefits of Learning Styles

According to Biggs (2001) Learning style has an important place in the lives of individuals.

1. When learners recognize their own learning style. They will be able to integrate it into their learning, Ultimately the learning process will be easier, faster, and more successful.

2. It helps learners to solve problems more effectively.

3. Learning style helps learners to become autonomous and accountable for their own learning.

4. Learner`s confidence will increase and teacher`s control will be reduced to learners.

5. Learning style helps teachers to design lesson plans to match their student`s styles.

Active Learning

2.1 Definitions of Active Learning

Active learning is a teaching approach that involves students in the process of learning through activities and discussion, rather than passively receiving information from the instructor. It emphasizes engagement, participation, and collaboration (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

According to Prince (2004), active learning refers to instructional strategies that actively involve students in the learning process, requiring them to engage with the material, participate in discussions, and apply knowledge to solve problems.

2.2 Methods of Active Learning

1. Group Work: Students work in pairs or small groups to discuss topics or solve problems. This collaboration helps them learn from their peers.

2. Case Studies: Students analyze real-life situations and apply their knowledge to find solutions. This method makes learning relevant and practical.

3. Interactive Lesson-Teachers incorporate questions and discussions into their lesson. This approach keeps students engaged and encourages participation.

4. Role Play: Students act out scenarios related to the subject matter. This method helps them understand different perspectives and improve communication skills.

5. Problem-Based Learning (PBL): Students are presented with complex, real-world problems that they must investigate and

solve. This method enhances critical thinking, research skills, and independent learning.

2.3 Goals of Active Learning

1. Developing Communication Skills: Active learning strategies help students develop essential communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By engaging in discussions, reading activities, and writing tasks, students actively participate in the learning process, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

2. Developing Collaboration Skills: Active learning also encourages collaboration, particularly through small group work. In such settings, students engage in problem-solving, share knowledge, and learn to work together to achieve a common goal.

3. Encouraging Responsibility and Independence: Another benefit of active learning is that it encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. As students become more involved in their education through self-directed activities, they develop the skills to become independent learners. It breaks boredom by focusing on learners` thoughts and bodies in the activity and it increases motivation.

4. Learners do not only sit and listen but are actively involved in the learning process, engaging with the material through activities and discussions (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

 5. The role of students is to question, discriminate, and critically analyze the information they receive, fostering a deeper understanding of the material.

6. Active learning facilitates divergent thinking, allowing students to generate a wide range of ideas and solutions, which enhances creativity and problem-solving skills (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

7. Teachers act as facilitators and co-learners, creating a student-centered environment where students take the lead in their learning process, with teachers guiding and supporting them (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding learning styles and the implementation of active learning strategies are crucial for enhancing the educational experience. By recognizing the diverse ways in which students absorb and process information, educators can tailor their methods to engage all types of learners. Active learning fosters a dynamic and interactive environment that not only makes learning more engaging but also supports critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Furthermore, integrating learning styles into active learning creates a more inclusive and personalized approach, ultimately promoting deeper learning and greater student success. As educational practices continue to evolve, it is clear that recognizing the importance of both learning styles and active learning can significantly improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

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