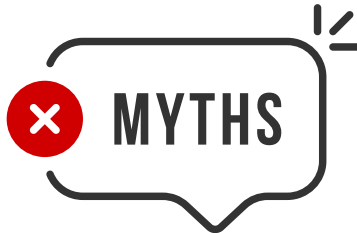


Debunking the Myth of Learning Styles

“I’m a visual learner.”

“I’m an auditory learner.”

You’ve likely heard these statements from students who invoke a learning style as a reason they are not performing well. They proclaim that the instructor doesn’t teach in a way that’s best for them or doesn’t match their learning style. Despite what students believe, numerous studies have shown that learning styles are myths.



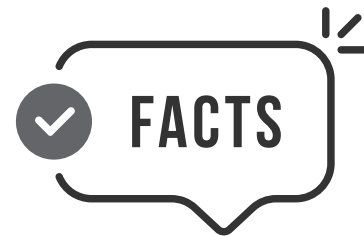
Purported Learning Styles

- Visual: prefer drawings, diagrams, graphs, pictures
- Auditory: prefer hearing information
- Reading/Writing: prefer text-based information
- Kinesthetic: prefer hands-on, real-world activities/information

Learning is a process that often involves multiple senses and different types of activities. Help students see different perspectives, make connections, and engage with the content.

Using Multiple Modalities Will Help Students Learn

- Watch a video.
- Read the textbook.
- Do the problems.
- Discuss with peers.



Becoming good at something, a sport, playing an instrument, or understanding complex ideas, takes time and practice. You can watch a hundred basketball games, but that doesn’t mean you can make a layup. You can listen to a symphony, but that doesn’t mean you can write one or play any of the instruments. You can play a game, but that doesn't mean you can explain the rules. Even if students don’t think the skills they are practicing are directly applicable to their lives, they serve as cross-training. For example, reading more can make you a better writer. Math skills can support learning chemistry or physics.

It is easier to be a passive receiver of information via a lecture or video than an active participant in constructing knowledge. Research has shown that students believe they learn more when listening to an engaging lecture and less when asked to discuss questions with their peers. In fact, research shows that learning gains are reversed – students learn more when they are active participants in their learning. By encouraging students to do more across modalities, we help them learn more.

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- Additional references available upon request.



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