

CITY OF GLASGOW
COLLEGE

Learning styles

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Introduction

Every student approaches learning in a different way. How we learn as individuals is known as our "learning style". One of the best ways to maximise your learning is to find out your individual learning style. This allows you to use your personal strengths whilst learning. It also lets you work on developing the weaker areas of your learning.

Psychologists, who have studied the idea of individual learning styles, have devised methods of assessing and categorising people's learning. One popular method categorises learning styles into the following:

- visual learner
- auditory learner
- tactile or kinaesthetic learner

By identifying your learning style, you may find you have learning traits from all three categories or are strongest in just one area. Identifying your learning style helps you find the study methods which will help you get the most out of your education.

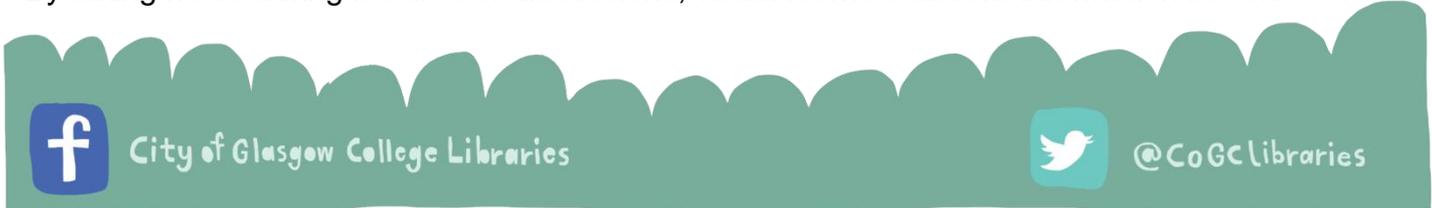
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Visual learners – learning through seeing

Visual learners learn best in class by sitting in a position where they can see the teacher or lecturer. This allows them to see clearly the teacher's body language and facial expressions. Visual learners usually prefer to study alone in a quiet area. They learn best from visual displays, such as:

- diagrams, charts and illustrations
- illustrated textbooks
- overhead projected information
- videos
- flip charts
- class handouts

By taking notes during lectures or discussions, visual learners absorb information better.





Study tips for visual learners

- Use highlighter pens to help remember key information when learning a new topic – use different colours for different types of information
- Summarise what you have learned in lectures, classes and textbooks - write summary sentences to cover key information
- Transfer key information from your notes into word processed sheets – use print outs when revising
- Write out key information or draw useful diagrams on small cards or sticky notes – reading through these cards will help you remember information

Auditory learners – learning through listening

Auditory learners learn best by talking about and hearing information. In class, a tutor's tone of voice, speed and pitch helps auditory learners pick out key information. Auditory learners often prefer group work and discussions in their study sessions. They learn best through:

- verbal lectures
- discussions
- talking about key information
- listening to others

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Study tips for auditory learners

- Form a study discussion group with other classmates who are auditory learners
- When studying alone, read notes aloud, as it helps recall of key information later
- Record important parts of lectures onto a smartphone or mp3 player, so that you can review information later (you may need your lecturer's permission for this).
- Record yourself reading out important notes or information from textbooks onto a smartphone or mp3 player. Listen to the recordings when travelling to college.





Tactile or kinaesthetic learners

Tactile or kinaesthetic learners learn best through movement, participation and touch. They prefer learning with a “hands on” approach, interacting with resources, and benefit from practical demonstrations during lessons (The term “kinaesthetic” also has an American spelling, “kinesthetic” – it has the same meaning).

Tactile or kinaesthetic learners may be unable to stay focused in lectures or class for long, or get distracted by the need for activity. They learn best by:

- hands on activity
- practical demonstrations
- experimenting
- working outside the classroom

Study tips for tactile or kinaesthetic learners

- Sit near the front during lectures and take notes of important points regularly to avoid distraction
- Transfer key information or phrases from notes and text books onto small study cards to flick through when revising.
- Type important points from notes and textbooks into word processed documents. The activity of typing helps reinforce the information.
- When reading through your notes or study cards, pace back and forward and read out loud – this will help you remember the information.





Self-assessment websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/extra/module1/3.shtml>

BBC KeySkills – What kind of learner are you?

<http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

This North Carolina State University site offers lots of information about learning styles. To take a self-assessment test, go to the page above and fill in your name then work through the questions. Click on the submit button to get the results. This test has a more complex scoring system and different categories than the previous site.

(Sites accessed 22 June 2016)

