

All tutors have different approaches for tutoring a student. The same is true of how people learn. I think at one point or another we have all been guilty of assuming our tutee knows what we are talking about. It is important to educate ourselves about learning styles of our students, because it can be highly beneficial to improving a tutor session and making the most of a session

Learning styles allow us to make the process of learning material easier for our students. We essentially are helping our selves out, because we would be able to relate more to the student and help them with English a lot more. It's important to know that people differ consistently from each other in their preferences (e.g., emotional, environmental) for certain ways of processing information. Matching or mismatching students' learning styles with instructional techniques affects learning significantly.

I chose to focus on ESL student's learning styles. ESL students tend to fall into two major categories. "They are either ear learners or eye learners" (Bernhardt 202). Ear learners are students that acquired their knowledge of the English language through people around them. It could come from teachers, friends, family, and so forth. They were able to pick up a sense for the vocabulary, grammar, syntax through trial and error process. These students know "slang", but they struggle in writing and grammar. My tutee grew up here most of her life. She moved from Mexico when she was a young girl, but picked up the language through hearing. Now, in college, she is struggling to grasp the basic structures of grammar. After figuring out her learning style and a little of history of studying the English language, I was able to construct the session in a way that helped her feel comfortable and motivated her to learn. We worked on using more formal words instead of slang words like "cool, sick or aight" to express that she was feeling good. Eye Learners basically learned the English in a formal matter. Their schools may have introduced the structures of grammar, and has English as a mandatory class. Eye learners know the principles of the English language. They know, understand, and can explain grammar. However, they have trouble with their listening and oral skills. They suffer from culture shock, and are unable to relate to topics discussed in class.

In my research I discovered the Basic types of learners, and Kolbs' learning style. Typically, to identify the learning styles of ESL

students, teachers recommended Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. However, to tutors, like myself, it can be complicated.

These methods can all help tutors identify the type of learner their student is. The three main types of learners are auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Auditory learners learn best by hearing. Visual learners are able to learn through seeing. Lastly, kinesthetic learners learn best by movement.

To help visual learners, taking notes is a great way for students to see the work in front of them, and for them to refer back to later. The tutee can also highlight key ideas and main points. A tool that may help students is color coding the work information so it is easy for the tutee to find the information and stayed organized.

My advice for auditory learners is to openly communicate with the tutee. Starting discussions on English topics or problem areas, may allow the tutee to open up and express areas where they are struggling with. A great exercise is to have the tutee repeat the concept or topic being learned out loud and have them explain in detail what they know about. From their explanation, a tutor would be able to focus on areas the tutee missed or was unclear on.

Kinesthetic learners are hands on learners and need to be involved in doing something to be interested. I suggest to act out things for them if they are having trouble understand. An example would be vocabulary. Acting out words may help the student remember it and use it in their work. I observed in L47 many tutors take their students to the computer to look up information. This is a great way for kinesthetic learners to understand concepts. Encouraging the student to look up the information on their own would allow the tutee have control and understand that it is up to them to understand the concept. This method can also be used when kinesthetic learners are stuck on a word. Asking the tutee to look up the word in the dictionary, gives them practice on where the word is, the definition, and the part of speech. It allows them to allow on themselves more than the tutors.

Kolb's learning style is very useful in improving our sessions with tutees. His theories on ESL learners allow tutors to adapt to different types of learning styles and enable us to help more students. There is "Diverging (feeling and watching), Assimilating

(watching and thinking), and Converging (doing and thinking),” (Kolb, 1984).

People with diverging styles are able to look at things from different perspectives. They are sensitive. They prefer to watch rather than do, tend to gather information and use imagination to solve problems. They are interested in people, tend to be imaginative and emotional, and tend to be strong in the arts. They prefer to work in groups, to listen with an open mind and to receive personal feedback. For students like this, it's best to set an agenda and have a structured list of things to do so they can avoid going off topic and have open discussions.

Assimilating learning preference is for a concise, logical approach. Ideas and concepts are more important than people. These people require good clear explanation rather than practical opportunity. They excel at understanding wide-ranging information and organizing it in a clear logical format. They are less focused on people and more interested in ideas. People with this style are more attracted to theories than practice. These learners are best known as the “critical thinkers”. As a tutor you can encourage them to focus their ideas on essay topics or class readings. Ask them to participate in class and in the session.

People with a Converging learning style use their learning to find solutions to practical issues. They prefer technical tasks, and are less concerned with people. They can solve problems and make decisions. People with a Converging style like to experiment with new ideas, to simulate, and to work with practical applications. Like kinesthetic learners, exposing converging learners to activities may draw their attention get them to get involved in the session.

By researching these different styles I was able to apply them to my own tutoring sessions and it improved the relationship between my tutees and I and motivated them to work much harder on their work. Learning a new language is tough for everyone, especially if they are placed in a country where the primary language is demanded in order to communicate with people. I believe it is essential that tutors discover their own unique learning style. This knowledge will enable them to realize which style/area they may be weak in and could improve in order to help their tutees. I recommend that every tutor look up their own learning style, and

ask their own tutee which is the best way they learn. You'd be surprised how much of a difference it makes in a session.

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