**Teaching and Learning to Different Learning Styles**

Using the VARK®

The VARK® is a questionnaire that provides information on a person’s learning preferences, or the ways we best absorb and deliver information.

Understanding your student’s VARK preferences, and comparing them to your own, can help you develop strategies for more effective communication with your student, as well as improve your own learning abilities.

It is suggested that both you and your student take the VARK, which is available at:

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>

It is a 16 question test that provides immediate results, including information on how people with each varying learning style comprehend best. A brief synopsis of the 5 different learning styles, with sample tips for teaching and learning are listed below:

(V)isual: Likes graphic depictions of things being learned (e.g. graphs, flow charts, diagrams, symbols). It does NOT include things such as PowerPoint or still pictures. Using many gestures while explaining, providing diagrams or charts of what you want the student to learn, or asking the student to draw out what they learned or highlight notes in multiple different colors can help these students learn better.

(A)ural: Prefer learning through hearing or speaking. Like lectures and discussions. Often talk things through. May be the first to speak, before thinking through questions, as hearing themselves say what they are learning helps to consolidate that information. Using discussion as a means for learning will be helpful for this student. Asking the student to repeat what he has been taught helps reinforce the concept. Having a quiet room for the student to work in helps to avoid distractions. Encouraging the student to study out loud or say their ideas out loud (when appropriate) is helpful, as well.

(R)ead/write: Reading and writing information is all important. These learners often like using lists, PowerPoints, websites without many distractors (i.e. pictures, sound). This student should be encouraged to utilize written resources (textbooks, websites, handouts, instruction manuals) to learn about information. Verbal instruction should be paired with written instruction. Students can write and rewrite information they are trying to learn in order to help in the learning process.

(K)inesthetic: These learners prefer hands-on activities or visual demonstrations of real-world activities. Activities such as case studies, practical applications, videos of real experiences, and simulations work best for these types of learners. Allow this student as much hands-on experience as possible. Trial-and-error works well, as does demonstration of real-life scenarios. Engaging as many senses as possible helps in the learning process.

Multimodal: These are learners that draw from multiple different learning styles. There are 2 types:

* VARK Type I: These learners may have about equal preference for all learning strategies and may switch from mode to mode, dependent upon what they are working on, choosing a single mode, dependent upon what the situation requires.
* VARK Type II: These learners do not feel comfortable until they have received information from all of their modes of learning. This can make them appear to be procrastinators or slow processors, as they want to gather all information before making decisions. These learners may have a great breadth and depth of knowledge than other learners.

If there are 2 or 3 modes in which this learner scores highest, those are the modes on which you should focus teaching / learning strategies. Those who score almost evenly on all 4 modes may adapt easily by switching from mode to mode, as the environment dictates, or they may require input from more than one mode before they trust their knowledge and understanding.