MODULE 3: UNDERSTANDING LEARNING STYLES: OUTLINE


Competency Objectives: By the end of this module, participants will be able to:
1) Recognize and describe characteristics of adult learning and learning styles
2) Develop a model for a mutually responsive and effective learning environment

I. REVIEW ADULT LEARNING AND LEARNING STYLES LITERATURE

Adult Learning Theories
A. Malcolm Knowles
B. Ron and Susan Zemke
C. Lloydene F. Hill

Learning Style Theories
• VAK (VARK) (1920’s) - Fernald, Keller, Orton, Gillingham, Stillman and Montessori
• Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences from his book, Frames of Mind (1983)
• Experiential Learning Theory (1984) - David Kolb

Developing Your Model for Field Instruction

EXERCISE
Develop your Model for Field Instruction using Adult Learning Principles

DISCUSSION

HANDOUTS
4A: LEARNING STYLE QUIZ
4B: RESOURCES ON FOUR LEARNING STYLE MODELS
4C: RESPONDING TO LEARNING STYLE DIFFERENCES
4D: ADAPTING YOUR TEACHING STYLE
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I. REVIEW ADULT LEARNING AND LEARNING STYLES LITERATURE

Adult Learning Theories

A. Malcolm Knowles developed an approach to adult education characterized by the following:
   • Utilizing self-directed learning
   • Providing an adult education in a “friendly and informal climate” – use of experience, enthusiasm and commitment of participants
   • Taking an andragogical vs. pedagogical approach - learning based on the adult’s life situation and changes in consciousness

Malcom Knowles was influenced by Eduard Lindeman’s “Meaning of Adult Education” and Carl Rogers’ emphasis on the role of facilitator rather than teacher. Knowles’ teaching took a humanistic approach with an emphasis on what had real value and applicability to the adult.

B. Ron and Susan Zemke made a list of “30 Things We Know for Sure About Adult Learning” in 1984. Their observations were similar to Malcom Knowles’ approach to adult learning. The following are among their primary considerations for adult learning:
   • A motivation to learn from life situations
   • A connection to self-esteem and pleasure
   • A preference to be self-directed, use more than one medium for learning, and a desire to control pace
   • A need for acceptance of viewpoints of different developmental life stages and value sets

C. Lloydene F. Hill describes in more detail differences between pedagogical and andragogical learning. She states the following:
   • Pedagogical learning: dependent upon teaching, external motivation
   • Andragogical learning: self-disciplined, bring experience to learning, free to learn what is relevant

In the Pedagogical model, the child depends on the teacher to learn. In the Andragogical model, the student seeks to know why they must learn, but will then put in the energy, self-discipline and motivation to learning. In addition the student will utilize their experience in learning what is relevant to their personal or professional lives. Lloydene Hill states the Andragogical model could be used in conjunction with the pedagogical model. It could also be
Learning Style Theories
The following are a few of the learning style theories found in the literature. Research indicates people do exhibit learning style preferences (Dunn and Dunn, 1992; Pitts, Joseph, 2009).
Learning styles refer to different ways individuals receive and process information. They differ among individuals, societal groups and cultures. The following are several models identified to illustrate different ways of thinking about learning styles:

- **VAK (VARK)** (1920's) - Fernald, Keller, Orton, Gillingham, Stillman and Montessori
  - V – Visual: seen, observed
  - A – Auditory: heard words, sounds
  - R – Reading: written words
  - K – Kinesthetic: touching, doing

  - Linguistic Intelligence
  - Musical Intelligence
  - Logical-Mathematical Intelligence
  - Interpersonal Intelligence
  - Spatial Intelligence
  - Intrapersonal Intelligence
  - Bodily-Kinesthetic

- **Experiential Learning Theory** (1984) - David Kolb’s learning theory identifies four learning style preferences
  1. Concrete experiences (feeling)
  2. Observations and reflections (watching)
  3. Abstract concepts (thinking)
  4. Actively tested (doing)

Developing Your Model for Field Instruction
A review of Learning Styles research indicates that matching teaching to learning style preferences is not significant to student achievement (Sparks, Richard L., 2006; Pashler, Harold; McDaniel, Mark; Rohrer, Doug; Bjork, Robert, 2009 - “Learning Styles, Concepts and Evidence” from the journal, Psychological Science in the Public Interest.

Richard Sparks found that content meaning does assist in memory retention (Sparks, Richard L., 2006). The following are important considerations for developing your model for field instruction:

- A responsive relationship (versus dominant-subordinate or superior-substandard) between field instructor and student may enhance learning (Miller, Jean Baker, 1976; Kohl, Herbert, 1991; Merson, Martha, 1994)
- Herbert Kohl (1991) observed in his essay, “I won’t Learn From You” that students caught in dominant/subordinate or privileged/targeted life experiences:
  - may learn how not to learn
  - can display a willful rejection of teaching
  - are not a student failure
  - struggle with authority
  - struggle with an issue of pride and integrity
  - strive for free choice in learning by:
resisting racism
• enacting a passive defense to preserve identity
• daydreaming to shut out the teacher

Kohl states that “No amount of educational research, no development of techniques or materials, no special programs or compensatory services, no restructuring or retraining of teachers will make any fundamental difference until we concede that for many students, the only sane alternative to not-learning is the acknowledgement and direct confrontation of oppression – social, sexual, and economic – both in school and in society.”

Martha Merson (1994) applied Kohl’s principles from his essay, “I Won’t Learn From You” to adult learning. In her article “Can We Learn From You?” she discusses fears, struggles with authority, loyalties and resistance in adult learning situations.

Your Model for Field Instruction
In developing your model for field instruction, consider the following variables based on literature and research of adult learning:

• Relationship
• Differences
• Commonalities
• Knowledge
• Learning Needs
• Competencies
• Values
• Identities
• Uniqueness
• Learning Styles
• Theoretical Framework

EXERCISE
Develop your Model for Field Instruction using Adult Learning Principles

Write your thoughts on the “Developing Your Model for Field Instruction” form using the following questions as prompts:
1. Preferences in your adult learning style
2. Recognition of student diversity in your teaching style
3. Methods to explore meaning and values in learning social work practice
4. Developing mutual respect in the learning environment

DISCUSSION

HANDOUTS
4A: LEARNING STYLE QUIZ
4B: RESOURCES ON FOUR LEARNING STYLE MODELS
4C: RESPONDING TO LEARNING STYLE DIFFERENCES
4D: ADAPTING YOUR TEACHING STYLE
HANDOUT 3A1: LEARNING STYLE QUIZ
Instructions:
Read each question and circle the answer that best corresponds to your behavior. When you are finished, add your number of responses for each letter.

1. When you read, do you
   A. Enjoy descriptive passages and visualize the scene
   B. Enjoy dialogue and hear the characters in your mind?
   C. Prefer action scenes, but do not enjoy reading

2. When you learn something new, do you
   A. Like to read instructions or see demonstrations
   B. Prefer verbal instructions
   C. Jump in and learn by doing it

3. When you are spelling an unfamiliar word, do you
   A. Visualize the word in your mind
   B. Sound the word out as you spell it
   C. Write the word down first

4. When you want to relax, do you
   A. Watch TV or read
   B. Listen to music
   C. Play a game or exercise

5. When you are concentrating, do you
   A. Get distracted by messy surroundings
   B. Get distracted by noise
   C. Get distracted by activity around you

6. When you are trying to figure out how someone is feeling, do you
   A. Look at their facial expressions
   B. Listen to the sound of their voice
   C. Look at their body movements

7. When you teach someone something new, do you
   A. Show them what to do or write down instructions
   B. Tell them what to do
   C. Do it with them
8. When you compliment someone on their work, do you
A. Write them a note
B. Tell them they did a good job
C. Shake their hand or pat them on the back

9. When you are bored, do you
A. Look around or doodle
B. Talk to yourself
C. Move around or fidget

10. When you need to remember something, do you
A. Write it down
B. Say it to yourself over and over
C. Think about it while moving around

11. When you are giving directions, do you
A. Draw a map
B. Give clear and detailed instructions
C. Point and use body language to explain the directions

12. When you are putting something together, do you
A. Read the directions first
B. Prefer to have someone to tell you what to do
C. Figure it out as you do it

A_________ B_________ C __________

I. MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES
Howard Gardner is Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He also holds an adjunct faculty post in psychology at Harvard and in neurology at Boston University School of Medicine. In his 1983 book entitled Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, the basic question he sought to answer was: Is intelligence a single thing or various independent intellectual faculties? Gardner's multiple intelligences theory challenges the earlier IQ test models which only assess limited aspects of knowledge and learning. Gardner believes that multiple intelligences, which correspond to different learning strengths and styles, include

- Linguistic Intelligence
- Musical Intelligence
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Spatial Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence


TAKE THE TEST and VIEW RESULTS in English, Chinese, Somali, Bengali, Urdu, Arabic.

II. KOLB LEARNING STYLES
David Kolb is the founder and chairman of EBLSI and professor of Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. He is the author of Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development, and the creator of the Kolb Learning Style Inventory. Kolb’s theory suggests that learners have two preferred ways for dealing with information:

- Abstractness or Concreteness
- Reflection or Activity
Combining them leads to four learning modes:

- Abstract Conceptualization (AC) - learning by thinking
- Active Experimentation (AE) - learning by doing
- Concrete Experience (CE) - learning by feeling
- Reflective Observation (RO) - learning by reflection, watching, and listening

These four learning modes are further reflected in four learning styles:

- Accommodators (AC and RO)
- Divergers (CE and RO)
- Assimilators (AC and AE)
- Convergers (CE and AE)

Extensive explanation, statistics, and references
TAKE THE TEST AND VIEW RESULTS online ($15 fee for copyrighted online test of 20 questions); at http://www.learningfromexperience.com/

III. PARAGON LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY
The Paragon Learning Style Inventory (PLSI) is a self-administered survey that provides a very reliable indication of learning style and cognitive preference. It uses the four Jungian dimensions (i.e, introversion/ extroversion, intuition/sensation, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving) that are also used by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Murphy Meisgeir Type Indicator, and the Keirsey-Bates Temperament Sorter. It can be self-scored and works with ages 9-adult.

This site provides the 48-item general version. To obtain both the 52-item revised student or 52-item adult versions, please select the order link and follow the directions. This site is managed by Dr. John Shindler at California State University, Los Angeles and Dr. Harrison Yang at State University of New York at Oswego. Direct any comments to jshindl@calstatela.edu or hyang2@oswego.edu.
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IV: VARK
Developed in 1992 by professor Neil Fleming of Lincoln University, New Zealand, the VARK model of learning preferences can be used to help develop additional, effective strategies for learning how to best take in information; study information for effective learning; and study for performing well on an examination.
Fleming’s learning styles include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading preferences for learning. The learning styles quiz offered in our module is Rose’s adaptation of this model, which is widely researched and available in 21 languages besides English.
HANDOUT 3C: RESPONDING TO LEARNING STYLE DIFFERENCES
Instructions: In small groups or online bulletin board:
Discuss various learning activities that you can use to meet the learning needs of
students with each of the three learning styles. Select a spokesperson to share your
ideas with the class.

The visual learner

The auditory learner

The kinesthetic learner
1. **When you read, do you**
   A. Enjoy descriptive passages and visualize the scene
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