TEACHING DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

**Learning Styles**

Not all children and young people learn in the same way so it’s worth thinking of ways you can mix things up for your children while they are Home Educated.

Depending on where you look, there are anything from four to twelve different learning styles. To keep it simple, we’re just going to look at the four key styles.

**VARK**

A popular theory about learning styles is the VARK model. It stands for Visual, Auditory (Aural), Reading/ Writing, and Kinesthetic modalities for learning (Fleming and Mills, 1992).

Each one is associated with a preference for learning that may help retention of information.

* Visual learners learn by seeing
* Auditory learners prefer to learn by listening and speaking
* Reading and Writing learners like to read and take notes.

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| **Visual**  Learn by seeing:  Charts/graphs  Graphic organisers  Picture Aids  PowerPoints | **Auditory**  Learn by hearing:  Read-alouds  Verbal instructions  Discussions  Repeat to a friend (or parent) |
| **Read/Write**  Learn by reading or writing:  Books & texts  Dictionaries  Note-taking | **Kinesthetic**  Learn by doing:  Tactile  Hands-on  Incorporate body movement |

* Kinesthetic learners prefer to move and learn by doing.

**which should you encourage?**

Many students are ‘multi-modal’ although they may have a preference of learning style. It may also vary depending on the subject/topic so they might be auditory in one subject and visual in another.

With this in mind, it’s worth trying a range of styles to see which work best for your children. But remember, don’t dismiss the learning style just because they didn’t engage well with that particular task.

By encouraging your children to incorporate different kinds of learning styles, you ensure that they can reach all types of learning. If they are only using verbal instructions when studying comprehension, for example, they may be missing opportunities to learn.

**Example: Vary instruction to include activities that cover different learning preferences.**  If you are reading a story, show the pictures and use a graphic organizer (*visual*), have students act it out (*kinesthetic*), retell the story to one another (*auditory*), and/or have them take notes in a student notebook or on post-its while you read (*reading/writing*). Other activities may include sequencing pictures on a pocket chart, acting out how the characters are feeling, and using a recorded version at a listening centre. (tejedastots.com)

**Here are a few ideas for you to consider:**

* **Visual**– PowerPoint presentations, pictures projected onto a screen, story maps, diagram, charts, highlighters, color-coding
* **Auditory**– turn and talk, repeat what you’ve said, use songs, chants, summarize to recap the learning
* **Reading/ Writing**– use handouts, books, dictionaries, and other texts, have students take notes, make lists, write key words
* **Kinesthetic**– role-play, science experiments, STEM activities, sorting objects/ pictures, building words (play-doh, finger-tracing, magnetic letters), use real-life examples (videos)

Most resource websites offer a range of resources and activities covering the different learning styles so have a look around and see what you can find that could engage your children.