

PARENT TEACHING TIPS

. . . on Learning Styles of Children, Part I

By Bill Welker, EdD

Every child has a preferred “learning style.” Many children learn primarily by reading. Some learn mostly through listening. On the other hand, others learn principally by observing.

In essence, learning styles involve the various ways individuals take in, store and find information. Likewise, a great number of children probably use a combination of learning styles that work best for them.

There are six common learning styles: reading, writing, listening, speaking, visualizing, and manipulating. In today’s column, we will examine three of the learning styles. If one or more is/are your child’s preference(s), read carefully to the suggestions offered to promote growth in his or her preferred learning style(s).

READING

If reading is a child’s preferred learning style, then he or she learns the most from studying the printed word. The following are some ideas for how to take advantage of this learning style:

1. Read a chapter before you listening to a lecture on it.
2. When you watch a demonstration, take good written notes. Later, you can review by reading your notes.
3. Get information for class papers or reports by reading instead of watching videos or listening to speeches.
4. Read classroom notes, study guides and flash cards over and over again.

- 5. Back up anything heard that is important to you by taking notes to which you can refer to later.**
- 6. Read directions rather than have someone explain them to you.**
- 7. Read information yourself instead of having someone else read it to you.**
- 8. Look up words for which you don't know the definition in a dictionary rather than ask someone for the meaning.**
- 9. Consider choosing a future career that involves more reading than listening.**

WRITING

Should writing be a child's best mode of learning, he or she most likely will learn better by writing down information. Without question, writing is my own primary learning style. The following are important measures to take:

- 1. Study your textbook with pencil in hand and write notes as you read.**
- 2. Take good lecture notes.**
- 3. Rewrite your lecture notes in your own words. In fact, just performing this act will reinforce learning.**
- 4. Always elect to do written reports instead of giving speeches whenever possible.**
- 5. Write down the steps you need to follow in order to complete a project.**
- 6. Keep track of your daily schedule with a calendar system and write down commitments.**
- 7. List things you need to do.**
- 8. Carry a small notebook at all times to take notes of important items you have heard or read.**

9. Consider choosing a future career that entails more writing than listening or speaking.

LISTENING

If listening is a child's style of learning, he or she will learn by hearing important information. The following are valuable ideas for supporting the "listening" learning style:

- 1. Try never to miss a class. Keep in mind, lectures and discussions cannot be heard when you are absent.**
- 2. Listen to information about an important topic on videotape, television, or cassette tape.**
- 3. Tape lectures, so you can listen to them again.**
- 4. Read out loud the important textbook information you have to learn.**
- 5. Study with other people, discussing ideas and giving each other oral tests.**
- 6. Discuss your notes out loud to yourself.**
- 7. Have another student read his or her notes to you.**
- 8. Repeat information, such as classroom instructions, out loud after having read them.**
- 9. Consider choosing a future career in which listening plays an important role on the job.**

Remember, as parents, your child may intuitively approach learning in more than one way. In the December column, we will the final three learning styles: speaking, visualizing and manipulating.

Parent Proverb

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.”

- John F. Kennedy

Next Month’s Column: “Learning Styles of Children, Part II”

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Bill Welker is a retired reading specialist who was a K-12 classroom teacher for 40 years. He was selected as a “2009 Teacher of the Year” by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce. His e-mail is mattalkwv@hotmail.com.)