

Assessment - Modality Strength**INTRODUCTION****PLACE FOR PARENT AND STUDENT SIGNATURES ON BACK OF PAPER!**

Modality, also called learning channel, refers to the preferred sensory mode with which an individual detects, registers, and recalls information. There are three primary learning modalities or channels: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. It is not unusual for a student to possess traits that are characteristic of two or more modality types; some students process information differently in different situations. An informal assessment of a student's modality strength is vital for developing a relevant and effective learning strategy repertoire that capitalizes on the student's preferred sensory mode(s).

MODALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The modality (learning channel preference) questionnaire reproduced here is by O'Brien (1985). To complete the modality questionnaire, read each sentence carefully and consider if it applies to you. On the line in front of each statement, indicate if the sentence never applies to you (1), sometimes applies to you (2), or often applies to you (3). Respond to all questions in all sections of the questionnaire.

1	2	3
Never applies to me.	Sometimes applies to me.	Often applies to me.

PREFERRED CHANNEL: VISUAL

1. ____ I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures and arrows in them.
2. ____ I remember something better if I write it down.
3. ____ I get lost or am late if someone *tells* me how to get to a new place and I don't write down the directions.
4. ____ When trying to remember someone's telephone number, or something new like that, it helps me to get a picture of it in my mind.
5. ____ If I am taking a test, I can "see" the textbook page and where the answer is.
6. ____ It helps me to *look* at the person while listening. It keeps me focused.
7. ____ I had speech therapy.
8. ____ It's hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there are people talking or music playing.
9. ____ It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells me.
10. ____ It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.

VISUAL TOTAL ____**PREFERRED CHANNEL: AUDITORY**

1. ____ My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed-out words and erasures.
2. ____ It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
3. ____ Papers with very small print or blotchy dittos or poor copies are tough on me.
4. ____ I understand how to do something if someone tells me rather than having to read the same thing to myself.
5. ____ I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read.
6. ____ Writing is tiring. I press down too hard with my pen or pencil.
7. ____ My eyes get tired fast, even though the eye doctor says my eyes are ok.
8. ____ When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as "them" and "then" and "bad" and "dad."
9. ____ It's hard for me to read other people's handwriting.
10. ____ If I had the choice to learn new information via a lecture or textbook, I would choose to hear it rather than read it.

AUDITORY TOTAL ____**PREFERRED CHANNEL: KINESTHETIC**

1. ____ I don't like to read directions; I'd rather just start doing.
2. ____ I learn best when I am shown how to do something and I have the opportunity to do it.
3. ____ Studying at a desk is not for me.
4. ____ I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than from a step-by-step method.
5. ____ Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
6. ____ I find myself needing frequent breaks while studying.
7. ____ I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations or directions.
8. ____ I do not become easily lost, even in strange surroundings.
9. ____ I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
10. ____ When I can't think of a specific word, I'll use my hands a lot and call something a "what-cha-ma-call-it"

KINESTHETIC TOTAL ____

Once all 30 items have been completed, add up the scores for each of the three sections. The maximum score in any section is 30 and the minimum score is 10.

The modality type with the highest score indicates the student's preferred learning channel. The higher the score, the stronger the modality preference. If the student posts relatively high scores in two or more sections, he/she probably has more than one modality strength. If the scores in the sections are roughly equal, the student probably does not have a preferred learning channel.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING

A student's preferred learning channel can profoundly influence which learning strategies will be effective, what tasks will be easy or difficult, and what accommodations might be appropriate for the student. The following guidelines, while not meant to be conclusive, static, or applicable to all students, provide some directions to explore.

VISUAL LEARNERS

- Organize work and living space to avoid distractions.
- Sit in the front of the room to avoid distraction and away from doors or windows where action takes place. Sit away from wall maps or bulletin boards.
- Use neatly organized or typed material.
- Use visual association, visual imagery, written repetition, flash cards, and clustering strategies for improved memory.
- Use note pads, Post-Its, to-do lists, and other forms of reminders.
- Use organizational formats like outlining for recording notes.
- Use imaginative organizational aids like spider maps or matrices.
- Allow sufficient time for planning and recording thoughts when doing problem-solving tasks.
- Use test preparation strategies that emphasize organization of information and visual encoding and recall.
- Participate actively in class or group activities.
- Develop written or pictorial outlines of responses before answering essay questions.

AUDITORY LEARNERS

- Work in quiet areas to reduce distractions, avoiding areas with conversations, music, and television.
- Sit away from doors or windows where noises may enter the classroom.
- Rehearse information orally.
- Use mnemonics, rhymes, jingles, and auditory repetition through tape recording to improve memory.
- Practice verbal interaction to improve motivation and self-monitoring. Subvocalize reading assignments, problems, and solutions.
- Use tape recorders to document lectures and for reading materials.
- Remember to examine illustrations in textbooks and convert them into verbal descriptions.
- Use test preparation strategies that emphasize auditory processing of information.
- Read the directions for tests or assignments aloud, or have someone read them to you, especially if the directions are long and complicated.
- Use a scribe for testing.
- Remind yourself to review details.
- Use time managers and translate written appointment reminders into verbal cues.
- Use verbal brainstorming, tape recording, and subvocalization strategies for writing and proofing.

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

- Keep verbal discourse short and to the point.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Use direct involvement, physical manipulation, imagery, and "hands on" activities to improve motivation, interest, and memory.
- Organize information into the steps that were used to physically complete a task.
- Allow for physical action in solving problems.
- Read or summarize directions, especially if they are lengthy and complicated, to discourage starting a task without instructions.
- Use taped reading materials.
- Use practice, play acting, and modeling to prepare for tests.
- Allow for physical movement and periodic breaks during tests, while reading, or while composing written assignments.

Parent Signature _____ There is a "Modality Table" in the "Student Notes" and I will put a copy of this on my web site!

Student Signature _____

LEARNING MODALITY TABLE: You can use this after you have discovered your modality strength!

The following table summarizes the observable characteristics indicative of the three learning channels (REFERENCE). It provides an informal means of assessing the student's preferred approach to learning.

MODALITY	VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE	Learns by seeing or watching demonstrations.	Learns through verbal instructions from self or others.	Learns by doing and direct involvement.
SPELLING	Recognizes words by sight; relies on configuration of words.	Uses a phonics approach; has auditory word attack skills.	Often is a poor speller; writes words to determine if they "feel" right.
READING	Likes description; sometimes stops reading to stare into space and imagine scene; intense concentration.	Enjoys dialogue and plays; avoids lengthy descriptions; unaware of illustrations; moves lips or subvocalizes.	Prefers stories where action occurs early; fidgets while reading; handles books; not an avid reader.
HANDWRITING	Tends to be good, particularly when young; spacing and size are good; appearance is important.	Has more difficulty learning in initial stages; tends to write lightly; says strokes when writing.	Good initially but deteriorates when space becomes smaller; pushes harder on writing instrument.
MEMORY	Remembers faces but forgets names; writes things down; takes notes.	Remembers names but forgets faces; remembers by auditory repetition.	Remembers best what was done, not what was seen or talked about.
IMAGERY	Vivid imagination; thinks in pictures; visualizes in detail.	Subvocalizes; imagines things in sounds; details less important.	Imagery not important; images that do occur are accompanied by movement.
DISTRACTABILITY	Generally unaware of sounds; distracted by visual disorder or movement.	Easily distracted by sounds.	Not attentive to visual or auditory presentation so may seem distracted.
PROBLEM SOLVING	Deliberate; plans in advance; organizes thoughts by writing them; lists problems.	Talks problems out; tries solutions verbally or subvocally; talks self through problems.	Attacks problem physically; impulsive; often selects solution involving greatest activity.
RESPONSE TO PERIODS OF INACTIVITY	Stares or doodles; finds something.	Hums, talks to self, or talks to others.	Fidgets or finds reasons to move; holds up hand.
RESPONSE TO NEW SITUATIONS	Looks around or examines structure.	Talks about situation; discusses pros and cons of what to do.	Tries things out; touches, feels or manipulates.
EMOTIONS	Somewhat repressed; stares when angry; cries easily; beams when happy; facial expression is a good index of emotion.	Shouts with anger or joy; blows up verbally but soon calms down; expresses emotion verbally and through changes in tone, volume or pitch of voice.	Jumps for joy; hugs, tugs or pulls when happy; jumps, stamps or pounds when angry; stomps off; general body language is a good index of emotions.
COMMUNICATION	Quiet, does not talk at length; becomes impatient when extensive listening is required; may use words clumsily; describes without embellishment; uses words such as see, look, etc.	Enjoys listening but cannot wait to talk; descriptions are long but repetitive; likes hearing self and others talk; uses words such as listen, hear, etc.	Gestures when speaking; does not listen well; stands close when speaking or listening; quickly loses interest in detailed verbal discourse; uses words such as get, take, etc.

GENERAL APPEARANCE	Neat, meticulous; likes order; may choose not to vary appearance.	Matching clothes not so important; can explain choices of clothes.	Neat but soon becomes wrinkled through activity.
RESPONSE TO THE ARTS	Not particularly responsive to music; prefers the visual arts; tends not to voice appreciation of any kind, but can be deeply affected by visual displays; focuses on details and components rather than the work as a whole.	Favors music; finds less appeal in visual art, but is readily able to discuss it; misses significant detail, but appreciates the work as a whole; is able to develop verbal association for all art forms; spends more time talking about pieces than looking at them.	Responds to music by physical movement; prefers sculpture; touches statues and paintings; at exhibits stops only at those pieces in which he/she can become involved; comments very little on any art form.