



CATERHAM SCHOOL

LEARNING STYLES ANALYSIS

An integral part of making young people more independent in their learning is to help them develop an understanding of how they learn best. There are numerous models of learning styles, but at Caterham School we focus on two in particular: VAK (Visual Auditory & Kinaesthetic) and Multiple Intelligences (developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, Professor of Education at Harvard University).

Both models work on the premise that we possess each of the learning styles in varying degrees, and thus may work more effectively if we are aware of our profile. Students not only increase their awareness of their preferred ways of learning but are also encouraged to develop areas where they have less of an inclination. This self awareness leads students to become more metacognitive in their learning i.e. they think about how they think.

Multiple Intelligence

Dr. Gardner suggests that we each possess eight different intelligences. These intelligences are:

- ◆ **Linguistic intelligence** ("word smart"):
- ◆ **Mathematical/Logical intelligence** ("number/reasoning smart")
- ◆ **Visual/Spatial intelligence** ("picture smart")
- ◆ **Kinaesthetic intelligence** ("body smart")
- ◆ **Musical intelligence** ("music smart")
- ◆ **Interpersonal intelligence** ("people smart")
- ◆ **Intrapersonal intelligence** ("self smart")
- ◆ **Naturalist intelligence** ("nature smart")

After the students have completed their profiling they receive instruction in what the different intelligences mean and how that might apply to their studies. They are given a list of suggested study tips linked to the different Intelligences. The tips are the result of detailed research into how to get the best out of each kind of Intelligence. For example a kinaesthetic learner is encouraged to:

- have a clear view of teachers when they are speaking so they can see their body language and facial expression
- take frequent study breaks
- move around to learn new things (e.g. read while on an exercise bike, make models to learn a new concept)
- exercise before sitting down to work: stretch, dance, run around
- chew gum while studying at home
- skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before settling down to read it in detail.
- fiddle with a piece of blutack whilst working
- take a walk while discussing a story or gathering ideas for a story.

- change the place where they write and use different kinds of tools to write, i.e., computer, large pieces of paper, notepads etc.
- use their whole arm (extend without bending their elbow) to write words they find difficult to spell in the air.
- move around their room / house to do different parts of your homework.
- change their body posture as often as they need (“numb bum = numb brain”)
- make mind maps

Tutors discuss the results with them and encourage them to try out some of the study tips for their preferred style(s). Naturally, some ideas will have more of a positive impact than others, but every student benefits from the experience of thinking about how they might work “smarter”, particularly when they have a choice of how they study (e.g. in revision).

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