

Pop Quiz: What's Your Child's Learning Style?

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Whether you are a newcomer or a seasoned veteran (I won't say "old-timer"), taking a learning styles quiz will help you understand and build a curriculum around your children's learning styles. As we all know, home schooling is not just a method of education, it's a lifestyle. We want our children to become lifetime learners not only because it's a wonderfully natural way to be, but because they will need this if they are to keep up in this fast-changing world. The best way to become a lifetime learner is to develop a passion for learning. The best way to develop that passion is to make learning fun, relevant and fascinating. When you do, you will simply be passing along and sharing in your child's natural joy of learning. This is one of the best ways to create lifelong learners--by making home schooling fun.

Every student has a completely unique way of learning. This quiz will help you find your children's different "types" and design a curriculum that makes learning--and teaching--much more fun and effective.

Here's an easy Learning Styles/Learning Personality quiz for you and your children to take (each person should do his or her own quiz).

First, identify your primary learning "modality." Circle the one answer that MOST describes you.

1. Are you good with your hands?

c) yes d) no

2. Do you enjoy listening to audio books (books-on-tape)?

a) yes d) no

3. How do you learn best?

a) I learn best by listening

b) I learn best by reading

c) I learn best by touching or building things

4. I am very aware of, and sensitive to, the sounds around me.

a) yes d) no

5. I am very aware of, and sensitive to, the visual details around me. I notice what people around me are wearing. I notice little details.

b) yes d) no

6. I like to move around. Sometimes I think best if I can pace or tap my pencil or wiggle my legs.

c) yes d) no

7. I love to read. The more books the better.

b) yes d) no

8. When I really want someone to understand me...

a) I talk to them about it

b) I write my idea down on paper

9. I do NOT do well in a classroom setting.

c) True. Classrooms don't work that well for me.

d) False. I can sit still just fine.

10. I am a natural athlete.

c) yes d) not really

11. When I was younger, people thought I was "hyperactive".

c) yes d) no

12. When I get something new, I almost always read the directions.

b) yes d) no

13. I tend to hum and/or sing to myself.

a) yes d) no

14. I love to write (letters, journals, etc).

b) yes d) no

15. I can talk on the phone for a very long time.

a) yes d) no

Score your answers.

Let's see if there is a learning modality that you are particularly strong or weak in. Count the number of a) answers that you had. Then count the number of b) and c) answers.

Record these below.

a = Auditory _____ (number of "a" answers)

b = Visual _____ (number of "b" answers)

c = Kinesthetic _____ (number of "c" answers)

d = "no" answers (no need to count these)

_____ Write your style here: A, B or C

Based on this quiz, what is your primary learning style (modality)?

Analyzing the Results

Most likely, you instinctively already knew what learning modality you are and what modality your children are. Audio and visual learners usually do well in school. Sometimes kinesthetic learners do not do as well. Most people are a combination of all three modalities. The purpose of this quiz is to help you identify if there is one particular modality in which you are really strong so that you can use that strength.

You can use this self-knowledge to help you communicate with others. For example, you might say to others:

"I find that I remember best if I can write things down. Do you mind if I take notes while we talk?"

Or,

"I seem to think best if I can talk out my ideas. Can I brainstorm my ideas with you for a minute?"

Or,

"I'm a hands-on learner. I need to be able to move around and use my hands as much as possible."

People also have a tendency to teach to their own learning modality. This is why you want to know your own learning modality as well as the modality for each of your children. This way, you can adjust your approach. For example:

- If your child is a strong kinesthetic learner, give him plenty of opportunities to build things, move around, and use his hands.
- If your child is strongly visual, then you want to keep the learning lectures to a minimum and instead give her lots of written materials.
- If your child is strongly auditory, then give him lots of opportunities to listen to books and to tell you what he has learned.
- Bear in mind that most young children are kinesthetic learners and need as many hands-on projects and kits as you can give them.

After you've asked all of these questions and had your children take the quiz, closely observe them throughout the week. What are they naturally drawn to? Do you have a child who loves to play the piano or some other musical instrument? Do you have a child who is gifted at sports and is happiest when outdoors or moving around? For example, my son loves audio books and he can listen to them for hours on end. I love audio books too, but my daughters find them annoying. My son and oldest daughter are both good with their hands. They love using sculpting clay and my son used to love Transformers, Legos, and K'Nex. I'm lousy with my hands. I'm not artistic, I don't cook (at least I don't want to cook), and I don't knit or sew. But I read two to three books a week and I like anything having to do with business and marketing.

Have your child answer these questions:

If your children feel they need some help figuring out their learning styles, here are some questions that might help guide them.

Personality Types

- What do you feel you are good at?
- What do you enjoy doing the most?
- Say, "I see you... _____ (for example, "...writing a lot." Or "reading a lot")
"Do you think this might be one of your special gifts?"

Talents and Interests

Write down your children's special talents--the top 5 things your kids say they are best at. Remind them why this list is important: They will be able to be their best when they are using their natural talents to their fullest. You can always tell them what you notice they are great at.

You can also ask them:

- What do you think you're naturally good at?
- What do you really enjoy doing?
- What are your favorite subjects?
- Has anyone ever ask, "Wow, how do you do that?" What was that talent?
- What are your particular talents and interests?
- What do you have a gift for?
- What do people compliment you on?

Best Learning Environment

Ask them questions like:

- Where do you do your best work? At the kitchen table? In your room? On your bed with the door closed?
- Do you work better alone or with others?
- Do you like quiet? Or do you listen to background music?
- Do you concentrate better alone in your room? Or with the family, sitting around the table?
- Do you concentrate better sitting still or moving around?

My husband is a very visual learner and I am a very auditory learner. When I was in college and I was having a hard time understanding a textbook, I would read to myself out loud. I didn't know why I did that. I just knew it helped. And when my husband and I were first married, I would have these grand ideas and I would excitedly try to verbally explain them to him, but he couldn't "see" them. So I learned to put my ideas down on paper in bullet points so that he could understand what I was talking about. Do you get the idea? Learning styles tend to be pretty obvious and they really aren't that big of a deal -- except when it comes to the kinesthetic learner.

We live in a mostly visual and auditory world, so you will have to think outside the box to support your kinesthetic learners. Teach them to trust themselves and to pay attention to how they learn best. Do they learn better if they are pacing the room? Do they have lots of opportunities to get their energy out? If you are not a hands-on learner, then you might automatically think that your children will learn well through workbooks or movies, but what they really need are hands-on projects and kits. Teachers in a classroom can't really have each child working on separate kits. It's too time-consuming and messy. But home schoolers can. When I asked our Homeschool.com Product Testers what three changes they would make to their home schooling, many said that they would add more projects and more field-trips. These are great for all types of learner.

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