

In 1992,
Neil Fleming and **Colleen Mills**
introduced the taxonomy



VARK

for **learning styles.**



Can you guess what the four letters stand for?

Maybe we can rephrase the original
Visual, Aural, Read and Kinesthetic

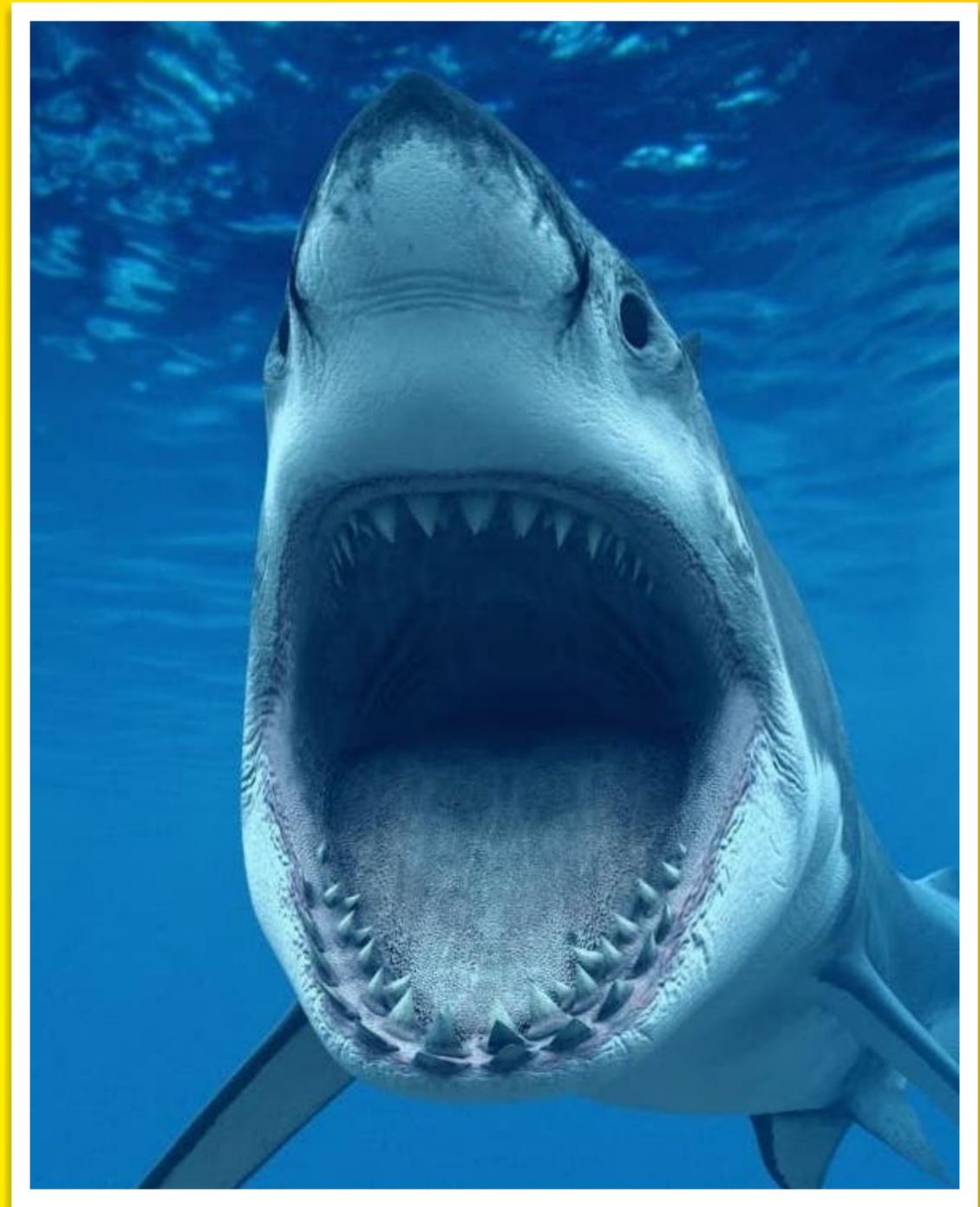
as

SHARK

See or Hear

And

Read or Knock



(With this slide we have satisfied both Visual and Aural learning styles. An ear centric person associates now SHARK with VARK and can remember the acronym.)

Since its introduction one has always assumed that every learner has a specific preferred learning style and that each one knows the type.

This is a myth

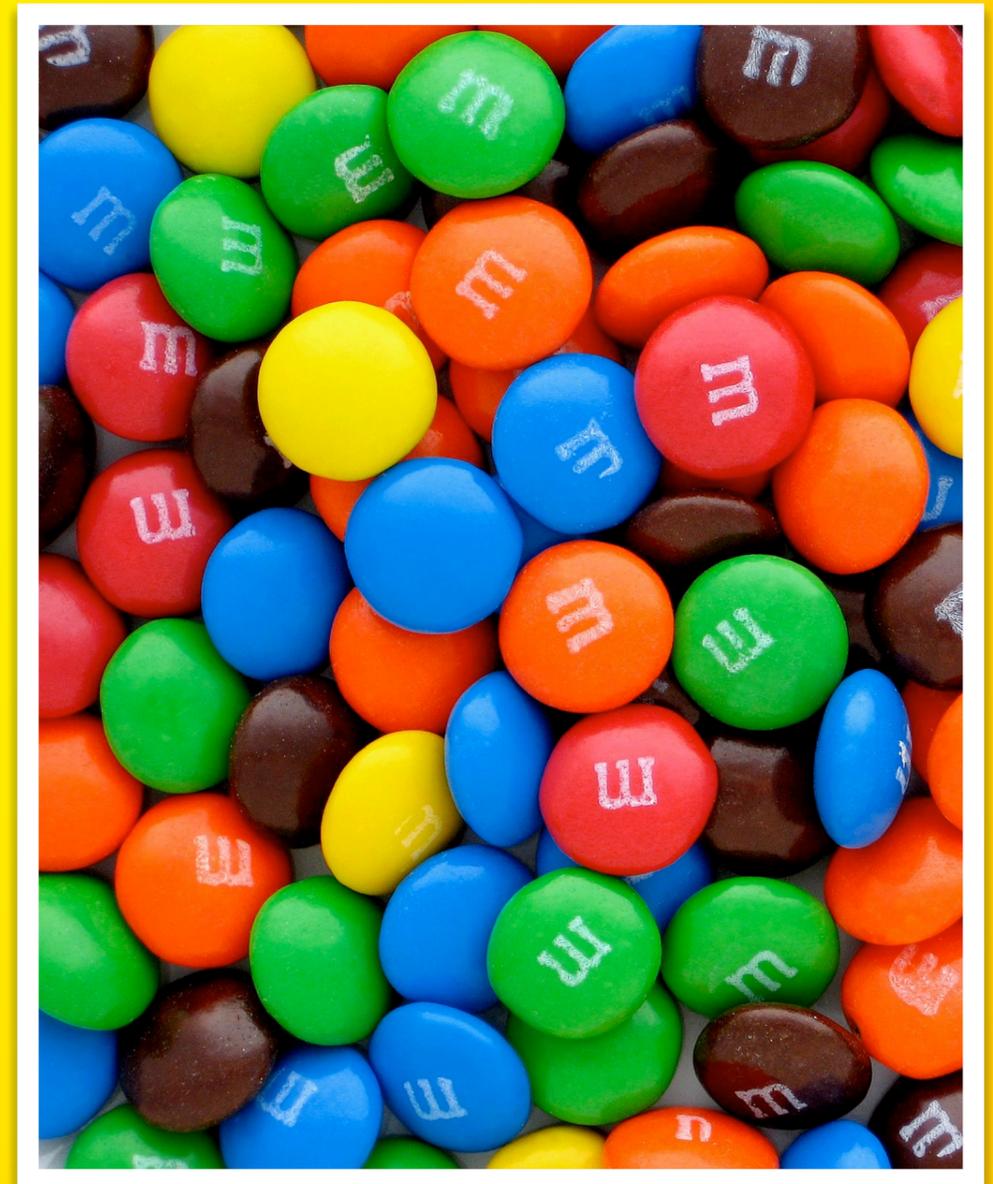
Experiments show that most learners do not know which learning method works best for them.

This is good news for teachers as they do not have to worry about adapting to each student. What turned out much more important is

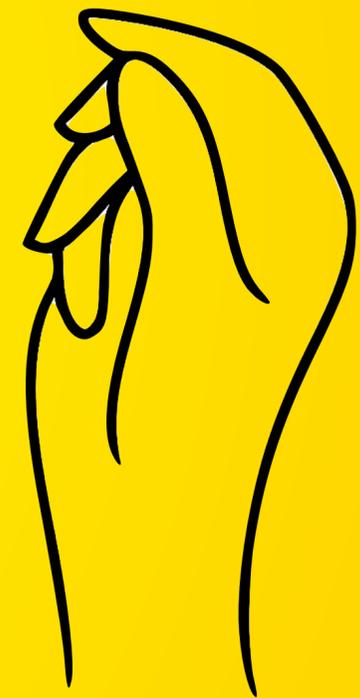
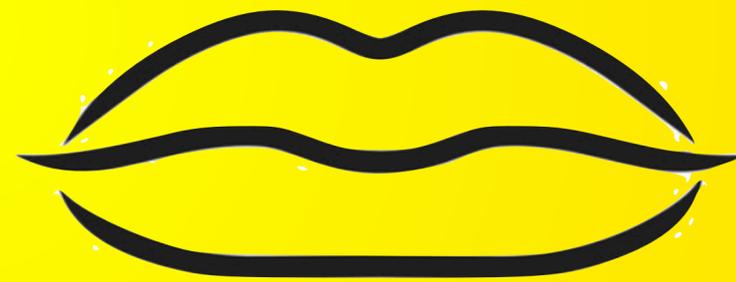
M M M

Do you know what this stands for?

No, it is not M&M.



It stands for Multi Medial approach. The best learning success is achieved if all elements and senses are used and the eyes, the ears, the lips and the hands are involved.



V

+

A

+

R

+

K

References:



Not Another Inventory, Rather a Catalyst for Reflection

From *To Improve the Academy*, Vol. 11, 1992., page 137

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In this article the authors focus on the use of a modal preferences questionnaire as a catalyst to empower students to reflect on their own sensory preferences and modify their study methods accordingly. The authors discuss the development and use of the questionnaire, strategies for students to use in modifying their learning behavior, responses of students and faculty to the technique, and directions for further investigation of modal preferences.

Over the last four decades the literature from both psychology and education has supported the proposition that learners of all ages have different yet consistent ways of responding in learning situations. These behaviors or predispositions to behave in a particular fashion have been termed learning styles (Claxton & Ralston, 1978; Grasha, 1990; Price, 1983) or cognitive styles (Goldstein & Blackman, 1978; Knox, 1977; Witkin & Goodenough, 1982). Research has spawned a wide range of inventories with which to assess the various style dimensions that have been identified (e.g., Canfield & Lafferty, 1974; Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1987; Honey & Mumford, 1982; Kolb, 1984). Smith (1982) reviews fifteen such instruments for identifying learning styles. These measurement tools tend to focus on a collection of style dimensions to provide a profile of a learner's style.

The implications for teachers of the stylistic variation present in groups of learners has been discussed extensively in the literature (Cronbach & Snow, 1977; Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; Kirby, 1979; Kogan, 1971; Martens, 1975; Messick, 1970; Schmeck, 1988; Tennant, 1988). Much has been written on the desirability of matching teaching methods to students' learning styles (Conti, 1985; Cronbach & Snow, 1977; Faurier, 1984). If we assume that the matching of presentational style and learner styles is a desirable objective, teachers face an incredibly demanding task. The range of style dimensions and therefore the combinations that might occur in one particular student group are likely to be so extensive that teachers are unable to extend their repertoire of teaching methods to encompass all of them (Mills, 1989).

Our collective observational experiences as teacher trainers and as an inspector of secondary schools in over 8000 classrooms during the last nine years have reinforced our belief that it is simply not realistic to expect teachers to provide programs that accommodate the learning style diversity present in their classes, even if they can establish the nature and extent of that diversity. We have come to the conclusion that the most realistic approach to the accommodation of learning styles in teaching programs should involve empowering students through knowledge of their own learning styles to adjust their learning behavior to the learning programs they encounter. This suggestion is not to say that we believe teachers should not consider the learning styles when developing and delivering instructional program. Rather, we believe in assisting students to know themselves and to operate in a metacognitive fashion to make adjustments in their learning behaviors (Biggs, 1987; Flavell, 1976).

Students are in no better position than their teachers to understand and assess the wide range of dimensions that collectively form an individual's learning style. The literature is too extensive and provides limited assistance in determining which particular dimensions need to be addressed to gain a complete or at least comprehensive understanding of the nature of learning style. We therefore looked for a dimension of learning style that had some degree of pre-eminence over other dimensions. By questioning students, we found that many students attributed their learning difficulties to the form in which course material was presented. Some students found they had difficulties learning in situations where the course material was only presented orally, while others reported similar difficulties when the material was primarily in written form. Still other

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By Olga Khazan

The Atlantic, April 2018

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Belief in Learning Styles Myth May Be Detrimental

Learning and Memory Schools and Classrooms

Many people believe learning styles predict academic and career success, study finds

WASHINGTON — Many people, including educators, believe learning styles are set at birth and predict both academic and career success even though there is no scientific evidence to support this common myth, according to new research published by the American Psychological Association.

Read the journal article [Maybe They're Born With It, or Maybe It's Experience \(PDF, 160KB\)](#)

Toward a Deeper Understanding of the Learning Style Myth," by Shaylene Nancekivell, PhD, Priti Shah, PhD, and Susan A. Gelman, PhD, University of Michigan; *Journal of Educational Psychology*, published online May 30, 2019

Education Next

TEACHERS AND TEACHING VOL. 20, NO. 3

The Stubborn Myth of "Learning Styles"

State teacher-license prep materials peddle a debunked theory

2020

William Furey

Reasonable people may disagree about whether teachers should have to pass licensing tests of instructional knowledge before getting a job in a classroom. But it's hard to dispute the idea that, if there is going to be such a test, there is going to be such a test, the questions should be based on the best evidence we have about how children learn. Right?

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

2018

BEHAVIOR

The Problem with "Learning Styles"

There is little scientific support for this fashionable idea—and stronger evidence for other learning strategies

By Cindi May on May 29, 2018

Cite this guide: Chick, N. (2010). Learning Styles. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching [today's date] from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/learning-styles-preferences/>

- What are Learning Styles?
- Caution!
- Why Are They So Popular?
- Now What?

What are Learning Styles?

The term *learning styles* is widely used to describe how learners gather, sift through, interpret, organize, come to conclusions about, and "store" information for further use. As spelled out in [VARK](#) (one of the most popular learning styles inventories), these styles are often categorized by sensory approaches: **v**isual, **a**ural, **v**erbal [reading/writing], and **k**inesthetic. Many of the models that don't resemble the VARK's sensory focus are reminiscent of Felder and Silverman's [Index of Learning Styles](#), with a continuum of descriptors for how learners process and organize information: active-reflective, sensing-intuitive, verbal-visual, and sequential-global.

There are well over 70 different learning styles schemes (Coffield, 2004),

Chick, N. (2010). Learning Styles. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching