## Learning Styles Summary

# EDUC 525

## Toner, Maria

**Learning Styles Inventory Given (i.e. Vark, Felder-Soloman, etc.):**

Vark

**Date & Location Administered:**

Tuesday, October 5, 2010

**General Tendencies Observed:**

 I administered this test to some students in my Physical Science class. This class includes students with documented special needs, who require additional assistance from their RSP teacher, as well as several students with undocumented special needs. Many of these students are not proficient in English due to it being a second language and/or due to cognitive difficulties. Due to the makeup of this class, I expected to see many students prefer Aural/Auditory and Kinesthetic learning styles, and relatively few Read/Write or Visual preferences.

 I was not far off base. Most students preferred Aural/Auditor, with Kinesthetic important to some, while some others scored as “multimodal”. I believe many of these “multimodal” scores may have been empathy scores or scores based on what they think is the way they *should* learn. The test itself did not generate a lot of enthusiasm. In general, this group of students seemed to feel that is was a “test” and not a “fun activity for their benefit”.

**How Tendencies Compare to Your Teaching Methods:**

 Over the course of this year, I have learned to adapt my lesson plans based on the many special needs of these students. I teach every concept in a variety of ways, because I have learned that the concept will not be mastered by many if I just use one approach, such as lecturing using PowerPoint. So I incorporate demonstrations, realia, group work and presentations, individual practice and group practice, videos and hands-on laboratory activities with almost every concept.

For example, we are working on the physical properties of matter. I started with a small group activity - asking the groups to design “machines” or processes to separate various mixtures. One or two people from each group presented their machine which they’d drawn on poster-size whiteboards. As each group presented, the class talked about each idea used for separation – melting point, size of the particles, buoyancy/density etc. Next, I demonstrated each of the properties used – floating baseballs, boiling sugar water, etc. Then we defined the properties as a class, and drew visual representations. This work became their study guide. Next, a PowerPoint reinforced the definitions. Lastly, the small groups will work to design a more complex procedure that will be used in a lab. During this laboratory procedure, students actually separate a mixture of sand, iron filings, salt and poppy seeds. The lab will include an individual report as well as group work.

**Impact on Your Teaching (if any, otherwise, explain why not):**

Knowledge of my students’ learning styles greatly impacts my teaching (in this Physical Science class), but at this point in the semester I already had a decent idea of their learning styles. This may be an unusual situation, but the differences in learning were very visible early on, so I was forced to make adjustments early. Should I do this again, I would give learning styles assessment very early in the term and then use the results as another piece of information to inform my teaching. I believe a more accurate assessment of students learning styles should come from direct observation of the students and from formative assessments, both of which I feel are more concrete evidence than a survey.