

Teaching students with different learning styles

There exist several teaching approaches that will appeal to different profiles. Introverts find energy in the inner world of ideas, concepts, and abstractions. They can be sociable but need quietness to recharge their batteries. Introverts want to understand the world. Introverts are concentrators and reflective thinkers. Their learning mantra is: 'There is no impression without reflection or quiet thinking time. Extraverts find energy in things and people. They prefer interaction with others, and are action oriented. Extraverts are inter-actors and 'on-the-fly' thinkers. Their learning mantra is: 'There is no impression without expression or speaking. The majority of undergraduate students are extraverts. The majority of university teachers are introverts. Extraverted students learn by explaining to others. They do not know if they understand the subject until they try to explain it to themselves or other people. Extraverted students have told us that they thought they knew the material until they tried to explain it to a fellow student. Only then did they realize they had not understood the subject. Extraverted students enjoy working in groups. Introverted students want to develop frameworks that integrate or connect the subject matter. To an introvert, disconnected chunks are not knowledge, merely information. Knowledge means interconnecting material and seeing the 'big picture'. Teachers should teach their students how to chunk, or group and interconnect, knowledge. Introverted students will find it valuable. Some of us choose to rely on our five senses. Some prefer taking in information through our 'sixth' sense. Sensing people are detail oriented, they want facts, and trust them. All they ever wanted was 'just the facts'. Intuitive people seek out patterns and relationships among the facts they have gathered. They trust hunches and their intuition and look for the 'big picture'. The majority of undergraduates are sensing students. Sensing students are 'why before what' learners. That is, teacher must get them to see the material's relevance before actually teaching the subject matter. Sensing students learn best when they can anchor the to-be-learned material into what they already know.