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MART 120

9/5/23

Learning Styles

The idea of learning styles is a little convoluted, and gets at some deep questions about our we understand ourselves. The simple premise is that people are inherently different, and therefore have different ways of learning, which can be used as a basis for developing a personalized educational strategy. However, as the article discusses, this idea lacks scientific evidence.

In general, I have always identified myself as a tactile learner, someone who learns best through experiencing the information or concept. For the last five or so years, since finishing my undergrad in 2017, I’ve been working as a carpenter. I started from almost no knowledge or experience, and learned on the job about how houses are built, what they’re made of, how to make them last, and how to work with materials to create the physical spaces people inhabit. I never read any books or watched any YouTube videos. This, at first glance, seems like a great example of tactile learning. However, after reading the article “The Problem with Learning Styles” I’m not so convinced. Rather, I think maybe this is an example of the universal learning strategies they highlight. My studies were spaced into regular workdays, with new concepts usual introduced at fairly sizeable intervals, I experienced the subject matter in the contexts of many different types of projects, and I was regularly tested by the client’s approval and satisfaction with my work. Overall, I’m inclined to think that I learned more as a result of incorporating these strategies than due to the tactile nature of my education.

The main way that I could see learning styles having a significant influence is through how much the student enjoys any particular approach. It seems logical that enjoyment would lead to greater educational motivation, which would most likely lead to greater success. But as one usually should with uncertain matters that they don’t know much about, I trust the scientists who say it doesn’t really matter.