Rhea Mae Edwards

Journal – Learning Styles

Two widely different learning experiences that I have had included a physical, hands-on learning experience and one that was in an indoor classroom learning environment.

When I took the technical rappelling class here at Oregon State University last spring term, that class offered a physical, hands-on learning experience in order to understand the material. Usually when we learn new concepts and skills throughout the course, we were first given a demonstration by the instructors as they described how the skill is supposed to be done and various ways possible if there were any, and then what we should be thinking as we later perform the task being shown, in order to further understand the concepts we are learning. Then after the demonstration, we students would ask any questions we have to make sure we understand as much as we can at the time, and then we were sent off to practice it on our own and with others. As we practiced, we were provided an environment where it was easy to ask any more questions or uncertainties about what we were doing, which was a good thing.

The way were learned was definitely a more physical way method which was appropriate for the course. Physical practice was a key aspect in order to deeply understand the material being taught to us. I would say the best learning style supported in this example would be active experimentation, because it is mainly based on the idea to try out what one just learned through a demonstration. Trying it out physically and just going for it is what is well known for an active experimentation learning style and well best describes my learning experience example on learning how and ways to rappel.

More commonly, most of the classes that I take here at Oregon State University are within an indoor classroom environment. For example, in the computer organization and assembly language class that I am currently taking this term, it is a lecture room where we sit down, listen, and take notes based on the information presented to us off of presentation slides and further verbal explanations from the professor. Unfortunately, there are no mental breaks within a typical lecture day in the class, where most of our mental attention is needed throughout the entire hour and a half every day of the class.

More mental concentration is needed through this learning experience in order to learn the material for the class. Further learning more about the subject at hand is needed also which requires time outside of the classroom from lecture, to more reading on the material and possibly other ways to learn the concepts, such as through our weekly labs and practice problems to work on. The best learning style that I would say would best describe this example would be abstract conceptualization, because a lot of reading and textual information is needed in order to highly understand the material. Such information is readily available to the students, so in a sense makes it easier for people that strongly have that learning style to more simply succeed in the course.

The following are four different people that I know, who I also call my friends ☺ , best represent each of the Kolb's learning styles and the evidence that shows why I believe such a learning style matches them well:

Concrete Experience – John Brugman

John tends to prefers to reason ideas, concepts, and parts on his own. He learns by doing things himself. One example that immediately comes to mind, is when the heater in his car stopped working, and rather than paying someone else to fix the heater for him, he preferred to do it himself. One of his reasons was because the price to pay someone else to fix the heater in his car, would cost more than the actual car itself, which did seem a pretty fair to say in my opinion. And then personally, I believe the main reason John wanted to fix the heater himself, is that by the smile on his face as he told me his dilemma, I saw the joy he had with the idea of doing it himself.

Reflective Observation – Herika Ramos

As like myself, I would say Herika would also mostly be considered a reflective observation learner. She really tends to rethink about a situation, possibly even over and over again, until actually performing the task at hand. Herika also learns from observing others, such as when it comes to new experiences. For example, when it comes to playing a game, such as during game nights with our sorority, Herika would prefer to watch others play the game first, in order to help her decide if she

would want to play the game or not, rather than just first playing it herself and then backing out if she decides she doesn't want to play.

Abstract Conceptualization – Emma Olds

I can strongly say that Emma fits the learning style of abstract conceptualization very well. Emma relies on readings and notes that she even creates for herself, not only academically, but also personally throughout her daily life. She is highly organized in life in general. For example, not only does she have folders within folders of past coursework online, and binders filled and divided with more material, Emma also has excel sheets organizing her daily life, illustrating the past, present, and future financially and tangibly. Emma has all of her expenses laid out in a variety of excel sheets, including not only bills, but any prices of items shared with others and even future bills and expenses that haven't even been charged yet.

Active Experimentation – Miles Curry

To be honest, Miles also completed the Learning Style Inventory for this class last term, and ended up resulting with this active experimentation learning style. But also, I can see it within him as we work on coursework for one our classes this term also. Miles enjoys learning by doing, applying the concepts he learned and putting that into action right away. For example, in the analysis of algorithms class we are taking this term, Miles tends to go straight into coding our homework implementation assignments, rather than planning on first how our program should be structured. Once he understands what has to programmed start writing it right away, which from a computer scientist perspective, is a risky game to play.

The Challenge Course Experience class that I took last term was a course where the instructor made effort to teach to a variety of learning styles throughout the term. In order to do so, most of the time Mark would give us a task for our class to complete, which would satisfy the concrete experience learners. Then afterwards, Mark would gather us up together and then we would reflect on what we did and learned individually and as group, which would satisfy the reflective observation learners. And then

if needed, sometimes improvements to what we were doing had to be done in order to complete the task if it hasn't been so already, so we would together attempt to complete the task again, satisfying the active experimentation learners. So through this ALI course, these were the ways the instructor was able to teach what he wanted us to get out of the experience to multiple learning styles.

Finding out through the learning style inventory that my learning style is mostly reflective observation, helped me realize that as a student in my coursework at Oregon State University, that learn best and prefer to observe others as I learn and then reflecting on my decisions and material on the subject at hand. Whether than be from observing others in person in a variety of activities, to going to lecture and watching my instructor work out a problem in class, to even just finding videos online to help me further understand a concept that I might not fully know, helps me become a better learner.

I am able to get more out of learning experiences that involve group work knowing that I prefer to watch others handle the task and knowing how I can integrate myself into the situation. I can suggest ways that would hopefully mostly benefit the group as a whole based off what others have to say and prefer. And then when an issue arises, I can help reflect on the issue we are all trying to conquer.