

Description of the VARK Instrument

Additional information on VARK and the indicated learning preferences is available on the web at the following URL: <http://www.vark-learn.com> . The VARK instrument and its description, along with descriptions of the suggested study modes, are copyrighted. Copyright for this version of VARK is held by Neil D. Fleming, Christchurch, New Zealand and Charles C. Bonwell, Green Mountain, Colorado, USA. 2001.

The VARK Learning Style Inventory (authored by Fleming and Mills) has been used since 1987 as a guide to help people learn more effectively. It includes a systematic presentation of questions to identify preferences for the ways information and ideas can be taken in or put out. An individual may have from one to four preferences, as identified through this inventory.

The acronym VARK represents four different learning modalities: Visual, Aural, Read-write, and Kinesthetic. No one mode is superior; and individuals may be successful learners with any combination. If one understands his or her preferences—whatever those may be—and reflects on them, it is purported that one can improve the effectiveness of his or her learning.

<p><u>Visual Learner</u> This preference includes the depiction of information in charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices that instructors or students use to represent what could have been presented in words. Color and layout and design matter.</p>
<p><u>Aural Learner</u> This perceptual mode describes a preference for information that is "heard." Students with this modality report that they learn best from lectures, tutorials, tapes, and talking to other students. Written words are not as valuable to an aural learner as words that are heard.</p>
<p><u>Read/Write Learner</u> This preference is for information displayed as words. To a learner with this preference, "talk" is okay, but a handout is better. Not surprisingly, many academics have a strong preference for this modality.</p>
<p><u>Kinesthetic Learner</u> This modality refers to the "perceptual preference related to the use of experience and practice (simulated or real)." Such an experience may invoke other modalities. But ideas are only valuable to the kinesthetic learner if they seem practical, real, and relevant. This type of learner needs to "do" things to understand.</p>

The preferences themselves may be mild, strong, or very strong. Students should refer to their score sheet attached to their completed survey to better understand their individual results.

The creators of VARK have identified study strategies that support the various modalities in the way that the following are preferred: taking in information, studying information for maximum learning, and studying for performing well on an examination. Those strategies are included elsewhere in this packet, and on the web at the URL listed above.

It is important to reiterate that the VARK inventory identifies only preferences for working with information, and not strengths. One can be strong in a method of learning, but not have a preference for it. (One can be a good dish washer, but prefer a variety of other activities over that one.)