

## SERIES 19

### Northwest Frontier Addiction Technology Transfer Center

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*Unifying science,  
education and  
services to  
transform lives*

## Counselor As Educator - Part 2

# Learning Styles - Teaching Styles

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*“The only kind of learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered or self-appropriated learning - truth that has been assimilated in experience”*

~ Carl Rogers (1902-1987) ~

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Addiction counselors function simultaneously as teachers and coaches, with their clients. We try to foster a positive and encouraging relationship with our clients with the goal of encouraging and reinforcing positive behavior change. We educate clients on substance use and facilitate recovery skill acquisition. Learning and teaching styles are two critical factors to consider as you, with your educator hat on, work with your clients and patients.

### Learning Styles

You may have observed that each of your clients absorb and retain information differently - they have their own style of learning. You also have a personal learning style which may contribute to and reflect in your teaching style. The following paragraphs provide information on basic learning styles and an awareness of possible challenges your clients may have to learning information and skills intended to enhance behavior change and recovery.

There are three basic processes by which we commit information to memory:

Visual - (learning by seeing)  
Auditory - (learning by hearing)  
Kinesthetic (learning by doing)

Most people have one predominant learning mode, but some of us have a balance between two or even all three. Some people are aware of their preference, they know their “comfort zone”, which helps them approach their own learning more efficiently.

The personal characteristics of individuals within each of the three learning modes can be seen in the chart on page 2. Depending on your clients’ preferred learning modality, different teaching techniques can have different levels of effectiveness. Being an effective educator requires you to use a variety of teaching methods which should cover all three learning modalities. No matter what their learning style, clients need to have opportunities to learn in ways that are most effective for them. Chart #2 on page 3 illustrates educational activity approaches you can implement for each learning style.

When trying to ascertain a client’s learning style try listening to the words they use when describing what they have learned or reflecting on a piece of information you’ve provided. Do they say “I see what you are saying” or “I never looked at it that way before”? They may be a visual

learner. Do they say “I hear you” or “That doesn’t sound like anything I’ve tried before”? They may be an auditory learner. The kinesthetic learner might say “That doesn’t feel right to me”.

If you are having difficulty expressing a concept or idea to your client you may want to “match” their learning style with the appropriate language. An example would be - “You may want to look at other aspects of your behaviors” or “When you talk about decreasing your substance use what does it sound like you want to do?”

### ***Challenges to Learning***

Some of your clients may have learning and memory deficits attributable to their substance use. Consideration should be given to the teaching approach used and the amount of information given to them at any one time. An example of this situation can be seen with clients who use methamphetamines and have short-term memory impairment. The Matrix Model of outpatient treatment illustrates an approach that recognizes impairments and delivers information to the client accordingly. Services are structured using methods proven-effective

with stimulant users. Some examples reflected in the client learning process are:

- Progress is gradual (at a rate the client can absorb while the brain is healing)
- The focus is on the present (takes into consideration short-term memory loss)
- “Core issues” are not immediately addressed (complex information is provided in smaller units presented in steps)

Another challenge to learning is age. The aging process does impact the learning needs of your older clients. They may be experiencing a decline in vision, hearing, short-term memory skills, and reaction time. You can help them compensate for these losses in several ways:

- Use large print on printed materials when possible,
- Meeting room should be well-lighted,
- Have both visual and auditory formats for information,
- Don’t speak too fast or softly,
- Look for non-verbal signs of confusion regarding what you presented,
- Younger clients may complete assignments or readings more quickly than older clients who are concerned with “doing it right” - remember they often work in environ-

**Chart # 1 - Personality Characteristics of the Learning Modalities**

<b>Visual</b>	<b>Auditory</b>	<b>Kinesthetic</b>
Mind wanders during verbal activities Has trouble following or remembering verbal instructions Doodles	Is easily distracted Quickly loses interest in visual demonstrations	Taps pencil or foot while thinking, studying, or writing Enjoys doing experiments
Prefers to observe rather than actively participate in group activities and discussions	Enjoys listening activities Is active in group activities and discussions	Enjoys handling objects Uses excessive hand gestures and body language Makes physical contact with people when talking to them
Likes to read silently	Likes to be read to Prefers reading aloud to silent reading Listens to music while studying or doing homework	Tends not to enjoy reading Enjoys hands-on activities Enjoys problem-solving
Is neat and organized Pays attention to detail Has neat handwriting	Has sloppy handwriting	Is unorganized
Is a good speller		Is a poor speller
Easily memorizes by seeing pictures and diagrams May have a “photographic” memory	Memorizes lists and sequences easily Remembers faces	May have trouble memorizing lists, numbers, etc.
Is usually quiet, shy, or reserved	Is fairly outgoing	Is outgoing Easily expresses emotions

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**Chart # 2 - Effective Teaching Techniques for Each Learning Modality**

Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic
Guided imagery	Auditory tapes	Experiments
Demonstrations	Reading Aloud	Role plays/Acting scenes out
Copying notes	Oral instructions	Games
Highlighting key ideas in notes	Lectures	Problem-solving
Flash cards	Repeating ideas orally	Writing notes
Color coding	Poems/Rhymes/Word association	Making lists
Diagrams/Charts/Graphs/Photos	Group discussions	Physical examples
Movies/TV	Music/Lyrics	Associating emotions with concepts
Mind maps/Acronyms	TV	

ments where inaccuracy isn't tolerated,

- Provide enough time for them to complete any psychomotor tasks you may ask of them, and
- Progress with teaching at a speed clients can follow.

When introducing complex or difficult to absorb information about substance abuse or the treatment process be aware that older clients may lack confidence in their ability to fully understand - you can help by providing them with more opportunities to succeed. The following guidelines can be useful:

- Break down information into manageable units,
- Complex concepts or information can be broken down into smaller units with progressive steps,
- Move from more understandable concepts to the more difficult,
- Repeat information frequently, and
- Discuss with them how they might organize and use the information they received.

**Teaching and Learning Styles Inventories**

There are several teaching and learning inventories you can access on the internet:

Learning styles:

<http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ilsweb.html>

Teaching styles:

<http://stoic.ftr.indstate.edu/fcrweb/tstyles3.html> and <http://p2001.health.orgST015hbox1b.htm#TRAINING>

*Next Issue:*

**“Fine Tuning Your Teaching Skills”**

**Sources:**

Polson, C.J., **Teaching Adult Students.** IDEA Paper N. 29, Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, Division of Continuing Education, Kansas State University. 1993.

**Teaching to a Variety of Learning Styles.** Retrieved from the World Wide Web on July 22, 2005: <http://edu.georgianc.on.ca/teaching/pub/pedagoggles/>

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**ADDICTION**  
*Messenger*



# Buprenorphine Treatment:

## *An Introduction for Addiction Professionals*

Buprenorphine is an exciting new treatment for opioid dependence. Approved by the FDA in 2002 for use in officebased settings, it holds the potential to reach more clients in more settings.

NFATTC is making Buprenorphine Information sessions available **free** of charge for interested addiction professionals. We can bring an information session, with length and content **tailored** to your specific needs and interests, to your meeting, agency or professional gathering.

This awareness training is designed for multidisciplinary (non-physician) addiction professionals, and includes a broad overview of the medication, its effects, and the role of non-physician practitioners in providing and supporting the treatment of individuals receiving this medication, as well as information about what to expect when someone is treated with this medication, legislation that permits office-based buprenorphine treatment, the mechanism of buprenorphine, patient selection issues, and various other patient, counseling, and therapeutic issues.

For more information or to schedule a session, please contact Wendy Hausotter at 503-378-8516 or [hausotte@ohsu.edu](mailto:hausotte@ohsu.edu).

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**Return your pre-test by mail or FAX at (503) 373-7348**

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## PRE - TEST Series 19

- #1  
Which of the following active teaching methods help clients engage more fully in the learning process:  
a. Concept Mapping.  
b. Role Playing.  
c. Reflective Talking.  
d. "a" and "b".
- #2  
Adult learners need to feel part of the learning community.  
True                      False
- #3  
Auditory learners prefer to absorb information through:  
a. copying notes.  
b. demonstrations.  
c. making lists.  
d. none of the above
- #4  
Adults are motivated to learn in order to cope with \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank) .
- #5  
If you are teaching a group of clients where two of them have a personality clash or argument you can help by emphasizing the points of disagreement and minimizing the points of agreement.  
True                      False
- #6  
Adults often bring more valuable life experiences into the learning process than younger clients.  
True                      False
- #7  
The mind of a visual learner may wander during verbal activities such as a lecture.  
True                      False
- #8  
The strength of using a teaching strategy such as a lecture, is that it provides information in a direct and logical manner. A limitation of using a lecture is that the audience may be \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).
- #9  
Which of following are considered learning styles:  
a. Kinesthetic .  
b. Auditory.  
c. Visual.  
d. all of the above.
- #10  
It is important to use only those teaching techniques suited to a client's particular learning style.  
True                      False

*Mail or FAX your completed test to NFATTC*

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