Identifying Your Learning Style
Teacher’s Guide to Interpreting the Data – Student Mina

Recall that Mina was born in Afghanistan and, due to war, had her schooling disrupted when she was 8. She fled with her family to Russia. She immigrated to Canada with her family when she was 16. She was accepted into the Nursing program as a mature student at age 21. We met Mina in her second year of the Nursing program, when she was 22 years old.

When we sat down with Mina to review her Identifying Your Learning Style assessment tool, we kept in mind that this was a collaborative process.

**Step 1 Look at the 8 Learning Styles**

In reviewing Mina’s Identifying Your Learning Style assessment tool, we determined that her personal learning styles were predominantly Visual, Verbal, and Sequential (in that order).

**Step 2 Go to strategies**

We compared what Mina identified as helpful with the associated strategies for each of her dominant learning styles (Visual, Verbal, and Sequential). We found that Mina was using a limited number of strategies and was not using many of those identified as most suited to her learning styles. For example, Visual was her predominant learning style yet she was not using the strategies associated with the Visual learning style.

**Step 3 Are there other strategies, related to their identified learning styles, that you think would be helpful to the student?**

This is discussion time. In order to increase the number of strategies, we reviewed the additional strategies that Mina could use (but had not chosen) under her identified learning styles.

**Visual**

*\* Finding or making diagrams, sketches, concept maps, or time lines that correspond to ideas in the class material –* Mina stated that she was not interested in making diagrams, sketches, or concept maps. Mina said that she had no talent for drawing and that these strategies would be too time-consuming. In discussion, however, she could see the value in making time lines. We pointed out the importance of time lines when moving through a case study; for example, the difference in caring for a patient on post-op day 1 versus post op-day 4.

*\* Colour-coding and highlighting main ideas –* Because Mina is a visual learner, colour-coding and highlighting could help her recall information, make links, and see the big picture. This is a valuable strategy for both studying and test-taking.

**Verbal**

\* *Summarizing and outlining course material in your own words –* Mina said she learned to do this while finishing high school and it has always worked well for her.

\* *Working in groups: this enables you to listen to others and explain to others* – This is difficult for Mina. She would like to study with a group but states that she hasn’t made enough friends in her class to join a study group.

**Sequential**

\* *Outlining course material before class – preview course material –* Mina is already doing this and plans to continue.

\* *Building on past learning – learn by analogy –* When we spoke to Mina about building on what she has learned in her other courses, she stated that the amount of new material kept her so busy that there was little time to review previous course work.

\* *Asking the instructor to fill in skipped steps* – Mina told us that she was reluctant to ask teachers for help because of her limited English. She added that she felt more comfortable with some teachers than others.

**Step 4 Are there other strategies, unrelated to their identified learning styles, that you think would be helpful to the student?**

In addition to the strategies compatible with Mina’s identified learning styles, we discussed the following strategies with her.

**Sensory**

*\* Relating theories to real-world experiences –*

**Active**

\* *Finding ways to use the information you are learning –*

**Reflective**

\* *Thinking of practical applications –*

We have found that second-year students benefit from linking theory to their experiences in the clinical setting.

**Conclusion**

These additional data obtained from the Identifying Your Learning Style assessment tool will be used in building an individualized Action Plan for Mina. When working with Mina, we will support the strategies that she is already using and strive to add other strategies that are suited to her predominant learning styles: Visual, Verbal, and Sequential.