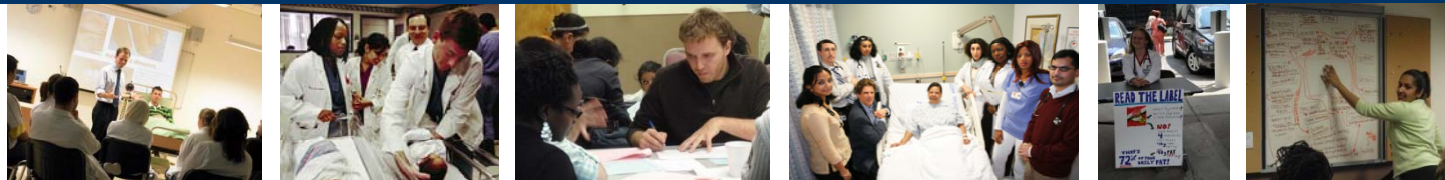


Teaching Tips

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Precepting for all Learning Styles

Precepting usually goes something like this... your resident or student sees the patient, then comes to you to present the case. You probably ask a series of questions and then agree on the next course of action. This technique is perfect for those who are primarily auditory learners. Yet, people have different learning styles. How can we ensure that all learners are getting the most from precepting?

Students learn in different ways

A method that works for one learner may not be as effective for another. Although there are numerous frameworks, consider VARK (table). During precepting, you might ask learners to write notes (kinesthetic), point to information in the chart or look at an image (visual), look up a topic (read-write), or role play a conversation (kinesthetic) rather than relying solely on questions and answers (auditory). Keep in mind these techniques need not be used every time.

	Style	How Students Learn Best
V	Visual	View, diagram, highlight
A	Aural	Discuss, cite examples
R	Read/Write	Read, outline, create lists
K	Kinesthetic	Demonstrate, build, type

Flemming (2001). VARK: A guide to learning styles. Online.

Some learning styles can be developed

Some styles are deeply rooted in one's personality or cognitive structure and are difficult to change. Other styles, such as VARK, are malleable and called learning preferences. The key is to teach difficult concepts in the style with which the learner is most comfortable. For easier topics, ask them to step out of their comfort zone and experiment with alternative methods.

Dr. Teachingmee, I'm looking forward to this clerkship, but you should know I'm a visual, sequential learner and the MBTI reveals I'm an ISTJ.



OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU

Misconception: Others learn best the same way you do.
Problem: Teaching often focuses on methods which match your style. What is your learning style? Find out by logging on to www.vark-learn.com and answer 16 items. Then think about how you teach. Does it match? If so, what are your next steps?

References / Resources:

- Armstrong, E. & Parsa-Parsi, R. (2005). How Can Physicians' Learning Styles Drive Educational Planning? *Academic Medicine*, 80(7), 680-684
- Chapman, D. M., & Calhoun, J. G. (2006). Validation of learning style measures: Implications for medical education practice. *Med Educ*, 40, 576-583.