



TITLE

WHAT ARE LEARNING STRATEGIES?

KEY IDEA

What is the best way to learn for me?

CONSPECTUS

1. Introduction: Difference between the learning of small children and adults
 - 1.1. Difference between acquiring physical skills and acquiring knowledge
 - 1.2. People can learn at any age but may have to use different strategies to do so
2. Key idea: What is the best way to learn for me?
 - 2.1. General learning strategies (time of day, group vs. alone, etc.)
 - 2.2. Individual learning strategies
3. Reasons: People have different needs and preferences when learning
4. Consequences: Learning strategies make learning easier
5. Conclusion: Not every way of learning works for everybody

REFERENCES

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OBJECTIVES

You can **recognize** correct statements why people may need different learning strategies
You can **identify** different learning strategies
You can **recognize** correct statements about the benefit of using the right learning strategies

FULL TEXT

1. Introduction: Difference between the learning of children and adults

Small children learn a lot in a short time. Most of time they learn without thinking about it. They learn when they observe and interact with their surroundings. Small children also learn when they imitate other people: the children imitate how other people sign, talk and move. Schoolchildren and adults also learn things without thinking about it, too. For example, they may remember facts they read somewhere. Most of the time they will have to make the decision to learn something, for example, at school or in a training course.

1.1. It is also important, if you learn something only with your brain or if you learn some physical activity. Things that you learn with your body will stick in your brain, like sports activities. Even if you have not used your bike or your skis for years, your body will remember how to do some of the basic movements. You will not be a complete beginner.

It is different when you learn things with your brain, like languages. You have to practice a language constantly, or you will start to forget it. Usually you will still be able to understand parts of it; but you will have more problems to speak or sign that language yourself.

1.2. Many people think that only children are good at learning. They believe that adults are too old to learn. This is not true. It is possible to learn something at any age. This is why there is a well-known slogan: "lifelong learning". This means you should learn your whole life long. Learning strategies can help you with learning.



2. Key idea: What is the best way for me to learn?

There are different kinds of learning strategies: learning strategies include planning when, how and what you learn. Learning strategies also include the things you need (for example: a workplace, pen and paper, a computer, a dictionary...). The concrete techniques you use for learning belong to two groups: general learning strategies and how you prefer to learn.

2.1. General learning strategies

Learning depends on where you start: some people like to look at the whole topic first, while others prefer to focus on the details of a topic.

Whenever you learn something new, try to connect the new knowledge or skill to things that you already know. Can you find some connection? If you can integrate new things into what is already there, you will remember the new information better.

Whatever you want to learn, the most important thing is to work on it regularly. It is better to learn a bit for a short time each day than to do it for hours on a single day. You will find it easier to concentrate for a brief time. It helps if you repeat the things you want to learn – the more you repeat them, the better you will remember them. Think of climbing a mountain: slow and steady steps will get you farther and help you to conserve your energy.

Another thing that you have to find out is whether you learn better alone or in a group. Some people learn better if they can discuss ideas or practice something with other people. There are also people who can concentrate better if they learn alone, because they are distracted by other people.

Your success at learning also depends on when you learn. For example, if you are hungry and sleepy, it may not be the best time to learn. If you like to get up early, you will probably learn better in the morning. If you cannot get out of bed in the morning but are wide-awake in the evening, the evening may be the optimal time for learning something.

Your motivation is very important as well. If you really hate what you are doing, you will



probably not succeed. You will not succeed if you learn only because somebody tells you to do it or expects you to do it. Try to find a reason for learning something: for example, you learn because the new knowledge or skill may be of advantage to you in everyday life, further your career or simply for fun: for example, you learn American Sign Language and English, because you want to study at Gallaudet University.

2.2. Which way do you prefer for learning?

It may be helpful to find out how you learn best. Maybe you will find out that some ways work better for you than others:

- As deaf people are visual, they may learn best by using this sense: for example, a deaf person may watch a video or use pictures.
- Some people learn through reading – they need written information like books. Writing things down helps to fix things in your mind. But you have to write by hand, not on a computer or another technical device!
- Other people learn things better if they are moving at the same time: for example, walking around. These people also like to do something themselves or to experiment themselves, so they learn best through "learning by doing".
- Hearing people sometimes like to listen to what they want to learn: for example, they read aloud or they listen to audiobooks.

Most people do not use only a single learning strategy but a combination of learning strategies.

3. Reasons: People have different needs and preferences when learning

Maybe you do not want to think about learning strategies. You do not want to spend the extra time. You just want to sit down and start learning. This may not be very effective. At school, the teachers show you one way of learning. Maybe this is not the best way of



learning for you. Not all people are alike. People have different needs. How you learn best depends on your personality and your personal preferences. If you test different learning strategies, you will see that you will like some and do not like others. Find out what your favorite learning strategy is.

4. Consequences: Learning strategies make learning easier

If you are conscious of your preferred learning strategy, it will help you to learn faster and more effective. When you respect the way your brain prefers to learn, you will remember things better and have more fun.

5. Conclusion: Not everything works for everybody

There are many different learning strategies and not all of them work for all people. The best way is to test some and then decide which strategies work for you and which ones do not.