

Traditional vs. Nontraditional Learning

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Traditionally, people have been learning by absorbing and soaking up information that is presented by people who are known to be more scholarly educated in the specific subject matter. Based on the writing of Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, education has been limited to just a narrating of materials on the part of the "narrating subject" (the teacher) so that what is presented is lifeless or irrelevant to the "listening objects" (students).

Although this model of learning and teaching still exists in America's educational system, there are other methods that instructors and students use to cultivate educational empowerment on behalf of both parties. Nontraditional learning and teaching comes from shifting the image of the instructor that knows everything to the students having some input and sharing their own knowledge in addition to the instructor's findings. Generally, there are also the three or four standard styles of learning that classify most learners. The visual verbal/nonverbal learning style contains materials learned best when it is presented through a written language format or pictures and design format. The tactile/kinesthetic learning style allows for "hands-on" activities to help people learn. And the auditory/verbal learning style is when information is learned best when presented through oral language. These are the typical styles of learning that many people can identify with based on the structure and conventional form of education. However, because I do question whether there are other learning styles that people can engage in especially if the three or four listed above are not effective for people or they just do not have the senses to experience those learning style. Then would smelling and tasting be accounted for as learning techniques and styles.

Ever since I came into UCLA or even just a higher educational institution, I have been exposed to a lot of different teaching methods especially nontraditional methods. I have also realized there is a handful of people (faculty, students, community leaders, etc) who advocate on having students take ownership of their own education which means it is not so much of a top down channeling structure of strictly teachers teaching students, but students get a voice in the syllabus, determine their own assignments or projects, and voice their opinions to the instructional staff especially if they would like to gain more insight or challenge the course materials. I myself have also sampled other learning styles to see whether I have developed a better learning style for myself based on the educational structure of my classes and of my understanding of the course materials. Outside of the classroom setting, through my three-going-on-four years of college education, I have also learned that getting involved and applying myself in different settings is one very effective and very strong way to learn. There is a parallel between what I learn in my classes and how I utilize that knowledge I have in my job experiences, internships, or even just workshop and conferences so that at the end of my experience I gain skills and characteristics.

In the next three to four years, I think we might be able to witness a shift in less traditional methods of learning to more nontraditional styles of learning. What would influence this change would probably be this generation which includes me. Those who have an understanding of how oppressive the traditional way of teaching is and want to advocate a change to the educational system, will take that initiative to educate the community whether through discussions, workshops, forums, etc. about taking on self education. This means that learning would be for everyone and knowledge would be evaluated and reevaluated consistently. Students would also find different outlets to find the learning style that fits them best. This would not be possible if everything I am saying in terms of my understanding of learning and teaching does not correspond with anyone else's understanding of the same methods and learning styles, which would make it difficult to change the traditional way of learning and teaching.

“Mind Map”

How People Learn and Teach

“Each one, Teach one”

Mentorship

By self or in a collective (group)

Different senses (hearing, seeing, touching)

Through arts, sciences, reading

Through first hand experiences

Trial and error

Mistakes

Reflection, action, reassessment

Traditional vs. Nontraditional

Classroom setting vs outside of the classroom

Taking notes, absorbing/reviewing/regurgitating material

Other generations

From higher authority and leaders

Cramming and not in-depth

Funneling and narrating

Force/pushed to learn

Involvement

Actions

Applying self