

Logical-mathematical – to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically

Linguistic – to use language to express oneself and to remember information verbally

Spatial – to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems

Musical – to recognise and compose musical pitches, tones and rhythms

Bodily-kinesthetic – to co-ordinate bodily movements

Interpersonal and intrapersonal – to understand your own feelings and intentions and those of others.

According to this theory all intelligences are required and it is important to find ways of supporting and developing them

Learning and learning styles in practice

There are some approaches that you can adopt that might make your learning and teaching event more comfortable for all your learners.

1 *Variety and variation.* Plan how you can use a mixture of teaching techniques within your class or informal teaching. For example, try to include activity, theory, thinking space and relevant examples in what you plan, linked perhaps to images and diagrams. It can be helpful to think of ways of breaking your session into 20-minute blocks of time, and then changing what you do in each block. This might be by following explanation

librarian as a learning facilitator. A striking feature of his research for this chapter was the paucity of published material on development for teaching among library and information professionals. In fact there was a general lack of material providing an accessible introduction to learning and teaching, in both theory and practice, since most texts and resources written for a wider audience focus on either the practical or wholly theoretical. We hope that to some extent our book has addressed this deficit in part, but there is so much more to be done.

If you are interested in exploring further the teaching role of librarians and the professionalisation of our practice in learning and teaching, you may wish to contact Chris Powis. One of the core elements of his £50,000 National Teaching Fellowship project, starting in early 2005, is the development of an international online community of practice for librarians as teachers, possibly linked to an online resource centre. ✪

‘Empowering users is not about defining a framework or curriculum for information literacy... we need to build our learning and service infrastructure on what we understand of learning and motivation.’

all, unlike traditional education which has favoured logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence most of all. Everyone has different strengths in each of these, and the level of these intelligences will often determine preferred learning styles.

■ **Vark.**¹³ This stands for Visual, Aural, Read/Write and Kinesthetic. This starts from the assumption that people have a preferred sense which dominates the way information is processed. If you have a visual preference, you learn best from seeing, if kinesthetic you learn from activity.

The important principle to remember from all these theories is that you should always try to provide a mix of teaching and learning activities in order to accommodate diversity.

Modes of learning

To what extent do different learning technologies, or the shift to distance learning affect the way that you learn? Different modes of learning offer some challenges if you are used to working in more traditional face-to-face contexts. These include:

■ **Time.** Online learning may be either synchronous – the learning event happens in real time, like an online discussion or videoconferencing – or asynchronous.

Even in asynchronous mode you can still create timetables and interaction through email discussion, establishing group tasks, etc

■ **Groups and individuals.** Online and distance learning can be both a way of building learning communities through communication and group work and also very isolating – one person at a computer or working in a study

■ **Delivery of content.** One of the key differences with online and paper-based distance learning material is that much of the content needs to be developed before the learners start the course, and producing online learning materials takes time.

with hands-on practical activity, or by setting different kinds of practical work, or simply by changing the pace of what you do. The same applies to courses – use varied delivery modes over the length of the course/ or when planning blended learning.

This is an important principle in making your teaching inclusive, so that a learner who is dyslexic would gain as much benefit from the learning experience as anyone else. Inclusive learning and teaching is less about accommodating people with different needs and more about good planning and design for all.

2 *Study skills and learning skills.* Some research¹⁴ suggests that ‘learning to learn’ programmes can be very effective. This evidence can be used to justify information professional input into teaching and training events. Even if you modify this conclusion by recognising that the skills need to be rooted within a subject context, it is still an evidence-based rationale for formal information literacy programmes.

3 *Your teaching persona.* Just recognising your own preferred cognitive style should make you more sensitive both to how you like to teach and what assumptions you have about learning and learners. You do not need to be a chameleon to be an effective teacher. But if you are an abstract thinker you might need to pin your examples down when working with adult learners.

Final thoughts

Information literacy is sterile if it is just seen as a curriculum. Being effective at supporting learning and at teaching should be embraced as part of our new professional identity. Unless we understand pedagogy and apply it in practice, wherever we work, we fail in our mission to create information-literate communities, organisations and societies.

Chris Powis¹⁵ recently published a review on how to develop the academic

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Their first book, *Teaching Information Skills: theory and practice*, was published by Facet in September 2004 (ISBN 1 85604 513 7; £39.95, 20 per cent discount for CILIP members – for ordering information, see p. 33).