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## **Learning Styles:**

Everyone has different learning tendencies and approaches to learning information. Learning styles can be best described as simply different approaches or ways of learning. There are three primary ways people learn, including:

1. *Visual Learners* - These learners need to see the educator and their expressions to fully understand the educational content. They tend sit at the front of the class to avoid visual obstructions, and they often prefer to take detailed notes. Visual learners typically think by seeing pictures and absorb information best from visuals. Visual tools that are helpful include: diagrams, illustrated text books, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs.

2. *Auditory Learners* - They learn best by listening to lectures, active discussion groups, and talking things through. Auditory learners pay attention to tone of voice, pitch, and speed of delivery. For these folks, written information is inferior if it is not reinforced by a lecture. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder. They also do not read the newspaper as much and tend to get their news by listening to television and radio.

3. *Tactile / Kinesthetic Learners* – They learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the things around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration. They like hands on activities and look forward to science laboratories and field trips where they get to experience education by doing something active.

Within every Extension program target audience, these three primary learning styles will be represented by different people. It is important for Extension educators to develop educational plans that accommodate all the different learning styles. In doing so, Extension programs will be effective for all participants.

## Educational Comprehension

Sequential learning is a term often used throughout Program Development. The idea that subject matter builds on previous information is one of the foundations of educational design and theory. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) noted five categories involved in helping learners reach educational objectives. These five are attending, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization by a value complex.

1. *Attending*- Deals with the most introductory level of change. It teaches an individual about the “awareness” of the subject matter and to begin to pay attention to the subject matter.

2. *Responding*- The responding level is at the center of what is meant by “appreciation.” This is very measurable because it allows the educator to begin to see a reaction in the learner. This is sometimes measured using satisfaction levels and reaction scales.

3. *Valuing*- After responding, the learner should move to valuing the subject matter. This is typically the time a learner begins to seek more genuine interest in the subject matter and start searching for additional information.

4. *Organization*- This takes the learner beyond the typical classroom setting. This typically encompasses the learner organizing their belief system, committing to the subject matter, and attempting to connect to subject matter experts in the related field/subject matter.

5. *Characterization*- This is the last and most difficult step in helping learners reach educational objectives. Characterization implies that the learner becomes the teacher and model for others. People at this level are functioning role models and are actually turned to as a teaching resource. This is most notable in our Master Gardener Programs and other volunteer programs where a set curriculum is taught and the learner gives back by teaching others. This is carried out by moving the learner through these five categories of comprehension.

## References:

Krathwohl, D.R., Bloom, B.S. & Masia B.B. (1964). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain*. New York: Longman.