How to Adapt Teaching to Learning Styles

Anthony Gregory in *An Adult's Guide to Style* showed four distinct patterns. This model is less known in business circles, and better known among educators because it has implication on how to adapt teaching to learning styles. Gregory warns that it is inappropriate to test children because their personalities are not fully developed, but it is still useful to teach everything in four distinct ways so all students can learn. He builds four quadrants base on two continuums:

1. **Concrete vs. Abstract**: Concrete people like to learn through their physical senses, what they can touch, see, hear, taste and smell. They like to deal with things that exist in the physical world. Abstract people prefer the world of ideas and feelings. They use reason or emotion to deal with ideas, concepts, and feelings. Of course we all use concrete and abstract thinking all the time, but we tend to favor one or the other.

2. **Sequential vs. Random**: Sequential people like the step-by-step approach to doing things and prefer a methodical process working in a predetermined order. They express themselves in a precise, progressive and logical manner. Random people deal with information in a nonlinear, galloping and leaping manner. Each piece of information has equal opportunity of receiving attention. This enables them to deal with diverse and independent elements of information with complex patterns.

By combining the two continuums he builds the following four quadrants:
1. **CS**: The concrete sequential people are practical and well organized. They like to plan their work and work their plan.

2. **CR**: Concrete random people are also practical and live in the physical world, but they like to learn by trial and error. Rather than a plan, they want options.

3. **AS**: The abstract sequential people like to develop ideas in a logical way. How someone feels about something does not change reality.

4. **AR**: Abstract random people work from the heart, not the head. How someone feels about it makes a great deal of difference.

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**What Not To Do**

The 4-quadrant models are useful because they are quick to learn, easy to remember, and straightforward in applying them to the current situation. They help us to appreciate our differences and affirm one another. These are not tools or for performance measurement, personal development or employee screening. Performance measurement has to do with measuring results, not personality. Personal development is a much bigger issue involving talents, skills, ethics, rules and other such items.

As people become aware of the model they can use it for their own development as they see fit to help them become more effective on the job. These tools are not validated for selecting particular people for particular jobs. They are just one more piece of information in a complex picture of a whole person.