Antanas VANSEVICIUS
Aleksandras Stulginskis University
Institute of Hydraulic Constructional Engineering
Universiteto 10-745, Akademija, Kauno raj., LT-53361, Lithuania
phone: +370 618 02 006   e-mail: antvans@yahoo.com

DISTANCE LEARNING AND LEARNING STYLES

Keywords: *distance learning, learning styles, learning tips*

Distance education or distance learning is a mode of delivering education and instruction, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distance_education)."The "e" in e-Learning stands for education – weoften forget that too -- it is not about bandwidth, servers, and cables. It is about education - first and foremost"(*Ken Gaines, East-West University*) [1].

How can you teach students, if you do not know how they learn?It is important to know their learning styles. "Learning style adopting a habitual and distinct mode of acquiring knowledge" [2]. There are over 100 learning style theories counted.The VARK questionnairein my view is quite simple and convenient for the determination of learning preferences (http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire). VARK questionnaire consists of 16 questions; you can choose one of 37 languages. The VARK questionnaire results indicate learning preferences -Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic.There is no such thing as a "good" learning style or a "bad" learning style (fig. 1).
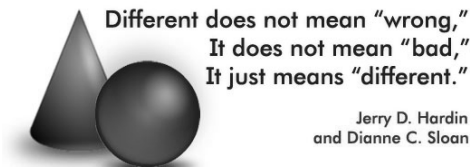

Fig. 1 Standpoint to the learning styles(http://www.singaporelearning.com/knowledge_cafe/learning_styles/kc001_applying_learning_styles_to_your_life.asp)

"Take a moment to think about different learning styles when you approach the storyboarding and Instructional Design. Try to incorporate information in a way that would appeal to at least two different styles. Engaging your learner is key, no matter what the venue" (*Mike Cormier,*

Vital Knowledge Software) [1]. Preparing materials for the distance learning effort should be made to submit it to adapt to different learning styles and it is essential to take into account the learning styles of students in examinations and consultation.You can find learning strategies matched to the VARK preferences on the http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=helpsheets.A simplified scheme for the learning strategy isshown in the figure 2.

Pictures from: http://www.clker.com/

Fig. 2Simplified scheme for the learning strategy

"When using the lesson to introduce a new topic, offer pages that deliver the content in different ways, according to how the students prefer to learn. For example the button "do you prefer to read?" goes to a page of text; "do you prefer to watch a video?" goes to a screencast; "do you prefer to listen to instructions?" -goes to a podcast and so on" (http://docs.moodle.org/21/en/Using_Lesson#Allow_for_different_learning_styles).We can recommend using such simple tools as Read Out Loudin Adobe Reader for auditory learners or prepare developments of any models for kinesthetic learnerswithout those common offers.

References:

[1] 701 e-Learning Tips by The MASIE Center, 2004, p. 141. Available from: http://masie.com/images/pdfs/701_ELEARNING_TIPS.PDF

[2] Markham S. Learning Styles measurement: a cause for concern /Technical Report, CERG 2004, p. 20. Available from:

http://cerg.infotech.monash.edu.au/techreps/learning_styles_review.pdf