



ics
LEARNING
GROUP

Specialist secondary
education programs

advanced reading
study skills
essay skills

How you can help your child learn

the first vital step for a
parent –

*understanding how your
child learns*

ics Learning Group conducts the following courses:
Leap into Learning (for students entering High School)
Leap into Learning (parent workshop)
Study Skills & Strategies for Junior Secondary Students
Study Skills & Strategies for Senior Secondary Students
Essay and Extended Response Writing Skills
Advanced Reading Skills for Senior Secondary Students

Superead – efficient reading skills for busy professionals
Superwrite – Plain English business writing skills

To find the **ics** Centre closest to you, visit www.skillscentre.com.au

Copyright

This e-book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without the written permission of the publisher.

Liability disclaimer

The material contained in this report is general in nature and not intended as advice on any particular matter. **ics** Australia and the author expressly disclaim all and any liability to any persons whatsoever in respect of anything done by any persons in reliance whether in whole or part, on this report.

Table of contents

Introduction	3
We are all different.	5
It does not have to be like this.	6
You can help.	6
Apply the knowledge.	7
We make different choices.	7
So what are learning styles?	8
Bring on the body!	9
(Kinaesthetic intelligence)	9
Number love!	10
(Numerical intelligence)	10
Show me a picture!	11
(Visual intelligence)	11
Tell me a story!	12
(Auditory Intelligence)	12
Give me the book!	13
(Language intelligence)	13
I can do this myself!	14
(Self intelligence)	14
I want to do this with my friends!	15
(People intelligence)	15
Summary of intelligences:	16
We are not only one type.	18
Identify your preferences:	19
Test your new knowledge	24
Conclusion	27

Introduction

This book has been written specifically for you, as a parent.

It is easy to find books on learning styles written for those involved in education, but the majority are written to help teachers and tutors in their jobs. Very little is available to parents, especially in a 'common sense' format.

Our children did not come with a handbook, and as parents we have to juggle a multitude of roles from nutritional expert through to social worker. Almost all of us have to trust professionals in a number of different fields to develop our children, and they (we hope) have the training and the time to do the job. But in the end they are only people and they have responsibilities for lots and lots of children.

I believe, as parents, we should never abdicate our responsibility for the little people we have created. It is our duty of care to know what is going on in their world, and help where we can. We all want the best results, and we need to understand and support the interaction between our children and the education system.

Our children will spend between a quarter and a third of their lives involved in formal learning. This book is one of a series of books that have been written as a 'common sense' guide to help you help your child on their journey.

Knowledge is power – I hope this book will help you and your child understand what works best. This is a 'learn and do' book - I have included examples for you to use to try your new knowledge.

Happy discoveries!

Rose Siva
ics Australia

How you can help your child learn

The first vital step – understanding what is important to your child

Have you ever heard the saying ‘youth is wasted on the young?’

Isn't it funny how the older we get the truer that seems to be?

Childhood is the time when we have all the opportunities and none of the responsibilities. Other people want to teach us, show us how to do things. We get to hang around with our friends doing all this stuff. And do we make the most of it? Hardly!

The reality isn't quite like that. If you are like me you probably got reprimanded in class for doing things ‘wrong’ and you didn't understand what exactly it was you had done wrong.

One of my earliest memories is getting into trouble for not trying my hardest to have neat handwriting. I *was* trying hard, and I *thought* I was doing a good job. But I didn't understand that what the teacher called ‘neat handwriting’ was not what I thought was ‘neat handwriting’. I didn't get the message she was trying to deliver until I got into trouble.

It was as though we were on different planets – and we were. I prefer auditory learning – she probably wrote it on the board or in my book, and I missed it completely. It was not until she *told me* that I got the message.

What was most memorable was the fact that I did not understand, and yet I had been in class at the time.

And I didn't understand that I didn't understand!

I am sure many children in school today have the same experience. And today's children ‘switch off’ quicker than we did. We would more than likely have persevered and eventually learnt from the experience. This generation are very quick to disengage if they don't get it the first time, and if the particular bit of information they miss is a vital step or building block in learning they can be setting themselves up for future failures to learn.

This is where we can do something. If we can understand *how we learn* we can be aware that we may miss the message, and take appropriate steps. We can use our strengths and compensate for our weaknesses.

We are all different.

Very few of us can provide the luxury of one-on-one educational opportunities for our children. Even in home schooling there are often several children learning in the same environment. Most of us send our children to schools where they attend a class with a *group* of children and *one* teacher.

This model was adopted hundreds of years ago, and it is a very successful way of imparting knowledge to the next generation while the rest of us get on with the business of keeping our society functioning.

The problem is that our children are *not all the same*. We as parents know this – the difference between siblings is obvious to us – not only the physical differences. There are also differences in their behaviour, the way they react, and the way they *take in information*.

The differences between our children and other children are even greater. This is wonderful – without differences we would all think the same and behave the same. There would be no debate (because we would all agree with each other,) and more importantly, no progress – because we would all *think the same way*, and worse still, come to the same conclusions.

Our teachers have to deal with these differences within the class group, and the issue is this: – one teacher, no matter how good he or she is, cannot tailor their teaching methods to meet the needs of every single student. Teachers are aware of learning styles (more of this later,) and can recognise the different traits in their students. However they have many students in their class, and cannot cater for every individual. Instead they must adapt their material and delivery to get the best result for the group.

So what are the implications of this situation?

The 20% rule.

Chances are your child is tuned in to the teacher and the material they are presented with only 20% of the time. The other 80% of the time he or she is not 'goofing off' (well they may be) – more likely they are just not

absorbing the information. It does not make sense, or is not relevant, or they just 'tune out.'

Educational Disconnection

Worse, your child may miss the entire message. They may feel that they don't understand or can't learn – are stupid, or just wasting their time. And it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how this can end up. They lose confidence, particularly if they see other students who learn better. There is a loss of self esteem; perhaps they withdraw or even start exhibiting unappropriated behaviour resulting in further withdrawal from the learning that is going on in the classroom. This is called *disconnecting with education*.

It does not have to be like this.

There are two people involved in the learning process. The teacher understands learning preferences but has a commitment to perhaps 20 or 30 other students in the class, all with individual learning styles.

The other person involved is your child. Your child may not be aware of how they learn best, or if they are, may not know how to use this knowledge. Many schools now cover learning styles in the classroom so children are made aware of the concepts. But as we all know, there is a difference between *knowing* and *applying*.

Active learning

If your child can understand and actively apply learning style techniques, he or she can be *active learners*. That changes the whole dimension in the classroom – the child can be involved in his or her own learning – take the information given by the teacher and tailor it to suit their individual needs.

Wouldn't that be great!

You can help.

We are all guilty at some stage of thinking that other people think the way we do, or at least of thinking they *should think* the way we do. We assume that our children should be learning/studying the way we did or

do, because it *works for us*. But, as I mentioned earlier, we are all different. The way you learn may be totally different to the way your child prefers to learn. You may like to go into your room and shut the door and study by reading through the material – whereas your child may be highly kinaesthetic and may learn better in an environment of noise and movement.

Understanding your child's style

If you take the time to understand how your child prefers to learn you can be active in encouraging him or her to *apply the best techniques for them to be able to learn*.

Apply the knowledge.

It is not enough to know – you need to use the knowledge. This book will help you do both. Following the description of learning styles there are practical examples (yes – it is a test!) for you to work through so you can see how *you* can guide your child in making the choice(s) that best suits their preferences.

And there is an added benefit – *you will also understand how you learn best*.

That might just be a revelation!

We make different choices.

We are all different - Not only in looks, but in behaviours and thinking.

My first child was a beautiful boy. I was determined there was going to be no sexual stereotyping in my family. My children were dressed in bold colours – no blues for boys and pink for girls – and decorations and toys were chosen on the basis of creating stimulating environments. No stereotyping of cars for boys and dolls for girls – there was a big toy box that everything went in to, and they were free to choose.

The first time my son actively played with a toy car he pushed it across the floor and he made a BRuuuummmmmMM noise. My daughter, to my knowledge, has never ever made a noise like that! They both played with

toy cars in the dirt, but she built little roads and garages to park them in, and he built hills and walls he could crash them into.

The choices they made were different, and I went on to understand that their learning styles were also very different.

My son is a 'self learner' with a high tendency towards language intelligence (he reads a lot – often all night and won't get up in the morning.) He also practices just-in-time time management techniques with his study that drives me crazy!

My daughter is very different – she prefers a mix of language and auditory, and is very people orientated (she likes to work in groups.) The phone gets constant use and she is a MSN junkie.

So what are learning styles?

Learning styles are based on Multiple Intelligences – a concept developed by Howard Gardiner, professor of education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. In 1983 he identified seven different areas of intelligence. This has subsequently been extended to as many as ten in other studies published by Tony Buzan and Raymond Keenne in their 'Book of Genius.' (Random House 1994.)

In 1994 Daniel Goleman used the term Emotional Intelligence to describe specific concepts such as self awareness, motivation, empathy and relationship management.

But we won't make this more complicated than it needs to be – we will stick to the seven areas that are directly applicable to the learning preferences of you and your child.

Turn the page to find out what they are.

Conclusion

Your child *can* learn to maximise his or her intelligences, and get the most benefit from every lesson.

You *can* help by helping them become comfortable with their own learning strengths, and encouraging them in their endeavours.

If your child is confident in their ability to learn they will be more comfortable in the classroom and better able to cope with school work. And when they understand that they have to play an *active* part in their own education they will be less likely to *disengage*.

And that would be good news for both you and your child!

Happy parenting!

Rose Siva

ICS has been delivering programs for over 25 years, and works with thousands of students in hundreds of schools across Australia every year. Information in the courses is available at www.skillcentre.com.au. Check out options available in your area.

ICS also offers *free* study tips for students, and *free* business tips in writing and reading skills at our web site. Subscribe today at www.skillcentre.com.au