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Applying a Multisensory Approach to Teaching
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Research Question
What are the effects of teachers adapting their teaching style to their students’ learning style?

Literature
• “Learning styles are a result of hereditary equipment, past experience, and the demands of the present environment combining to produce individual orientations to a variety of learning modes” (Kolb, 1985, p. 2).
• Students prefer an active learning environment, which may be difficult with traditional-style instruction (D’Albro, 1983).
• Yazicilar (2006) found that the implementation of learning styles shows an increase in student success.
• According to Kyprianidou (2011), students learn best when they are in their comfort zone.

Methodology
• My study consisted of 17 fourth-grade students in a suburban, low-income school (8 girls, 9 boys).
• The data I analyzed were: field notes, student anecdotal records, student feedback, and student work samples.
• To analyze my data, I used Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) themed techniques, where I looked for repetition, linguistic connectors, theory-related materials, and missing data.

Results and Data Analysis
• Field notes showed that there were four types of learning styles in my classroom: diverger, assimilator, converger, and accommodator.
• Diverger learners learned best when I incorporated music or illustrations into lessons.
• Assimilator learners learned best when I allowed them to think abstractly. They also thrived in open-ended questioning.
• Converger learners learned best when I allowed opportunities for independent work.
• Accommodator learners learned best when they were able to experiment with ideas or resources.
• Only 1 of my students preferred traditional-style assessments, which was discovered through student feedback.

Conclusion
• Findings show that a learning-style instructional approach shows improvement in student achievement and motivation.
• In the future, educators should structure lesson plans and assessments around their students’ learning styles.
• Teachers should be teaching students, not subjects. Every student is different, so teaching styles should also differ.

Figure 1: Students’ learning styles varied. Most of my students identified with two or more learning styles, and all of my students identified with at least one learning style.