

Educational Support Cell (ESC)/TLDE Tips & Strategies

“There are three kinds of men. The ones that learn by readin’. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence for themselves.”
— **Will Rogers**

While the quote above might be a bit graphic, it certainly depicts the different kinds of learners and instructors assigned to SWCS. Whether attending the most basic course or advanced level classes, classes are filled with different types of learners and for the most part, if asked, they will say that they are “hands-on learners.” Of course, that should not be surprising given the line of work that they chose. But, what does this mean for instructors?

What it means is that we all have different learning styles or learning preferences. While we can all learn through a variety of methods, we are more comfortable learning when material is presented to us in a way which corresponds to our preferred learning style.

But in classrooms filled with numerous students with multiple learning preferences, it can be a challenge to the instructor. The key, however, is to plan a lesson or block of instruction which incorporates multiple learning strategies throughout which appeal to each learning preference in order to achieve greater lesson outcomes. The ELM (experiential learning model) when applied correctly is actually a great plan for meeting this goal.

Listed below are some easily implemented tips to consider adding to your next block of instruction to appeal to all those different learners in your classroom.

Visual Learners

- Graphic organizers are an excellent tool to help those visual learners see the information and organize it into comprehensible chunks of information (i.e. Frayer Model – see figure below)

Doctrinal Definition	In your own words
Example Models	Non-Examples

WORD

- Color-coded notes
- Suggest students add symbols or pictures to their notes
- Charts and graphs
- Video clips, pictures, posters which relate to the objective of the class and give a purpose for watching
- Ask students to draw/sketch/ or create a symbol to represent important facts from presentation

Auditory Learners

- Auditory Books, Recordings, Presentations
- Think, Pair, Share: Ask a verbal questions from the presentation, tell students to think about it first to give them to process, then direct them to discuss with someone sitting near them. After a few seconds of discussion, ask someone to share their answers.
- Ask students to give oral summaries of presentations
- Incorporate class discussions
- Ask open-ended questions
- Lecture (but remember that few of your learners actually list this style as their number one preference so limit the amount of lecture in your presentations)

Educational Support Cell (ESC)/TLDE Tips & Strategies

Reading/Writing

- Quick-writes
- Pre-reading assignments
- Jigsaw: Create small groups. Number each person in the group and then have them re-mix with folks from the room with the same number who become “experts” on a topic. Give time for them to study and become familiar with info and research. Call time and tell them to return to the original group and teach each other.
- Writing reports/research papers
- MIP-ask students to think about the information they just learned and write down the MIP (most important point) that they just heard
- Vocabulary activities

Kinesthetic

- Board Rotation/Carousel Brainstorming: Assign groups of students to each of the whiteboards or butcher block that you have set up in the room and assign one topic/question per board. After each group writes an answer, they rotate to the next board and write their answer below the first but must be different than the previous groups, and continue rotating until each group has rotated to each board.
- Cooperative games/competitions
- Role-plays/simulations within the classroom
- Take a hand-out: one that has information which is categorized or sequenced, cut it up, and hand out to students to organize
- Manipulatives: copy a hand-out that includes steps or a chart. Cut it up, put in envelopes, and then pass out to students to put in order or arrange and explain as they work with the notes in a hands-on manner – a simple way to make written information hands-on to meet the needs of these learners.
- White-board activities
- Take information and put on magnet strips and ask students to organize on the whiteboards if they are magnetized

The ESC provides support for the uniform application of USAJFKSWCS educational processes across the Institution to include:

-Support to Curriculum & Instruction [Courses and Instructors];

-Support to Leadership & Professional Development Initiatives;

-Support to the development and implementation of program evaluation and assessment systems; and

-Support to the design and implementation of SOF Career Pathways.

For more information, contact:

Mr. Geoff Jones, TLDE at
Geojones2@socom.mil

When considering how to plan for the different learning styles of the students in your classrooms, first of all, take a poll. You can do an informal poll or use a learning inventory. The results will help guide you as you plan for the activities that best meet their needs. If you have folks in each learning category, try incorporating at least one learning activity per block of instruction that appeals to their preference. If you have a majority who prefer one or two styles, incorporate more activities that align with their styles but make sure, you plan for everyone. By doing so, you might find that your blocks of instruction are more energetic, more engaging, and more appealing to your students as they are offered more variety. As a result, both you and your students will reap the benefit as they are able to retain more information and apply what they learn from the classroom to the field and real world situations.