

Learning Styles

An Anecdote From Brian

One of my junior instructors in martial arts approached me with a dilemma. He works with beginner-level students (white belts), and was struggling with assessing the learning style of one of them. He tried everything. He explained the technique thoroughly, and demonstrated it visually (audible/visual learning style). It didn't settle in. He provided supplemental information, then some self-study (cognitive learning style). No help. He physically adjusted the student through the different movements (tactile learner). It helped a little, but the student still struggled.

One evening he paired up his students as an exercise in having them coach each other. Initially, the student he was struggling with was on the receiving end of the coaching. This frustrated his partner to no end. When they switched roles, something amazing happened. While demonstrating a side-kick, the student was able to perform it flawlessly. As it turned out, his learning style was to teach.