

SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION WITH DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES USING GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

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Abstract

Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education is a child's right, not a privilege. The special needs students many a times need extra attention. Hence the teacher's role becomes very challenging. Each student has his/her own preferred learning style. 'Learning styles' means every student learns differently. Though demanding it is important that the teacher tries to cater to every student's learning style. Graphic Organizers can be one of the solutions in this context. According to the 'Schema Theory' and the 'Dual Coding Theory' on using graphic organizers, the teaching-learning process can be made interesting and organized. It will enable us to deal with different kind of learners at the same time since graphic organizers are presented via different presentation strategies. Considering all these points, the authors have come up with a model of teaching GOALS (Graphic Organizers and Learning Styles) to cater to the students having different learning styles with the specific reference to the VAK Model. An appropriate environment for learning can thus be designed. As the famous quote of Albert Einstein states 'I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.'

Key Words: *Inclusive education, learning styles, Graphic Organizers*



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❖ Introduction:

"School" makes us to remind the students wearing uniform, same text books and the teachers who teach the whole class by the same approach. The fact we can't forget that the learners are never the same. There is a wide range of learning diversity in schools. In every classroom it is observed that the students' learning progress is never at the same rate. The special need students many times need extra attention. Hence the teacher's role becomes very

difficult. Each student has his/her own preferred learning style. It would also be very difficult for the teacher to cater for every student's preference. The Gladstone Web site described diversity along the dimensions of "race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies" (The Gladstone, 1999). As mentioned before students are unique so that we can't avoid diversity in the classroom. Therefore, the teachers have a big challenge to provide students a positive and supportive learning environment.

In such a diverse classroom, students have different learning styles. Some students may learn best by watching, few by listening and others by doing and moving or by a hands-on environment. The role of teacher is very important here. Teacher should not forget the concept of inclusion as inclusive education refers to educating each & every child without any sort of discrimination because of physical, mental or emotional abilities. Graphic Organizers can be a good solution to cater to the needs of students having different learning styles.

❖ **Objective of the Paper:**

- ⊙ To emphasize the relevance of using graphic organizers for the successful inclusion of students with different learning styles.

❖ **Concept of Learning Styles:**

Every individual is unique and hence the way he approaches learning is unique. Individuals have preferences regarding the way in which they would like to learn. These are determined by the learning style of the individual. Learning styles are the ways, tendencies, preferences and conditions under which the individual learns best.

❖ **Some definitions of learning style:**

- ☞ Learning style is a student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning.
- ☞ Learning style is the complex manner in which and conditions under which learners most efficiently process, store, and recall what they are attempting to learn.
- ☞ Learning style is a student's own tendency to absorb a special learning strategy independent from the environment.

❖ **Classification of Learning Styles:**

Learning style refers to the individual's characteristics and preferences. These determine how the individual will look at his environment, how he would interact with the

environment and how his learning would take place. Researchers have studied individuals and classified them on the basis of their preferred learning style in different ways. Given below are a few classifications:-

➤ **David Kolb's Model:**

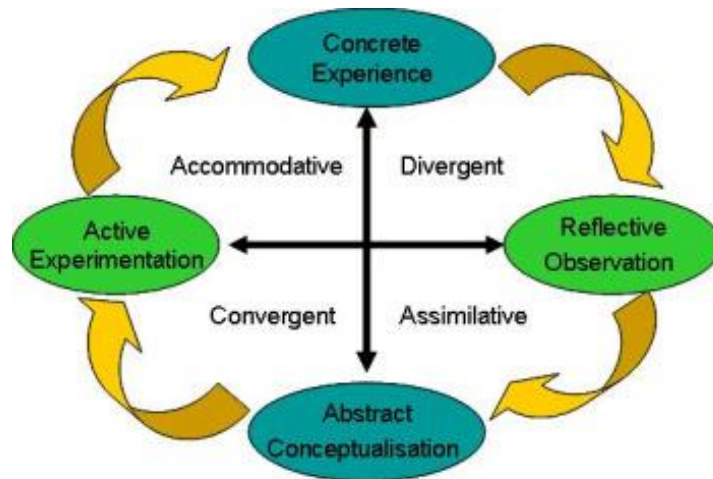


Figure 1: Kolb Experiential learning (leopard-learning.com, 2013)

➤ **Types according to the theory of Multiple Intelligence:**



Figure 2: Theory of Multiple Intelligence (recomendarpsicologo.com, 2014)

➤ **Fleming's VAK/VARK model (based on the dominant sensory organ):-**

A frequently-mentioned learning style model is the VAK/VARK model proposed by Neil Fleming in 1992, which divides people into visual, auditory read/write or kinesthetic learners.

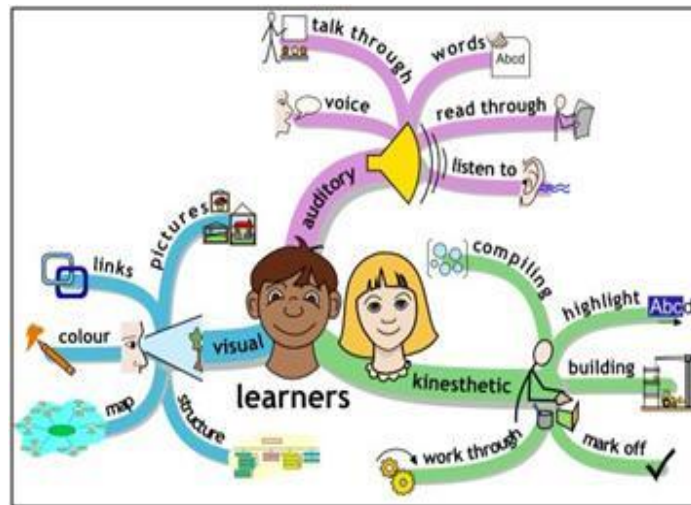


Figure 3: Learning Styles (parenting-in-an-electronic-age, 2016)

❖ Characteristics of VAK Model:

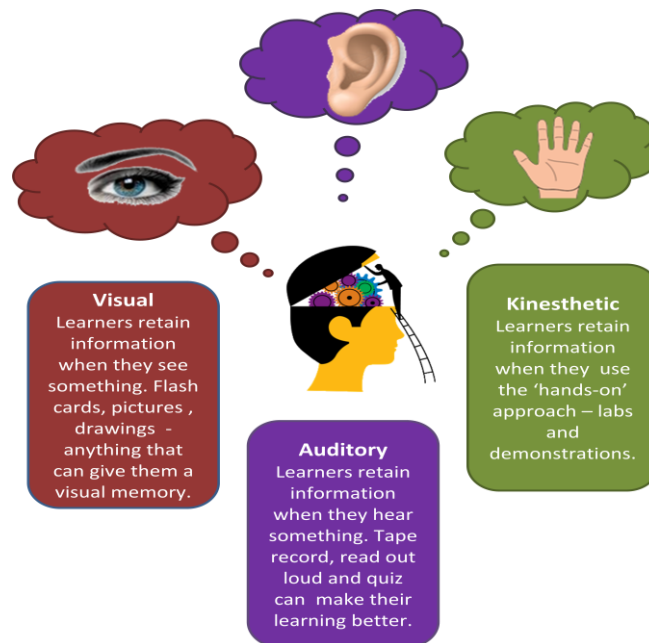


Figure 4: VAK Model

❖ Why think about the learning styles?

No learning style is superior or inferior. Each one has its own advantages and disadvantages. Further we all have elements of each learning style in us. But only one or two types stand out in each of us. In our class we have children with all these learning styles (Vartak, 2012).

Hence the teachers need to think about all kinds of learning styles while dealing with the class at a time. Teachers can incorporate different activities in their teaching. Graphic organizers can be used during these activities to cater to different learning styles.

❖ **What are Graphic Organizers?**

Graphic organizers (some of which are also called concept maps, entity relationship charts and mind maps) are a pictorial way of constructing knowledge and organizing information. They help the student convert and compress a lot of seemingly disjointed information into a structured, simple-to-read and graphic display. The resulting visual display conveys complex information in a simple-to-understand manner.

(<https://umagarimella.wordpress.com/2011/07/05/graphic-organizers-and-thinking-skills/>)

❖ **Types of Graphic Organizers:**

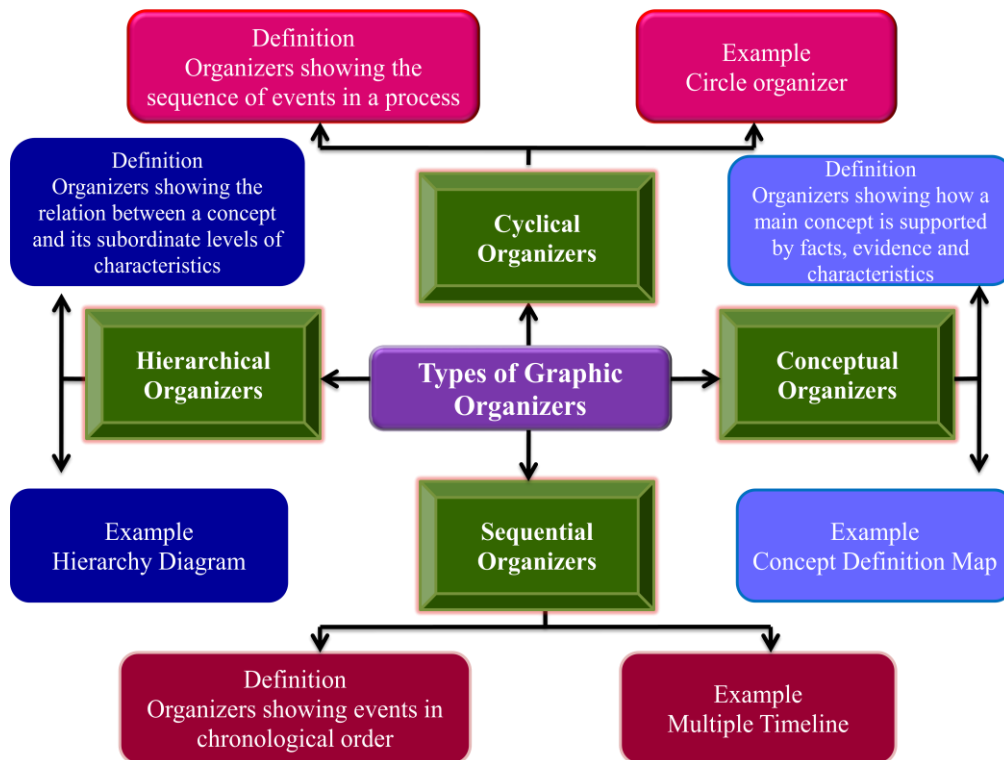


Figure 5: Types of Graphic Organizers

❖ **Philosophical and Psychological foundations of the graphic organizers:**

↳ **Schema Theory and Graphic Organizers:**

➤ **Focus of the schema theory:**

- ❖ Encoding, storing and retrieving of information by relating it with the existing information.
- ❖ Principle of Scaffolding.

➤ **Relevance in learning:**

- ✘ The use of Graphic organizers facilitate the formation of the link between the new information to existing knowledge and help students build the schema they need to understand new concepts.

↪ **Dual Coding Theory and Graphic Organizers:**

➤ **Focus of the Dual Coding theory:**

- ✘ Memory consists of two separate but interrelated codes for visual processing information- verbal and visual.
- ✘ The interrelations and connections of the two systems allow for dual coding of information which promotes knowledge comprehension and retention.

➤ **Relevance in learning:**

- ✘ Being a visual and a linguistic tool, the graphic organizers help the students to process and remember the content. (Vartak, L. &Varade, G.,*Teaching using Graphic Organizers*)

These postulates behind 'teaching via graphic organizers' for effective inclusion of students with different learning styles can be best explained in the words of Mother Teresa:

"I can do things you
Cannot, you can do
Things I cannot,
Together we can do
Great things."

❖ **Principles of Teaching:**

The educators and philosophers have emphasized certain principles of teaching which the teachers are expected to use for making their teaching effective, efficient and inspirational.

Following principles proves the theory of learning styles and graphic organizers:

- ↪ Principles of Individual Differences
- ↪ Principles of Activity or Learning by Doing
- ↪ Principles of Feedback and Reinforcement
- ↪ Principle of Creativity
- ↪ Principle of Correlation
- ↪ Principle of Motivation(Vallikkat, 2012)

These principles prove that every individual is unique and important. So everyone's need should be considered. Learning is a process where a learner needs motivation and feedback also. Activities can make teaching effective and develops creativity among the students. Teaching using graphic organizers can help us in successful inclusion of children with different learning styles.

❖ **Benefits of Graphic Organizers to Students and Teachers:**

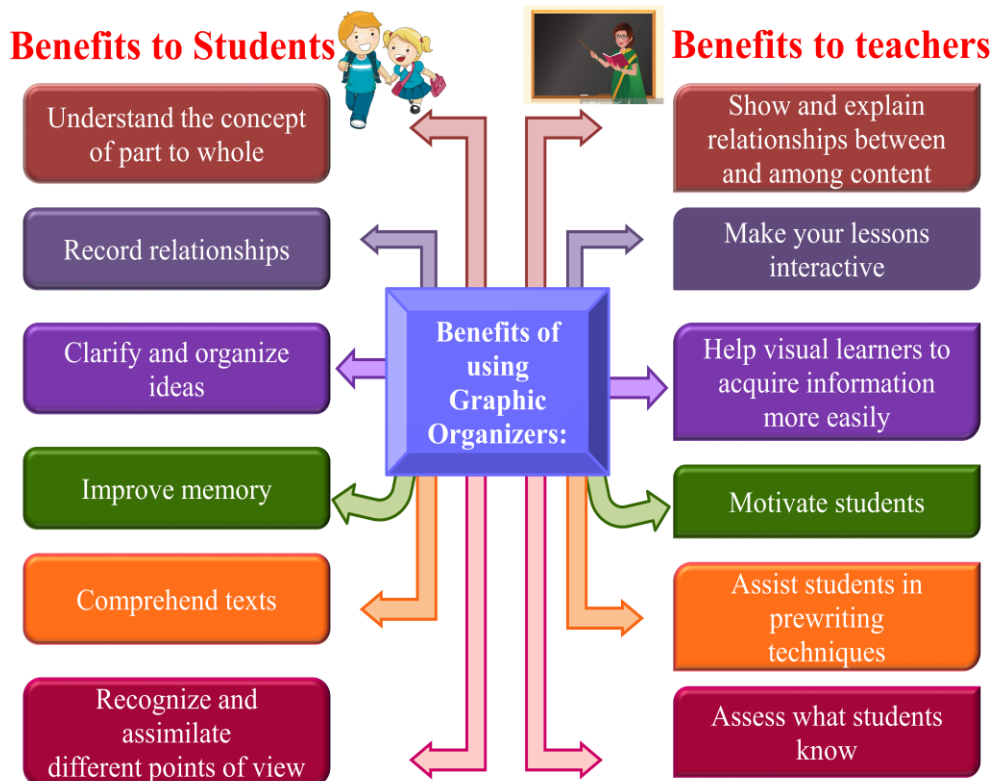


Figure 6: Benefits of Graphic Organizers to Students and Teachers

❖ **Moving from Theory to Practice:**

Using graphic organizers teaching-learning process becomes more interesting and organized. We can easily deal with different kind of learners at a time. The authors have attempted to design a model of teaching which uses graphic organizers to cater to the students having different learning styles with the specific reference to the VAK Model. The model named GOALS (Graphic Organizers and Learning Styles) has been depicted in figure 7-9. GOALS consist of 3 phases namely- Pre-Active, Inter-Active and Post-Active planning for inclusion.

Phase I - Pre-active Planning for Inclusion:

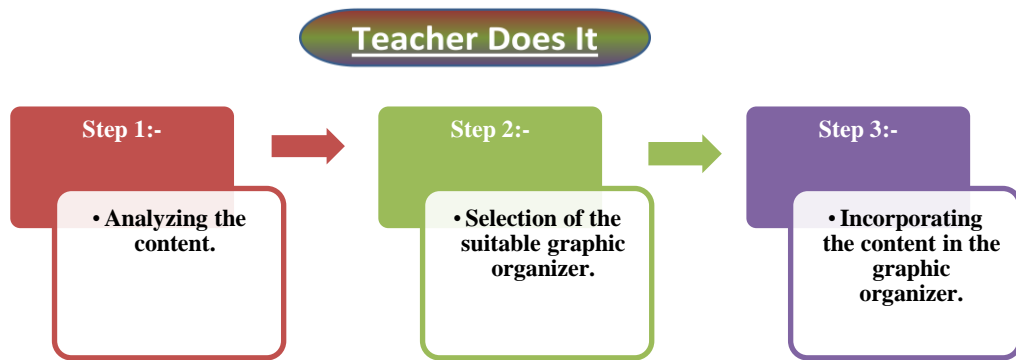


Figure 7: Pre-Active Planning for Inclusion: Teacher does it

Phase II - Inter-active Planning for Inclusion:

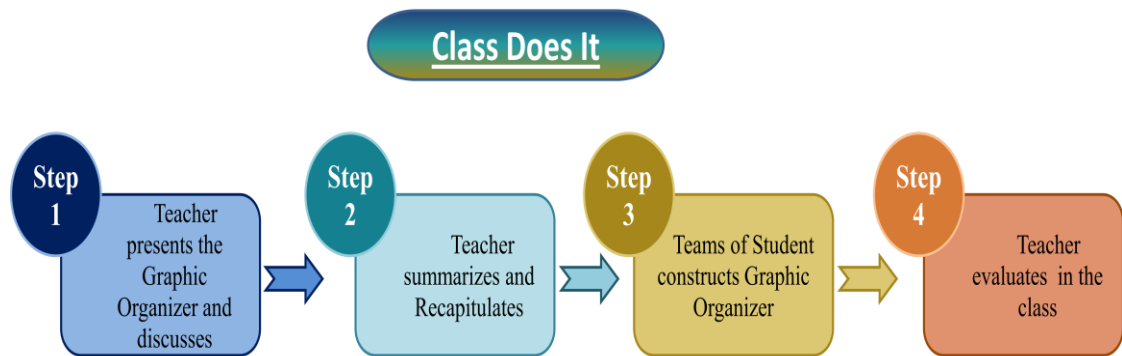


Figure 8: Inter-Active Planning for Inclusion: Class does it

Phase III - Post-active Planning for Inclusion:

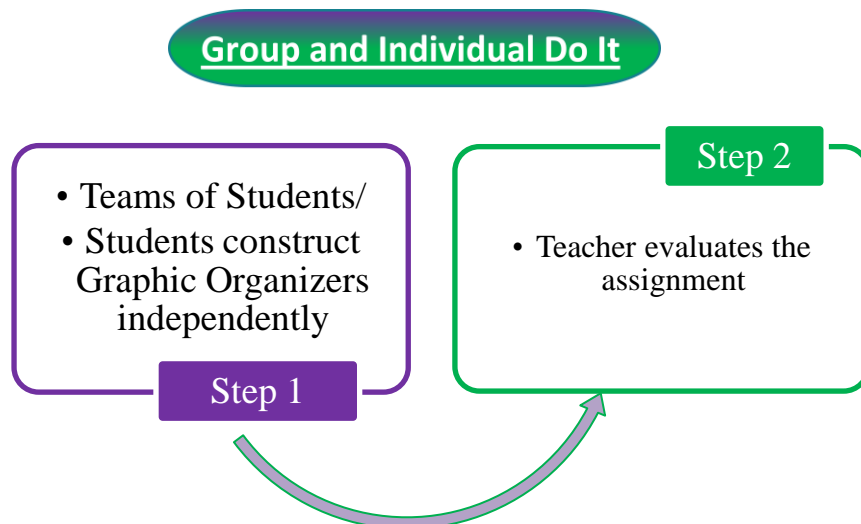


Figure 9: Post-Active Planning for Inclusion: Group and Individual do it

❖ **Benefits of Graphic Organizers with respective Learning Style :- (With reference to VAK Model)**



Figure 10: Benefits of Graphic Organizers with respective Learning Style
(Vallikkat, 2012)

❖ **Conclusion:**

Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education is a child's right, not privilege. Inclusion is about providing the help that the children need to learn and participate in meaningful ways. Individual differences between children are a source of richness and diversity, and not a problem. The diversity of needs and pace of development of children are addressed through a wide and flexible range of teacher's responses. These diverse students have different kind of 'learning styles' which means every student learns differently. To deal with the different needs of these students teacher can use graphic organizers as an effective tool. As graphic organizers are presented via different presentation strategies, all kinds of learners' needs can be satisfied. Here the model of teaching GOALS could be fruitful to all types of learning styles of the learners. To put it in a nutshell we can say that the role of a teacher is to provide a positive and supportive environment which can facilitate the students'

learning. This idea is depicted beautifully in Albert Einstein's quote: 'I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.'

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