

Student Learning Styles: The R2D2 Model

What is it?

The R2D2 model, developed by Bonk and Zhang (see citation below), is a simplified model for addressing student learning styles, focusing on "the type of tasks, resources, and activities that one may want to embed in an online course . . . to address different human learning strengths" (251). I created the diagram (below and attached) from the article's tables to highlight the 4 areas in the model, **read**, **reflect**, **display**, and **do**.

The purpose of the model is to provide an easy way to remember how to address our students' needs as we are working with so many new Web tools to create dynamic and interactive content, and particularly, learning tasks. The article lists both tasks to meet learning styles and the technologies to accomplish them, although the authors' list of technologies will quickly be outdated. The main focus is on creating appropriate tasks.

What does it look like in practice?

In practice, the model adapts to your course design and content, instead of prescribing such. It can most simply be used as a checklist to review individual assignments for their appeal to a variety of learning styles; for example, listening to or watching lectures appeals to auditory and verbal learners. If you can accompany those lectures with diagrams and timelines, you bring in the visual learners. Reflection papers and journals appeal to reflective and observational learners, and if you allow students to create reflections with videos or other online tools, you appeal to the tactile/kinesthetic learners.

No one task can cover all learning styles, probably, but sensitivity to learning styles can help you create tasks over the course of a semester that appeal to all students.

How does such a method fit into my course?

You might see the results in the following ways:

- More tasks that require more than one method of completion, as in a writing assignment that includes using multiple media.
- More opportunities for student reflection or observation:
 - Role play and simulations
 - Collaborative writing
 - Electronic portfolios
- More student-centered participation, even in the presentation of lecture material:
 - Discussion board or wiki presentations that allow comments
 - Student-assigned presentations of new content



Further Reading

Bonk, Curtis J., and Zhang, Ke. "Introducing the R2D2 Model: Online Learning for the Diverse Learners of This World." *Distance Education* 27.2 (2006): 249-64.