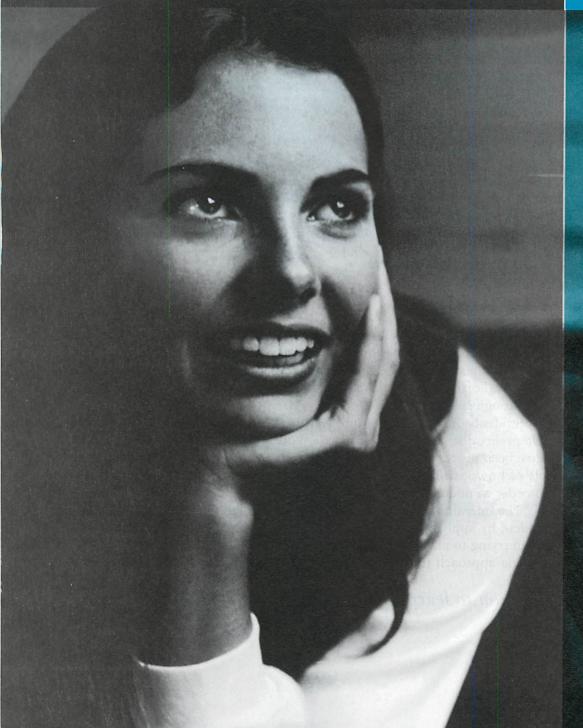
Sights, Sounds, and Sensations

INFORMATION PROCESSING AND LEARNING STYLES



ath. How Andre hated that subject! It didn't matter how hard Andre studied—he couldn't get it. He could remember his parents, teachers, and friends getting on his case about studying. Andre did study! He even had tutors! But, nothing seemed to work. He was discouraged and frustrated, and Andre knew he was doomed to never make a grade better than a D (and that was on a good day).

One day, all that changed. It was Andre's freshman year in college. He never forgot that first class with Mr. Lane. Mr. Lane explained that math was about to become everyone's favorite subject. Andre thought he was crazy! That'll be the day, he thought.

Lo and behold, Mr. Lane was able to change Andre's attitude toward math. He first explained how important it was that we think positively and believe that we could master numbers. Sure, some students would have to work hard, but Mr. Lane explained that in order to really understand math we needed to see it, hear it, and touch it. For example, he told us to use our fingers when counting and to remove our shoes and use our toes if we had to.

He was an excellent teacher. He really did show the class how to see, hear, and touch math. For the first time in his life, Andre understood what he was doing. It was as if someone had unlocked a door that was blocking his way. Andre got an 88 out of 100 on his first test. He even managed to pass the class with an 82!

erhaps Andre's fear of math sounds familiar to you. The story about Andre is quite common. Many students share these same fears, anxieties, and academic frustrations over math and other subjects. Fortunately, Mr. Lane was there to show this student how to master a tough subject.

Students often give up or quit learning new material because they do not comprehend it right away. What they do not realize is that they may not have been processing information correctly. Andre's story is a perfect example of how learning involves seeing, hearing, and touching the information in order to understand it.

The intention of this chapter is to show you how to become a successful student by applying information-processing theory and learning-style theory when trying to master information. This chapter will teach you how to use a holistic approach to process information with all five senses, thus pointing

"He who has no inclination to learn more will be very apt to think he knows enough."

the way to academic success. Being a student means accepting responsibility for learning the information presented to you. In a nutshell, when you understand how material is processed by your brain and how to use your preferred learning style, you can overcome academic barriers.

At the end of this chapter, if you complete the exercises, participate in class, read the additional assignments that may be issued by your instructor, and keep an open mind, you will be able to do the following tasks:

- Define information-processing and learningpreference theories
- Identify your preferred learning style
- Create and use learning-style strategies to learn and recall information
- Use a global and analytical approach to processing information
- Use mnemonic devices, or "memory tricks," to store and recall information

Studying is not necessarily a natural or easy activity for everyone. It is, however, a learned skill in which you can become proficient if you are aware of your own individual learning style. In the box at right, you will find 10 questions intended to cause you to think about how you learn and process information. Please consider carefully each statement and then answer each one as honestly as possible.

How did you do with the self-analysis? Are you familiar with any of the terms presented? Do you understand that there are different ways in

which we learn? If you are unfamiliar with any or all of the terms used, do not despair—this chapter is intended to teach you as much as possible about learning styles and the various ways in which people learn.

INFORMATION PROCESSING THEORY

earning and processing information are primarily functions of the brain. The human brain is divided into two halves, called the left and right hemispheres, that deal with information in different ways. The human brain functions best when both sides are able to work together. The left hemisphere is the part of the brain that does the thinking and reasoning. It exhibits most of the characteristics associated with analytical thinking. The right hemisphere controls mostly feelings and actions. It gives us most of the characteristics associated with "global" thinking. The two styles of thinking are of equal importance, each balancing the other and contributing to learning and information processing.

LESTON

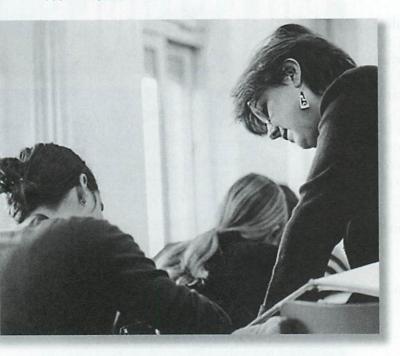
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Answer each statement by checking "Y" for Yes, "N" for No, or "S" for Sometimes.

- I understand how the brain processes. information.
- YNS
- 2. I know my preferred learning style.
- (Y) (N) (S)
- 3. I use a variety of senses when studying and learning.
 - YNS

4. I enjoy learning.

- (Y) (N) (S)
- 5. I know how a visual learner processes information.
- (Y) (N) (S)
- 6. I know how a kinesthetic learner learns.
- YNS
- 7. I know the characteristics of a global thinker.
- YNS
- 8. I know how an auditory learner learns.
- (Y) (N) (S)
- 9. I use mnemonic devices.
- (Y) (N) (S)
- 10. I know how to store information in long-term memory.
- (Y) (N) (S)



If you discover how you learn best, you can apply that knowledge to each class—you may even be able to help your instructors teach you more effectively.

Traditional school settings are designed to meet the needs of students who think analytically (i.e., those likely to find reading, writing, and math easy to learn). However, there are many students who fail to learn in school or experience difficulties understanding new information. Many of these students are global thinkers and need to use this strength to master the analytical skills. When students use analytical and global thinking together (i.e., using both halves of the brain), learning becomes easier. As a student, it may be useful to figure out what type of thinker you are (analytical or global) and how to use both types of thinking at the same time.

It is important that you understand that you have strengths associated with both types of processing. Everyone, however, has a dominant style. The inventory on the following page will help you to identify the style of thinking that is dominant for you. Stop reading now and complete the inventory before going on.

Most individuals spend about 70 percent of their time completing and participating in analytical activities and only about 30 percent of their time in global activities. By learning how to develop both styles of processing or thinking, students can significantly improve their ability to learn.

Because everyone has a preference for one style of thinking or the other, the key to successful learning is to use both styles of thinking at the same time. For example, if you are unorganized and always forgetting assignments, then writing down assignments would be very helpful to you as a student. In addition, when taking notes, you might find it helpful to use colored pens and pencils. The color is helpful because it stimulates global processing while you are completing the analytical skill of taking notes. When learning vocabulary, you might use index cards. Flashing through the cards is a global activity that helps the analytical processing needed to develop vocabulary.

When you learn to use both styles of thinking at the same time, retaining and understanding information become much easier. Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso, along with many other scientists and artists, saw the value of using both styles of thinking. These individuals had well-developed analytical and global thinking skills.

Information Processing Inventory

DIRECTIONS: First, read through the following statements. After you have read all of the statements for both "A" and "B" traits, check the statements that most apply to you. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers.

"A" TRAITS	"B" TRAITS	
I am good at remembering faces.	I am good at remembering names.	
I remember how to perform a task better when someone shows me how to do it.	I remember information best when I can read about it.	
I like expressing my feelings.	I do not like expressing how I feel.	
I enjoy doing many things at once.	I like to work on one thing at a time.	
I can sense how someone feels.	I usually cannot tell how someone is feeling.	
I can create funny things to say or do.	I find it difficult to create funny things to say or do.	
I like having fun when I am doing things.	I like to be serious when doing things.	
I like studying in groups.	I prefer to study alone.	
I am easily distracted.	I am not easily distracted.	
I am disorganized.	I am organized.	
I enjoy art, music, and/or dance.	I enjoy reading, math, and/or science.	
I prefer essay tests.	I prefer multiple-choice tests.	
I like meeting new people.	I am uncomfortable meeting new people.	
I make decisions with my heart.	I make decisions with my head.	
I like to answer questions by guessing.	I like to think through questions before answering them.	
I don't pay attention to details.	I pay attention to details.	
I learn best by seeing or doing.	I learn best by hearing about things.	
I have difficulty following directions.	I can follow directions.	
I use my hands when I talk.	I rarely use my hands when I talk.	
I lose track of time.	I can keep track of time.	
Now, count the number of checks you made for ".	A" and "B" and record the totals below:	
Total A Traits =		
Total B Traits =		
"A" traits are characteristics associated with global		

"B" traits are characteristics associated with analytical thinking.

Characteristics of Analytical and Global Thinkers

Analytical Thinkers

concerned with details concerned with the big picture

Global Thinkers

organized disorganized predictable spontaneous

auditory visual and kinesthetic

consecutive random

aware of time unaware of time

math (algebra) geometry (shapes, etc.) reading, spelling, writing music, art, drama, dance

practical creative logical instinctive focused easily distracted

The following information describes strategies for activating analytical and global processing:

ANALYTICAL PROCESSING OR THINKING

When learning, analytical thinkers prefer:

- Bright light
- Quiet study environment
- Working on one activity at a time
- Studying alone
- Formal or traditional learning environment

GLOBAL PROCESSING OR THINKING

When learning, global thinkers prefer:

- Short breaks
- Low lighting
- Eating/drinking while learning
- Music or sound in the background
- Informal learning environment
- Working on many activities at a time
- Studying in groups

Brainteaser

This activity does not measure your intelligence, your fluency with words, or your mathematical ability. It will, however, give you some indication of your mental flexibility and creativity. It will require that you draw from both styles of thinking in order to achieve success. Few people can solve more than half of the items, so don't get discouraged if you have trouble.

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3. 2 Ps in a P	
4. HDD (TMRUTC)	
5. 3 S to a T	
6. 100 P in a D	
7. TNoPLH	
8. 4 Q in a G	
9. IaSWAA	
10. 50 S in T U	

LEARNING PREFERENCE THEORY

any of you have undoubtedly wondered how information gets into your brain. This information travels along several very common avenues or pathways. When you are learning or processing information, you are in fact using one or more of your five basic senses (sight, touch, sound, smell, or taste) to gather information for your brain to process. Successful learning of new information occurs when you use as many of your senses as you can to transmit the new material to the brain.

Everyone has a preferred learning style or dominant sense that they use to learn information, especially information that they find difficult. For instance, have you ever asked someone to write something down, to repeat what they said, or even to let you try your hand at something in an effort to understand? If you've made these comments, chances are you were trying to get the information presented in such a way that you could best understand it.

Most students use a combination of senses to help guarantee that the brain will understand the material. If you are learning a new song, for instance, your sense of *hearing* is challenged more than the other senses. Sight may also play a part in the learning process because you feel as though you can "see" the musical notes. In addition, by using a musical instrument to play the song, you are using *touch* to learn the song. These examples reveal that you can use a combination of senses to experience a new song. In all likelihood, your chances of mastering the song are increased if you involve several of your senses.

Another illustration of how you might combine your senses in learning might occur if you were studying a new type of flower. You may first examine it closely. Next, you may smell its scent. You may also be able to taste the flower if it is edible, and finally you may even observe how it feels. Once again, you would be using several of your senses (sight, smell, taste, and touch) to identify the new flower.

If information is received through as many of the senses as possible, you are more likely to understand a new concept. Using the five senses, explain how you would teach the following items to someone who has never been exposed to that item before. Be creative and have fun.

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Hearing	
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Touch	
Hearing	
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hich senses we	re harder to use? Why do you think they were harder to us you feel students use when they are learning new

HOW DO YOU LEARN?

s you have discovered, effective learning involves a range of senses. We all learn differently, and some students must use specific senses in order to learn. Students generally use one or more of the following senses when learning a new skill: visual (sense of sight); auditory (sense of sound); and/or kinesthetic (sense of touch). Each student has a

preferred style that he or she uses regularly to achieve academic success. Which style do you think you use most often? Circle your preferred style:

VISUAL AUDITORY KINESTHETIC

It is important that you know your preferred style and how to use the other styles to reach your academic potential. Knowing about other learning styles can also help when the material seems difficult to learn. The inventory that follows will identify your preferred learning style.



Learning Preference Inventory

Before completing this activity, read each statement in each category. For each of the following categories, check (\checkmark) the appropriate number for each statement. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers.

1 = least like me 2 = sometimes like me 3 = most like me

"A" LEARNING PREFERENCE

- 1 2 3 In my spare time, I enjoy watching TV or reading a magazine.
- 1 2 3 When putting something together, I need to look at a diagram.
- 1 2 3 I like teachers who write on the board and use visual aids.
- 1 2 3 I need to see things in order to remember them.
- 1 2 3 When I solve math application problems, I draw pictures.
- 1 2 3 I need a map in order to find my way around.
- 1 2 3 I can tell how someone feels by the expression on his face.
- 1 2 3 At a meeting, I prefer to watch people.

"B" LEARNING PREFERENCE

- 1 ② 3 In my spare time, I enjoy listening to music or talking on the phone.
- 1 2 3 When putting something together, I need someone to explain how to do it.
- 1 2 3 I like teachers who lecture on the course's subject.
- 1 2 3 I need to hear things in order to remember them.
- 1 2 3 When I solve math application problems, I need to talk them out.
- 1 2 3 When getting directions, I need to hear them.
- 1 2 3 I can tell how people feel by the sound of their voices.
- 1 2 3 At a meeting, I prefer to listen and talk to people.

"C" LEARNING PREFERENCE

- 1 2 3 In my spare time, I enjoy physical activities (running, playing ball, etc.).
- 1 2 3 When putting something together, I need someone to show me how to do it.
- 1 2 3 I like teachers who provide classroom activities and encourage student involvement.
- 1 2 3 I need to write things down in order to remember them.
- ① ② ③ When I solve application problems (in math), I prefer that someone show me what to do.
- 1 2 3 When getting directions, I need to write them down in order to remember them.
- 1 2 3 At a meeting, I prefer to take part in the conversation or activities.

Total points for "A" Learning Preference =

Total points for "B" Learning Preference =

Total points for "C" Learning Preference =

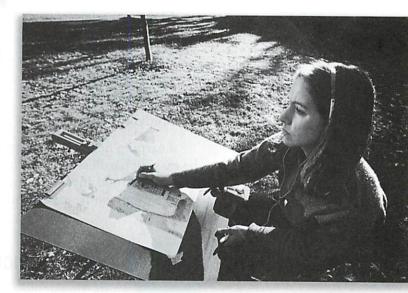
- "A" learning preference is Visual, the sense of sight.
- "B" learning preference is Auditory, the sense of sound.
- "C" learning preference is Kinesthetic, the sense of touch.

It is important to note that there are *no* right or wrong answers. We are all different, and we all learn differently. One style is not more important or better than the other, and you may see a little of yourself in all of the preferences. This inventory indicates the style you prefer when learning new material. The following information describes the three types of learners and strategies for using each style.

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn information through their sense of sight. They need to see in order to understand and remember. This learning style is the most common. The following activities help to develop visual strengths:

- Reading or studying the written word, pictures, or charts
- Taking notes (especially in color)



Visual learners, who learn primarily through their sense of sight, may be challenged in college, where much material is presented through lectures and discussions.

- Drawing pictures or diagrams
- Visualizing information in your mind

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners learn information through their sense of hearing and through sound. They need to hear something to learn and remember it well. Approximately 80 percent of the material presented in college is taught in this way. Therefore, it is extremely important that you develop this learning style in order to achieve academic success. The following activities help to develop auditory skills:

- Stop talking and listen
- · Focus on what your teachers are saying
- Make audiotapes of class lectures and discussions
- Talk to yourself or others about the information
- Study in a group

Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners learn best through their sense of touch. Students who learn in this way must physically experience the information to understand and remember it. The following activities help to develop the kinesthetic sense:

- Acting out the information (role-playing)
- Using your hands
- Making models, charts, diagrams, etc.
- Taking notes
- Adding movement when studying (e.g., walking, tapping a finger, or rocking in a chair)
- Chewing gum
- Studying in a group

Learning new information can sometimes be difficult. It may sometimes be easy. Regardless of its difficulty level, to successfully master new material, students should involve as many of their senses as possible. Learning new information can be easier and more fun with the help of your senses.

USING MNEMONIC DEVICES

eople forget about 98 percent of what they learn. This is an alarming statistic, especially when you consider the enormous amount of time and effort that many of you put into studying. Understanding human memory and applying memory techniques can help increase the chances that you will be able to recall the information you have studied for an exam.

According to psychologists, there are three types of human memory:

- 1. Sensory memory
- 2. Working memory
- 3. Long-term memory

Sensory memory stores information gathered from your five senses. This memory is usually temporary unless it is important to you. Working memory is the information gathered from your senses that you feel is important. You can only store a limited amount of information in your working memory. If you want to ensure that you remember this information, you must store it in your long-term memory. Long-term memory stores information permanently. How you organize and remember information is extremely important.

In many ways, your brain is like a room with file cabinets along the walls. On the floor in the middle of the room is a huge pile of papers. Each sheet of paper contains a separate and distinct piece of information. This pile of papers is your working memory. As the pile gets larger and larger, pieces of information get covered up and forgotten. The only way to move this pile of working memory into long-term memory (where it will not be forgotten) is to organize it and to place it into one of the file cabinets

"Our ability to retrieve information from our memory is a function of how well it was learned in the first place."

JOSH R. GEROW

along the wall. You can, for example, put equations into a folder in the math file cabinet. (This folder in the math file cabinet may hold equations that solve certain types of math problems.) You can also put the definition of a word into a folder in the language file cabinet.

One way to organize this information is to use mnemonic devices or "memory tricks." Mnemonic devices help you to store information in your long-term memory by associating that information with information you already know (i.e., putting it into a folder).

There are five basic types of mnemonic devices:

1. JINGLES/RAP. You can create jingles and rhymes to remember information.

EXAMPLE: In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

2. ASSOCIATIONS. Create associations by putting words, ideas, and symbols together to remember information.

EXAMPLE: Lightbulb = an idea Apple = Macintosh

3. SENTENCES. Create a sentence using the first letter in each word from a list of information that you want to remember.

EXAMPLE: To remember the order of operations in math, use "Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally." This stands for Parentheses, Exponents, Multiply, Divide, Add, and Subtract.

4. WORDS. Create a word to represent the information you need to remember.

EXAMPLE: To remember the colors in the spectrum, use the name Roy G. Biv (this stands for Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet).

5. \	VISUALIZE. Create a picture in your mind of what you want to remember.
	EXAMPLE: Italy looks like a boot on a map.
Cre	eate a mnemonic for the following concepts:
	Parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections)
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2.	The five Great Lakes (Michigan, Erie, Superior, Huron, Ontario)
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3.	The first five presidents of the United States (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe)
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4.	The seven continents (North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Antarctica, and Australia)
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5.	The nine planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto)
	list of information that you want to remember
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	determinent have unit multi-reminer mit reminer at here a surse.) Printed
	TREATHER ST. COSTS CONT. PROPERTY OF STORY OF COSTS CONT. IS SECOND.

Now that you have completed this chapter, take a few moments to complete the Milestones checklist to the right.

How did you do with the questions this time? Do you understand more about how the brain works and how learning is affected by individual preferences? What changes might you make in the way you approach studying now that you are aware of how you learn? Certainly, much can be gained by focusing on your individual learning preferences and how they affect the way in which you approach academic material.

MILESTONES

NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE . . .

Answer each statement by checking "Y" for Yes, "N" for No, or "S" for Sometimes.

- 1. I understand how the brain processes information.
- YNS
- 2. I know my preferred learning style.
- YNS
- 3. I use a variety of senses when studying and learning.
- YNS

4. I enjoy learning.

- YNS
- I know how a visual learner processes information.
- YNS
- 6. I know how a kinesthetic learner learns.
- YNS
- I know the characteristics of a global thinker.
- YNS
- 8. I know how an auditory learner learns.
- (Y) (N) (S)
- 9. I use mnemonic devices.
- YNS
- I know how to store information in long-term memory.
- Y N S

ROADWAYS

TO LEARNING AND PROCESSING INFORMATION

- Become actively involved when studying, reading, and taking notes. Ask yourself questions
 to keep yourself focused. Draw visual diagrams, study with friends.
- Get organized! Develop a note-taking system, record assignments, and keep an organized notebook.
- Your study environment should be quiel and free of distractions (phone, friends, etc.).
- Use colored pens and pencils when taking notes and studying.
- Create *movement* when studying. Walk, march, tap a finger, etc.
- Use mnemonics to store and *helieve* information.
- Get involved! Use both styles of thinking and as many senses as possible when learning.

Applying What You Know

This chapter was designed to teach you as much as possible about learning styles and the various ways in which people learn. Applying the strategies suggested in this chapter allows you to take charge of your learning since you are ultimately responsible for your academic success.

Now that you have finished this chapter on information processing and learning styles, refer back to the Case Study about Gwen at the beginning of this book. Based on Gwen's situation, answer the following questions:

If we assume that Gwen is a global thinker, what would you suggest she do to improve her grades in ENG 101?
What strategies would you suggest that Gwen implement to improve her grades in MAT 101 if she is a visual and kinesthetic learner?

Observations

CHARTING YOUR COURSE



Your academic success is your responsibility. Your instructors might not teach in the way that is best for you. There also may be academic subjects that you find difficult. Although you may have to face either one or both of these situations, you are ultimately responsible for mastering the information. Do not let your academic subjects get the better of you.

Learn to take charge! Remember to learn and to study new information using both styles of thinking. In addition, use as many senses as possible when learning and studying. Because success is within your reach, you must grasp it by applying the techniques mentioned in this chapter. You can achieve academic success. The road is yours to travel.



Getting There on Time

Once you have mastered techniques related to learning styles, you will learn that you can save a great deal of time spent studying. For example, consider how the use of mnemonic devices will help you. If you become proficient with the use of mnemonic devices, you will be able to recall facts more readily and more easily, focusing more of your time on studying theory and logic as it relates to your particular subject.



Exploring Technology

This exploring technology assignment is about your vehicle's "brains." Computers, computers, computers. Computers and computer chips are part of every aspect of life: television sets, cell phones, toys, and of course our automobiles. Many of us are not aware of the degree to which state-of-the-art technology is used in vehicles. Fuel injectors and exhaust emissions are just two of the ways we use technology to improve the performance of our cars. Computer chips are also used to diagnose and troubleshoot vehicles. In fact, many cars now either keep a record of problems or allow an operator to take a "snapshot" of the vehicle at the time of trouble.

Provide the name of the computer chip that controls your vehicle, or the computer that troubleshoots your car. (Be sure to include the make, year, and model of your vehicle.)

HEI PEUL REFERENCES:

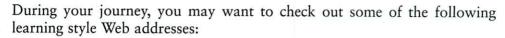
- automobile manual
- automobile shop (e.g., Auto Zone, NAPA)
- friendly neighborhood mechanic

THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES MAY BE HELPFUL:

www.autoalliance.org/economic/info.htm www.fulllogic.com/

Web Connections

TRAVELING THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY



www.chaminade.org/inspire/learnstl.htm www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/learning-styles.html www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm



Journal

As a result of this chapter, and in preparing for my journey, 1 plan to	
As a result of this chapter, and in preparing for my journey, I plan to	
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