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FOOD & RESOURCE  
ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT



NUDGING STUDENTS TO AN AUTHENTIC LEARNING  
EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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SAEA 2018 | Jacksonville, FL

# Background

- Active classrooms are often considered best and preferred by students and practitioners for learning, particularly for at-risk populations (Lombardi, 2007, Freeman, et. al, 2014, Eddy and Hogan 2014, Miller and Metz, 2014)
- Others have quickly moved to defend traditional teaching paradigms, predominately—lecturing (Burgan, 2006, Strauss, 2009, Walthausen, 2013, Webster, 2015)
- In the middle is the teacher—the one who wants to teach a distracted population something!

# Research Questions

Does “nudging” students to think about how they learn best:

1. Impact the ways in which they engage in the course?
2. Lead students to study “appropriately” for the course?

# Study Design

- Two courses taught at the University of Florida in the Fall of 2017 both taught with lecture, active components and application activities inside and outside of the class (Data Analysis and Economics of Resource Use)
- 83 responses out of 123 (67% response rate) (22/38 and 60/85)
- Administered a learning style assessment at the beginning of the course (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic) and asked students to describe how they SHOULD engage in the course given their learning style
- Follow-up survey at the end of the semester about how students engaged in the course

# Study Design: Learning Style Assessment



## Learning Style Question 1

When you study for a test, would you rather:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>A</b> | read notes, read headings in a book, and look at diagrams and illustrations |
| <b>B</b> | have someone ask you questions, or repeat facts silently to yourself        |
| <b>C</b> | write things out on index cards and make models or diagrams                 |

- 15 questions
- Mostly As-Visual
- Mostly Bs-Auditory
- Mostly Cs-Kinesthetic



Note: Much criticism surrounds the learning style assessment in terms of its reliability and validity and the implications for pedagogy. The point of this study was not to contribute to this literature, but rather to give students a simple self-assessment in order to induce stylized study behavior.

# Study Design: Survey of Study Behavior

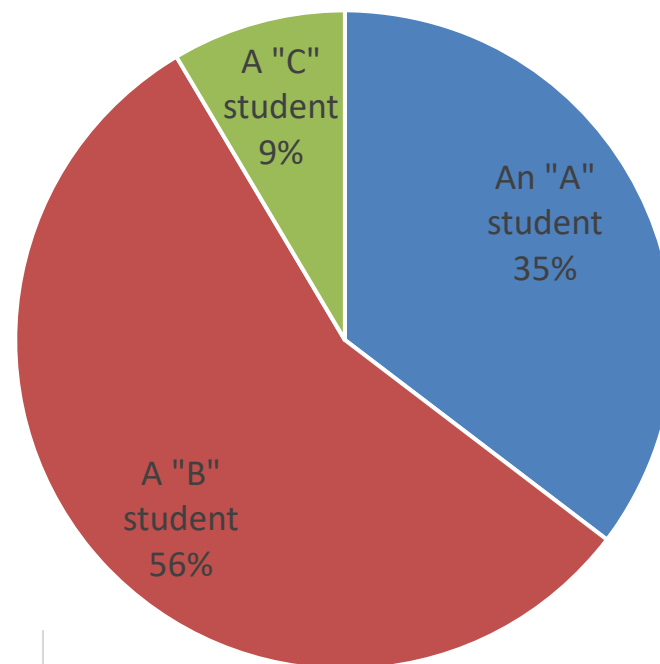
Study Habits	Auditory	Kinesthetic	Visual
Work in groups	X	X	
Write notes by hand	X	X	
Use note outlines		X	X
Watch lecture on TopHat			X
Read material on TopHat			X
Read the book			X
Make-up hypothetical study questions		X	
Quiz yourself using previous exams		X	
Read the note outlines			X
Re-write notes after class		X	X
Create flash cards or written study aids		X	X
Read the material aloud or explain aloud	X		
Listen to recorded lectures	X		
Ask clarifying questions in class or office	X		
Use internet resources to study	X	X	X



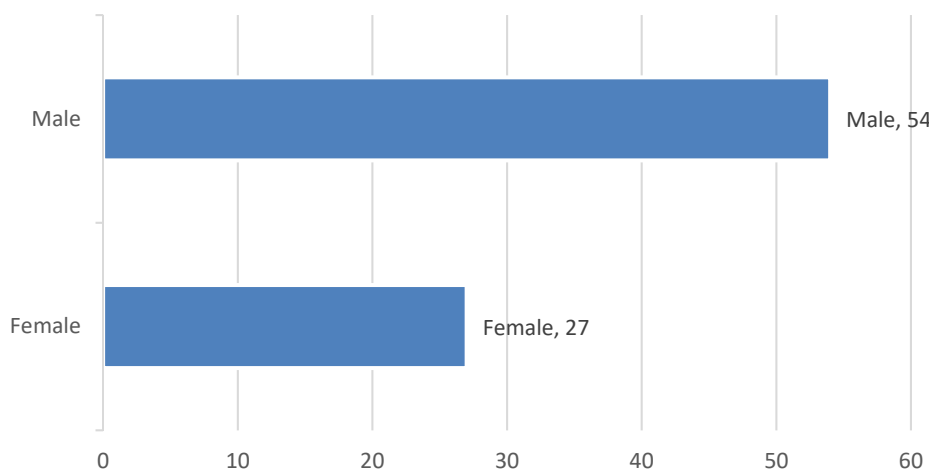
## Results: Demographics

Type of Learner	Count Based on Learning Style Assessment	Count Based on Preconceived Learning Style
Auditory	4	5
Both Auditory and Kinesthetic	4	4
Both Auditory and Visual	26	19
Both Visual and Kinesthetic	19	20
Kinesthetic	13	11
Visual	16	23
Grand Total	82	82

Self-Classified Student



Student Gender

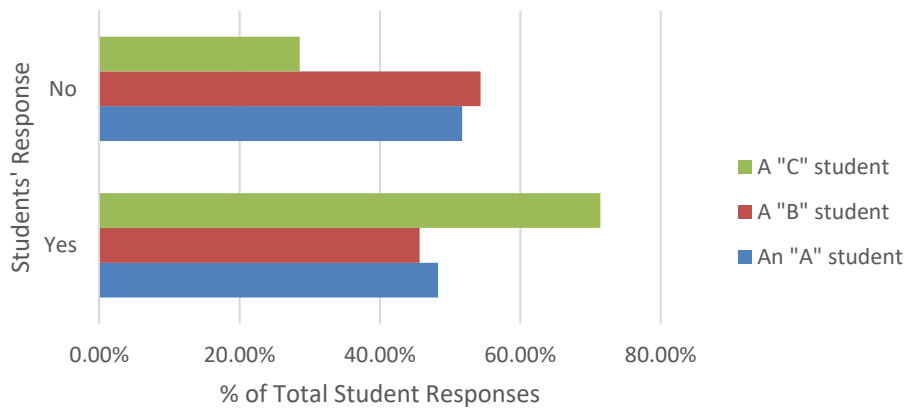


# Results: Habits by Learning Style

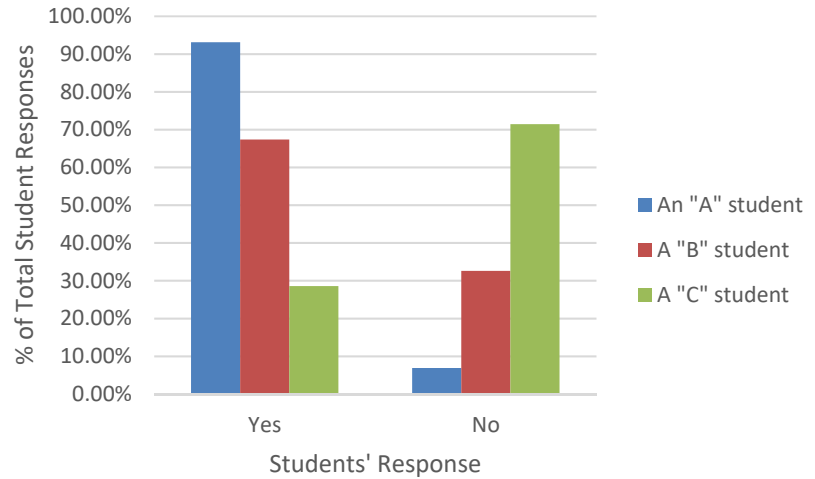
Study Habits	Auditory	Kinesthetic	Visual
Work in groups	33%	47%	51%
Write notes by hand	25%	42%	46%
Use note outlines	18%	46%	41%
Watch lecture on TopHat	43%	67%	67%
Read material on TopHat	32%	43%	49%
<b>Read the book</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Make-up hypothetical study questions</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Quiz yourself using previous exams	41%	69%	77%
Read the note outlines	37%	71%	75%
Re-write notes after class	7%	15%	15%
Create flash cards or written study aids	22%	36%	39%
Read the material aloud or explain aloud	21%	51%	34%
<b>Listen to recorded lectures</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Ask clarifying questions in class or office	9%	18%	20%
Use internet resources to study	10%	33%	25%

## Results: General

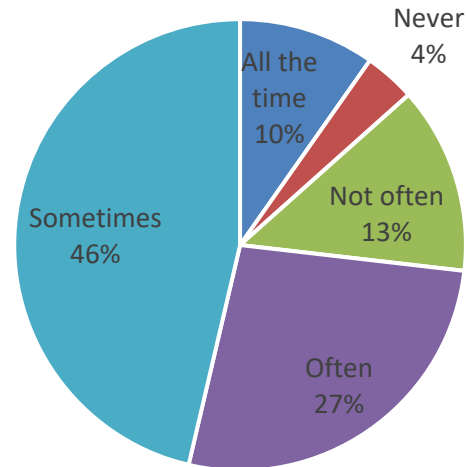
Did Something Outside of the Class Impact your Performance in this Class



Did you use Appropriate Study Habits?



How Often Did you Employ Strategies Appropriate to your Learning Style?



# Conclusions/Discussions

- Good students seemed to study appropriately
- Some good study habits are underutilized
- Students seemed to “take the nudge”
- Future research is needed!

# Future Research

- Tie study habits to grades (instead of self-reported)
- Survey students mid-semester and end of semester with “Learning Style Assessment” at midterms to see if behavior changes by student
- Compare economics courses to mathematical/statistics oriented courses

Connect. Explore. Engage.

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