



Dale's Cone of Learning

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- Edgar Dale's Cone of Learning is a visual metaphor for learning modalities. The objective of this visual is not intended to place value on one learning modality over another, rather to show the difference between Active Learning and Passive Learning. Additionally, the shape of the cone and movement from the bottom to the top is not related to comprehension, but rather the degree or levels of learning that occurs when you combine and engage learning modalities—reading, hearing, seeing, doing.
- If you move from the top of the cone down toward the bottom, you see an increase in learning with the senses engaged. Separate or uncoordinated senses are Passive Learning modalities, because they are not integrated. No matter how hard you listen during a lecture, if that is your only engaged sense, you're only going to comprehend 10% of what you hear. Listening is indeed an essential learning tool, but used on its own is not nearly as effective as when used in conjunction with other learning modalities, other senses, other activities.
- Now look at the activities associated with Active Learning: participate, design, demonstrate, simulate, and perform. These actions call for the harmonious interrelationship with multiple senses—speaking, performing, simulating, designing.... They rely on a synthesis of the learning modalities. The more learning modalities you incorporate into the learning process, the more you will learn. When you combine and engage a series of senses (hearing, seeing, doing, etc.) you increase your capacity to learn and comprehend 90% of what you hear, see, and do, etc.

People generally remember...
(learning activities)

People are able to...
(learning outcomes)

10% of what they read

20% of what they hear

30% of what they see

50% of what they see and hear

70% of what they say and write

90% of what they do.

