

Learning Styles

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Abstract:

The author presents an overview of learning styles most pertinent to music education with the intent of heightening and facilitating educators' awareness of various learning preferences and human intelligence theories. By highlighting and contrasting key models—Modality learning theory, Gardner's multiple intelligences, Myers and Briggs type indicator theory, Keirseian temperament theory, and Golay's animal personality temperaments—the author presents information educators may reflect upon and utilize while broadening their approach to providing students with optimal learning experiences through targeted, efficient, and effective lessons.

Introduction:

Perhaps obvious to most of us is the fact that people are different in fundamental ways. Each human being is born into a unique environment with a solitary genetic configuration. The result is a person possessing an individual way of collecting, organizing, and processing information into useful knowledge – a personal learning style. And yet, individuals may be grouped or identified with others possessing similar characteristics. Features that appear unique may actually be coalesced into a broad range of learning behaviors. The resultant diversity of learning styles has produced many differing opinions, explanations, and a great deal of investigation over the years. Mounting research has been directed toward the hypothesis that students achieve optimal results when taught using strategies that are consistent with their preferred learning style. Golay wrote, "When the teacher begins to view each student as having a certain type of personality and a particular learning pattern he will no longer expect all students to be responsive to the same educational program."¹ Meyers et al "saw in type theory not only a means for human understanding but also a catalyst for the realization of human potential."² In the context of private lessons, studio teachers have a unique opportunity to adapt teaching strategies to maximize each learner's receptivity, cooperation, and enthusiasm for learning. With that in mind, this essay will serve as a brief overview of various learning styles that may be considered by teachers as they modify their lesson plans to meet the needs of multifarious students.

Materials and Methods

This paper is an overview of the learning styles; therefore, these do not apply.

Results

This paper is an overview of the learning styles; therefore, there are no results.

Discussion/Conclusion:

At first glance, classification appears to defeat the purpose of treating each pupil as a unique individual. But, classification is the means by which people make sense of the world—without it we are lost. Identifying learning styles is a highly useful step on the music educator’s road to the implementation of direct teaching strategies—thereby freeing themselves from repetitive and inefficient instruction.

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