

## 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.

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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."<sup>2</sup> Meyers et al "saw in type theory not only a means for human understanding but also a catalyst for the realization of human potential."<sup>3</sup> 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

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<sup>2</sup> Keith Golay, *Learning Patterns and Temperament Styles* (Fullerton: MANAS-Systems, 1982), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Isabel Briggs Meyers et al., *MBTI Manual: A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1998), 253.

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.

**Modality learning theory**, a traditional view, originated with the cognitive theory of information processing and centered on three learning perceptual modalities: visual, auditory, and tactile-kinesthetic.<sup>4</sup> Visual learners learn best by reading a text or a graphic demonstration of the concepts being taught. Auditory learners communicate meaning by giving verbal directions or explanations of concepts. Kinesthetic learners understand best through hands-on approaches, body movements, and manipulating objects. As music students, visual learners often are those who can sight-read with note accuracy. Reading through the score is often what visual learners like to do as an initial activity. However, due to their over reliance on the printed score, they tend to have trouble memorizing repertoire. Also, they may perform mechanically instead of being expressive, and lack sensitivity to sound quality or phrasing. Auditory learners, on the other hand, are those who have a heavy reliance on playing by ear. For them, sound must always precede notation. Reading even the simplest music could be a hindrance for them. They prefer to guess what comes next rather than read notation. Generally, they like to get a general sense of the whole piece. Their keen sensitivity towards sound enhances their interpretation, aids their ability to improvise, and play from memory. Kinesthetic learners are normally very aware of how their body “feels,” and are comfortable with their instruments. They are willing to work on technique and repeat patterns to “get them in their fingers.” They learn best through games and movement activities, and rote presentation of the various elements of a piece. Like Auditory learners, they can memorize easily, but through tactile means.

In *Frames of Mind: Theory of Multiple Intelligences*,<sup>5</sup> Howard Gardner challenges the traditional view of modality as one quantifiable entity. Instead he proposes that there are actually seven different learning modalities, or intelligences, and that all individuals are made up of differing combinations of intelligences. Gardner claimed that “the seven intelligences rarely operate independently. They are used at the same time and tend to complement each other as

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<sup>4</sup> Richard M. Felder and Joni Spurlin, “Applications, reliability, and validity of the index of learning styles,” *International Journal Engineering Education* 21, no.1 (March 2005): 103, accessed July 12, 2012, <http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/FLAnnals.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

people develop skills or solve problems.”<sup>6</sup> Explanations of *Gardener’s multiple intelligences*<sup>7</sup> are as follows.

***Visual-Spatial Intelligence*** learners perceive the world accurately in a visual sense, and try to re-create or transform aspects of that world. These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They can recognize and visualize patterns within wide and confined spaces.

***Linguistic Intelligence*** learners are sensitive to the meaning and order of words, and are attuned to the spoken and written language. They use language to express themselves, and also as a way to remember information. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

***Logical-Mathematical Intelligence*** learners detect logical and numerical patterns and order, analyze problems logically, classify and categorize information, and handle chains of reasoning deductively. They are always curious about the world around them, and constantly ponder natural events and experiments.

***Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence*** learners are able to remember and process information by interacting with the space around themselves: by hands on experimentation for example. They have the ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. These learners express themselves through movement and have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination.

***Musical Intelligence*** learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music—either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds.

***Interpersonal Intelligence*** learners have the ability to relate to and understand others. They are concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. They tend to see things from other people’s point of view and often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers. Although

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<sup>6</sup> Howard Gardner, *The Unschooled Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 81.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Armstrong, *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Inc., 2006), 4-8.

sometimes resorting to manipulation, they generally try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

***Intrapersonal Intelligence*** learners have the ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. They possess access to one's emotional life—inner feelings, desires and dreams, relationships, strengths and weaknesses—as a means of understanding themselves and others.

***Naturalist Intelligence*** learners have the ability to recognize, classify and draw upon certain distinctions and patterns in the natural world; the numerous species of flora and fauna; the natural phenomena like cloud formations and mountains; and inanimate objects such as cars, and books.

Based on the work of Jung's psychological theories of personality type preference,<sup>8</sup> Myers and Briggs define four contradictory continuums that indicate the "preferences related to the basic functions our personalities perform throughout life."<sup>9</sup> While Jung's typology is based on binary divisions, most importantly introversion and extraversion,<sup>10</sup> the core to the ***Myers and Briggs type indicator theory (MBTI Theory)*** are two personality dichotomies which are based on functions of gathering information and making decisions; what their preferences are in the way they gather and access information (*sensing-intuition*), and how they use that information to choose a path of action (*thinking-feeling*). MBTI theory also makes references to two personality dichotomies that indicate the preferred attitude individuals may show towards these functions; how individuals relate to the world (*extraversion-introversion*), and how they manage their life (judging-perceiving). Each plays a role in an individual's preferred teaching or learning style.<sup>11</sup>

An individual with a Sensing (S) personality prefers to focus on the present and on information brought by one's senses in a literal and chronological manner.<sup>12</sup> These types "tend to accept and work with what is 'given' in the here-and-now, and thus become realistic and

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<sup>8</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types*, trans. Helton G. Baynes (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1923).

<sup>9</sup> Otto Kroeger, and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1988), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. vol. 6. Bollingen Series XX, trans. Richard F. C. Hull (New York: Princeton University Press, 1990), 6, 518.

<sup>11</sup> Naomi L. Quenk, *Essential of Myers-Briggs Type Indicators Assessment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009), 2-15

<sup>12</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 24-25.

practice.”<sup>13</sup> They lean toward usefulness and the practical. While a Sensing personalities place greater trust in what their five senses tell them, a person with an Intuitive (N) personality listens more often to their sixth sense; the hunches. They prefer to translate literal information into possibilities, implications, and relationships, and look toward the future,<sup>14</sup> beyond the information from their senses.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes, they give in to imagination and day-dreams. Individuals with Intuitive personalities look at the big picture and often ignore specific details.<sup>16</sup>

Individuals who prefer Thinking (T) judgment want objective opinions. They like to keep emotions from clouding their judgments<sup>17</sup> and will use rational analysis and impersonal logic to come to a decision.<sup>18</sup>

Those who favor Feeling (F) judgment make subjective decisions based on feelings and internal value systems.<sup>19</sup> They are concerned about the “personal impact of the decision on the people around [them]”,<sup>20</sup> as opposed to the logic of the decision.

Individuals with an Extraverted (E) personality preference receive energy through the outside world of people, things, and actions; therefore, they prefer hands-on experience or discussion of information in group situations. Long periods of solitude would drain someone with an Extraverted personality.<sup>21</sup> Individuals with an Introverted (I) personality preference receive energy through the inner world of thought, reflection, introspection, feeling, or impression and solitude.<sup>22</sup> They need time to think through concepts, and they learn best by understanding theory.

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<sup>13</sup> Meyers et al., *MBTI Manual*, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Quenk, *Essential of Myers-Briggs Type Indicators Assessment*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Meyers et al., *MBTI Manual*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 24-25.

<sup>17</sup> Quenk, *Essential of Myers-Briggs Type Indicators Assessment*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Quenk, *Essential of Myers-Briggs Type Indicators Assessment*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me: Character & Temperament Types* (Del Mar: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, 1984), 22.

<sup>21</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 32.

<sup>22</sup> Quenk, *Essential of Myers-Briggs Type Indicators Assessment*, 2.

They have a longer attention span, and prefer individual library projects over hands-on projects in group situations. They show their best and strongest side in privacy.

The second attitude dichotomy determines whether an individual's dominant function is Perceiving (**P**) through gathering information or Judging (**J**) through decisions.<sup>23</sup> People with Judging preferences prefer their decision-making function to be dominant. They like a step by step process, and a controlled environment enabling them to "plan their work and work their plan."<sup>24</sup> Organization, meeting deadlines, and coming to quick decisions is their preferred lifestyle. Meanwhile, individuals with Perceiving personalities enjoy spontaneous interaction and flexibility in their lives.<sup>25</sup> They like to stay open to new experiences and prefer to continue to collect information, rather than come to a decision.

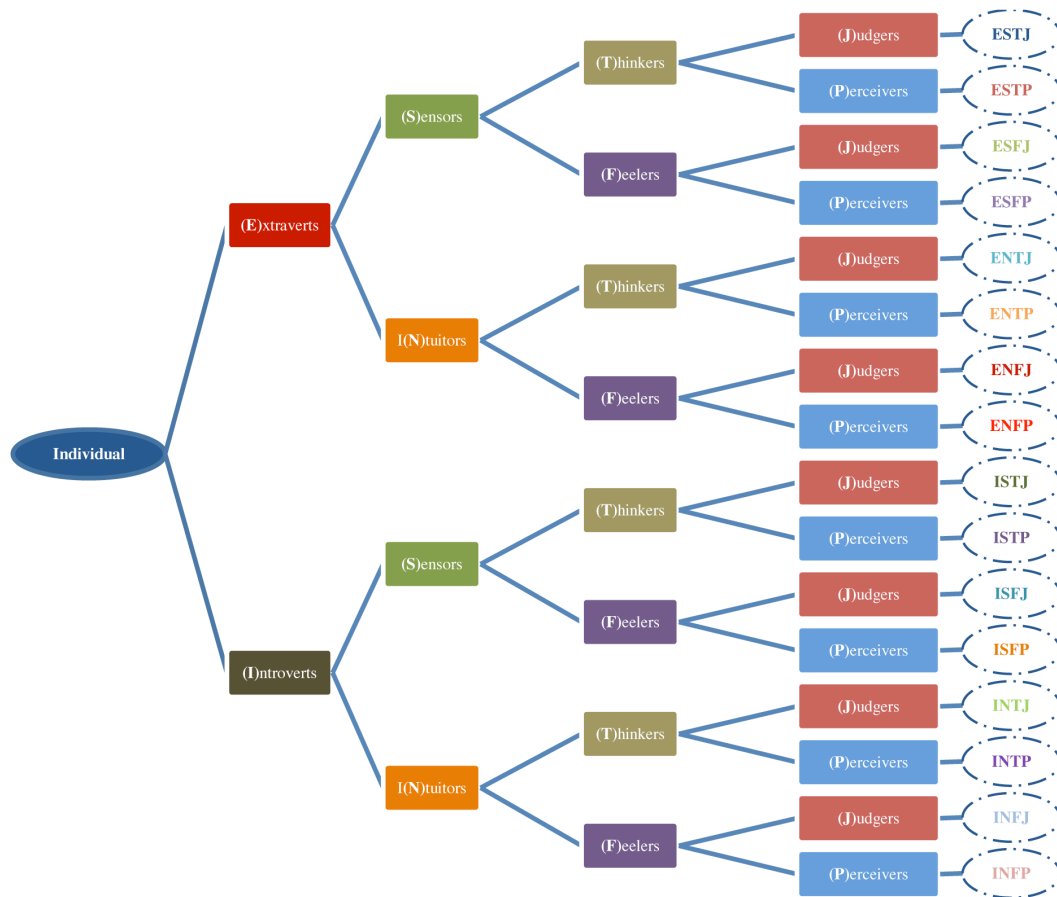
Since each person has four personality preferences, sixteen unique personality type codes emerge. The sixteen personality types that represent the consistent differences between individual personalities are illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>23</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Kroeger and Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 38.



**Figure 1.** Sixteen Personality type codes of Myers and Briggs Type Indicators

Each combination makes specific preferences slightly different from one another. As an example, several of the personality variations are:<sup>26</sup>

- ENTJ are considered natural leaders with people oriented skills (Extraverted). In seeing connections and possibilities (iNtuitive), they are able to analyze objectively (Thinking) and implement in an organized fashion (Judging).<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Meyers et al., *MBTI Manual*, 390-394.

<sup>27</sup> Hile Rutledge and Otto Kroeger, *MBTI: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Introduction Workbook* (Fairfax: Otto-Kroeger Associates), 29.

- INTJ are independent thinkers, who reflect on ideas (Introverted) and see the world in endless possibilities (iNtuitive). They translate ideas and possibilities into objective decisions (Thinking), which they implement through a structured order (Judging).<sup>28</sup>

While both ENTJ and INTJ learners like direct experience, ENTJ learners prefer group projects, class reports, and team competition while INTJ learners learn best from audio, visuals, and lecturers.

**Temperament theory** appertains to behavior and how students perceive life and make decisions. It uses four modes or combinations founded originally by Hippocrates, who suggested that there are four psychological groups: the sanguine, buoyant type; the phlegmatic, sluggish type; the choleric, quick-tempered type; and the melancholic, dejected type.<sup>29</sup> David Keirsey<sup>30</sup> combined Kretschmer's temperament hypothesis<sup>31</sup> and Jung's behavior descriptions<sup>32</sup> with the Greek typology of Nietzsche and Spitteler. In his epic, *Prometheus and Epimetheus* (1881; English translation, 1931),<sup>33</sup> the Swiss writer of epic poetry, stories, novels, dramas, and essays, Carl Georg Friedrich Spitteler defined the traits of Prometheus and Epimetheus, while Nietzsche, in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872; English translation, 1968),<sup>34</sup> introduced his famous distinction between the Apollonian, or the rational element in human nature, and the Dionysian, the passionate element. Furthermore, Keirsey developed four different temperament styles from the MBTI personality types.<sup>35</sup> He stated that each temperament has its own primary value. If individuals are (S)ensing types, the next important function would be (J)udging or (P)erceiving. He views (S)ensing types as Sensing Judgers (SJs) or Sensing Perceivers (SPs). Furthermore, if the individuals are i(N)tuitive types, then the next important function would be (T)hinking or (F)eeling. Intuitive Thinkers (NTs), and Intuitive Feelers (NFs) are not pale copies of the (S)ensing

<sup>28</sup> Rutledge and Kroeger, *MBTI: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Introduction Workbook*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> George Sarton, *Galen of Pergamon* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954).

<sup>30</sup> Keirsey and Bates, *Please Understand Me: Character & Temperament Types*.

<sup>31</sup> Ernst Kretschmer, *Physique and character* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1925).

<sup>32</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Collective Works of C. G. Jung: The Development of Personality*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol.17. Bollingen Series XX, trans. Richard F. C. Hull (New York: Princeton University Press, 1970).

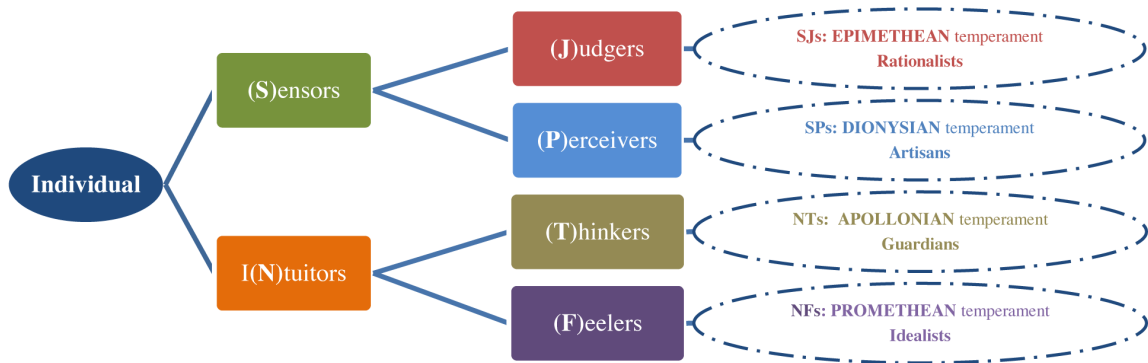
<sup>33</sup> Carl Friedrich Georg Spitteler, *Prometheus and Epimetheus*, trans. James F. Muirhead (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1968).

<sup>35</sup> David Keirsey, *Portraits of Temperament* (Del Mar: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, 1987).



types. These four patterns are temperaments—the way in which human personality interacts with the environment. As illustrated below in Figure 2, Keirsey introduced new terminology for the four temperament types that represent the consistent differences between individual temperaments.<sup>36</sup>



**Figure 2.** Four temperament types of David Keirsey

Explanations of the Keirseian temperaments theory of personality are as follows:<sup>37</sup>

The **EPIMETHEAN** temperament / **Rationalists**; SJ students are usually very responsible and feel guilty for dependency. They like to belong and are eager to do what is expected. They are outstanding at precision work, and follow through on commitments. They primarily value belonging through providing service to others, and are considered natural organizers who have a realistic view of the world (Sensing). They are good with details and routine, and are comfortable working in a structured environment. They sometimes find change and lack of rules frightening. They value following and preserving traditions, and are decisive and enjoy the decision making process (Judging). Title and entitlement are important. They have a deep commitment to the standards of society. In summary, they learn best when curricular materials are concrete and instruction well planned and routine.

The **DIONYSIAN** temperament / **Artisans**; SP students like to be free. They primarily value personal freedom and spontaneity, and prefer receiving immediate feedback for actions. They like action and work best in a crisis. They are concerned mainly with the present, and often do not

<sup>36</sup> David Keirsey, *Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence* (Del Mar: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company, 1998).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

take future responsibilities seriously (Sensing). Their goals are few and tentatively held. The status quo and traditional quickly bore them. They make decisions on the spur of the moment, and like to keep their options open (Perceiving) rather than coming to a decision. Often they leap before looking and do not live up to the expectations of others. Their philosophy is one of “easy come, easy go.” In brief, they learn best through strategies that highlight variety, action and entertainment; therefore, they often find school difficult because of the constant requirement of practice and routine.

The **APOLLONIAN** temperament / **Guardians**; NT students continually search for self-actualization and cannot understand why others do not do likewise. They are interested in determining the relevance of learning to their personal lives and the lives of those important to them. They primarily value personal growth, and are considered inspired leaders and followers. They have lots of energy and enthusiasm, and are very good at turning liabilities into assets. They have a gentle personality with imagination, and see life as full of possibilities (iNtuitive). As leaders, they are able to draw the best out of people and commit deeply to them and their dreams. They are able to communicate caring and enthusiasm and have empathetic listening skills. It is important to them to make a difference in the world. They are future-oriented and will not stay involved in an activity if it lacks long-term significance. They make subjective decisions regarding these possibilities (Feeling). They are very concerned with values, both theirs and others, and are often caught up in causes. As followers, they are hypersensitive to sarcasm, and require unconditional positive feedback. Therefore, positive personal relationships are very important. They usually write and speak fluently. They prefer instructions that emphasize cooperation and personalized applications of learning.

The **PROMETHEAN** temperament / **Idealists**; NF students are concerned about competence. Ability to understand, control, predict, and explain are very important to them. They primarily value competence and capability. All facts and knowledge need to be questioned, and they keenly aspire to do things well under all circumstances. They are constantly escalating their standards of performance, working not for product but for improvement, perfection and expansion of skill and knowledge. They are future-oriented and are more interested in the “big picture” than in the details. In seeing connections and possibilities (iNtuitive), they analyze them objectively (Thinking). They grasp the interworking of a system quickly, respond to new ideas and problem solving, are excellent decision makers, and are usually highly skilled in various abilities and competencies. They are often independent thinkers, and prefer instructions that

promote discovery, experimentation and allow them to work alone in an unstructured environment. They expect little from others and usually do not offer much to others. They need challenges and are likely to be critical of both themselves and others.

Keith Golay applied Keirseian Temperament Theory of personality to understanding the differences in learning behavior. He defines learners in terms of “Actual” or “Conceptual” and believes that personality predisposes the learner to certain ways of thinking, wanting, liking, and acting. Golay’s research tacks along the lines of “if there are certain temperament types that we can generally group people into, then it stands to reason that each temperament has its preferred way of learning.”<sup>38</sup> Golay classifies learners as; Actual-Spontaneous learners (ASL), Actual-Routine learners (ARL), Conceptual-Specific learners (CSL), or Conceptual-Global learners (CGL).<sup>39</sup> For easy identification, Golay assigned each temperament type an animal: an *Ape* for the impulsive, spontaneous Artisan/ASL; a *Bear* for the responsible, rule-governed Guardian/ARL; an *Owl* for the analytical, theoretical Rational/CSL; and a *Dolphin* for the romantic, diplomatic Idealist/CGL.<sup>40</sup> Each animal or temperament type has specific characteristics that manifest themselves in unique learning and teaching styles. Explanations of Golay’s *animal personality temperaments* are as follows:<sup>41</sup>

**Ape** Artisans / Actual-Spontaneous Learners: “Action or Accidental” learners. It is never their intended purpose to acquire a useful base of knowledge; it just happens “accidentally.” Any learning that occurs is an unintentional by-product of their actions. These students, above all else, seek freedom. They will not be bound, confined or obligated. They believe the world was meant to be taken apart. They are controlled by their impulses, and like to act spontaneously. *Doing* is their thing, and they dislike planning and organizing. With short attention spans, they value variety and welcome more experiences and hands-on activities. They need constant stimulation with plenty of physical movement and novelty. They perform best when they have the opportunity to construct, operate, or manipulate objects. They seek excitement, risk, and challenge, and enjoy competitions that allow them to show off. Immediate rewards and short

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<sup>38</sup> Debra Bell, *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2005), 95.

<sup>39</sup> Keith Golay, *Learning Patterns and Temperament Styles* (Fullerton: MANAS-Systems, 1982), 8.

<sup>40</sup> Keith Golay, Andrew Hisey and Ruth Burrow, “Introducing the Animal Kingdom—It’s a Jungle Out There!,” *American Music Teacher* 52, issue 2 (Oct / Nov 2002): 40-52.

<sup>41</sup> Golay, *Learning Patterns and Temperament Styles*, 27-71.

goals are appealing. If they are entranced by an activity, such as practicing, they can go for hours on end. Demonstrations by teachers are stimulating and exciting for these learners.

**Bear** Guardians / Actual-Routine Learners: “Task-oriented” learners. They are stable and reliable, responsible, and consistent learners who are usually seen as “good” children. These students tend to be cooperative and conformists and desire to meet their teacher’s expectations. They prefer practical and concrete instructions, and excel in an organized environment. They like material presented and planned in a sequential, step-by-step manner, with precise instructions, clear expectations and specific procedures for accomplishing tasks. They ask for clarification frequently in an effort to avoid making mistakes, and enjoy fulfilling assignments and reports back on their progress. Naturally they divide big projects into smaller steps and segment subjects for study. They like drills and routines and find comfort in knowing exactly what to do. They have little interest in the complex and abstract, and are not comfortable with spontaneity, extrapolation, or equivocal creative activities; such as improvisation or interpretation.

**Owl** Rationales / Conceptual-Specific learners: “Big Picture” learners. They have serious natures and are happy that way. They have an insatiable appetite for knowledge, are highly curious and enjoy solving problems. They need to understand, explain, predict, and control their environment. They learn through experimentation, comparison of ideas and inspecting hidden assumptions. They like a mixture of routine and lecture, and want to do more than memorize. They want to learn the theory behind what they are doing, and they want to perfect their skills to the highest degree possible. They have an interest in gaining insight into structures and functions. They are often skeptical and desire answers to their questions, wanting to know specific practice techniques and the reasoning behind them. The goal of these students is to be competent or capable. They are self-motivated, and find great self-satisfaction in their own achievements. Unlike actual-routine learners, they do not need the approval of others. Their greatest difficulties, however, lie in accepting their own limitations. Often these learners will become frustrated with any hindrances to their own intellectual growth. They also often neglect subjects and responsibilities outside their narrow frame of interest. Instructors of actual-routine learners should realize that they will need help and encouragement in keeping their shortcomings in perspective. They have the capacity to keep their minds focused on a single point for extended periods of time. They enjoy working independently or in a tutorial relationship with a competent teacher. They do not need to be entertained, but need to be challenged.

**Dolphin Idealists / Conceptual-Global learners:** “People-oriented” learners. They are social people, looking for meaning and significance in both their education and their lives. These learners are often interested in concepts rather than details. Drilling bores them. They are least interested in facts and focus on the positive, meaningful significance of learning. They prefer integrated studies, where they can connect personal aspects into understanding their world. In general, they are considered well-motivated, high-achievers, and do well academically. But often, they set high standards for themselves. Strongly tied to their sense of self-worth, their creations and work are an extension of themselves. Therefore, failure or rejection of their work is often interpreted as failure or rejection of themselves. They prefer to function in a group, especially when that group is their audience, and are often communicators and performers. Golay adds that they need to be known, recognized and acknowledged by others, especially by the instructor. Rather than just brilliant technical displays, or exciting performances, they want to use music as a form of self-expression to communicate their inner feelings to the world.

This paper was undertaken with the specific intent of heightening and facilitating educators’ awareness of various learning preferences and human intelligence theories and models. It highlights a few key models: Modality learning theory, Gardner’s multiple intelligences, Myers and Briggs type indicator theory, Keirseian temperament theory, and Golay’s animal personality temperaments. It is hoped that knowledge of these theories of learning will inspire educators to reflect on their teaching, and broaden their approach to providing students with optimal learning experiences through efficient and effective lessons.

Some might wonder whether we are defeating our original purpose by reducing our personality temperaments and learning styles to various classifications or categories. Are humans not all unique? Golay answered this question during his Pedagogy Saturday VI session, “Exploring Learning Styles: Developing Flexible Teaching Approach,” at the MTNA National Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, March 16, 2002. He states “whether we are a menagerie of a million or an even family of four is not important. For it is the utility of the classification, not the classification itself, that matters. Will this theory help us improve our relationships and job performance? If so, then it is indeed useful. The truth is, human beings have always had and will forever have a need to classify the world around them. Man or woman, woodwind or brass, Democrat or Republican, things are what they are because of what they are not—and only because of what we have made them. That is how we make sense of the world. That is how we communicate, in fact. Language is a classifier without which we feel lost. Perhaps that is why—

child or adolescent, owl or bear—we turn to music to express ourselves. In that way, intuitively, we are all alike.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Rebecca Rischin, “Exploring learning styles: Developing a Flexible Teaching Approach: Reflections on Pedagogy Saturday VI.” *American Music Teacher* (Oct / Nov 2002), accessed July 12, 2012, [http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art\\_learning\\_R\\_Rischin.htm](http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_learning_R_Rischin.htm).

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