

EIGHT STYLES of LEARNING (for Martial Arts & Self-Defense teaching)

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(Based upon Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence's which hypothesizes that "human beings are capable of seven independent means of information processing: Seven Styles of Learning." I have added the eighth style for all the reincarnates and enlightened ones.)

The Main Three—"The Soup Stock"

1) VISUAL/SPATIAL (artistic)

Is good at visualization—they can easily imagine or "see" the movements in their mind. Can understand concepts and principles. Learns best using drawings, diagrams and videos for memorization.

Use videos of the techniques/katas. Use colorful drawings/diagrams. Let them draw.

2) VERBAL(Linguistic)/AUDITORY (mental)

Is good at memorizing names, history, dates and trivia. Likes to write things down in words rather than drawing or diagramming. Learns best using words: listening and talking, using languages

Use Handouts, make sure they have notebooks. Create "name games".

3) KINETIC/BODY (physical)

Is good at physical activities in general.

Learns best by touching, moving, interacting with space and processing knowledge through bodily sensations.

Use "Mirroring"—They like to have someone be in front, or next to them when learning moves, then they will "copy" the move. Use touch/physical moving for correction.

The "Flavorings"

4) LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL

Is great at problem solving, figuring things out, exploring patterns. Is good with details. Learns best by categorizing, classifying and working with abstract patterns/relationships. Likes to ask many questions.

Use the verbal approach. Offer them "problems to solve/analyze".

5) INTERPERSONAL/ACTIVE

Is good at understanding people, leading others, organizing and communicating.

Learns best by sharing, comparing, relating, cooperating and interviewing.

Use group practice. Let them teach or lead a drill.

6) INTRAPERSONAL/REFLECTIVE

Is good at understanding self, focusing inward, following instincts, pursuing goals and being original. Learns best by working alone, self-paced instruction, and having own space.

Use "self-training" time in class, or offer "open class time" for training alone.

7) MUSICAL

Is good at picking up sounds, and is good at timing, remembering melodies, noticing pitches and rhythms. Learns best when there is music involved.

Use music to create the pattern in moves, use drumming or other forms of rhythm.

8) SPIRITUAL/NATURAL

Is able to do things without much instruction. Has natural ability and seems to understand things on a deeper level. Use patience. These are the "Mozart's" of the martial arts world.

Challenge and encourage them to grow in areas that are not so naturally gifted. Guide them to teach and share their innate abilities.

Follow up notes for Eight Styles of Learning for the Martial Artist:

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Many people have learned to balance themselves in the styles of learning.

For example, I am a visual learner for the most part, AND I am able to put things into words and write them out. I have a strong kinetic tendency too that is balanced by my mathematical/logical side, which works when I need it (ie: finances, details, planning). I can work in a group, and I also spend a lot of time self-training. I love to do anything with music. The spiritual and natural style of learning happens when I “let go and trust the process”.

Because of my teaching for all these years, I have balanced myself out having had to stretch myself into areas that I was not totally comfortable. This has allowed me to be able to learn in situations that were previously difficult for me.

At first in my own martial training, I was primarily Kinetic, and Visual. When I started teaching (which my teacher has us do as soon as we become a color belt), I began to explore the Verbal and Auditory ways of learning by how well I described things, both concretely and creatively. In the beginning of my training, I preferred to work in a group, lined up watching our teacher and doing what he asked. As I grow older, I prefer to work alone, use videos, get private instruction and practice to music as much as possible. Part of this progression is due in part to teaching so much, and needing time for myself to keep growing in the arts.

Many years ago, an educator of high school young adults talked with me about these learning styles. It changed how I looked at learning and teaching. I hope this class opens some areas that were longing for acknowledgement. I hope it helps us all to learn as much as we can while we are here so we can share our knowledge in as many ways as are needed to help us all reach our highest potential on earth.

Lastly, these are GUIDELINES to play with, not rules to adhere to. There are so many ways in which people learn and grow, all of which are valid and powerful. Please feel free to modify and add to any of the learning styles. In some of my research, there have been as many as SIXTEEN learning styles. It is an amazing adventure to see what people come up with from an original idea or experience or definition or perception.

I added an eighth style to Gardner’s seven, to cover everything I have personally seen or experienced as a teacher/student of the martial arts.

Sources: Gardner, H., 1983, Frames of mind

Learning to Learn: Modules: Learning Styles: the Multiple Intelligence Inventory

Web references:

<http://snow.utoronto.ca/learn2/mod3/mistyles.html>

<http://www.bena.comewinters/styles.html>

<http://www.chaminade.org/inspire/learnstl.htm>

<http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm>

These are tests you can take online to find out your style!

http://www.ldpride.net/learning_style.html

<http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ilsweb.html>