



LEARNING STYLES 101

Once upon a time, people didn't talk about learning styles. Teachers gave students material -- by lecture, textbook reading assignments, or a handful of dittos -- and then students were required to repeat the information back to them. That was considered "learning." Now, we have a more comprehensive understanding of how the brain learns. And today's schools are oftentimes evaluating the application of the material mastered, not just a regurgitation of facts. Respecting how our brains learn, and that some brains learn differently, has become a very important aspect of academic success in the 21st century.

Every individual has a preference for learning. The way a learner predominantly perceives, interacts with, and responds to the environment characterizes one's style of learning. A learning style is everything that controls how we take in, concentrate on, understand, process, store, remember, and use new information. **By understanding a person's learning style you can help maximize his or her potential**, both in and out of the classroom. Carolyn Hooper, author of *PRACTICING COLLEGE LEARNING STRATEGIES*: "No one processes information in exactly the same way you do. If you discover how you process information best, you learn things both more efficiently and in less time. By applying strategies that address your learning style, you can study faster and better."

"But I can listen to a lecture and learn things," you say. "I can read a ditto and pull information from it. I can also conduct a chemistry experiment and gain knowledge from the experience. Does that mean I'm all three?" For many, it is a culmination of different learning styles that constructs the total learning experience for us. When we do not possess a deficit in any one area, all of our senses relay to us a variety of information that we process, store, and can recall when information is needed for a test, or to solve a problem at home or on the job. But for those dealing with challenges such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, a processing delay, ADHD, autism, or a sensory processing disorder, receiving the information by-way of one or more senses can be problematic and challenge the success of the overall learning process. By rooting strategies in one's natural learning style, students can maximize their learning potential confidently. The goal is ultimately to learn how to independently support one's own success, regardless of how the information is provided to you. Mackenzie Meyer, 2010 Anne Ford and Allegra Ford Scholar, and dyslexic, puts it simply: "*Your whole life is about figuring out what learning style works for you. What communication works **for you.***"

So how do you determine your best learning style? There are many tests that can be found online. These aren't meant to be a diagnostic tool, but can certainly help you evaluate your own learning preferences. Learning styles can be broken down into four key categories:

VISUAL – Visual learners typically have strong visual processing skills and learn best by seeing information. Learning strategies include: color-coding, pictures, charts, flash cards, videos and doodling.

AUDITORY – Auditory learners learn best by hearing information. They can typically remember information more accurately when it has been explained to them orally. Learning strategies include: taping lectures, study through discussion, mnemonics, play music (w/o words) while studying.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SPECIAL NEEDS PROFESSIONALS

PIA PRENEVOST

Hello?

New teacher, or therapist, or doctor? Is that you?

Oh hello...

I just wanted to chat with you a second. To caution you. Or warn you.

Please, tread carefully.

You see, what you might not realize as you look at me, talk to me, tell me your opinions, our options, our lack of options, and your predictions of our outcomes is that; well ... you see that heart?

The slightly broken, definitely bruised one?

Yeah, that's my heart.

My slightly-broken, definitely-bruised heart.

Now, I realize that as you look at me you might see ... a confident parent ... or an angry parent ... or a happy-go-lucky parent... You might think that I understand everything ... or nothing ... or that I have all the experience in the world because I have done this before ... or that I know the rules ... or that I don't know the rules and that is for the best... You might believe ... that I am high maintenance ... or overreacting ... or maybe neurotic ... or disengaged and uninterested ... or that I don't really care ... or maybe I care too much...

But regardless of what you see, what you think, or what you believe, this is what you should know:

I am broken-hearted. And it doesn't matter if it is the first day or a century later. It doesn't matter where in the "grief cycle" I might be. It doesn't matter if the wounds are healed, or healing, or fresh and new. This heart is bruised. Slightly broken. Different than it once was and will ever be again. And when you speak, or don't speak, in judgment or not, my heart is out there.

Some of "us" parents ... the 'special' ones ... can be a pain in the ass. I know that. We know that. But we are fighting a fight we never planned to fight, and it doesn't end. We don't get to clock out at the end of the day. We don't get a vacation from it. We live it, everyday. We are fighting without knowing how to fight it, and we depend so much on you to help us. We have been disappointed, by you or others like you. And we are disappointed in ourselves. We are your harshest critics. We are our own harshest critics too. We are genuinely fearful, and driven, and absolutely devoted. And we also know, we need you. So please, be careful with us. Because as hard and tough as we may look outwardly, our hearts are fragile things.

*This essay appeared on the website The Thinking Person's Guide to Autism (<http://www.thinkingautismguide.com>)
Pia Prenevost writes about her adventures raising her special needs son on her blog The Crack and The Light (<http://www.thecrackandthelight.com>)*



A Program JUST for Brothers & Sisters of Kids with Special Needs

☆ **AGES 8-13** ☆

SPONSORED BY: MT. WASHINGTON PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

Sibshops is a fun, supportive and therapeutic activity for the unique role of a sibling of a special needs kid.

Baltimore County: Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm: Sept 18th, Oct 16th, Nov 13th

\$30 for all three session, including Lunch! For more information, or to register, please call: 410-578-5169

Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, 1708 West Rogers Ave, Baltimore

***Limited number of scholarships available.**

☆ **REGISTRATION DEADLINE - FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th** ☆

UPCOMING EVENTS

STAR TRAINING SERIES: GETTING AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER DIAGNOSIS: WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Monday, September 20th 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Kennedy Krieger Institute, 3901 Greenspring Ave, Creamer Building, 3rd Floor Large Conference Rm

Cathy Groschan, LCSW-C, clinical social worker, leads this discussion and takes your questions about getting a diagnosis, finding services, the education system and more!

For More Information, visit: <http://september1startraining.eventbrite.com>

AUTISM YORK FALL SPEAKER SERIES 2010

Thursday, September 23rd 9 am – 4 pm

York Learning Center, 300 E 7th Avenue, York PA

Topic: "Demystifying Autism" with William Stillman

Join speaker William Stillman for an insightful, inspiring "inside-out" workshop. As a person with Asperger's Syndrome, Bill provides a non-clinical, humanistic overview of the autism spectrum from the perspective of those who experience it.

For More Information, or to register, visit: www.autismyork.org

4TH ANNUAL HOWARD COUNTY AD/HD AWARENESS WEEK PROGRAM

Thursday, September 23rd 7 – 9 pm

Centennial High School; 4300 Centennial Lane; Ellicott City

Speaker: Dr. Brad Sachs

The process of helping children/students with attention deficits, anxiety, and learning challenges, to become academically independent is a complicated one, and the strategies that parents tend to rely on often serve the purpose of undercutting, rather than augmenting, their children's autonomy. This lecture will provide attendees with a new understanding of the basis for self-motivation, as well as the conversations, methods and interventions that are most likely to reduce family conflict and ultimately enhance their children's self-reliance and self-assuredness. This evening's program will provide examples for all age ranges. No pre-registration is required.

MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR WITH ARI TUCKMAN

Friday, September 24th 6:30 – 10pm (7:45-9:15 pm presentation)

Turf Valley Resort, 2700 Turf Valley Rd., Ellicott City

Couples where one (or both!) partners have ADHD probably have more to argue about—but hopefully lots to laugh about, too. In this lively presentation, psychologist Dr. Ari Tuckman will treat these serious topics with a good dose of humor. By seeing the humor in these common relationship pitfalls, you and your partner will be less defensive and better able to communicate and come up with solutions where you're both happy.

Tickets: \$40 p/person. For more information, visit: www.chadd-mc.org/tuckman/

DINING OUT WITH AUTISM AWARENESS AT THE MAIN STREET TOWER

Tuesday, September 28th 4 – 9 pm

29 South Main Street, Bel Air

A night of autism awareness and dining out with other families that understand in a setting that accommodates your family's needs. The Main Street Tower Restaurant will provide: gluten and casein-free menu items (Mario will make these special diet items any night for you if you call in advance); reduced background music; a quiet area in case of need; a restaurant staff trained in autism sensitivity. Families interested in attending are encouraged to call ahead.

10% of the proceeds will be donated to Pathfinders for Autism.

For More Information, contact 410.838.8007 or visit: www.mainstreettower.com

Please feel free to send your future event notifications to Mary Beth Collins: mcollins@confidentstudent.com!
It's best to receive them by the 15th of the month prior to your event.

INSPIRATION CORNER

Learning how to learn is life's most important skill.

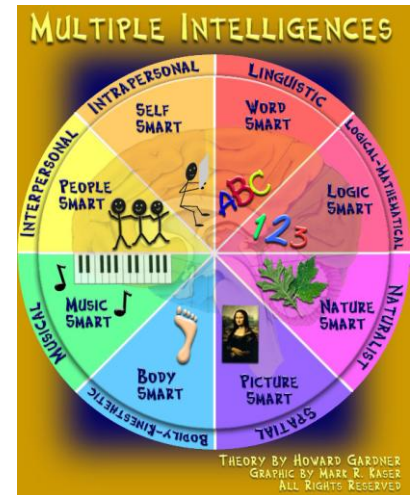
-TONY BUZON-

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KINESTHETIC – Kinesthetic learners need to learn “hands-on.” They need to be actively involved with the learning process in order to gain understanding. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and become distracted because of a need for activity/exploration. Learning strategies include: physical movement, role playing, constructive projects, experiments, interactive computer software, and field trips.

KINESTHETIC/TACTILE – Kinesthetic/Tactile learners master material by “doing.” They need to touch things and actively explore their environment. These learners need to write things down and incorporate fine motor skills when they learn. Learning strategies include: arts & crafts, math manipulatives, highlighting, writing, drawing, making dioramas.

These four areas are just the basics, as other theorists have broken down learning styles into different formats. One of the most popular is Howard E. Gardner’s “multiple intelligences.” The chart to the right illustrates the categories he outlines in his theories. Speaker, author, educational consultant Dr. Thomas Armstrong explains how Dr. Gardner’s theory applies to today’s education: “Dr. Gardner says that our schools and culture focus most of their attention on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. We esteem the highly articulate or logical people of our culture. However, Dr. Gardner says that we should also place equal attention on individuals who show gifts in the other intelligences: the artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs, and others who enrich the world in which we live....Many of these kids, in fact, end up being labeled “learning disabled,” “ADD,” or simply underachievers/unmotivated.”



www.becomehealthynow.com/images

Today’s teachers who embrace the strength of teaching to one’s learning style enjoy the academic successes of their students. Kathleen Herron, kindergarten teacher, Fairfax County Public Schools (VA): “As a teacher, I plan lessons that support each child’s learning style. This strategy not only provides differentiated instruction, it also provides a learning situation that is built on the child’s strengths rather than the weaknesses. The child will remain engaged in these activities because they are personally fulfilling. The child builds background knowledge from these positive learning opportunities for further application.”

To learn more, here are two great books detailing learning styles: **SO EACH MAY LEARN: INTEGRATING LEARNING STYLES AND MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES**, Harvey F. Silver, Richard W. Strong, Matthew J. Perini; and **MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES: NEW HORIZONS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**, Howard E. Gardner.

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!!



Special Needs Performing Arts, Inc.

MARYLAND DANCEABILITY SPECIAL NEEDS PERFORMING ARTS begins its dance classes this month, specifically designed for children and adults facing a variety of special needs. The first of its kind in the Baltimore area, it brings the joy and freedom of dance to all! Classes are offered to all age groups, and Zoey Robinson-Budreski is looking for teenagers and adults who are interested in volunteering to help out with the classes. You don’t need to be a dancing virtuoso, just a caring soul with patience to help students learn and enjoy the wonderful world of dance.

For more information about the program, visit: www.danceability.webs.com. If you have any questions, or are interested in volunteering, call 443.278.5502, or email: specialneedkids@gmail.com.

www.confidentstudent.com

ADULT ISSUES WORKSHOPS

SPONSORED BY PATHFINDERS FOR AUTISM AND THE HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

Each workshop features two sessions: one targeted to adults with autism/HFA/Aspergers; the other to parents and caregivers. Workshops will be held on Saturdays from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm at The Bain Center; 5470 Ruth Keeton Way; Columbia. Sessions are offered free of charge, however registration is required for each session. To register, visit www.pathfindersforautism.org or call 443.330.5370.

September 11 – Employment *William Stillman, Author, Speaker, and Consultant & Sherry Moyer, Author*

October 30 – Housing *Joe Wykowski, Founder of Community Vision & Diane Dressler, Statewide Training Coordinator and Housing Specialist, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Developmental Disabilities Administration*

November 13 – Finance *Mary Turos, Founder, Confident Student & Diann Jones, Special Needs Financial Planner, Nationwide*

January 22 – Relationships *Peter Gerhardt, Director, Upper School, McCarton School & Zosia Zaks, Author and Advocate*

GAMING SOCIAL NOW WEEKLY IN HARFORD COUNTY

Fridays, 5 -10 pm ---Graphix Gaming Center, 8 Newport Drive, Ste D, Forest Hill

Get together with other special needs kids and enjoy all the great things this facility has to offer:
XBOX 360 – PLAYSTATION 3 – NINTENDO WII; (10) GAMING PC'S; THE BEST VIDEO GAMES;
MOVIE PLAYING IN PRIVATE THEATRE.

Regular rates apply, parents not playing enter free of charge.

For more information on pricing or Graphix Gaming Center, visit: www.graphixgaming.com

For more information about the social, contact: Lori Ginley: 410.652.5413, partners.success@hcps.com

BRAIN BYTE



DO YOU KNOW WHICH SOCCER PLAYERS SUFFER THE MOST HEAD INJURIES?

In a study of 20 FIFA tournaments between 1998 and 2004, researchers found that head & neck injuries in MEN were suffered in the following proportions: defender (40%), forward (23%), midfielder (22%), goalkeeper (15%). In WOMEN, the proportions of head and neck injuries were: defender (34%), forward (29%), midfielder (29%), goalkeeper (9%). In another study of high school athletes, for boys soccer teams, forwards and halfbacks had 66.1% of the concussions and goalkeepers had 11.9% of the concussions; in high school girls soccer games, forwards and halfbacks had 70.3% of the concussions and goalkeepers had 18.8% of the concussions. Remember that the number of players in each position varies, except there is only one goalkeeper.

*References: Powell, J.W. and Barber-Foss, K.D., Traumatic brain injury in high school athletes, JAMA, 282:958-963, 1999
Fuller, C.W., Junge, A., Dvorak, J., A six year prospective study of the incidence and causes of head and neck injuries in international football, Br. J. Sports Med., 39(S):i3-i9, 2005.*

For More Interesting Neuroscience Trivia, check out the Neuroscience for Kids website, created by Eric Chudler, Ph.D,
Questions/Answers Page: <http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/questions.html>

SECAC GROUPS

WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY DO FOR ME?

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) is part of a statewide network of advisory committees that are required by state and federal law. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education ACT (IDEA) requires that each State operate a statewide advisory panel. In accordance with the law, Maryland has a Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC). The purpose of SESAC is to advise the State Board on unmet needs of students with disabilities, including the development of evaluations, reports, and corrective action plans in response to federal monitoring, and implementing policies and procedures to coordinate services for students with disabilities.

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The Maryland State Department of Education supports the development of local advisory committees in each local school system. SECACs enable a local director of special education to seek meaningful input from parents, community partners, service providers, and school administrators on local issues relative to the provision of a free appropriate public education and the achievement of students with disabilities.

In addition to regular meetings, set on regular intervals by county chapters, some have even formed Yahoo groups to foster interactive communication and support between members throughout the school year.

Each chapter has its own personality, and develops an agenda based upon the issues challenging students in the county, as well as the quality of the working relationship with its Department of Special Education (DSE). Kimberly McKay, Executive Director of Parents for Parents, Inc and current Chair of the Howard SECAC comments: "We have a wonderful working relationship with the DSE. Our DSE is very open and accessible to parents." Howard County parents are beginning to address issues facing the students with disabilities in all areas of the school system-transportation, curriculum, testing-beyond just the department of special education. "At most of our events," McKay continues, "we host a 'listening post' period when parents can meet with SECAC Executive Committee members to share concerns. At many events, the DSE leadership staff is there as well to answer individual questions or concerns." Heading up a younger, but growing chapter, Harford County Chair Chuck Masters is excited about the emerging involvement of Harford County parents: "There now is a core group of parents that are interested in working together. I'm hoping to discover ways to improve communication between parents that don't know where to get answers they seek."

Parents who need more information about academic challenges, the process to explore supports within the school system, or are frustrated with some aspect of special education should consult their county's SECAC organization. Masters reiterates how vital this information exchange is for student success across the county: "We parents are the biggest advocates for our children. Their futures depend upon us and our ability to secure relationships within the school system to create that village that nurtures our children to become productive members of society. SECAC, I believe, allows parents an avenue to understand the special education process at the county level which helps to navigate the special education maze. As parents, we can help to implement change at our individual schools from the information we share at SECAC meetings."

LOCAL SECAC GROUPS:

Anne Arundel County	2644 Riva Rd, Annapolis 410.647.0114
Baltimore City	200 E North Ave, Baltimore 410.396.8983 http://www.bcps.k12.md.us/Parents/secac/index.html
Baltimore County	ESS Bldg, Towson 410.887.4554 http://www.bcps.org/offices/special_ed/secac.html
Carroll County	125 N Court St, Westminster 410.751.3033 http://community.carr.org/fullrecord.asp?record=384
Frederick County	Rock Creek School, Frederic 301.644.5281 http://fcps.schoolwires.com/152910112010544517/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=54292
Harford County	102 S Hickory Ave, Bel Air 410.588.5246 http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Harford-County-SECAC/124592990912115?ref=sgm
Howard County	Faulkner Ridge Center, Columbia, 443-310-0112 http://www.howardsecac.org

