Matching Teaching Style with Learning Style


You have disaggregated your school’s standardized test scores, established grade-level cohorts based on student scores, and your teachers have implemented differentiated interventions. The results, however, have shown minimal academic gains. What do you do now?

Kise suggests we apply type theory, which holds that we have similar personality preferences for how we take in information. Specifically, the types include extraversion and introversion (how an environment energizes one); sensing and intuition (processes for gathering information); thinking and feeling (how we decide what we believe); and judging and perceiving (determining our approach to school/work). Both learners and teachers have preferred types. The question is how to match the teaching style with learning styles within a classroom.

The author leads the reader through various topics (classroom management, reading, math and science, writing) that lend themselves to type differentiation. There is also discussion regarding what learning looks like for specific types of students. Each chapter offers exercises for developing lessons based on student personality type. Strategies for working with specific types of learners are also offered.

Kise suggests educators, teachers, and principals need to review how they personally take in information and make decisions as learners. Coupling that with identifying how students take in information and make decisions will lead to meaningful differentiated instruction. What is even more intriguing is Kise’s belief that we need to challenge students to move beyond their comfort zones and help them expand how they learn. She believes this will promote independent student learning and achievement.

The utility of this book lies in its practical use. Each chapter opens with a prompt to reflect on a lesson you taught or topic you were exposed to when you were a student. This book would be useful in a professional learning community, either as an independent reading activity, in grade-level team meetings, or as a whole-school faculty study.

Reviewed by James Linde, Principal, Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary School, Baltimore, jlinde@bcps.k12.md.us.

Ensuring Full Inclusion


My first reaction to this book was to write my name inside the cover, and then pass it around to my colleagues to review. I highly recommend it as a must-have for any school or district administrator who deals with special education questions.

This slim volume is more a reference guide than a book you pick up and read, though it is certainly not an unpleasant experience to read it cover to cover. The opening chapter clearly defines and provides a brief history of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). References to legal codes are included and eligibility is discussed—in language appropriate to use when discussing that issue with parents—and is followed by components of evaluation. Roles of each member of an individualized education program (IEP) committee are also clearly delineated.

Following this introduction, each classification for special education is discussed in a formatted chapter: “Definition Under IDEA,” “Overview,” “Prevalence,” and “Determining the Presence” (of the classification). The prevalence section, while brief, will help readers relate to the possibilities of this classification being an accurate one—or one that may be being used too frequently as compared to national standards. The “Determining the Presence” section is bulleted and very comprehensive. Step 1 offers common characteristics of students suspected of having the specific disability; Step 2 is a guide to determining procedures and assessments; and Step 3 is a final determination. The sample documents to be created by following the outline could be used effectively during IEP meetings as a checklist to meet the needs of the student.

I definitely suggest making copies of this book available to teachers who attend IEP meetings and using it as a guide for discussing eligibility and placement with parents.

Reviewed by Jeannette Gilliland, Interim Director of Personnel, School District of the Chathams, Chatham, New Jersey, jeanettegilliland@yahoo.com.