like organization and test-taking. We might brainstorm and test strategies for note-taking, after which students practice the strategies that work best for them. Or we may examine ways in which style preferences influence our listening behavior and responses to directions. Again, we share ways to deal with the problems we encounter, knowing that no one technique will work for everyone.

Students also consider their styles in relation to their study environments at home. After comparing our "ideal" study environments, which range from sterile desktops to sandy beaches, we identify ways to make our real environments match our ideals a little more closely. Students see that the ultimate test of an environment is the quality of thinking and work that the individual student does there.

This focus on learning styles benefits students in many ways. They gain confidence in their strengths and develop diverse strategies for coping with the challenging situations that inevitably arise. Students begin to see how they learn most effectively and efficiently; therefore, they are better able to take responsibility for their own learning. And, most important, students learn that their ways are not better or worse than those of their peers—they are simply different.□

[1]C. Ulrich, and P. Guild, (1986), *No Sweat! How to Use Your Learning Style to Be A Better Student* (Seattle, Wash.: The Teaching Advisory).

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PAT JAOUEN

Fostering Students' Awareness of Learning Styles

Helping students understand learning styles lets them see new perspectives and increases their tolerance for each other's differences.

Most of the staff members at Mt. Everett Regional High School in Sheffield, Massachusetts, have taken learning styles courses with Pat Guild and her associates over the last few years. Our lives were so positively changed by this, we wanted our students to become aware of "styles," too.

We have done several things toward this end for our 7th and 8th grade students. At first we decided to administer the short form of the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* test to the 7th graders, but we had to do quite a bit of prep work on vocabulary with the students so they could understand the questions. Someone suggested we use the *Murphy-Meisgeier* test instead, since it is geared to children. Each time we administer it, we help the children define the meanings of *introversion*, *extraversion*, and other style terms by using a couple of pages from Page's (1983) *Looking at Type*.

We then set up activity stations, each geared to a particular type, and students move from one to the other, trying to figure out which activity goes with which style by experiencing each one on an individual basis. The children seem delighted to find that they can move around, handle items, talk through certain processes, and just experience new ways of learning. An animated discussion usually follows this activity, during which we hear things like "It's awesome!" and "Can we do this again?"

We found that it's easier to design activities in our cooperative learning groups now that we include a cross section of types in each group. We also reinforce style awareness by focusing on individual styles. For example, the teacher of our 8th grade health program reviews the different styles and personality types. Students then analyze lessons from various disciplines to determine what appeals to different styles. This leads to a unit on personalities; students learn the similarities and differences among individual personalities. These classes have helped children become more tolerant of one another. Now they help each other, instead of making fun or getting frustrated as they often did in the past.

What a help it has been for students to actually come forward and discuss ways in which they can learn a particular lesson! Learning styles has certainly had an impact at our school, and we are all the richer for it.□

Reference

Page, E.C. (1983). *Looking at Type*. Gainesville, Fla.: Center for Applications of Psychological Type.

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