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Personality types and how they affect teaching and practice

4 Types of personality:

Artisan, Idealist, Guardian, Rational

ARTISAN – the key is stimulation

When teaching, know that they: enjoy stimulation, enjoy free form and chaos, don't like repetition, like to pick the order of the lesson and are happy not knowing exactly what is going to happen.

They are **most likely to practice** if they: feel the music is still fun and novel, if they are in competition with the teacher, use as many senses as possible, use imagery which points to the concrete application, have a performance coming up. They love to show off. Imagery without concrete direction tends to be a disaster because they don't like drill.

They are **least likely to practice** if they: see no reason to learn, have endless repetitions, are working on the same material for a long time or think that it is too easy.

Artisans embrace challenges and competition and taking risks. Requiring perfection from them can be counterproductive.

IDEALIST – the key is enthusiasm.

When teaching these kids know that: they want the Ts crossed and the Is dotted, they must connect emotionally - they may be coming to the lesson because they like the teacher, they like to talk about their day – the social connection is paramount, like to have music involve story-telling, prefer to compete with themselves than you or anyone else. They respond to a composer's personality or history, like praise on every aspect, enjoy group-activities if they feel valued. *practice spots*

Least effective teaching tools would be: any sort of competition with another person or you, pushing too hard (they will cry easily because they put pressure on themselves to be good so you like them)

They are **most likely to practice** if: they don't feel any conflict or pressure to be perfect. They practice more if they are with someone (parent, you, other student); have a social outlet (orchestra, chamber, group). These kids will practice in order to not disappoint the teacher.

They are **least likely to practice:** alone, when there is not hope of accolades or a relationship, if it is competitive, if it was a nuts and bolts lesson without imagery, or if there is any feeling of conflict in the lesson or with the parent.

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GUARDIAN – the key is responsibility.

Guardians like to be helpful. They like to be given specific steps and have them checked off. They need approval for a task. They like working with an established routine and want to keep track of things. Charts are really effective for these kids. They like direct verbal cues. Imagery is nice but not essential. They will follow rules without caring why and enjoy group experiences. They are very sensitive to negative criticism and scolding.

Least effective teaching tools would be: having no sense of order to the lesson and giving vague assignments

They are **most likely to practice if:** they have a system for accountability (they will love making their own practice chart), and you give them exact steps and they know they will receive praise.

They are **least likely to practice:** if there is no system or method, the parent or teacher is critical and there are no external incentives (stickers)

RATIONAL – the key is autonomy.

These kids like to be asked where they need help. They like using the Socratic Method –asking questions. It is good to work backwards with them – and have them discover the answers. Encouragement works better than praise because they are self-critical and know if you say “good” and it really wasn’t...They ask “why” in order to have the reason behind what you are asking or saying.

Least effective teaching tools would be: charts, awards or telling them every move to make.

They are **most likely to practice if:** the piece is not too hard, they really like the piece and they understand why they are doing it.

They are **least likely to practice** if the piece is too hard, if they feel your demands are unreasonable and if they don’t understand why.

CONCLUSION:

Everybody needs stimulation and temperaments grow. These characteristics are not really clear before the age of four.

We need to be a “child watcher” and then a children shaper.

What you enjoy or find stimulating may not be what your child/student enjoys.

Keirse, David 1998. Please Understand Me II – Temperament, Character, Intelligence
From Ruth Meintz’s session at the ASTA Conference in Kansas City March 2006

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