

Name: Barbara J. Millis

Article: "Deep/Surface Approaches to Learning: An Introduction"

Double Entry Journal

Critical Points	Response
<p>"Learning Styles" have been over-emphasized in the research literature.</p>	<p>I would agree! I have never been comfortable with so many different typologies. I have taken courses in the Myers-Briggs instrument, 4-MAT, etc., and I have never understood the distinctions and values. Other than the truism that we should vary our teaching methods, the learning styles information has been of little practical value for me as a faculty developer and as a teacher.</p>
<p>Many students don't get the point of what they are reading because they aren't looking for it.</p>	<p>As a composition/literature teacher, this fact is no revelation to me. I am concerned now in my Eng 211 class that students truly learn to apply literary concepts and that they learn to explicate a piece of literature.</p>
<p>Students often adopt a surface approach to reading by seeking facts they will be tested on, not the underlying meaning.</p>	<p>Issues of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation have always concerned me. I found the adult military students I taught overseas to be far more motivated--on the whole--than the cadets I have observed or taught so far. I can understand why this is the case, but it is always troubling to a teacher when students do not share her passion for the subject matter. I use IP points to motivate cadets to prepare for my classes, tying them in with structured pre-assignments.</p>
<p>Researchers examined a key question, "What does it take to be good at learning?"</p>	<p>A good question!</p>
<p>Metacognition--thinking about one's thinking--appears to lie at the heart of learning, and a predisposition toward it appears to be related to the learning environment rather than to learning styles.</p>	<p>No comment . . . I'm eager to read further.</p>
<p>Researchers looking at the question above have found consistent patterns that suggest that context and content will foster or discourage metacognitive approaches to</p>	<p>I was struck by the contrast between the humanities fostering a deep approach and the sciences emphasizing a superficial approach. This does not necessarily have</p>

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<p>learning.</p> <p>The student's perceptions of the required task and their intended approaches (how they will "process the task") are intimately linked.</p> <p>Students learn in two broad ways: (1) Some grasp the big picture and then alter their perceptions as they acquire/discover new details [comprehension learning]; (2) others amass details and form the picture as they go along [operations learning]. Both approaches are necessary.</p> <p>There are four general social orientations: academic, vocational, personal, and social.</p> <p>The simple dualism--"deep surface"--represents a highly complex view of actual learning.</p> <p>In practical terms, this theory boils down to: "Teach toward understanding, not grades."</p>	<p>to be the case.</p> <p>This makes sense to me . . .</p> <p>I'm not certain I understand this. Doesn't this counter the hypothesis that learning styles have been over-emphasized? Wouldn't one's level of understanding depend again on the context and the content. I can dip into an e e cummings poem quite comfortably based on prior learning [comprehension learning], but listening to a lecture on electrical circuits would cause me to build any comprehension slowly, based on analogies to water levels or a rat in a maze. (I actually did learn a little bit about this--I think--observing four DFEE courses!)</p> <p>Wow! As the author says, faculty resist such vocabulary. I resist more lists! How can "social" be part of the definition and part of the "stem"?</p> <p>I'm still not convinced!</p> <p>I am motivated to read the side bar, but not necessarily to include it in this journal entry because of time constraints. But, I want answers. How can I de-emphasize grades!? As I indicated above, I find that I need to assign IP points to get cadets to do the work, at least the underclassmen I teach now. [By the way, I am VERY interested in how Lt Col Aretz's students approach these homework assignments. Will they do them with no IP points!?!]</p>
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