The background of the image is a spiral-bound notebook with a light beige, textured cover. The spiral binding is visible on the left side. The text is centered on the page.

# The Effects of Ethnicity in Learning

An Innovative Strategy

By

April Y. DuPree

# Definitions

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Ethnicity-refers to groups whose members share a cultural heritage from one generation to another; normally defined on the basis of Race

Learning-a relatively permanent change in behavior and/or mental associations due to experience (Ormrod, 1999)

# Differences in Learning Styles

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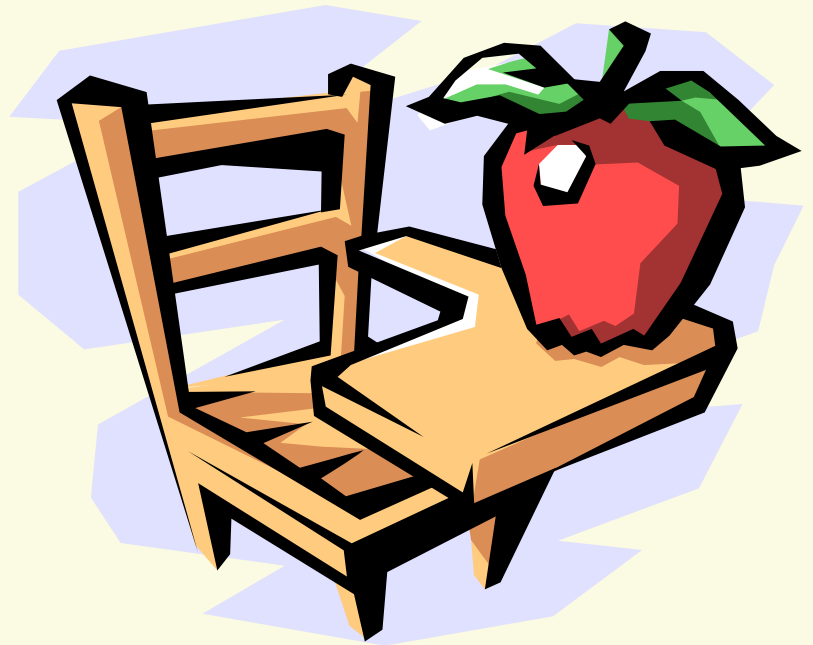
It has been well established that there are many differences in learning styles.

Several researchers suggest that ethnicity may play a major role in learning styles.

This strategy will examine the differences in learning styles of African American students and Caucasian American students.

# Field Independent and Field Dependent Learners

Nance & Foeman  
(1993) advanced the  
notion that more  
African American  
students were field  
independent learners,  
and more Caucasian  
students were field  
dependent learners.



# Characteristics of Field Independent Learners

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Short attention span

Easily distracted

Do best on verbal tasks

Prefer cooperative learning

Very colorful in speech

Highly creative in telling stories

Appreciate information that has human  
content

# Characteristics of Field Dependent Learners

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Long attention span

Not easily distracted

Do best on analytical tasks

Prefer competitive learning situations

Very formal in speech

Not very creative in telling stories

Appreciate information that is impersonal

# The Role of the Family

Nance & Foeman (1993) also suggest that family structure/parents play important roles in a student's learning. Many times, these family structures may be the basis for a student's success or failure.



# Characteristics of Many African American Families

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Single-parents - there is very little time to spend with children as they complete school work

Undereducated - some may not understand or value the importance education

Financially limited - there is no extra money to spend on supplemental educational material (i.e. books, computers)

# Characteristics of Many Caucasian -American Families

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Two parents - substantial amount of time to spend with children as they complete school work

Educated - many understand and value the importance education

Financially secure - there is money to spend on supplemental educational material (i.e. books, computers)

# Teaching Styles

Many teachers are shown to be field dependent learners.

Most teaching styles are tailored to field dependent students as they stress the quiet, formally structured atmosphere.



# What Does This Mean for African American Students?

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Less likely to pay attention

Low motivation

Low classroom participation

Students may be seen as hyper-active

Students may be placed in “special education” classes when they should not

# Implications for Instructional Design

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Teaching styles should attempt to match learning styles.

Assign individual & group projects.

Instruction should be formal & informal.

Material should be relevant to the learners



# Summary

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Without a doubt, prior knowledge (i.e. ethnicity & culture) may effect one's learning style.

Instructors should be sensitive to the different learning styles and vary their teaching styles accordingly.

# References:

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