

Flow Activity



This is a video of me performing “Don’t Know Why” by Nora Jones.

<https://youtu.be/Tn3ULezoUGU>

When I play the piano I frequently experience flow. I become completely focused on my playing. I feel like I am in complete control of my movements while also being aware of the music I am reading. I lose myself in the music and time flies by. In an online article, Cognitive Flow and Online Learning by Juliette Denny, the author discusses 5 things that people experience when they are in a state of flow. They experience extreme focus, a sense of active control, merging of action and awareness, loss of self-awareness, and a distortion of the experience of time (Denny, 2017).

When I am having a stressful day, finding this experience of flow is so rewarding. Not only am I practicing a skill, but I am in a state of meditation. None of the stressful thoughts can take hold when I am in this experience. In an online article, Flow State and Meditation, the author states that, “The Flow State goes hand in hand with Meditation” because the brain produces a similar pattern in both states. With the brain entering this state stress is alleviated, the ego falls away, and emotions are regulated (Meloncelli, 2017).

Psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defines flow as that state of being where creativity and productivity spring smoothly from your mind (Oppland, 2016). While I am in the state of flow, my piano playing skills become amplified. I do not miss as many notes as I would if I were distracted. My playing becomes much more musical. My creative brain is working extra hard and I find myself taking more chances.

How can a teacher create the right conditions in class for students to experience flow?



In order for students to experience flow during their activities certain conditions need to be met. First, the activity must have well described goals with manageable rules. This is to eliminate any confusion that the students may have about the activity (Denny, 2017).

Second, the students must be able to complete the task. If the activity is too difficult the students will become anxious. If the activity is too easy the students will become bored. Yet, when the correct level of difficulty is found, the students will enter flow (Baron, 2018).

Third, the teacher must give clear feedback immediately after or during the activity. The teacher's job during the activity is to guide students. Teachers can do this by giving feedback, hints, or asking questions (Denny, 2017).

Fourth, the students must not be distracted. Distractions can include other activities happening within view of the students, sounds or visuals not included in the activity, and peer distractions. In order to eliminate most distractions from the activity, the teacher needs to create a calm and focused space. Also, the teacher needs to be aware of students who are not entering the flow state and help them so they are not a distraction to the rest of the class (Denny, 2017).

References:

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