

17 - 19 October 2025

Lyon , France

If You Cant't Teach Yourself, No One Can

Timna Mayer

Formerly Cornell University, United States

Abstract

This paper explores the vast potential of self-directed learning in violin pedagogy. Based in practice and drawing on concepts from neuropsychology, the author, a violinist and teacher, outlines five learning principles. Self-directed learning is defined as an ongoing process based on problem detection, definition, and resolution. The traditional roles of teacher and student are reimagined within this context. A step-by-step guide to applied self-directed learning suggests a model for both teachers and students that realizes student independence in the classroom, leading to higher-level understanding and more robust performance. While the value of self-directed learning is well-known in general pedagogy, this paper is novel in applying the approach to the study of musical performance, a field which is currently dominated by habit and folklore, rather than informed by science.

Keywords: Neuropsychology and Musical Performance, Selfdirected-directed Learning, Strategic Problem Solving, Violin Pedagogy