Pedagogical Implications: Bridge between Teaching & Learning

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ABSTRACT
Students have different levels of motivation, different perceptions, attitudes and different responses to learning. Teachers should understand these differences and their pedagogical implications. Accordingly, teachers have to adapt their teaching styles. To be more effective in imparting education, teachers must know their own learning style to enhance the learning of others. This article discusses various learning style preferences pertaining to individual learners and how to match teaching style with the learning styles of the individuals.

KEY WORDS: Motivation, Perception, Attitude, Learning, Pedagogical Implications

INTRODUCTION
Teachers are facing greater challenges in teaching in the present educational system. They need to know what style of teaching is suitable for the students. Ultimately, the teacher needs to know or diagnose appropriate learning style for an individual or a group of students. While designing the learning methodology for the students, the teachers or trainers have to be aware of the implications of learning styles on the individual learners. A greater responsibility lies with the teacher while designing the learning process for the students.

Students' learning becomes more effective when they acquire knowledge from more than one style of learning. Therefore, teachers or trainers should use various combinations of methods - both audio and non-audio.

LEARNING
Learning whether implicit or explicit; is acquiring new, or modifying, existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals and some machines. Progress over time tends to follow learning curves. Learning is not compulsory; it is contextual. It does not happen all at once, but builds upon and is shaped by what we already know. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Needless to emphasize, the knowledge imparted in a learning process must be in a phased manner, with due pause in adequate quantity each time to yield maximum absorption by the learner.

Human learning may occur as part of education, personal development, schooling, or training. It may be goal-oriented and may be aided by motivation. The study of how learning occurs is part of neuropsychology, educational psychology, learning theory, and pedagogy.

LEARNING STYLE
Information enters the learner’s brain in three main ways: sight, hearing and touch. Out of these, the one an individual uses most is called his/her Learning Style.

1. Visual Learners learn by sight
2. Auditory Learners learn by hearing
3. Tactile Learners (kinesthetic) learn by touch

Visual Learners
• Prefer to see information such as pictures, diagrams, cartoons, demonstrations
• Picture words and concepts they hear as images
• Easily distracted in lecture with no visual aids
• Overwhelmed with intense visuals accompanied by lecture
• Benefit from using charts, maps, notes, and flash cards when studying
Auditory Learners
- Prefer to hear information spoken
- Can absorb a lecture with little effort
- May not need careful notes to learn.
- Often avoid eye contact in order to concentrate
- May read aloud to themselves
- Like background music when they study

Tactile or Kinesthetic Learners
- Prefer touch as their primary mode for taking in information
- In traditional lecture situations, they should write out important facts
- Create study sheets connected to vivid examples
- Role-playing can help them learn and remember important ideas

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING STYLES
No matter what the Learning Style is, it’s very important to-
- Be involved in class – participate. Be interactive!
- Link classroom experience to the outside world
- Relate class concepts to your own life.
- Ask questions and offer concrete and meaningful criticism.
- Stimulate further relevant discussions.
- Don’t get distracted – stay “on-task”
- Keep an open mind: there are many ideas beyond your own possessed knowledge.

DIFFERENT TEACHING STYLES
- Lecture – teacher talks all through the period
- Group discussions – teacher talks but encourages discussion
- Small groups – teacher aids (facilitates) group interaction
- Visual focus – teacher uses lots of visual aids
- Verbal focus – words, words & more words
- Logical sequence – teacher presents material in a step-by-step, reasonable format
- Random sequence – teacher jumps all over the place

STUDIES ON TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES
Some empirical studies on teaching and learning styles are analyzed to understand the influence of teaching styles on learning styles. Some surveys indicate a mismatch between teaching and learning styles.

The findings of a study, conducted by Peacock (2002) on 206 students and 46 teachers at a Hong Kong university, were:
- Learners favored Kinesthetic and Auditory styles, while teachers favored Kinesthetic, Group and Auditory styles.
- There was, therefore, a mismatch between Group and Auditory styles.
- Seventy-two percent of the students were frustrated because of a mismatch between teaching and learning styles.

Another study was conducted by Rinaldi and Gurung (2008) on 45 educational psychology students from Midwestern University. The results showed that learning may be enhanced by using diverse styles of teaching and did not mean that using different teaching styles is insignificant.

The findings of Guinta (1984) indicated that:
- Teachers who needed a quiet environment while learning imposed the same environment on their students;
- Authority-oriented teachers tended to be authoritative; and
- When there was a mismatch between teachers' and students' styles, stress was seen in teachers.

A study, conducted by Wallace (1995), revealed that there was mismatch between learning styles of teachers and students. While the teacher mostly preferred the auditory learning style, the students preferred the visual style of learning.

MATCHING TEACHING STYLES WITH LEARNING STYLES
The above studies indicate that teaching should match learning styles of students in the academic classrooms. Therefore, teachers have to change/modify their style of teaching as per the requirement of the varied learning styles of students.

"Teachers know that students learn in different ways; the experience in the classroom confirms this every day. In addition, well-accepted theories and extensive research illustrate and document learning differences. Most educators can talk about learning differences, whether by the name of learning styles,
cognitive styles, psychological type, or multiple intelligences. Learners bring their own individual approach, talents and interests to the learning situation” (Burke Guild, Pat, 2001).

Teachers need instruments, based on various learning theories to identify learning styles of students and their differences. This diversity in learning styles of students could be overcome by matching teaching styles with students' learning styles.

If a teacher prefers to use the concept of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) to analyze the students' learning styles, he/she needs to prepare the lesson combining all the characteristics of the three types of learners (visual, auditory and kinesthetic). The lesson plan should include: a combination of oral communication with body language and facial expressions of the teacher, PowerPoint presentations, diagrams, videos, flipcharts, etc. (characteristics of visuals); variation in speech, tone of voice, pitch and sound (characteristics of auditors); role-plays, group exercises, management games, simulation exercises (characteristics of kinesthetic).

Teachers who are convinced to adopt Kolb's learning theory need to match the teaching style suiting to learning styles (convergers, divergers, assimilators or accommodators). For example, convergers are hypothetical, occupied with ideas and things. They are not people-oriented. It is absolutely difficult for a teacher to involve them in group working and to assign any joint/team activity. Hence, he or she should change the teaching style as per the need. Similarly for divergers, assimilators and accommodators, teachers need to modify their teaching style accordingly.

Honey and Mumford (1982) conceptualized that learners are categorized as: activist, reflectivist, theorist and pragmatist. If teacher decides to apply this concept for understanding the learning styles of students, the teaching style has to be adapted accordingly. For instance, activists learn best through new ideas and involving in others' activities to get new experiences. Similarly, for the other type of learners, such as reflectivists, theorists, and pragmatists, the teacher needs to know their characteristics to orient his/her teaching styles accordingly.

In all academic classrooms, irrespective of the subject matter, the composition of students will be of multiple learning styles, with a variety of major, minor and negative learning styles. Therefore, the teachers should change their own styles of teaching, thereby accommodating these learning styles, by providing a variety of activities.

However, the teacher has to keep in mind certain limitations while adopting a teaching-learning style for the class which varies from batch to batch, depending upon the average capacity of the group to absorb and assimilate. While teaching to a prescribed syllabus within a definite time frame, the teacher has to structure it to meet the end result. From this point of view, it must be remembered that, the subjects taught within a limited time frame of the Academic session should be categorized as:

**Must Teach** – Basic contents of the Syllabus within the time frame.

**May Teach** – Additional information on the related subjects like case studies, Field examples, Sharing of Experiences and drawing inferences thereon.

**Pleasure to Teach** – Research, Projects (those not covered in the Syllabus)

**CONCLUSION**

Normally, teachers adopt their preferred style of learning for teaching. However, students in the classroom will have diverse learning styles. The way teachers teach should be adapted to the learning styles of the group of students. To match the teaching style with the learning styles of students and to know the students' learning preferences, it is essential for the teacher to have an understanding of the various theories of learning styles. Accordingly, the teacher needs to navigate his/her style based on the learning preferences of the students. There should be compatibility between the teaching styles of the teacher and the learning styles of students.

**REFERENCES:**


