LEARNING STYLES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

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Abstract

It is important to study learning styles because recent studies have shown that a match between teaching and learning styles helps to motivate students´ process of learning. That is why teachers should identify their own teaching styles as well as their learning styles to obtain better results in the classroom. The aim is to have a balanced teaching style and to adapt activities to meet students´ style and to involve teachers in this type of research to assure the results found in this research study. Over 100 students complete a questionnaire to determine if their learning styles are auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. Discovering these learning styles will allow the students to determine their own personal strengths and weaknesses and learn from them. Teachers can incorporate learning styles into their classroom by identifying the learning styles of each of their students, matching teaching styles to learning styles for difficult tasks, strengthening weaker learning styles. The purpose of this study is to explain learning styles, teaching styles match or mismatch between learning and teaching styles, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles among learners.

Key words : *Learning Style, Teaching Style ,Age Group*

Everyone has a different learning style and learns better through different means. Understanding the particular learning style and how to best meet the needs of that learning style is essential to performing better in the classroom. Once we unlocked learning style and discovered the best methods for helping to learn through that style, it will be surprised to discover just how well can flourish in the classroom, even in subjects that previously found difficult.

Research Objectives : The study aims to identify strategies and learning styles of students and to highlight differences in the levels of these two variables, from the perspective of five different age group of students. The primary objective of this study is to determine the degree of variability in the use of learning strategies by students from different standard. The starting point is the results of previous research which raised the question of stability versus instability and proposed strategies and learning styles.

Hypothesis : *There are significant differences between different students of different age group in terms of the degree to which strategies and learning styles are used.*

Method :

Participants : The experiment involved a total of 270 students (190 participating male and 80 female), as follows: 66 students of standard-5, 68 students of standard-6, 64 students of standard-7, 72 students of standard-8.

Measures : Inventory of Learning Styles

Procedure : The questionnaires were applied in the classroom, paper and pencil format. Participation was voluntary and verbal consent was required of participants. Participants were assured of confidentiality of results and the possibility to ask personal outcomes to the researcher. All students participating in the research informed their consent in accordance with the general aim of this approach.

Results and discussions : Hypothesis aimed to verify the existence of significant differences regarding the development of strategies and learning styles for students from five standards. The obtained results support the hypothesis for most of the strategies and learning styles. We can therefore say that the study shows that the use of individual learning strategies

vary by subjects, as well as preference in the use of learning styles. The specifics of the disciplines and skills, skills required of them, lead to differences between students of these majors.

How do personal and age factors relate to students' learning patterns ?

Studies show that age factors influence the student's orientation, either to acquire expertise in the study, or to achieve a specific performance or high grades in exams. In the age factors involved in teaching in academia that could explain differences obtained in this study we can mention several aspects. A first issue concerns the type of learning tasks, tasks that vary from one standard to another or which are required in varying proportions depending on the standard. It is well known that theoretical and decontextualised tasks lead to getting a private performance, while the applied loads and current activities related to students are more attractive and easier to acquire expertise and guidance not only to achieve a particular performance. Another important aspect may be the time to learn a task. Thus, a time too short given learning tends to de-motivate and lead students to memorize.

Of course relation of teacher - student cannot be omitted from this framework in explaining the differences found. The autocratic relationship, the requirements for learning determine extrinsic motivation and a perception arguably ambivalent about their own competence and on self efficiency, while democratic relationship, autonomy in learning and intrinsic motivation leads to a positive perception of their own learning skills.

Furthermore, formal and informal use of reinforcements and rewards can boost student to take responsibility for their own learning and to adjust learning processes. In this respect, it is recognized that specific performance is a rewarding role in short-term motivator, while reward power has a strong motivational role in the long term. The learning achievement of self regulation has an important role in self-efficiency expectations about task. When the student is perceived as ineffective in learning tasks, this will cause him to avoid difficult tasks or engage less in this kind of task.

Finally, we indicate how to assess and self-assess. Various au-

thors criticize that education focus solely on assessment, neglecting aspects of teaching. The self-evaluation and assessment of teaching must be to support students and thus task performance constructed in a manner as close to reality. Orientation determines the power of formative assessments of learning motivation high, compared with the orientation towards performance.

Vermunt (2003) believes that the perception of students on teaching and assessment procedures, rather than the method itself is affecting students learning directly. All the issues mentioned could explain differences obtained in this study.

Of course, it is expected, according to the model that Vermunt (1998) proposed, that learning strategies provide less stability than the mental models and learning orientations. This was not confirmed in our study, whereas learning strategies varied in the same way the conceptions and learning orientations. The lowest level of stability was recorded for mental models of learning. Cross-sectional studies (Vermetten, Vermunt and Lodewijks, 1999) showed a similar practice as learning reported.

It was demonstrated that the use of learning strategies differ depending on the degree programs of academic study of variability. To more thoroughly investigate the learning strategies variables prescribed by the context variables, it is necessary to carry out larger studies.

Effects of various forms of teaching and assessment have led researchers to investigate the differences in how teachers describe their teaching methods. These results are valuable in explaining both the problems related to low levels of development strategies and learning styles and to design strategies to enhance training programs based on meaningful and constructive change in mental models.

Undoubtedly, this study has limitations. Number of participants could be broadened and at the same time the number of standard included in the study could be extended. It would also be interesting to see if there are differences in the form of education: full time or part-time. Moreover, it would be to measure perceived learning environment and approaches involved in teaching and in assessment by teachers, which would lead to the hypothesis of contextual nuances.

Despite these shortcomings, the present study emerges the importance of learning environment, learning strategies adopted by students and reinforces the idea that the problem of stability versus instability strategies and learning styles is not a singular response.

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