

TEACHING STYLE

1. Introduction

- When planning and developing instructional material, strive for a balance of teaching styles to match the various learning styles – Felder & Soloman, 1992 –
- Students will gain more knowledge, retain more information, and perform far better when teaching styles match learning styles – Lage, Platt & Treglia, 2000 –
- It is recognized that it is difficult to match with every learning style and therefore, a portfolio of teaching styles is recommended – Moallem, 2001 –

2. How do we define a teaching style?

- Possibilities offered by Grasha:
 - General patterns of classroom behavior
 - Characteristics associated with a popular instructor/ teacher
 - Teaching methods and teaching style
 - Behaviors common to all college faculty (teacher)
 - The roles teachers play
 - Personality traits and teaching style
 - Archetypal forms of teaching style
- Teaching style may also be defined in terms of the answer to five questions
 - What type of information is emphasized by the instructor
 - Concrete – factual?
 - Abstract – conceptual? Theories?
 - What mode of presentation is stressed:
 - Visual – pictures, films, demonstration?
 - Verbal – lectures, reading, discussion?
 - How is the presentation organized:
 - Inductively – phenomenon leading to principle (details → general)
 - Deductively – principle leading to phenomenon (general → detail)
 - What mode of student participation is facilitated by the presentation:
 - Active – students talk, move, reflect?

- Passive – students watch and listen?
- What type of perspective is provided on the information presented
 - Sequential – step-by-step progression (the trees)?
 - Global – context and relevance (the forest)?

3. Teaching style (Grasha, 1996)

- Expert
- Formal authority
- Personal model
- Facilitator
- Delegator

4. Teaching style cluster:

- Skills for cluster 1: Expert/ formal authority
 - Traditional teacher-centered presentations and discussion techniques
 - These style worked best with the students who were less capable with the content and who possessed more dependent, participant, and competitive learning e.g. during in primary school.
 - Cluster 1 teaching also was effective when teachers were willing to control classroom tasks
 - It did not appear necessary in most circumstances for a teacher to devote time to building relationships with students
- Skill for cluster 2: personal model /expert/formal authority
 - Role modeling and coaching/guiding students on developing and applying skills and knowledge
 - Student need to possess more knowledge than they would in a lecture class because they will frequently have to show what they know
 - Such styles work nicely in learning environments where coaching and following the examples of role models are prominent e.g. ward round teaching
- Skills for cluster 3: facilitator/personal model/expert
 - Collaborative learning and other student-centered learning processes consistently emphasized in a course e.g. PBL

- In addition to possessing or being willing to acquire appropriate content, students also need to be willing to take initiative and to accept responsibility for meeting the demands of various learning tasks
- Skills for cluster 4: Delegator/facilitator/expert
 - Emphasis on independent learning activities for groups and individuals
 - Teaching works best when students have appropriate levels of knowledge and possess independent, collaborative and participant learning style
 - To use the highly student-centered teaching methods of cluster 4 or the independent study processes means that teachers must be willing to give up direct control over how learners engage various tasks and their outcomes e.g. learning contract.