DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES IN EDUCATION

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Abstract: - An educational system can only be as good as its teachers. Research shows that a good teacher in every classroom is the most effective way of improving student performance. Teacher training, especially preservice training must be reformed so that teachers have the competence and motivation to interact with students and to facilitate their development. Presevice training that focuses almost exclusively on knowledge acquisition with little attention to pedagogy, instructional practices and classroom management skills is not preparing teachers for 21st century.

CONCEPT OF LEARNING STYLE:

The term learning style refers to the preferred way of an individual learner in approaching a learning task. Sometimes this concept is used by the researchers interchangeably with cognitive styles or is considered a part of cognitive style. But this is a broader concept than cognitive style. It not only includes cognitive aspect but affective and psychomotor aspects of the learning behavior also.

`Learning style' has been defined by a number of authors in different set of words. Here some definitions are given to have the overview of the concept of learning style.

Dunn and Dunn (1975) state that a child's learning style may be defined as those environmental, emotional, sociological and physical characteristics through which he/she learns most easily.

Claxton and Ralston (1978) defined learning style as student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in the context of learning.

TYPES OF LEARNING STYLES:

A number of authors have proposed various types of learning style. Here an attempt has been made to enlist some important types of learning styles.

- According to Rosenberg (1968) there are four types of learning styles:
  - Rigid-inhibited
  - Indiscipline
  - Acceptance-anxious
  - Creative
Stern (1966) identified three types of response style:
- Authoritarian
- Antiauthoritarian
- Rational

Mann and Others (1970) have identified eight types of learning style:
- Complaint
- Anxious-dependent
- Discouraged
- Independent
- Heroes
- Spinner
- Attention seeking
- Silent

According to Grasha and Reichmann (1974) there are six types of learning styles:
- Independent
- Dependent
- Competitive
- Collaborative
- Participant
- Avoidant

Dunn et al. (1989) based on five stimulus groups - environmental; emotional sociological and psychological have mentioned 22 elements of learning styles. They are as:
- Sound
- Light
- Temperature
- Design
- Motivation
- Persistence
- Responsibility
- Structure
- Learning alone
- Learning in pair
- Learning with Peers
- Learning as a part of team
- Learning with a teacher
- Learning in a varied treatments
- Auditory
- Visual
- Tactile
- Kinesthetic
- Need for intake while learning
- Time of the day energy periods
- Need for mobility versus passivity
- Global analytical

- **Eison (1981)** lists two types of learning style:
  - Learning oriented
  - Grade oriented

- **Kolb (1976, 1985)** have given four types of learning style:
  - Diverger
  - Assimilator
  - Converser
  - Accommodator

- **Honey and Mumford (1986)** have enlisted four types of learning style:
  - Activist
  - Reflector
  - Theorist
  - Pragmatist

- **Mc Carthy** has stipulated four types of learning style:
  - Innovative
  - Analytic
  - Commonsense
  - Dynamic

- **Schmeck (1977)** has identified four types of learning styles:
  - Deep processing
  - Elaborative
  - Methodical study
  - Fact Retention
Gregorc (1982) proposed four distinct learning styles:
- Concrete Sequential
- Abstract Sequential
- Abstract Random and Concrete Random

Canfield (1983) proposed 30 clusters of learning styles based on preferred conditions content, mode and expectancy.

Grasha-Riechmann Student Learning Style Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>STYLE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>This response style is characteristic of students who like to think for themselves. They prefer to work on their own, but will listen to the ideas of others in the classroom. They learn the content they feel is important and are confident in their learning ability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>This style is characteristic of students who show little intellectual and who learn only what is required. They see teachers and peers as sources of structure and support. They look to the authority figures for guidelines and want to be told what to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>This style is typical of students who feel they can learn the most by sharing their ideas and talents. They cooperate with teachers and peers and like to work with others. They see the classroom as a place for social interaction as well as content learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>This response style is exhibited by students who learn material in order to perform better than others in the class. They feel they must compete with other students for the rewards of the classroom, such as grades or the teacher’s attention. They view the classroom, as win-lose situation where they must always win.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner's Learning Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Participant</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This style is characteristic of students who want to learn course content and like going to class. They take responsibility for getting the most out of class and participate with others when they told to do so. They feel they should take part in as much of the class related activity as possible yet to do little that is not part of the course outline.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Avoidant</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This response style is typical of students who are not interested in learning course content, at least in the traditional classroom. They do not participate with students and teachers. They are uninterested or overwhelmed by what goes on in their classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:** Learner's learning style represents a key consideration in curriculum design; assessment based teaching and differentiated learning. The student's role in learning will surely involve the formation and refinement of learning strategies which reflect their own learning style and the learning task. The teacher's role in learning must then surely be to incorporate the awareness of style in their approach to the task of teaching and learning. Thus final purpose of an assessment of learning style will be of teaching and learning.