

Teaching style

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Definition

Daniel K. Schneider thinks that *teaching style* refers to the teaching strategies and methods employed plus use of certain kinds of rhetorics. But often, the literature only focuses on one of these dimensions (see the typologies below).

"The term itself has no agreed definition but the more widely accepted definitions refer to it as "a set of teaching tactics" (Galton et al, 1980) "instructional format" (Siedentop, 1991). In [Physical education] circles the definition of it as "the general pattern created by using a particular set of strategies"" ([Teaching Styles in Physical Education and Mosston's Spectrum], retrieved 15:43, 11 August 2007 (MEST)).

Typologies of teaching style

Anthony Grasha (1996) identified five potential approaches for classroom teachers:

- Expert
- Formal Authority,
- Personal Model
- Facilitator
- Delegator

Behar-Horenstein (2006) and many other studies distinguish between:

- teacher-centered
- student-centered

Daniel K. Schneider doesn't feel that these 2 dimension reflect more recent theory. E.g. modern socio-constructivism (typically associated with "student-centered") is very much teacher-led and can be highly scripted. In other words, it may be more interesting to talk about the amount of scaffolding, monitoring and tutoring provided.

Moston and Ashworth (1986) defines according to Doherty (2003) a list of teaching methods.

1. Style A Command - teacher makes all decisions.
 2. Style B Practice - Students carry out teacher-prescribed tasks.
 3. Style C Reciprocal - Students work in pairs: one performs, the other provides feedback.
 4. Style D Self-check - Students assess their own performance against criteria
 5. Style E Inclusion - Teacher planned. Student monitors own work.
 6. Style F Guided Discovery - Students solve teacher set movement problems with assistance.
 7. Style G Divergent - Students solve problems without assistance from the teacher.
 8. Style H Individual - Teacher determines content. Student plans the programme.
 9. Style I Learner Initiated - Student plans own programme. Teacher is advisor.
 10. Style J Self Teaching - Student takes full responsibility for the learning process.
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From a cognitive point of view

In teacher training, teachers may be exposed to more formal learning designs, pedagogical scenarios, lesson planning methodology etc. Teachers then have personality and beliefs are exposed to pre-service and in-service training. There is a huge literature on this which we don't cover much in this wiki (Teacher development).

The combination of these (training, personality and beliefs) with experience (i.e. concrete exposure to classroom context and policies) will then lead to a given teaching style.

Teaching style most often is not explicitly perceived or formulated by teacher. Daniel K. Schneider believes that it's a situated, emergent phenomenon.

From an instructional design point of view

There exist a lot of instructional design models that are prescriptive models made for classroom teachings, have a look at our long list of instructional design models. Teachers that apply these may be characterized that way along the combinations of models/strategies/methods they use. Here we just mention a few examples of such models.

Behaviorist/cognitivist examples

- Nine events of instruction
- Direct instruction, e.g. the Madeline Hunter method
- More simple methods, like WIPPEA

Constructivist

Usually constructivist models are not used as sole teaching methods, but there exist institutions that do so. In higher education, for example, project-oriented learning can be dominant, e.g. some engineering schools use project-based teaching, medical schools use problem-based methods, management and law schools use case-based

- Moursund project-based learning model
- Laurillard conversational framework

Based on learning styles

- Felder design model

From a pedagogical methods point of view

Teachers can adopt various general pedagogic methods and then very specific didactical recipes, for example, how to explain a triangle or how to teach composition (Graves, 1974).

Again, teaching style would then be defined by the teacher's adoption of a set of didactical recipes.

On a side note, in some cultures (e.g. France), there is a strong belief in the education community that instructional design only makes sense at this level (i.e. in the interaction of pedagogy with a very specific subject). This is very much in contrast to a general pedagogy approach like in the US or Dutch schools of instructional design.

Cultural issues

“Youngsters from non-mainstream cultural groups often possess cognitive styles that differ from those promoted in the schools. This mismatch can lead to misunderstandings, and culturally inappropriate interaction, assessment, instruction, or discipline. Underachievement, poor self esteem, and misbehavior can result.” (McInty, 1996)

Method

Below we list some popular survey tools for describing teaching styles.

Teaching Behavior Preferences Survey (TBPS)

In a the Behar-Horenstein (2006) study, Teaching styles' beliefs were measured across two domains:

- teacher-centered (TC) and student-centered (SC) and four subdomains:
- methods of instruction (MI), classroom milieu (CM), use of questioning (UQ), and use of assessment (UA).

A representative set of questionnaire items in Behar-Horenstein (2006:852) was:

Subscale	TC/SC Items
Methods of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My teaching is guided by instructional strategies. • My teaching is guided by instructional strategies that help learners make meaning. • I adjust my teaching techniques based on learners' behaviors.
Classroom Milieu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My learning environment is efficient and highly structured. • My learning environment encourages learners to work quietly and stay on task. • My learning environment is supportive and cooperative.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use the same assessment techniques for each objective of the lesson. • I change assessment technique according to the lesson objectives. • My assessment techniques are not influenced by the material I teach.
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I ask learners questions frequently to determine what they understand. • When I ask learners questions, their answers typically require them to provide justification. • I ask learners questions infrequently because I believe they can synthesize material.

Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS)

The Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS) Conty (1983) was developed and validated for measuring congruency between adult education practitioners' actual observable classroom behavior and their expressed belief in the collaborative teaching-learning mode.

PALS is self-administered, has 44 items, and can be completed in about 10 to 15 minutes (Conti, 1990). Half of the items are worded positively, the others negatively and are arranged randomly.

PALS leads to a single score and which can be divided as follows, according to a table in Barrent (2007:44):

- Teacher centered-extreme: 0-105
- Teacher centered - very strong: 106-125
- Teacher centered - increased: 126-145
- Learner centered-increased: 146-165
- Learner centered - very strong: 166-185
- Learner centered - extreme: 186-205

In a study in interactive television teaching styles (Dupin, 2004), the following explanatory variables were found:

- training in philosophy, history, and/or foundations of adult/continuing education;
- interactive classroom type;
- training in psychology of adult development/learning;

- training in teaching methods for adults;
- consultation with other distance education instructors
- training in the development of curricula for distance education courses.

COLLES Constructivist On-Line Learning Environment Survey

Taylor and Maor devised the COLLES ^[1], which measure quality of an on-line environment. Since in post-graduate teaching with small numbers, the teacher usually is in control of such an environment, it also can be a measure of teaching styles. (but at some point we may move this entry to another wiki article ...)

The COLLES comprises an economical 24 statements grouped into six scales, each of which helps us address a key question about the quality of the on-line learning environment. The questionnaires are available on-line (which is not often the case).

- Relevance: How relevant is on-line learning to students' professional practices?
- Reflection: Does on-line learning stimulate students' critical reflective thinking?
- Interactivity: To what extent do students engage on-line in rich educative dialogue?
- Tutor Support: How well do tutors enable students to participate in on-line learning?
- Peer Support: Is sensitive and encouraging support provided on-line by fellow students?
- Interpretation: Do students and tutors make good sense of each other's on-line communications?

Dolmans effectiveness of teachers in guiding small groups

Dolmans (2003), developed a similar instrument like the COLLES. It is based on socio-constructivist believes about small group teaching and is composed of

1. active or constructive learning
2. selfdirected learning,
3. contextual learning
4. collaborative learning
5. teacher's interpersonal behavior

As an example self-directed learning is measure like this:

The teacher stimulated us

- 6 . . . to generate clear learning issues by ourselves
- 7 . . . to search for various resources by ourselves
- 8 . . . to evaluate our understanding of the subject matter by ourselves

The full questionnaire is published in the article.

Links

- Teaching styles ^[2], University of Texas at Austin, retrieved 15:43, 11 August 2007 (MEST)
- Instructional Design and Teaching Styles ^[3]. Center for Teaching and Learning, Indiana State University

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 - [10] http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/C-Learn.html
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