

Another Look At School Teaching

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Learning styles vary from pupil to pupil and even in the same pupil, from topic to topic. Hence the need for varying the technique of teaching.

AMONG the manifold tasks that involve actual classroom teaching, there are some that relate directly to it, for instance the problem of arousing interest and its sustenance, span of attention, motivating learners by using proper reinforcement, developing concentration by applying techniques that are designed fit for the objective aimed at, so on and so forth. These are more or less within the purview of a teacher's regular concern. One reason for their being so is their overtness in the transaction of teaching learning situation. Contrasted to this, a rather less explored and, therefore, less known dimension in the teaching learning process is the variable called learning styles of pupils.

Given a particular task, different individuals handle it in several different ways. For arriving at a solution of a problem, they employ different ways or processes. Some of the examples of intellectual exercises involving various learning styles in the area of education are ways of handling a subject matter for comprehension and conceptualization, techniques of memorization, styles of reading, styles of writing in organization of ideas, etc. These are certain ways or modes that an individual uses for processing information in an academic task.

What is actually done in a classroom situation is to look into the end-product, or a solution arrived at in a given topic of a subject. Of course it gives indications as to the intelligence

and ability of the child to handle a particular problem. Such a learning situation can be viewed simply as a stimulus-response paradigm. For instance, given a particular instruction a student is expected to respond in a particular way. What is lacking in this design of learning is how the student processes information that he obtains in a learning situation. In other words, what goes on between the presentation of the instruction and the learner's response is not considered here. On the other hand, a teacher can gain a better understanding of the learning outcome if he takes into consideration the process variable that a student engages in when confronted with a learning task.

Let us take an example of writing answers to some questions given. For writing answers which is one of the most frequent problem-solving behaviours in an academic setting, a student will definitely need to read the topic for comprehension prior to writing. It is really fascinating to come across various styles applied for reading comprehension only.

Some would read the thing thoroughly may be more than once, some others would scan or skim the portion casting an eye rather casually while trying

to be taught to use style or styles that are more appropriate for a particular purpose.

In other words, a teacher must not only be concerned with the fact that children learn what is taught but also see to it that they learn how to comprehend, memorize, think, deduce, reason etc. in an efficient manner so that it is appropriate and at the same time economical in terms of time. Young children are oftentimes found to employ unintelligent ways in handling lesson. It is therefore essential that children should not only be taught what to learn but further more how to learn.

This is not to disregard individual differences in learning but to help developing and employing styles that are better in accordance with a given task. Identification of learning styles assumes further significance in a situation where students of similar abilities vary considerably in their performance. Findings of researches on styles of learning have shown their relationship to teaching styles as well. Knowledge of the multiplicity of learning styles can guide a teacher in varying his style of teaching in case a particular style of learning was required in solving a problem. Moreover, he can discourage application of styles that are found to be stereotyped among the learners.

Considered from these points of views recognition of learning styles as factors in the resultant academic achievement adds yet another aspect of responsibility to the job of teaching.