

Matching Students' Learning Styles and Lecturers' Teaching Styles

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Keywords: Learning Styles, Teaching Styles, Teaching and Learning, Tertiary Education

Introduction

Teaching and learning is best known as one of the progressions by which the society deliberately conveys its accumulated information and knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. In other words, it is a process by which people learn formally while involving in the development of instruction, teaching and learning from any type of educational institutions including primary, secondary and tertiary education. As for graduates, the tertiary education or best known as higher education that being offered in higher learning institution is the best option for them to raise a higher degree of essential attributes as a students. Aripin and Mahmood (2008) further suggested that institutions of higher learning are engaged in a sustained and continuous process of maximizing the quality of their graduates so as to enhance their readiness for the job market. Thus, it is important for educational institutions to focus on improving critical aspects of teaching and learning.

Learning Styles

Students' learning style is the manner in which the learner perceives, interacts with and responds to the learning environment (Keefe, 1979). Furthermore, Felder and Silverman (1988) indicated that a learning-style model classifies students according to where they fit on a number of scales pertaining to the ways they receive and process information. Students usually learn in many ways, by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorizing and visualizing and drawing analogies and building mathematical models; steadily and in fits and starts. Students, in fact all individuals, are most effective when they are taught according to their personal learning styles. For that reason, the students' learning styles has played an important role in determining the ability of the students to acquire knowledge and skills that they want to perceive.

Teaching Styles

On the other hand, teaching styles is a set of teaching tactics that usually varies from one person to another. It may involve in dissimilar instructional techniques or styles that different teachers use. Kapadia (2008) mentioned a variety of teaching styles where some teachers lecture while others demonstrate; some focus on principles while others deal in applications and some emphasize memory and remembering facts while others work on understanding. Each of these pairs of teaching styles takes up contradictory positions yet each in its own

right is valuable and essential. Researchers have pointed out that students learn effectively in a harmonic environment and by using teaching aids which match the students' learning style preferences (Li et al., 2008).

Consequently, it is important to remember the effect that the educator has on the learner. Just as the learner has a favoured learning style, the educator also has a preferred teaching style. In fact, the teaching style has a powerful effect on the dynamics of the students learning experience and the educator should adapt it or adopt other styles that are appropriate to the purpose of the teaching, accordingly. Therefore, in today's higher learning education, I do agree with the proposal where the education literature has proposed the importance of a necessity fit between the students' learning styles and their lecturer's teaching styles. In other words, it is essential for the lecturers to match the teaching styles with the students' learning styles. In order to do that, the lecturers must first identify their own learning style. By doing this they will be able to familiarize themselves with the element that they require to possess before they applying their desired teaching styles. As for that reason, understanding students' behaviour is crucial to ensure effective delivery of knowledge and skills to the students. This is because, as a lecturer we should be more flexible and aware as whether our teaching styles suit the learning style and needs of the learners. In fact, we must also be able to swap or adapt the teaching styles in a way to engage with the students more effectively. This will hopefully grant more impact to the students on their gain in knowledge, skills and better attitudes.

There are several ways on how we can match our teaching styles with the learning styles of the students. Some of the ways include matching and allowing choice, providing several different methods of learning and independent study. Through matching and allowing choice, the lecturer should be more flexible and applied adaptable teaching styles to cope with introvert and extrovert learners. This can help them fit in well with the learning environment. Meanwhile, by providing several different methods of learning, the students will be able to mix and match the effective ways of teaching styles with their learning capabilities. Whereas for independent study, a complete freedom to study will also give good results to the students. This can be done through case study, group discussions and presentation as the students will have the liberty to express their opinions and thoughts.

Additionally, proper motivation also plays an important role to provide effective teaching styles that match the students' learning styles. The lecturers should be able to motivate learners through adopting positive motivation so that the learners will be keen to learn more about the subject because of the skill as an inspiring teacher, because the subject interests them a great deal or they can see the relevance to their future career progress. Positive motivation tends to lead to deeper understanding and better long term learning than negative methods, which can lead to superficial learning that is often forgotten.

Finally, although the education literature has proposed the importance of a necessity fit between the students' learning styles and their lecturers' teaching styles, there is still some research that indicate the mismatch between the learning and teaching process (Ibrahim and Ramli, 2010). Therefore, it is very important for the lecturers especially, to identify the issue in a way to ensure that the teaching and learning process is conducted effectively and benefits both the lecturers and the learners.

As a conclusion, it becomes clear that the use of a variety of teaching techniques will provide the most success in appealing to the broadest range of student learning styles (Provitera and

Esendal, 2008). In fact, getting all the feedback from the students with regards to the lecturer's teaching style will also help the lecturers to determine whether the students can follow the teaching styles that had been implemented successfully or otherwise.

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