



The Learning Styles

Between Reality and Myth

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الملخص

أصبح العمل على تحسين التعليم عبر الدراسات العلمية والعملية قائما من أجل تحقيق نتائج أفضل، ومن بين هذه الدراسات كانت مسألة التأثير التي لها الدور الأساس في هذا الجانب، مما يلحظ ان لهذا التأثير أنماط يجب أن تتوافر عند المعلم أو المدرس؛ ليراعي عبرها اختلاف فهم الطلاب للمادة في الصف؛ وذلك لأن بعض الطلاب يبني فهمه على الرؤية، والآخر على السمع، ومنهم عبر الممارسة الحركية، وقد ذهب بعض المتخصصين في التعليم إلى أن فكرة الأنماط غير حقيقية _ خرافة _؛ فهم يرون عدم وجود أدلة كافية لإثباتها، ومن هذا المعنى تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى محاولة إثبات فكرة أنماط التعلم فيما لو كانت حقيقة فعلا، أو غير ذلك؛ إذ يتبنى الباحث في هذه الدراسة من أجل التعلم والتعليم.

Abstract

Working on enhancing teaching has been the subject of numerous studies that may have led to better results. Among these studies there was the effect of what has been called the learning styles. The pivot idea of learning styles is that students differ in understanding the lessons. Some students understand better when they see, other students would understand if they hear, while another students understand when they do. Some specialists think that such an idea (the learning style is much or less a myth) for they think that there is not enough evidence to prove it true. The current study is to investigate whether learning styles are real or just a perception with no effect on the teaching /learning process in reality. The researcher hypothesizes that learning styles are effective and should be taken into consideration to achieve better teaching.



Introduction

The process of learning is not that easy to attending the lecture and , then taking an exam. Attending a lecture doesn't necessarily mean that a student is interacting with the lecture. In addition, if he interacted it does not necessarily mean he got the knowledge that the teacher aimed at having his students acquire (Jorg, Davis & Nickmans, 2007, p. 147). There were many studies conducted to explore the factors that may affect the process of learning and make sure that the students are, first, attracted to the lecture and, second, understand the message that was to be sent. Among these studies was the research on the learning styles(VAK). Some educationists stated that people are not the same in the mode they interpret a phenomenon. Such a concept would be applied to students understanding and meeting the goal of attending a lecture. The educationists thought that some students prefer seeing to understand(Visual style), other students understand better if they hear(Auditory style) while the others prefer doing(Kinesthetic style) as to understand(Neil Fleming 2006). Other educationists disagreed with the idea stating that the evidence which must prove the idea is not enough. In addition, there is no way to determine the styles that match the students'differences. They stated that the same student may prefer different styles in different situations and then the idea of learning styles(VAK) is merely a myth(Oluwaseyi Kolawole Oladele2024). The current study investigates the reality of the effect of considering learning styles when teaching. The researcher is not neutral here; he states that learning styles are to be considered even if the students prefer different styles in different situation. The researcher says that a teacher can (rather than should) manage the different styles in the same situations. In addition, identifying the students' style can be known via the response of the students; a teacher can use a specific style and through questions can know which students understand and via relying



on another styles can know the other kind of students. So, a teacher needs to know, from the response to his questions, which style his students prefer most.

The Aim of the Research: the study aims to determin whether the learning styles are considerable factors(as Neil Fleming and others state) or, as the other specialists desribed it a myth.

The Research Question: Are the learningstyles real factors that affect the learning process or not?

The Research Hypothesis: The researcher hypothesized that the learning styles are real factors and should be taken into consideration when teaching.

Review of literature

The significance of learning is an axiom. Learning is one of the essential sources of self-confidence. It guides people to a better life by being exposed to more opportunities. Such a significance has caused the specialists to have been looking for the factors which had affected on the learning process. Among the factors was the variety in the learners' ability to understand what was learnt. This variety may be up to the difference of a person IQ, the philosophy of the surrounding environment, or in mode which a person's mind needs to be addressed. Concerning the variety in the mind, Neil Fleming states that there are at least three styles of learning that affect the students' success in obtaining knowledge. The styles refer to the ways that a student prefers to understand. There are students who understand what they see (visual style learners). For example, if the teacher wants to teach them the parts of the human body, they prefer to see a chart showing the parts and they would obtain that easier than reading a list of the parts. Another students would prefer to hear, so in the same situation of human body parts they easily gain the information via hearing the teacher talking about it. The third kind of student prefers to get involved in comprising an artificial human body using the parts of the body.



Learning theories

It would be worth mentioning to have an idea about the theories of learning to understand the role of the learning styles in the leaning process. Learning theories refer to the psychologists' perception of how students understand and reinforce knowledge and skills. These theories help educators to better teaching through more understanding of the process of gaining information. The educators may create a more suitable environment which helps students grasp the information easier and, then the educators would save time and effort (Molly Zhou 2015). However, there are five basic learning theories: behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, humanism, and connectivism.

Behaviourism

The behaviourism theory, which was founded by the American psychologist John B. Watson (1878-1958) stated that a human absorbs information and skills by observing the behaviours of others who surround him. The behaviour would be reinforced upon the human mind with repetition. So if the teacher wants to have his students understand a specific idea he would behave as the idea entitles and repeat the action so as to impress it on the students' minds.

Cognitivism

The theory of cognitivism is the deeper aspect of behaviourism. On the contrary to behaviourism which states that people observe and response to what they observe, in cognitive theory people think about what they observe so the response comes after analyzing what is observed. In this concept, a teacher should put on his mind that the students wouldn't conceive what they observe similarly. The students here are not just objects reacting to the stimuli(Elke D. Reissing 2015).

Constructivism

The pivotal idea of the constructivism theory is that people are not just



reacting passive objects. Instead, they have an active role in constructing information upon previous knowledge(schema). So the teacher needs to cater to his students minds' as much as he can so as to build better knowledge(BADA, Steve Olusegun 2015).

Humanism

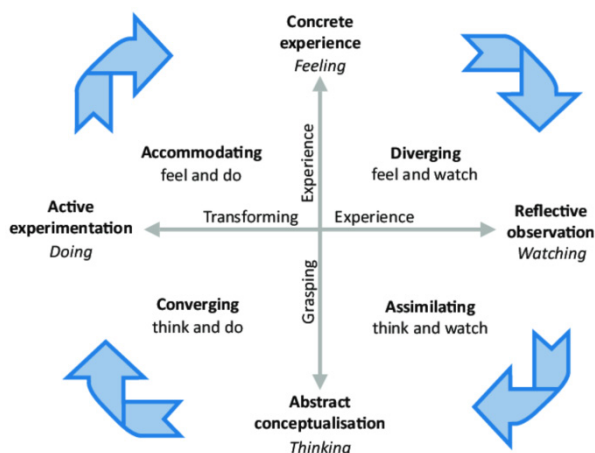
According to humanists, a student would act in a good way if his basic needs were met. The founder of the theory are Carl Rogers, James F. T. Bugental and Abraham Maslow(whose idea is the Human Needs Hierarchy).

Connectivism

It is not that easy to clarify the idea of the connectivism theory in such several lines for it is a wide specturm concept. Briefly, the main idea of the connectivism theory is the relation between ideas and phenomena. Such a trend in thinking is a result of the widespread of technology in general and internet in particular. In this theory, the teacher has less responsibility in learning and a bigger role for the learner(Selialia Mampota 2023).

The Foundation of the Theory of Learning Styles

Daviv Kolb, a psychohlogist and modern figure in modern learning, was the founder of the learning cycle theory. He stated that our learning would depend, to a good deal, on our genes in addition to other factors such as environment, parenting, friends etc... This theory was the basis of the learning styles inventory which stated that people understand differently (visua, audotory, and kinesthetic learners).



Methodology

The study aims to determine whether the learning styles are real effective factors in the teaching\learning process or not. To achieve the aim the researcher relied on teaching the same subjects in three ways; talked, showed, and did what he wanted to teach. In other words, he clarified an idea by talking about that and asked the students to see who understood. Then he showed them and asked them, and finally, he clarified the same idea with questions after each clarification. The students were submitted the test papers which contained five items of questions. They were asked different questions with each different style of teaching. This was to avoid the factor of reinforcement of the information via repetition. In other words, if the researcher used the same question after he clarified the idea in the three styles that may have not answer in the first styles but have done in the second style just because it was the second time. Then he summed up the correct responses for the sake of analyzing the results to see if there were specific students understood according to a specific way (for example: visual) and another student got better according to the other way (for example: auditory).

Otherwise; if the same students understood via different styles, it would



mean that the teaching styles are not significant and not to be taken into consideration when teaching.

The population of the study is the students of English Department- College of Basic Education. The sample of the students is 50 3rd class students; 25 males and 25 females.

Findings and Discussion

After the study procedures had been done the results were as follows:

As was mentioned in the methodology the researcher delivered lectures in grammar for the 3rd college class about different subjects. He used the three styles for different subjects. In the first lecture, he used the visual styles (charts, TV, and drawing on the board). In the second lecture he explained a different subject via talking about it. The third lecture was clarified by having the students play the role of the action to understand the tense. The students were tested at the end of each lecture. The percentage of the passing students at the first lecture was 22% males and 20 females so the total percent was 42%. In the second lecture, the percentage was 8% males and 10% females; the total percent was 15%. In the third lecture, it was 8% males and 11% females so the total percentage was 19%. The passing students in the three lectures were not the students. In other words, most of the passing students in the second lecture failed the test in the third lecture which refers to their ability to understand the auditory lecture. The same would be applied to the students who passed the exam in the third lecture; they failed in the second which means they understand better when they do. In the first lecture, the students included both second and third lectures passing students. This means that the visual aids were the best to have the students understand (but the research is not about determining the best way of teaching). The below table shows the above mentioned- results:

	The number of the male passing students	The number of the females passing students	Total percentage
The 1 st (lecture(Visual	3,7,9,14,17,19,22 (20%) ,30,38,43,49,54,	,1,4,6,10,16,20,23 27,32,36,45,53,55,57 (22%)	42%
The 2 nd (lecture(auditory	(8%) 3,9,17,30,49	(10%) ,4,20,36,45,53,57	18%
The 3 rd (lecture(kenesthetic	(8%) 7,22,38,39,50	(11%) 1,6,10,16,20,23,27	23%

According to the above results the learning styles affected the comprehension of the students with no difference between male students and female students though the females had a better achievement in all tests but this is not related to the research topic. The researcher recommends more studies to confirm the correlation between considering the learning styles and the students' understanding of the lesson. The reason is that there is, still, possibility that some factors affected the validity of the study. An example of such factors is the limitation of the research sample. In other words, it is probably different results would be if the study took place in a different setting. Another possibility factor is the limitation of the specialty namely; the subject was only grammar. There is a possibility of getting different results if the subject was different. In conclusion, the current study is not a perfect evidence to prove that the teaching styles are to be considered in the teaching \ learning process for they are real factors in the education aspect rather than knowledge in general. However, the study has a role on the way of determining if the learning styles are real or myth. So



the researcher recommends wider similar studies to have a clearer idea about the styles. In addition, the recommended studies may open the gate for more aspects that may arise during the study conduction. For example, the studies may reveal the necessity for implementing all teaching styles for the diversity of the students' styles preferences. Or they may reveal that a student who prefers a specific style can understand all styles only when he is familiar with (the researcher agrees strongly with that). So, it is an aim of the education stage is how to make the students flexible and then, familiar with all learning styles.

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