

A Study Of The Learning Styles Of B.Ed Student-Teachers Of Delhi

Dr Shalini Yadava

University School of Education, GGSIP University,
New Delhi

Abstract: Although a number of research studies have been conducted across the globe on learning styles but there is conflicting evidence with respect to their relationship with learner achievement making it imperative to explore further. However studies do lend support that an emphasis on learning styles leads to lessening of the burden on students on one hand and innovative teaching-learning on the other. The present study is an attempt to find the preferred learning styles of B.Ed student-teachers of Delhi. The VAK self assessment questionnaire was administered on 65 B.Ed student-teachers drawn randomly from two B.Ed colleges of Delhi. The findings indicate that the most preferred learning style using the VAK questionnaire was found to be the Kinesthetic Style of Learning with around 37% of the respondents favouring it in comparison to the Visual and Aural mode.

Keywords: Learning Style Preferences, B.Ed Student-teachers, Learning Theories

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Indian classroom it is largely seen the focus is on the teaching styles of teachers to improve our accesses with students. We seldom find any discourse or attempt to understand the ways student learn best. What are the efforts needed to make students understand, process, reflect on the information presented before them? How does a teacher know the best ways through learning takes place effectively? These basic questions actually bring us to understand the dynamics of the learning styles of students. Let us begin with defining a learning style. According to Stewart and Felicetti (1992) Learning styles are “those educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn (www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles.html). The learning style theories have emerged basically from three major orientations i.e How do we best perceive the information presented before us (the perceptual mode)? In this category the most famous is the VAK questionnaire which stands for Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic ways of learning. The second is the information processing mode wherein the emphasis is on how the brain processes the information presented before it. Here the most popular work is of Kolb who developed the Learning Style

Inventory. The basic underlying assumption of Kolb’s theory of Experiential learning is that every individual reflects on his/her experiences which includes two important domains. The process domain in which the individual may learn through active participation and by keenly observing and reflecting on the experience. The other domain is the domain of perception which includes feeling the experience and conceptualizing it abstractly cognitively. The individual learns through an interplay of both. The domains depending on the concept or task on hand. Honey and Mumford (2000) refined the Kolb’s experiential learning style model and gave the learning styles questionnaire which explored in depth the general behavioral inclinations of individuals assuming that most people do not pay attention to how actually they learn or learn best.

In the present study the VAK Learning Styles Self Assessment Questionnaire (adapted by Swinburne University of Technology) has been used to collect data on learning style preferences. The questionnaire contains 30 multiple choice questions which have three responses each. The three response options connote the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic domains. If the respondents choose mostly A’s then it is indicative that they prefer the visual learning style, if most of the responses are B’s then it indicates an auditory learning style and in case

most of the respondent prefer the choice C then it stands for the kinesthetic learning style. The research on learning styles has pointed out that there is no good or bad learning style. The learning styles are preferred by individuals depending on what meets their needs best. Most individuals learn through a mix of different learning styles thus making it imperative to explore the learning style preferences. In the present study the learning style preferences of B.Ed student-teachers of Delhi have been studied.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Rezaeinejad et.al (2015) studied the relationship of learning styles to educational achievement in high school students of Iran. The total sample of the study comprised of 3958 students of high school from the city of Ilam, Iran selected through stratified random sampling. The data was collected using an online questionnaire developed by Felder and Soloman and was analysed using SPSS to find the coefficient of correlation. The results of the study showed that there is a positive relationship in educational achievement in Mathematics and student learning styles using Active-Reflective and Visual learning styles. While there was no significant difference in the educational achievement and learning styles of students of Humanities field using the Sequential-Global, Visual-Verbal and Sensory-Intuitive learning styles. The researchers felt that the results showed a positive relationship between learning styles and educational achievement which was contrary to many earlier studies such as the study conducted by Mohammadzadeh and Izadi (2011) and Esfandabad and Emamipour in 2008.

Nzesei (2015) conducted a co-relational study between the learning styles and academic achievement of school students at secondary level in Kenya. The sample of the study consisted of 613 secondary students drawn through simple random sampling from four schools. The data was collected using Barsch's Learning Style Inventory (BLSI) which contains 24 items on the Likert scale. The inventory includes three dimensions of learning styles namely Visual (V), Auditory (A) and Kinesthetic (K). The key findings of the study were: a) 39.6% of the high school students prefer to use only visual and auditory learning styles and 0.6% preferred the single kinesthetic learning style. b) A strong positive correlation was found between VAK learning styles and achievement in Mathematics with respect to both boys and girls. The study recommended that teachers need to understand the learning styles of their students in order to create a more enriched teaching-learning environment.

Anand and Rajendraprasad (2016) studied the learning styles and their impact on Science teaching amongst primary school students of Karaikal district of Tamilnadu. The sample of the study was chosen using simple random sampling 100 primary students were selected from primary schools of Karaikal district. The findings of the study showed that Science achievement was better if teacher focused on Audio, Visual and Kinesthetic learning styles in classrooms for teaching.

Montgomery and Groat (1999): In this paper the authors advocate that it is essentially important for teachers to make

teaching-learning dialogue in order to engage students. Teachers also need to consider the diversities associated with a multicultural classroom including the different learning styles of pupils. They have also highlighted the need to communicate across in a classroom in a classroom using a myriad of ways in order to accommodate learning styles. The authors also pointed out that by using innovative teaching strategies in a heterogenous classroom teaching can definitely be more rewarding for the teacher.

Naqvi and Naqvi (2017) conducted a study on learning styles, Gender and academic performance of post graduate management students in India. The sample of the study comprised of 98 first years students including 50 males and 18 females and 87 second year students including 59 males and 28 females drawn from management institutions in NCR. The data was collected using the third the third version of Learning Styles Inventory Test (LSI) designed and standardized by Kolb. The finding of the study point out that the learning style preference of the sample was inclined towards assimilating and converging styles. There was no significant difference found across the two genders and the academic performance of males was higher in Finance and Marketing disciplines while females scores higher in Human Resource Development and International Business.

Kutay (2006) explored the relationship between students' learning styles and their culture. The sample of the study comprised of 100 Turkish and 100 American students drawn non-randomly from undergraduate and graduate level. In order to identify students' learning styles the Building Excellence (BE) survey by Dunn was used. Out of the twenty four elements, eight were found to be different between the two groups. The differences were mostly in physiological and environmental stimulus attributed to chiefly cultural practices and habits. The researcher concluded that it is important for a teacher to know the learning style preferences of students in order to provide equal opportunities to all learners.

Pallapu (2008) studied the undergraduate students' learning styles among three colleges of Education of Education, Liberal Arts and Business. The results showed that only the college of Education has less intuitive learners and more sensing learners. Most of the respondents of the study were visual, active, sequential learners than being verbal, reflective and global learners. The researcher felt that teachers should incorporate diverse activities in order to cater to different styles of learning styles to achieve the desired learning outcomes and on the other hand students should focus on improving their weaker learning styles and use their preferred learning styles predominantly to enhance their learning.

Renou, .J (2010) conducted a study to find the perceptual learning styles and achievement in a university level foreign language course. The sample of the study included four regular first semester university French language courses taught by the same teacher and eighty two English speaking students whose mother tongue was Spanish. The tool used to collect the data was the Barsh Learning Style Inventory Questionnaire. The results pointed out that around 50% of all the respondents were visual learners, 23% were auditory learners and 21% are both visual and auditory perceptual learning styles. The last 7% were tactile learners. The results

also indicate no significant difference with respect to one learning style being advantageous with respect to scoring in French language course.

Inal, S. et.al (2015): conducted a study to explore the preferred learning styles of Turkish EFL teacher trainees. The sample comprised of 2490 English trainees and the data was collected using the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) by Wintergerst and DeCapua (1999). The findings of the study revealed that the Turkish Teacher Trainees of English are mainly group oriented. It was also found that females were more inclined towards Project Orientation than Males which implies that females preferred to work and study together in groups and males preferred to study and work alone individually.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study lies in the realm of descriptive research where in the emphasis on looking at the behavior or phenomena as it exists today. In this study preferred learning styles of B.Ed student-teachers have been explored.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To find the preferred learning learning styles of B.Ed student-teachers of Delhi.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

65 B.Ed student-teachers were selected randomly from two B.Ed colleges of Delhi.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data was collected using VAK Self assessment Learning Styles Questionnaire adapted by Swinburne University of Technology. This questionnaire had thirty items and for each item there were three response categories belonging to the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic mode respectively. The respondents were required to choose one option out of the available A, B and C belonging to each response category. Based on the responses of the 65 respondents the data was analyzed using frequency and percentage analysis.

Findings and Educational Implications:

- ✓ It was found that 31.5% of the respondents preferred the Visual learning style.
- ✓ 32.2% of the participants preferred the auditory/aural learning style.
- ✓ The most preferred learning style was the Kinesthetic style of learning as 36.3% of the respondents opted for it.

Based on the above findings it can be implied that the teacher educators need to use a blend of the Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic styles of learning in order to improve our accesses with our student-teachers. This in turn would mean that while teaching them subjects such as ICT in Education, Philosophy of Education, Sociology of Education, Knowledge and Curriculum, Psychology of Education or the Pedagogies

of Teaching we need to use a mix of teaching-learning materials depending upon the choice of pedagogy employed. This may include use of charts, flash cards, flip boards, posters, concept maps etc in the visual domain. To cater to the auditory domain we may use podcasts, audio lectures apart from power packed lectures. The audio-visual combined together would be catered by screening of DVDs and Films or Power point presentations followed by threadbare discussions on the themes selected. The Kinesthetic aspect is best dealt with by engaging students in hands on activities such as Seminar presentations, Workshops, Symposia etc. Using an interplay of different kinds of learning modes shall go a long way in making the teaching learning interesting and meaningful.

V. CONCLUSION

In order to evolve as teachers and teacher-educators we need to think of the ways and means by which we are equipped to cater to the diversities in the classrooms. This means we ought to innovate by thinking out of the box which shall entail planning and strategizing with respect to the use of teaching methods, teaching-learning materials for each lesson depending on the target audience. Here by catering to the target audience we need to take into account the language i.e the medium of learning, the learning styles and the culture which each learner brings with him/her. Looking at the review of related literature and the findings of the present study it is also important for teachers and teacher-educators to use an amalgam of different learning styles i.e the visual, the aural and the kinesthetic. Apart from identifying the learning styles of pupils it is also significant that the students are themselves enlightened to understand how they learn best.

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