Learning How to Learn:
An Analysis Through Styles and Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This article describes how every learner is a unique creative individual responsible for paving his/her own way of learning in a preclusion of external restraints. Learners apply a bunch of idiosyncratic means to segue the information into knowledge. The various implications of such manipulated formulation by the learners implies strategic responses to new information and indicates a rational commitment to learn in many different ways. Pertaining to this we have also different versions of learning styles and strategies and their categories. The growing innovative and multiple dynamic ways of learning here bring diffidence to the existence of those stipulated types of learning styles and strategic traditions. This article makes an attempt to synthesize the different types of ways of learning; the self- determined learning strategies along with the prevailing theories of learning styles hypothesis.

KEYWORDS

Behaviour, Cognitive, Learning, Online Technology, Strategies, Styles

INTRODUCTION

Over the ages, continuously many teaching learning methods and techniques of language have emerged and evanesced. They have their own underlying theoretical bases. These continual and acute changes in language learning and teaching theories along with the extant drift to increase learners' autonomy have put the teachers' self-confidence in a startlingly tough condition. So, the important part of giving priority to promote learners' independent learning is never to be left unattended. Moreover, talents are not confined to biological limitations but can be heightened to an unlimited degree by virtue of long practice and varied training. Assorted studies on language styles and strategies apprise about 'how' and 'how better' the learners acquire the language through self- directed involvements. It is often observed that the teachers manifest their resistance towards the updated feasible facts and lie in the same track of conventionality. There is a plethora of current research sources in this regard, but often teachers follow no facts and evidence-based studies, thus lead the class in their own habits of conventionality, imposing certain selected preferences on the learners, irrespective of their attentiveness. There is still a need of more studies on the contradictory messing hypothesis of learning styles.

The educational philosophy revolving around 'learning to learn' has stimulated considerable debates in both theoretical and practical fields of education. Many researchers such as Coffield, Mosely,

Hall, and Ecclestone (2004); Sternberg, Grigorenko, and Zhang (2008), Kozhevnikov (2007), Dunn (1990), Kolb (1984, 1985), Honey and Mumford (1992), Deshler and Schumaker (1986), Dunn and Griggs (1988), Cornett (1983), etc., have done extensive studies on the support of the existence of certain learning styles and about their impact on learning. However, in contrast to this, around these last four decades, the researchers like Pashler (2009), Kirschner and van Merrienboer (2013), Massa & Mayer (2006), Riener and Willingham (2014) have been active surging in the study of learning styles seeking more empirical evidences.

The Concept of Learning Style

The idea of learning style deals with mode of instruction affecting learning outcomes. Different definitions of this concept are found such as "way of concentrating, absorbing, processing, and retaining new and difficult information" (Dunn & Dunn, 1993), "some cognitive styles and dispositions influencing how and what students learn" (Ormrod, 2008), "summarize the environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and global/analytic processing preferences that a student has for learning" (International Learning Styles Network, 2008), "biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that makes learning terrible or wonderful"(Dunn & Griggs, 1988, p. 3) etc.

Various study preferences and educational practices pertaining to the theories of learning styles are collected from different literature reviews and depicted below with prevailing categorizations. Table 1 shows learning styles, ways of learning, course of teaching, learning activities.

STUDIES CONTRARY TO EXISTENCE OF LEARNING STYLES

Having reviewed extensive studies on learning styles and their categories, the general interrogation of practicality and scientific base of those stipulated leaning styles are under discourse. The current research studies display sizeable discredits acclaiming it as 'brain myth' in front of the traditional anecdotes. The authentication of prevailing learning styles therefore is an analytical aspect in pedagogical domain in order to combat its unscientific impressions on the learners and teachers as well. Pashler and McDaniel (2009) in 'Learning Styles: Concepts and Evidence' affirm sufficient evidence to integrate learning styles into common learning practices. The stereotypical classifications of learning styles claim about learning attached with specific sensory organs which contradict the fact of most learning happening through multiple sensory domains at a time. Thus, the matching hypothesis of a particular learner with a particular learning style falls flat when it surpasses beyond the practical significance of mastering the subject matter in many different ways by the same learner. "There lies a big gap between the actual way of effective learning and the way that someone prefers to learn" (Kirschner, 2016).

As James Randi rightly quotes, "No amount of belief makes something a fact", the theme of this paper is to reveal whether any specific basis lies in the certain optimal learning strategies of a particular learner and whether the learner sticks to that learning strategy consciously all the time. "The self-reported preferred way of learning is often a bad predictor of the way people learn most effectively, what people prefer is not per definition, what is best for them" (Kirschner, 2016).

Taking into consideration of low objectivity, lack of proven fact and significant empirical evidences behind the learning style postulations, Kirschner gives the conclusive statement, "when designing instruction that takes differences between learners into account, their cognitive abilities are to be assessed rather than their preferred styles because abilities are better predictors of how people learn most effectively. Moreover, these cognitive abilities should be objectively measured on an ordinal scale and in an objective way, rather than by subjective self-reports that are used to assign people to types on the basis of one or more arbitrary criteria" (Kirschner & van Merrienboers, 2013).

Earlier supporters of learning styles advocate the dichotomies of learning styles such as visual vs. verbal, impulsive vs. reflective, linear vs. holistic etc. and that the learning can be bettered by matching particular teaching with that style. Practically learning satisfaction is beyond own specific

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