

# DO WE TEACH THE WAY WE LEARN? A CASE-STUDY REGARDING THE TEACHING STYLES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Alina Turculeț, Ph.D.

Transilvania University of Brașov, Romania

[alina.turculeț@unitbv.ro](mailto:alina.turculeț@unitbv.ro)

**Abstract:** *The most important reason for studying styles is to collect information on the extent to which teachers' styles affect students' performance, and their overall development. In the teacher's, stylistic profile various aspects can be retained. The mode of information processing and, consequently, the learning style determined by this mode occupies an important place. If we study styles in order to produce qualitative learning to our students, then becomes legitimate to investigate whether the learning style influences the teaching style or not. Our research conducted on primary-school teachers shows there are no influences between the learning styles and the teaching styles of the participants.*

**Keywords:** *teaching style; learning style; primary education;*

## 1. Introduction

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, online version, by style could be meant: "A specific way of expressing in a certain field of human activity, for certain purposes of communication; one's own way of expressing "; "the talent, the art of expressing ideas and feelings in a chosen, personal form "; "The totality of manifestations specific to a people, a community, or an individual", "a way, to be, to act, to behave" ([www.dexonline.ro](http://www.dexonline.ro)). The concept of style acquires new expressive valences in postmodernism that reconsiders the individual's position in the community, emphasizing the promotion of uniqueness and diversified means of increasing efficiency. Some Romanian authors consider the educational style imprints teaching (Cerghit, 2008), the personal equation gives the uniqueness of style (Potolea, 1983), the educational style empowers and energizes the operational variant of the whole system of the crystallized personality (Iucu & Manolescu, 2004), and style is a consequence of personality dynamics (Iucu, 2008). Other authors consider experiential learning is very important for personal efficacy (Argyris & Schön, cited in Cocoradă, 2010) and learning is integrated and it involves all learning styles (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Therefore, the investigation of teaching styles from the perspective of previous learning situations becomes relevant.

Regarding the learning styles, the divergent learning style is characteristic for individuals competent in concrete research situations, preferring to work in a team and receive personalized feedback. The assimilative learning style is characteristic to people who are capable of understanding information and putting it into a logical form, focusing on abstract ideas and concepts. People with a convergent learning style are pragmatic, finding practical use to all ideas and theories. People with accommodating learning style have the ability to learn, first, from experience, relying more on people and testing different approaches to finalizing a project. The fundamental prerequisite for learning by experience is the educated, seen as an active and responsible person who effectively manages the learning situation and the interpersonal relationships within it (Cocoradă, 2010). Regarding the teaching styles, the analyse starts from teaching aims and teaching methods. The aim of teaching is interpreted in terms of students' produced learning, namely mechanical learning versus applied learning, as

well as in terms of presentation of concepts, cognitive particularity that differentiates teaching in comprehensive teaching, which emphasizes the transfer in concrete situations of life and routine based teaching, which presents scientific knowledge (routine teaching). Teaching methods are divided from the perspective of the cognitive processing of concepts and from the perspective of the organizational form of students (individual study, independent work or cooperative, interactive). Thus, the learning offer developed by teachers could be a consequence of their previous learning experiences

## **2. Research question and objectives**

The research question investigates the relation between learning styles and teaching styles of individuals: *Do the learning styles of primary-school teachers influence their teaching styles?* In order to answer to our research question, we set the following objectives:

1. To identify the learning styles of primary-school teachers;
2. To identify the teaching styles of primary-school teachers;
3. To investigate the relation between the learning styles and the teaching styles.

## **3. Methods**

### **3.1. Procedure**

During the first semester of the school year 2015 – 2016, we conducted the quantitative phase of our research among the primary-school teachers of a school of Braşov. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and they were aware it was a part of doctoral research project. The research instruments were presented to the participants. The instructions for completing the questionnaires were also introduced. We obtained the written agreement to process the data and to disseminate the results.

### **3.2. Participants**

The target population of our study consists in 30 primary school teachers of Secondary School no. 2 *Diaconu Coresi* of Braşov. One subject has gone into study leave and has been carried out of our research. All primary-school teachers are women. The structure of the group of subjects regarding their age is homogeneous, starting from 18 to 60, the majority being of middle age ( $M=43,83$ ;  $SD=16,17$ ). Regarding their studies, 73,3% graduated, in addition to their initial teacher training, undergraduate studies and 30,0% of those postgraduate studies. The statistical analysis identified a direct correlation between the didactic degree and age ( $r=0,62$ ;  $p<0,01$ ).

### **3.3. Measures**

The research method was the investigation based on a questionnaire. We used only validated research instruments, namely the *Learning style inventory* developed by Kolb in 1971 and perfected until its last version from 2005, and the *Teaching style inventory* CORD 2005 developed by the Centre for Research and Occupational Development.

## **4. Results and discussions**

### **4.1. Results regarding the learning styles of primary-school teachers**

All four learning styles were identified in the investigated population: *convergent* - practical and rational, *divergent* - observative and emotional, *assimilative* - observative and rational, *accommodating* - practical and emotional ( $M = 2,73$ ,  $SD = 1,11$ ). The learning styles of teachers and their frequencies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The learning styles of primary-school teachers

	Frequencies	Percentages
Convergent	14	46,7
Divergent	1	3,3
Assimilative	12	40,0
Accommodating	3	10,0

We note that the majority of subjects predominantly have experience-based learning styles, namely convergent in a proportion of 46,7% and accommodating in a proportion of 10,0%. Of the target population, 13,3% process information emotionally, teachers with divergent and accommodating learning styles, and 86,7% information process rationally, teachers with convergent and assimilative learning styles.

#### **4.2. Results regarding the teaching styles of primary-school teachers**

The teaching styles identified in the investigated educational community are synthesized in Table 2.

Table 2. The teaching styles of primary-school teachers

	Teaching style	Frequencies	Percentages	Percentages per category
Category A	AA	0	0	0
	AB	0	0	
	AC	0	0	
	AD	0	0	
Category B	BA	5	16,7	40,0
	BB	3	10,0	
	BC	1	3,3	
	BD	3	10,0	
Category C	CA	1	3,3	13,3
	CB	0	0	
	CC	0	0	
	CD	3	10,0	
Category D	DA	1	3,3	46,7
	DB	1	3,3	
	DC	2	6,7	
	DD	10	33,3	

Statistical analysis identified teaching styles from Category B, C, and D ( $M = 11.20$ ,  $SD = 4.54$ ). We emphasize that these teaching styles are based on intuitive process of acquiring knowledge (40,0%), on comprehensive learning (13,3%), and on interactive learning and emotional dimension of knowledge construction (46,7%). According to the recorded results, none of the subjects included in the research adopts a teaching style

characterized by the transmission of knowledge and the mechanical memorization of the data communicated by the teacher (Category A). More than half of the respondent practice a teaching style that emphasizes the importance of active and conscious participation of students in the teaching process and supports intrinsic learning motivation (Categories C and D, CA, CD, DA, DB, DC, DD).

Regarding the relationship between learning styles and teaching styles of primary school teachers, we found it useful to investigate it from the perspective of reporting on the theory of learning by experience. Given that there are teachers with the same learning style that have different teaching styles and teachers with the same teaching style that have different learning styles, we can state that for the investigated population there was no relation between the learning styles and teaching styles of teachers. Thus, the learning styles of teachers for primary education do not influence their teaching styles.

## 6. Conclusions and implications

There are opinions that learning styles are but a "modern caprice", which implies that different students have different preferences for certain ways of learning (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer & Bjork, 2009; Riener & Willingham, 2010) (Hattie, 2014). The preference for the mode of learning according to the predominant auditory, tactile, visual or kinesthetic style appears to be commercial, because students are assigned different styles by different teachers (Holt, Denny, Capps & De Vore, 2005) there are few studies that meet the minimum acceptability criteria (Coffield, Moseley Ecclestone & Hall, 2004) (Hattie, 2014). However, the cyclic model of experiential learning substantiates the classification of the learning styles according to Kolb's theory. The lack of a relationship between the learning styles and the teaching styles of the teachers participating in the study reveals that there are other variables that determine how teachers manage their teaching activity.

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