

Style of Learning and Thinking of Graduate Students in Kerala

Sony Francis c,

Assistant Professor in Education,

JES Training College,

Chittilappilly, Thrissur, Kerala

ABSTRACT

Styles depend on the cerebral dominance of an individual in retaining and processing information. The present study focuses on the learning and thinking of graduate students. Students have different learning style but the persons who utilize whole brain are more successful.

Keywords: Learning Style, Thinking Style, Graduate Students, Kerala, Cognitive Style, Educational Psychology, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Everyone perceives the world through five senses, but differently. Just like fingerprints everyone has his or her own unique style of learning and thinking. In accomplishing various tasks, each individual had particular preferred learning style. Styles depend on the cerebral dominance of an individual in retaining and processing different modes of information in his own style of learning and thinking. It is one of the reasons why the same problem is perceived and solved by different individuals in different ways. Both groups learn equally well but for functioning effectively in any professional area require working well in all learning style modes. Therefore objective of education should be to help students to build their skills in both preferred and less preferred modes of learning.

STYLE OF LEARNING

Learning style_ indicates individual's highlighted and relatively consistent behaviour patterns. Therefore it is closely related with individuality. It is the tendency of the learners to adopt a particular set of strategies consistently. Learning styles are formed through the following manner:

- Step-I Cognitive process: It is the basic cognitive activities taking place in the memory.
- Step-II Cognitive skills: They are cognitive processes described in terms of ability of individual's consistency to carry out certain type of tasks.
- Step-III Tactics: They are skills brought into play in order to solve particular problems.
- Step-IV Strategies: They are organized series of tactics.
- Step-V Learning styles: They are similar set of strategies used consistently across different tasks. This connection of brain and learning style is represented through the following diagram.



NEED AND IMPORTANCE

Graduate course is considered as one of the important stepping-stone in the education period. It is after the completion of graduate course, most of the students enter into the professional field they prefer. Therefore learning and thinking of graduate students at these periods are of great significance. A study of learning and thinking of graduate students will be of great benefit to instructors, students and parents.

BENEFITS TO THE STUDENT

Collaboration and the ability to work effectively in a team environment is continually reported as one of the top attributes employers are looking for in college graduate. The key to collaboration is effective communication and the key to effective communication is to

understand both our colleague and us. A student who learns and appreciate all styles will more easily adapt to new challenges in college, at work and in his/ her personal relationship.

BENEFITS TO THE INSTRUCTOR

Robert J. Sternberg says, "Many students that I had thought to be dumb were not stupid at all, but rather simply did not learn in a way that was compatible with the way I was teaching. But my teaching material is just a single way had never even given them a chance".

A teacher who possess an understanding of his/her students preferred learning styles can present lessons in a variety of ways and offer each student the opportunity to find the mode that works best for him or her.

BENEFITS TO THE PARENTS

Styles like abilities are not always inborn. They are in large part developed due to environmental condition and by way of nurturing children by their parents. Styles are not fixed, but changeable. Fixing and changing of particular style is possible by changing the existing environment, in which parents had great role. It also helps parents to know the child's learning style and give scaffold in accordance to it.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem is stated as "Style of learning and thinking of graduate students in Kerala".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To measure the difference between Right hemisphere style of learning and thinking of male graduate students and left hemisphere style of learning and thinking of male graduate students
- ❖ To measure the difference between Right hemisphere style of learning and thinking of female graduate students and left hemisphere style of learning and thinking of female graduate students.
- ❖ To find out the difference between style of learning and thinking of professional graduate students and style of learning and thinking of non-professional graduate students.

HYPOTHESES

- ❖ There is no significant difference between Right hemisphere styles of learning and thinking of male graduate students and left hemisphere style of learning and thinking of male graduate students.
- ❖ There is no significant difference between Right hemisphere styles of learning and thinking of female graduate students and left hemisphere style of learning and thinking of female graduate students.
- ❖ There is no significant difference between style of learning and thinking of professional graduate students and style of learning and thinking of non-professional graduate students.

METHOD OF STUDY

In the present study 'survey method' was adopted to accomplish the objectives. SOLAT tool developed by Dr. Venkataraman (1994) was used to measure the hemisphere preferences for information processing. It consisted of 100 items based upon accumulated research findings concerning the specialized functions of the left and right hemispheres.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

A total of 300 students from various professional and non-professional colleges were selected for the study. In the Professional group the investigator selected B.Ed., Engineering, Nursing, B.B.A and Law and in the non-professional group Economics, Zoology, Computer science, Maths, and B.com students. The investigator randomly selected 30 students from each group of which half were boys and remaining were girls. The study was conducted in various professional and non-professional colleges at Thrissur, Palaghat and Kozhikode districts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1

The 't' value between right hemisphere learning and thinking styles of male/female graduate students and left hemisphere learning and thinking styles of male / female graduate students

Style of learning and thinking	't' value	Significance(0.01)level
Right hemisphere learning and thinking and left hemisphere learning and thinking of males	4.88	significant
Right hemisphere learning and thinking and left hemisphere learning and thinking of female	7.81	significant

Table 2

The 't' value between learning and thinking styles of professional and Non-Professional graduate students

Style of learning and style of thinking	't' value	Significance(0.051)level
Style of learning and style of thinking of professional and non professional students	0.315	Not significant

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ There is marked difference between the Right hemisphere Learning and Thinking style of Females and Left hemisphere learning and thinking style of Female Graduates ($t=7.81$) even at 0.01 level.
- ❖ There is marked difference between the Right hemisphere Learning and Thinking style of Males and Left hemisphere learning and thinking style of Male Graduates ($t=4.88$) even at 0.01 level.
- ❖ There is no significant difference between the Learning and Thinking style of Professionals and Non-professional Graduate students ($t=0.315$) even at 0.01 levels.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

No research effort can be said to be worthwhile if it does not provide some educational implications. The findings of the study have certain important educational implications.

The right and left hemispheres have their own peculiarities and significance. But for an individual to function better, an integrated function of both the hemispheres is necessary. Different teaching techniques and methodologies can be adopted to activate and influence the hemisphere functions of brain. The teaching techniques in the schools\colleges must be undertaken in consonance with the student's style of learning and thinking. This approach will remove unnecessary restrictions on teaching and learning of the students and actualization of the concept "no limits to learning". The teaching and learning procedures must be organized in such a way that they tone up and activate the hemisphere functions of the brain in students.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study give a clear picture of how the brain hemisphere dominance influences the style of learning and thinking among graduate level students. It is seen that the two sides of the brain performs different functions. Those differences in brain functions are what causes, individual learning and thinking styles among people. In no way one brain hemisphere is superior over the other. Understanding styles of learning and thinking can help people prevent their misunderstanding and actually come out with a better knowing of each other and themselves. Teaching and Learning process must be organized in such a way that they toned up and activated the hemisphere functions of students. We can help students to become more integrated learners and thinkers with better processing skills on both hemisphere, by working with the hemisphere preference of learners as well as providing opportunity for actuating the functions of the non-dominant hemisphere. This will make the students as independent lifelong learners.

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