

Which dominant teaching style are you?: A Preliminary Study among Practitioners at a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

Knowing a practitioner's teaching style in delivering contents matter to their respective students is vital. Practitioners need to regard that assessing their teaching styles as their personal inventories. Such may assist them in identifying their teaching styles to address their students' diverse learning styles. The current study reports on practitioners' styles of teaching in Universiti Malaysia Pahang. Data was collected among five (5) lecturers who are teaching one of the computer science subjects at the university. A questionnaire was employed to gauge the lecturers' teaching style wherein they were required to identify their teaching styles to be Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, or Delegator. The results of the study revealed that the majority of them demonstrate a single teaching style. Yet, one (1) lecturer employed various teaching styles when delivering content to the students. In other words, overall, these lecturers demonstrate a strong teaching style as an Expert, Facilitator, or different dominant teaching styles. The study implies that assessing the lecturers' teaching styles is essential as it ensures engagement from students in the learning process of the latter. Equal important is that lecturers need to try employing different styles of teaching to meet the objectives of their lessons.

Keyword: Teaching styles, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator

Introduction

One of the most significant challenges in the teaching profession is not knowing the teaching styles that are demonstrated by us as instructors. It is a sad situation for us if we do not know the teaching styles that we dominate. As a result, we may not be able to improve students' learning experiences (Khandaghi, 2011). Assuming a class with students' characteristics – introspection and extroversion while the teacher demonstrates Expert style, do these styles of teaching and learning work well in class when group activities are conducted?

It is fundamental, therefore, to identify our teaching styles, and having said that, the current study investigates the overall teaching styles among the lecturers teaching at one tertiary level education in the East Coast of Malaysia. Also, it gauges the teaching styles – Expert, Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, and Delegator that are demonstrated by these respective lecturers. This study, however, is limited to investigating only the teaching styles using The Teaching Style Survey (TSS) developed by Grasha-Riechmann Teaching Style Inventory.

Literature Review

Grasha's Teaching Styles

This section describes Grasha's Teaching Styles that are used to identify practitioners' teaching styles. Using the inventory, Grasha (1996) proposes five (5) styles of teaching that is depicted in Figure 1. The 'Expert' style are those practitioners who possess the knowledge and expertise that students require. Those who demonstrate this style of teaching would try their best to maintain their authority as an expert among students by giving the latter detail content of the subject matter (Ford, 2016). The 'Formal Authority' is similar to Expert style teachers. Yet, they have status among their students due to the authority, position, and most importantly, have the content knowledge. Usually, these teachers tend to be conventional and follow their standards of teaching (Vaughn, 2008). The Personal Model of teaching style is demonstrated by teachers that hold their roles as a participant, dependent, collaborative in teaching their students (Dinçol, 2011). Employing this method, teachers act as prototypes to students when instructing the latter to think and behave (Shaari, 2014). Shaari (2014) also states that once the teachers explained the things that need to be done to the students – at this stage, asking students to observe; they then tend to direct the students to imitate the method shown. Teachers who demonstrate 'Facilitators' as their teaching styles tend to have coaching profiles (Ford, 2016). This type of teaching style witnesses that teachers have 'inherent features' of becoming teachers (Ford, 2016). In other words, it is the natural characteristics of teachers that are demonstrated in individual teachers, whereby they are inclined to facilitate students to become independent in their learning (Grasha, 1996). Finally, the Delegator style of teaching reflects the teachers who demonstrate themselves as independent resources. When they conduct activities in class, problem-solving, self-discovery exercises, learning debates, and case studies are some of those carried out in the class (Grasha A, 1994).

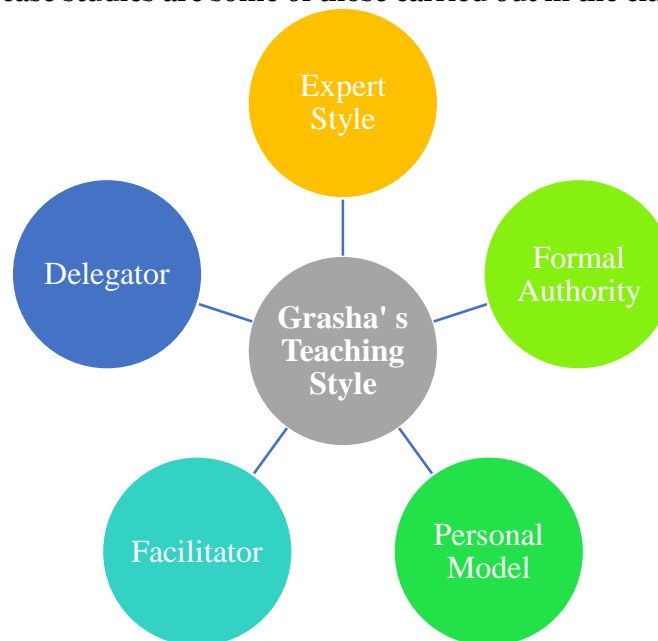


Figure 1. Grasha's Five Teaching Styles

Empirical Studies on the Use of Grasha's Teaching Styles

A study conducted by Quitadamo (2001) focused on in-service teachers' distance learning experiences, in particular their challenges of using online learning to teach their students. The study found that Facilitator and Delegator teaching styles were used extensively by the instructors. The participants were found to use problem-solving and self-exploratory tasks in their teaching more than other activities in the class. Such was the results when Grasha's Teaching Styles Inventory (GTSI) was employed as one of the variables to assess the course instructor's instructional approach. Öznacar (2017) found interesting findings emerge as the results of testing several dependent variables – gender, marital status, education levels, and seniority with that of independent variable, i.e. GTSI. In terms of gender, only the Personal model of teaching style varied between male and female teachers. Whereas for marital status and education levels, no significant difference were found concerning the tested variables. Finally, they were a significant difference putting seniority as one of the dependent variables in that the teaching style, i.e. Expert was more prominent among senior teachers compared to the juniors. Such was due to the former had more experiences in teaching compared to the latter. Yet, no difference was found in other teaching styles - Formal Authority, Personal Model, Facilitator, and Delegator; when junior and seniority were compared.

Methodology

This section explains the research design, samples, data collection procedures, and data collection analysis of the current study.

Research Design

The study uses a quantitative research design to collect its data. More specifically, a descriptive research design i.e. survey research design is employed to collect responses from the participants of the current study.

Samples of the study

The samples that are involved in the study are five (5) senior lecturers from Universiti Malaysia Pahang. Specifically, they are two (2) male lecturers, and three (3) female lecturers are selected on voluntarily basis to be the samples in the current study. When the study takes place, they teach one of the computer science subjects in the Faculty of Computer Systems & Software Engineering.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire developed by Grasha's, namely The Teaching Style Survey (TSS) is employed as the research instrument in the current study. The questionnaire that is available online (<http://longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html>), however, is modified in terms of its structure to suit the need of the research. Using Google Form, the modified questionnaire consists of three (3) parts, wherein the first part explains respondents concerning the definition of teaching styles identified by Grasha. The five (5) categories of teaching styles are per below:

1. Expert - teacher holds the expertise, and knowledge students need
2. Formal Authority - Standard and structure of teaching style
3. Personal Model - teaching by personal example
4. Facilitator - consults with students
5. Delegator - teacher available on request

Meanwhile, in Part Two, respondents are asked to tick their names on the radio button provided in the questionnaire. Using the Likert Scale from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), the final part, Part Three, requires respondents to select their most preferred choice of answers for 40 items in the questionnaire. Using Cronbach Alpha to determine the reliability of the

questionnaire, it shows that its value is 0.85. The results indicate that the research instrument is reliable to be used for collecting data.

Results and Discussion

This part explains the findings that are obtained from the questionnaire. Further, the discussion illustrates the results obtained from the research question formulated.

Individual lecturers' teaching style

Table 1 and Table 2 explain the overall lecturers' teaching styles following Grasha's 40 items of Teaching Styles. In the tables, L1 connotes Lecturer 1; L2 connotes Lecturer 2, etc. In explaining the table, Items 1 to 8 concerns with Expert Method of teaching styles, Items 9 to 16 concerns with Formal Authority of teaching style, Items 17 to 24 concerns with Personal Model of teaching style, Items 25 to 32 concerns with the Facilitator teaching style and finally Items 33 to 40 concerns with Delegator teaching style. Also, in selecting the preferences, the lecturers are instructed to choose the scales from 1 until 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

In discussing the Expert Method of teaching style, Table 1 indicates that the majority of the lecturers choose 'Strongly Agree'. The result entails that, to a certain extent, they demonstrate the teaching style in the class. For Formal Authority, these lecturers show almost equal preference in employing the teaching style as a more significant number of them chose 'Strongly Agree' that they utilize the style in teaching their students.

Table 1. Frequency counts of teaching style preferences among FSKPP lecturers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Expert Method								Formal Authority								Personal Model			
L 1	5	4	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	3	4
L 2	5	5	5	5	3	5	2	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5
L 3	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	3	3	4	5
L 4	5	4	4	4	2	4	1	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
L 5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	5

Meanwhile, in Table 2, it shows that the majority of them chose 'Agree' that they used Personal Model in approaching students when delivering contents of the subject. In terms of their roles as Facilitators, likewise, the majority of them chose 'Agree' that they implement the style in the classroom. Interestingly, for their roles as Delegators, one lecturer chose 'Strongly Disagree' administering the style in his teaching. Overall, for this teaching style, mostly, they chose 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' to the statements made for the items formulated under the domain 'Delegator'. Their responses on the teaching preferences, as measured by Grasha-Riechmann's Teaching Style Inventory show that all the lecturers have at least one most influential teaching style, while some demonstrate modest teaching styles for other categories.

Table 2. Frequency counts of teaching style preferences among FSKPP lecturers (continued)

	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	Personal Model					Facilitator					Delegator									
L 1	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	4
L 2	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
L 3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4
L 4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	4	3
L 5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4

According to Ford, Robinson, and Wise (2016), coaches, as in the current study, refer to practitioners, need to utilize multiple approaches in their teaching. Likewise, the implementation of practice-based learning is paramount for Quality Improvement purposes in delivering the content of the subject to the students. The use of inventory, such as in the current study, enables the practitioners to identify their teaching profiles. As a result, they would accommodate their students' learning processes more efficiently. Moreover, Hill (2014) argues that in higher education, effective teaching is beyond presenting the content of the subject matter. Yet, affective or emotional processes need to go hand-in-hand when teaching the students. Therefore, employing multiple teaching methods with the amalgamation of cognitive, affective and kinaesthetic approaches proves to be the formula for successful teaching and learning experiences. Moreover, demonstrating various teaching styles show that the respective lecturers are active in their teaching, as was found in the study conducted by Shaari (2014). The study found that the lecturers in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) were able to make their students understand the subject matter better when they employ multiple teaching styles.

Dominant teaching styles demonstrate by the respective lecturers

To gauge the lecturers' styles of teaching, Table 3 shows the mean of their respective teaching styles. From the table, the dominant teaching style for L1 is Facilitator, whereas L2 demonstrates high scores as an Expert and Facilitator. The result is interesting due to L2 employs different teaching styles depending on the contents or activities that are conducted in the class. L3 indicates a single dominant teachings style; Facilitator, when conducting his class. Likewise, L4 demonstrates a Facilitator teaching style in her class while L5 finds herself to be a Delegator when instructing students.

Table 3. Means of Lecturers' Teaching Styles

Lecturer/ Teaching Style	Expert	Formal Authority	Personal Model	Facilitator	Delegator
L 1	4.38	3.85	3.63	3.5	3.88
L 2	5	4	4.62	5	4.63
L 3	4	3.5	3.75	4.38	4
L 4	3.5	2.88	3	3.75	3
L 5	4.38	4	4.63	4.63	4.75

The results of the study show that the majority of the lecturers demonstrate a single dominant teaching style. Most of them are comfortable with their roles as Facilitators. According to Grasha's (1996), practitioners who demonstrate such a role in the educational environment resemble themselves as genuine teachers in the class who attempt to interact with students to make the latter become independent learners. When delivering their lectures, these practitioners take the

roles as consultants for the projects/ issues that students are exploring (Grasha, 1994). In this environment, both teachers and students work together to share information, and the interaction in this manner is not formal.

Nevertheless, the results of the study stood in contrast to the study conducted by Aldhafri (2014) in that the respondents in his study demonstrated an authoritative teaching style when conducting class to assist students in achieving intrinsic motivation in the learning of the latter. Using the style, practitioners build a trusted environment in that students' feelings, emotions, and opinions were considered. Practitioners employing this teaching style tend to make their expectations clearer as well.

Conclusion

This study sets out to identify overall lecturers' teaching styles and their dominant teaching styles. The results of this investigation show that all lecturers demonstrate the teaching styles proposed by Grasha; to a certain extent. The study also shows that the majority of the lecturers demonstrate at least one dominant teaching style. For instance – Facilitator, as the style was observed to be used by L1, L2, L3, and L4. However, for L2, the lecturer shows another teaching style, Expert, when he/she conducts his/her class. For L5, Delegator is the dominant teaching style demonstrated by the lecturer. The findings of this study suggest that as academicians, using a particular teaching style may be associated to the content or activities that are conducted in the class at that specific time. Teachers need to shift from one teaching style to another to accommodate the learning outcomes they need to achieve. Shayesteh (2015) states that teachers have to have teaching styles to maximize their students' learning outcomes. To make it requires them to demonstrate multiple teaching styles in the class. Most importantly, however, one's teaching styles need to be matched with students' aptitude for successful teaching-learning experiences (Ali, 2012)

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