**The Relationship between the Learning Styles of First Year College Students and the Teaching Styles of their Instructors/Professors at Aldersgate College: An Analysis**

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**Background of the Study**

The teaching atmosphere of today’s classroom can no longer be viewed in the same way it was centuries ago when students were forced to sit down and listen to the teacher with the fear of getting punished should they fail to do so. The use of lecture-discussion method in the teaching-learning process is no longer sufficient to bring about an efficient outcome. New theories on classroom management have been institutionalized that gradually replaced the traditional theory counted upon by educators and curriculum developers in earlier educational systems. Whether there had been improvement done to the existing system, teachers in the educational system have to cope with whatever innovations that are introduced in their desire to change what they consider underachievement. Too many teaching techniques and strategies are being introduced each year but very few can be adaptive to the changing learning needs of the students. Some teachers sometimes fail to consider that as students in a class look differently they also think and react in their own distinct manner. Teachers need to reflect that the uniqueness in personality, diversity in strengths and disparity in motivation of every student can bring about incongruity in their responses and reactions to instructional approaches and systems. Probably the most important aspect to get at learning is the idea of challenging all learners at their level instead of giving more work to those who learn the concept more quickly. This would require assessing the students learning styles should there be a need to differentiate classroom work. Learning styles has been acknowledged as a justification to the perception that students achieve differently in class. A theory which supports this concept of students learning differently is Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. There are numerous ways in which students will learn best and these can be identified if educators will give consideration to the weaknesses and strengths of the learners.

An effort to get better in terms of the quality of the teacher’s teaching style should be instigated, one which is rooted on the awareness of the learning needs of the students. It is the undertaking of every teacher to determine the basis of students having different learning styles. Awareness of the students’ learning styles will help teachers devise teaching methods that harmonize with these needs. Trying to match what students are actually doing as closely as possible with what they like doing and what they are good at doing may be advantageous for individuals to be well-rounded. A mismatch of students’ learning needs and the teachers’ way of delivering the concepts may likewise be a factor in the poor performance of students.

Concerned with the problems faced by teachers interested to use other teaching techniques and methodologies which are more responsive to students’ need and motivated by the desire to effect a better transfer of learning, the researcher believes that individualized instruction promotes competency and proficiency in the learning process even with minimum direction of a teacher since much of the actual adaptation activities take place outside the teacher’s supervision. It is in this regard that we consider individual learning styles to improve the way we teach English Communication Arts in the academic setting. Doing so will cause some challenges in innovating activities that will accommodate every student’s learning needs and abilities. The effort will create an improved learning environment for students where they can improve their study habits, attitudes and behavior, and eventually progress in the academic performance of even the underachievers in the classroom.

The assumption that students’ learning styles and their instructors/professors’ teaching styles have a major connection in the students’ performance in the classroom is the motivating factor for the researcher to conduct this study entitled: **The Relationship Between the Learning Styles of the First Year College Students and the Teaching Styles of their Instructors/Professors at Aldersgate College: An Analysis**.

**Methodology**

To attain the purposes or objectives of the study, the descriptive-correlational method was employed. As a correlational study, it determines the significant relationship between and among the students’ learning styles, the instructors/ professors’ teaching style and their profile variables. The respondents of the study were first year students enrolled in five colleges for school year 2007-2008 and the teachers, instructors and professors who are teaching them.

In this study, description, documentation, analysis and interpretation and correlation of the learning styles of students and teaching styles of instructors/professors of Aldersgate College were done and how they are related to selected variables.

To determine the profiles of the student and faculty-respondents the **frequency** and **percentage distribution** and **ranking** were used. **Mean** was used for age. To determine the learning styles of the student-respondents and the teaching styles of the instructor/professor-respondents, the **weighted mean** and **ranking** were used in analyzing the data that were gathered from the checklist. To find the significant relationship of learning styles of student-respondents and teaching styles of instructor/professor-respondents to identified variables Pearson product moment coefficient correlation was used. And to find if there is a significant difference between the teaching styles of the instructors/professors teaching in the first year level and learning styles of first year college students, the t- test was used.

**Results and Discussion**

**Profile of the Student respondents**

The study found out that the 262 student-respondents have the mean age of 18.37, and they are distributed according to the following age range: 175 are within the age range of 17-19, 37 are within 16 and below, 36 are within 20-22, 10 are within 23-25, three are within 26-29 and only one is within the age group of 29 and above.

Of the 262 student respondents 146 are females and 116 are males. Typically, the student respondents are single, however there are six who are married.

The biggest portion of the population in the first year level are enrolled in the School of Medical Sciences with 139 students, followed by the College of Business and Information Technology with 65 students and the College of Engineering and Technology with 27. The courses offered in the School of Criminology and the College of Arts Sciences and Education have the least enrollees.

There were 13 religious orientations that emerged from this study being dominated by the Roman Catholics in terms of frequency count, followed by the Methodists. The other religious groups that share the remaining percentage of the student respondents are Born Again, Iglesia ni Cristo, Espiritista, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Jehova’s Witness, Philippine Independent Catholic Church, Church of God, Church of the Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventist, Church of Christ and Evangelical Church.

The 262 student respondents are dominated by the Ilocanos. The other 13 cultural affiliations bared in this study include the following ordered according to their ranks. Tagalog, Ifugao, Gaddang, Kalanguya, Isinai, Ibanag, Cebuano, Bisaya, Bontoc, Itawes, Samar, Pangasinense and Manobo.

The data gathered reveal that 110 of the student respondents have parents who are engaged in farming ranking first among 33 occupations. Housekeeping registered a high frequency of 76. There are 38 who are engaged in business, 36 work as Overseas Filipino Workers and 32 earn a living through driving. Seventeen parents are employed in teaching, 12 are into carpentry. Parents who are employed in the government service and in the police/ military service share equal number of nine. Five parents each are into politics and vending. Clerical and engineering jobs have equal number of four while three parents do not have gainful occupation. Welding and mechanic occupations record three parents each. For each of the five occupations of the parents namely cashier, medical practice, nursing practice, school administrator and hairdressing there are two. One is registered for each of the following occupations: apartment caretaker, auto electrician, bank employee, barangay nutritionist, dental practice, fishing, forester, human resource officer, preaching, retiree and tailoring.

The print media material used by the student respondents the most are books with 185 or 70.61 percent. Dictionary is the second most available. There are 127 student respondents who subscribe to magazines and 105 to newspapers. The least read among the print materials by the student respondents are educational journals.

Among the non-print media materials subscribed to by the student respondents, the television has the highest percentage of 88.93. There are 198 who listen to their radio sets at home. This is followed by DVD/VCD player with 66.41 percent. Cellular phones are also available to the student respondents. Student respondents who have computer without internet with 14.89 percent outnumber those with internet access with only 8.78 percent. There are 42.76 percent who have electronic learning packages.

**Profile of the Instructor/Professor Respondents**

The highest percentage of the instructor/professor respondents are those who are grouped in the age bracket of 34 and above with 57.78 percent. Of the 45 instructor/professor respondents 23 are females and 22 are males. Twenty eight of them are married, 15 are single and two are widows. The highest educational attainment of the instructor/professor respondents are Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education. Twenty-seven of the instructor/professor respondents are baccalaureate degree holders and 16 are graduates of Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Divinity, Master in Public Administration and Master in Business Administration. Most of the subjects taught by the instructor/professor respondents fall under the College of Arts Sciences and Education with 46 or 41.44 percent. Twenty-five belong to the College of Business and Information Technology. Seventeen are from the School of Medical Sciences. The College of Engineering and Technology has 12 and School of Criminology eleven. Of the 45 instructor/professor respondents 22 are Roman Catholics having the highest percentage among other religious orientations. Based from the data gathered, majority of the instructor/professor respondents are Ilocanos as to cultural affiliation. 40 instructor/professor respondents have books at home, 37 subscribe to magazines, 28 to newspapers and 25 to educational journals, 42 have television sets, 29 have radios, 19 have computers without internet and 12 are privileged with internet access.

**Learning** **Styles of the First Year College Students of Aldersgate College for the School Year 2007-2008**

The learning styles of the student respondents were determined through the use of the 60-item inventory grouped into six with 10 indicators for each group to represent each of the six learning styles defined by Anthony Grasha and Sheryll Reichmann. Based on the assessment made, the collaborative learning style with the weighted mean of 3.75 and competitive learning style with a weighted mean of 3.67 are the learning styles of the student respondents classified as high in terms of their descriptive category. The student learning styles which are described as moderate are participant learning style with a weighted mean of 3.67, dependent learning style with a weighted mean of 3.63, independent learning style with a weighted mean of 3.50 and avoidant learning style with a weighted mean of 2.87.

**Teaching Styles of the Instructors/Professors Teaching the First Year College Students of Aldersgate College for the School Year 2007-2008**

The teaching styles of the instructor/professor respondents were determined through the use of the 40-item inventory designed by Anthony Grasha. The inventory which was grouped into five has eight indicators each to describe the five teaching styles. Most of the instructors/professors teaching the first year college students of Aldersgate College exercise the expert teaching style having the highest mean of 4.30 when compared to the other teaching styles. The formal authority teaching style with a weighted mean of 4.17, personal model teaching style with a weighted mean of 4.16, facilitator teaching style with a weighted mean of 4.14 and delegator teaching style with a weighted mean of 4.12 are all interpreted as high.

**Significant Relationship of the Learning Styles of the First Year College Students of Aldersgate College for the School Year 2007-2008 with Profile Variables**

The correlation values computed under age variable of the student respondents reveal that only the dependent learning style is **highly correlated,** and **moderately low** correlation is observed on avoidant and collaborative learning styles. The gender of the student respondents does not influence their independent andcollaborative learning styles. On the contrary, there is significant relationship in the **gender** of the student respondents particularly the female gender as to the **dependent** and **participant styles**. The marital status of the student respondents shows **very high correlation** in the **avoidant** and **competitive learning styles**. There is low correlation on the independent and collaborative learning styles Except for being a participant the student respondents have no significant relationship with the college they are enrolled in which does not tailor their learning styles. But the **college enrolled in** by the student respondents shapes in some extent their being a **participant** in the classroom. Learner types such as **avoidant, collaborative, dependent** and **participant** have strong correlation with the **multi-media materials** present in the homes of the student respondents.

**Significant Relationship of the Teaching Styles of the Instructors/Professors Teaching the First Year College Students of Aldersgate College for the School Year 2007-2008 with their Profile Variables**

The teaching styles of the instructor/professor respondents were tested to show how they correlate with study profiles like age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, college classification of the subjects they teach, religious orientation, cultural affiliation, and multi-media materials at home. As The correlation values fall within the range of +0.25 and -0.25 which is interpreted as a **very low correlation** observed in all the profiles versus the respondents’ being an expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator; there is no significant relationship of these teaching styles with the **college classification of the subjects they teach** except in the cases against **expert** and versus **formal authority** when correlated with the categories of the other **r-**values. The instructor/professor respondents, however, are dispersed in the domain of **formal** **authority.**

**Significant Difference Between the Learning Styles of the First Year College Students and the Teaching Styles of their Instructors/Professors at Aldersgate College for the School Year 2007-2008**

The null hypothesis that there is **no significant difference** between the teaching styles of instructor/professor respondents and the learning styles of student respondents is **accepted**.

**Recommendations**

1. For the students to perform well in class, they should be aware of their own way of learning so they can understand their differences from their fellow learners and be guided to redirect interests. The activities to be given them should match their interests. Knowledge of their learning styles will assist them in nurturing their strengths and addressing their weaknesses, therefore improving their academic performance.
2. Students’ learning styles are influenced by the people in their immediate environment particularly their parents. If parents realize their children’s learning styles they will be able to understand the differences in their children’s personalities. Parents will refrain from comparing their children instead encourage them to cultivate their strengths and balance learning interests by providing appropriate multi-media aids to enrich their children’s abilities and strengthen their weaknesses. This suggestion is based on the finding that the strong correlation of student respondents’ learning styles is found in the availability of multi-media materials in their homes. This concern will increase students’ self-esteem through successful learning opportunities such as multi-media materials and facilities provided by parents and other family members.
3. Instructors/professors of Aldersgate College should be informed and oriented about the learning styles of a typical college freshman so they can be in position to adopt teaching strategies that could match their students’ learning styles and devise techniques that will coincide with the learning needs of their students. If the instructors/professors are aware of their students’ learning styles it will be easier for them to approach the problem of students in school and adjust their teaching styles devising more attractive ways to support students undergoing difficulty in their studies.
4. Instructors/professors do not have to design each activity or class component to reach every learning style. The class as a whole should be diverse enough to reach everyone in the classroom. On the basis that strong correlation of student respondents’ learning styles is seen in the use of multi-media materials, the following suggestions can be considered to increase creativity in lesson presentations.
   1. Images, diagrams, screen projections with oral and written explanations and other multi-media materials that are appropriate in the lesson presentation can be helpful to the dependent learners.
   2. Handouts that summarize presented information and give directions to repeat the skills that were demonstrated can be provided to independent and competitive learners who would prefer doing tasks by themselves.
   3. Activities to encourage students to work in groups can be designed to address the collaborative and participative learning styles of the students.
   4. Material should be presented in a logical, sequential manner, and students should be given time to point out the connections between this information or process and other areas where this knowledge is relevant. The abstract ideas should be explained and then connected to something in the ‘real’ world.
   5. An instructor/professor can analyze and improve teaching style by watching a video of himself, asking colleagues to observe and tell what they saw, pairing up with a colleague and exchanging classroom visits regularly, and showing willingness to change and continually evolve as innovations in the educational system dictates.
5. A similar assessment should be conducted in all the academic levels of the entire college using other assessment tools that are available in the net.
6. The teaching modules for selected lessons in Communication Arts which were developed as outcome for this study will be presented to the instructors/professors teaching first year students for validation.

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