INNOVATIVE LEARNING STYLES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

A learning style is a method of educating particular to an individual that is presumed to allow that individual to learn best. Teachers have the major responsibility in creating the effective students and society. So including innovative learning styles in Teacher Education is the need of the hour. In depth knowledge of Innovative Technology is imperative for teachers to acquire quality education and to gain global comprehension. Web-based Learning environment may be designed for students of Teacher Education so that both knowledge-based and problem-based learning environment can be included. The computer Assisted Learning (CAI) successfully manages the different responses of the learner by directing him appropriately what to do further. Individual differences in students learning could be successfully met to a large extent by providing for "Multi Media Instruction". In Computer-Conferencing people at distant places, through their respective individual computers establish contact with the "Control-Computer" (or Master-Computer) and get texts, diagrams, pictures, graphs etc. transferred. Learning can be very innovative using E-Book. A digital library is an information retrieval system of digitally stored content. IPod in Education is a great resource for the teachers. The knowledge and understanding of educational technology not only helps a teacher to be an effective teacher but also assists him to produce effective learners for the learning society.

Introduction

Learning is one of the important psychological processes determining the human behaviour. The complex way in which the human beings behave is well learnt. If one wants to explain and predict behaviour, he needs to understand how people learn. The psychologists say that human beings, unlike animals possess an extremely high proportion of unused mental capacity at birth. It is, of course unfavourable in the initial years, because the student will feel helpless. But in the later years, as the student grows older, this unused mental capacity will help him in adapting to changed conditions and circumstances. This unused mental capacity will be used with the help of learning. In fact, practically all human behaviour is either directly or indirectly affected by learning. For example, a worker's skill, a person's mode of dress, his attitude or his way of speaking are all learned. Learning processing and principles help in improving the behaviour of human being.

Learning Styles

A learning style is a method of educating an individual that is presumed to allow that individual to learn best. The idea of learning styles is a somewhat unfounded deduction of the observation that most people favour, particular types of interactions when it comes to learning. Based on this concept, the idea of individualized "learning styles" was created, popularized later by Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence Model.

Types of learning styles

Educators have found at least four separate learning styles, each with its own optimum teaching methods. Meanwhile, four kinds of students are innovative learners, analytic learners, common-sense learners, and dynamic learners.

a) Analytic Learners

An analytic learner says, "Just give me the facts." Analytic learners like to know the mind of the experts. For them, learning comes by thinking through ideas to form reality. They tend to have less interest in people than in ideas and concepts. They like to critique information and collect good data. These are the people who love the traditional classroom.

b) Common-Sense Learners

These people don't believe in talking about something; they want to do it. Nothing is more important for common-sense learners than practical, hands-on approaches.

c) Dynamic Learners

Dynamic learners want to discover truth themselves. Hidden possibilities excite them. Their favorite question: "What can this become? This group functions best by acting and then testing their experience.

d) Innovative Learners

Innovative learners seek the meaning. They learn as they listen and share ideas. For them, being personally involved in the learning process is important.

Innovative learners….

- look for personal meaning while learning
- draw on their values while learning
- enjoy social interaction
- are cooperative
- Want to make the world a better place.

Innovative Learning Styles in Teacher Education

A Teacher has a very respectable position in society. Being a teacher is to be a change agent transforming ideas into ideals and ideals into institutions, which may spread the light of knowledge and wisdom into eternity. Teachers have the major responsibility to create the effective students and society. So including innovative learning styles in Teacher Education is the need of the hour. The student- teachers should acquire the practical knowledge about innovative learning technology, in addition to the theoretical knowledge. In depth knowledge of innovative Technology is imperative for teachers to acquire quality education and to gain global comprehension. The following innovative learning styles in Teacher Education play an important role in producing effective teachers.

Web-Based Learning

The World-Wide Web shortly referred to as www, is a graphical hyper -text based internet tool that provides access to home pages created by individuals, business houses

and other organisations. With a computer having an internet connection, anyone can visit the home pages available in the websites.

Web-based Learning environment may be designed for students of Teacher Education so that both knowledge-based, as well as problem -based learning environment, can be included. The learner should be actively engaged and made to feel the real life experiences through simulation.

Skills for Web-based Learning are
  (i)   Web Processing
 (ii)   Designing Personal Web-pages
(iii)   Handing e-mails

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)

In Computer Assisted Instruction, the lesson and its contents to be learnt are recorded in the software of the computer. The software in the form a C.D., or Cassette is inserted in the Computer and when the student presses the keys in the keyboard, lessons appear in the monitor as small texts, each followed by a question. The student has to answer the questions by pressing the keys and the answers to appear in the monitor screen. If the answer given by the student matches with the answer provided in the study material booted, it will be acknowledged and he is allowed to proceed further. If the given answer is incorrect, he is given alternate explanations or asked to study the same frame again before answering the question. In this way, the computer manages the response of the individual learner.

Merits of Computer Assisted Instruction are
  (i)   The learned can receive the content (study material) sequentially very fast and that too without any error.
 (ii)   As the quality of *the* learning material presented is rich, with animation and appropriate background sound, *the* interest *in* learning is kindled.
(iii)   The computer successfully manages the different responses of the learner by directing him appropriately about what to do further.
(iv)   Based on the learner's achievement, the computer will decide the nature of his further learning.
  (v)   The Computer can act according to the speed of the learner and his learning needs.

Multi-Media Approach in Learning

We could observe in today's classroom the vast individual differences in the potentials and styles of learning among the pupils. Some prefer learning by reading; some others prefer hearing to experts and some like to learn by seeing Majority of students are interested in using audio-visual in their learning. Such kind of individual differences in students learning could be successfully met to a large extent by providing "Multi Media Instruction".

Educational uses of Multi-Media are
(i) It promotes the curiosity of the learners. While learning a topic, the pupils could obtain various information related to the topic in the form of pictures, texts, visuals and sounds acquire comprehensive knowledge.
(ii) To clarify pupil's doubts, the teacher could provide detailed information with the aid of pictures. Drawing and films.
(iii) Pupils could learn the content not only in the textual form but also through visuals in true life-like settings.
(iv) The Habit of self-learning is promoted.
(v) Creative expressions of students are enabled.
(vi) Multi-Media programmes find extensive applications in computer-based training.
(vii) Teachers could prepare "Multimedia programme packages" for pupils effective self-learning.

Tele-Conferencing
In teleconferencing, people situated at distant places establish direct contact through telecommunication and converse among themselves. This sophisticated method liberates people from undertaking expensive and time-consuming long distance journeys. This method is employed in Distance Education Course of Teacher Education.
At present teleconferencing is arranged along three basic types. They are
(i) Video-Conferencing
(ii) Audio-Conferencing
(iii) Computer-Conferencing

Video-Conferencing uses televisions and audio systems and through electronic media makes it possible for participants though not physically present in the same place to participate in a conference face to face and interact with each other.

Audio-Conferencing is an extension of the method of the telephone conversation between any two people; here more than two could participate in conversation and exchange ideas among themselves.

In Computer-Conferencing people at distant places, through their respective individual computers establish contact with the "Control-Computer" (or Master-Computer) and get texts, diagrams, pictures, graphs etc. transferred.

E-Book
An e-book (short form of the electronic book) is an e-text forms the digital media equivalent of conventional printed book. E-books are usually read on personal computers or a smart phones or dedicated hardware devices known as e-book readers or e-book devices. Many mobile phones can also be used to read e-books. Teacher educators can be exposed to this technology so that the learning can be very innovative.

Digital Library

A digital library is a library in which wide range of collections are stored in digital formats as opposed to print, microform, or other media and accessible by computers. The digital content may be stored locally, or accessed remotely via computer networks. A digital library is an information retrieval system of digitally stored content.

Advantages of Digital library are
  (i) No physical boundary
 (ii) Round the clock availability of information
(iii) Multiple access
 (iv) Information Retrieval
  (v) Preservation and Conservation
 (vi) Little physical space
(vii) Low Maintenance Cost

I-Pod in Teacher Education

A powerful distribution system for everything from lectures to language lessons, films to labs, audio -books to tours – is an innovative way to get educational content into the hands of students. This popular new technology is being used for teaching and learning. Included studies, information on podcasting, lesson plan ideas, and discussion groups.

The Lesson Plan page contains more than a dozen activities for a number of grade levels and content areas, with print materials and audio files available for download. The iPod resources section lists tutorials and how-to guides on recording audio and pushing information to other iPods. In the Learn More section, you can read numerous case studies on how iPods are being used successfully in both K-12 and collegiate classrooms. Although a bit difficult to navigate, iPod in Education is a great resource for the teacher who is comfortable using technology and wants to jump into using iPods.

Applicability of Innovative Learning Style

So much has been said in educational circles about people's different ways of perceiving reality. We're inundated with "right brain, left brain" jargon. We hear that some people think with their feelings, senses, and emotions; others with facts and figures. Clearly, we don't all think – or learn –alike.

A critical and careful approach is obviously required when deciding which theory one should follow. First, it is important to take into account the specific characteristics of the educational institution: age group of students (determines how flexible their learning styles can be), the nature of education provided by the school (general or specialized). Second, teachers also have their own approaches to the classroom and their own teaching styles. Thus, it is important to consider not just one, but a variety of approaches to learning styles and selects the most appropriate from both objective and personal

perspectives. It has been proposed that teachers should assess the learning styles of their students and adapt their classroom methods to best fit each student's learning style.

Another essential need is eradicating technophobia of the teacher by practical experiences and seminars.

In general, the factors related to the applicability of innovative learning style are,

- Assessment of learning style of the student
- Eradicating technophobia in teachers
- Availability and accessibility of technology
- Infrastructural facility
- Effective communication
- Cost
- Time

Conclusion

Today, the teacher shoulders a great responsibility of preparing his students for the learning society which is fast emerging. The knowledge and understanding of educational technology not only helps a teacher to be an effective teacher but also assists him to produce effective learners for the learning society. Both theoretical and practical knowledge of educational technology are, therefore, required for every teacher's educator. Innovative learning styles have a strong positive benefit on the learner, applying a mix of teaching approaches to the classroom and in planning the learning opportunities for students should benefit the maximum numbers of students.

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