

Chapter 43

What is Your Teaching Style?

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ABSTRACT

The authors compare the knowledge facilitator and the knowledge dictator in today's organizations. Research around cultures in the Confucius-influenced Eastern hemisphere relating to teaching approaches and classroom behavior is explored and contrasted to the Western approaches. The differences in learning styles play a major role in how facilitators transmit information and an insight into the different ways information is processed by learners is outlined. In order to remain competitive in the 21st century and in today's global environment, organizations must determine what type of teaching style is influential in their learning culture, and an appreciation of the interactive model of program planning is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have postulated that the knowledge facilitator is superior to the knowledge dictator in Western literature in that a knowledge facilitator is germane to learning whereas a knowledge dictator may well stifle learning in today's organizations. However, in some other cultures such as in China, South Korea, Japan or Singapore, scholars and practitioners may prove otherwise (Biggs, 1996). The issue of knowledge facilitator versus knowledge dictator seems to be a perennial topic for scholars and researchers in all cultures. Scholars and practitioners in the West do not seem to agree with their counterparts in oriental cultures. In China the educational practitioner

focuses on lecture methods to deliver material to the students. Students view the teacher as an authority figure rather than a facilitator. Reward is provided for memorizing the material (Biggs, 1996 in Wang, Dennett, & Bryan, 2013). In the Chinese classrooms, rows of chairs are the norm and there is an expectation that the students will listen and remain quiet and not challenge their teacher (Bond, 1992). Bond also states that the textbooks and handouts are provided to help the students to memorize the material. The western approach to teaching is very different to the Eastern approach. Biggs (1994) stresses the approach of the West as being the encouragement of deeper thought. Western teachers teach students how to: Understand the abstract framework of a concept,

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Table 1. Eastern versus Western educational system

Country	Main Purpose
USA	Focus on individual. Develop individual's full potential. Transmitter of cultural heritage.
East Asia	Focus of loyal citizenry. Develop literate citizenry. Help select future leaders. Transmitter of past cultural heritage. Instructor Mode.
USA	Learner-centered. Stresses understanding, application and ability. Use of educational psychology. Learner active.
East Asia	Teacher-centered. Stresses recall of facts. Use of rote learning. Examinations as a motivator. Learner passive. Curricular Orientation.
USA	Present-future orientated. Development of whole person. Social interaction promoted.
East Asia	Past-present orientated. Strict exams to develop academic knowledge. Concepts first then skills (p. 8).

Chan (1999) Adapted from Yee (1989)

to take control of their learning by planning and measuring how well they are learning the material, and to make sure they are enjoying the learning process.

The Table 1 highlights the differences between the Eastern and Western world of teaching.

Likewise, scholars and practitioners in the Eastern Hemisphere do not seem to buy into Western thinking on the premise that knowledge facilitator necessarily leads to effective learning. On the basis of this dichotomy, little agreement has been reached regarding whether a knowledge facilitator or a knowledge dictator is more needed in today's organizations. Because of this dichotomy, subsequent research has been sparked to determine which side of the coin is conducive to learning.

In addition, with the way technology is influencing the way jobs are performed in organizations today; there is a need for training and even a need

for incorporating technology into the learning environment (Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe, & Terry, 2013). Employees' skills need to be updated. Facilitators incorporate an array of digital media; for example: Podcasts and avatars (Dennett & Vasquez-Collina, 2012) into their instructional methods.

The differences in learning styles influence the way a facilitator transmits material and researchers Tennant (2006), Kolb and Fry (1975) and Phillips and Gully (2013) outline the different learning styles that adults may possess. If facilitators understand that learners have different learning styles and that they may process information differently, the facilitators can incorporate different ways of delivering material so that learning is maximized.

The interactive model of program planning is a useful tool when designing training programs and Caffarella (2002) discusses the variety of training programs as well as the variety of learning preferences. In the circular model, the twelve segments remind the reader about the importance of being flexible when designing training programs.

BACKGROUND

In the West, it was individuals like Rogers (1951, 1961, 1969) and Knowles (1970, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1986, 1998, 2005) who shaped academic thinking. Both Rogers and Knowles believed that we cannot teach another person directly and that we can only facilitate his learning. This hypothesis comes from Rogers' (1951, pp. 388-391) personality theory that "every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center," and "the organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived." On the basis of this theory, Rogers (1969) defines the aim of education as the facilitation of learning (pp. 104-105). He further defines the role of the teacher or trainer as that of a facilitator of learning. In order to have a personal rapport with the learner, a successful facilitator must have three attitudinal qualities according to Rogers: (1) realness and

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