



M M SHAHIDUL
HASSAN

Problems of Teaching-learning Process at Tertiary Level

IN the old paradigm of teaching, knowledge is transferred from a course teacher to her/his students in a form of information transfer. But students in this paradigm of teaching passively receive information from the teachers and internalize it through some form of memorization. In this passive teaching mode students watch and listen. Due to increasing competitive demands both in the business world and in the academic community, universities in developed countries strive to provide the most productive classroom experience for their students in order to prepare them for careers in the business world. Management educators constantly search for new and improved teaching methods. The search for the best teaching approach has led educators to explore many different teaching methods and learning styles. Side by side many studies have been carried on the relation between a student's preferred learning style and associated preferred mode of instruction. Universities in Bangladesh are also subject to the pressures of society and employers in preparing the graduates as an employable workforce with relevant skills and expertise needed to meet the changing technology and skills demands of the economy. They demand that educators will discard the old paradigm and search for new and improved teaching methods.

Students always expect that their course teacher will teach them the way they can learn. The teacher should recognize that each student has her/his own preferential style of learning. Therefore, favouring a particular mode of learning over others produces a mismatch between the learning styles of students and the preferred teaching

style of their course teacher. This mismatch or disparity in learning and teaching styles obviously creates frustration for the students. Course teacher must find a teaching style (styles) after soliciting input from students on her/his preferred mode of teaching.

Learners can be classified into one of two possible categories on each of the five dimensions, i.e., the sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, inductive/deductive, active/reflective, and sequential/global dimensions. The most important learning style model is accepted to be active learning. It is an approach to instruction that involves actively engaging students with the course contents through discussions, problem-solving, case studies, role plays, and other engagements. Active learners learn best by doing something with the information, explaining it to others while working in groups; whereas, the reflective learning style consists of absorbing, rather than acting on, new information. It is more than just memorizing some facts, formulas, or dates. Reflective learners are used to working alone and think quietly about the presented information. Sensing learners prefer to take in information that is concrete and practical. Sensing learners understand information best if they can see how it connects to the real world, and intuitive learners dislike repetition and disincorporate 'plug-and-chug' problems. Visual learners remember and retain better what they see (e.g., pictures, charts, graphs, demonstrations, etc). Verbal learners show more interest in reading and hearing, i.e., written and spoken explanations. Sequential learners tend to gain understanding in linear steps, with each step following logically from the previous one. They work with infor-

mation in an organized and systematic way. On the other hand, global learners learn in a more holistic fashion and literally make leaps in their learning. In the Inductive Learning, students examine, group, and label specific "pieces" of information to find patterns and In deductive learning, students get a grammatical rule with examples before they practise a structure.

A course teacher in his/her class teaches students having different preferred learning styles and hence, it is not possible for the teacher to follow different methods of teaching to satisfy individual students separately. The researchers (Felder and Solomon 2001) conducted the study on learning styles and disparity. The studies revealed that students preferred any of the five learning styles, namely active, sensing, visual, and sequential learning styles. The findings of their study also showed that students predominantly preferred active learning as the primary mode of teaching even though individual student's preferred learning style is different. In addition, the investigation found that the primary teaching mode adopted by the instructor had more effect on motivating and helping students learn in spite of learning style mismatch. This finding recommends that the course instructor should first solicit input from students on their preferred mode of teaching and work together to achieve it using the active learning paradigm. Active participation is the best teaching style for all types of students and the students are attracted to the active mode of participation. Dissatisfaction among students creates in many cases when the course instructor follows a teaching style that suits the time allotted for delivery of class material as well as the physical

space constraints imposed by the number of students. In classes with predetermined amounts of material to cover and/or those with large enrolments, instructors have no other choices left but to select the lecture mode because it is less time consuming and deemed more efficient for large class sizes.

Teaching in universities in Bangladesh is viewed as a monopoly of the teachers. Teaching is teacher-centred where a teacher's personal learning style gets preference and the class teacher does not allow students to express themselves, ask questions, and direct their own learning. Students turn into passive learners. However, nowadays the teaching philosophy has started turning to be student-centred. Student-centred learning intends to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students. The choice of teaching styles used depends on the classroom students' socio-demographic characteristics, the teaching philosophy of the teacher, and the subject area. Our educators, in general, are not exposed to modern pedagogies used in developed countries. Teachers need to understand modern pedagogies first and then develop their own understanding before inventing the method/methods that will work best for the students. Bringing teacher training into university will definitely offer great benefits to teaching and learning. Management educators should make policies to improve teaching methods and teaching skills.

The writer is the Vice chancellor, East West University,
Email: vc@ewubd.edu