

# TEACHING STYLE – CONSERVATIVE AND CURRENT SIGNIFICATIONS IN *CORD* VISION

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**Abstract:** Numerous specialists in the field of education sciences show in the current debates interrogatory issues such as: what defines effective teaching? What are the most appropriate ways to teach? What are the most recommended teaching methods, why and in what contexts, etc.? Following the various studies, the literature shows enough teaching methods, a vast methodological system, suggestions and recommendations meant to ensure the success of the didactic activity. This paper is a theoretical analysis of the stylistic typology of teaching proposed by the Center for Occupational Research and Development (*CORD*, 2005), an extremely complex and generous one when it is intended to decipher the significations of the teaching style.

**Key words:** teaching style, teaching goals, teaching methods, educational activities.

## 1. Introduction

In a very general view, teaching involves a set of measures taken to achieve learning among students (Dewey, 1933; Robertson, 1987; Smith, 1987). The teaching styles illustrate the planned interactions between the teacher and the students, so the intentions of engaging students in educational activities that result in the achievement of a set of specific objectives and in close connection with them, the achievement of some school performances (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002; Rink, 2002). Cerghit (1988) defines teaching as a set of specific actions and behaviors, with the main purpose of producing learning. In addition, Cristea (1999) defines the concept by referring to the teacher's "transfer of knowledge at the level of a unidirectional communication model in accordance with certain methodological requirements that condition the learning in general and the school education in particular" (1999, p. 367). The effectiveness of teaching has been associated with the teacher's teaching style, which refers to his teaching preferences. Most expert opinions are in contrast to the operational definition of the teaching style, but there are agreements that it refers to the teaching process and not to its content (Neher, Gordon, Meyer & Steven, 1992). Irby (1995) argues that the teaching style is the manner, method or resources by which teachers strive to convey information in the sense of influencing pupils' behaviors to desirable, understanding and implicit learning. Thus, the teaching

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style is highlighted as a major contribution to the learning process in students that determines the efficiency of the activity or not. Learning theories testify the idea that the teaching style influences the effectiveness of the teaching activity.

## 2. Teaching Style in CORD Vision

The typology of the teaching style that we will focus on is the one offered by the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD 2005), which captures a complex structure of it. Thus, this model analyzes teaching at the level of two dimensions: teaching goals and teaching methods.

The purpose of teaching is interpreted from two perspectives. First, the learning that it generates among the pupils, thus highlighting two types: a memory-centered and a logical one centered on understanding / thinking. The second perspective is the representation of the concepts / ideas / theories by the teacher in the act of teaching, which can be abstract (rigorous, predominant scientific language, theoretical teaching) or applied (applicative character, concrete notion, explicative-applicative teaching).

The second dimension of the teaching style is represented by the teaching methods, which are viewed from two perspectives. The first refers to the cognitive processing of concepts, ideas and theories, and can be of a symbolic type: it provides for teaching and interpretative teaching and interpretative methods (referring to information processing): involves exploration and action methods. The second perspective is that of organizing pupils during their teaching activity, which can be of an individual type: emphasis on individual study and cooperative groups: cooperative learning.

The graphical representation of teaching style model in CORD vision is shown in Figure 1.

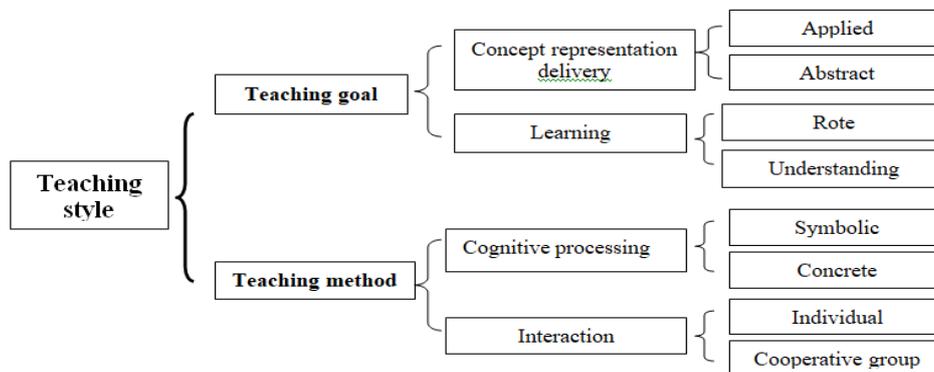


Fig. 1. CORD Teaching style model

Finally, the teaching style of the teacher consists of the combinations of the two dimensions (the aims and methods of teaching), resulting in a typology that includes 16 teaching styles:

**Style AA:** rote learning – abstract concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – individual study; **Style AB:** rote learning - abstract concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – cooperative group; **Style AC:** rote learning – abstract concept representation & concrete cognitive processing –

*individual study; Style AD: rote learning – abstract concept representation & concrete cognitive processing – cooperative group.*

**Style BA:** rote learning-applied concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – individual study; **Style BB:** rote learning-applied concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – cooperative group; **Style BC:** rote learning-applied concept representation & concrete cognitive processing- individual study; **Style BD:** rote learning-applied concept representation & concrete cognitive processing – cooperative group.

**Style CA:** understanding learning – abstract concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – individual study; **Style CB:** understanding learning – abstract concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – cooperative group; **Style CC:** understanding learning – abstract concept representation & concrete cognitive processing – individual study; **Style CD:** understanding learning – abstract concept representation & concrete cognitive processing - cooperative group.

**Style DA:** understanding learning – applied concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – individual study; **Style DB:** understanding learning - applied concept representation & symbolic cognitive processing – cooperative group; **Style DC:** understanding learning – applied concept representation & concrete cognitive processing – individual study; **Style DD:** understanding learning – applied concept representation & concrete cognitive processing – cooperative group.

In order to provide a comprehensive view of this stylistic typology, we will present the defining notes of the teaching styles. Depending on the purpose of teaching, which is highlighted in the form of a constant dimension, the teaching styles can be categorized into four categories, which will optimize the proposed analytical approach.

### **Category 1: Teaching styles AA, AB; AC; AD**

For the first category of styles, the aims of teaching revolve around the students' mechanical learning of the theoretical content transmitted during the didactic activity. From the perspective of this fundamental feature of excessive transmission concentration, teaching styles can be assimilated to academic / discursive or reproductive. Therefore, teaching in this context, it has traditionalist features according to which it is limited to a communication activity, information transmission, the presentation of the subject matter by the teacher. As a teaching method, we discuss two distinct categories on these styles: traditional and modern conversational-exhibition methods (AA and AB styles) and exploration, action, traditional and modern (AC and AD styles) (Cerghit, 2006). The training strategy is complemented by the ways of organizing students, these teaching styles targeting, on the one hand, the individual study, which implies a considerable responsibility of the learner towards the learning activity, his own work effort, the personal learning style (the styles AA and AC) and, on the other hand, cooperative learning, ensuring pupils' communication and interactivity, an active character of learning (AB and AD styles).

The analysis of the first category styles highlights plus and minus. A limit of styles is excessive concentration on the delivery or transmission of knowledge by the teacher, a process in front of which the student plays the role of receiver and reproducer of information. Also in the category of limits is the predominant use of the conversational and exhibition methods or the individual study. The transition to an effective style is due to the use of dynamic methods such as exploratory and action and, moreover, to

stimulating learning through cooperation, a context in which the student becomes an active and conscious subject of his or her development.

### **Category 2: Teaching styles BA; BB; BC; BD**

The second category of styles brings a new vision of teaching, in the sense that it promotes the applicative / concrete and explicative character of the knowledge conveyed during the instructive-educational activity. The mere presentation of matter, with an emphasis on the abstract / scientific nature of information, is substituted by a set of multiple functions and actions to access and ensure the comprehensiveness of knowledge. Although learning culminates in the memorization of processed content, students make the leap from “know” to “know how to do”, assimilation of knowledge being complemented by the acquisition of skills or knowledge skills, acquiring new dimensions: it is a progressive and clear respecting the itinerary from simple to complex, from unknown to known, from theoretically to concrete. Translating the contents into an explanatory register where the way of knowledge is an active one, and the actual exposure is done in an articulated and coherent manner these efficiency and productivity styles. The teaching methodology (teaching methods and forms of student organization) are those described above.

### **Category 3: Teaching styles CA; CB; CC; CD**

In terms of this category of styles, the teaching goals undergo changes in terms of the type of learning that they require for students. But first, we have to mention that teaching is maintained at a high and constant level of abstraction, which means that teachers build their pedagogical discourse on the basis of a theoretical knowledge. Most often, this teaching option proves to be unproductive, as it greatly impedes students' understanding of the knowledge and, moreover, distorts communication, especially the didactic one. In essence, the understanding of information is intimately given at the level of the pupil's development and training, to his or her background. If the earlier styles involved the memory capacity and then the assimilation of the reproduction of the acquired knowledge, the teaching styles in category 3 access the thinking, the superior intellectual capacities in the learning process. Even if teaching teaches abstract content, the implication of thinking in their processing allows them to be logically assimilated. This fact resizes learner roles in the learning process. If initially he was passive and conformist, in this new vision, the pupil becomes active and directly involved through his entire personality in school activity, thus gaining greater autonomy and responsibility. Even the roles of the teacher gain new accents, being concerned about the design of educational situations meant to involve, engage and determine the active participation of students. Based on these features, styles fit into the current paradigm, that of centering student education and learning. The training methodology provides the same sets of teaching methods, namely - conversational and exhibition methods, exploration and action methods, and the arrangements for organizing individual or cooperative learning described in previous analyzes.

### **Category 4: Teaching styles YES; DB; DC; DD**

The last category of styles presents the highest efficacy and productivity of teaching, in terms of the explicative-applicative character of the knowledge and training methodology used. From this point of view, learning evolves from memorizing knowledge to

processing and logical assimilation. Based on the goals and teaching strategies used, teaching becomes an activating, strategic one that puts the learner at the center of the preoccupation. During teaching, the teacher uses a set of teaching strategies that predict a methodical and effective route, an appropriate chain of concrete teaching and learning situations. In the context of these learning situations, the teacher ensures the accessibility of the knowledge transmitted in relation to the cognitive potential of the pupils, making an adapted didactic speech that contributes to the achievement of the formative - educational objectives. According to these styles, teaching is defined as an offer of many learning situations that will trigger true learning, cognitive, affective and acting experiences. Educational situations designed by the teacher stimulate student conscious and active participation and support intrinsic motivation for learning. Based on the characteristics of these styles, teaching promotes the stimulation of students' participation in the activity; learning through cooperation; a balanced relationship between exigency and indulgence; creating and maintaining a stimulating and secure learning climate; promoting democratic relations; fostering interactive communication (Ebmeier, & Good, 1979). Moreover, the teaching in terms of styles in this category is defined by the involvement and motivation of the students, by directing and supporting the process of learning among the pupils, by sensitizing them to the didactic activity. All these outline a series of "actions, different in form and content, oriented towards the pupil in order to develop the multiple sides of his personality, actions that underlie the structuring of the entire teaching behavior (Albulescu, 2008, p. 8).

### **3. Conclusion**

The analyses carried out at the four stylistic categories inevitably lead to emphasizing the main assumptions of some implicit paradigms: behaviorist, cognitivist and constructivist. From some points of view, behavioral accents can be highlighted in the roles assumed by both teachers and students in relation to the first two stylistic categories. Thus, the teacher is the only exponent of knowledge; he selects structures and processes the information; he / she delivers / delivers the content to be taught by students, often using methods that ensure a high level of retention among students; the teacher has control over the whole lesson. Referring to the student, we recall the predominantly passive role in assimilating some readily processed / processed content by the teacher. With the teaching styles of categories 3 and 4 we can discuss cognitive and constructivist influences. Contrary to behaviorism, cognitivism highlights the internal processes of learning. In other words, emphasis is placed on the mental processes involved in learning, emphasizing the student's role in the learning process, now becoming an active one by diversifying learning strategies, ranging from simple ones to complex ones involving deeper processing material subject to learning. Equally, the roles of the teacher undergo a series of changes, making it a facilitator of the learner's learning process by organizing and structuring the material subject to learning, and further stimulating student activism by involving them in authentic learning situations.

From the aspect of the constructivist dimension, which is specific to the teaching styles of category 4, the fundamental is the perspective on the subject of education. In this respect, the student builds his / her own knowledge based on personal learning experiences or life experiences; in other words, the "learner subject performs a reflective activity on his or her own knowledge" (Bocos, 2013, p. 39). The main contribution of the

teaching styles in the fourth category consists in designing and implementing some didactic activities that urge and provoke the pupil to build his / her own knowledge universe. Under these conditions, constructivism promotes active and dynamic learning, an adaptive process of building knowledge. Teaching also exceeds the limits of meaning and tends to stimulate discovery learning, to induce some uncertainty among students in order to encourage and exploit their potential, thus fueling learning through learning and supporting the extensive knowledge-building process.

The educational value of this stylistic typology, with an emphasis on teaching styles in category 4, consists in increasing the effectiveness of teaching activity and implicitly in obtaining higher school outcomes among students. Beyond this, it is imperative for each teacher to know their teaching style and to identify ways of optimization and improvement.

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