

Mosston Teaching Styles

It is well accepted that teaching styles have an important contribution to make to children's learning in PE and that different styles affect different aspects of the teaching process, such as lesson "climate" and the teacher's ability to meet individual needs (Macfayden, 2000). By far the most detailed analysis of teaching styles and behaviours came from work originated in the United States by Mosston (1966) and have been developed since his initial publication providing a framework for teaching physical education in different contexts all over the world that is still very relevant today. The Spectrum of Teaching Styles is "a framework of options in the relationships between teacher and learner" (Mosston, 1992, p.56) that incorporates ten landmark teaching styles along a continuum based on the degree to which the teacher or pupil assumes responsibility for what is taking place in the lesson. At one extreme of the Spectrum are the direct and teacher-led approaches and at the other end more open-ended and pupil-centred approaches where the teacher's role is predominately facilitatory. Direct teaching styles are those where the teacher makes most of the decisions, whereas indirect styles which are more pupil-centred, involve the learner in problem-solving, experimentation and self discovery.

The Spectrum offers teachers a range of options that can effectively accommodate diverse learning styles and meet specific learning needs of all pupils. Table 1 below illustrates the range of teaching styles in the Spectrum and the degree of teacher-pupil involvement in examples from PE contexts.

The Spectrum is no straightjacket for teachers. Rather it is a flexible framework around which one can organise teaching effectively. No one style is associated with any particular physical activity but emphasises the relationships between styles, rather than their differences. It allows a huge degree of freedom that celebrates teachers' creativity and by using a variety of styles in any given lesson or activity area, allows the very particular needs of children with dyspraxia in mainstream PE lessons to be met more effectively. (p. 21-22)

(Source: Dyspraxiafoundation (2007). Retrieved Oct 10, 2007 from http://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/downloads/Professional_Journal_Issue_4.pdf)

Table 1. The Spectrum of Teaching Styles and teacher-pupil involvement

Spectrum Style	Learning Intentions	Teacher-Pupil Involvement	Practical PE Example
Style A Command	Motor skill acquisition	Teacher makes all decisions	Performing a somersault on a trampoline
Style B Practice	Motor skill development	Pupils carry out teacher-prescribed tasks	Groups of four practice the “dig” in volleyball
Style C Reciprocal	Working with others Observing. Analysis	Pupils work in pairs: one performs the other provides feedback	In twos, practice the set shot in basketball
Style D Self-check	Helping others assess their own performance.	Pupils assess their own performance against criteria	Shot putt in athletics. Success criteria on a teaching card
Style E Inclusion	Maximising involvement. Assisting others to succeed	Teacher planned. Pupils monitor own progress	Using hurdles set at different heights and distances
Style F Guided Discovery	Discovery learning	Pupils solve movement problems with assistance	Pupils try different start positions for the forward roll in gymnastics
Style G Divergent Problem-Solving	Independent thinking Social: confidence, group work	Pupils solve movement problems without assistance	Devising a new co-operative game using a range of equipment
Style H Individual	Planning	Teacher determines content. Pupil plans the programme	Making individual decisions about constructing a dance routine
Style I Learner initiated	Selection and application. Personal responsibility.	Pupil plans own programme. Teacher is advisor	Discussion with teacher/tutor about research topic
Style J Self teach	Understanding. Independence	Pupil takes full responsibility for the learning process	Little application to PE in schools