The Spectrum of Teaching Styles: Style D – The Self-Check Style

Robert S. Christenson

David C. Barney
david_barney@byu.edu

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The Spectrum of Teaching Styles
Style D - The Self-Check Style

Robert S. Christenson, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor
Health and Human Performance -
Physical Education
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK
robert.christenson@okstate.edu

and

David Barney, Ed. D.
Assistant Professor
Health and Human Performance -
Physical Education
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK
david.barney@okstate.edu

Muska Mosston (1964) created, and Mosston and Ashworth (1994) revised the Spectrum of Teaching Styles in an effort to identify several of the more profound instructional episodes in the teaching-learning process. While developed with physical education as a focal point, the eleven teaching styles included in the teaching spectrum are based upon the countless instructional decisions that are made prior to (PRE-IMPACT), during (IMPACT) and following an instructional episode (POST IMPACT). Based upon who is making the decisions, styles A to E are grouped into a first cluster representing reproduction styles. Styles F to K represent a discovery style of teaching characterized by creation, as well as production of the unknown. In the 2008 October/November issue of the OAHPERD Journal, the first in this series of Mosston’s spectrum presented Style A (Command Style) and Style B (Practice Style). In the 2009 March/April issue, the second in the series presented the Style C (Reciprocal Style), which is the third teaching style on the spectrum. This article, the third in the series, presents the Self-Check Style which has as its biggest revelation—the start of a shift of responsibility during the instructional phase of the lesson to the learner. This transfer during the teaching-learning process demands, on the part of the learner, an in-depth look at the instructional objectives, performance expectations, and instructional cues to create a mental picture of the performance. It is during the “guided practice” phase of the lesson that the learner also takes on the role of evaluator to provide feedback and change behavior.

Mosston’s Spectrum of Teaching Styles

Mosston’s Spectrum of Teaching Styles identifies the various decision making alternatives that help to define the “teaching-learning” process.
Mosston (1994), in his presentation of the styles that comprise the spectrum, identifies an underlying premise within the Axiom his belief that teaching behavior is a "chain of decision making" and that "every act of deliberate teaching is a consequence of a prior decision." The framework of the spectrum was developed to identify a set of instructional decisions, and each teaching style has a different set of decisions based upon who has the decision-making power. Each of the teaching styles along the continuum is of equal value, as it responds to the individual learners engaged in the teaching-learning process. Mosston (1994) created a framework for classifying teaching behavior into a style by identifying six underlying premises (see diagrams #1 and #2) including (1) The Axiom, (2) The Anatomy of Any Style, (3) The Decision Makers, (4) The Spectrum, (5) The Clusters, and (6) The Developmental Effect. In addition to each of the decisions that define the different teaching-learning conditions of a specific style, there are factors that influence who is best equipped to make a decision, as well as having an impact on the teaching-learning process. Factors that impact the learning environment include such things as: (1) subject matter, (2) individual learning differences, (3) time allocation, (4) facilities and instructional resources, (5) learner readiness, (6) teacher instructional effectiveness, (7) learner interest, (8) learner motivation, (9) lesson content and (10) curricular-related experiences. No one style can serve all the needs of an individual learner nor could a single style come close to addressing the learning necessities of a class full of learners.

Diagram 1  The Structure of the Spectrum
### Decision Sets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preimpact</th>
<th>Decision Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Content: Preparation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Objective of the episode</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Selection of a teaching style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anticipated learning style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Whom to teach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Subject matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When to teach (time):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Starting time</td>
<td>d. Stopping time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Pace and rhythm</td>
<td>e. Interval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Duration</td>
<td>f. Termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Modes of communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Treatment of questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Organizational arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Where to teach (location)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Attire and appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Parameters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Class climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Evaluative procedures and materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Decision Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Content: Execution and Performance)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Implementing and adhering to the preimpact decisions (1-14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adjustment decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postimpact</th>
<th>Decision Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Content: Evaluation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gathering information about the performance in the impact set (by observing, listening, touching, smelling, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assessing the information against criteria (instrumentation, procedures, materials, norms, values, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Providing feedback to the learner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Diagram 2

The Anatomy of Any Style of Teaching on the Spectrum
The Self-Check Style

The most basic and easily identifiable characteristic of the Self-Check Style is related to feedback. The performance in this style is evaluated by the individual learner performing the skill rather than the teacher, another student, or another adult. The selection of the task, individual skill or event is critical to success of this style.

In the Pre-Impact set of decisions, the selection of the skill, task or series of skills to be executed is critical so the learner can evaluate his/her performance. The decisions included in this phase are made by the teacher due to the critical nature of the type of activity. The learner must be able to create a vision for the event and the performance expectations and then conduct an assessment of the performance and compare the two, creating feedback as the necessary component in this style. The decisions that are included as parts of the impact phase of the lesson are made by the learner.

It is the responsibility of the teacher, during the various activity phases of the lesson, to provide assessment instruction, as well as support for the learner to become the best possible self-evaluator. The teacher helps the learner to identify “Key Elements” of the skill/event in an effort to assist the learner to focus on the various instructional cues. The teacher ceases to be the central focus and the transfer of decision making power lies with the learner. The teacher’s role now is to support the learner to become a better assessor of the performance as well as evaluator with regard to when objectives have been met. This power of the learner to match expectations with performance, when analyzed correctly as a function in the post impact phase of the lesson, will have a very positive and profound impact on the final understanding of how to perform a technically correct task/event. There is great instructional strength in the self-check style because the learner must focus on all the details connected to the performance expectations. The learner is challenged with understanding the elements of the task/event along with the performance expectations. The feedback on each and every trial is immediate and when processed provides an intrinsic sense of how to change the last performance to match expectations. The processing of all the feedback, along with the adjustments in the tasks/events, is the responsibility of the learner. This decision-making power to adjust remains with the learner as long as decisions made by the teacher during the pre-impact phase of the lesson, are neither ignored or violate the teaching-learning process. The Self-Check Style also facilitates learning allowing it to progress at a rate best designed by the learner. Learning progresses slow enough to allow for learning, steady enough to make possible a feeling of success, and fast enough to meet all the instructional objectives of the lesson. In the Self-Check Style, post-impact phase is completed by the learner. This style, to be utilized effectively, requires a self-starter type maturity. The learner must be able to focus on executing the task, and then instantly switch roles and be able to assess how the instructional cues were achieved, while monitoring both the intrinsic and extrinsic feedback.

When using the Self-Check Style, the selection of a skill or event with an easy-to-assess outcome will facilitate the teaching-learning-evaluation process. Learning tasks that involve “closed skills” in nature, such as rolling a ball at pins, kicking/shooting a ball into a goal, throwing or jumping a distance, putting a ball to a hole, an arrow at a target or a shuttlecock inside a court, helps to facilitate the extrinsic feedback. While there are many advantages to the self-check style of teaching on the Spectrum, there is markedly less skill-based instructional communication between the teacher and learner. The performance feedback and resultant assessment/evaluation in the Self-Check Style leads the learner to be more confident as an individual, independent as a learner, and more self-assured as a life-long participant in a variety of activities. Infrastructure of the Self-Infrastructure of the Self-Check Style

### The Pre-Impact Phase

1. Instructional objectives for the episode
2. The “Teaching Style” that best serves the lesson
3. Learning styles
4. Whom to teach
5. Subject matter for the lesson
6. When to teach (time)
7. Starting time; Pace & Rhythm; Duration
8. End time; Transition / Interval; Termination
9. Modes of communication
10. Treatment of questions
11. Organization of arrangements
12. Where to teach (location)
13. Posture (instructional cues)
14. Attire and appearance
15. Parameters
16. Class climate
17. Evaluative procedures and materials
18. Other

### The Impact Phase

1. Implementing Pre-Impact decisions (1-16)
2. Adhering to the Pre-Impact decisions (1-16)
3. Adjustments decisions
4. Other

### The Post Impact Phase

1. Gathering information about the performance in the impact set
2. Assessing information against criteria
3. Providing feedback to the learner
   - About subject matter
     - a. Value statements
     - b. Corrective statements
     - c. Neutral statements
     - d. Ambiguous statements
4. Treatment of questions
5. Assessing the selected teaching style
6. Assessing the anticipated learning style
7. Adjustment decisions
8. Other
Make It Relevant

By Joe Jones

A few years ago I was asked to present a thirty minute presentation to incoming professors attending an in-service workshop as they were beginning their first year at Cameron University. Being a HPER professor I was honored to be invited as a speaker but was uncertain as to what I could say to university professors that were extremely qualified in their areas of expertise. As I began to ponder the possibilities of standing before this esteemed group of educators I knew I would not impress them with any HPER jargon but at the same time I could sense their uneasiness as I remembered my first in-service training program. There were several other professors from other disciplines that would be presenting during this session and I didn’t want to be “just another speaker” or did I want to try and “one up” the others. I wanted to do something unique, yet helpful and informational. I strongly believe that what I shared that day several years ago is beneficial today as we prepare our graduates to enter the work force.

I began my presentation with a pair of “ABC Bears.” Two small battery operated bears that turned on and face to face with each other began to sing the ABC song. Each one taking turns and the conclusion was “won’t you sing with me now.” Obviously I had everyone’s attention as that was the last thing anyone in the room expected; starting a speech with a pre-turn.

It wasn’t that long ago that the students those professors would have in their classes were learning the ABC’s and how to grow up and become successful in life. Many times I was asked by my parents: “what did you learn in school today?” Most of the time the answer to that question was; “nothing.” How sad. It’s even sadder when the same question is asked of a high school or college student and the same answer is given: “nothing.” But it’s true and that should send up red flags and shout at educators are you teaching things that are relevant? I can understand why some students feel like school is a twelve year prison sentence. They show up, do their time and feel relieved that it’s over. Over the past few years I have noticed that many of my students walk into the class room as though they are going to the gallows. It’s an attitude of let’s get this over with so I can get out of here. I have to ask myself why? Am I the problem? Is there something I need to do and the answers are yes, yes and yes. As a coach and a teacher I’ve always believed that if nothing is expected, nothing will be achieved and I think this is at the base of the problem. Success is a process that demands ownership and it appears that many of our students today have learned to rely on the yes but, poor me attitude or it’s the fault of someone else that they are not doing well. I for one will not let them buy into that excuse. Bottom line is this: if they have time to set around and feel sorry for themselves, they have too much free time and immediately I encourage them to get involved in some type of community or child service program. Visit a hospital, a nursing home, a senior citizens center, a YMCA, a boys or girls club, etc. Once they visit one or more of these places they realize how good they have it.

My point in this; are we challenging our students and making the information we are giving our students relevant? Everyone has problems, successful people solve them. It’s that simple. I want my student’s motivated everyday in every class and I want them to leave that classroom with a feeling that says I’ve been challenged. I want them to feel like it was exciting and they can’t wait to get back to hear more. That won’t happen if the information is not relevant, something they can touch, feel and embrace with 100% enthusiasm. There are hundreds if not thousands of ways to accomplish this but a reminder once in awhile is a good starting place. It’s sad but true; “Many teach, few inspire.” The education department at Cameron has a vision statement that each student is challenged to accomplish. (1) Be competent, (2) be caring and (3) be committed. That is a great start toward making what we teach relevant. Perhaps never before has the information we deliver had more meaning and more importance in the development of a healthy and productive citizen. If we can’t get excited about our product and our vision now, it will never happen. Let’s encourage each other and “make it relevant.”

References


