

## The Teacher, Teaching and the Learning Styles of the Students

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### Abstract

The learning styles are ways or methods through which a pupil learns, perceives and understands information. The recognition of the learning styles is very important as it creates for the teachers the possibility to select the techniques and proper strategies in accordance with these styles. This study aims to highlight the importance that the style recognition has from the teacher and to evaluate the role in adopting the teaching conform them. In the study we have assessed if the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching conform pupils' style leads to a more effective learning. The study included teachers ( N=30 ) and pupils ( N=300 ) from the elementary cycle of schools in the city of Tirana. The instrument used was the questionnaire for the teachers and another one for the pupils of the schools in the study. From the analysis of the data we noticed that recognizing the learning styles from the teachers helps in the realization of the more productive hours and the improvement of the quality of the school hours. Each pupil has his own way of learning. This way is taken into consideration from the teacher when he plans the activities during his teaching, in order to achieve success in each student. The teacher plays an important role in adopting the teaching methods according to the students' styles by ensuring a more effective learning. The use of information technology during class hours helps the pupils in their learning styles. Providing information to the parents for their children methods of learning is very important, as it makes the parents create the best conditions for the children to study.

**Keywords:** teachers, teaching, learning styles, adoption

### Introduction

The learning styles are ways and methods used by the students to learn, percept and understand information. People have always talked about the learning styles since the ancient times. Aristotle stated: "Each child has specific talents and skills". He also noticed the changes in his students in the area of information obtaining and data extraction. The recognition of the learning styles from the teachers is very important, as it creates opportunities to organize the work by selecting techniques and strategies in accordance to the students' needs. Recognizing the learning styles is one of the general standards for the teachers. Standard number 6 states: "The teacher accepts and keeps in his mind the changes of the methods of the learning styles. The teacher creates for the students the possibilities and conditions for their progress". The learning styles depend on the cognitive, emotional and environmental factors and in different individuals these factors have various degrees of impact.

### Some approaches on the learning styles

Learning styles are considered as complex methods (James and Gardner, 1995) of information perception, the feelings and behaviors in learning situations (Marriam and Caffarella, 1991), a special approach of the behaviors and opinions which relate to the learning context (Swanson, 1995). From the analyses of the learning styles are distinguished four aspects which are related to: perception (sight), cognitive knowledge (mental), feelings (affective) and views expressed through behavior (active) (Dunn & Dunn, 1993). Based on these aspects are classified four types of styles. According to Kolb the learning styles are: Divergent (open), Assimilating (adopting), Convergent, Accommodating (adoptive). Honey and Mumford based on Kolb classified these styles in: active style, reflective style, theoretical style and pragmatist style.

In the study of Demis Kunje, Elizabeth Selemeni-Meke and Keiichi Ogawan in Kobe University in Japan the researchers prove that the relationship between the learning programs, teaching and learning are closely related. There are other approaches that are especially oriented in the treatment of this relationship (Kunje, Meke - Selemeni & Ogawa, 2009).

### **Learning styles according to Kolb**

Learning styles are terms through which the natural or permanent model of individual is prescribed, the way they take and perceive information. People change by the ways they study (Gardner, 1995). Kolb model refers to the theory of experimental learning where the individual uses all his cognitive skills.

### **Learning styles according to Gregorc**

According to Anthony F. Gregorc learning styles are a set of observed behaviors or qualities, through which the mind relates to the world, and finds its way to obtain new information. These skills may change with time. He makes a certain division of the learning styles: students with a continuing real learning, students with an occasional real learning, students with a continuing abstract learning and students with an occasional abstract learning.

### **Learning styles according to Solomon and Felder**

According to Felder & Solomon, students possess these learning styles: active, reflective, sensitive, instinctive, virtual and verbal.

### **Learning styles according to Dunn Dunn**

According to Dunn Dunn, learning styles are a combination of many biological features which contribute in concentration, each in its own way and all together as one. According to Dunn Dunn, there are different learning styles even among the family members. Some various elements develop as a product of students' experiences and other factors too. According to Dunn Dunn, there are some factors that affect the style of learning such as:

**Environment** which includes elements such as sounds, noises, temperature, the way of class organization etc.. Some students like to study with the music on the surroundings, some others prefer the quietness, some the light and some warm areas, and some want the class to be organized differently.

**Physiological factors**, which relate to the skills to learn, desire to study, the proper time to study. Thus, some pupils find it difficult to study late hours, and some not; some prefer to study during the classroom hours.

**Social preferences**, which include learning with a friend, individual, in the group or with an adult;

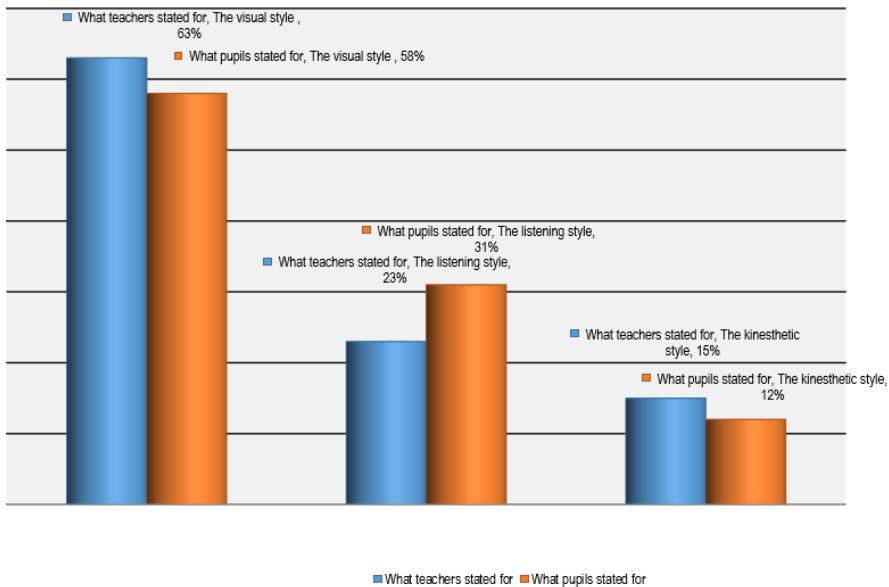
**Psychological factors** which include the global/analytical learning, impulsive and reflective learning.

### **Methodology**

This study aims to evaluate importance of recognizing the learning style from the teacher, and the way the teacher organizes its job based on this recognition, in order to increase the quality of the learning efficiency. The main goal of this study is to prove that the recognition of the learning styles from the teacher and the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching adopted according to the learning styles, heads to a more effective learning of the pupils. We used a quantitative method of study, realized through the questionnaires of the teachers and pupils. The population of this study comprises of the teachers of some elementary and middle schools of the district of Tirana, who teach third grades and fourth grades of elementary education. The teachers sample was N=30 and the students' sample was N=300, all in the schools participant in the study.

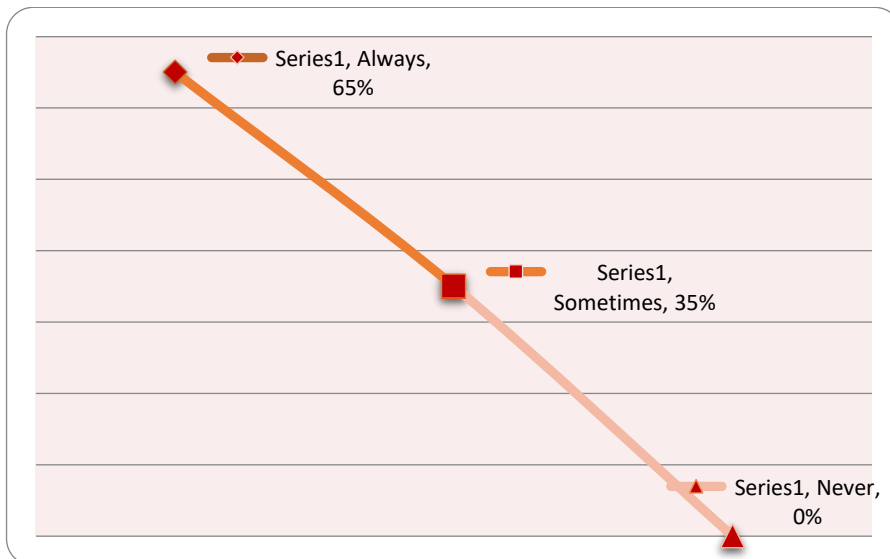
### **Results and discussion**

In order to get the right answers, we asked questions to the teachers and the students. In relation to the question to the teachers that "Which of the learning styles have you seen to your students" 63 % of the teachers stated the visual style, 23% stated the listening style, and 15 % stated the kinesthetic style. When we asked the students that in what learning style they feel better, 58% stated the visual style, 31% the listening style and 12% the kinesthetic style. Here is the graphic presentation of the acquired data:



**Graphic 1: Learning style according to the teachers and the students**

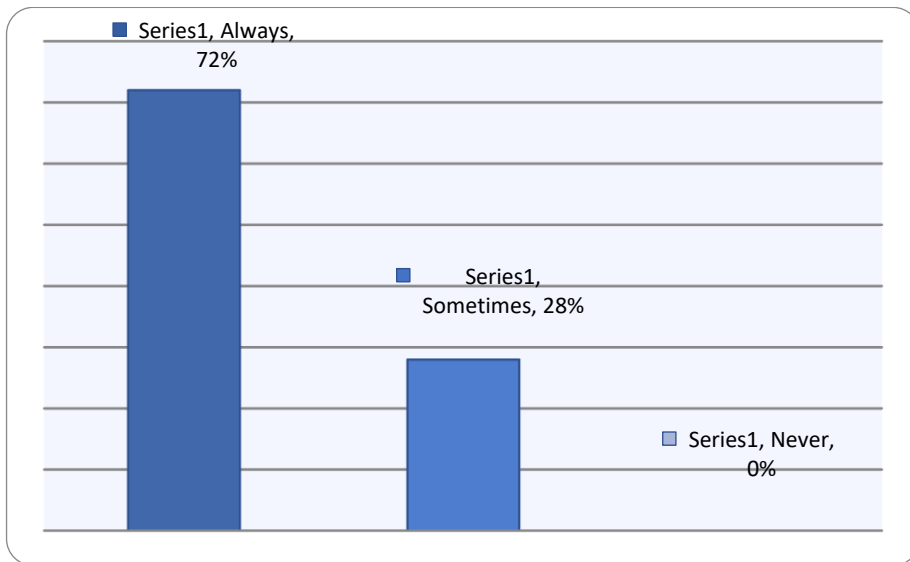
In relation to the question: "Do you keep in mind the learning styles of your students when you prepare the lesson planning", 65 % of the teachers stated the answer *always*, 35 % stated *sometimes*. Here is the graphic presentation of the data:



**Graphic 2: Taking into consideration the learning styles during the lesson planning**

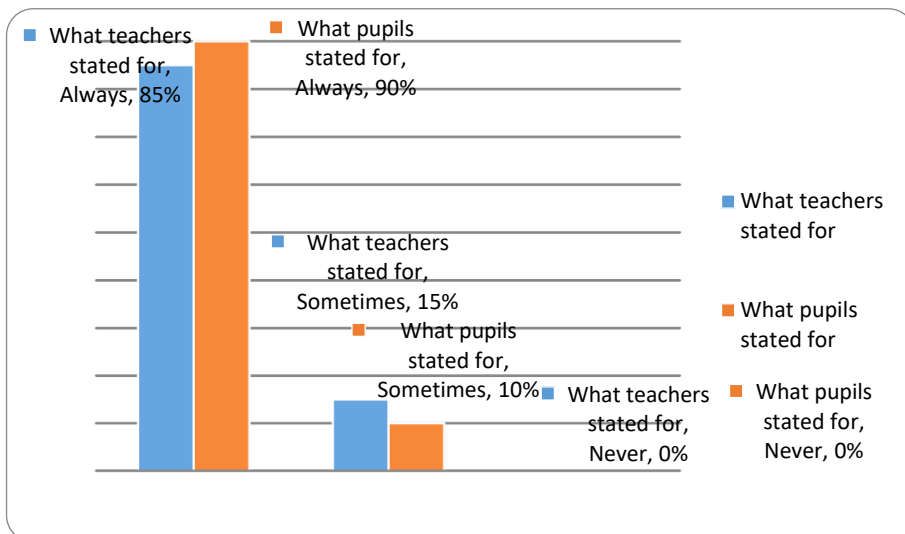
The question to the teachers if "Recognizing the learning styles helps them to organize the lesson hour", 72% of the teachers stated that it *always* helps them as they consider the student learning style, 28 % stated that it helps them

sometimes as they not always take into consideration the student learning style. Here is the graphic presentation of the data:



**Graphic 3: Organization of the lesson process based on the learning styles of the students**

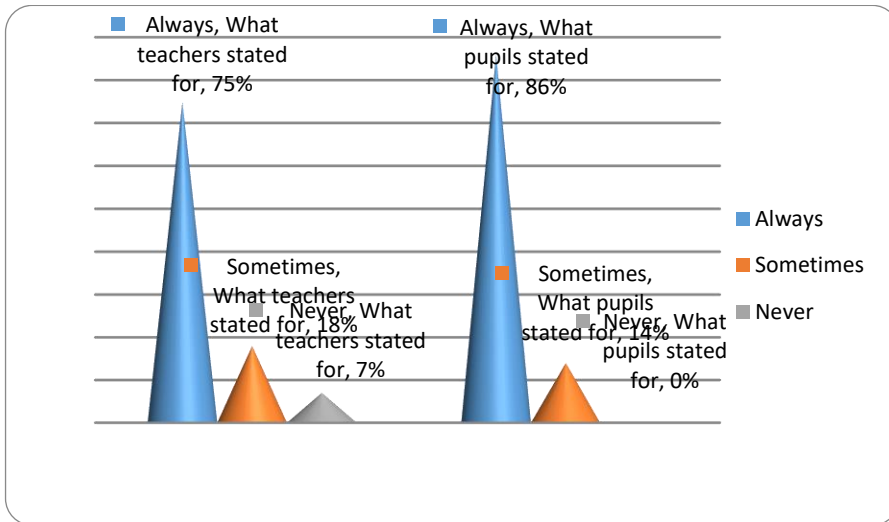
In relation to the question: "Do you think that the selection of the techniques and strategies of teaching according to the styles, helps in realizing the lesson competencies", 65 % of the teachers replied *always*, 35 % *sometimes*. Here is the graphic presentation of the data:



**Graphic 4: The impact of the techniques and strategies in fulfilling the competencies**

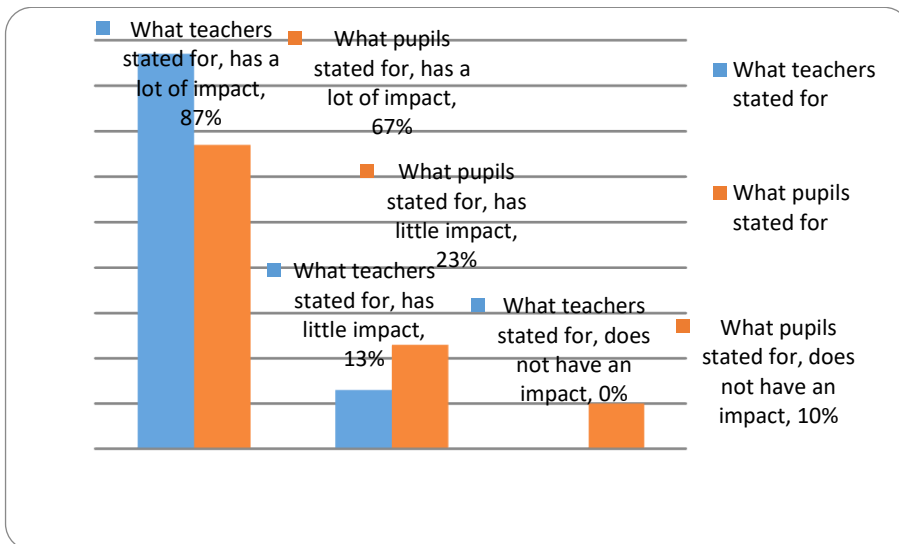
In relation to the question "Does the technology help the students in learning according to the styles", 75% of the teachers replied that it always helps them, 18% that it helps them sometimes, and 7 % of them think that technology does not play

an important role in students learning according to their learning styles. Around 86% of the pupils stated that it always helps them, while 14% think that it helps them sometimes depending on the lesson techniques.



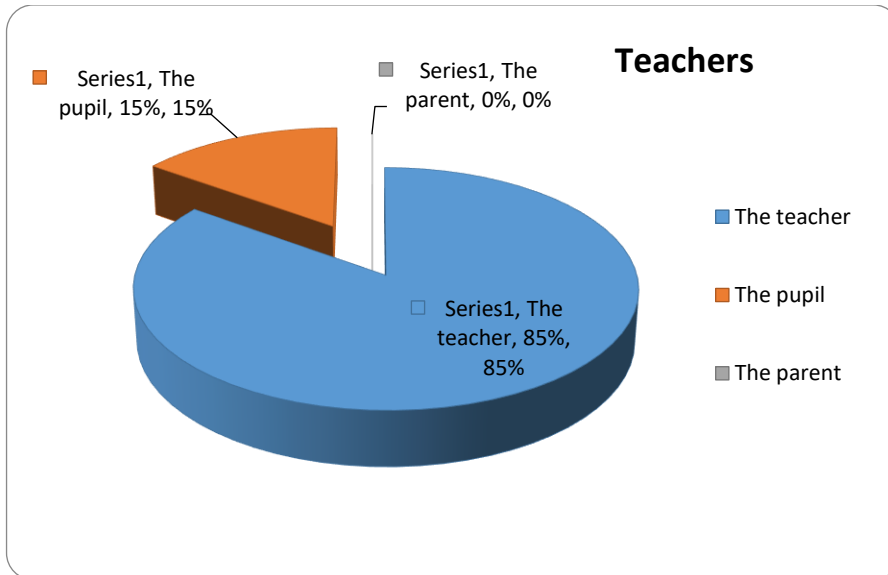
**Graphic 5: The help of technology on the student learning styles**

In the question “Does the information of the parents about the learning styles of their children have an impact in increasing the learning efficacy”, 87% of the teachers stated that it has a *lot of impact*, 13% stated *little*. For the same question, 67% of the pupils think that informing their parents has a *lot of impact*, 23% think that it has *little impact* and 10% think that it does *not have an impact*.



**Graphic 6: Information of the parents for learning styles of their children**

For the question “ Is learning a product created by the pupil, the teacher or the parent”, 80% of the teachers state that learning is a product created from the teacher and only 20% state that is a product created from the pupil. The exact answer would have been that learning is a product created by the pupil and is helped by the teacher.



**Graphic 7: Learning as a product created by the teacher, the parent or the pupil**

### Discussions

Referring to the answers of the teachers and the students related to the recognition of the learning styles, we notice that there are similar answers from them all, which shows that teachers know pretty well their students' learning styles. What is more obvious is that it prevails the visual style followed from the listening style. Only 65% of the teachers think they always keep in mind their pupils' learning style when they prepare the lesson plan, and 35% of them state that they only think of those occasionally.

The answers and the graphic presentations show that the lesson organization is done according to the learning styles, where 72% of the teachers state that they always keep in mind the students' learning styles in planning of the learning process and 18% state that they only sometime think of the learning styles.

The selection of the techniques and proper strategies in accordance to the learning styles has an impact on the formation of the learning competencies. This is shown clearly in the graphics presented. The study showed that the technology helps the pupils to learn according to their learning styles. This is stated from the teachers and the pupils that participated in the study.

This study showed that is very important to inform the parents for the learning styles of their children. In the interviews with some parents of the pupils included in the study, we saw that when the parents have the right information of the way their children learn, they can support them better.

### Conclusions

This study is important, as it tries to see the role of teaching adaptation in student learning styles. The study revealed that the teacher plays an important role in adapting the teaching according to the learning styles, by recognizing and using the appropriate teaching methods, techniques and strategies in the lesson. Teachers should perform classroom activities such as competitions, role-play, and group work so that all students feel involved. Teachers should receive appropriate training in the use of teaching methods, by adapting them to pupils' learning needs and styles. The teacher pays attention to the

recognition of student learning styles, as it helps in the realization of learning competences. Most teachers always keep in mind the learning styles when planning the lesson plan, which creates the opportunity for better planning of the lesson hour.

Starting from the results of the schools included in the study, it should be noted the importance of each of the learning styles. Each student learns in his own way and is not like other students. This fact must be respected by the teacher, in order for each student to be helped to achieve his success. The students should be encouraged to learn according to their learning style where they feel better, but to experience other learning styles, as they do not possess a single learning style. The parents should be informed about the style of their children's learning, to have the characteristics of the learning style explained, in order to create suitable conditions for home learning.

According to the results of the answers provided by the teachers and students involved in the study, the use of technology in the classroom is also important. It directly affects the enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of the lesson hour, by strengthening the styles of learning for each student. The teacher should use organizational graphics when explains new information. Schemes help students rearrange information and make relations that they may have overlooked. The use of technology contributes to the concentration of students through the appearance of different images, through voices and understanding of phenomena.

Recognizing the learning styles of the pupils enables students to integrate into the learning process, facilitates the work of the teacher in organizing and orienting learning from the students, creating opportunities for organizing independent learning.

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