The Impact of Individual Teaching Styles
On Student Academic Achievement

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree Master of Education in the
Graduate School of Marietta College

By
Brandi M. Miller, B.A.

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Master’s Examination Committee:  Approved by
Dr. William M. Bauer, Adviser

Adviser
Department of Education
Abstract

All teachers have their own philosophy governing how they teach. These philosophies serve as a foundation for their individual teaching style. Some teachers use more traditional styles of teaching, while others have adopted a more progressive style. Not much research has been conducted to determine the impact of teaching styles on academic achievement, but the little research that is available suggests progressive teaching styles may be more effective than traditional ones. This researcher used quantitative data in an attempt to support the idea that teachers need to develop more progressive styles of teaching in order to become more effective in the classroom and produce students with higher levels of academic achievement.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Teachers have their own philosophy guiding how they teach. Aspiring teachers in undergraduate classes are encouraged to develop a teaching philosophy, and most colleges and universities even require a personal teaching philosophy statement to be included in all educational portfolios. This teaching philosophy serves as a foundation for one’s individual teaching style. Teaching styles represent a pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors displayed by teachers in their classrooms (Grasha, 1994). They are multi-dimensional and can influence one’s methods of instruction, types of assessments, classroom management, and teacher-student interaction. An individual teaching style also contributes to the overall atmosphere of a classroom by creating a particular mood or emotional climate.

Since schools are comprised of many teachers, each with their own philosophies and individual teaching styles, there exists a plethora of personalities blended together. Schools are a wonderful and vast mixture of individuals with unique educational styles and perspectives on how to teach (Simplicio, 2000). Some teachers adopt a more traditional style of teaching relying heavily on lecture, note-taking, and formal assessments. These teachers tend to be highly-structured and serious when it comes to educating their students on the subject matter. They are quite often perceived as figures of authority. On the opposite end of the teaching style spectrum are the progressive teachers. They tend to focus on class discussion, hands-on activities, and collaborative learning. As teachers, they assess student performance based on group projects,
presentations, and participation. Progressive teachers are perceived as being entertainers, friendly, and nurturing. Of course, quite a distance separates a traditional teacher from a progressive one, and many teachers would probably categorize themselves somewhere in between as they may exhibit various aspects of both teaching styles.

Very little research exists, however, examining the actual impact of teaching styles on student academic achievement. The question therefore remains: is one style more advantageous than the other? Does a student who is taught by a traditional teacher have a higher academic success rate than one taught by a progressive teacher? Answering this question poses many difficulties and may be the subject of debate.

In this study, the researcher focused on how much of an impact individual teaching styles have on student academic achievement. Questionnaires were given to high school English teachers in the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District where they reported their gender, years of teaching experience, and how many students received an A, B, C, D, and F in their classes in the first grading period of this academic year. The subjects also read descriptions of three different teaching styles and select which one best describes them. They also answered “yes” or “no” to two additional questions, further assessing their teaching style. One of these questions inquired whether or not these teachers feel their students would elect to take another class offered by them in the future if they were given the opportunity. The second created a scenario where a student is failing the class but tried his/her very best. The question asked if the teacher would ultimately decide to pass or fail that student. This researcher also examined if there is a relationship between gender or and one’s individual teaching style.
Research Problem

There is not an abundance of research evaluating the impact of teaching styles on student academic achievement. Therefore, educators do not know if one style is more effective than another.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of teaching styles in student academic performance to determine if one style yields a higher level of academic achievement when compared to another.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis: Teaching styles have no impact on student academic achievement.

Alternative Hypothesis: Teaching styles have an impact on student academic achievement.
Definition of Terms

**Teaching Style**- The pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors displayed by teachers in their classrooms. One’s teaching style influences the method of instruction, type of assessment, classroom management, teacher-student interactions, and emotional climate of the classroom.

**Traditional Teaching Style**- The traditional teacher is serious and primarily concerned with educating students on the subject matter. The majority of the classroom instruction consists of lecture, note-taking and reading. The majority of grades are based on tests, quizzes, and papers. In regards to discipline, the class is highly structured, and there are established rules and clear consequences. Traditional teachers are perceived as figures of authority.

**Progressive Teaching Style**- Progressive teachers aim to educate and entertain students to keep their attention and interest. The majority of classroom instruction consists of active learning procedures such as class discussion, collaborative learning, and group projects. The majority of grades are based on projects, presentations, and participation. In regards to discipline, the class is less structured and may be a bit louder as student interaction is encouraged. Progressive teachers are perceived as supportive and nurturing.
Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by a variety of factors. It was conducted with high school English teachers in the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District. The Switzerland of Ohio Local School District is a rural, Appalachian school district located in southeastern Ohio. It is comprised of Monroe County and a portion of Belmont and Noble Counties. Approximately 2,761 students attend six elementary schools, three high schools and one career center. Since the subjects are from this particular setting, the results may not reflect or be representative of teachers across the country. Another possible limitation was whether or not the subjects answered the questions honestly. Some teachers may not possess an accurate sense of awareness of their individual teaching style. They might also not desire to admit if their students would not elect to take another class from them or if they would fail a student who had tried his/her best.
Every teacher in contemporary society possesses an individual teaching style. Informed by one’s educational philosophy, one’s teaching style is shaped by the cumulative result of interrelated experiences sustained over a period of time (Gomberg & Gray, 2000). Teaching styles represent a pattern of needs, beliefs, and behaviors displayed by teachers in their classrooms (Grasha, 1994). A teacher’s method of instruction, type of assessment, and classroom management is contingent upon his/her individual teaching style. An educator’s teaching style can be conceptualized on a continuum ranging from teacher-centered to student-centered (Gomberg & Gary, 2000). Teaching styles also serve as a guide to dealing with the interpersonal aspect of the student-teacher dyad. The particular mood or emotional climate created in the classroom is also influenced by one’s teaching style.

Teachers are trained in a variety of educational theories and methodologies, but too many educators settle in and only adopt a few strategies. A multitude of teaching styles exist, but in general, teachers tend to be either traditional or progressive. Traditional teachers are usually serious and primarily concerned with educating students on the subject matter. Their classroom instruction consists mostly of lecture where students listen, take notes, and are then given some type of formal assessment such as a quiz or test. These teachers are also notorious for assigning individual research papers and book reports. Group activities, class discussion, or any type of collaborative learning usually does not occur. The classroom of a traditional teacher is highly structured and
on the opposite end of the teaching spectrum are the progressive teachers. These teachers are usually energetic and equally concerned with keeping their students educated and entertained in order to hold their attention and interest. Their classroom instruction is quite active consisting of class discussion, collaborative learning, and group projects. The teacher may use everyday life experiences and personal stories to accentuate an idea in the curriculum.

The source of the majority of their grades comes from projects, presentations, and participation. The classroom of a progressive teacher is less structured, and it would not be surprising to find the desks in small groups or even in a large circle. This type of physical arrangement of a classroom aids in promoting open communication and increased interaction. Anyone passing by this classroom may hear students talking as they are discussing issues, debating, and expressing their opinions. Progressive teachers are perceived as supportive and nurturing. They convey the message, “I am here to consult with you” (Grasha, 1994). The nature and quality of student-teacher interactions are different. Teachers and students work together, share information, and the boundaries
between them are not as formal. A warmer emotional climate exists giving students more opportunities to express themselves, ask questions, and discuss personal experiences.

The question baffling the world of academia remains unanswered. Which teaching style is more effective in terms of student success: traditional or progressive? Few studies have attempted to directly compare the effectiveness of progressive teaching with traditional methods (McCarthy & Anderson, 2000). Even though very little research has been conducted on the impact of teaching styles on student academic achievement, the research that is available suggests the need for a major change in the field of education for teachers to rely less on traditional styles of teaching. This necessary shift in the field of education is contingent upon the fact that teachers are losing the competition for their students’ time and attention. The allure of television, computers, and video games is often the victor of young minds. Thus, teachers need to develop more creative approaches to teaching in this new generation of students (Simplicio, 2000).

Some research even suggests traditional teaching methods may be counterproductive to the overall learning process. The centerpiece of traditional instruction for presenting information to students is the lecture. Lecture is an important means to communicate essential material that students should learn, yet is widely overused by many educators mistakenly because they feel it is the easiest and most efficient way to disseminate information. The lecture method of teaching is a long-held tradition in academia but is often criticized for being authoritarian and boring (Beischline & Holmes, 1998). Instruction such as this causes students to become passive learners, absorbing pre-processed information and then regurgitating it in response to periodic
exams (McCarty & Anderson, 2000). It encourages students to concentrate on superficial indicators rather than on fundamental underlying principles, thus neglecting active learning. Active learning refers to experiences in which students are thinking about the subject matter as they interact with their teacher and each other. It helps to enhance higher levels of thinking such as critical thinking skills. Active learning yields many more benefits when compared to passive learning. It also tends to maximize participation and motivation and gives life and immediacy to the subject matter (McCarty & Anderson, 2000). Passive learning does not move beyond a surface, fact-based approach to the material and can be quite intimidating.

This formal and uninviting atmosphere of a traditional classroom also causes students to experience unnecessary anxiety. Many young children seem to have a zest for learning, a natural curiosity that diminishes as they progress through school, especially when faced with cold, conservative teachers (Torak, McMorris, & Lin, 2004). They do not feel comfortable in class and are afraid to ask for help, thus causing them to lose interest in class and develop a negative attitude towards school. This does not mean that traditional teachers should change their teaching styles completely by becoming their students’ best friend or replacing all lectures with class discussion or research papers with group projects. Traditional methods such as lecture, tests, and papers are sometimes necessary, but can be demonstrated with a more positive approach and welcoming attitude. Most researchers advocate a variety of teaching techniques, some traditional and more progressive, be implemented in the classroom. This is especially critical in the field
of humanities (McCarty & Anderson, 2000). In courses such as English, it is imperative for students to learn to think for themselves and not just accept information as true without careful thought and analysis. Students should be reading material, interpreting it on their own, and successfully provide evidence to support their assertions. They should be encouraged to discuss and debate issues in order to acknowledge the opinions of others and gain a better understanding of beliefs other than their own. It is also crucial for them to understand the motives and perceptions of other people, unlike themselves and inhabiting different conceptual worlds, and to comprehend the perspectives of others even if they might not agree or personally identify with them (McCarty & Anderson, 2000). This type of instruction is progressive and used by ideal teachers.

According to research conducted by Abbott-Chapman, Hughes, and Williamson (2001), several characteristics comprise ideal teachers. First of all, ideal teachers need to be equally centered on both the subject matter and their students. They should assume the position of a leader in the classroom who is helpful and friendly. The ability to develop a keen understanding of students’ learning needs and problems and modify lesson plans to accommodate for them is a major component of an ideal teacher. Ideal teachers should inspire their students to reach and develop their own learning potential. These teachers are singled out as enthusiastic, energetic, approachable, concerned, imaginative, and have a good sense of humor (Gomberg & Gary, 2000). This description illustrates the characteristics of a progressive teacher rather than a traditional one.

The impact of teaching styles on academic achievement yields favorable results to the preference of progressive styles of teaching moreover traditional styles. An
experiment conducted by McCarty and Anderson (2000), studied the results of two classes, one taught in a cooperative format and one taught in a traditional format. They concluded that individuals exposed to more progressive styles of teaching outperformed the individuals taught by traditional methods. Using cooperative learning techniques in the classroom may well enable students to absorb and retain information just as well, if not better than the more traditional methods. They also found significantly high levels of satisfaction among the students in the course taught in a traditional format (McCarty & Anderson, 2000). These findings may indicate that students seem to prefer more progressive styles of teaching.

In a similar study, Grasha (1994) found that students exposed to collaborative learning techniques showed significant gains in mastering content, were more satisfied with the course, had higher levels of enthusiasm and morale, and were less tardy and absent from class. Torak, McMorris, and Lin (2004) went a step further in their research and studied the use of humor by teachers in class. They found that humor facilitates the retention of information, increases learning speeds, improves problem solving, relieves stress, reduces test anxiety, boosts morale, and increases attentiveness.

These results suggest that teachers may want to modify their teaching styles to allow for more progressive types of instruction including active learning and collaborative learning techniques. Teachers must begin by looking at their lessons differently. They must be willing to utilize different methodologies, strategies, and approaches to instruction as well as change their assessment tools and evaluation criteria. In order to be successful, they must attempt to utilize new and creative methods of
Teaching Styles

instruction if and only if they have a firm understanding and mastery of these techniques (Simplicio, 2000). Some advice for these teachers is to implement more personalized instruction into their lesson plans. This can be accomplished through assessing the students’ individual needs and making the appropriate modifications. One of the easiest ways to do this is simply by asking the students for input. Then a teacher can relate the course content to their students’ experiences (Miglietti & Strange, 1998). This helps to create a more positive climate within the classroom.

Students should also be engaged in a more stimulating classroom environment. Teachers may also encourage students to be active learners by simply arousing their curiosity and engaging them to answer more open-ended questions (Topping & Ferguson, 2005). The use of small groups to answer questions or debate issues may also be helpful. Ultimately, teachers must rise above and beyond just competently conveying knowledge, understanding, and appreciation about a specific subject. They must do so in such a way that is engaging and interesting if they truly desire to be effective (Torak, McMorris, & Lin, 2004).

Student-teacher interactions are also an area in which some teacher may need to improve. Recent studies have documented significant associations between aspects of student-teacher relationships and children’s social and academic adjustment at school (Wentzel, 2002). Teachers should also be considered as facilitators, helpers, and partners in the learning process. A teacher must not assume that it is the student’s responsibility to adapt to the classroom. The teacher exchange should be a reciprocal process where the
instructor adapts to the needs, abilities, and interests of the students, and the student responds based on the environment fostered and supported by the instructor (Gomberg & Gary, 2000). One goal of a teacher should be to aid in the development of people who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity (Nuckles, 1992). Thus, teachers should treat their students with respect and dignity. In addition to teaching the required curriculum, teachers should arm students with the knowledge to better equip them to be successful once they leave school (Simplicio, 2000). They must aspire to develop individuals open to change and continued learning, people who strive for self-actualization and can live together as fully, functioning individuals (Nuckles, 1992).

One of the emerging themes in education is the teacher as a counselor, nurturing and caring. Students should feel comfortable approaching their teachers for help in the classroom as well as support in their everyday lives. Teachers should treat their students as real people and refrain from ordering them around (Abbott-Chapman, Hughes, & Williamson, 2001). Support from teachers has been found to be unique in predicting a student’s interest in class, goal accomplishment, and amount of academic effort. When teachers provide students with warmth and support, their students develop a stronger sense of community, increase positive behavior, and achieve academic success (Wentzel, 2002).

The learning process has changed and teachers are being challenged to change as well or be left behind. This change must involve new and creative approaches to everyday classroom instruction (Simplicio, 2000). Students should be given the luxury of having various types of instruction in the classroom. Likewise, teachers should be
Teaching Styles

flexible and readily able to provide various types of instruction in their classroom. Some types of instruction have proved to be more effective and teachers with traditional styles of teaching need to realize they must make the appropriate accommodations to ensure the success of their students. This may require that they alter their own teaching styles and adopt more progressive attitudes and practices. Students should no longer have to fear a stern, sterile environment in the lecture hall. If teachers want students to learn, they should consider making learning more enjoyable (Torak, McMorris, & Lin, 2004).
CHAPTER 3
METHOD

Study Design

This study used quantitative research to explain a relationship or correlation between individual teaching styles and academic achievement. This was accomplished by administering a survey to the participants.

Participants

A survey was distributed to all high school English teachers in the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District.

Procedure

After receiving permission from the Marietta College Human Subjects Review Board and the principals of the high schools, the researcher placed a survey, letter of explanation, and consent form in each teacher’s mailbox. Upon completion, the teachers returned the survey and signed consent form to the researcher through inter-office mail. Once the surveys were returned, the researcher began organization and analyses of the data.
Instruments

The study was conducted by administering a survey. The survey asked the participants to report their gender, years of teaching experience, and the total number of students they teach earning an A, B, C, D, and F for the first 9 week grading period. The next part of the survey addressed teaching styles. There were descriptions of 3 different teaching styles and the participants were asked to select the one that best matches their individual teaching style. The last section of the survey asked 2 additional questions, in a yes or no format, to further assess their teaching styles.

Reliability

The reliability of this research was established by:

- Ensuring the questions on the survey are clear and unambiguous to all participants.
- Using a panel of experts to verify and approve the survey.
- Administering the survey in a consistent manner to all participants.
- Setting the alpha level at .05 on SPSS.
Validity

The validity of this research was established by:

- Asking experts if the questions are equally representative of the areas being tested.
- Checking the procedures for records data to fit the hypothesis.
- Using an instrument that contains an accepted scale of measurement.
- Checking for a 10% response rate.

Data Analyses Procedures

The data was organized, reviewed, and coded. Manual tabulation was conducted by the researcher before the data was run through SPSS. Then the quantitative data was entered into a database and subjected to a set of analyses using SPSS.

Preliminary Results

The researcher expected to prove that the alternative hypothesis is correct. The alternative hypothesis states: Teaching styles have an impact on student academic achievement.
Potential Ethical Issues

Prior to beginning this research, the researcher obtained permission from the Marietta College Human Subjects Review Board and the principals of each high school. The anonymity of the individuals and their institutions was protected by filing away the names of each teacher participating and using only the survey results for the study. The identity of the individuals and their institutions will remain private and confidential.

Timeline

October 20, 2005- Filed paperwork to obtain permission from the Marietta College Human Subjects Review Board.

October 21, 2005- Received permission from all the high school principals.

Budget

There were no expenses incurred as a result of this research.
The purpose of this study was to examine if a relationship existed between teaching styles and a student’s academic performance. The sample was comprised of 10 high school English teachers from the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District. Permission to complete this research was obtained through the Marietta College Human Subjects Review Board, the Superintendent of the school district and by the four principals of the high schools. A survey was distributed to the 10 English teachers that assessed their teaching styles and the grades they gave out for the first 9 weeks of school. The data was analyzed using SPS 11.5 statistical computer software.

- 90% of the teachers surveyed were female and 10% were male.
- 70% of the teachers had taught for 20-25 years and 30% have taught for 2-5 years.
- 40% of the teachers rated themselves as having a traditional teaching style.
- None of the teachers reported having a progressive teaching style.
- 60% of the teachers reported having a combination of a traditional and progressive teaching style.
- 70% of the teachers believed a student would elect to take another class from them.
- 30% of the teachers believed a student would not take another class from them.
• 50 of the teachers reported that they would pass a student for trying his/her best and half said they would not.

The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1 and the means and standard deviations of the grades given out by the teachers are presented in Table 2.

A bivariate correlation test was run on all of the variables and the statistically significant results appear in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6. There was a correlation between teaching styles and the number of students receiving A’s from these teachers. The correlation coefficient was 0.494 suggesting teachers who use some progressive types of teaching are more likely to have students earn A’s than teachers who use strictly traditional methods of teaching. Likewise, there was a strong correlation between teaching styles and the number of students receiving F’s from these teachers. The correlation coefficient was -0.880 suggesting teachers who are traditional tend to give out more F’s than teachers who are more progressive.

There was also a strong correlation between an instructor’s teaching style and whether the instructor believed their students would want to take another class from them. The correlation coefficient was -0.802 suggesting teachers with traditional styles of teaching believed students would not want to take another class from them and teachers using some progressive techniques in their classrooms believed their students would want to take another class from them. Finally, there was a correlation between teachers who would pass their students for trying their best and whether these teachers felt their students would elect to take another class from them. The correlation coefficient was 0.655 suggesting that teachers who would pass students for trying their
best also believed their students would take another class from them. Teachers, who
would not pass their students, even if they tried their best, believed their students would
not take another class from them.

Surprisingly, there was no statistical significance between gender or the number
of years of teaching experience and any other variable. The fact that only one man was
surveyed may have contributed to the lack of a relationship caused by gender and both
novice and experienced teachers varied in their personal teaching styles. There was also
no correlation between teaching style and whether or not the teacher would pass a student
for trying his/her best. Too much variation existed between teaching styles and whether
the teachers believed students should pass a class if they tried their best.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.1000</td>
<td>.31623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>16.1000</td>
<td>8.73626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>19.8000</td>
<td>10.10830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>24.2000</td>
<td>13.01111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>18.5000</td>
<td>11.50121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>15.9000</td>
<td>11.06998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>10.1000</td>
<td>9.43339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.2000</td>
<td>1.03280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Again</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.3000</td>
<td>.48305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.5000</td>
<td>.52705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table expresses the minimum and maximum values for each variable as well as the means and standard deviations for each variable.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Given</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>10.10830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>13.01111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>11.50121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>11.06998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10.01</td>
<td>9.43339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table expresses the mean and standard deviation for the grades given by the teachers.
### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table expresses the correlation between teaching styles and the number of A’s given.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.880 (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

This table expresses the correlation between teaching styles and the number of F’s given.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Takeagain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.802 (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeagain</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

This table expresses the correlation between teaching styles and whether the teachers believe students would want to take another class from them.
This table expresses the correlation between teachers who would pass students for trying their best and teachers who believe students would take another class from them.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Takeagain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>Takeagain Pearson Correlation</td>
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Most of the existing literature on adopting a progressive teaching style focuses on how teaching style enhances student interest in the subject matter and generates a more stimulating classroom atmosphere. Currently, there are few studies attempting to directly compare the effectiveness of progressive teaching with more traditional models.

Based upon the findings of this research, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted. Therefore, an individual’s teaching style may affect a student’s academic success. The null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between teaching styles and academic performance can be rejected. There are several implications that can be based upon some of the findings.

This research supported the des that more A’s are given to students by teachers who do not consider themselves as having a traditional style of teaching. Likewise, more F’s are given to students by teachers who do consider themselves to have traditional styles of teaching.

It also seems that teachers who describe themselves as traditional believe their students would not want to take another class from them and teachers who describe themselves as in between traditional and progressive feel their students would want to take more classes from them.

Gender may have had a pivotal affect in this research if more than one man was surveyed. Years of teaching experience may also have had an influence if the factors had been more varied.
Limitations

There are specific limitations identified by this researcher that could have influenced the data. The experimental design was not truly scientific as the samples were not randomly selected nor were potentially confounding variables controlled. Instructor performance could have affected the results as well as the academic levels of the students they taught. Some students were honors, advanced placement, regular education, and vocational education. Also, the way the teachers perceive their individual teaching styles and their actual teaching style may not concur. The teachers may also not have answered the questions about whether or not a student would elect to take another class from them or if they would pass a student who was trying his/her best honestly. They may have wanted to appear either too strict or too lenient. The small sample size of 10 teachers could have also affected the validity and reliability of this research. Given the limitations of the study, these conclusions are merely suggestive. They do demonstrate, however, the need for more research in this area.

Application

The significance demonstrated from this research about teaching styles and academic performance could be used by teachers as they are adopting their individual teaching styles. They may choose to use a variety of teaching techniques instead of relying on conservative and traditional teaching methods. Principals and members of the school board could also use this information in the hiring process as they consider what types of teachers to employ. They could give teaching candidates a survey or ask them
questions to help identify their individual teaching styles and hire more teachers whom are more progressive in nature.

Future Implications

This study has only touched the surface of assessing a connection between teaching styles and academic performance. Additional research is needed to give a more accurate portrayal. If the researcher were to complete this study again, there would be a few changes and additions made to make this study more valid and reliable. The researcher would begin by increasing the sample size. It could include a random sample of more than one school district across the state or in the tri-state area. This would also more than likely increase the number of men completing the survey and provide a larger range of years of teaching experience. A separate survey would also be distributed to the students of these teachers to see if the results matched up. We could also assess which teaching styles the students prefer in order to be more successful academically. The researcher would also expand the study to include additional subjects such as History, Math, Science, Foreign Language, and Electives. The researcher might even consider a longitudinal study that extended for the entire school year taking into account grades from each grading period. A more thorough research project can only help to establish whether or not academic achievement is influenced by an instructor’s teaching style.
References


Dear Principals,

The purpose of this letter is to ask permission to gather research data from your high school English teachers for my Master’s Thesis Project at Marietta College and hopefully for publication in an educational journal. I will be completing my Master’s Degree in May and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to study the teaching styles of high school English teachers in the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District. This research will simply entail asking the teachers to anonymously complete a one-page survey. In no way should this research interfere with class instruction or be a distraction of any kind. I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Human Subjects Committee at Marietta College. If you would like to review these guidelines or a copy of my survey, please let me know, and I can provide these for you.

By signing this letter, you are granting me permission to administer a survey to your high school English teachers in which I will use for my project and possible publication.

Thank you so much for your time and if you would like a copy of my thesis when I am finished, do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Brandi M. Miller

Beallsville High School-

Monroe Central-

River High School-

Swiss Hills Career Center-
Monday, October 24, 2005

Dear Fellow Teachers,

In addition to teaching at Monroe Central and Beallsville High School, I am working on my Master’s Degree at Marietta College and about to begin my Thesis Project. You were selected as a possible participant in this project because you are currently teaching high school English. I would like to invite you to take part in this study of individual teaching styles.

Attached to this letter is a one-page survey. It should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. When you are finished, please send both the signed letter and completed survey to me at Monroe Central through Inter-Office Mail. I need to have this by Friday, November 4th.

Being a participant in this study has no foreseeable risks. The records of this study will be kept private. No information will be included in any published report that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be kept in a secured file and only the primary researcher will have access to the records.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you so much for your time and if you would like a copy of my thesis when I am finished, do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Brandi M. Miller

I give my consent that I have read the above letter and am a willing participant in this study.

X ______________________________________________________________________
Teaching Style Survey

Gender: ___________________

Years of Teaching Experience: ___________________

Total # of students you teach this year: ___________________

# of students earning an A: ___________________

# of students earning a B: ___________________

# of students earning a C: ___________________

# of students earning a D: ___________________

# of students earning an F: ___________________

Place an X by the paragraph that best describes your individual teaching style.

__________ As a teacher, I am serious and primarily concerned with educating my students on the subject matter. The majority of my classroom instruction consists of lecture, note-taking and reading. The majority of my grades are based on tests, quizzes and papers. In regards to discipline, my class is highly structured and there are established rules and clear consequences. My students perceive me as a figure of authority and know I am in charge.

__________ As a teacher, I am fun and entertain my students to keep their attention. The majority of my classroom instruction consists of class discussion, collaborative learning and group projects. The majority of my grades are based on projects, presentations and participation. In regards to discipline, the class is less structured and may be a bit louder as student interaction is encouraged. My students perceive me as supportive and nurturing to their needs in and out of the classroom.

__________ As a teacher, I incorporate both teaching styles into my classroom. I try to be informative and entertaining as I teach my students the subject matter as well as valuable lessons in life. I use a combination of lecture, note-taking, reading, class discussion, collaborative learning, and group projects depending upon the lesson. My grades consist of tests, quizzes, papers, projects, presentations, and participation. My classroom can be highly structured at times, but at other times less structured as I encourage my students to interact. My students recognize me as a figure of authority, but also feel comfortable coming to me for guidance.

Answer the following questions by circling yes or no.

If possible would your students elect to take another class from you? Yes No

If a student is failing your class but tries his/her best, would you pass him/her? Yes No