

Effective Learning and Testing Methods in School-Aged Children

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Abstract : When we teach, we have two critical elements at our disposal to help students: learning styles as well as testing styles. There are many different ways in which educators can effectively teach their students; verbal learning and experience-based learning. Lecture as a form of verbal learning style is a traditional arrangement in which teachers are more active and share information verbally with students. In experience-based learning as the process of through, students learn actively through hands-on learning materials and observing teachers or others. Meanwhile, standard testing or assessment is the way to determine progress toward proficiency. Teachers and instructors mainly use essay (requires written responses), multiple choice questions (includes the correct answer and several incorrect answers as distractors), or open-ended questions (respondents answers it with own words). The current study focused on exploring an effective teaching style and testing methods as the function of age over school ages. In the present study, totally 410 participants were selected randomly from four grades (2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th). Each subject was tested individually in one session lasting around 50 minutes. In learning tasks, the participants were presented three different instructions for learning materials (learning by doing, learning by observing, and learning by listening). Then, they were tested via different standard assessments as free recall, cued recall, and recognition tasks. The results revealed that generally students remember more of what they do and what they observe than what they hear. The age effect was more pronounced in learning by doing than in learning by observing, and learning by listening, becoming progressively stronger in the free-recall, cued-recall, and recognition tasks. The findings of this study indicated that learning by doing and free recall task is more age sensitive, suggesting that both of them are more strategic and more affected by developmental differences. Pedagogically, these results denoted that learning by modeling and engagement in program activities have the special role for learning. Moreover, the findings indicated that the multiple-choice questions can produce the best performance for school-aged children but is less age-sensitive. By contrast, the essay as essay can produce the lowest performance but is more age-sensitive. It will be very helpful for educators to know that what types of learning styles and test methods are most effective for students in each school grade.

Keywords : experience-based learning, learning style, school-aged children, testing methods, verbal learning

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