

# WHAT IS YOUR INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE?

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT AND APPLICATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL STYLES

When teaching, who makes the majority of the decisions – you as the teacher, or your student as the learner? Are your students spending most of their time reproducing knowledge from memory? Are your students provided with opportunities to create new knowledge based on inquiry-based learning experiences? Are you employing different teaching styles to provide your students with a range of learning experiences based on the intended outcome?

**The purpose of this TOTW is to provide teachers with a summary of the Spectrum of Teaching Styles with practical examples of when some are used in the Physical Education (PE) setting and to highlight the importance of teachers making informed decisions as to which style to use based on the intended outcome of the lesson or learning experience.**

## IMPORTANCE OF USING DIVERSE PEDAGOGICAL STYLES

To teach the Health and PE Curriculum as intended and considering all focus areas, safety requirements and the five **Health and PE Propositions**, teachers should be utilising a range of teaching styles.

For example: when teaching students to enter and exit water safely at the beginning of a swimming unit, the teaching will be teacher-centred, as distinct from giving students the opportunity to create a game, where the students are making most of the decisions.

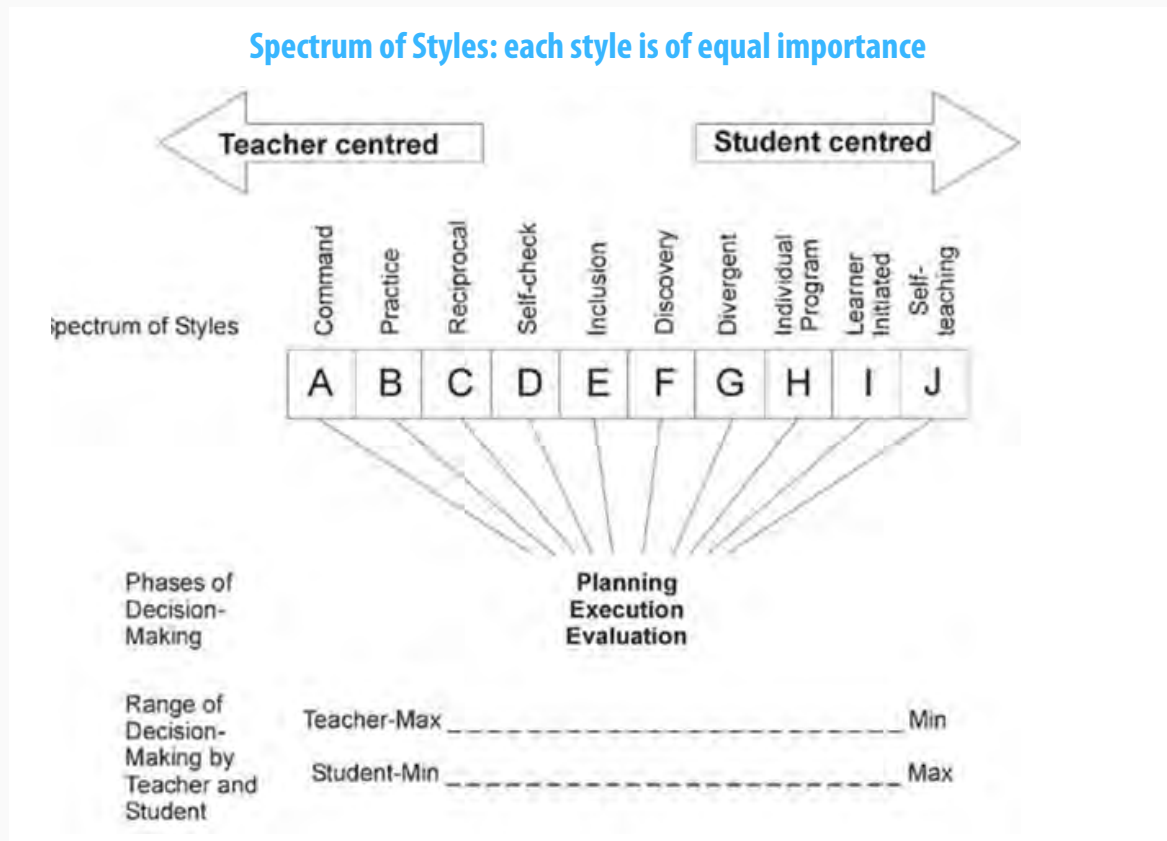
Using a variety of teaching styles is relevant when looking at AITSL teaching standard 3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning under Focus Area 3.3 Use teaching strategies. For a teacher to demonstrate proficiency in this focus area, they are required to show that they select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.

The **Spectrum of Teaching Styles** is a theory constructed from a statement that “teaching is governed by a single unifying process: decision making” (*Mosston and Ashworth 2008: 8*). The decisions being made are about “who is making the decisions, when the decisions are being made, and the intent of the decisions.” (*SueSee et al. 2018*).

The Spectrum consists of 11 **teaching styles** (Styles A-K), beginning with **Style A – Command Style** where the teacher is making all the decisions with minimal student input, to **Style K – Self Teaching Style** where the student is making the decisions.

## IMPORTANCE OF USING DIVERSE PEDAGOGICAL STYLES (CONTINUED)

As you move across the Spectrum, the styles change from teacher centred learning styles to more student-centred learning styles. Styles A-E are referred to as the reproduction cluster as they require students to reproduce knowledge, primarily relying on their memory and recall. Styles F-K are referred to as the production cluster as they require the student to produce new knowledge that relies on either discovery or creativity as the basic premise of student engagement. (SueSee et al. 2018)



When embedding the **High Impact Teaching Strategies** into practice, teachers will choose a variety of teaching styles from the Spectrum. For example: HIT 3: Explicit teaching and HIT 6: Multiple Exposures would be using the reproductive cluster (A-E) from the Spectrum. However, HIT 5: Collaborative Learning, HIT 7: Questioning and HIT 9: Metacognitive Strategies would be predominantly using the productive cluster (F-K) from the Spectrum.

SueSee et al. (2018) reported that Senior PE teachers in Queensland who participated in their study, predominantly used Practice Style B, Command Style A and Divergent Discovery H. They suggest that "...knowledge of teaching styles can assist teachers in choosing appropriate pedagogy to assist them in meeting lesson objectives." (SueSee et al. 2018).

With more knowledge around the different teaching styles, teachers will be able to make more informed decisions about the style they choose to best meet the intended outcomes of a lesson or unit. This may encourage teachers to incorporate a wider range of styles into their teaching.

## IMPORTANCE OF USING DIVERSE PEDAGOGICAL STYLES (CONTINUED)

When choosing a teaching style it is important to understand that one style is not better than another style. The content, students, learning intentions and desired outcomes, student safety and the teaching environment are among the many factors that will influence the approach you take to your teaching on any given day. An experienced teacher knows that two classes within the same school, learning the same content may require completely different approaches to teaching.

## OVERVIEW OF STYLES A-E: THE REPRODUCTION CLUSTER

Below we provide an overview of Styles A-E: the Reproduction Cluster. A later TOTW will overview Styles F-K: the Production Cluster. Over time, we will provide applied examples of each Style.

**We encourage you to review the 5 styles outlined in the table below and consider if, when, and how effectively you implement each of the styles in your teaching:**

<p><b>Style A: Direct Teaching</b></p> <p>Teacher leads the class through an activity where the objective is to reproduce and replicate an anticipated response or performance in a short period of time. All students will usually be participating in the same task.</p>	<p><b>Teacher benefits:</b> Time efficient and high practice time. Good model to use when introducing new skills, stopping a game to reinforce a skill or if safety is paramount.</p> <p><b>Student benefits:</b> Learner responds to instructions.</p> <p><b>Physical Education example:</b> Teaching students how to enter and exit the water safely when beginning a swimming unit.</p> <p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher-centred</li> <li>- Students recalling information from memory rather than thinking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Style B: Practice</b></p> <p>Teacher demonstrates a skill or task and then sets up practice opportunities for students to practice the skill. Students practice the skill / task and teacher provides feedback to students on their performance of the task. The teacher makes most decisions but learner is now making decisions about the pace of practice or number of practice attempts.</p>	<p><b>Teacher benefits:</b> Teacher can provide specific feedback to students.</p> <p><b>Student benefits:</b> Students work on task independently.</p> <p><b>Physical Education example:</b> Teacher demonstrates an overarm throw and then has students practice the skill in a pre-determined activity, such as throwing bean bags at targets on a wall.</p> <p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficult to provide feedback to all students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Style C: Reciprocal</b></p> <p>Students work in pairs: one performs a task / skill, the other provides feedback from a list of criteria provided by the teacher.</p>	<p><b>Teacher benefits:</b> Teacher free to circulate around the class to observe students' ability to work cooperatively.</p> <p><b>Student benefits:</b> Learner is making more decisions about another learner's ability to perform a skill, working with other students in the class and all students receive feedback.</p> <p><b>Physical Education example:</b> Students are provided with a criteria sheet for a particular skill or game strategies. Students provide feedback to one another on their performance, based on the criteria.</p> <p><b>Disadvantages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May not be successful if task is unclear to students or criteria given is too complex, as students may not be able to provide appropriate feedback to one another.</li> </ul>



## OVERVIEW OF STYLES A-E: THE REPRODUCTION CLUSTER (CONTINUED)

### Style D: Self-check

Students work independently to assess their own performance against criteria prepared by the teacher.

**Teacher benefits:** Teacher free to circulate the class and observe students, providing assistance when necessary.

**Student benefits:** Learner making decisions about their own performance and how this could be improved.

**Physical Education example:** Students use a video analysis app to analyse their skill performance using set criteria prepared for them by the teacher.

**Disadvantages:**

- Lower skilled students may not be able to analyse their own skill performance.

### Style E: Inclusion

The teacher creates learning experiences with multiple levels of difficulty and the learner chooses where they enter the task in terms of level of difficulty. Teacher questions students about the appropriateness of their choice.

**Teacher benefits:** Teacher can spend time questioning students about their choices and providing guidance on choice.

**Student benefits:** Students are making decisions based on where they think they are at. Students can challenge themselves further once they feel they've achieved the simpler level.

**Physical Education example:** Cooperative rallying in Badminton

*Entry Level 1: balloon and hand*

*Entry Level 2: racquet and balloon*

*Entry Level 3: racquet and shuttle*

**Disadvantages:**

- Students may choose inappropriate entry levels.

- Some students may not be motivated to challenge or progress their learning.

## REFERENCES:

- [High Impact Teaching Strategies](#) (2017) - Department of Education and Training, Melbourne.
- [Teaching Physical Education](#) (2008) - Mosston, M. & Ashworth, S. 1st online edition. Spectrum Institute for Teaching and Learning (United States)
- [Curriculum Perspectives, 38\(1\), 41-54](#) (2018) - SueSee, B., Edwards, K., Pill, S. & Cuddihy, T.

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

If you have any questions or comments relating to this TOTW, a topic you'd like to learn more about or would like to contribute to a future #TipOfTheWeekHPE, please contact our Professional Learning Manager, Bernie Holland via [email](#) or phone [\(03\) 9274 8906](#).

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