

## Mosston's Spectrum of Teaching Styles: A New ... Vision!

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### Abstract

*The main purpose of this study was to gain insights into Mosston's Spectrum of Teaching Styles in order to find better forms for individual student growth during teacher preparation programs. We hypothesized that beginning to learn with Divergent Production would encourage the exploration of feelings of cooperation or discordance and strengthen self-confidence. By focusing the learning process on the student, on what each student does not know, it is possible to help him or her become a better decision-maker. This work is a descriptive study and the data that was collected from those who had participated in the New...Vision study: (1995-96-97) Divergent Production, Convergent Discovery, Guided Discovery, Inclusion, Self-Check, Reciprocal, Practice, Command, Individual Program, Learner-Initiated and Self-Teaching Styles. This is a different order from that proposed by Mosston. All the students involved at the program affirmed that learning by a new sequence of styles was extremely valuable in their preparation program and in their growth as individual people, and they felt included at all times. Also, that the Spectrum is a strong foundation for a good education and a weapon against the bad educators who think that Physical Education is just sport and not human movement education. A New... Vision searches for other ways to learn the Spectrum and Dr. Mosston used to say that we always can see things from other ways, and also modify the actual way of looking for new ones. We hope with this proposal to contribute for a greater growth in teacher preparation programs.*

### Introduction

There are a few compelling reasons for developing and using the Spectrum of Teaching Styles: personal diversity of student population, the multiple objectives of education and the need for a coherent, comprehensive and integrated framework for teaching. Sooner or later every one of us becomes anchored in our teaching behavior, our personal style. It reflects a unique combination of who we are, how we do things, and what we believe about our relationship with students. Mosston said that teachers must teach beyond their experiences, their values, their successes, they must not be anchored in their idiosyncrasies. This motivated the birth and development of the Spectrum, which has survived years of experimentation by many teachers in the United States, Canada, Finland, Scotland, Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Brazil. The Spectrum is not only a technique, a method or a single framework; these are idiosyncratic by definition and temporary. It was conceived to be an expanded pedagogy, a universal framework of alternatives based on the reality of our schools. The Spectrum is about teaching. It is about the relationships among teacher, learner and objectives, where a special human connection evolves. There is no teaching-learning without decision making; this is the universality of the Spectrum. The goal of the model is to invite each teacher to introspect and use as many styles as possible in his or her classes, to create new realities, to provide better opportunities to the learners and consequently improving the learning process. The Spectrum has been considered a stimulating and provocative theory based on its applicability, questioning structure and reliability. Proposing a different order to learn and teach this theory takes us forward. I believe that in this way we will understand Mosston's Spectrum, in constant cognitive dissonance. Considering the need for further studies this theory focuses the education process on the learner, we need to create new situations at the beginning of any teaching-learning situation. We can not ignore their previous experiences and we should stimulate them to be creative and not simply reproduce the existent knowledge. We believe that learning to learn will allow the learner to explore his or her feelings in

a more positive way than in the traditional learning method. Learning to learn is a manner in which cooperation or discordance is often tested and this allows the learners to improve their self-confidence. This self-confidence permits the learner to share with the teacher all the situations involved in the program. The educational process needs to be understood as a lifelong process and teachers must learn more about their learners and appropriate technologies to develop a more human centered process. The genesis of the idea was motivated by one of Mosston's student while he taught at Rutgers University. The was walking on the campus when he was stopped by one of his student, who told him: "I want to talk with you about the things that you are teaching us." and said: "I'm not you. I don't want to be you". Mosston was astonished and became frustrated because this incident showed him that he was stimulating his students to be identical to him. This scene made clear to me that it is not possible to teach beginning from the Command Style, which centers all the decisions on the teacher. Analyzing the available literature since 1966 it was noticed that the teacher preparation programs were very different in structure and length in several countries. However all of them followed the traditional sequence.

As we see in Figure 1, the Spectrum has added new Styles as teachers tested it in their schools and suggested intermediate Styles.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>		<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>		<b>G</b>	
Com-Mand	Practice		Reciprocal	Individual Teacher Plan		Guided Discovery	Problem Solving		Ind. Learner Plan	
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	
Com-Mand	Prac-tice	Reci-procal	Self-Check	Inclu-Sion	Guided Disco-very	Diver-gent Produc-tion	Ind. Pro-gram by the Learner	Learner Initiated style	Self-Teaching	
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>
Com-Mand	Prac-tice	Reci-procal	Self-Check	Inclu-sion	Guided Disco-very	Conver-gent Disco-very	Diver-gent Produc-tion	Ind. Program by the Learner	Lear-ner Inicia-ted	Self-Teach-ing

Figure 1. Styles of Teaching Changes (1972-1994).

After analyzing Figure 1 and Figure 2 I started questioning why no one had looked for a different approach. From 1978 to 1985, I studied the Spectrum searching for better understanding and in 1986, I began putting this New... Vision into practice. Following this, more than eighty students have experienced it and other undergraduate students contributed to strengthen this proposal.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>
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Figure 2. Schematic diagram in the non versus concept (1986).

<b>H</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>
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**Figure 3. Schematic diagram – The New...Vision (1997).**

It is clear that all the studies done in the Spectrum from Mariani (1970) to Jenkins & Byra (1996) were conducted concerning the traditional sequence: from Command to Discovery. Greenspan (1992) said that believing as he does in the Spectrum he wanted to give the children more decision in the first day. Gerney and Dort (1992) refers to the pleasure that the children felt when discovering solutions by themselves and the feelings of their bodies power. Crum (1995) said that the Spectrum was not to be considered the alpha and omega in Sport Pedagogy. It is one model and not the only model. He questioned if the styles sequence in fact follow from dependence to independence. For him how to decide continues to be the central question and not who decides. Also important is how the students perceive the content and how they structure their actions. Byra stated that the research in the productive group was just beginning and that the most difficult task would be to find reliable measures. Byra said there is no evidence up to now that the Spectrum has been refuted and thus the Locke, Nixon enthusiasm is warranted. He said also that teacher behavior is not the only factor that affects the student's behavior, but it is clear that significantly influences it. This behavior perhaps is the most important and influent variable under teacher control. The New...Vision as presented in Lisbon in 1997 as complementary study in the Ph.D. program and intends to be a new way to approach the Spectrum: Divergent-Production, Convergent Discovery, Guided Discovery, Inclusion, Self-Check, Reciprocal, Practice, Command, Individual Program, Learner-Initiated and Self-Teaching Styles. The decision making in each style according to the New...Vision is shown in the Figure 4.

<b>Divergent Production</b>	T	L	L
<b>Convergent Discovery</b>	T	L	L-T
<b>Guided Discovery</b>	T	T-L	T-L
<b>Inclusion</b>	T	L	L
<b>Self-Check</b>	T	L	L
<b>Reciprocal</b>	T	Ld	Lo
<b>Practice</b>	T	L	T
<b>Command</b>	T	T	T
<b>Individual</b>	T	L	L
<b>Learner Initiated</b>	L	L/T	L
<b>Self-Teaching</b>	L	L	L

**Figure 4. The Decision Making Process In The “New ...Vision”.**

Who are our learners? How can they develop into better people? How do they learn? How can they learn better? How was the teacher's behavior during his or her lessons? How can they teach in a way to integrate all the complex relationships that are involved in the teaching-learning process? Mosston used to ask these and a lot of other creative questions. He suggested that we could ask children how they make decisions in their daily life. What are the decisions that they make from the time that they wake up? When he wrote the theory he began by suggesting that the process follow from Command to Discovery, Why did he suggest that order if the fundamental goal is to develop a creative, participating citizen? How do we develop this in learners? Why does Mosston center on the content in the first Style (Command) and not on the learners? I believe that the development of their whole cognitive capacity will only be possible if the focus is on them. Gallahue (1994) focused the development of motor skills (1<sup>st</sup> stage) suggesting that children must explore situations, and search for new ways to move. The Guided-Discovery was used in stage 2 and the focus was on the ability to apply the discovered movement and in the final stage (advanced) the focus was on the refinement, maybe on styles A, B, C, D or I...? The difficulty we have had until now is how to measure the development of each learner in each channel: Motor, Social, Emotional, Cognitive and Moral with greater reliability. How will the student growth be achieved in each channel learning by the New...Vision?

## Conclusions

Without recriminations in the initial process it will be possible to allow learners to be more self-confident and to gain higher self-esteem. All the students involved in the teacher preparation program at the Faculdade de Educação Física de Cruz Alta answered that learning in the new sequence of styles was extremely valuable in their preparation program and in their growth as an individual person. Also, they felt included at all times and shared with the teacher their decisions, experiences and subject matter. The Spectrum has been considered as a strong foundation for good education and a weapon against misinformed educators who think that Physical Education is just a sport, and not human movement education. The prospective teachers hoped to learn more about the Spectrum when they are at schools with many different children. They hoped that other colleagues would experiment with the New...Vision and then express and share their feelings about it. They hoped that we would continue studying the Spectrum of Teaching Styles created by Mosston and that he would inspire us not to give up his Unified Theory of Teaching.

## References

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