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## THE TEACHING STYLES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS<sup>11</sup>

**Abstract:** *When classifying teaching styles of primary school teachers one starts from the use of their authority. In school theory and practice the two dominant teaching styles are as follows: autocratic and democratic ones. They are placed between the two extremes and each corresponds to a certain situation, circumstances and has both good and bad points. Teachers also use laissez-faire teaching style in their teaching. It refers to the minimal involvement of the teacher in pupils learning styles, apart from the situations when suggesting what literature and other teaching material should be used. On the basis of these hypotheses, a research was conducted by the use of a sample of 104 course and class teachers of primary schools of the city of Nis (Serbia). The data was collected by scaling and was processed by factorial analysis and t-test. Factorial analysis gave three factors relating to the three teaching styles of primary school teachers, as follows: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire style. T-test shows that the teaching style of a course teacher is mainly autocratic, while democratic and laissez-faire styles are more present in the teaching of class teachers.*

**Key words:** *primary school, teacher, course teacher, class teacher, teaching style, autocratic style, democratic style, laissez-faire style*

### INTRODUCTION

In modern primary school a teacher has the most responsible role in all the phases of the teaching process: preparing, operative, verifying and the applying one. Success of a teaching process depends mostly on the professional, scientific, psychological, pedagogic, didactic and methodological qualities of the teacher's work. It also depends on his working, moral and, above all, human qualities of a teacher, but also his experience. A primary school teacher has an integrative role. He comprises a school ambience, curriculum, pupil's manners, and his creative way of teaching into a singular active unit. He also has some other roles and

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functions. That is why it is said that a primary school teacher is a creator, leader and a direct participant of the teaching process.

Based on a number of classifications of the teaching styles of primary school teachers, the most frequent teaching styles are as follows: a) autocratic and b) democratic. A combined teaching style of primary school teachers is mentioned as the third one. In the sources in English language (Walker, 2008; Quiazade et al., 2009) a permissive teaching style is also mentioned. On the other hand, Evans Carol and Waring Michael (2011:158) along authoritarian and democratic teaching styles, also mentions manipulative and congruent teaching styles. In some foreign sources there is a mention of laissez-faire teaching style, which has not been much practiced in primary school teaching in the states of former Yugoslavia.

Each of these teaching styles has its characteristics, thus differing from each other. According to Živorad Milenović (2011:156), characteristics of the authoritarian teaching style are as follows: a) outer motivation is based on a sovereign authority, b) teachers readiness to punish and pupils receptivity c) discipline as an educational aim d) physical punishment e) strict following of the curriculum f) didactic materialism g) pupils obedience h) institutionalism based on formal relations and i) authoritarian personality of the teacher.

According to the same author, democratic teaching style is characterized by a) an authoritarian motivation based on an example (model), b) complexity of a teacher who allows for pupils competence, c) conscious discipline as an educational aid, d) teacher as an exemplary model e) tuning, a dialogue on teaching process contents, f) overcoming of the didactic materialism, g) achieving complexity through the gaining of knowledge, skills and habits, h) democracy based on informal relations and I) democratic personality of the teacher.

Therefore, dominant teaching styles in school theory and practice are autocratic and democratic ones. They are, however, placed between the two extremes each corresponding to a certain situation, circumstances and having good and bad points (Dever & Karabenick, 2011; Siwelem et al., 2012). Teachers also use laissez -faire style of teaching in their work. It refers to the minimal involvement of the teacher in the pupils' learning styles, apart from suggesting the pupils what literature and other teaching material should be used.

Laissez -faire style of teaching in primary schools is characteristic for a minimal involvement of the teacher in his pupils' work. Under such circumstances the teacher provides the pupils with information needed for their work (Shan, 2010; Solvie & Sungur, 2012). The teacher presents a connection between the pupils and the outer world (Milenović, 2012). Pupils have a high level of freedom; choose methods and aids for achieving their aims without teacher's involvement in their work, when this style of teaching is used (Marojele & Muthukrishna, 2011; Yu & Chen, 2012). Laissez-faire style is neither mentioned nor presented in pedagogic-didactic theory and practice sufficiently. This style of work is

characteristic for expert teams, which exactly know who should be doing what, thus making the presence of the leader superfluous.

One of the problems recently occupying attentions of the expert publicity is a teaching style, as a specific way of teacher behavior in the teaching process. The features of the teaching styles are based on the two basic characteristics, such as follows: 1) a prevailing social character and 2) a way of expressing interaction dominance. There are numerous opinions concerning teaching styles. They are different and often opposed to each other, at least in the scientific circles. But, what about the teachers' opinion about the issue, as they are the direct realizers of the teaching process? What are their views and opinions of the particular styles? What is the difference in the opinion between the course teachers and the class teachers? The answers to these and some other questions will be looked for in this research.

## **METHOD**

The subject matter of this paper is research on teaching styles of primary school teachers. The aim of this research is to determine dominant teaching style of course teachers and class teachers in primary schools. The object of the research is to find out whether there is a difference in teaching styles between the primary school teachers, depending on their vocational type of teaching (course teacher and class teacher).

General hypothesis is as follows: primary school teachers mainly use autocratic and democratic teaching style, while laissez-faire style predominant in expert teams in primary schools, is less used by the teachers. Specific hypothesis is as follows: there is a statistically relevant difference in teaching styles of primary schools teachers depending on their vocation (class teacher and course teacher).

Variables comprised by the research are dependent and independent ones. An independent variable is a teacher position. The variable offers possibilities as follows: a) class teacher and b) course teacher. Dependent variables are sub-scales of SRNOS Scaler. The Scaler is divided into three sub-scales. Each corresponds to one teaching style: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

Population comprises all the course and class teachers of primary schools in the city of Nis (Serbia) in February to 2015, when the research was conducted. The sample comprises 104 teachers. The structure of sample is as follows: 53, 85% of course teachers and 46,15% class teachers. The sample is not intentional and is representative. Comparative procedure is used, as well as descriptive method. Technique used in the research is scaling while the instrument is Scaler -SRNOS. The Scaler is of Likert type and is 5graded one. It is divided into three sub-scales corresponding to each of the primary school teachers teaching styles: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire style. Each sub-scale consists of seven statements.

The research was conducted in February 2015, in the city of Nis (Serbia), in primary schools. These primary schools are chosen because they have a sufficient

number of teachers. The data obtained by factorial analysis by Varimax rotation and t-test is shown in the tables.

### RESULTS

Data collected by the survey were first subjected to principal component analysis with Varimax rotation.

*Table 1 – Factorial matrix and Cranach alpha values of the scaler*

The Teaching Styles	I	II	III	$\alpha$
Autocratic style				0,7960
In order to study pupils must be silent.	0,723			
Teacher makes rules and decides upon consequences of breaking the rules exclusively.	0,715			
Results of work (checking) are more important than how the pupils feel in the classrooms.	0,710			
Teacher does not discuss class activities with pupils.	0,706			
Pupils are not to interrupt the teacher.	0,704			
If the pupil is not behaving himself, teacher punishes him without further discussion.	0,703			
Pupils have no justification for their behavior.	0,701			
Democratic style				0,7910
Preparation of pupils for shared work is worthy of effort.		0,790		
It is very important for the teacher to have a feedback from the pupil on any activity.		0,754		
Teacher regularly tries to explain the reasons for his decisions.		0,732		
Pupils know they can interrupt the teacher when they have an important questionnaire.		0,723		
Teacher discusses homework with the pupils.		0,716		
It is important for the teacher to motivate pupils for work.		0,709		
Teacher discusses a content and a learning style with pupils.		0,706		
Laissez-faire style				0,7158
Pupils can take their own decisions.			0,724	
Whenever the pupil wants to go out of the classroom the teacher allows it.			0,722	
Teacher finds it more more important for pupils to feel good in the classroom than to control them.			0,721	
Teacher does not want to reprimand the pupil as it may hurt his feelings.			0,711	
Teacher can adapt his teaching according to the pupils' mood.			0,708	
Learning style and the use of teaching aids is best chosen by the pupil himself.			0,706	
Teacher does not think important whether the pupils respect him or not.			0,703	

In table 1, the data is obtained by factorial analysis of the scaler of Varimax rotation. After five iterations one factor per each teaching style was separated as follows: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire style. Such result confirms reliability of scaler method in the framework of method of division into three parts. Guttman's criteria is satisfied in this way. Factorial overload in all these assertions is higher than 0, 70.

Calculation of Kronbach - alpha coefficient (autocratic – 0, 7960, democratic -0, 7910 and laissez-faire style – 0, 7158), are satisfying for all the sub-scales, although Kronbach-alpha coefficient is much lower in laissez-faire style sub-scale than in the autocratic and democratic styles.

**Table 2 – Correlating matrix**

The Teaching Styles	autocratic style	democratic style	laissez-faire style
autocratic style			1
democratic style		1	-0,256 (correlation is significant on the level 0,01)
laissez-faire style	1	0,042 (correlation is significant on the level 0,05)	-0,213 (correlation is significant on the level 0,01)

Considerable correlations point to the fact that the teaching styles are related. Thus, with the dominance of the laissez-faire teaching style, the domination of democratic and autocratic teaching styles becomes weaker and a vice versa, while with the dominance of democratic teaching styles autocratic teaching styles are more dominant and a vice versa. (table 2).

**Table 3 – Teaching styles and vocations of the teachers**

The Teaching Styles	The Teaching Profession	N	M	s	t-test	P
autocratic	class teacher	48	17,25	4,331	3,980	0,000
	course teacher	56	19,26	4,255		
Democratic	class teacher	48	27,65	3,341	2,654	0,000
	course teacher	56	28,78	3,231		
laissez-faire	class teacher	48	24,18	3,927	3,789	0,000
	course teacher	56	22,36	3,504		

T-test showed that the teaching style of class teachers is namely autocratic, while democratic and laissez -faire teaching styles are more present with class teachers. (table 3).

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

So far there have been no studies that determine factors individual styles of primary school teachers. The exception is Ivana Vlahek and Lana Jurčec conducted in Croatia in 2009. year. These results have confirmed results of some previous researches. Results of this research are partially different from the results

of the research conducted by Ivana Vlahek and Lana Jurčec (2009: 601-612), which have also separated three factors of teaching styles of primary school teachers, but have determined factorial overload higher than 0,40 (in this research a factorial overload is higher than 0,70), while the dominant teaching style of the teachers comprised by the research are democratic, followed by laissez-faire and finally autocratic style (in this research the dominant teaching style of course teaching is autocratic one, while the dominant teaching style of class teachers is democratic and partially laissez-faire one).

By considering the problem of the research, it is determined that successful realization of the teaching process depends on teaching style of the teachers. In pedagogic-didactic theory and practice, autocratic and democratic teaching styles are mostly present in primary school teaching. These two styles are placed between the two extremes. Therefore presence of the other teaching styles of primary school teachers such as: combined, permissive, manipulative, congruent and laissez-faire style, the latter one is characteristic of expert teams, where it is precisely defined who does what and when. By the empirical research both general and specific hypothesis are confirmed. Results of the research show that the dominant teaching styles of course teachers are autocratic, while the most frequent teaching style of class teachers is democratic and partially laissez-faire style of teaching.

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## НАСТАВНИ СТИЛОВИ НАСТАВНИКА ОСНОВНЕ ШКОЛЕ

У овом раду су приказани резултати истраживања стила рада учитеља у основној школи. Указано је да се при квалификацији стила рада учитеља полази од начина на који он користи ауторитет у настави. Анализом теорије и праксе васпитања и образовања се може закључити да су у настави углавном доминантна два стила рада: ауторитарни и демократски. Као трећи, заступљен је *Laissez-faire* стил рада. Он међутим због своје претеране либералности, па и стихијности, није нашао ширу примену у школи.

О стилу рада учитеља постоје бројна схватања. Она су различита па и супротстављена. Сваки од њих има своја обележја. Карактеристике ауторитарног стила рада учитеља су: а) спољашња мотивација темељена на неприкосновеном ауторитету учитеља, б) важност учитеља и рецептивност ученика, в) дисциплина као циљ васпитања, г) кажњавање ученика, д) круто уважавање плана и програма наставе, њ) дидактички материјализам, е) послушност ученика према учитељу, ж) институционализам утемељен на формалним односима и з) ауторитарна личност учитеља. Демократски стил рада учитеља карактеристике: а) спољашња мотивација темељена на примеру (узору), б) комплексност учитеља која допушта компетентност ученика, в) свесна дисциплина као средство васпитања, г) лични пример учитеља, д) усаглашавање и дијалог о садржајима процеса учења, њ) превазилажење дидактичког материјализма, е) постизање комплексности кроз стицање знања, вештина и навика, ж) демократија заснована на неформалним односима и з) демократска личност учитеља. Уочљиво је да се ауторитарни и демократски стил рада учитеља налазе између две крајности, да сваки одговара одређеној наставној ситуацији, одређеним условима и да има своје предности и недостатке.

Као што је наведено, у васпитању и образовању учитељи користе и *Laissez-faire* стил. Он подразумева његово минимално укључивање у ученикове активности, осим у упућивању на литературу и друге наставне материјале. У оваквим околностима, учитељ обезбеђује ученицима информације које су им потребне за учење. Учитељ даље представља везу између ученика и спољашњег окружења.

При оваквом стилу рада учитеља, ученици имају висок степен слободе. Они бирају методе и средства рада којима ће постићи жељене циљеве без мешања учитеља у њихов рад.

*Laissez-faire* стил се мало спомиње у научним публикацијама. У довољној мери није заступљен у педагошко-дидактичкој теорији. Није подесан ни при индивидуалним активностима ученика. Овај стил рада карактеристичан је за експертске тимове стручњака, којима се долажење до решења проблема заиста може препустити у потпуности. Они тачно знају ко и што ради. Зато им и помоћ са стране није ни потребна.

У емпијском делу истраживања је утврђено да су доминантни стилови рада учитеља у настави ауторитарни ( $\sigma = 0,796$ ) и демократски ( $\sigma = 0,791$ ). Утврђено је и да се *Laissez-faire* стил рада мало користи ( $\sigma = 0,716$ ). Истраживањем је утврђено и да су поменути стилови рада учитеља међусобно повезани и условљени. Даље је утврђено да са доминацијом ауторитарног стила рада (корелација =  $-0,256$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) углавном доминира и демократски стил рада учитеља (корелација =  $-0,213$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) и обрнуто. Поређењем доминантних стилова рада учитеља у настави (ауторитарног и демократског) са недовољно коришћеним *Laissez-faire* стилу рада је утврђено да са доминацијом ауторитарног и демократског стила рада слаби доминација *Laissez-faire* стила рада (корелација =  $0,042$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ) и обрнуто.

Из приказаних резултата истраживања се може закључити да је у млађим разредима у основној школи и даље доминантни стил рада учитеља ауторитарни стил. Потом следи *Laissez-faire* стил, па тек онда демократски стил рада. То су показали и резултати истраживања добијени *t*-тестом (ауторитарни = 3,980; *Laissez-faire* = 3,789 и демократски = 2,654). Полазећи од и даље доминантне традиционалне наставе организоване према разредно-предметно-часовном систему, било је очекивано да ће истраживањем бити утврђено да је ауторитарни стил рада учитеља и даље доминантни стил рада у настави. Оно што је занимљиво је доминација *Laissez-faire* стила рада у односу на демократски стил рада учитеља. Та доминација је међутим само привидна, зато што учитељи с једне стране немају довољно знања о овом стилу рада, а с друге, они његове одлике у одређеним наставним ситуацијама повезују са одликама демократског стила рада, па су њихове процене разумљиве и из овог разлога.

Данашњој настави се упућују бројне замерке. Најчешће помињане су: а) да је недовољно ефикасна, б) да не одговара потребама друштва и в) да не одговара потребама ученика. Полазећи од тога, потребно је у настави тежиште са учитеља све више преносити на ученике. Све то указује на потребу другачијег рада учитеља у настави. С тим у вези се и истиче потреба дефинисања његовог пожељног стила рада. То посебно добија на значају у данашњим условима када је инклузивна настава уведена у сва одељења редовних школа. У приступу проблему овог спроведеног истраживања се истиче прилагодљиви стил рада учитеља као његов пожељни стил рада.

У терминолошкој основи овог стила рада налазе се у јединственој целини учитељ и његово понашање у настави (стил рада) које је прилагодљиво. То значи да учитељ у данашњој настави нема стил рада који се одликује његовим понашањем у настави које је предвиђено, као што је то случај код ауторитативног, демократског и *Laissez-faire* стила рада. Учитељ у данашњој настави прилагођава свој стил захтевима наставе и потребама ученика у зависности од конкретне наставне ситуације у настави. Прилагодљиви стил рада учитеља има

одлике свих стилова и посебне одлике које су условљене захтевима данашње наставе и потребама ученика.

Учитеља прилагодљивог стила понашања у данашњој настави одликују бројне карактеристике по којима се разликује од осталих учитеља. При оваквом стилу рада, власт није концентрисана искључиво у рукама учитеља. Он је водитељ наставе, али се о свему договара са ученицима. Но без обзира на то, коначне одлуке о свим битним питањима доноси учитељ. Да би био успешан у томе, потребно је да буде одмерен како би у свакој наставној ситуацији изабрао најбоље могуће решење. При прилагодљивом стилу рада учитеља, комуникација се одвија у свим смеровима, како између учитеља и ученика, тако и између ученика. Учитељ прилагодљивог стила даље обезбеђује одговарајућу педагошку и социјално-емоционалну климу, која треба довести до опуштене атмосфере у одељењу. На тај начин стварају се услови за слободну комуникацију међу свим учесницима у настави, што доприноси њеној већој ефикасности.