



## Research Article

# PREFERRED TEACHING STYLES OF YOUNG FACULTIES IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION-A CASE STUDY OF TAMIL NADU

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**Abstract:** The present study aimed to investigate preferred teaching styles of young faculties in agricultural education among 23 constituent colleges of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, 641003 using Staffordshire Evaluation of Teaching Styles (SETS). An online survey was conducted among 156 young faculties of 2014 Batch working in different constituent colleges of TNAU and 73 faculties respondent to the survey. The results showed that, 62.53 percent preferred "The one-off teacher" style followed by 62.26 percent preferring "The student centered, sensitive teacher" style. "The all-round flexible and adaptable teaching style" was preferred by 61.64 percent. The Official Curriculum Teacher" was preferred by 61.23 percent, 58.97 percent preferred "The Big Conference Teacher" and 58.08 percent of the faculties preferred "The Straight Fact no Non-sense Teacher" type of teaching style. From the results, it was concluded that, blended teaching approach can balance a teacher's personal strengths and interest with student's needs and curricular requirements enables a teacher to tailor their teaching according to the student's needs and as per subject matter.

**Keywords:** *Staffordshire Evaluation, Teaching Styles, Scoring Grid, SETS tool*

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## Introduction

Teaching styles are closely associated with teacher's educational value. Understanding our own teaching style will not only help us improve teaching methods but also engages more students and increases their potential in giving productive outcomes. Teaching style varies from subject to subject and from classroom to classroom because of diversified students. For example, lecture-based teaching style will suit only to larger classroom and subject that requires heavy memorization. Subject with lab activity demands conducive teaching style that involves significant feedback. Research and exploration to figure out useful and effective teaching and learning methods are one of the most important necessities of educational system [1].

Teaching style of an individual should focus mainly on balanced mix that can blend the best of what we could offer and what reaches the students effectively. Developing an effective teaching style requires time, effort, a willingness to experiment with different teaching strategies and an examination of how effective a teaching should be [2]. That's the reason why institutions are conducting Faculty Development Trainings periodically. In modern world, rapid changes have brought newer and variety of challenges in the higher education system. Therefore, training more eager and thoughtful individuals in interdisciplinary fields is required [3].

The main objective of training teacher is to focus on low quality teachers or without quality, making teachers capable of accepting new responsibilities or confronting curriculum changes, updating teachers and their knowledge according to new condition and teaching methods [4]. Professors have a determining role in training young teaching faculties in the mentioned field [5].

Regardless of the significance of good teaching, the consequences are remote from being perfect. The present study aimed to investigate teaching of young faculties in Agricultural Education from 23 constituent colleges of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, 641003, Tamil Nadu, India.

## Material and Methods

An extensive electronic literature search was made to draw up a list of descriptive terms for variety of teaching style. Staffordshire Evaluation of Teaching Styles (SETS) was adopted from Kay Mohana, Ruth Chamber, David Wall of Staffordshire University (2007) with 24 statements formulated in a 5-point continuum scale indicating the degree of agreement or disagreement. Construction of Staffordshire Evaluation of Teaching Style involves 5 steps.

Step 1: The respondents have to work out their preferred teaching style by answering the 24 statements. Most important rule of step one is that there is no right or wrong answers. The respondents have to mark the most closely approximate preference he chose for each statement under the 5-point continuum scale. This initial step is for examining the extent of teacher's willingness to employ various teaching styles and techniques.

Step 2: This is the Scoring Grid of the SETS tool. After responding to each statement, the respondents have to transfer the score for each question into six teaching styles viz., The all-round flexible and adaptive teacher, The sensitive and student centered teacher, The official curriculum teacher, The straight facts no non-sense teacher, The big conference teacher and the one-off teacher.

Step 3: In this step, the respondent has to add the columns of each style to get totals. The 24 statements are classified in 6 teaching style at four statements per style. The respondents after responding to 24 statements will place their scores for each statement from 1-5 in their respective styles and finally add the total score for each style. This was for per individual. In case, if the total participants score is to be added then, the actual score and the average obtained by the respondents for each question needed to be calculated. To obtain this result, the formula used was

$$\text{Score Grid Index} = \frac{\text{Obtained score}}{\text{Maximum Obtainable Score}} \times 100$$

Step 4: Fill the score from the chart totals to the corresponding teaching styles. In this step, the respondent has to fill in the score obtained from the chart totals into the six boxes against each of teaching styles.

Table-1 Extent of willingness and Degree of Responses

SN	Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1	I vary my teaching approach depending on the maturity level of the audience	1	2	3	4	5
2	I don't usually prefer straight presentations but enjoy teaching through games and exercises	1	2	3	4	5
3	To relay learning, agricultural education can be taught through games and practical exercises	1	2	3	4	5
4	I believe on fixing external targets to control the progress of learning	1	2	3	4	5
5	I prefer to teach every day without any follow ups of the previous lectures	1	2	3	4	5
6	Standing and teaching often distracts my delivery efficiency	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can hold large audience at a time	1	2	3	4	5
8	I prepare my teachings every day and that focuses on me and my role	1	2	3	4	5
9	I don't sit and teach	1	2	3	4	5
10	Conveying straight facts in a clear way is the best part of teaching	1	2	3	4	5
11	I usually stick with the plan and avoid being distracted from skipping the sessions	1	2	3	4	5
12	I am satisfied in inculcating broad-spectrum skills to the students	1	2	3	4	5
13	I attach no value for being employed formally as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
14	I don't prefer Face to Face interaction or Individual contact method in teaching	1	2	3	4	5
15	Whoever the audience may be. I deliver what I intent to deliver with consistency	1	2	3	4	5
16	There are opportunities for students to explore how to learn in agricultural education	1	2	3	4	5
17	Like all teachers I have developed my own style teaching agricultural graduates	1	2	3	4	5
18	I believe individual contact method in teaching will enhance individual's capability to learn things faster than in groups.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Teaching with Role plays and dramas can provoke emotions among students especially in agricultural education	1	2	3	4	5
20	I prefer to teach with some humor touch	1	2	3	4	5
21	I sit in classroom with students only when I am having informal interactions	1	2	3	4	5
22	I showcase my teaching to impress my boss and I feel it's important in an academic institution.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I feel little uncomfortable when I have multi-disciplinary group of learners to teach	1	2	3	4	5
24	I organize teaching within the framework of organizational structure and I am the best in it.	1	2	3	4	5

\*Note: SDA-Strongly Disagree; DA-Disagree; N-Neutral; A-Agree; SA-Strongly Agree

Table-2 Scoring Grid for the SETS tool

Q. No.	Style - 1	Style - 2	Style - 3	Style - 4	Style - 5	Style - 6
1	Q1 = 207					
2		Q2 = 224				
3		Q3 = 230				
4			Q4 = 236			
5						Q5 = 229
6						Q6 = 223
7					Q7 = 203	
8			Q8 = 223			
9					Q9 = 218	
10				Q10 = 206		
11				Q11 = 215		
12	Q12 = 229					
13						Q13 = 238
14					Q14 = 212	
15				Q15 = 215		
16		Q16 = 209				
17	Q17 = 227					
18						Q18 = 223
19		Q19 = 246				
20	Q20 = 237					
21					Q21 = 228	
22			Q22 = 206			
23				Q23 = 212		
24			Q24 = 229			
TOTAL	900	909	894	848	861	913

Now, the respondent has his/her score out of 20 for their own self-evaluation of preferred teaching styles. Step 5: Take marks and put cross on the six axes to get shape of own teaching style. In this step, a respondent can plot his score in each of six teaching styles. He/she may wish to join up the crosses to produce a shape of own contribution of styles. These inventories for characterizing teaching styles are very limited and scarcely reported in literature especially for agricultural education. Therefore, a self-evaluation questionnaire along with a scoring sheet was developed to allow young faculties of agricultural education in Tamil Nadu to derive a personal score for each style and ascertain their strongest preferences. The results were visualized as the Staffordshire Hexagon.

## Results and Discussion

An online survey was conducted to 156 Assistant Professors involved in agricultural education across Tamil Nadu to assess the preferred teaching style. Nearly 73 responses arrived and the same was considered as sample for analysis. [Table-1] represents the statements used to the respondents and their degree of

willingness. After getting responses to these statements from the respondents the scoring grid for the SETS tool was constructed. The 24 questions on SETS were randomly allocated on the survey form so that the marks to each teaching style viz., the all-around flexible and adaptive teacher (Style 1), the sensitive and student centered teacher (Style 2), the official curriculum teacher (Style 3), the straight facts no non-sense teacher (Style 4), the big conference teacher (Style 5) and the one-off teacher (Style 6) can be correctly allocated. [Table-2] represents the scoring grid for the SETS tool and the score for each question by all the respondents. The total scores for each style were derived and were subjected to corresponding teaching style. Now having a score out of 1460 the obtained score was filled from the chart totals for assessing the preferred teaching style. The results from [Table-3] revealed that, 62.53 percent preferred "The one-off teacher" style. Faculties in Agricultural Education likes to deliver small self-contained bits of teaching on a one-to-one basis with no props to help and no follow up was found evident from the result. This was followed by 62.26 percent preferring "The student centered, sensitive teacher" style.

Table-3 Average of Obtained score from chart table against the maximum obtainable score

Style	Description	Score (no.)	Average (%)
1	The all-round flexible and adaptable teacher	900	61.64
2	The student-centered, sensitive teacher	909	62.26
3	The official curriculum teacher	894	61.23
4	The straight facts no non-sense teacher	848	58.08
5	The big conference teacher	861	58.97
6	The one-off teacher	913	62.53

There was only 0.27 percent of marginal difference was found between “The one-off teacher” and “The student centered, sensitive teacher” in agricultural education. It was obvious to see that majority of the young faculties in agricultural education prefer to be very student-centered, and willing to teach in small groups using emotions to the core, apply role play and drama and is not comfortable doing straight presentations. “The all-round flexible and adaptable teaching style” was preferred by 61.64 percent. Results revealed that, young faculties in agricultural education were found to experiment different skills and had the capacity to teach both peers and juniors and was very aware of the whole environment both in teaching and also about the learners. This was followed by “The Official Curriculum Teacher” with 61.23 percent preferring this style. Reason might be due to the mix of strict adherence of academic calendar and imbibition of excellence in career and professional development among young faculties had made them adopt official curriculum teaching style. 58.97 percent preferred “The Big Conference Teacher”. Outcomes publicized that faculties falling under this category likes nothing better than to stand up in front of a big audience and does not like to sit in groups. This was followed by 58.08 percent of the faculties preferring “The Straight Fact no Non-sense Teacher” teaching style. This teacher likes to teach clear facts with straight talking, concentrating on specific skills and much prefers not to be involved with multi-disciplinary teaching and learning.

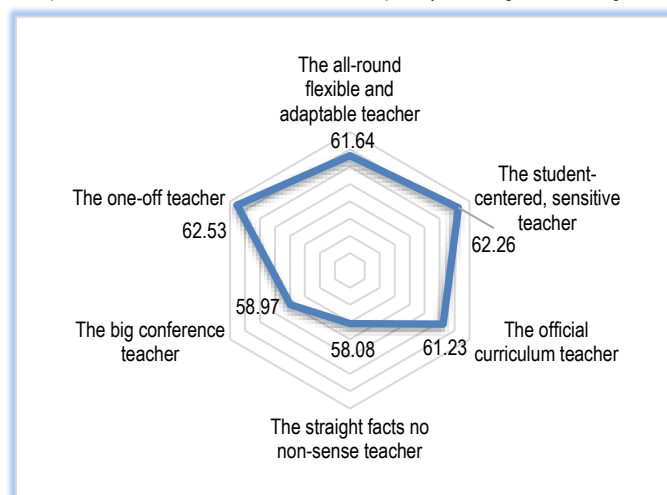


Fig-1 Staffordshire Hexagon: Preferred teaching style of TNAU

The results were represented in a Hexagon pattern [Fig-1] which is the last step in Staffordshire Evaluation Test. This diagrammatic representation will help the researcher to get a clear picture on the current status of teaching style by faculties of any institute. For the present study, following is the hexagon pattern representing the preferred teaching style of young faculties of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

### Conclusion

Faculties recruited in 2014 by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, 641003 were spread all around Tamil Nadu working in Constituent College under TNAU. A survey was conducted on self-evaluation wherein majority of the young faculties were asked the two major factor that affects their teaching style. Young faculties of TNAU reported that age and experience were the two main factor that had molded their teaching style and had played a major role in being a student-centered teacher. They also stated that, students have been seeing them since the time of their education in TNAU and most of them knows the faculties very well in person. This had been an ice-breaking point for the young faculties to mingle with

students easily and teaching never seemed to be hard hitting factor to them. This on later stage by experience had made the young faculties to see all the fresh and up-coming batch as their juniors and through self-motivation, they preferred to sustain student-centric teacher style. As Tamil Nadu Agricultural University is the sole University that delivers agricultural education in Tamil Nadu for more than 100 years, it is the responsibility of its faculties to take its pride, prospects and its rich heritage to the students in delivering quality agricultural education. The young faculties in agricultural education does this exactly and that can be proved from the evidences. Also, as a professional, it is the responsibility of the young faculties to follow the course curriculum in order to fulfil the academic protocols. This had sometime led to the conduct of teaching predominantly using lecture method even for practical sessions. Hence, it is suggested that, blended teaching approach, one that balances teacher's personal strengths and interest with student's needs and curricular requirements enables teachers to tailor their teaching to student's needs and subject matter. When a person begins to learn, according to the value of hope theory, he must feel this is an important learning and believe that he will succeed. Since the feeling of being successful will encourage individuals to learn, teachers must know that they have an important role in this sense.

**Application of research:** To connect with students and impact their lives personally and professionally, teachers must be student centered and demonstrate respect for their background, ideologies, beliefs and learning styles. The best instructors use differentiated instruction, display cultural sensitivity, accentuate open communication and offer positive feedback on the students' academic performance. Therefore, training tutors to move away from moral teaching towards a more student focused approach leads to increased students' satisfaction with teaching and learning within the curriculum.

**Research Category:** Agricultural education

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