

## ABSTRACT

### COGNITIVE STYLES OF STUDENTS AND THEIR LECTURERS IN A SAMPLE OF JAMAICAN TEACHERS COLLEGES

Cognitive style has gained much prominence in educational research. A clearer understanding of this phenomenon could help educators in their planning and implementation of programmes for optimal learning.

The sample for this study was drawn from three teachers colleges in Jamaica. All second year students and their lecturers in educational courses were included.

The research questions were:

1. Are there differences between the academic achievement of field dependent and field independent students?
2. Do students in a matched instructional situation produce better academic achievement than students in a mis-matched situation?
3. Are there differences between the learning styles of field independent and field dependent students?

The data collecting instruments were the Group Embedded Figures Test and a Learning Styles Inventory.

The Group Embedded Figures test was administered to students and their lecturers but the learning styles inventory was administered to students only.

The results of the Group Embedded Figures Test was used to put the subjects into categories based on Witkin's classification of Field Independent - Dependent Cognitive Style.

The grades obtained in the first and second years common examination in education courses were used as indicators for students' academic achievement.

### **Findings**

1. No major differences were identified in the academic achievement of field dependent and field independent students in educational courses.
2. When the academic achievement of students was tested under matched and mis-matched instructional situations no marked significant differences in achievement were evident.
3. Field dependent and field independent students manifested similar learning styles. No differences were identified.

### **Recommendations**

1. Differences in cognitive styles should not be seen as a disadvantage in the learning situation.
2. Research should be continued until much more information regarding cognitive styles and their implications for teaching are received.

Suggestions for research leading to cognitive mapping and longitudinal studies are proposed.