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## Interview with Ph.D. Berenice McCarthy on Application of the Model 4 MAT and the search for revolutionary conceptions about teaching<sup>1</sup>



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*(\*) The photograph has been assigned by the Ph.D. McCarthy from his personal  
photographic archive for the publication of this interview.*

<sup>1</sup> This work corresponds to the cycle of interviews prepared by the author in the inaugural frame of the section "Interviews with great personalities of Education, Social Sciences and Critical Thinking" of the Center for Latin American Studies of Inclusive Education (CELEI).

## Bionota:

*After extensive experience in teaching at all levels, including special education, and his Ph.D. studies at Northwestern University, Dr. McCarthy developed an instructional model to connect all types of students. I was convinced that the diversity of the students required a learning cycle that encompassed everything. She relied on the research of Jung, Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, Levin and Kolb to create an educational system that developed through the entire learning cycle, using strategies that would attract all students. This innovative approach, the 4MAT System, was the basis for the creation in 1979 of About Learning Inc., the institution that Mc Carthy founded.*

*The 4MAT System began in education, but quickly expanded into corporate governance and the value of this model became more widely recognized. It applies to two levels within these organizations, teaching and training and administrative and leadership. Organizations are encouraged to use multiple methods of problem solving and communication to help take advantage of the person's full potential. Instructional design, team processing, leadership skills, communication, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving and creativity are all in the 4MAT Model.*

*She is a prolific author and rapporteur and has conducted workshops and master sessions on effective learning in organizations around the world including school districts throughout the United States and Canada, as well as in higher education and government. It also conducts online training courses in partnership with the Corporate Division of About Learning. The most recent have been for the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is a nationally renowned author in instructional design. He has written six books, including The 4MAT System, 2003, 4MAT in Action, About Teaching, About Learning, and Hold on You Lost Me: The Use of Learning Styles to Create Training that Persists Over Time, 2007 His most recent book is about the use of the Cycle Learning to Teach the 21st century student.*

## Abstract

The interview with the Ph.D. Berenice McCarthy, founder of About Learning, addresses the methodological understanding of the Model 4 MAT and its application in the construction of teaching climates for educational justice, difference and inclusion. It is conceived as a key didactic device for overcoming the pragmatic obstacle of Inclusive Education, especially, it appeals to the organization of learning experiences in accordance with human nature, conceiving that human beings are multifaceted, complex and unique. For this reason the Ph.D. McCarthy states that learning arises from the integration of feeling, thinking, reflecting and acting. In short, it provides a new analytical-methodological framework for planning teaching focused on the multiplicity of differences present in the school space. In this framework, the whole must be conceived in terms of multiple singularities.

**Keywords:** *model 4 MAT, diversification of teaching, inclusion and educational justice for teaching*

## Resumen

La entrevista realizada a la Ph.D. Berenice McCarthy, fundadora de About Learning, aborda la comprensión metodológica del Modelo 4 MAT y su aplicación en la construcción de climas de enseñanza para la justicia educativa, la diferencia y la inclusión. Se concibe como un dispositivo didáctico clave para la superación del obstáculo pragmático de la Educación Inclusiva,

especialmente, apela a la organización de las experiencias de aprendizaje en conformidad a la naturaleza humana, concibiendo que los seres humanos somos multifacéticos, complejos y únicos. Por esta razón la Ph.D. McCarthy afirma que, el aprendizaje surge desde la integración del sentir, el pensar, reflexionar y actuar. En suma, brinda un nuevo marco analítico-metodológico para planificar la enseñanza centrada de la multiplicidad de diferencias presentes en el espacio escolar. En este marco la totalidad debe ser concebida en términos de singularidades múltiples.

**Palabras clave:** *modelo 4 MAT, diversificación de la enseñanza, inclusión y justicia educativa para la enseñanza*

**Aldo Ocampo González (A.O.G.):**

*Good morning Ph.D. McCarthy*

*First of all, to thank you for your kindness in the acceptance and support for the realization of this cycle of interviews, carried out by the Center for Latin American Studies of Inclusive Education of Chile, it is an honor and a great joy to hold this dialogue with you.*

*I would like to start this interview with the following question: ¿What is the 4MAT Model?*

**Berenice McCarthy (B.M.):** Many thanks to you Aldo, for being interested in my research. Regarding your question, I would like to point out that, a model for instructional design based on the four parameters of feeling, thinking, reflecting and acting contained within a natural Cycle, correlated with learning styles, and including a balance of right and left mode processing in each of the four quadrants.

**A.O.G.:** *¿On what conception of human cognition is its model based?*

**B.M.:** It is based on the principles of experiential learning theory of David Kolb, the psychological typology of Jung, the practical emphasis on action and application of John Dewey, and the ordering and constructivism of Jean Piaget.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What are the main limitations of the model?*

**B.M.:** It is simply an instructional design based on four major style approaches to learning. Human beings are multi-faceted, hardly possessing one single approach to learning. The major impetus of the 4MAT Model is to raise awareness as to the benefits of traveling the complete cycle.

**A.O.G.:** *¿In what sense does the 4MAT Model become a strategy of equity and cognitive justice?*

**B.M.:** Only in the sense that people discover the legitimacy of different preferred approaches to learning, raising awareness and inspiring determination to honor the possibilities of building a powerful collective wisdom in their communities.

**A.O.G.:** *¿How can we use it to create new and richer educational opportunities?*

**B.M.:** By making knowledge of the legitimacy of learning styles and the wisdom of the natural learning cycle available to all teachers and counselors as an option, never a mandate. Mandates don't work. Invitations do.

**A.O.G.:** *¿How is the learning process conceived and configured through the 4 MAT model?*

**B.M.:** The learning process just is. It is how humans are, from feeling to thinking through reflection, followed by moving to action and back to feeling anew at hopefully higher levels, a journey which if taught, should lead learners to high potential.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What determines the potential of the learning cycle of the 4 MAT Model?*

**B.M.:** The belief in one's self and the courage to travel the cycle.

**A.O.G.:** *¿How should the evaluation of learning be conceived and developed when proposing teaching through the principles of the 4MAT model?*

**B.M.:** Assessment must travel the 4MAT Cycle completely from measuring learner connections, to reflections, to imaging concepts, to understanding content material, to skillful mastery of content use, and finally to adapting the learning into one's life. Each of these requires a different measurement technique and a different role for the teacher with different criteria rubrics.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What are the main differences that could be established between the 4 types of students that you identify in your model, with respect to the traditional conception of learning styles (VAK)?*

**B.M.:** I cannot answer the question above as VAK are not learning styles. There is no correlation to the four points in the learning cycle where. Auditory, Visual and Kinesthetic are preferred or ever singly called for. To comment on the main differences between the 4 learner types regarding traditional instruction, our research shows schools still cling to lecture techniques whether in person or with technology, ignoring the other key strategies and teacher practices of the complete learning cycle.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What makes your proposal more revolutionary?*

**B.M.:** The connection between style and instructional design bringing the importance of the complete cycle into focus.

**A.O.G.:** *Considering your extensive research experience, ¿what could be the most revolutionary issues to build a new theoretical framework on teaching in the 21st century?*

**B.M.:** The 21<sup>st</sup> Century calls for experiential, conceptual, competence mastery and open-ended, innovative instruction, the quadrants of the 4MAT cycle.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What would you recommend to teachers when planning their classes using the learning cycle explained by the 4 MAT model? What is the key to developing through this model?*

**B.M.:** Heartful honoring of diversity and high content conceptualizing skill.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What would you recommend to teachers to be aware of the extraordinary talents their students possess and how could they maximize them through the application of the 4MAT Model?*

**B.M.:** Try 4MAT and see how many more students engage and witness the multifaceted products of diverse creativity that emerge.

**A.O.G.:** *¿What should an educational curriculum have to build justice thinking in students?*

**B.M.:** Again, the honoring of diversity and the belief in what can be accomplished through the collective wisdom of the group.

**A.O.G.:** Finally, I would like to thank you for your kindness in granting me this interview. Undoubtedly, interesting reflections and didactic contributions to understand Inclusive Education in broader terms.

**B.M.:** Thank you for this invitation.

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*Interview with Ph.D. Berenice McCarthy on Application of the Model 4 MAT and the search for revolutionary conceptions about teaching - Ocampo González, A.*

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