

LEARNING STYLES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article aims to introduce a range of learning styles and how they may then link to the effectiveness of teaching EFL. It reviews the more familiar learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing, and discusses each as it relates to how learners perceive and retain information. The study stresses how awareness of and catering to variation in student learning style may facilitate motivation, participation, and language learning. The findings suggest that a blended approach to teaching—that is, the use of a range of methods which appeal to different learning styles—best facilitates effective teaching in the EFL context.

Keywords: learning styles, English as a foreign language, teaching effectiveness, language acquisition, visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners, personalized instruction.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language faces certain difficulties brought about by the diverse backgrounds and cognitive preferences that learners come from. Realizing that different people absorb and process information in different ways, educators have categorized a number of learning styles, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing learners. Such awareness of learning styles becomes important in devising teaching strategies that will best promote language learning. This article explores how the concept of learning style impacts effective EFL teaching and discusses how an integration of such styles can increase overall language proficiency and encourage learner participation.

Learning styles can be conceptualized as preferred modes of managing learning, processing information, and retaining that information. Knowledge of learning styles is indispensable in the realm of EFL learning because it has been perceived as providing a way for teachers to apply teaching methodology or techniques that will increase students' proficiency in the language. The most discussed learning styles among researchers and educators include visual,

auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing. Each style reflects the particular direction through which the learner feels most comfortable approaching new knowledge. This paper will explore these styles of learning and their impact on the teaching-learning process in EFL classrooms from a more critical perspective with regard to practical implications and outcomes [3].

Visual learners depend a lot on seeing and observing. They gain much from images, diagrams, charts, and written instructions. In EFL teaching, visual aids such as flashcards, infographics, and videos help substantially in making vocabulary, grammar structures, and pronunciation clear to such students. For instance, it is easier for learners to comprehend verb tenses when there are timelines to present them or to remember the words with pictures, making them stick in their memory. Written exercises and color-coded notes can also be useful for visual learners to reinforce memory by using an association of visual stimuli with linguistic concepts 4. Auditory learners process information best through listening and speaking activities. In other words, they understand and remember better when lessons include dialogues, songs, discussions, and oral explanations. Auditory learners also have much to gain from an EFL context where the teacher uses listening comprehension exercises, pronunciation drills, and interactive speaking tasks; they are more absorbed if exposed to authentic language sounds and rhythms that help them learn intonation patterns and improve conversational fluency. Group discussion and oral quizzes are effective because they permit auditory students to actively process language through verbal interaction. Kinesthetic learners are those who prefer to learn new things through hands-on experiences and physical activities. This learning style is quite critical in EFL classrooms 1, where role-plays, language games, and physical gestures can easily be used in order to make up for the limitations in verbal instructions. Kinesthetic learners learn better when they have the chance to move around and use their body as a means to associate physical actions with the meanings of language. For instance, acting out verbs or using TPR techniques helps these kinds of learners internalize English vocabulary and syntax more efficiently compared to passive listening or reading. Incorporating movement into lessons not only increases engagement but aids in memory consolidation through experiential learning.

The reading/writing learning style entails a preference for interaction with texts, such as reading of passages, writing essays, and taking notes. For learners of this style, language is acquired through written words; hence, they are particularly responsive to grammar exercises, vocabulary lists, and written assignments. In EFL settings, promoting reading comprehension activities, along with journaling tasks, enables these learners to reflect on the language rules in detail. Writing allows the learners to produce the language by way of trying out sentence structures and practicing vocabulary while receiving feedback. It is highly important for these learners to establish a good foundation in both reading and writing for a sound base in English [2].

The effectiveness of using learning styles in EFL teaching cannot be overestimated. Research shows that when instructional methods are in congruence with students' learning style preferences, motivation increases and the retention rate of language skills is improved. However, the debate on exclusivity in using learning styles has discouraged educators from being purely focused on these means of teaching. For instance, a purely visual or auditory lesson may only serve to benefit some learners and could leave others disengaged. Therefore, blending teaching strategies into multi-modal experiences is key both to catering for diversity in the classroom and maximizing overall learning outcomes.

Matching teaching methods with different learning styles has several practical advantages. For example, visual aids accompanied by audio recordings accommodate both visual and auditory learners, promoting collaboration and peer learning. In the same vein, kinesthetic activities combined with reading and writing exercises allow multiple learning preferences to be accommodated within one lesson plan. A multimodal approach of this nature serves not only the different needs but also fosters an inclusive learning environment wherein every student gets an opportunity to excel. The management of such endeavors naturally requires trained educators who are observant and responsive to the evolving preferences of the learners.

Despite such clear benefits, certain criticisms have arisen regarding the strict categorization of learners into fixed styles. Critics say that learning styles are fluid and context-dependent rather than static traits. Besides this, there is little empirical evidence that matching instruction only with one learning style improves academic performance. Instead, most researchers conclude that it is more helpful for the long-term acquisition of a language like English, which comprehensively involves reading, writing, listening, and speaking, to nurture flexibility in the use of a variety of different learning modes. Pedagogically, teacher awareness of learning styles enhances classroom management and curriculum design. Knowing students come with diverse needs drives educators to diversify their toolkits and resources. These are increasingly an area of relevance with technology [5]: digital platforms accommodate multimedia content, interactive exercises, and even real-time feedback that can simultaneously engage a range of learning preferences. Examples include online language games, video conferencing for conversational practice, and digital flashcards, to name just a few. In sum, understanding and applying knowledge of learning styles is one of the most valued elements of teaching English as a Foreign Language. Although such individual preferences do indeed operate to impact how learners receive the language materials they encounter, the very best teaching strategies will take such preference into consideration in dynamic ways, providing a balance of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing activities. Thus, educators create an environment that is motivating and supportive of language acquisition for all learners [6]. Future research and teacher training should emphasize flexible instructional designs that can meet the changing learning style profiles of students so that EFL education continues to be inclusive, engaging,

and effective. Conclusion Matching EFL instruction with different learning styles significantly enhances the engagement, comprehension, and retention of the language by learners. Even though there is no ideal approach for all learners, integrating visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing methods makes learning more inclusive. An understanding of the each approach will, therefore, provide a teacher with an opportunity to use different teaching techniques and try to respond to the needs of individual learners, thus significantly improving the quality of teaching English as a foreign language. Further research should, therefore, be directed at creating flexible, learner-centered curricula which would overtly take care of learning style diversity.

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