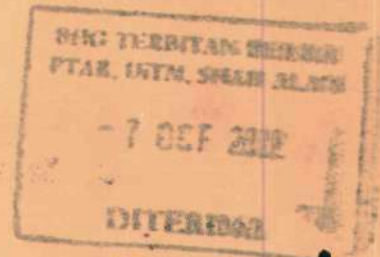


Wahana AKADEMIK



JURNAL ■ UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA ■ CAWANGAN KEDAH ■ KAMPUS SUNGAI PETANI

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Maj. 1*

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- Capital Budgeting in Investment and Project Appraisal
- Gambaran Sektor Pertanian Padi di Malaysia dan Kepenggunaan Tenaga Buruh di Sektor Tersebut
- How to Analyse Time Series Data Using Cointegration Techniques
- Key Success Factors of TQM Organizations : A Review of the Literature
- Language Enrichment Activities for Preparatory English
- Learning Styles Useful in Improving Students' Learning
- Malaysian Accounting Standards Overload?
- Motivational Styles and Instructional Designs of Second Language Learning :
A Brief Insight into Students' Language Learning Preferences
- Pengaruh Bahasa Inggeris Terhadap Kecemerlangan Pelajar :
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KATA-KATA ALUAN PENAUUNG

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Tahniah diucapkan kepada Jawatankuasa Jurnal Akademik UiTM Cawangan Kedah khasnya dan warga akademik UiTM Cawangan Kedah amnya kerana telah berjaya menerbitkan penerbitan pertama WAHANA AKADEMIK iaitu Jurnal Akademik UiTM Cawangan Kedah. Usaha ini adalah sejajar dengan cabaran era globalisasi yang memerlukan keupayaan penguasaan dalam pelbagai bidang ilmu. Masyarakat yang tidak mempunyai ilmu akan terus ketinggalan dan terkebelakang dalam segala segi. Sebagai sebuah universiti, para pensyarah dapat memainkan peranan yang penting dalam menghadapi cabaran ini kerana ilmu yang diturunkan dalam bentuk penulisan dapat mengubah nasib sesebuah masyarakat. Oleh itu para pensyarah perlulah berusaha untuk melengkapkan diri dengan meningkatkan pengetahuan tentang bidang masing-masing serta komited dengan penulisan dan penerbitan.

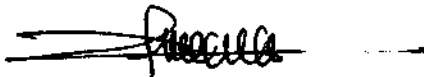
Saya amat berharap kewujudan jurnal WAHANA AKADEMIK akan menjadi pemacu kepada percambahan dan pertumbuhan ilmu serta menjadi saluran utama kepada penerbitan pensyarah UiTM khasnya UiTM Cawangan Kedah.

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Wassalam.



Prof. Madya Dr. Zaliha bt. Hj. Hussin
Pengarah Kampus
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Kampus Sungai Petani

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Kegiatan penulisan dalam pembentukan profesyen seorang pensyarah di institusi pengajian tinggi adalah sangat penting. Ini adalah kerana dengan melibatkan diri di dalam penulisan akademik, pensyarah dapat menunjukkan bahawa ia sentiasa berusaha untuk melengkapkan diri dan berkemampuan untuk meningkatkan ilmu pengetahuan sesuai dengan tarafnya sebagai seorang ahli akademik. Walau pun sibuk dengan beban pengajaran yang banyak, tetapi pensyarah tidak wajar menjadikannya sebagai alasan untuk tidak terlibat dalam bidang penulisan. Oleh itu, saya menyeru agar pensyarah sekalian berusaha menjadikan penulisan sebagai satu budaya serta memainkan peranan dengan sebaik-baiknya bagi menyempurnakan kegiatan yang berfaedah ini.

Saya juga berharap agar pensyarah menggunakan peluang untuk mendalami ilmu, mengemukakan pendapat dan seterusnya menyebarkan pengetahuan melalui ruang yang disediakan oleh WAHANA AKADEMIK ini dengan sebaik mungkin. Sesungguhnya penerbitan jurnal ini merupakan satu mekanisme yang dapat mempertingkatkan status akademik pensyarah UiTM Cawangan Kedah di mata masyarakat.

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Wassalam.



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DARI KETUA PENYUNTING

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Syukur kepada Allah kerana penerbitan pertama 'WAHANA AKADEMIK,' iaitu jurnal akademik pertama Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah akhirnya dapat diterbitkan. Usaha untuk menerbitkan jurnal ini lahir daripada kesedaran bahawa budaya penulisan perlu dipupuk di kalangan ahli akademik. 'Wahana' yang bermakna alat untuk melahirkan atau menyampaikan fikiran atau pendapat diharap akan dapat dimanfaatkan oleh ahli akademik dalam usaha untuk menyalur dan berkongsi maklumat mengenai perkembangan pelbagai bidang akademik kepada pembaca.

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Wan Faizah bt. Wan Abdullah

LEARNING STYLES USEFUL IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an insight into learning styles, which could be useful for educators. It serves to present the theory and the operational aspects of learning styles identified among learners. Teaching and learning practices urgently need improvement. As such, learning styles is a concept that can be important and useful in enhancing our teaching practices. Successful learners employ different and more efficient learning styles during their learning process. Learners acquire expectations on their own efficacy of learning from their own individual learning styles. On the basis of this concept it is therefore pertinent that educators should learn to exploit the concept of learning styles and incorporate them into their lessons.

Key words: *Learning Styles of Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinesthetic, Group, Individual Learners*

INTRODUCTION

Until the last few years, there has been a lot of research conducted in the area of educational studies. Research has shown that success in language learning is greatly influenced by numerous factors. Among them are the methodology used, the teacher themselves, the resources available, and the amount of exposure to the target language. However, the aspect of learning styles could also be one of the paramount factors influencing success in language learning. Information about learning styles can assist educators to become more sensitive to the different methods or ways of learning prevalent among students in a classroom setting. It can also serve as a guide in designing learning experiences that may match or mismatch students' learning styles. Studies have shown that by identifying a student's learning style and then providing instruction consistent with that style may contribute greatly to more effective learning. This means that in order to maximise learning attributes, educators must identify the different types of learning styles that their learners have, and cater their lessons according to their students' particular learning styles.

WHAT IS LEARNING STYLE?

In simple terms learning styles can be defined as ways in which the individual learners prefer to learn or process a given information using certain techniques of learning that they are comfortable with. Joy Reid (1995) in her article, 'A learning styles unit for the intermediate ESL/EFL writing classroom,'

has shown that successful learning can take place if a competent teacher knows how to employ the correct learning styles catering to his/her students' needs. More importantly, from an educator's point of view, we can see how Joy Reid offers suggestions for implementing a variety of teaching styles that can accommodate the different learning styles of individuals in a classroom setting.

Stacey Mantle (2001) describes learning styles as ways, methods, and skills that learners employ in order to learn about a subject. According to Stacey, there are several specific types of learning styles that are being used by learners. In order to maximise learning advantages, educators must define the types of learners that they have, and cater the lesson to their particular learning styles. For example, if your student is primarily a mixture of visual and auditory learner, then you should incorporate several novels into your curriculum. This type of learner loves to read, write, and tell stories. The student has remarkable ability to repeat everything you have told him/her in great details. Educators should therefore have lots of learning activities based on students' learning styles/abilities. In short, educators should be aware of the different learning styles of their students and strive to facilitate successful learning through effective planning and implementation of correct teaching methods.

Joy Reid (1995) has identified 6 types of learning styles identified among learners. Among them are:

Learning Styles	Criteria
(a) Visual Learners (They have to see it to believe it).	Learners prefer to see words/pictures. Have ability to study alone and like to take down notes. Educators should use graphics to reinforce learning for example, films, slides, illustrations, charts, flashcards, handouts, transparencies, and videos.
(b) Auditory Learners (If they hear it, they remember it).	Learners prefer to listen to words or oral explanation. Showed preference to read information aloud. Learners like to participate in class discussions. Learners learn well in lecture settings.
(c) Tactile Learners (If they touch it with their hands, they will remember better).	Learners prefer hands-on experience with materials. Showed preference for building models, touching, and note-taking. Difficulty in sitting still. Have tendency to memorise or drill facts to be learned while walking or exercising.
(d) Kinesthetic Learners	Learners prefer activities being physically involved. Learners find it hard to sit still for long periods.

Educators should focus instructional designs based on numerous activities and exploration. Examples: field trip, role-playing or multiple sense stimuli.

(e) Group Learners

Learners prefer to study and communicate with others to help themselves in the learning process. Learners understand and remember information better if they study in groups.

(f) Individual Learners

Learners prefer to work alone in the learning process.
Showed preference for quiet reading.

PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Interest in language learning styles (behaviours and ways that learners engage in to learn a subject) have blossomed in recent years. Underlying learning styles research is the belief that students learn best when they can address and interpret the subject in ways that they are comfortable with. Findings from Joy Reid's research showed that her students could perform well because she accommodates her teaching approach to cater to the different needs of her students. This means that educators could draw upon her experience and implement the approaches that may accommodate the different styles of individuals in a classroom setting.

Students learn in many ways. Some are more comfortable with the written words. Others find aural or visual materials more accessible or they may learn best through hands-on experience. As such, educators should tap into such inherent qualities of the learners and understand their students' learning styles. On top of it, learners too should be told about their own preferences or inclinations towards certain learning styles. Research has shown that learners are interested in learning about themselves as well as their learning styles. In her research, Joy Reid has proven to us that learning about learning styles is helpful for students, not only for a particular subject but it is also useful in the students' future endeavours.

Educators equipped with the knowledge of learning styles could incorporate the correct pedagogical approaches in their teaching and learning processes. The concept of learning styles approach may hold the answer to underachievement among learners. Research conducted by contemporary educators (Schmeck, 1988) in the aspects of learning styles has shown some positive results. Educators should take the cues from such findings. For example Joy Reid has given certain guidelines whereby educators could tap into some of these inherent qualities.

Basically there are certain assumptions to adhere so as to achieve optimum learning among learners. Among the steps taken are:

(a) Students are taught about the different types of learning styles.

- (b) Students are given a set of questionnaires to know about their preferences to certain learning styles.
- (c) Students are able to identify and describe their individual learning styles.
- (d) Students who are exposed to the various learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, group or individual learners) are taught to share and extend the information by collaborating with classmates.
- (e) Students are taught to implement and utilise those learning styles in their future endeavours during the learning process.

More importantly however, educators need to know how to conduct their lessons by catering to the students' learning styles. To ensure that educators are aware of the process, I would like to share some of the activities that I have carried out with my students in accordance to the suggestions given by Joy Reid. For example, the following steps might be used:

- (a) Students are asked to write about ways or methods that they enlist when they learn.
- (b) Educators or teachers try to establish the concept of learning styles through lectures. Students are taught on how learning styles are determined and used by students in their learning process.
- (c) Students are asked to answer the questionnaires so that they could identify their own learning styles (see **Appendix**). This survey is conducted to identify the major/minor and negative learning styles of the students.
- (d) Major learning styles are written on the board and students are requested to come out to write their names under their major styles.
- (e) Incorporating those learning styles in instructional design/methodology.

When we study the above steps taken in a normal lesson, we could see the gradual and consistent build-up of the various learning styles. More importantly, the activities that are being suggested above have incorporated the various aspects of learning styles. The framework below provides a clear picture on how the various learning styles have been sensitised (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: Incorporating Learning Styles in a Classroom Setting

Activities	Learning Styles
(a) Students are asked to write about ways or methods that they enlist when they learn.	Emphasising on visual and tactile learners.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| (b) | Educators or teachers try to establish the concept of learning styles through lectures. Students are taught on how learning styles are determined and used by students in their learning process. | Emphasising on auditory learners. |
| (c) | Students are asked to answer the questionnaires so that they could identify their own learning styles (see Appendix). This survey is conducted to identify the major/minor and negative learning styles of the students. | Emphasising on individual and tactile learners. |
| (d) | Major learning styles are written on the board and students are requested to come out to write their names under their major styles. | Emphasising on kinesthetic learners. |
-

After having access to the learning styles' preferences of the students, educators should gear their instructional methods towards the inclinations of the major learning styles of the students. For example, if we have identified that a vast majority of the learners are geared towards visual and tactile learner, then we should ensure that our instructional methodology should be geared towards those types of learning styles.

As Reid (1995, 1996) reminds us, in the learning-centred classroom, our job as teachers is first to observe. This entails the identification of students' learning styles and strategies. We should then adapt our instructions and resources to accommodate their needs. In the process we hope to teach students to understand themselves on how they learn. Only then will the students be able to stretch towards being truly independent and self-regulated learners.

Enabling students to be self-aware of their learning styles is a crucial step to ensure that they can move on without us. Underlying the concept of learning styles is the belief that students learn best when they can understand the styles involved in a learning process. Below are listed some conclusive findings from educational research conducted (Terry O'Connor, 1997):

- (a) Students will learn better when using preferences in which they are comfortable with.
- (b) Students will be better learners when they can expand their preferences.
- (c) Educators, who accommodate and cater their lessons to the various preferences of their learners, showed better results in their students' performances.
- (d) Instructional designs should take into consideration and incorporate the various advantages of learning styles.

Wesche (1981) reports on the work done by the Public Service Commission of Canada to improve the efficiency of its language instruction. Findings from the survey substantiate the basis that greater satisfaction and achievements were reported amongst students' whose learning styles matched with those appropriate teaching methodologies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This article has drawn our attention to the usefulness of utilising the concept of learning styles in our teaching practices. Educators should have a strong conviction and internalised the concept of learning styles so as to enable their students to cope well in the learning process. As such, translating theory into instructional methodology could be the answer to underachievement among students. With the increasing emphasis being placed on the accountability of learning styles, it is therefore pertinent that we should match our instructional designs to the students' learning preferences. That is, teachers should provide instructional designs consistent with the different types of students' learning styles.

Educators equipped with an understanding of learning styles can broaden their awareness of the students' knowledge and skills. This will enable them to look at each student from the perspectives of their strengths and potential. Educators may also become aware of the different ways in which students demonstrate the understanding of the teaching materials provided. In short, the knowledge of learning styles provides a structured way of understanding and addressing the diversity that many educators often encounter in the classroom. For instance, lessons can be taught by incorporating the different learning styles of the students. In this way, the lessons can be made interesting and each learner can acquire the required skills by employing the different individual strengths or preferences.

Similarly, we should also arrange for extensive practice of learning styles among students. Once students have been told or shown how to use a given style, they must have numerous opportunities to practice it. When a domain-specific style has been applied in a learning unit, students should be asked to transfer that knowledge or skills in a wide range of contexts. It is in teaching these learning styles that a group of educators/teachers may coordinate their efforts, as Derry and Murphy (1986) describe. In other words, an English lecturer/teacher may illustrate his/her subject matter through his/her instructional designs, which suit his/her students, while an economic lecturer may illustrate the use of the same strategy with his/her class. Strategy practice of learning styles in all domains helps to ensure the development of self-directed learning, as described by Shumin Kang (1999). As learners acquire a repertory of the styles as incorporated in the instructional designs, it is hoped that they learn to utilise the learning styles that they are comfortable with in their self-regulated learning.

Research has shown that learners are more effective at self-instruction when they are aware of their own learning preferences or styles and they know how to select those appropriate styles in their learning goals. These students may also be more highly motivated to learn and use the styles if they are aware of how it might be useful to them. In short, this argues for teaching students on

how to regulate their individual styles as well as to utilise them in their learning process. When the application of learning styles becomes automatic, learners are free to devote their attention to the processing of content. In order to promote all these, educators/teachers need to abide by those principles as subscribed by advocators of learning styles (Derry & Murphy, 1986).

CONCLUSIONS

Improvement of learning ability is not only an important goal for educators, as it is also a viable one. We have seen in this article that a variety of styles that learners used to enhance their own internal preferences (Gagne & Driscoll, 1988). Independent thinkers or self-regulated learners who are aware of the processes of learning should know what to do, why they should do it, and when to apply those learning styles which will enhance their learning goals. Knowledge of those learning styles can thus help educators and learners alike in their endeavours.

As what have been shown, what to do depends on how educators are able to incorporate those learning styles in their instructional methods. Why and when to use those learning styles could be comprehended as aspects of the learners' awareness of their own learning preferences and the perceived application of it. This means that teachers/educators who are well informed of the different learning styles can transfer the knowledge by focusing on learning activities that draw upon students' existing strengths and weaknesses.

In order to apply those learners' styles most effectively, educators/teachers should, first, teach learning styles to ensure that students are able to grasp and internalise them in their learning goals. It is obvious that educators play a vital role by providing instructional designs, which are in congruence to their learners' preferences. Educators should also take into consideration their teaching tasks by providing extensive practice for those learning styles.

Finally, by providing information about the usefulness of incorporating learning styles used by learners and designing certain instructional methodologies that may cater for the needs of the learners, it is hoped that the development of desirable improvement in the learning process can be enhanced. Educators who are well aware of the different learning styles may find that they gain a deeper understanding of their students' learning preferences. With a working knowledge of these differences, this will stimulate educators to think about ways in providing effective teaching through engaging the correct instructional designs in class.

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Appendix

Style Analysis Survey (SAS)

	SA = strongly agree	A = agree	U = undecided	D= disagree	SD = strongly disagree				
No.	Learning Style Evaluation				SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better.								
2.	I prefer to learn by doing something in class.								
3.	I get more work done when I work with others.								
4.	I learn more when I study with a group.								
5.	In class, I learn best when I work with others.								
6.	I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the blackboard.								
7.	When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn better.								
8.	When I do things in class, I learn better.								
9.	I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read.								
10.	When I read instructions, I remember them better.								
11.	I learn more when I can make a model of something.								
12.	I understand better when I read instructions.								
13.	When I study alone, I remember things better.								
14.	I learn more when I make something for a class project.								
15.	I enjoy learning in class by doing experiment.								
16.	I learn better when I make drawing as I study.								
17.	I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.								
18.	When I work alone, I learn better.								
19.	I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing.								
20.	I learn better in class when I listen to someone.								
21.	I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates.								
22.	When I build something, I remember what I have learned better.								
23.	I prefer to study with others.								
24.	I learn better by reading than by listening to someone.								

25.	I enjoy making something for a class project.					
26.	I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities.					
27.	In class, I work better when I work alone.					
28.	I prefer working on projects by myself.					
29.	I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.					
30.	I prefer to work by myself.					