UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

LEARNING STYLES AND TECHNOLOGICAL PREFERENCES AMONG COLLEGE ENGLISH COURSE LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY IN I-CATS

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis/dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, University Technology MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Technological integrations in English as a Second Language classes are essential needs in the teaching and learning processes in International College of Advanced Technology Sarawak (I-CATS). Unfortunately for the instructors, technological resources were limited to tools and web services on the Internet. The problem with this situation was the suitability of the chosen tools' for different learning styles. To maximize the usability of the technology tool for I-CATS learners' learning style, the study aimed to identify the learning styles of the learners, the technological preferences for various online educational tasks of the learners and the most preferred technological tools for the preferred learning styles. This case study was conducted among all diploma students of I-CATS taking various English courses. The population of this study consisted of 496 students from five different programmes and 214 samples were randomly selected from each program. Two sets of instrument were used in this study; the Index of Learning Style and the Technological Preferences. Descriptive analyses were used to analyze the data from Index of Learning Styles and Technological Preferences. These data sets were then linked using a method developed by Saeed et al. (2009) in order to match technological tools with the corresponding learning styles. Majority of the respondents' learning styles were Active, Sensing, Visual and Sequential learners. They were moderately Active and Visual learners and fairly well balanced Sensing and Sequential learners. There were three tools frequently ranked in the top three technological preferences namely Email, Chat Application and Facebook Groups. Vodcast was voted for top choice online revision task. All tools mentioned were linked to all of the learners' learning style. This showed Email, Chat Application and Facebook Groups were preferred by I-CATS students with Active, Sensing, Visual and Sequential as their learning styles.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Technological aids in Malaysian classrooms in general are not new but reinforcements of its implementation have recently started. The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 has been established to reinforce the importance of technology as one of the pushing factors that will elevate the education quality in Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 2012). The role of English language is also one of the main pillars of the blueprint's transformation processes.

The evolution of technological tools have gone through newer trends with many of the tools now are readily available for even more layers of the Malaysian society; it is becoming more mobile and affordable. Tertiary institutions have also been providing facilities to allow access to these tools whether during or after classroom periods, allowing learners to pick and choose whichever tools that they find suitable for their learning objectives.

When we discuss about the advancements of the e-learning developments, frequently we come across the term Information Communication Technologies (ICT). ICT is an umbrella term that covers all platforms allowing the sharing of information. In education, it is prevalent because information is the core of the teaching and learning outcome. In 2010, the government of Malaysia has updated the policy regarding the use of ICT in education (Ministry of Education, 2012). This was the third time that it had gone through some changes to ensure that the aim of integrating ICT is in-line with the Government Transformation Program (GTP), New Economic Model (NEM) and the overall aims of Vision 2020 (Policy on ICT in Education, 2010). The use of ICT among teachers in Malaysia has also been increasing for their lesson deliveries (Simin et al., 2014). Many teachers have managed to integrate the use of ICT tools include various computer software and hardware (Melor, Norazah, Hadi & Choo, 2013; Simin et al., 2014). In the area of ESL in Malaysia, the use of ICT has always been fruitful and delivered the expected positive outcome (Melor et al., 2013). Whether or not this is as a result of the Malaysian Education Blueprint