

**THE LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCE OF MASTER IN EDUCATION  
(TESL) STUDENTS**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Education in Partial Fulfillments of  
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Education (TESL).**

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## ABSTRACT

Education has been the main human activity for survival ever since. Some people are fortunate to study continuously as the examination results augur well for them to continue and some are unable to continue because they could not afford to study as places offered were limited at the same there were no facilities to cater for the growing needs of education for higher learning. Fortunately, as years passed learning institution became more developed with the opportunities to study were made available and adult learners began to take the golden opportunities to continue their study. The purpose and objectives of the study are to investigate the approaches in learning and what motivate adults to learn again and to determine the learning styles preference of these adult learners. The study is confined to about 40 adult learners pursuing a Master Degree program in education as part time students at University Technology Mara who wished to further their study at master's level to improve themselves, self-satisfaction, gain more knowledge, for better chance of promotion, increase in pay and in tandem with modern development. Rogers (1989).

The research method used for this study is both quantitative and qualitative as questionnaires from Gibbs et al as cited by Nunan (1999) and Felder and Brent (2005) on approaches in learning and Honey and Mumford LSI (1992) on learning style preference are used to illicit information from the respondents. Beside that, the respondents are being interviewed using interview questions of Gottfredson, (2006).The study from both the questionnaires and the interview questions revealed that 75 % of the respondent agreed to learn again because of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In learning style preference, the results depicted that about 57% were pragmatist followed by 17.5% reflectors and 12.5% for both activists and theorists.

In conclusion, as far as learning is concerned, it should not stop but should continue as a life long learner and everyone who is interested should be given the opportunity to study and do research on their own field of interest to benefit the society. The style of learning be known by students and be exploited to the benefits of the students and the society.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		i-iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iv
TABLE OF CONTENT		v-vii
LIST OF TABLES		viii
CHAPTER	1. INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1. Introduction	1
	1.2. Background	2
	1.3. Problem Statement	4
	1.4. Purpose and of the study	5
	1.5. Research Questions	6
	1.6. Significance of the study	6
	1.7. Limitation	6
	1.8. Conclusion	7
CHAPTER	2. LITERATURE REVIEW	8
	2.1. Introduction: Overview of Adult Learning	9
	2.2. What is Learning Style?	9
	2.3. Adult Learning	12
	2.3.1. Andragogy	12
	2.3.2. The Principles of Adult Learning	15
	2.4. Factors Why Adults Learn	17
	2.5. Studies Related To Adult Learning Style	21
	2.6. Theoretical Framework Of The Study	39
	2.6.1 Theory of Andragogy	39
	2.7. The Honey Mumford Learning Style Inventory	44
	2.9. Conclusion	46
CHAPTER	3. METHODOLOGY	48
	3.0 Introduction	47
	3.1. Research Design	47
	3.2. Population and Sample	48
	3.3. Instrumentation	49
	3.4. Administration	50
	3.5. Data Collection	50
	3.6. Data Collection Procedure	50
	3.7 Data Analysis	50
	3.8 Conclusion	51

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Many of the students who are taking Masters' course in Education (TESL) have different methods of learning. They attend the lectures, do their assignments and receive the results of the test at the end of each semester but may not know their kind of approaches and learning style. It is interesting and beneficial to know the kind of style each individual is using as once the students know their own style they can develop and make use of the style in order to obtain the best results. Understanding and exploiting the way people learn is the key element to understand students' satisfaction in learning, Hickson & Battimore (1996) cited by Robinson (1989). Thus makes learning more interesting and increasing the urge and determination to study as long as that person is contemplating to be a life long learner.

Adult learning is when adult learns to further their study as there was no opportunity before. Adult learners adopt a different style of learning as compared to young children and the way these two groups are taught differ greatly in term of approaches. Adults continue to study because of motivation, Robinson (1984). Children approaches are more of instructions and direction as they need to be guided, Draves (1984). Adult kind of style is self directed, more open and mutually agreed, discussion based and group work, Knowles (1984). In view of this, the lecturers have to be well versed and sensitive to the needs of the learners and adopt an andragogical approach, suitable to these groups of people.

Although their ages are ranging from 30 to 58 years old, they should be saluted for taking the initiative to further their study as they have to do three important tasks as they are

## 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the student orientation and approaches in learning?
2. What motivate adults to learn?
3. What are their learning style preferences?

## 1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study would help to contribute knowledge to those 'would be' adult learners in the future. The numbers of adult learners in Malaysia are small compared to western countries where the people are practicing life long learning. With the findings the "would be adult learners" would be more prepared to face any shortcomings and understand the problems he/she is facing. The learning style available to them would be fully utilized by learners making learning more interesting and self satisfying. Those who missed the opportunity to learn in the university would be motivated by others who received better salaries and deserved promotion as a result of the newly acquired qualification obtained while working.

## 1.7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to 40 post graduate students of cohort 3 and 4 who are pursuing a Master Degree program in Education on Teaching of English as a Second Language at Samarahan Campus, Kota Samarahan. The research is confined to these matured and experienced teachers and their course on English Language Teaching. There are two types of questionnaires used one, adopted from Gibbs et al as cited by David Nunan(1999) with some relevant statements included in the personal constructs from Felder (2005) to make more choices on the part of the students and Honey and Mumford learning style questionnaire – (LSQ) which uses four styles: Activist, Pragmatist, Theorist and Reflector. There are many other types of learning styles questionnaires in this field but Honey and Mumford have been chosen.