

The Importance of Understanding Learning Styles of the ESL Learners

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Abstract

Learning style is defined as learner's preferred ways of acquiring information or knowledge whereas learning strategy refers to the techniques that are used to gain knowledge (Oxford 1990). According to Chiya (2003), teachers must be attentive to students' learning styles and introduce, and expose them to suitable learning strategies so that successful learning takes place in the classroom. Language teachers should understand the learning styles. Learning style may affect the learning process in second language acquisition. Meanwhile learning styles make the lesson easier and it provides a better teaching learning environment, through this ESL or EFL teaching learning process become more effective. In a second language classroom learning style is a key tool for the teachers to plan their lessons and to identify their teaching styles. Thus using the qualitative research methodology, the study tries to analyze the importance of understanding learning styles of the ESL learners by the ESL teachers. Primary data were collected from interviews and secondary data were gathered from relevant books, magazines, articles, previous studies, and internet sources. The thematic data analysis techniques are applied for data analysis. The finding of the study is knowing and understanding the students' learning styles. This enables teachers to be aware of their students' beliefs regarding learning styles in order to provide an effective learning in an ESL classroom.

Key words: Understanding; styles; strategies; teaching; learning

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