

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

ESL/EFL learners vary not only in terms of their purposes for learning English, but also in terms of individual differences in learning due to their educational, ethnic, and cultural diversity. To make ESL/EFL learning/teaching successful, educators must understand and respect individuals' diverse learning styles and make an effort to create optimal learning environments for learners.

Educators should employ research instruments to identify students' learning styles and provide instructional alternatives to address their differences as researcher did for this study. Furthermore they should plan lessons to match students' learning styles while at the same time encouraging students to diversify their learning style preferences.

It is not easy for teachers to accommodate different learning styles (LS) unless their students develop the ability to shift LS according to the activity. Recognizing the weakness of their own styles and the strength of other LS is important for students in order to become effective learners.

6.1 Thai Students' Learning Style

In this study of secondary level learners of EFL, I found some significant differences between boys and girls. The subjects rated their own preferences by a self-reporting five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." I found out that Thai female students were significantly more visual than Thai male students and the overall major learning styles of Wichai Wittaya Bilingual School students is kinesthetic learning.

Researches clearly come to conclusion by doing learning styles survey with different cultures, genders, age groups, majors etc. they found that students' learning styles are influence by their gender, previous learning experiences, motivation, instructors teaching style, material that teacher uses, age and the society they live in.

Few researchers have done a perceptual learning style survey with Thai E.F.L learners. But in 1987 Reid used the same questionnaire and her finding with adult Thai English learners' in United States had some difference from what I found with Wichai Wittaya Bilingual School Secondary level learners. That is probably because of the age group, environment or being in different culture.

6.2 Applications for Teachers

The results of this study will tell the teachers that they need to determine student's learning style preferences and present instruction, supply materials and provide assessment options in a way that addresses students' learning style needs. Students must be taught about their learning style strengths so they can study in

ways that will help them concentrate more on learning and acquire new and complex information. Both students and teachers need to be respectful of learning style differences. The results will also tell the teacher to encourage students to expand their learning styles in their study of English.

Many researches suggest that if a teacher wants to significantly enhance students' achievement in class, he/she needs to make sure his/her teaching style matches the students' learning styles. This implies that the teacher has to use an approach that will meet each student's needs. The teacher also needs to design interactive activities to maximize kinesthetic students' learning and plan auditory, tactile, visual, group and individual activities to reach all students.

Teachers should analyze student learning styles to develop course syllabi. Unfortunately, it is rarely possible for teachers to perform needs analysis or learning-style evaluations; therefore, syllabi are often prepared before having full knowledge of what best suits student needs.

Teachers should, from the very beginning, try to accommodate all learning style preferences. If teachers only teach in a manner that favors their pupils' less preferred learning style, their discomfort level will interfere with their learning. On the other hand, if teachers just teach in their students' preferred modes, the students may not develop the mental ability they need to reach their potential for achievement in school and as professionals. Teachers should thus try to help pupils build their skills in both their preferred and less preferred modes of learning.

As trainers, we need to present information using all the styles. This provides all learners, no matter what their preferred style is, with the opportunity to become

involved. Just because we prefer one style, it does not mean that the others do no good. On the contrary, they help us learn even faster by reinforcing the material.

I strongly believe teachers can play an active and valuable role, which can enhance of language learning. For the good result along with other factors (motivation, gender, culture etc.) learning styles of learners should be known by the teachers. Considering these, I would like to suggest that if language teachers know more about what the successful learners learning styles are, they might be able to teach according to these styles to poorer learners to enhance their success record.

In spite of the increasing popularity of research on learning styles since the 60s, the topic of learning styles is still a new research area in Thailand, especially in the secondary school context. There has been a study on the finding learning styles of the individual Thai students Reid 1987.

Most teachers focus the results but rarely the learning styles that students use and they spend very little time talking to learners about their learning. These matters need to be taken into account by secondary school teachers because their students need to keep on learning foreign languages, even when they are no longer in a formal classroom setting. Both students and teachers are well aware of the importance of studying English for gaining admission into a high school or a college as well as for future job opportunities. On the teachers' part, if they include learning styles as part of their instruction, they can play an active and valuable role in helping their students to become successful learners of the foreign

language. Thus, research on the language learning styles of Thai secondary school students should not only sensitize Thai students and teachers to the use of these styles but also encourage them to develop and strength the learning styles.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

In my study after I found out about Thai Teenage English learners learning style I compared that to Reid's (1987) adult ESL Thai learners' research and found they prefer different learning style. Further research can focus on whether styles (both teaching and learning) change over time, and if so, how quickly and why?

Researches clearly showed that providing suitable course materials which match the learner's preferred learning style increase ones academic achievement. Teacher can use the findings and develop course materials according to the Thai secondary school students learning styles.

Dunn and Griggs (1998), and Domino (1979) suggest that knowing students learning styles increases achievement but I would like to know specifically how awareness of learning styles increases Thai learners' achievement.