

## **A Case Study of the Learning Styles in Low-Level Learners in a Private School in Bogotá**

### **Un estudio de caso sobre los estilos de aprendizaje de estudiantes de bajo rendimiento académico de un colegio privado en Bogotá**

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This paper aims to report on a study carried out with eighth graders at a private school in Bogotá. The main focus of the research was to determine the learning styles characterizing low-achievement students when learning English. It also gives an account of the role learning styles played in the learning process as well as the factors that allowed students to explore their styles. Instruments used to collect data were field notes, students' work and focus-group interviews. Considering students' interests, their needs and providing them with different environments for learning were the silent results of the implementation of this research.

**Key words:** Learning styles, low-achievement learners, learning environments, reinforcement

El propósito de este artículo es presentar un estudio que se llevó a cabo con estudiantes de octavo grado en un colegio privado en Bogotá. El objetivo principal de la investigación fue determinar los estilos de aprendizaje que caracterizan a los estudiantes de bajo rendimiento académico cuando aprenden inglés. También dar cuenta del rol que éstos juegan en el proceso de aprendizaje, así como de los factores que les permitían a los estudiantes explorar sus estilos de aprendizaje. Los instrumentos que se emplearon para recolectar datos fueron: notas de campo, trabajos de los estudiantes y entrevistas de grupos focales. Como resultado de la implementación de esta investigación se logró considerar los intereses de los estudiantes y sus necesidades, proporcionándoles diferentes ambientes para el aprendizaje.

**Palabras claves:** Estilos de aprendizaje, estudiantes de bajo rendimiento académico, ambientes de aprendizaje, refuerzo

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## INTRODUCTION

During our teaching process, we noticed that students learn in different ways. In order to meet students' needs in terms of their different learning styles, it became necessary to use certain activities; this was especially so in the case of learners with low academic performance. We, as teachers, should take advantage of our students' learning styles and create an environment in which all the members of the classroom feel comfortable.

Considering what was observed in the classroom that we chose for our project, the main focus of this paper was to detect the learning styles students with low academic performance used when learning a foreign language and afterwards give an account of the role they played in the learning process as well as the factors that allowed them to explore their styles.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the field of learning styles several studies have been undertaken with the purpose of identifying individual learning styles, interests and likes. Some authors have approached this topic by giving a definition of the term 'learning style' and by providing a classification of the different learning styles, from both pedagogical and psychological perspectives.

Students' learning processes and the differences among them is also important. These differences have to be taken into account for planning classes and for the different activities that can be implemented according to their respective learning processes.

Richards and Lockhart (1994, p. 59) refer to learning styles -also known as cognitive styles- as "some of the views learners hold about language learning and language teaching". Those styles are strongly related to personality types. Cognitive styles also refer to the preferred way individuals process information.

Our students have different ways of perceiving the world and that is influenced by their environment and by the way they manage to solve problems in

their everyday lives. From the pedagogical point of view, the following seven types of styles are identified by Winters (as cited in Cárdenas, 2001, p. 18-19):

*Plays with words:* This person learns best when given the opportunity to hear, see and say words associated with the desired outcome. It is also known as an auditory learning style.

*Plays with questions:* This learner is usually good at math and logic/problem solving and learns best when given the opportunity to classify, categorize, and work with abstractions and their relationship to one another.

*Plays with pictures:* This person is especially proficient at imagining, manipulating pictures and colors, doing puzzles, and reading charts and maps.

*Plays with music:* This learner gets new information via melodies, musical notation or rhythm.

*Plays with moving:* This learner is a dancer, plays sports, and participates in producing a variety of crafts. This person remembers the new information through the body. It is also known as a kinesthetic learning style.

*Plays with socializing:* This learner is always with a group of people and talking with friends. Organizing, mediating, communicating and understanding people are characteristics of this person. It is also known as a communicative learning style.

*Plays alone:* This person learns best when the projects are individual, self-paced, and singularly oriented.

In order to identify the learning styles of our students, we based our study on two previous studies carried out at institutions in Indonesia and at a public school in Bogotá. A person's learning style can be determined by learning-styles inventories (LSIs). Nur and Ruru (Davis, Nur, and Ruru, 1994) administered and interpreted two learning-style instruments to students in one of their EFL classes at a university in Indonesia. Another project, carried out by Aguilar (2001) at Barranquillita public school in Bogotá with seventh-grade students, aimed at finding how to motivate students to learn English as

a second language through classroom activities that corresponded to their interests and learning styles.

Based on what the researchers found, they began to make instructional changes by modeling the different types of learning strategies through exercises, activities, role-play, demonstrations, etc., in order to fulfill students' needs.

The previous studies based on learning styles helped us to conduct this research because they shed light on the way styles can be identified and how activities can be implemented to stimulate such styles. However, learning styles are also characterized by the way they work and how dependent on or independent of the field a person can be.

In other words, from a psychological perspective, there is a classification that distinguishes two different styles of learning: field-independence and field-dependence. Persons with a field-independent style are able to distinguish parts from a whole and are also able to concentrate on something without being disturbed by surrounding variables. In contrast to field-independence, people with a field-dependent style are able to see the whole situation as a global perspective and can analyze it in a general context (Witkin, as cited in Ellis, 1995).

The classifications of field-dependence and field-independence give us insights into the way we can manage students' differences from both pedagogical and physiological perspectives. They can also help us observe how students explore their learning styles according to their environment and their ways of working and perceiving things.

According to Capel, Leask, and Turner (1995), it is important to take into account students' differences in terms of culture, expectation, knowledge and experience because those aspects play a paramount role in planning. These authors also claim that learning processes are highly influenced by cultural aspects. That is why each child responds to the curriculum differently; therefore, the teacher has to make the curriculum not only interesting and relevant, but also easy to understand.

When the studies and theories mentioned above are taken into account, it can be seen that there

are various processes that occur during learning. Both perspectives, pedagogic and psychological, gave us a background framework for exploring new paths in the search for an improvement of the learning-teaching process. They were also useful for the planning and implementation of activities that matched students' preferred learning styles.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What roles do learning styles play in the English language learning process for students with low academic performance?
2. Which factors allow students with low academic performance to explore their learning styles during the English language learning process?

### RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to conduct our research, we chose a combination of case study and action research. The advantage of working with case studies is that "case studies in *education* can focus on individual students and seek to understand specific issues and problems of practice" (Merriam, 1988, p. 23). A wider method that allowed us to perform the research was action research. According to Cárdenas (2000), action research involves the collection and analysis of data and is characterized as being participatory, self-reflective and collaborative, which makes this method different from traditional research methods.

After we had identified the students whose academic progress was slow, they signed a consent form giving us permission to undertake the research. After this process, a survey was applied in order to identify the learning styles of these students (see Appendix 1). The survey was interpreted and, according to that interpretation, some activities were designed, and implemented in the classroom.

The classes were observed and notes were taken about the students' performance during the development of the activities. Along the process, some samples of the students' work were collected in order to see how they were doing in the activities proposed. At the end of some lessons, a five-to-

ten-minute time period was allocated to have students interact and give their opinions about the development of the activities in a focus-group interview. The interview was audio-taped in order to have detailed information about the students' talking.

### CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The research project was carried out at a private school located in the north of Bogotá. Students had 6 hours of class a week and these were divided into 3 blocks of two hours each. Though 6 hours a week of English class is a good number of hours, it is important to mention that it was not a bilingual school. Twenty two students, whose ages ranged from twelve to fifteen, attended the English class which was the object of this study. To develop our case study, we worked with five students whose learning processes in the English class were slow. Those students were selected based on previous teaching observation.

### INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instruments for collecting data that suited the purpose of our project were the following:

*A survey:* It helped to gather initial information about the students' preferred ways of learning. It was also useful for implementing activities that corresponded to the students' learning styles (see Appendix 1).

*Field notes:* We observed that the classes and notes were written on a recording sheet. The notes taken included information about the students' performances and their attitudes towards activities and materials prepared according to their learning styles.

*Students' work:* These were useful tools for analyzing the ways in which students completed the activities assigned in class.

*A focus-group interview:* Its main purpose was to generate discussion and interaction among the participants. The students with low academic performance were grouped and they were asked some questions that allowed us to know their opinion and the way they felt during the development of the class activities (see Appendix 2).

### PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN

After identifying the students' learning styles via the survey, we planned some lessons with activities that included those styles and preferences. We implemented eight lessons for a period of one month and a half. The activities were useful in the collection of the information we required.

The topics of the lessons were taken from the textbook that students used in the school (*My Choice 2*). Some of the activities were taken from English language teaching books and others were created by us. Those lessons were written in a style that might allow teachers to use them if they are interested (See Appendix 3).

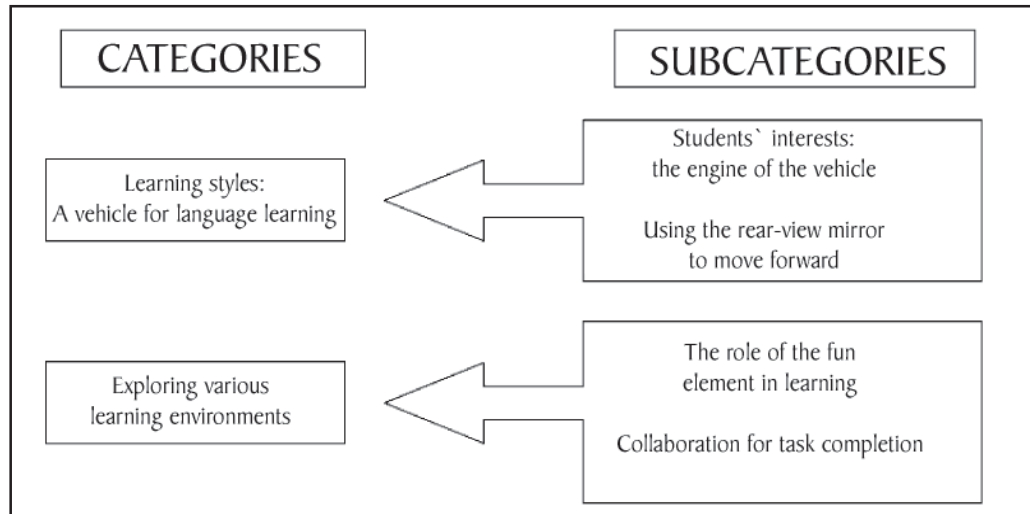
### DATA ANALYSIS

Having collected the data by using the instruments already mentioned, we began the process of data analysis. The focus-group interview was a fundamental guide for the data analysis. Aspects such as the students' feelings, opinions, ideas and perceptions were taken into account as the main unit of analysis. Based on that, some other units from the notes and samples of students' work emerged. From the notes, the students' reactions and behavior were analyzed. The samples from the students' work were complementary material to the analysis of those units.

The internal validity of this research was ensured through triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Merriam (1988, p. 169) as "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings". The three instruments -interviews, notes and students' work- were contrasted with one another to find common aspects. Such aspects were interpreted in light of the research questions.

### CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

Taking into account our research questions, two categories and four subcategories (two for each category) emerged.



**Table 1.** Categories and subcategories found in the data analysis process.<sup>1</sup>

### Learning Styles: A Vehicle for Language Learning

A metaphor was the best way to support the title of this first category. The main function of a vehicle is to transport people and goods from one place to another. In the same vein, learning styles can be used as a vehicle that helps conduct the English language learning processes in different ways. That is to say, the students were equipped with some linguistic and didactic elements to go through the English language learning process. Such elements were given by implementing different activities that conveyed learning styles to give the students the opportunity to choose the kind of activities they felt comfortable with. Every activity was made up of both a linguistic and didactic element, thus giving students the chance to learn the language in their preferred way. When the students were asked if the activities used in class had helped them to learn, one of them replied:

“Well... at the beginning the activities were entertaining for us to get adapted to the group...after that, we began to learn through very dynamic activities and I think that we have really learnt a lot because at these moments when anyone wants to start a conversation or

when anyone wants to reinforce what has been studied, then he can do it without any problem.”  
(Daniela, focus-group interview 1)

Something we observed during the development of the classes was that the students themselves chose the activities that conveyed their preferred ways of learning. For instance, if they did not feel interested in participating or in taking notes, which was a very common situation among those students, they were not obliged to do so. This situation made the students feel freer and more autonomous in class.

Even though the students enjoyed the activities and advanced in their learning process, it is important to mention that at the beginning they virtually did not understand the teachers' instructions and the spoken language. In the second focus-group interview that we applied to the students, some of them said that it was difficult to understand the spoken language:

“Well...what seemed difficult for us and for the rest of the group were the instructions. For example, in class work because many students do not know some words. So they do not understand the whole paragraph just because they do not know a single word.”  
(Daniela, Focus-group interview 2)

<sup>1</sup> These metaphors were the product of the creative process and were not taken from any other source.

During the note-taking process, we also realized that the students had problems understanding instructions. Some of them had to ask the teacher or their classmates for explanations, and it was a very common situation in the development of classes. Hederich and Camargo (2001) state that, as a teacher, you might have had the frustrating experience of being misunderstood by students when you tried to explain to them a topic, no matter how clear you might have been. From a psychological perspective, they also say that the way cognitive styles operate can help to understand and face those kinds of situations. It means that stimulating the students with their preferred ways of learning helps them assimilate teacher talk.

Implementing activities that consider the students' interests and preferred ways of learning was part of the process we followed in order to give the students the chance to overcome difficulties. Besides, students also contributed with their own ideas for "moving forward" in the learning process. This move-forward process explains the first subcategory which is related to the students' interests as the engine of the vehicle.

a. Students' interests: The engine of the vehicle: The engine is an essential part of the vehicle because, with the adequate elements, it makes the vehicle move and work. In order for the learning of the language to be meaningful, it is necessary to take into account students' interests. In our lessons, we observed that when students were involved in topics dealing with their interests, such as trendy movies, young culture and sports, they responded better to the activities proposed. Hence, the students' interests are related to the engine as that essential part that makes them work.

Lindstromberg (2004, p. 2) affirms that "the members of a class are quite disparate, especially in their interests and in their level of proficiency". The students' interests were taken into account in the design of the lessons and they also showed their own interest in the learning of the language. Students showed interest in learning the language for their own communicative purposes. It included the need these students had for acquiring

meaningful and interesting vocabulary so that they could express themselves the way they wanted.

When the activities implemented in class took into account the different interests students had, the learning of the language became more meaningful. Even though interests made the students move on in the learning process, there was still another aspect to be considered in order to complement this step of the learning process. This aspect is what we have called the "rear-view mirror", which is part of our second subcategory. It is described below.

b. Using the "rear-view mirror" to move forward: The rear-view mirror is an element that the car has for the driver to be able to see what is behind him and, therefore, be able to move forward. Reinforcement in the class was the rear-view mirror because its main function was to allow the students to review contents through different activities by taking into account their learning styles.

The main functions of reinforcement were to strengthen and to review contents. The students themselves emphasized the importance that reinforcement had in overcoming the difficulties they had in understanding the spoken language. In one of the focus-group interviews, some of the students said:

"I think it is better to reinforce first and then one understands. Reinforcing pronunciation more than reading would make it easier to understand oral explanations."

(Francy, focus-group interview 2)

It was interesting to see that the students themselves became involved in their own learning process by proposing different ways of reinforcing contents in order to overcome difficulties. Hederich and Camargo (2001), who have studied learning styles in depth from a psychological perspective, state that when a person is conscious of his learning style, he can develop strategies to manage his strengths effectively and limit the effect of his weaknesses.

In the samples from the focus-group interview cited above, the students proposed useful strategies in order to understand spoken language and spoken instructions better. They looked for strategies that helped them overcome their weaknesses. The students considered that one way to reinforce contents was by designing materials that allowed them to practice such reinforcement. In one of the lesson plans that we implemented, we suggested the design of a mini-dictionary. This served as a means to reinforce contents as the students themselves expressed:

"I think that the dictionary can be a means for learning and it seems good to me {...} because one indeed reinforced topics that were not understood."

(Francy, focus-group interview)

Implementing activities that integrate the students' different learning styles was of paramount importance for the development of the students in terms of language learning. The students' interests and learning styles were taken into account and reinforcement was a useful tool to solve doubts and to learn new vocabulary, as evidenced in the following excerpt from the focus-group interview when one of the interviewers asked about what the students had learnt in the English class:

"The adjectives, the verbs, the comparisons and the way they are used daily and paying close attention to the teacher and reinforcing those adjectives in several class activities."

(Pedro, Focus-group interview 2)

### **Exploring Various Learning Environments**

A learning environment refers to the conditions that may influence the work that the students carry out in class. The different stages that were proposed in the lesson plans such as warm-ups, presentations, practice and production gave the students the chance to explore several environments for learning.

Harmer (1998, p. 5) claims that if we provide different topics, tasks and activities related to the students' likes, "students are much more likely to remain interested." When the students were asked in one of the focus-group interviews about the way they had felt about the various activities implemented previously in class, one of them said that it was boring to do only workshops all the time. He then affirmed that he felt better when classes were made up of different activities such as songs, movies and games.

We noticed that the students remained more interested in classes in which we implemented game-like activities, and when they were in the video-room looking at videos and movies and listening to songs. The students also showed a great preference for activities in which they could work in groups, share opinions and talk to friends. The students' interest in the activities arose because those activities incorporated their preferred ways of learning. What we observed relates to the notion of diversity that characterizes students and its importance for planning lessons as well as for making the curriculum interesting and relevant for students (Capel et al., 1995).

Besides providing different environments for learning, we thought that it was also necessary to set clear instructions and specific goals for every activity. If the students knew what to do exactly and what the purpose and the outcome of the activity were, they engaged more in the activity. We observed that in most of the classes the students looked for clear instructions and the teacher had to monitor the students' work, guide them and clarify doubts and confusions.

The previous ideas taken from our observations and from the students' own opinions are related to Hederich and Camargo's (2001) psychological theory about learning styles. These authors assert that for students who are field-dependent, the teacher is like "a mediator between them and knowledge" (p. 31). Field-dependent students show a preference for those activities that are guided by the teacher. Taking into account the definition of

various learning environments and its properties, we will make reference to some of its components. The components are what we called the fun element and collaboration for task completion.

a. The role of the fun element in learning: The fun element is part of the various learning environments mentioned above. Something fun involves enjoyment, cheerfulness, amusement and a series of activities that may inspire joy in learning. This element entails games, movies, songs and videos.

Such kinds of activities were not only a way of having a fun and entertaining time but also a way of learning. The students showed a preference for games that allowed them to have fun and learn English at the same time without being aware of the actual process. All of the students interviewed agreed on the affirmation that learning through games was one of the best ways to learn.

Lindstromberg (2004, p. 7) states that "activities with game-like elements are usually very good for generating interest" in teenage students. In the case of our research with eighth graders from a private school in Bogotá, we observed that when we implemented games as part of the lessons, the students' participation increased a lot. Those students especially liked those games in which they had to compete and move. Besides, those games made the students become interested in the activities and in the language itself since they tried to produce language on their own.

It should be noted that in our particular case, our teenage students liked doing games in class and acknowledged that those activities helped them learn; something that might not happen with other age groups or cultures.

Additionally, the students not only expressed interest in games but also in other activities including movies, videos and songs. Those interests depended also on the students' styles for learning. For instance, the students who tended to be visual learners preferred movies and those who were auditory learners preferred songs. That way, the students could explore their preferred ways of learning and enjoy themselves too.

The students' preference for activities which involved the fun element was part of their preference for using the English language laboratory. Using the laboratory was for them a different space to study, a space in which they could have fun and learn at the same time. Working in the laboratory or outside the classroom was relaxing and it was a good way to change the usual environment for teaching and learning.

The other factor concerning the exploration of the learning styles has to do with teamwork and peer help. These concepts are widely discussed and described in the following lines.

b. Collaboration for task completion: When we mention the words collaboration for task completion we refer to both teamwork and peer help. As part of the process of learning a language, teamwork was essential in bringing about communicative situations in which the students had to interact to carry out different tasks. The students used peer support in order to help one another, to correct one another, to share opinions and to solve problems and doubts about instructions that had not been clearly understood. This characteristic is related to the description of field-dependent people.

According to Hederich and Camargo (2001), field-dependent people are sociable and they like to join others when working. They are also emotional and receptive to the feelings and opinions of others. This description of a field-dependent person fits well with the kind of personality of the low-level learners from eighth grade we worked with. We observed that when group work was assigned, the students worked well with their classmates and tasks were completed better as they were working cooperatively.

Hofstede (1999) classifies cultures into several dimensions. In his work he identifies individualism and collectivism as characteristics of some of the cultures of the countries that he studied. He observed that the Colombian culture is characterized as being highly collective. This means that collective interests are more important than



individualistic ones. It has implications for the Colombian educational context. Getting together in groups of students to carry out a specific task is a very common characteristic of most collective societies. We found that there is a correlation between Hofstede's classification of the Colombian culture and the characterization of low-level learners of eighth grade at the private school in which we carried out our research project. Such correlation is better explained in the following lines.

When the students worked in groups, they had the opportunity to take advantage of other classmates' learning styles since: *One learns from others and others learn from us.* (Pedro, focus-group interview 1). We observed that when the students were asked to work in groups, they were never reluctant to do it. Moreover, when group work was done, the students cooperated a lot and the final outcome was better than if they had worked alone. The students always gave very positive comments towards group work and considered it important for the learning of the language. For example:

"I think that working in pairs would be good because one learns mutually from the other person and it is possible to do a better work."  
(Pedro, focus-group interview 2)

As we have already pointed out, the students had problems understanding spoken language. Peer help was a way to overcome this problem because, as we observed, when the students did not understand instructions or when they needed help from their classmates, they requested extra support or explanations. It was very common among the students to look for help from other classmates in order to complete tasks and share ideas about the development of some activities.

The main purpose of collaboration was to let the students know other styles for learning and to share their own styles with classmates. Working with classmates, in groups or in pairs, gave students the opportunity to explore their styles. As the

students were given a specific task, they showed how they could develop it by using their styles and, at the same time, they could observe the styles used by their partners. This way of working let the students develop a specific task in a complementary way; that is to say, every student contributed with his own learning styles to carry out the task.

## CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the role that learning styles play in the English language learning process, we can conclude that the incorporation of learning styles facilitated the learning process. Besides, learning styles helped the students move forward in their learning process. Reinforcing and reviewing contents through different activities supported this forward-moving process.

Concerning the research question about the factors that allow students to explore their learning styles, we concluded that providing students with different learning environments allows them to explore their learning styles. Activities that involve the fun element for learning were part of the environment for exploring learning styles. Teamwork and peer help were part of collaborative work, another environment in which the students could also explore their styles.

The students remained more interested in classes when the "fun element" was present in the activities implemented. Games, movies, songs and activities that were developed outside the classroom or in the English laboratory room were motivating for the students because through those activities they could explore their preferred styles for learning. The role that the fun element played in the learning process went beyond merely giving the students an entertaining time. This role allowed them to participate more in class and change the traditional setting for carrying out the lessons. When planning the classes, we tried not to skip the fun element from every single activity. This was a way to give them the opportunity to play and learn at the same time.

Bearing in mind the students' differences for implementing class activities was useful for creating a pleasant learning environment. The view that Capel et al. (1995) hold about the relevance of the curriculum and its importance for engaging students is particularly useful when we refer to the creation of a pleasant environment for the exploration of learning styles. The fact that low-level learners had different preferences and styles for learning allowed us to implement activities that benefited not only them, but also the rest of the class.

### IMPLICATIONS

For teaching low-level learners, a teacher must bear in mind several parameters for a more effective and motivating class for students. First, it is necessary to design and implement activities that take into account students' interests and that also awake their interests for learning the language. Those kinds of activities must consider the age of the population, the topics to be taught, the lifestyles of students and the goals and the expected outcomes of the teacher. Evidence of this can be observed in the sample of the lesson plans we designed and implemented in class (See Appendix 3).

Implementing cooperative work is also highly recommended because it allows the completion of tasks by grouping students with different learning styles. It is also recommended because it promotes discussion and sharing of ideas among students, thus allowing them to take advantage of other styles and to learn from them. That way low-level learners manage to explore and share their styles and learn from more advanced students.

The class is an appropriate space to let students make use of their styles for learning the language. Since classes are full of students with mixed abilities and ways of learning, teachers can take advantage of that in order to plan more motivating classes. It is advantageous to have mixed-ability classes because when implementing varied activities not only low-level learners but also high-level learners

will benefit. Though this task is demanding and time-consuming for teachers in the planning of the class, at the end of the road students will be deeply grateful for being taken into account.

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### APPENDIX I: LEARNING STYLES SURVEY

Por medio de la siguiente encuesta queremos conocer la forma como más te gusta aprender en la clase de inglés, para hacer actividades que se ajusten a tus preferencias.

Responde las siguientes afirmaciones y marca una x en la casilla que más corresponda a tu gusto (nunca, casi nunca, casi siempre, siempre)

En la clase de inglés:

	Nunca	Casi nunca	Casi siempre	Siempre
1. Me gusta que el profesor nos enseñe por medio de dibujos				
2. Me gusta que el profesor me diga lo que tengo que hacer				
3. Me gusta hacer manualidades en clase				
4. Me gusta trabajar en grupo				
5. Me gusta escuchar música en inglés				
6. Me gusta resolver crucigramas y sopas de letras				
7. Me gusta que el profesor nos ponga a hacer mímicas, bailar y actuar				
8. Me gusta que me den instrucciones de forma escrita				
9. Me gusta que mis compañeros me expliquen lo que no entiendo				
10. Me gusta trabajar con materiales como plastilina, recortes, carteleras, etc.				
11. Me gusta que el profesor nos ponga a trabajar en parejas				
12. Me gusta que el profesor nos ponga canciones en inglés				
13. Me gusta hacer preguntas en clase				
14. En la clase de inglés me gusta desarrollar todas las actividades de forma individual				
15. Me gusta que el profesor nos ponga a repetir palabras y frases en coro				
16. Me gusta completar oraciones				
17. Me gusta que el profesor nos deje tareas para realizarlas en forma individual				
18. Me gusta hacer tareas con otros compañeros				
19. Me gusta más leer en inglés				
20. Recuerdo mejor lo que escucho que lo que leo				
21. Me gusta más trabajar solo que en grupo				

Based on:

Cárdenas, M. (2001). Responding to children's learning styles. *How: A Colombian Journal for English Teachers*, 8, 17-26.

Richards, J., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

## SAMPLE 1

1. ¿Cómo consideran ustedes que aprenden mejor?
2. ¿Qué les gusta aprender en la clase de inglés?
3. Hablemos ahora con respecto a las actividades que se realizaron durante la semana en la clase de inglés. ¿Cuál actividad les ha gustado más, con cuál actividad se han sentido mejor?
4. ¿Ustedes creen que han aprendido algo con las actividades de esta semana? Hablemos sobre eso.
5. Durante el desarrollo de las actividades, ¿Ustedes sintieron que podían desarrollar las actividades solos/solas o necesitaron la ayuda del profesor o de algún compañero? ¿Por qué?

## SAMPLE 2

1. ¿Cómo creen ustedes que les queda más fácil aprender y entender el inglés?
2. ¿Qué les parece difícil aprender o entender en la clase de inglés?  
¿Por qué? ¿Qué solución proponen ustedes para que esas dificultades disminuyan?
3. ¿Cómo se han sentido con las actividades que se han realizado en la clase? ¿Qué tipo de actividad los hace sentir bien en la clase?  
Contémosle al grupo por qué se sienten así.
5. ¿Qué han aprendido en la clase de inglés hasta el momento?  
¿Cómo han logrado aprenderlo?
6. ¿A ustedes les hubiera gustado que el examen se hubiera hecho en parejas? ¿Por qué?

\*La última pregunta se formuló de esta manera ya que se realizó un examen para evaluar los temas vistos durante el primer bimestre.

### APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE OF A LESSON PLAN

Time: Ninety minutes

Topic: Verbs in present simple.

Aims: Students will be able to identify and use verbs such as look, can, see, hold, change, kill, come, take, lay, rest, want and love.

Grammar: Simple present

PRESENTATION (10 min) (For auditory style learners)

Write on the board the word 'verbs' and ask students what they understand by that word. Ask them to give you a definition and some examples. Tell them the grammar definition of a verb. Write the following verbs that are present in the song "November Rain": *look, can, see*. Give the definition of each one of them within the context of the song.

PRACTICE (30 min) (For auditory and individual style learners)

Ask students to identify all the verbs that are present in the song "November Rain" and to look for their definition in the dictionary.

PRODUCTION (20 min) (For visual and kinesthetic style learners)

Ask students to form two groups and tell them that you are going to play a competitive game. The card contains one verb and the person in front has either to draw or to mime the verb that is on the card. The opposite group has to guess what the verb is (within a time limit). The group that guesses the most verbs is the winner.

PRODUCTION (20 min) (For analytical, individual and communicative style learners)

Give students back the handout of the movie "Shrek" and ask them to finish completing it with the verbs which best suit the actions of the characters. Once students have finished, ask them to form groups of four and to share their information of the handout with the group.

WORKSHEET ON THE MOVIE "SHREK 2"

Describe the following characters from the movie. Write an adjective that describes the character, then use a comparative adjective to compare the character and finally use a verb to describe their actions in the movie.

Look at the example given.

CHARACTER	ADJECTIVE	COMPARISON	VERB
Fiona	• She is fat.	• Fiona is fatter than her mother.	• Fiona loves Shrek.
Puss in boots			
Shrek			
Fiona's father			
Fiona's mother			
Donkey			
Fairy godmother			
Charming			