

LEARNING STYLE AND LEARNING STRATEGY
PREFERENCES IN AN INTENSIVE
ENGLISH PROGRAM

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, there has been a paradigm shift in the way that people perceive the world in which they live. There have been major developments to expand knowledge of the world due to a curiosity to learn more about people, how they lived, and about things that have impacted society. Technological discoveries have brought people together by modern modes of travel, forms of communication, and educational opportunities. Time and space no longer present a barrier in the interactions of different cultures.

Culture includes "the attitudes, customs, and daily activities of a people, their ways of thinking, their values, their frames of reference" reflective of their history, sciences, and arts (Valdes, 1986, p. 179). Within each culture, individuals express themselves through varying forms of communication. "Cultures exist primarily to create and preserve common systems of symbols by which their members can assign meanings" (Samovar, 1994, p. 28). Due to an ever-increasing global village, there is a need to identify and understand these meanings of people groups in various cultural communities.

In the United States, there has been a great influx of

international people. These people come here for educational and professional purposes but face many challenges. The dress, food, and customs vary from those in their countries. Often times culture shock is experienced. Culture shock is "thought to be a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols" (Brown, 1994, p. 171)." Feelings of sadness, isolation, repression, and rejection are often felt (p. 171).

In addition, when international students come to the United States to pursue educational studies, there is a language barrier that they have to overcome. It is called English. Often these individuals have to study the English language before they can enter a university. This is why Intensive English Programs (IEP) are very important. Intensive English Program are focused programs of English to non-speakers. One of the primary purposes of these schools is to equip English as a Second Language students with proficient English skills, so they can successfully accomplish their goals. Students learn specific skills needed in order to participate in an American university. In addition, this experience at the language school proves to be a transition time that they move from one culture to another.

There is a need to educate and acculturate those who are coming to this land of opportunity. In addition, it is important to have a greater understanding of other people and places. This will lead to a more unified, stable, and cohesive society. There have been many changes globally over the past few decades; yet, the seeds sown into these students' lives will bring many hopes and dreams to life that will birth further advancements globally.

University Language Institute

Intensive English Programs (IEP) are formal language institutes that equip nonnative English speakers with skills in the language in a short amount of time. "The emphasis is organized around the tasks, functions, and skills that the students will need to perform effectively in academic settings" (Brown, 1995, p. 27). A variety of methods and materials are utilized within systematically designed curriculums in the classes offered based upon the students' needs and goals (p. 24). Typically, the classes in these programs are offered in 9-week increments four times a year.

University Language Institute is an Intensive English Program located on the campus of Oral Roberts University. It provides English as a Second Language classes to international students for educational and professional

purposes. There are 6 levels in the program. Students are placed into levels by the Michigan Placement Test according to their ability: Levels 1 & 2 -- beginning levels; Levels 3 & 4 - intermediate levels; Levels 5 & 6 - advanced levels. The classes are comprised of the fundamental content areas of English as a Second Language.

Students receive instruction in the areas of reading, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking for Levels through Level 5. In addition, students are provided the opportunity to complete the university preparatory program named University Bridge program in Level 6. The classes in this level are American Literature, Academic Writing, Oral Communication, U.S. History, and Grammar. Classes are 50 minutes in length and meet 5 days a week. Each session lasts for 7 weeks, and students progress from level to level as competency is demonstrated throughout each session.

Adult Learning

Andragogy is based on what the adult learner needs to know. Adults are often motivated to participate in learning activities due to developmental issues and changes that they encounter in life (Merriam & Clark, 1991, p. 89). Adult learning occurs in a variety of settings from home or work to formal settings. When considering the process of

adult learning, it is important to remember that it is important to acknowledge prior knowledge and experience of the learners regardless of the background. Then the learners may be able to see their own skills and abilities in the area of lifelong learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p.43).

There are several key factors in the process of adult learning (Knowles, 1998, p. 4). First, adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it. When adults see the relevance in the opportunity to learn, they acquire value for the learning opportunity. As a result, the learners' performance or the quality of their lives is enhanced. Second, adults need to be responsible for their own decisions in their lives and need to be seen by educators as capable of self-direction. The teacher should engage in a process of mutual inquiry with the students rather than to transmit the instructor's knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it. This improves the learners self-concept and encourages the learner to take ownership in the process. Third, adults bring their own experiences into the situation which is one of the richest resources of learning that the adults possess. Since adults' orientation to learning is life-centered, the appropriate units for organizing adult

learning are life situations (Knowles, 1998, p. 64). Readiness to learn is also another important factor. Learning experiences need to coincide with the need at hand. Timing is essential. Lastly, motivational factors such as job promotions, higher salaries, self-esteem, quality of life, and job satisfaction affect adult learners' perspective about adult learning (p. 67). As adults invest their time and energy into the adult education process, they will reap the benefits (Tough, 1971, pp. 13-14).

Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy; therefore, these are the appropriate starting points for organizing adult learning activities. Adult education will become an agency of progress if its short-time goal of self-improvement can be made compatible with a long time, experimental but resolute policy of changing the social order. Changing individuals in continuing adjustment to changing social functions-this is the bilateral though unified purpose of adult learning." (Lindeman, p. 58, 1995).

Learning and Culture

Learning style and strategy preferences have a direct connection between learners and culture. Each culture

imposes a particular world view on its speaker based on cultural variances. "Language is a way of life, is at the foundation of our being, and interact simultaneously with thoughts and feelings" (Brown, 1994, pp. 38-39).

Therefore, second language learners are constantly faced with the task of sorting out new meanings from old in order to develop thoughts and concepts (p. 68). The way that a fact is expressed often affects the way that an idea is conceptualized. Words that are spoken affect everyday life in which cultural patterns, customs, and ways of life are expressed. Cultures have different ways of even breaking up the color spectrum of how they see and perceive the world in which they live; this is caused by the labels that the language provides which shape individuals overall cognitive and affective development. Whorf expressed this cognitive development as follows:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from that world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds. We cut up

nature, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significance as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way--an agreement that holds through our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.

(Brown, 1994, p. 186)

In addition, emotional stimuli have a great impact on individuals' learning. They are composed of motivation, persistence, responsibility, and the need for internal structure are a part of the learning process (Dunn & Griggs, 1995, p. 16). English as a Second Language students have a variety of pressures that can impact their affective needs. They struggle with culture shock, how to meet basic survival needs, how to demonstrate their knowledge in an unfamiliar language, and many other relational issues that affect the process of acquiring a second language (Reid, 1998, p. 28). Teachers need to implement means to eliminate fear and stress from the class. They need to know how to elicit positive emotions through determining and utilizing the students learning strengths and strengthening weaknesses based on cultural factors that impact the learning process. Studies have shown that once teachers lower inhibitions in the

classroom, there is more active involvement in the learning situations, a heightened ability to absorb and retain information, and an increased motivation and ability to work with other people (Reid, 1998, p.29).

Different systems of communication appear to be at the heart of the learning process and the environment. There is an impact of ethnicity and culture on collaborative learning. There are some groups who thrive on learning from others while there are others who come from societies where decisions are made by authority figures and participation and consensus building is forbidden; therefore, it may be hard to learn in some settings for students who come from cultures where silence is valued. Those cultures "stress interdependence and social connections rather than independence and autonomy, the rules of speech tend to be more tightly regulated by relationships, and statuses" (Bruffee, 1993, p. 42). In some cultures students express themselves directly, make eye contact, and engage in social interactions. For example, the Hispanic communities are more concerned with interpersonal relationships and often express their facts along with feelings. However, in other cultures such as those in Asia, there is a hierarchical system in which roles are established according to age, sex, and status and

where direct expression is discouraged. In sum, these values are represented in different styles of language acquisition that have different values in various cultures (p. 43).

Teachers are researchers. They are always looking at the results of data gathered from class discussion, observation of students' progress, test scores, lesson plans, and students' projects. This information is important because it gives information on how to improve the teaching and learning process and product. When teachers implement this knowledge into the classroom, it is known as "action research". One very important area of research among teachers deals with learning styles and strategies used by various students within the classroom. There is an even greater need to research learning styles and strategies in the English as a Second Language classroom due to the varying learning preferences due to cultural factors (Reid, 1998, p. 15).

Learning Styles

"Learning can be likened to a musical instrument and the process of learning to a musical score that depicts a succession and combination of notes played on the instrument over time. The melodies and themes of a single score form distinctive individual patterns that we will

call learning styles" (Kolb, 1984, p. 62). People grasp reality through emphasis on different aspects of comprehension as seen through their experiences. They transform this understanding by extension and/or intention which determines what mode of the learning process will be emphasized (Kolb, 1984, p. 64). The development of the concept of learning styles has been greatly influenced by the work of David Kolb (1989).

Kolb developed the Experiential Learning Model to describe learning styles. This model uses a cycle that consists of four stages to describe learning. The cycle begins with concrete experience and leads to reflective observation. Next, it focuses on the formation of generalizations that are then experimented with new situations. Within each stage are required cognitive skills. There has been a shift from stimulus-response to an "information processing approach" in learning theory (McKeachie, 1974, p. 187). This is demonstrated in Kolb's Experiential Learning Model. "He placed the four cognitive tasks in the Experiential Learning Model into opposing pairs to arrive at two dimensions along which people vary in their learning" (Ivey, 1992, p. 42). The way that individuals perceive information is described on the vertical axis. On this axis, the insights gained through

abstract thinking differs from those who display a preference for concrete experiences. The way that individuals process information is described on the horizontal axis. This is how new information is internalized and knowledge is retained. "This dimension varies from those who process information by observing and reflecting on it to those for whom actively working with new information is the best way to assimilate it" (p. 42).

Learners identified within each quadrant of the grid for the Experiential Learning Model may be labeled as Convergers, Divergers, Assimilators, or Accomodators. An understanding of these learning style preferences is important in order for students to take control over their learning and maximize their potential for learning (Kolb, 1989, p. 2). Convergers learn through abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Students with this learning style preference often perform best in situations like taking conventional intelligence tests where there is a single correct answer or only one solution to a question or problem. These learners' greatest strengths are problem-solving, decision-making, and the practical application of ideas. They prefer dealing with technical tasks and problems rather than with social and interpersonal issues.

Divergers acquire information best through concrete experience and reflective observation. High performance is found in situations calling for the generation of alternative ideas and implications. These learners' greatest strengths are in imaginative ability and awareness of meaning and values. In addition, they are people-oriented and tend to be imaginative and feeling-oriented.

Assimilators learn through abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. The greatest strengths of these individuals are inductive reasoning and the ability to create theoretical models by assimilating disparate observations into an integrated explanation. They are more concerned with ideas and abstract concepts than practical value.

Accommodators learn through concrete experience and active experimentation. Strengths in this area include carrying out tasks and plans and getting involved in new experiences. These individuals are opportunity-seekers who thrive when adapting to changing circumstances and risk-taking opportunities. Learning style preferences are connected to learners and their culture. A wide range of variables are brought into the classroom that are directly related to diverse backgrounds which impact learning (Brown, 1994, p. 41). The cognitive and the affective

aspects of language development are important areas to consider when looking at the relationship between culture and learning (Dunn & Griggs, 1995, pp. 16-17). Everyone has personal learning styles. It is unrealistic for all individuals to expect that all learning situations will accommodate their personal style, and learners may find themselves in many situations outside their comfort zone. Therefore, it is important to be flexible in the learning processes because it is possible to acquire skills to learn outside natural learning style preferences (Knowles, 1998, pp. 168-169).

Learning Strategies

"Learning strategies are the techniques or skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a learning task. They differ from learning style in that they are techniques rather than stable traits and they are selected for a specific task" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 8). The central focus of learning strategies are metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management (p. 8).

Metacognition includes three major areas which are knowledge of self, task, and strategy. When individuals are conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses, they are recognizing their own personal ability to learn. In

addition, a knowledge of learning strategy preferences enhances individuals development of this area. Task insights also compose the area of metacognition (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 9). This includes identifying the difficulties of the tasks and determining how to most effectively deal with these challenges in learning (p. 10). This can be accomplished by "changing learning strategies, restructuring learning to satisfy one's knowledge level, and developing techniques to help match learning task to one's own personal learning characteristics" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 4). The key strategies utilized are Planning, Monitoring, and Adjusting.

Memory strategies are another area of learning strategies. This area primarily deals with the "direct manipulation of the learning material" (Brown, 1994, p. 115). Memory activities include the process of acquiring, storing, and retrieving information (Paul & Fellenz, 1993). Examples include imagery, elaboration, and inferencing. Memory learning strategies are Organization, Use of External Aids, and Memory Application.

"Metamotivation is the awareness of and control over factors that energize and direct one's learning" (Fellenz, 1993, p. 12). It involves students' knowing how and why they are participating in a learning activity (Conti &

Kolody, 1999, p. 4). Metamotivational strategies involve the interaction between the internal and external variables in the areas of Attention, Reward/Enjoyment, and Confidence.

"Critical thinking is a reflective thinking process utilizing higher order thinking skills in order to improve learning" (Fellenz, 1993, p. 30). According to Brookfield (1987), the four parts to this approach include "identifying and challenging assumptions, challenging the importance of concepts, imagining and exploring alternatives and reflective skepticism" (p. 7). These elements are necessary in order to develop the whole person. The critical thinking-learning strategies are Testing Assumptions, Generating Alternatives, and Conditional Acceptance.

Resource management is the fifth learning strategy area identified. When individuals learn how to identify, utilize, and manage the resources, the learning process is positively impacted. Gaining skills to identify resources strengthens the learners' abilities when determining value and need of sources (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 8). Using the resources correctly involves critical evaluation about the material accomplished through research about the validity and reliability of the resources. The resource

management learning strategies are Identification of Resources, Critical Use of Resources, and Use of Human Resources.

These 15 learning strategies in these 5 areas have led to the identification of three groups of learners (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 9). They are Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers. Navigators are "focused learners who chart a course for learning and follow it" (p. 9). They are logical people who have high standards of achievement. They "rely heavily on the learning strategies of Planning, Attention, Identification and Critical Use of Resources, and Testing Assumptions" (p. 11). Problem Solvers are critical thinkers whose learning strategy preference includes Testing Assumption, Generating Alternatives, and Conditional Acceptance (p. 12). Engagers are people who enjoy learning and learn best when they are a part of the process. These learners prefer utilizing metamotivational learning strategies. They enjoy collaborating and interacting with others in order to accomplish a task (p. 14). All of these learning strategy preferences are found in the English as a Second Language classroom.

In an English as a Second Language Classroom (ESL), the learners enter the learning situation with their own strengths and weaknesses. Some ESL students utilize the

strategies of learning with feeling while working with others (Oxford, 1989, p. 7). Other ESL students prefer to organize and to evaluate the learning process logically compensating for missing knowledge. In addition, another group of ESL students rely heavily on memorization and critical thinking. Adding language and cultural factors to these learning strategy preferences brings a very unique learning atmosphere into the classroom.

Problem Statement

America has a great influx of people from many parts of the world. They come here to be a part of the land of opportunity. Along with their dreams, they bring cultural factors consisting of similarities and differences in so many areas such as food, customs, and language. These factors often affect individuals when participating in the programs of the educational institutions in this country, especially in the area of learning the English language. Students enter school with certain perceptions and expectations about learning situations that are based on the ways that they were trained in their respective countries. Learning styles and learning strategies are embedded in the way they process and apply information in the learning tasks.

"Learning styles are internally based characteristics... for the intake and comprehension of new information" (Reid, 1988, ix). They are biologically established ways of processing information that include cognitive and affective aspects. The cognitive aspect includes intellectual functions and the affective aspect consists of personality types that make people unique.

Conversely, learning strategies reflect external skills that students consciously utilize in order to enhance their learning. There are metacognitive, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management strategies which represent various techniques which students use when entering into a learning task (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 10). Students enter the classroom with these learning preferences even though they may come into contact with individuals who have other preferences. Therefore, it is vital for these students to understand their own preferences in order to effectively communicate and interact with others.

Also, culture has a direct impact on how individuals learn. Educational systems in different countries have placed some learning characteristics above others. For example, Koreans are reserved and do not always participate much in class because they think this takes away from the

time that the teacher would use to convey the information. On the other hand, Americans and Hispanics value cooperative work in the classroom. The second language learner must take into consideration not only two languages but two cultures when working with individuals with different backgrounds. Culture encompasses the "deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, and meanings" (Brown, 1994, p. 11) which influence the way individuals think and look at various situations. This results in various learning preferences in the classroom (Brown, 1994, p. 105).

There is a need for instructors of intensive English language courses to be aware of the students' learning preferences in a quick and reliable way (Reid, 1998, p. 44). This knowledge is necessary in order for educators to successfully address the needs of the adult learner in a global educational arena. The challenge for educators is "to create compelling learning experiences through which learners are able to maintain their integrity as they attain relevant educational success" (Wlodowski & Ginsberg, 1994, p. 27). In the classroom, there are students and teachers who have differing backgrounds in learning based on past cultural experiences. Therefore, these individuals have different perceptions as to how learning should take

place. Learning styles and learning strategies are seen through culturally tinted lenses. Therefore, it is vital to have an understanding of how students' cultural factors impact learning style and strategy preferences.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the learning styles and learning strategies of students involved in the University Language Institute program. This involved measuring their learning styles and strategies and describing their perceptions related to the application of the learning process. Kolb's Learning Style Inventory was used to identify the appropriate learning style categories for each participant. Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS) was used to classify participants into their preferred learning strategy category. Also, the Strategy Inventory was used in order to find tactics participants used when learning English as a Second Language. Journals, focus groups, and teacher observations were used in order to gather and assimilate information about individual differences found in students' learning.

Research Questions

1. For the participants of this study, what are the
 - A. learning style profiles?
 - B. learning strategy profiles?

C. SILL profiles?

2. How do the students describe learning projects?
3. How do the students' styles and strategies influence the application of material learned in class?
4. What teacher actions help students in the learning process?
5. What teacher actions hinder students in the learning process?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data consisted of the scores on the Learning Style Inventory, Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults, and Strategy inventory for Language Learning instruments. For each instrument utilized, the students' scores were recorded and reported. Students' profiles for the three instruments were reported through a frequency distribution of the scores. In addition, qualitative data was gathered through students' journals, observations, and interviews to gain multiple perspectives of how students approach learning tasks. Data gleaned helped to describe the participants' individual differences resulting from learning style and learning strategy preferences. Additionally, projects were analyzed by how teacher actions helped the students' acquisition of knowledge.

Definitions

Accommodator: Term used to describe learners whose strength lies in doing things, in carrying out plans and tasks and getting involved in new experiences. They "tend to solve problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner, relying heavily on other people for information rather than on their own analytic ability" (Kolb, 1984, p. 78)

Adult: Someone who has passed through the stages of childhood and adolescence and assumed the role of worker, spouse, and/or parent. An adult has taken primary responsibility for his or her life and functions in socially productive ways in the society. (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 8).

Adult Learning: The process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise. (Knowles, Horton & Swanson, 1998, p. 124).

Andragogy: The art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980, p. 43).

Assimilator: Term used to describe learners whose strength lies in inductive reasoning and the ability to create theoretical models. They are less focused on people and more concerned with ideas and abstract concepts (Kolb, 1984, p. 78).

ATLAS: Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults. An instrument developed by using the international database compiled using SKILLS data, which can assess learning strategies (Conti & Kolody 1998b, p. 109).

Converger: Term used to describe learners whose strength lies in problem solving, decision making, and the practical application of ideas. Often "controlled in their expression of emotion. They prefer dealing with technical tasks and problems rather than social and interpersonal issues" (Kolb, 1984, p. 77.)

Critical Thinking: Thinking that is reasonable and reflective and which focuses on deciding what to

believe or do. It includes identifying and challenging assumptions, challenging the importance of context, imagining and exploring alternatives, and reflective skepticism (Brookfield, 1987, p. 12).

Diverger: Term used to describe learners whose strength lies in imaginative ability and awareness of meaning and values. These learners are interested in people and tend to be imaginative and feeling-oriented (Kolb, 1984 pp. 77-78).

Empowerment: The process of liberating individuals and groups from oppression enabling them to participate equitably (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 21).

Engager: ATLAS grouping of passionate learners who love to learn, learn with feeling, and learn best when actively engaged in a meaningful manner. Engagers pursue learning activities that provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 14).

Learning Strategies: The techniques and skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a specific learning task. Such strategies vary by individual and by learning objective (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 1).

Learning Style: "The individual's preferred ways of grasping and transforming information" (Dixon, 1985, p. 16)

Learning Style Inventory: An instrument developed to determine the learning style of an individual. (Kolb, 1981).

Memory: Storage, retention, and retrieval of knowledge. Memory strategies associated with adult real-life learning are rehearsal, organization, use of external aids, and memory application (Paul & Fellenz, 1993, p. 18)

- Metacognition: Knowing about and directing one's own thinking and learning process (Conti & Fellenz, 1991).
- Metamotivation: Awareness of and control over factors that energize and direct (motivate) one's learning (Conti & Fellenz, 1991).
- Navigator: ATLAS grouping of focused learners who chart a course for learning and follow it. Navigators rely heavily on planning, attention, identification and critical use of resources, and testing assumptions (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 9).
- Perspective Transformation: The process of becoming critically aware of how and why one's presuppositions have come to constrain the way one perceives, understands and feels about the world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14).
- Problem Solver: ATLAS grouping of learners who use the learning strategies associated with critical thinking. These learners test assumptions, generate alternatives, and re open to conditional acceptance of outcomes (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 12)
- Real-Life Learning: Learning that relevant to the living tasks of the individuals in contrast to those tasks considered more appropriate to formal education. Also referred to as "real-world" learning or learning that results in "practical" knowledge (Fellenz & conti, 1989, p. 3)
- Resource Management: Identification of appropriate resources, the critical manner in which they are used, and the use of human resources in learning situations (Fellenz, 1993, p. 27).
- Self-Directed Learning: A learning activity that is self-planned, self-initiated, self-monitored and frequently carried out alone (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

SILL: The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning is an instrument that reveals what learning tactics students use in learning English as a Second Language. (Oxford, 1990).

Chapter II

INTRODUCTION

Intensive English Programs

In the world today, there is an increased need for global understanding which has created "a demand for strengthened communication among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds" (AAIEP, 2000, p. 1). In order to accomplish this task, it is necessary to provide education for these individuals in an efficient and timely way. Thus, Intensive English Programs (IEP) have been created.

Intensive English Programs are educational programs that provide English as a Second Language classes to international students. These students come from other countries to the United States for the primary purpose of learning English in these programs before pursuing academic and professional goals. These institutes offer classes in 7-10 week sessions depending on the individual school. The school places students into levels according to placement test results, and then students progress throughout the levels within the course of a year or less. Intensive English Programs in the United States consist of different

entities such as recruitment and placement, faculty, and curriculum.

Recruitment and Placement

Intensive English Programs promote their programs through transactions that pertain to students' interest. Recruitment staff, administrators, and admission personnel give prospective students a holistic perspective of the various aspects of the program. Recruitment activities consist of promotional activities such as presentations at college conferences and dissemination of material through internet web sites (AAIEP, 1999).

When students arrive at an Intensive English Institute, placement tests are administered. The results of these tests are used to assign students to appropriate levels in accordance with their ability. The kind of test administered is selected by looking at how well the test matches the content of what is taught in the various classes within the program. Most programs prepare the learners for the university, and the core classes are usually reading, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking.

Therefore, the Michigan Placement Test typically best assesses the language learners' abilities for these types of classes.

Faculty and Staff

Intensive English Programs (IEP) employ a core unit of full-time teachers which provides instructional continuity. Part-time teachers are also hired for the purpose of teaching additional hours in which there is not a full-time teacher to cover. In order to be a faculty member, teachers must have either a Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language or equivalent training in this field. Instructors come from many different parts of the world to teach English in IEP's which brings an array of perspectives into the program based on individual differences. The teachers do not have to be native English speakers but need speak with native-like fluency.

Staff members are not faculty members. Their responsibility is to help the students with admissions, financial cost, books, housing, travel arrangements medical needs and any other special need that may arise. Working with international students has additional responsibilities not only for staff but also for faculty members. Therefore, the staff and the faculty work together as a team to provide a comfortable environment in which the students can learn English. In the classes, the teachers offer instruction which takes into consideration various students needs, cultural sensitivity, and learning styles.

In addition, these faculty members participate in professional development activities to be continuously aware of the ways to sharpen their skills and to gain further insights in recent research done about the way students learn (AAIEP, p. 3).

Curriculum

Curriculum development is based on a "series of activities that contribute to the growth and consensus among the staff, faculty, administration, and students" (Brown, J., 1995, p. 19). Intensive English Programs have a written curriculum for all levels of instruction. The curriculum identifies what needs to be completed at each level. Communication classes are offered at each level which assists students in speaking, pronunciation, listening, and reading. Writing/Grammar classes are also offered which include writing, grammar, and research classes. Additional classes offered include Business English, Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Prep, and Basic Computer Skills classes. Intensive English Programs have beginning level classes in which students learn basic community education skills and vocabulary, grammar, writing, reading, and listening.

In levels 2-5 students, have the core classes of grammar, writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Levels

1-3 are created to work on the fundamentals of the English language. Levels 4-6 are often created to help equip international students with research, note-taking, and presentation skills needed for their university studies or their career. These classes typically last for approximately 7-10 weeks and are offered 4-5 days a week for 4-5 hours per day. Most of the programs have classes year round with a 4-6 week break at the end of the year.

Intensive English Programs

There are many Intensive English Programs (IEP) in the United States and around the world. These programs have a typical model in which they create and operate their programs. Some of the leading Intensive English Programs are The English Language Institute at the University of Hawaii, The American English Institute at the University of Oregon, and The Intensive English Language Institute at the campus of the University of North Texas. The English Language Institute at the University of Hawaii is a sub-unit of the English as a Second Language Department. It was established 35 years ago and has had 350-400 students from more than 50 countries over the past few years. The mission of ELI is to provide English language instruction to UHM students who need more academic training in English. The focus is on the tasks, functions, and skills of

communicative language for academic settings. There are courses in listening, reading, speaking, and writing offered at various levels which lasts for 15 weeks. These classes are considered to be credit equivalent which satisfies immigration and financial aid requirements but do not count for graduation.

The American English Institute is located on the campus of the University of Oregon. It was established in 1977 for the purpose of providing English as a Second Language students English skills for professional and personal purposes. In addition, this program helps the students acquire English skills in order to "communicate and study effectively in English and to gain a greater understanding of American culture"

(<http://aei.uoregon.edu/overview.html>, p. 1). The program offers classes in reading, writing, grammar, and speaking. Additionally, pre-Master's in Business Administration orientation for business-minded students are offered in summer session. Classes are held in five 10-week sessions per year.

The Intensive English Language Institute is located on the campus of University of North Texas and is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation. The goals of this institute include

equipping international students with skills needed for academic achievement. There are seven levels starting with the beginning level and moving through high advanced levels. Academic preparation classes include listening, reading, writing, speaking, library research, vocabulary development, computer skills, test-taking, study skills, and U.S. Academic Orientation. Additional courses are offered in pronunciation, spelling, conversation, and TOEFL preparation.

University Language Institute

University Language Institute(ULI) is an intensive English school housed on the campus of Oral Roberts University. ULI was established in 1991. This English school is independently owned and operated from; yet the board consists of ORU faculty. This program offers 25 hours of instruction 5 days per week. The mission of University Language Institute is to "prepare students to be successful in the pursuit of their academic, business, or personal goals" (uli.net, 2000, p. 1). The classes utilize a communicative approach which involves immersion in American language, culture, and customs. The faculty of ULI provide a positive learning environment based on ULI's goal to further "the cause of peace and understanding" (Student Handbook, 2000, p. ii) among all peoples of the world.

Information about University Language Institute (ULI) is disseminated through its web site, culturally-related magazines, and an information brochure. Information provided includes class offerings, program length, tuition, and related costs, and other services such as housing and university placement assistance and counseling. Although these formal sources of information exist, many of the students now hear about the school through friends and family members who have taken classes with ULI. In addition, ULI's administrative assistant keeps all promotional material updated and accurate in accordance with immigration requirements (CEA document, 2000, p. VII-6).

When students arrive at University Language Institute, they are required to take the Michigan Placement Test (MPT). The MPT tests students in the areas of listening, reading, and grammar. In addition, students are given a writing task in order to assess their ability in this skill area. Based on the MPT test score results and the writing sample, students are placed into the appropriate level. Changes in placement may occur during the first week of the session if the student or teachers feels that the student is not in the correct level. When this situation arises, all of the student's teachers meet and discuss the student's

English language learning abilities. If there is still a question, then further testing may be administered by the teachers. The curriculum was developed by a committee of experienced English as a Second Language teachers. The curriculum consists of a "a detailed description of each course at each level, course goals, student level, students objectives that are observable and measurable, and a listing of requirements for advancement, textbooks and materials" (CEA, 2000, p. II-2). For each class, a syllabus is written and revised in accordance with skills mandated for each course. Courses include reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and listening for Levels 1-5. Level 6 classes consist of American Literature, Academic Writing, Oral Communication, U.S. History, and Advanced Grammar. Levels 1 and 2 are the beginning levels in which the students learn foundational English skills such as survival skills, pronunciation, basic grammar, reading, writing, and listening. Students in levels 3-4 in the intermediate classes and learn focus on conversation skills, pronunciation, TOEFL listening, paragraph and beginning essay writing, intermediate grammar and intermediate reading. Level 5 classes are advanced English classes and focus on public speaking, note-taking, essay development and writing, advanced grammar, advanced reading, and

academic vocabulary. Students in Level 6 receive instruction as if they were in a university setting and have the opportunity to participate in debates, write research papers, learn about American Literature and History, and sharpen grammar skills at an advanced level. All of these classes help to prepare the students for the university as well as accelerate their English language acquisition. Scope and sequence charts have been developed in order to outline what skills are needed for each class and to ensure continuity across the curriculum. A curriculum guide is provided for the faculty. It contains specific examples of lesson plans, worksheets, and assessment procedures (CEA site doc, 2000, p. II-2).

There are 13 faculty members who work at University Language Institute. The faculty consists of one director, one secretary, a housing coordinator, and ten teachers. All of the salaried faculty have a Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language. In addition, English is the native language of 80% of the teachers and the remaining 20% have native like fluency in English. Each full-time teacher instructs four 50-minute classes per day for five days a week. Teachers instruct different skills at various levels. Teachers also attend weekly faculty and curriculum meetings. Other responsibilities

include serving on various committees, administering institutional and practice Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), participating in professional development activities, taking students on field trips, and conducting student-teacher conferences.

Andragogy

An understanding of the concept of andragogy is essential in the area of adult learning and education. Andragogy is a term that refers to the learner-centered approach for teaching adults. Andragogy was birthed from a need to understand the characteristics of adult learners and to create a strategy for educating adults with appropriate methods. It is contrasted with the term pedagogy which pertains to helping children learn. In the 1970's, Knowles popularized the term "andragogy" at a time when adult educators were in search of a theory to call their own (Lee, 198, p. 48), and it has become known as the "badge of identity" (Brookfield, 1986, p. 90) for many in the field of adult education. The concept of andragogy was based on four major assumptions: (a) the learner progresses to become self-directing rather than dependent, (b) the learner's life experiences are valuable to the learning process, (c) learners learn best what they identify as

relevant, and (d) learners want to be able to apply what they learn to their lives (Knowles, 1970).

When adults become self-directed in learning, they are able to focus on their personally set goals. This creates an individualized path of inquiry and gives the learners control over their own learning material, setting, and way in which learning will take place. Learning for adults is based on their experiences. These experiences serve as a reservoir of knowledge and understanding that gives to them insight and understanding when learning and also give them reasons to learn. Adults learn because they have a need to learn and form their educational goals around their professional and personal needs. Learning helps adults deal with these needs that are often based on changes in life. When adults identify what they need to learn and see it as applicable to their situation, motivation is increased and self-directed learning takes place.

Two assumptions were later added to andragogy. Knowles described those assumptions as (a) adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it, and (b) adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like) (Knowles, 1998, pp. 44-45). Since learning is based on need, adults like to know the reasons behind the

learning in order to see if and how it applies to their life's situations. These learners have many responsibilities, and time is of an essence; therefore, adult learners are focused on learning only what applies to their lives. Thus, they want to know why they need to learn something. Adults participate in learning opportunities in which they can see relevance and value for their lives. When relevance and value is seen, then motivation to learn is activated. This is often tied to advances in their career or even their personal life.

Based on these assumptions of andragogy, Knowles developed a seven-step program planning model. These steps are as follows, "establishing the climate, creating a mechanism for mutual planning, diagnosing needs, formulating objectives, designing activities, operating the activities, and evaluating learning needs" (Knowles, 1970, p. 54).

In establishing the climate, there are several factors that make a climate conducive for adult learning (Knowles, 1970, p. 46). For example, the physical environment should make adults feel relaxed. It should have meeting rooms that have decor suitable for adult preferences and comfortable furnishings and equipment that are made for adults. In addition, the psychological climate should be

established to make the adults feel acceptance, respect, and support. This can be accomplished through creating an atmosphere that is friendly, informal, and values each student. It is also important for there to be a shared inquiry between students and teachers that eliminates fear and creates free expression (p. 46). The teachers should respect each student and show an interest in the thoughts and ideas expressed. The learning climate extends past the classroom to the institution which can be

reflected in the decor, policies, procedures, leadership style, and human relations. One can sense rather quickly on entering an institution, for example, whether it is concerned about the feelings and welfare of individuals or herds them through like cattle, and whether it views adults as dependent personalities or self-directing human beings. (Knowles, 1970, p. 47)

In order to facilitate a learner-centered classroom, there should be mutual planning between the teacher and the student. In adult education, the student needs to feel ownership in the program and the process (Knowles, 1980, p. 226). This can be attained by including the participants in the planning and decision making process of the learning situation. On the other hand, individuals feel less committed to participate in a learning activity if they are not a part of the planning and decision making process. Most importantly, this needs to be done with genuineness

demonstrating that the students really have a part in the responsibility of organizing the program (p. 227).

Adult learners also need to be involved in self-diagnosing their learning needs. Within this phase, "there are three sources of data for building such a model: the individual, the organization, and the society" (Knowles, 1990, p. 126). The construction of the model begins with the perception of what the learner wants to become, and to achieve and the desired performance level (p. 126). Desired performance of the organization is gained through "system analyses, performance analyses, and analyses of such internal documents as job descriptions, safety reports and productivity records" (p. 127). In addition, desired performance of society are gained by "reports by experts in professional and technical journals, research reports, periodical literature, and books" (p. 127). At this point, the expectations of the learner are blended with those of the teacher, institution, and society for a more complete picture (p. 127).

The fourth step involves formulating objectives which are key to developing guidelines for program development. In addition, objectives are the basis on which activities are scheduled (Knowles, 1980, pp. 120-121). Objectives serve as a compass to direct participants in the learning

process and to provide unity and cohesion within the program.

The fifth step includes designing a pattern of learning experiences based on problem areas identified by the learner. Units of experiential learning are designed "utilizing indicated methods and materials, and arranging them in sequence according to the learners' readiness and aesthetic principles" (Knowles, 1980, pp. 127-154). The model's design places much responsibility on the learner and keeps the focus on self-directed learning.

The sixth and seventh steps consist of operating and evaluating programs. The sixth step's primary purposes include "1. recruiting and training teachers and leaders, 2. managing facilities and procedures, 3. counseling, 4. promotion and public relations, and 5. budgeting and financing" (Knowles, 1980, p. 155). The seventh step focuses on making a shift from evaluation to self-evaluation. The educator works with the students to see the progress made toward their goals in a non-judgmental way. In addition, an assessment is made of how the program helped or hindered the students (p. 49).

The concept of andragogy and its assumptions are related to English as a Second Language Learners of Intensive English Programs. The assumption of the learner's

need to know and the self-concept of the learner are key in this area. English as a Second Language (ESL) students need to have knowledge of and an understanding of why they are completing certain tasks in order to see the value of their work. In addition, they need to have a self-awareness of how they learn and what factors contribute to their personal learning process. This knowledge and understanding can help to foster self-direction. The two assumptions of prior experience of the learner and readiness to learn are also key. ESL students need to know that their life experiences are valuable and link to the task at hand making the learning situation relevant to their lives and goals. Also, they need to see that they can serve as resources for their peers and teachers. This encourages motivation to learn. The assumptions of self-performance centeredness and motivators due to internal pressures are also important. For example, ESL students are very focused on their performance in class because of the pressures to gain English skills in order to achieve academic and professional goals.

Self-Directed Learning

One of the major keys in adult education is for adults to take responsibility for their own learning and to become self-directed learners. "Self-directed learning is defined

as a process in which individuals take the initiative in designing learning experiences, diagnosing needs, locating resources and evaluating learning" (Knowles, 1975, p. 40). Adults need to learn how to self-teach themselves by taking control over the mechanics and techniques of learning (Knowles, 1998 p.135).

In traditional education settings, the practice of teachers has been one of spoon feeding students information with students taking a passive role in the classroom. Years later after these students become adults, they display a dependency on the teacher. Therefore this has spurred the need of facilitating self-direction which is a common goal of adult educators. This concept of self-directed learning has been developed by Malcolm Knowles, Allen Tough, and Stephen Brookfield.

Malcolm Knowles (1980) describes self-directed learning as consisting of four major steps. First, adults move toward self-directedness with maturity. This assumption dispels the idea that self-directedness can be attained by reaching a certain chronological year. Second, experiential techniques based on life experiences are a rich resource for learning. These techniques include discussions and problem-solving. This assumption helps give the students a sense of value and importance and expects

them to initiate involvement in the learning process. Third, adults learn due to real-life tasks or problems. This assumes students are self-directed learning because the learning experiences are based on need and readiness to learn. Lastly, adults are performance-centered learners. They are self-directed in that they immediately take and apply the new skills and knowledge to the task at hand (pp. 43-44). Knowles' work has been predominant in the field and "has provided the language, the concepts, and more importantly the descriptive terms for key elements and process of self-planned learning" (Kasworm, 1992, p. 56).

Allen Tough (1978) built on the work of Houle to create the first available study to describe self-directed learning naming it self-planned learning. He derived his material from his study on learning projects of sixty-six people from Canada. From this study, Tough determined that learners planned 70% of all the learning projects. The term learning project was defined as "a highly deliberate effort to gain and retain certain definite knowledge and skill, or to change in some other way" (p. 250). Tough (1971) also found that learners utilized various skills when working on learning projects which include deciding (a.) what to learn; (b.) where to learn; (c.) when to begin; (d.) what methods, resources, and activities to use;

and (e.)the pace to proceed to learn. He also determined that "highly deliberate efforts to learn take place all around you. The members of your family, your neighbors, colleagues, and acquaintances probably initiate and complete several learning efforts, though you may not be aware of it" (p. 3). Stephen Brookfield (1986) concludes that there are two forms of self-directed learning. First, self-directed learning includes such techniques as specifying goals, identifying resources, implementing strategies, and evaluating progress. The purpose of these techniques is to seek out and process information. This is known as self-education. In addition, self-directed learning:

Occurs when learners come to regard knowledge as relative and contextual to view the value frameworks and moral codes informing their behaviors as cultural constructs, and to use this altered perspective to contemplate ways in which they can transform their personal and social worlds. (p. 47)

These assumptions display autonomy which is at the heart of self-directed learning. Adults demonstrate a readiness when they realize that both personal and social worlds are important in this process making (Brookfield, 1986, p. 58). This realization leads to action in order to acquire skills which demonstrates self-directed learning. In sum, "they are realizing their autonomy in the act of

learning and investing that act with a sense of personal meaning" (p. 58).

These major concepts of adult learning applies to learning in Intensive English Programs in various ways. Many students that enter University Language Institute are moving into "adulthood". Therefore, they are identifying their future goals and what resources are necessary to achieve these goals. These pre-college and pre-professional students are in the process of learning how to direct and to take responsibility of their own learning. For many of these students, this is their first experience with independence in a different culture which launches them into becoming self-directed.

Learning as Transformation

In adult education, learning can be a dynamic process that transforms the participants. Transformative learning

"involves reflective assessment of premises, a process predicated upon still another logic, one of movement through cognitive structures by identifying and judging presuppositions" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 5). In the life cycle, childhood is known as the formative years when beliefs are assimilated about oneself and the world. As people move from adolescence into adulthood, there is a transformative process "involving alienation from those roles, reframing

new perspectives, and reengaging life with a greater degree of self-determination" (Mezirow, 2000, p. xii). Mezirow has lead the way in conceptualizing transformation learning in which adults "learn how to change their frames of reference" (Mezirow, 2000, p. xiv).

Adult learners' frames of reference are derived from their past, present, and future experiences. No need is more fundamentally human than the need to understand the meaning of one's experiences (Mezirow, 1990, p. 11). Therefore, researchers conclude that experience is the basis and the foundational anchor of the process of transformative learning.

Transformative learning was influenced by Thomas Kuhn who popularized the concept of "paradigm" in scientific thought and by Paulo Freire's usage of "conscientization" in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". The first step in accomplishing this is to realize that old ways of making meaning of experience do not work anymore. Therefore, it is important to deal with the problem. A new perspective can be formed through engaging with the experience to form meaning. Then the learner must evaluate the interpretation of the experience by self-examining these assumptions and beliefs.

A major commitment of adult education is "to help learners act upon the assumptions and premises...upon which their

performance, achievement, and productivity are based”

(Mezzirow, 2000, p. 148).

The focus of transformational learning is based on the cognitive process of learning instead of adult learner characteristics like andragogy and self-directed learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 318). It results from the experience of a major crisis in life like the death of a loved one or the loss of a job that brings about change. According to Mezirow, transformational learning involves three phases: “critical reflection of one’s assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action” (p. 60).

The process of transforming perspectives begins with critical reflection which is the “uncovering of submerged power dynamics and relationships” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 136). First, self-examination takes place, and many times the learner feels guilt or shame. This leads to a critical assessment of assumptions in which the individual sees that others have experienced a similar process. Next, various options are explored in order for new relationships or roles to form. Out of this, a plan of action is made that includes four steps: “acquiring knowledge, trying out new roles, renegotiating relationships and negotiating new relationships, and building competence and self confidence”

(Mezirow, 1995, p. 50). Lastly, reintegration is made back into life with the transformed perspective. Sometimes this last step in the phase occurs during the period of self-exploration; yet, the key catalyst in transformation learning occurs when individuals find the missing piece in their life (p. 50). This leads to creating new meaning. In order to determine the authenticity of new meanings, it is important to dialogue or discourse with another well respected expert.

Discourse is the next phase of transforming perspectives. The purpose of discourse is to look for a common understanding and assessment of a belief (Mezirow, 2000, p. 10). "Discourse involves an effort to set aside bias, prejudice, and personal concerns and to do our best to be open and objective in presenting and assessing reasons and reviewing the evidence and arguments for and against the problematic assertion to arrive at a consensus" (Mezirow, 1995, p. 53). By drawing on collective experience, this process helps participants gain a clearer understanding of assumptions in order to gain a tentative best judgment. This phase of building transformational perspectives helps enable participants to "find one's voice" which is necessary in order to gain free full participation. This process can be accomplished in groups,

one-on-one relationships, and formal or informal settings.

The third phase of forming transformative perspectives is action. The kind of action taken is dependant on the nature of the dilemma and could be a simple decision in reaction to a need for social action. "When the disorienting dilemma is the result of oppressive action by a partner, employer, landlord, or anyone else, the transformation process requires that the learner take action against her oppressor, and when appropriate, collective social action" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 60). When there is a need for social action, individuals of like mind need to work together in organizations, systems, and relationships in order to facilitate transformation. There are three steps which are a part of the process. The first step is to recognize that there is a need which comes through critical reflection. Second, "a feeling of solidarity with others committed to change needs to be established" (Mezirow, 1993, p. 189). Lastly, the right course of action needs to be chosen for each situation.

Transforming perspectives is related to English as a Second Language learners due to a transformation that occurs as they settle in a new land. These students come to the United States with certain perceptions based on their culture and prior experiences. However, at times

they find that they have to disengage from their own cultural perspectives and re-engage into a new world filled with new experiences and expectations. This creates a transformation in the students with which is sometimes difficult to deal when they return to their native country.

Empowerment

The word empowerment has been widely used in the field of adult education over the past few decades. "Empowerment involves using learning from the social environment to understand and deal with the political realities of one's social and economic situation" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 21). There have been two great adult educators leading the people in the process of empowerment. They are Myles Horton and Paulo Freire.

Myles Horton's endeavor to help people overcome their oppression came from his childhood experiences of living in Appalachia. This area is naturally beautiful, but many of its people live in poverty. Yet, Horton's belief was that poor working-class people could overcome these circumstances and take control of their lives (Mayers, 1990, p. 1). He determined to help these people and others in similar situations by founding Highlander Folk School in New Eagle, Tennessee (Horton, 1990, p. ix).

Highlander's purpose has been to enable ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. Horton treated all people the same regardless of skin color or social class; therefore, when Highlander was opened it became one of few meeting places for people of different races and classes. In the early 1950's, Horton's focus was on holding workshops for those wanting to organize and participate in the Civil Rights Movements. As a result, Highlander became the primary gathering place for participants of the black revolution (Fellenz & Conti, 1986, p. 6).

The primary purpose of Highlander was to help people overcome circumstances that created oppression. Discussion groups were often held to talk about the peoples' current needs. Within the groups the people analyzed their problems, shared their past experiences, and brainstormed ideas on how to improve their current situation and strengthen their organization. People realized that the answers lied within and with each other (Adams & Horton, 1975, p. 10).

Freire's quest for empowerment was birthed out of his personal experiences in his country of Brazil. Freire was born in a very impoverished area; yet, he lived in a middle-class home. In 1929, the economic crisis in America affected Brazil, and as a result, his family became poor.

On many occasions, he went hungry and saw first hand the negative impact that this can have on human lives.

Therefore, at the age of 11, Freire vowed to help others overcome their oppressive circumstances (Freire, 1998, p. 12).

Freire's focus is on radical social change. His one major assumption is that "man's ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves toward new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (Freire, 1998, p. 14). A component of Freire's theory was to make a distinction between "banking" and "problem-posing" education.

In the banking system, the communication is one way with the teachers filling students with knowledge that is received, memorized, and repeated. These students emerge with knowledge but lack creativity and the skills of how to acquire new knowledge. Instead, Freire saw the importance of a partnership between the teacher and the student engaging in critical thinking which helps to foster creativity (p. 56). "Only through communication can human life hold meaning" (Freire, 1998, p. 58). This is achieved through the cooperative effort of dialogue used to humanize and liberate.

According to Freire (1998), in order to "change the world, you have to name the world" (p. 69). Dialogue is created from assimilating words in which praxis, action and reflection, are a part of naming the world (p. 68). It is "the united reflection and action of the dialoguers to address the world which is to be transformed and humanized" (p. 70). The learning situation's content is often developed by generating themes through dialogue and thereby discussing concerns that are present in the learner's life.

Throughout the discussion, awareness is created about social needs; questions are posed; true knowledge is gained; consciousness is raised; actions are tested; reality is critically dealt with; and people begin to see the control they have over their lives (Freire, 1998, p. 4). Freire (1970) used these techniques with combat illiteracy especially in Third World countries (p. 27). As a result, the people involved in this process become empowered, and lives and societies are transformed.

Culture and Learning

Culture is the unique lifestyle of a group of people that consists of customs, values, and materials based on what people know, believe, and do (Pegagoy & Boyle, 1995, p. 8). It refers to what a group of individuals share based on what was learned from family, friendship, and societal

groups (Reid, 1995, p. 6). In addition, culture is dynamic in the sense that it changes and is not static; therefore, it may be viewed as "a system of symbols and meanings where past experiences influence meaning, which in turn affects future experience, which in turn affects subsequent meaning" (Clouston, 1982, p. 4).

Culture may be viewed through different senses which may include the aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic or sociolinguistic senses. First, the aesthetic sense is comprised of literature, music, cinema, and media. Next, the sociological sense points to the nature and organization of the family, interpersonal relations, customs, and material conditions. Thirdly, the semantic sense refers to "the whole conceptualization system which conditions perceptions and thought processes" (Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990, pp. 3-4). Lastly, the sociolinguistic sense pertains to the individuals language code and background knowledge needed in order to communicate successfully.

Language is an important element of a culture because it provides a basis on which individuals organize perceptions of the world that they live. These perceptions of the people are reflected in the languages' vocabulary and linguistic structures (Ramirez, 1995, p. 58). The

elaboration of vocabulary is partly related to the need to create words that represent the influence of certain phenomena encountered in an environment. "Different cultures are like schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas" (Frake, 1981, pp. 375) Therefore, similar and differing perceptions of learning may be found in the English as Second Language classroom because of different backgrounds.

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and their students may have their own perception as to how learning takes place. When the teacher and the student have differing perceptions about how learning occurs, all parties involved can become frustrated and learning may progress at a slow rate and be more difficult. Therefore, there should be a cultural awareness of cultural variation in learning (Reid, 1995 p. 15).

First, cultures may be viewed on a scale of high and low context. Individuals who live in high context cultures have similar values and attitudes containing close religious, education, and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, these people usually identify with a group and act in accordance with what is best for the group. They work toward agreement and avoid confrontation in order to save face. Japan is a country that practices this by teaching

students to avoid "nami kaze" waves and wind. In addition, in Japan there is only slight variation between religious or ethnic beliefs, and the teachings of the educational system are standard throughout the country.

However, those who live in a low context culture have greater differences. They do not necessarily share the same or similar values and attitudes in the areas of religion and education. The focus is on individual goals, competition, and achievement which is found quite often in the United States. Each individual looks out for personal interest. Differences are also found between the perception and use of oral and written communication. For example, the Japanese see oral communication as very important and view verbal agreements as binding and final.

Whereas, Americans need to have every business agreement in writing (TESOL Journal, 2, 1995). These factors are important to think about when working with students from different countries.

Teachers need to consider individual differences when facilitating learning within English as a Second Language classes. When working with students from high context cultures such as Japan, teachers should look at such things as praise. American teachers have the tendency to praise individuals for accomplishments; whereas, Asian teachers

generally treat the class the same thus facilitating a group effort in order to pass the class. Group work is also very common in ESL classrooms, but students from some cultures, such as Japan, are not accustomed to those ways of learning. Therefore, a variety of types of activities should be used in order to utilize students strengths yet help them to acquire new skills.

In addition, Chinese students learn from modeling. They memorize text as exemplar of good writing. They will memorize pages of textbooks and then rewrite the material verbatim onto a test to show the teacher that they have learned the material and as a form of respect to the authority who wrote the text. In America, this is unacceptable because of English writing rules. This practice may be seen as plagiarism by the instructor; therefore, the instructors need to be sensitive to these individual differences and to make the students aware of differing practices in the United States (Reid, 1995, pp. 15-16).

Acquiring more knowledge about how people from different cultures learn is necessary in order to facilitate cultural awareness and is a valuable resource in the English as a Second Language classroom (p. 376). It provides the teacher and students an understanding about

each others background. Yet, teachers need to be sensitive not to overgeneralize trends of stereotyping students by sociocultural assumptions because there are variations of attitudes and beliefs even within specific groups of people (Reid, 1998, xii).

Individual Differences

Adults come into learning situations with a diverse background of experiences. People become increasingly different as they get older. Range of abilities widen, and talents and interest develop with age. In addition, individual differences among adults are partly attributed to the societal context in which they have lived. There has been many social changes in nutrition, education, and technology just within the last century. Therefore, adults who live in this century are quite different from those who lived a hundred years ago (Knox, 1977, p. 11).

Experience makes adult learners valuable resources.

Background, needs, learning styles and strategies, interests, and goals create a heterogeneous group of people. Therefore, adult education emphasizes individualization in teaching and learning experiences. Experiential techniques such as group discussion, simulation, and problem-solving are often utilized (Knowles, 1990, p. 59). Thus the need to be aware of and

to glean from individual differences demonstrates a need to be informed in the areas of culture and learning.

The understanding of culture in the English as a Second Language classroom is important because it helps to facilitate a more positive learning environment and may bring greater motivation to the students (Paige, 199 p.21). Motivation in turn can increase the rate and degree of the students' English language acquisition. Gardner and Lambert (1972) suggests that there are different factors that effect this process including integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p. 74).

Integrative motivation is one factor that effects language learning. Learners who desire to learn how to become part of and interact with the target language community are integratively motivated. Their purpose for learning the language may be seen as "a key to possible membership into a secondary society" (Spolsky, p. 57, 1971). They often have a desire to use the language outside of class and have a positive attitude toward the target culture (McCracken, 1998, p. 60). On the other hand, there is instrumental motivation which is "based on the advantages that can accrue if language is known" (p. 60). These individuals learn the language in order to advance in their careers and/or to get a degree or training in a

certain field. This kind of learning is impacted by performance or success (p. 55).

There are other factors that effect motivation for people from various backgrounds. People from different countries are influenced differently by motivational variables because of strengths found in varying populations (p. 74). Additional factors that effect motivation and that play important roles in language learning:

- a. attitudes (ie. sentiments toward the learning community and the target language)
- b. beliefs about self (i.e., expectancies about one's attitudes to succeed, self-efficacy, and anxiety)
- c. goals (perceived clarity and relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning)
- d. involvement (i.e., extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process)
- e. environmental support (i.e., extent of teacher and peer support)
- f. personal attributes (i.e., aptitude, age, sex, and previous language learning experience). Oxford and Shearin 1994.

Age is another factor affecting individual differences. A common goal of all English language learners is to become proficient enough to carry out tasks at school, home, and the community. For younger students, there are fewer barriers to overcome when acquiring native like proficiency because they are still developing their language. The critical period in language learning is before the age of 12 or 13 in which individuals may achieve near native-like

fluency when learning the language in a natural environment. They learn best from "direct experience, manipulation of concrete objects, and social interaction with adults and peers" (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997, p. 48). Yet, language learners are not able to begin to deal with abstract concepts until they reach the age of 12 or 13. Syntax and morphology are rapidly acquired by older language learners (48). This is an advantage that adolescents and adults have. In addition, affective factors influence language acquisition. Adults and adolescents have an increased filter and less acquisition when learning English due to being more self-conscious than children. There is a greater development of egoism which may make them less willing to take risks. Conversely, children are not as self-conscious and are more willing to try new things with less concern for their self-image. Therefore, the rate of language acquisition may be influenced by this factor. Another factor influencing language development is the kind of language heard by children and adults. When children are addressed, simplified language is used to help with understanding, but since adults are older, they are often presented with more complex language structures.

Self-Confidence also impacts the acquisition of English as a Second Language. Some individuals are self-

confident, love to try new experiences, and are natural risk takers. These learners are willing to make a guess even when they are not sure if they are right. They also find situations to practice authentic communication which increases the rate at which the language is acquired. On the other hand, other learners are more self-conscious and are less prone to take risks. Therefore, the use of the language is at a slower pace making the rate of language acquisition slower (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 75). As students become more confident, they become more responsible and develop self-directed when learning English.

There are many factors that contribute to individual differences with English as a Second Language Learners. Experience, Motivation to Learn, Age, Culture and Self-Confidence all affect the way that students perceive, process, and participate in learning activities. These students are taking risks by coming to another country to learn English. Therefore, it is important for educators to be aware and sensitive to factors related to individual differences.

Learning Styles

Over the past two decades, researchers have defined and utilized "learning styles" differently. In the field of education, there are many ways that learning styles are explained. Many descriptions of learning styles have been proposed and various instruments have been created in order to assess different traits. When describing learning styles, some educators looked at the cognitive personality of individuals (Myers, 1962) while others deal with the learning environment (Dunn, & Dunn, 1978). Yet, the leading theories that address learning styles deal with the way external information is perceived and processed by the learner (Kolb, 1981).

Myers looked at learning styles as cognitive personality aspects of adults. This provided the foundation for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) which is an example of an affective/temperament learning styles instrument. This instrument is based on Jung's theory of psychological types and has been expanded by Isabel Briggs Myers to include Jung's work on perception and judgment (Wiggins, 1989, pp. 537-538). The MBTI has been used in a variety of settings for educational, career and family counseling. This instrument yields scores for intuition versus sensing, introversion versus extraversion, thinking versus feeling, and judgement versus perception.

Dunn and Dunn (1993) define learning styles as "the way students begin to concentrate on, process, internalize, and remember new and difficult academic information" (p. 8). In the Dunn and Dunn Model, a multidimensional concept of learning style is represented making it useful for elementary and secondary populations. In order to describe learning style, Dunn and Dunn' focus on the environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological stimuli (p. 9). The stimuli assessed first include the environment in the areas of sound, light, temperature, and design. Emotional factors such as motivation, persistence, responsibility, and structure are considered. Sociological aspects in the areas of self, pair, and peers are looked at. Physiological factors of perceptual intake, time, and mobility are assessed. Finally, there is a consideration of psychological factors such as global vs. analytic, hemisphericity, and impulsive vs. reflection.

Kolb (1984) defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 41). His explanation is based on the "Experiential Learning Model" (Jarvis, 1987, p. 17). This is a four-stage model that requires cognitive skills in order to describe learning. It begins with the concrete experience on which students observe and reflect on. Then

moves to forming generalizations and testing these generalizations in new situations to create new concrete experiences. When looking at each stage of the model, different cognitive skills appear to be utilized.

Kolb's learning theory is based on an "information processing" approach which is exemplified in his description of learning styles. Kolb (1984) postulates that there are four elements concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation in learning (p. 30). He regards his model as cyclic and these elements are placed sequentially in the model. The cyclic nature of the model suggests that learning can take place at any given point in the model (Jarvis, p. 18). Through this four stage learning model and his learning style inventory, Kolb infers that learning for humans is both an experiential and a reflective process (p. 6). Kolb is also suggesting that learning is a cognitive process and that at the different stages of cognitive skills required (p. 6). For example, the model begins with concrete experience and leads to reflective observation. Next, it focuses on the formation of generalizations that are then experimented within new situations. Each stage requires cognitive skills. Kolb places the four cognitive tasks in the model into opposing pairs to arrive at the vertical and the

horizontal dimensions. Vertical describes the way people perceive information and horizontal describes the way people process information. Within the dimensions and around the model's framework are four quadrants which Kolb named Convergers, Divergers, Accomodators, and Assimilators (Kolb, 1981, p. 238). Convergers prefer dealing with things, rather than people. Divergers are interested in people, are emotional, and like to generate ideas. Accomodators prefer doing things, are more flexible than the others, tend to ignore theory, and use intuition. Assimilators prefer inductive reasoning, love abstract concepts, but are less interested in practical applications (Kolb, 1974, p. 31).

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is a one page instrument used to describe how individuals learn and respond to ideas in real life situations. There are 12 partial statements with 4 selections to use for the completion of each statement. The participants rank each sentence completion statement according to their learning style preference. The number 4 is to describe how participants learn best down to the number 1 which describes the least likely way persons' learning takes place. Each number may only be used once (Kolb, 1981, p. 1). Results are calculated for four different learning

modes, and the resulting areas are placed on the Learning Style Type grid demonstrating individual preferences. Each quadrant of the grid is identified Converger, Diverger, Accommodator, and Assimilator representing the four dominant learning styles

The findings from the use of this instrument may help to compare and evaluate the learning style preferences of English as a Second Language students. Learning style preferences may have a direct connection between learners and their culture. Even though this instrument could suggest cultural bias, the examination of cultural issues in the ESL classroom is relative. The cognitive and the affective aspects of language development are important areas to consider when looking at the relationship between culture and learning (Dunn & Griggs, 1995, pp. 16-17). Everyone has personal learning styles. All learning situations will not accommodate everyone's learning style preference, however it is possible to acquire skills to learn outside natural learning style preferences (Knowles, 1998, pp. 168-169), provided learners become knowledgeable of their preferences and learn how to incorporate them in their repertoire and appreciate other styles as well.

Learning Strategies

"Learning strategies are the techniques or skills that an individual elects to use in order to accomplish a learning task. They differ from learning style in that they are techniques rather than stable traits, and they are selected for a specific task" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 8). In higher education, learning strategies have been linked to study skills. Claire Ellen Weinstein has also lead the way in studies concerning learning strategies. Weinstein (1988) defines learning strategies as "any behaviors or thoughts that facilitate encoding in such a way that knowledge integration and retrieval are enhanced. More specifically, these thoughts and behaviors constitute organized plans of action to achieve a goal" (p. 291). These learning strategies are study skills that students use to improve their learning. "The key to learning is knowing how to do it" (p. 291). When participating in learning tasks, students need not only to understand their learning strategies, but should strengthen their weaknesses. Learners can do this by rethinking their approach to learning (p. 291). One way to accomplish this is through the use of The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) created by Weinstein. This instrument was made to develop strategies as study skills for college (p. 298). The LASSI offers feedback about proficiency in study

skills and can also be used to "facilitate the design of remedial learning strategies" (p. 298).

In the field of adult education, learning strategies have been linked to real-life learning. In real-life learning, adults must first learn to recognize problems for themselves and then define what are the problems. The structuring of problems is often difficult because in real-life problems are not well-defined in context like academic ones. Therefore, real-world problems do not always have one right answer like problems that may be given in school.

In addition, when looking for information to solve real world problems, there is not always a clear knowledge of where to get that information or what information is needed. When students are in academic situations, they get feedback, but in real-life situations feedback is often unclear or muddled. The focus in schools is on the individual problem solving skills and not on problem solving in group settings. (Sternburg, 1990, 40).

Therefore, there is a need to utilize learning strategies that are linked to learning in real-life settings.

Learning strategies for adults have been conceptualized to include the five areas of metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management (p. 8).

These areas were developed out of the Self-Knowledge

Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS) studies.

SKILLS

The Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS) was developed in 1991 at the Center for Adult Learning Research at Montana State University (Fellenz & Conti, 1993, p. 5). SKILLS was developed to address learning strategies related to "real-life learning" which incorporates problem solving, reflection on experience, or planning in response to situations that occur outside academic settings. SKILLS was designed to assess the learning strategy preferences of adult learners in the areas of metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management (Conti & Kolody, 1998, p. 109).

The SKILLS "consists of a series of six scenarios depicting real-life learning situations which necessitate various levels and types of learning" (Fellenz & Conti, 1993, p. 1). There are 15 questions within each scenario that assess the likelihood of individuals to use specific learning skills and/or techniques in resolving given scenario (p. 1). Two versions of SKILLS were created. The first version deals with present learning situations in areas such as auto insurance, burial customs, local

history, pet care, job regulations, and cholesterol level.

The second version deals with putting a bike together, dental care, recruiting leaders, a letter to the editor, visiting a national park, and care for a relative (Fellenz & Conti, 1993, p. 1).

The SKILLS is created to give the learners the opportunity to choose four out of six scenarios that relate to their lives. Then, the learner reads each vignette and answers the 15 related questions to ascertain the possibility that students will use specific learning strategies in the resolution of the learning situation. Next, the learner is asked to determine which strategies they would "definitely use", "probably use", or "not likely use" to resolve the stated problem (p. 1). The students' choices fall into five areas conceptualized as learning strategies: metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management (p. 1).

Metacognition

Metacognition involves thinking about thinking or learning and is continuously expanding in the field of adult education (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 9). In the 1970's, the cognitive psychologists Flavell and Brown introduced metacognition to cognitive psychology. Flavell (1976) referred to metacognition as "one's knowledge

concerning one's cognitive processes and products or anything related to them, e.g., the learning-relevant properties of information or data" (Counter & Fellenz, 1993, p. 10) Also, Brown (1982) described metacognition as "knowledge and control that one has over learning" (Counter & Fellenz, 1993, p. 10). Thus, learning is enhanced when learners understand how to develop their own learning. Metacognition is necessary in the field of adult education because it makes the learner aware of one's own strategies and effectiveness.

Metacognition strategies measured in SKILLS include Planning, Monitoring, and Adjusting. Planning includes a learners ability to determine the best way to approach a learning task. "The basis for such planning is an awareness of one's most effective learning characteristics, insight, into the learning task, and an understanding of the planning process" (Fellenz and Conti, 1993, p. 9). Planning helps the learner to take responsibility and control of learning the learning activity (Conti & Kolody, 1999a, p. 4). Monitoring includes the learners ability to assess their own learning progress while participating in a learning task and/or project. The learners self-check their progress by comparing it to acceptable standards. The strategies included in monitoring are self-testing,

comparing progress from previous learning situations, asking for feedback, checking new resources for information, and keeping track of diverse steps in learning (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 4).

Metamotivation

Metamotivation is defined as "the awareness of and influence over factors that energize and direct one's learning" (Fellenz & Conti, 1993, p. 12). It deals with "one's knowing and understanding how or why one is motivated to participate or remain in a learning activity" (Conti & Kolody, 1999a, p. 4). This is a major influence in learning regardless of the learners reason to learn. The SKILLS instrument evaluates motivation based on internal versus external factors.

Metamotivation strategies include Attention, Reward and Enjoyment, and Confidence. Attention refers to one's ability to focus on the material to be learned (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 5). Students must be engaged in the learning task for information to be absorbed. Engagement results from a relationship formed between teacher, learner, task or subject matter, and the learning environment (Kidd, 1973, p. 276). Reward and enjoyment is another important part of metamotivation. Students judge the value of a learning activity by determining if the

learning activity is fun and self-fulfilling. This results in motivation while participating in the learning project.

Confidence in learning occurs when the learner knows that a learning task will be completed once started. This serves as a pre-requisite to motivation in learning. When these factors are present, the students are more effective learners and retain greater amounts of information.

Memory

Memory is the capacity of humans to retain information, to recall it when needed and recognize its familiarity when they later see it or hear it again" (Wingfield & Byrnes, 1981, p. 4). "The intended application of material to be remembered also affects the degree of attention given to a topic. Selective attention is the process of allocating attentional resources to one object or event over another" (Paul & Fellenz, 1993, p. 24).

In the SKILLS model, memory strategies are associated with real-life learning and are categorized as Organization, External Aids, and Memory Application (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 75). Organization strategies "use structuring or processing of information to store, retain, and retrieve knowledge" (Paul & Fellenz, 1993, p. 25). These strategies are needed in order to arrange the knowledge in meaningful patterns that direct the learners

retrieval process (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 7). External aids are also utilized as memory strategies which include, "reviewing materials, the use of appointment books, making lists, things to do, placing visual items on display, and asking others to provide reminders at relevant times" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 7). When the learners manipulate these aids effectively, memory recall is enhanced.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is "a reflective thinking process utilizing higher order thinking skills in order to improve learning" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 7). It is aimed at improving individual and societal learning (p. 7) which has resulted from the impact of the information age on society (Fellenz, 1993, p. 30). Brookfield's (1987) four components of critical thinking are the basis for the SKILLS model of Critical Thinking and directly related to real-life situations. Brookfield's steps toward critical thinking include (a) identifying and challenging assumptions, (b) challenging the importance of concepts, (c) envisioning and exploring alternatives, and (d) maintaining a healthy skepticism concerning conclusions.

The critical thinking strategies targeted by SKILLS includes Testing Assumptions, Generating Alternatives, and Conditional Acceptance. Testing assumptions include

identifying and examining assumptions in real-life situations (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 8). Generating Alternatives involves "exploring alternatives when engaged in critical thinking or problem solving". Conditional Acceptance entails "advocating reflective skepticism to avoid absolutes or over simplifications" (p. 8). In the SKILLS model, conditional acceptance is measured by assessing whether the learners are "monitoring results and evaluating consequences" (p. 8).

Resource Management

Adults have many resources at their disposal to use when completing learning tasks. Resources are constituted by but not limited to books, magazines, newspapers, tapes, TV, computers, or individuals (James, 2000, p. 65). Since there is such an enormous amount of information available on a particular subject, learners may not always know what to do with all of the available resources (Smith, 1982, p. 103). Therefore, resource management strategies are beneficial when participating in learning opportunities.

Resource management consists of Identification of Resources, Critical Use of Resources, and the Use of Human Resources. Identification of Resources involves locating the best source of information for the learning task. "The learner must judge whether obtaining the resource is equal

in value to the time, energy, and expense in gathering it" (Tough, 1971). Critical Use of Resources is another important strategy which involves critically reflecting on the best source instead of those that are readily available. In the SKILLS instrument, it is used "to measure the critical evaluation of resources including contacting an expert or an outsider, checking the information with a second source and observing or asking questions to check for bias" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 9). Use Human Resources is the third resource management strategy. In SKILLS, this strategy entails dialoguing with other people that may have different opinions or insights about issues. Sometimes, the support offered by these individuals is just as important if not more important than the information that they contribute.

Groups of Learners

SKILLS has proven to be a valid and reliable instrument to assess the learning strategies of adults and has been used in over 20 studies. From this research, distinct groups of learners surfaced and were identified using these 15 learning strategies of the SKILLS instrument (Conti & Kolody, 1998a, p. 109). Using a diverse database of 3,070 learners from these studies developed three groups

of learners to have been identified describe learning preferences of adults in real-life settings (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 16-20). These groups of learners were identified as Engagers, Navigators, and Problem Solvers (p. 18). The Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS) was developed to find adults learning strategy preferences of learners in the groups. The ATLAS can be completed by learners quickly and the results can be used immediately by both teachers and learners (p. 16).

These learning strategy preference groups have a distinguishing profile. Navigators are learners who focus on what they want to learn and set a plan in motion and follow it. They like planning, organizing, and need to make logical connections (p. 9). They like to "chart a course and for learning and follow it" (Conti & Kolody, 1989, p. 9) which reflects the use of the Planning learning strategy. They do not like interruptions from their schedules and become stressed if this occurs. Navigators like to know what is expected in the learning activity before starting, to make a plan for learning and to identify necessary resources. As they work, Navigators use the learning strategy of Critical Thinking while reflecting on the process by looking closely at details.

Problem Solvers are critical thinkers who utilize reflection and higher order thinking skills (p. 11). They like to test assumptions and to generate alternatives which may create additional learning opportunities. When many opportunities are generated these learners may have difficulty deciding which opportunity to pursue. These types of learners perform better on exams with open-ended questions and problem solving activities. They are critical thinkers and continuously modify their learning plan as they evaluate their learning.

Engagers are passionate about learning, love to learn, learn with feeling, and are best at learning when they are actually engaged meaningfully with the task (p. 13). They are relational learners and therefore, learn best when involved in learning tasks with other people. These students benefit from the learning strategy of metamotivation and excel in learning opportunities where there are factors that opportunities that motivate and energize learning like reward and enjoyment.

Second Language Assumptions

J. Michael O'Malley and Anna Chamot (1990) have done extensive research regarding learning strategies in second language acquisition. They have classified learning strategies into three categories: metacognitive strategies,

cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies include advance organization and preparation, self-monitoring comprehension and production, and self-evaluating achievement of objectives. Cognitive strategies include the interaction of the learner with the material (p. 197). This is accomplished by mentally manipulating the material through the elaboration of concepts and skills or the creation of mental images. In addition, it can refer to physically grouping items into meaningful categories or recording important information through note-taking. Social strategies involve the learner's interaction with others in order to assist learning (p. 197). This is demonstrated through cooperation or asking questions for assistance. These strategies were included in Chamot and O'Malley's development of an instrument named the Cognitive Academic Learning Approach (CALLA). The central component of CALLA is learning strategy instruction. It is based on four assumptions:

- 10 Mentally active learners are better learners;
- 20 Strategies can be taught;
3. Learning strategies transfer to new tasks;
4. Academic language learning is more effective with learning strategies. (O'Malley & Chamot, 1987, p. 240).

The Cognitive Academic Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional program for second language learners. "The focus of CALLA is on the acquisition and use of procedural

skills that facilitate academic language and content learning" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990, p. 191). It provides instruction in content areas using learning strategies to strengthen comprehension, retention, and use procedural knowledge. These three components are "integrated into an instructional sequence with five recursive phases of instruction that provide students with a variety of learning experiences to develop content knowledge and processes, academic skills, and practice in using learning strategies to become self-regulated learners" (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990, p. 203). This model assists teachers in finding the learning strategies that the students are using through the use of self-talk during the activities and interviews after the activities. These two activities make students aware of mental processes used while completing a task and help the teacher to diagnose learning strategy needs. These researchers concluded that learning strategies are effective in second language acquisition. From their studies, Chamot and O'Malley have found that good language learners use many different learning strategies. In addition, they have concluded that there are core learning strategies useful in second language acquisition.

The Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) is a product of Rebecca Oxford's effort to create a more practical way to learn a second language making a shift from rote memory and grammar translation to communication (Oxford, 1990, p. 1). She built upon the work of Chamot, O'Malley, Dansereau, and Rubin, and created what some consider to be one of the most comprehensive systems of classification in language learning strategies (McKeachie, 1998, p. 23). Oxford developed the SILL based on the strategies she found to be most needed to learn a new language.

The SILL divides strategies into two major classes, direct and indirect. "These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups: memory, cognitive, and compensation under the direct class; metacognitive, affective, and social under the indirect class" (Oxford, 1990, p. 14). Direct strategies require direct involvement in second language learning (McKeachie, 1998, p. 23). They are composed of memory strategies in order to remember and retrieve new information; cognitive strategies are used to understand and produce the language; and compensation strategies are used to fill in gaps of language learning (Oxford, 1990, p. 14). Indirect strategies are used to aid in the acquisition of second language learning. They are

composed of metacognitive strategies in order to coordinate the learning process; the affective strategies are used to regulate emotions, and social strategies are used to learn with others (McKeachie, 1998, p. 23).

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was "designed to assess how language learners go about learning a language" (Oxford, 1990, p. 279). It is a questionnaire that contains 50 items responded to by participants. The statements are related to language learning strategy practices. The students respond to the items based on a Likert-type scale: 5-Always, 4-Usually, 3-sometimes, 2-Occasionally, and 1-Never. Oxford's (1990) classification system has six categories named subscales. Each contains different individual language learning strategies. The six subscales are Remembering More Effectively - memory strategies; Using All Your Mental Processes - cognitive strategies; Compensating for Missing Knowledge - compensation strategies; Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning- metacognitive strategies; Managing Your Emotions - affective strategies; and Learning With Others - social strategies (McKeachie, 1998, p. 94). After the students respond to this questionnaire an assessment is made of their strengths and weaknesses related to language learning behavior.

SILL is useful in the study of second language acquisition because it determines the specific strong and weak strategy areas of the students. In addition, it helps the students to identify what tactics they do and do not utilize in learning a second language. As a result, the teacher and student can create and implement a plan to develop weak areas of language learning behaviors by strengthening those techniques not used by learners. The student can then keep track of the progress made in weak areas by journaling, and the teacher and students can make adjustments to the plan as needed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

“Descriptive studies are primarily concerned with finding out ‘what is’ utilizing observational and survey methods to obtain data” (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 20). There are many types of descriptive studies. One way to classify descriptive studies is the way in which the data was collected. This data is usually collected through a questionnaire survey, an interview, or an observation. In self-report studies, data is collected through questionnaires and interviews. In observational studies the participants are not always asked for information; the researcher collects this data through alternative means such as direct observation (Gay, 1996, p. 251). In education, “descriptive research seeks to characterize a sample of teachers, students, school buildings, or textbooks in one or more variables” (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 30). The descriptive research is quite often used to deal with attitudinal, demographic, and inquiries that are opinion based (Gay, 1996, p. 249). This study utilized a descriptive research design in education that included the discovery of new phenomena through the process of triangulation by employing the use of journals,

observations, and interviews in this case study.

Case studies are "intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978) such as an individual, program, event, group, intervention, or community" (p. 19). By definition, case studies "focus on a particular situation" (Merriam, 1988, p. 11). Qualitative studies are descriptive. They build a thick description through the use of a variety of data collection and analysis techniques and quite often report results using narration and quotations rather than numerical data (p. 10). An important objective of case studies is to "illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under the study" (p. 13). The four characteristics which are essential to case studies include the following;

1. Particularistic nature - it can suggest to the reader what to do or what not to do in a similar situation. It can examine a specific instance but point out a general problem. It may or may not be influenced by the author's bias.
2. Descriptive nature - it can obtain information from wide variety of sources. It can present information in a wide variety of ways...and from the viewpoints of different groups. It can illustrate the complexities of a situation - the fact that not one

but many factors contributed to it.

3. Heuristic nature - it can explain the reasons for a problem, the background of a situation, what happened, and why. It can explain why an innovation worked or failed to work. It can evaluate, summarize and conclude, thus increasing its potential applicability.

4. Inductive nature - generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses emerge from an examination of data-grounded in the context itself. (Merriam, 1988, pp. 11-13).

This study sought to gain a clear understanding of the learning style and strategy preferences practiced by individuals with various cultural backgrounds at University Language Institute. Journals, observations, and interviews were used to collect qualitative data. From this data, themes emerged that gave clear, rich descriptions of participants' learning.

Sample

A population is the people in a group that have a similar set of characteristics. The target population is the group that the researcher is particularly interested in studying who have these sample characteristics.

Populations may be any size and may cover any geographical

area (Gay, 1996, pp. 112-113). The target population for this study included international students attending Level 5 and Level 6 English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. These students represent a wide range of cultures and goals. They are adults who are preparing to go to an American university or to attain employment where fluent English skills are necessary.

A sample is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in a way that the individuals represent the group from which they were selected. The individuals selected comprise the sample for the study, and the larger group is the population of interest (Gay, 1996, p. 111).

In this case, a sample was taken from the total student population at the Intensive English Program. The sample consisted of high intermediate to advanced groups of students in Level 5 and Level 6 at University Language Institute. These students represent a wide range of culture and goals. They are adults who are preparing to attend an American university or to attain fluent English skills for their employment. The primary focus was on the Speaking/Listening and Vocabulary classes for Level 5 and the Academic Writing class for Level 6. These classes meet 5 days a week for 50 minutes each day. Students

participating in these classes advance to the next level every 8 weeks as necessary progress is made.

Learning-Style Inventory

The Learning-Style Inventory is a one-page instrument used to describe how individuals learn and respond to ideas and real-life situations. There are 12 partial statements with 4 selections to use for the completion of each statement. The participants rank each sentence completion statement according to their learning style preference. The number 4 is used to describe how participants learn best down to the number 1 which describes the least likely way ones' learning takes place. Each number may be used only one time (Kolb, 1981, p. 1). Results are calculated for four different modes, and the resulting areas are placed on the Learning-Style Type grid demonstrating individual preferences. The quadrants of the grid are labeled Diverger, Assimilator, Converger, or Assimilator representing the four dominant learning styles. If a person's scores fall close to the center of the grid, then the learning style preference is evenly balanced, but if the data falls close to a corner of a quadrant, then this demonstrates that the person will have a heavy reliance on a certain learning style (p. 6). The results of this instrument may help individuals compare and evaluate

learning style preferences related to school, work, or other everyday life situations (p. 8).

Substantiating the validity and reliability of an instrument are very important for all studies. One of the most important questions to consider when determining validity would be is if an instrument is for the purposes for which it is being used (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 275). Three important kinds of validity are content validity, construct validity and criterion-referenced validity.

"Construct validity is the extent to which a particular test can be shown to measure a hypothetical construct inferred on the basis of observable behavioral effects" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 275). Its primary purpose is to "assess the underlying theory of a test" (p. 275). The theoretical bases and hence the construct validity of the Learning Style Inventory resides in the Experiential Learning Model.

"Content validity is the degree to which the sample of test items represents the content that the test is designed to measure" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 276). This is often determined with a comparison between test items and curriculum content. For Kolb's LSI, there is not a perfect mathematical relationship between the quadrants; yet, there are general relationships. This is often determined with

a comparison between test items and curriculum content. There is a "moderate negative relationship between abstract conceptualization and concrete experience, and there is a similar negative relation between active experimentation and reflective observation. Other correlations should be near zero" (Kolb, 1979, p. 74).

"Criterion related validity compares an instruments' scores with external criteria known or believed to measure the attribute under study" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 459). Typically these tests rate the students against a standard rather than rating them against other students (Madsen, 1983, p. 8). For the Learning Style Inventory, criterion related validity was established by evaluating the relationship between the appropriateness of questions to data gained about the various learning styles. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. The estimations of internal consistency of the original version of the Learning Style Inventory were low; yet they were moderately consistent across studies (Sewall, 1983, p. 26). Also, the test-retest reliabilities were fairly low. The average reliability scores for six studies ranged from .37 to .66 (Sewall, 1986, p. 32). The expanded Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) demonstrates an improvement of reliability with values ranging from .73 to .88 (p. 32).

ATLAS

The Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults(ATLAS) instrument was developed in order to have a user- friendly instrument to assess adults learning strategy preferences.

It is made up of five brightly colored cards that are one-half the size of a standard 8.5" x 11" page. The cards are bound with a black plastic binding. Each card contains two choices of learning strategy preferences. Each choice is located in a box which is a part of a flow-chart design. After the respondents choose one option, the instructions on the card guide the respondents to the next card with two more statements about learning. The arrows on the card lead from one box to the next based on the answers of the respondents. Respondents follow the flow chart until their final card places them in the correct learning strategy group. This instrument takes approximately 1 to 3 minutes to complete (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 16).

ATLAS is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring learning strategy preference. Construct validity was established by using cluster analysis to identify the three groups of learners from a data set of 3,070 responses to the Self-Knowledge Inventory of Lifelong Learning Strategies (SKILLS). Since the times for SKILLS was used to establish ATLAS, the construct validity of ATLAS is

based upon that of SKILLS. SKILLS "is a valid and reliable instrument [which] consists of real-life learning scenarios with responses drawn from the area of metacognition, metamotivation, memory, critical thinking, and resource management" (Conti & Kolody 1999, p. 3). The groups were named Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers (Conti & Kolody, 1999, pp. 6-8).

Content validity was established by discriminate analysis for ATLAS through determining the learning strategy pattern that each group utilized when compared with the others (pp. 18-19). The item that identifies a group on each card was constructed based on the result of a discriminant analysis for those groups. The statistical process produces data for highly accurate items.

Criterion-related validity was established by comparing respondents scores to their scores on the Self-Knowledge Inventory for Lifelong Learning Strategies (p. 19) and by the testimony of respondents concerning the accuracy with which the instrument correctly describes them as a learner; current data on nearly 1,000 learners in diverse settings reveals that 90% of those taking ATLAS confirm that the learning preference group in which they are placed correctly describes them (Ghost Bear, 20001, p. 345). Test-retest data confirms that ATLAS has a

reliability of .9.

SILL

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was created to assess the learning strategy-tactic preferences for ESL students' strengths and weaknesses in learning strategy practices. The questions are divided into smaller sections consisting of 10 questions. Each section is labeled with differing learning strategies which include Using All Your Mental Processes, Remembering More Effectively, Compensating for Missing Knowledge, Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning, Managing Your Emotions, and Learning with Others. The sections contain statements related to the specified learning strategy. The students respond using a Likert -type scale: 5-Always, 4- Usually, 3-Sometimes, 2-Occasionally, and 1-Never. Answers are marked on a separate worksheet. This inventory takes 20-30 minutes to complete.

Data Collection

Setting

University Language Institute (ULI) is housed on the campus of Oral Roberts University located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. ORU is a Christian university founded in 1968 by Oral Roberts. ULI is independently owned and operated by Byrene Culver who founded the school in 1991. The focus of

the school is to provide international students with training in the English language for academic and professional purposes.

The classes are small and taught by professionals in the field of English as a Second Language. Each class averages between 10-12 students and is intentionally kept small in order to have a greater ratio between students and the teacher which lends itself to a higher quality of education. Each class focuses on the skills of reading, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking. There are additional courses in American Literature, Advanced Writing, Oral Communication, U.S. History, and Advanced Grammar. Classes are offered in six levels 5 days a week.

There are 7 weeks in the session and six sessions per year.

Context

Descriptive studies occur within a particular context, and their purpose is to describe a setting. In order to do this, the researcher must be sensitive to the context and the variables like the people and the physical setting in the study (Merriam, 1988, p. 38). Sensitivity to the information is also important. Therefore, one of the key principles of qualitative methods is the relevance of context and background to process and to interpret data

(Patton, 1983, p. 9). In qualitative data the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Therefore, understanding the role of the researcher in the lives of the participants is important. The researcher's interaction with the participants may be sustained over a long period of time or it may be brief yet personal as in some interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 59). It is the presence of the researcher in the participants' lives that "brings a range of strategic, ethical, and personal issues that do not attend quantitative approaches (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1993, p. 59).

The design of this study developed from my position as an English as a Second Language teacher at University Language Institute (ULI) for 2 years. I was employed as a full-time faculty member which meant that I worked 5 days a week for 7-8 hours a day. During the day, I taught 4 classes a day, created learning activities for classes, and evaluated students' progress in English acquisition. As a result of this employment, I was able to come in close contact with many international students who needed to learn English to accomplish their academic and professional goals in life and to live in a world where speaking English is a

vital skill.

Before working at University Language Institute, I instructed in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for the Tulsa Adult Education Program in Oklahoma. This position also gave me the opportunity to help people learn English for the purposes of becoming involved and integrated into the community. I gave them a tool which they could use in their everyday life. I also instructed in the Family Literacy program which gave me the opportunity to show parents and children how to work together when learning the language. During that same period of time, I instructed in work-based education classes for a local company. I helped to equip the international employees with language which was necessary to effectively and efficiently complete their jobs.

My background in Teaching English as a Second language sparked my interest in learning more about how people learn. I have a desire to help international students learn more about themselves in order to appreciate their strengths in learning and to further develop weaker areas in learning. Working with international students takes time and patience on my part; yet, there are great rewards that accompany helping students learn-how-to-learn.

As a teacher at University Language Institute (ULI)

for the past 2 years, I have naturally conducted interviews and observations with the students of ULI. This research gives the students at the University Language Institute the opportunity to express themselves and to better understand the way that they learn.

Data

Data are "simply bits and pieces of information found in the environment" (Merriam, 1998, p. 67). "Data collection in a case study is a recursive, interactive process in which engaging in one's strategy incorporates or may lead to subsequent sources of data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 134). The collection of these sources was based on the type of study undertaken by the researcher. In case studies, there are three techniques often used to collect data: interviews, observations, and journals. The analysis of the results of these sources of information helps the researcher to gain different perspectives of the data. In turn, gaining a holistic picture of the phenomenon "mandates both breadth and depth of data collection" (Merriam, 1998, p. 134).

Data Collection Techniques

Observations can be used as research tools. They are critical to qualitative research because they help to discover complex interactions in natural settings. In

addition, these tools give information about specific incidents and behaviors that serve as reference points for subsequent interviews (Merriam, 1998, p. 96). This method is common to educational settings and "makes it possible to record behavior as it is happening" (Merriam, 1998, p. 96).

Observations help to look at behaviors and attached meanings and sees these behaviors as purposive with the expression of deeper values and beliefs. Observations "(1) Serve a formulated research purpose, (2) is planned deliberately, (3) is recorded systematically, and (4) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability" (Kidder, 1981, p. 264).

Observations are determined by the researcher's questions of interest. The disciplinary orientation of the researcher often gives definition to the problem (Merriam, 1998, p 97). The concentration of the observations may include certain events, behaviors, conversations, participants, and subtle factors (p. 98). In addition, there is flexibility in the amount of structure of the observations. Less structured observations may have a more specified focus and be based on pre-thought. Yet, it is important to allow changes in the focus as needed (p. 97).

At the beginning of stages of the study, the researcher has broad areas of interest, but the focus narrows through

early analysis of patterns identified in the notes. These are reference points for subsequent interviews (Merriam, 1998, p. 96). "Observations entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts (objects) in social setting chosen for a study" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 79). Then more focused observations are made and recorded in analytic memos. Interviews are utilized as a means to get large amounts of data in which the researcher is able to do immediate follow-up and clarification. One widely used data collection method is called in-depth interviewing. This is simply a "conversation with a purpose" (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, p. 149) and predetermined response categories.

At the outset of the study the investigator should inform the participants of the motives and intentions of the study (Taylor & Bogden, 1998). Since the teacher is the researcher, rapport is already established, so interviewees feel more comfortable sharing information that the researcher wants to explore. The research is developed as the researcher explores these topics using questions that help to guide the participant in expressing their perspectives; yet, the researcher has respect for how the participant responds. The participant's point of view is a key fundamental to qualitative research.

However, there does need to be "a degree of systemization in questioning" (Donagy, 1984, p. 10) to guide the conversations. The questions direct the respondents and shape the way that they respond to acquire desired information. If desired information is not acquired then verbal or non-verbal probes and follow up inquiry may be used to attain the data. It is important for the researcher to convey an attitude of acceptance to the participants' responses making them feel that their input is important. This can be done through tone of voice, word choice, and rate of delivery developing a personal style while taking into consideration the style of the respondent (Donagy, p. 10). In addition, listening is an important skill for the interviewer to have because 70% of the time is spent listening. It is not a passive but an active process that is beneficial to both parties in the interview process. Instead of a formal question and answer session, the interview should be modeled after a conversation between equals. The role of the researcher is similar to that of a research tool (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, pp. 88-89).

At the end of the interview the given information should be summarized by the researcher and any questions and concerns should be clarified.

Lastly, the collection of data through student

journals has become increasingly popular in many different subject areas including education (Ballantyne & Packer, 1995, p. 1). It is a powerful research tool in qualitative research (Janesick, 1998, p. 27). "Journals are claimed to integrate theory and practice, stimulate critical thinking and reflection analysis and practice and promote professional development" (Wagner, 1999, p. 2). In addition, journals promote self-evaluation and self-development as progress is tracked. Journals also, give course evaluations from a participant's viewpoint and is advantageous to the class due to the immediacy of feedback that it provides. This data collection tool is better than questionnaires because journals capture the students thoughts and feelings of the moment. Therefore, valuable information is not forgotten unlike questionnaires which give more general than specific data (p. 5). "From this we gain an insight into the students' world, their experience and their perspective on learning, and this is offered in a holistic way" (Wagner, 1999, p. 1).

Journals, observations, and interviews have given multiple perspectives to this study the opportunity to freely express their ideas in recorded form. This was done over the course of the session, so the students were able to keep track of their learning, to be made aware of their

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The purpose of multiple methods in triangulation is "to offset biases in investigations of the same phenomenon in order to strengthen the validity of inquiry results" (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989, p. 256). As a design strategy, triangulation uses mixed methods to expand limitations that a single method could yield to a study (p. 256). The purpose of triangulation is to seek convergence, corroboration, and correspondence that are the results that come from different methods. Further, the use of different methods not only increases the validity of the constructs and results of the inquiry but also counteracts the heterogeneity of irrelevant sources attributed to method inquirer, and theory biases (Lafleur, 1990, p. 12).

Mathison (1988) suggests triangulation begins with the analysis of one set of data or at one point of the "triangle". Then the interpretations of the analysis are tested and revised based on the data from the other two data sets. The utilization of triangulation increases "the probability that new insights will indeed emerge from the data, and that verifiable predictions can be made" (p. 17).

There are benefits in using mixed methods. When qualitative and quantitative data methods are used together they "may provide complementary data sets which together give a more complete picture than can be obtained using

either method singly" (Nau, 1995, p. 3). This gives the researcher different lenses to view the data. These methods work together in order to derive information that neither could do by itself (p. 30).

Data collected from the descriptive study of learning style and learning strategy preferences used by students in Intensive English Programs were both qualitative and quantitative. Mixed methods were used with qualitative and quantitative data to offset biases which was accomplished through the use of three qualitative tools namely journals, teacher observations, and interviews. These data collection tools worked together to gain new insights about the English as a Second Language learners and to provide a complete picture of how they acquire, process, and participate in learning activities. The journals described the learning process of the students while participating in various learning activities. These journal entries can paint a clearer picture and assist the teacher in explaining student actions that are observed. In addition, teacher observations can provide additional information about the students' learning which may be compared to students' journals to glean from other perspectives which helps to set the stages for the interviews. Interviews

allowed for further investigation of ideas and questions raised from journals and observations. The quantitative data consists of the scores on Kolb's LSI and ATLAS. The profile of the three instruments were reported through a frequency distribution of the scores. Looking at the different scores showed how students scored within different groups of learners.

Procedures

The first step in data collection was to speak with the director of University Language Institute. We discussed the possibility of doing research on the students learning styles and learning strategies. She liked the idea and gave permission to conduct this study. During a later discussion, the focus of the study was narrowed to solely include high intermediate and advance classes.

The next step was to gain permission from the students in order to use them as participants in the study. A consent form was disseminated and completed by compliant students. At this time, the students involved in this study were informed that their identities would remain confidential. After this process was completed, demographic information collected from the students.

The following step was to administer the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI), Assessing the Learning Strategies

of Adults (ATLAS), and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to Level 5 and Level 6 students. The ATLAS and SILL determined the students learning strategy preferences. In addition, the SILL related the results of its' assessment to language acquisition. The Learning Styles Inventory determined the learning style preferences of these participants.

Finally, data was collected related to the students' learning. Journals were kept by these participants throughout the session. They logged information about learning related to the class activities. In addition, students discussed their thoughts about learning with the teacher in formal and informal interviews. Concurrently, observations were made by the teacher of the students' style and strategy preferences while participating in class activities. These observations were recorded and referred throughout the course of the study.

Chapter IV

PARTICIPANTS

Profile of Participants

There were 36 participants in this study from the University Language Institute. These participants were enrolled in Levels 5 and 6, which are upper intermediate and advanced English as a Second Language classes. These students learning styles and learning strategies were assessed by the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI). Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS), and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL). Qualitative data were acquired by journals, interviews, and observations. Demographic information was received from the participants which included their gender, age, race, and education.

Of the 36 participants in this descriptive study, 18 were males (50%) and 18 were females (50%). These participants range in age from 17 to 35. The median age of the participants in this study was 22.5. The average age was 23.2 with a standard deviation of .90. Overall, students at University Language Institute learned English for very specific purposes. Of the participants, 66.1% ranged in age from 17-25 who were either college bound or profession seeking adults. In addition, 33.3% of these

participants ranged in age from 26-34 who were taking English classes for career advancements. Some of the students in this age bracket were wives of professionals or students and needed to learn the language in order to live in America.

Age	Percent
Under 18	11.1%
18-25	55%
26-29	19.4%
30-34	11.1%
35-39	2.8%

The educational background of these participants ranged from high school diplomas to doctorate degrees. Of the 36 participants, 36.1% have their high school diploma; 30.5% have their bachelor's degree; 16.7% have their associate's degree; 8.3% have their master's degree; 5.6% are in high school; 2.7% have their doctoral degree.

The participants in this study came from various parts of the world. The ethnic distribution of the participants was predominately comprised of Asians from Korea and Japan

and Hispanics from Venezuela and Mexico. Other countries represented in the study were Bolivia, Austria, Brazil, Angola, Turkey, Vietnam, Pakistan, India, and Saudi Arabia. The Asians made up 44.4% of the participants, and the Hispanics constituted 33.3% of the participants while the other nationalities comprised 23.3% of the population.

Country	Number of Students
Venezuela	20%
Korea	25%
Japan	20%
Mexico	8.3%
Bolivia	3%
Austria	3%
Brazil	3%
Angola	3%
Turkey	3%
Vietnam	3%
Pakistan	3%

India	3%
Saudi Arabia	3%

These students came from different parts of the world to learn English. The students had varying reasons for studying the language. Each group of students had certain cultural and personal reasons for studying English at the University Language Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Venezuelans constituted 20% of the participants. Most of them learn English to help them academically or professionally, primarily in the area of engineering. Some of them are spouses of graduate students who were sent to Tulsa to attain a degree in engineering or a related field.

Since petroleum is the major financial resource of the country, many of them are drawn to Tulsa due to the influence that this area has had on the oil industry.

The Mexicans constituted 8.3% of the participants in this study. Many of the Mexican students who study at University Language Institute are interested in business. This interest is often cultivated by their families because many of these students families own their own business and would like their children and grandchildren to prepare to take care of the business. For example, the grandfather of one of the students owns a major tortilla factory in

Mexico. He wanted his grandchildren to come to America to get English skills in order to be prepared for the university to acquire a good education and then in turn take care of the company. Another student was sent to learn English in order to get his Masters in Business Administration from the university. This degree is important in order to help his father with his accounting firm. Many additional students from Mexico study International Business degrees which usually require that a student is proficient in English.

The Koreans constituted 25% of the participants in this study. Many of the Koreans come to study at the University Language Institute because of the connection that the Korean church has with the university. Some of these students are preparing to get a degree in theology; therefore, they need to acquire the English language in order to take classes at the university. Other Korean students would like to study other degrees at other American universities; therefore, they need to learn English in order to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Many of the Japanese students also want to attend various American universities so they also must study English to achieve passing TOEFL scores.

Learning Styles Profile

The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) yields several scores. One type of score is categorical. These scores are distributed into the four categories of Divergers, Assimilators, Convergents and Accommodators. These categories represent various learning style categories which show how people perceive and process information. There were 14 Divergers, 6 Assimilators, 6 Convergents, and 10 Accommodators.

Divergers

The international students identified as Divergers displayed the typical characteristics of Divergers and were able to articulate experiences that reflected these characteristics. Divergers are innovative learners with a great imagination. They like to be personally involved in the learning project and look for personal meaning in the process. Their perception of the information is concrete, and their processing is reflective. This style is named Diverger because these learners look for alternative ideas through learning opportunities like brainstorming sessions (Kolb, 1984, p. 78). These learners best learn when seeing the connection between their experience, interaction with others, and learning (p. 78). These students ask, "Why do I need to learn this?"

Data revealed that Divergers, who like to gain personal meaning in the learning process, gleaned the most knowledge and understanding of English in the learning opportunities that were closely connected with their current learning needs. In the journals when discussing the Learning Style Inventory, students made the following statements:

The interviews about education in different countries benefitted me the most. I want to be an English teacher in Japan, so I should know about the many country's ways to learn something. It was a good opportunity. Also, my speech about my country's education helped me to improve my English skill. I had to think about my speech. Also, I have to pronounce English exactly. (23-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

To hear real American English is very important if I study here at the university. Also, hearing the different accents of English is very helpful ...listening to the dialogues and hearing the right pronunciation, and learning and using expressions are all useful in my daily life. In the interview, I had to express myself in English, so I had to use my memory and translate into English. (19-year old male, Problem Solver, Diverger, Austria)

I enjoyed the interview about my classmates and my own country's schools. That was so interesting that I could know many similarities and differences about my classmates education. It was a good opportunity to think about education and to help me to be an English teacher in Japan. (23-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

The group discussions benefitted me the most. Also, the drama because it was very fun and we had to use many vocabulary words that we learned in class. (29-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, Korea)

Assimilators

The international students who were identified as Assimilators demonstrated characteristics typical of Assimilators and reflected these characteristics in stated experiences. Assimilators are analytical learners. They are interested in knowing the facts, gaining intellectual competence and seeking expert opinions. Their perception of the information is abstract and the processing is reflective (Kolb, 1984, p. 70). These individuals learn best by thinking through ideas. They are named Assimilators due to their tendency to use inductive reasoning. When they learn, these learners piece the ideas together to create theories based on observations. They are more interested in facts than people. Normally, these learners ask what they need to learn.

Since the Assimilators are analytical, their incentive for learning often comes from knowing the purpose of completing a learning activity. Yet, they often have difficulty with completing activities in which they have to think quickly about information because they want to think things through before answering. For example,

If I realize that I am learning something for a purpose, then I will work harder on the activity.

I know that if I go to a class in another level, I'll have all the information that I need. I know when an activity is good for me when I can use it in my daily life. (18-year old male,

Assimilator, Engager, Venezuela)

I liked the extemporaneous speech because I'm not good at giving speeches; yet, it is hard for me to give a speech without preparing. Also, listening and immediate summarizing is beyond my ability. (25-year old male, Assimilator, Problem Solver, Korea)

Convergers

The English as a Second Language students identified as Convergers possess typical characteristics of Convergers as indicated in stated experiences. Convergers are common-sense learners who like to know practical and usable information and determine how things work (Kolb, 1984, p. 77). Their perception of information is abstract and their learning takes place through active and practical testing of theories. Convergers received this name because they are people "that seem to do best in situations like conventional intelligence tests where there is a single correct answer or solution to a question or a problem."

They learn kinesthetically by doing instead of by watching.

Convergers in this study prefer learning opportunities that apply to daily life. They benefitted from public speaking activities and real-life conversations. These learners liked learning opportunities in which they can see how things work which may be applied in learning English by looking at the correct functions of the vocabulary terms.

For example,

I think all of the activities in this class are very important because they include daily elements to be used in daily life. Now I think that everyone can learn a new thing that helps us in all moments. (32-year old female, Converger, Venezuela)

The part that I enjoyed the most in the speeches was that most of them were about our own experiences of that we could know each other better. Not only did I share my experiences with my classmates, but I also listened to theirs. Also, we could overcome our fear of being in front of people talking, so doing speeches every week has helped me a lot. (17-year old female, Converger, Venezuela)

In my English skills, to expand my vocabulary for not to speak with the same words. So I like learning new words to use in my day by day. I also like to learn the correct functions of the words when you write so you can use them in your oral vocabulary, too. (21-year old male, Converger, Brazil)

I enjoyed the speech with the college students because it was a new experience. Also, I enjoyed the expressions for specific circumstances because we can use them in daily life. (19-year old male, Converger, Mexico)

Accommodators

International students identified as Accommodators demonstrated typical characteristics of Accommodators by depicting these characteristics through personal experiences. Accommodators are dynamic learners who learn best by discovery methods. They are risk takers who like to seek new opportunities and make changes easily. The reason why these learners are called Accommodators is due to their ability to easily adapt to changing immediate

circumstances. Contrary to Assimilators who are analytical, they work well with other people and can make good decisions intuitively despite the absence of logical reasoning (Kolb, 1984, p. 78). They often disregard authority and like to ask the question, "What if...?"

These participants best represented characteristics of Accommodators through their active involvement with other people in hands on activities. They enjoyed participating in games, drama, songs, and simulations. The students considered these activities to be dynamic new ways to experience learning.

I enjoy games, songs, music, stories, speeches, using new words. (21-year old female, Accommodator, Japan).

I like the real interview time. It was a little different from the preparing time. Of course, I made so many mistakes, but in the practicing process my friend helped me and I got more ideas about my topic.

I also enjoyed going to the TV studio. I enjoyed the conversations with the college students while they were producing TV. I am going to do that some day, so it is a good preview. (20-year old female, Accommodator, Korea).

I like using actions when I learn because I understand better. Also, speeches are good because I never tried them before in English....Working on essays and stories are fun because I get to use the new words that I have learned. All of these things help me the most in learning English. (21-year old female, Accommodator, Japan)

I learn best by repetition. Also, I like to learn how to work with others. I work together with my classmates. They help to give advice and explain ideas. The games also help me to learn better to. They are fun. Also, I know how to use the information

and to use the words in context. I also like making stories and essays. I especially like to know how to make transitions. When I make stories, I can practice my English and know more. I like to talk to my friends and make stories. (19-year old male, Accommodator, Angola)

I like using the recording system in the language lab because I can play back my recording. Also, it is interactive. I also enjoyed the interview because we need interview when I work in the future. Now I know it is useful for everybody. I enjoyed the speeches, especially the informative speeches about the cooking process. (23-year old male, Accommodator, Japan)

Learning Strategies Profile

The Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults

(ATLAS) places individuals into the categories of Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers. Participants in this study were almost equally distributed among the groups of learners. There were 14 Navigators, 10 Problem Solvers, and 12 Engagers. Of these respondents, 94.4% felt ATLAS accurately described them.

Navigators

The international students who were identified as Navigators demonstrated characteristics typical of Navigators. Navigators are "focused learners who chart a course for learning and follow it" (Conti & Fellenz, 1999, p. 9). They are high achievers driven by results who like to plan and organize their learning activities. In this study, the Navigators agreed that their identified grouping

accurately described their learning strategy preferences. The primary learning strategies of Navigators include Planning and Monitoring the Learning Task, Identification and Critical Use of Resources, and Testing Assumptions.

Planning involves identifying the purpose of the learning activity and determining the sequenced steps necessary in order to complete a learning task. These individuals base their planning on given schedules and time. They like to know what is expected of them in the learning process up front, so they can organize their work in order to gain the best results. The Navigators in this study often referred to organization and organizational practices that helped them in their learning.

I like handouts and lectures because I can learn more through organized and structured explanations. I practice everyday. This helps me practice because there is a lot of material so I can look back on my notes. I like to organize my papers according to topics and then make a chart to organize my information. Then, I use the chart to help me practice and to know the information. (35 year-old male, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

I take the principle things and then try to use examples to memorize something. Organizing my notes is an important thing because it helps me to study and know the material. I take all my notes and organize them into sections from the most to least important. Then, I work from there. (32 year-old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

In addition, the Navigators in this study were

concerned with monitoring their learning. The learner would compare progress in the present learning situation with the learning in the past situation. Then, the students would focus more time on skills that were not progressing as they desired. Navigators in this study made several references to self-checking their progress throughout the language learning process at University Language Institute. Typical comments include:

In Level 1, I could not understand anything. Listening was especially difficult for me. In level 3, I improved, and then I could understand more of what the teacher taught. In level 5, I met 80-90% comprehension of what was taught.

This applied to different skill classes. In reading, I had a greater understanding of the meaning of the stories, also I had a better comprehension of the vocabulary that helped me to know and understand the reading better. Also, in speaking, I can speak better because others can understand what I am saying. Also, I can understand what others are saying better. (35 year-old male, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

I usually check my progress when talking with Americans which helps me to see how much more I understand. Also, in writing I now can send e-mails to my friends in English which is great. When I write them, they can understand what I said and respond to me the right way because I was clear in the way I put the words down on paper. Also, I am on the volleyball team and I can send my coach e-mails about practice schedules and any updates about our workouts. It makes me feel really good to be able to do this. (32 year-old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

Another learning strategy of Navigators is Testing

Assumptions which falls in the category of Critical Thinking. This strategy utilizes higher order thinking skills and involves the learners ability to "recognize and evaluate specifics and generalizations in relations to learning situations" (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, p. 10). These students constantly think about what they are learning to link the information to their task at hand. Then, they apply the learned material to see if it works in their specific situations.

I have increase my comprehension in English. For a long time, I have had to think and then write. The letters are totally different, and it is hard to make the logical connections between the two languages. It was a slow process, but now I can think and write in English together. (19 year-old male, Navigator, Diverger, India)

Problem Solvers

The international students in this study identified as Problem Solvers displayed the typical characteristics of Problem Solvers and were able to articulate experiences that reflected these characteristics. Problem Solvers are learners who utilize critical thinking skills. They like to "test assumptions, generate alternatives, use external aids, and identify many resources to use" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 12). Additionally, they prefer to use human resources instead of reference manuals. They do well on tests with open-ended questions versus tests with multiple

choice items. These learners tend to think in terms of how something works and are detail oriented in their understanding and explanations of ideas. They are often known as storytellers (Ghost Bear, 2001, p. 383).

Memory strategies are important for Problem Solvers. Memory is "the capacity of humans to retain information, to recall it when needed and recognize its familiarity when they later see it or hear it again" (Wingfield & Byrnes, 1981, p. 4). Problem Solvers specifically use External Memory Aids like lists of things to do, daily planners, and schedules (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 12). These aids assist them with planning. For example,

In the Korean culture, it is the woman's responsibility to keep her house in order; therefore, all Korean women are very organized and have to plan everything for the home...meals, children's activities, etc. We are trained how to do this in the home. I like to make a list of things to do, and then I get the list in my head. Then I can do what I need to do in a better way. (19 year-old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Korea)

I spend a lot of time making my projects. I make a list first of what I should do. Then I check off what I do as I finish each step. For example, when I make a project for speaking class, I make of list of what I need to buy. Then, I go to the store and buy everything. Then I make my speech. I write my speech, practice my speech, and make my visual. (23 year-old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

Another learning strategy area for Problem Solvers is Resource Management. This involves identifying and managing materials needed for the learning process

according to preference and need. Resources include books, newspapers, and television or radio clips, and they may be located at the local library or on the Internet.

Additionally, according to various Problem Solvers in this study, talking with other people to gain needed information is one of the best resources available. It facilitates real-life learning in the truest sense. Finding resources helps to find solutions to problems found in everyday life, and this is what Problem Solvers enjoy doing. (Fellenz & Conti, 1989, pp. 4-5) Students were able to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of English by using resources such as TV, radio, and other people.

I choose resources based on the teacher's instruction. She tells us what information and materials the students need, and then I look at my weak areas and get resources that will help me with those areas. I need help with listening and speaking. Therefore, I watch television to help me in those areas. (24 year-old female, Problem Solver, Accommodator, Korea)

It depends on my personal interest. For example, I like music, so I like to use it as a resource. (19 year-old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Korea)

When I don't understand something, another student can explain it, and I'll learn more. (19 year-old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan)

Engagers

The international students identified as Engagers possess typical characteristics of Engagers as indicated in stated experiences. Engagers are "passionate learners who

love to learn" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 13). "Engagers like to interact with others and enjoy collaborative environments" (p. 13). These learners see the learning process a pleasurable experience and are motivated to learn out of the Affective Domain in which they judge the value of a learning activity through their feelings. These learners employ the use of Metamotivation strategies such as Reward/Enjoyment and Confidence and Memory strategies such as Use of External Aids and Memory Application.

Metamotivation is "the awareness of and control over factors that energize and direct one's learning" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 4). Engagers are greatly motivated to learn by reward or enjoyment which consists of experiencing satisfaction and having fun while learning. These students value relationships along with accomplishments in the learning process. They recognize personal growth as a motivating factor to reach higher and farther in the learning experience. Engagers like to learn by having fun while sharing their ideas with others which brings about different perspectives into the learning opportunities.

I like speaking with others. It is very helpful because you can learn from each other and share more ideas and fuse them together. When I realize that I am learning something for a purpose, I will work harder on the activity. I know if I go to a class in another level, I'll have all the information that I need. If I'm talking with someone and I can use it, then I know

if the activity is good if I can use it in my daily life. (18 year-old male, Engager, Assimilator, Venezuela)

I learn through need, current or if I need to get a job. If it's fun, then that tells me that I need to do it. (21 year-old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan)

I like to learn how to work with others. I work together with my classmates. They give me advice and explain ideas. The games help me learn better too. They are fun. It is hard to do exercises by myself because when I don't understand, I need extra help to do the assignment. When I don't have a friend to motivate me to work or to keep practicing, it is hard. They help me to move forward when they talk with me and when they help me. (19 year-old male, Engager, Accommodator, Angola)

Confidence is another important learning strategy for Engagers. As a Learning Strategy, this means if the learners decide to do a learning task, then they are confident that they can do it. This is related to confidence in general of having self-assurance that a task can be completed when started. Those who have confidence often have better results than those who do not. Gaining confidence is very important for English as a Second Language learners. When students demonstrate confidence in learning, then most likely they will succeed.

I like to see the abilities that I will get by doing this activity. Also, I like to make a speech because it prepares me for college and it lowers my fears. I can then talk to many people. Speaking to others gives me the courage to talk more. (19 year-old male, Engager, Accommodator, Angola)

Memory Strategies are also important in the learning

process for Engagers. Memory is "the capacity of humans to retain information, to recall it when needed and recognize its familiarity when they later see it or hear it again" (Wingfield & Byrnes, 1981, p. 4). Memory is "viewed in its relationship to adult learning and the influence it can have on decision making and consequent human behavior" (Paul & Fellenz, 1993, p. 24). In addition, when the material is meaningful to the student, then there is more attention given to the learning, and it is retained longer in memory.

In order to remember the material, Engagers frequently use external aids. The following participants mentioned various aids that they use in their learning.

I like to play games, listen to music, work with others, and give group presentations. (18 year-old male, Engager, Assimilator, Venezuela)

The best experience was speaking in front of the cameras. It was a very nice experience. I wish I could do it again in the near future. (20 year-old male, Engager, Japan)

The best experience was when we watched TV or listened to the tape. It really helps to improve our listening in a second language. (21 year-old female, Engager, Accommodator, Pakistan)

ESL-Related Learning Strategies

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is a questionnaire written by Rebecca Oxford in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the language learning strategies of English as a Second Language

students. It is comprised of six general areas which are Remembering More Effectively, Using All of Your Mental Processes, Compensating for Missing Knowledge, Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning, Managing Your Emotions, and Learning With Others. Remembering More Effectively is made up of tactics to help the memory through creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing, and employing action. Using All of Your Mental Processes is composed of cognitive learning tactics that help students to practice, receive and send messages, analyze and reason, and create structure for comprehension and production. Compensating for Missing Knowledge consists of tactics that help students compensate for lack of knowledge and to make intelligent guesses and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing. Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning contains learning tactics related to metacognition that help students to keep a focus, plan activities, and evaluate progress. Managing Your Emotions is comprised of affective learning tactics that lower anxiety, develops self-encouragement, and assesses motivation, feelings, and attitude. Learning with others consists of social strategy tactics which involve asking questions, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

Using All of Your Mental Processes is a cognitive

learning strategy. The language learning tactics focused on in this section include reading for pleasure in English; writing notes, messages, or reports in English; using English words in different spoken and written ways; watching English tv shows; conversing with native English speakers; finding patterns in English, making summaries of information; and practicing the sounds of English (Oxford, 1990, p. 295). Students thought that it was important to use different tactics to sharpen English as a Second Language skill areas. These learners enjoyed listening to the radio to hear natural English conversations. In addition, they liked to watch movies in order to learn more vocabulary and to sharpen their listening skills. Students learned more when they watched old movies because there are more gestures and the pronunciation of the actors and actresses is slower and clearer. Yet, listening to and singing along with contemporary music seemed to be a favorite way to learn new words and expressions, and to practice pronunciation. Responses of students to these statements include,

The easy way to learn is to listen to the native English speakers conversation. Listening to the conversation not only can practice my sound but can also improve my listening. For example, I like to watch movies or listen to the radio and so on. (24-year old, female, Problem Solver, Accommodator, Korea)

I usually try to repeat, in my mind, the pronunciation and the sound of the words when native English speakers are talking. Also, I try to retain some words by looking for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English. I also try to improve my English in my free time by going to the movies and listening to music spoken in English. (24-year old female, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

Remembering More Effectively is a part of the memory strategy. The responses to the statements in this section determine if the students think of relationships between what they already know and the new information they acquire in English, use new words repeatedly, use visual cues to help remember a word, and use rhymes and physical actions to remember the words. Using such strategies help students to retain the language in the learning process (Oxford, 1990, p. 294). Participants stated that making connections between old and new knowledge about English usually helped students to understand and to remember. In addition, when students learn English as a Second Language, they often depend on different senses such as sight and hearing. Therefore, it was important not only to present the information audibly but also through providing written and visual cues to aid in that language learning process. Students felt that seeing and hearing the language helped the students to learn and to remember.

I usually try to relate the things that I know with the new information. Remembering some words

in English is easier for me when I remember a specific situation that a teacher talked about or remember something that was written on the blackboard. When I learn a new word, I immediately try to relate it with something. (20-year old female, Engager, Assimilator, Bolivia)

Compensating for Missing Knowledge is a compensation strategy. It includes making guesses, using gestures, predicting, using synonymous language, and reading with context clues (Oxford, 1990, p. 295). The participants felt that it was important to make guesses when practicing English because that was one way to test their knowledge.

In addition, if the students could not think of a certain word, they would use gestures with their friend or teacher which helped to fill in communication gaps. The following are examples of how the students compensated for missing knowledge.

In some cases, I try to make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English. Also, if I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing. For instance, I had some problems starting a conversation with Americans because I did not know too many vocabulary words. I was able to use some gestures or body language techniques to explain everything that I try to say. Even now I still do this. (32-year old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

I am not good at guessing words and speaking without any hesitation. People sometimes laugh when I speak the wrong word, and I feel ashamed. But I will keep doing this to improve my English. (24-year old female, Problem Solver, Accommodator Korea)

Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning is a

metacognitive strategy. It is comprised of planning and managing time, creating goals, thinking about progress, finding many ways to use English, and paying close attention to English speakers (Oxford, 1990, p. 296).

Students found that organizing notes after lectures helped to identify which skills needed further work. Furthermore, these planned time in which to do homework, so they could accomplish everything that they needed to. When assignments could be completed with others especially Americans, students found that they were able to find mistakes and improve their language skills. For example,

I am a very organized and evaluative person. For instance, when the teacher gives me some homework, I organize all of my homework by each class. I put a sticker in my notebook to remind me which one is going to be hard. I also do the same thing with my learning. First, I organize all the knowledge that I learned that week. Then I evaluate which one has been hard to learn, and I begin to work on it. (35-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

I always think about my progress in learning English. For example, in Level 1, I could only write a couple of sentences, and now I can write a couple of pages or more. In addition I pay attention when someone is speaking English. It helps me to notice my English mistakes and use that information to do better. Furthermore, I always give myself time to do my homework because it is an excellent way to learn vocabulary and to think in English every day. (24-year old female, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

I always try to keep speaking in English with American people. Therefore, I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better. For

example, I have met a good American friends who always helps me with my pronunciation. Also, he corrects my mistakes at the moment I make it so I can learn better. (25-year old female, Engager, Converger, Mexico)

Managing Your Emotions is an affective strategy.

Tactics utilized include overcoming fears of learning English by talking with someone about feelings when learning English, writing down feelings in a language learning diary, encouraging self to get past mistakes, and rewarding accomplishments (Oxford, 1990, p. 296). Anxiety can negatively effect practicing and knowing English. Students found that when they did not try to communicate in English, there was no opportunity to strengthen English skills. With continued practice students learned that their fears were lowered, and they began to relax and speak more fluently in English.

It is very important for me to manage my emotions. If I feel afraid to use English then my English skills do not develop. When people do not manage their emotions to try some new things, they will never develop their goal. But I am different. I have this managing emotion skill. For example, when I first arrived in the USA, I was afraid to meet an American, but I thought they will not hurt me. I can speak and make them understand me. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

When I need to speak English with an American person, I forget my fears and I pay attention only to my English, and just let it go. (26-year old male, Navigator, Accommodator, Mexico)

I am able to be relaxed whenever I feel afraid of using English, I can think much better and organize my

ideas. For example, when I began to talk in English I was always nervous and afraid of making a mistake especially when I began to go shopping by myself. Now I just try to control the emotions and relax. (32-year old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

The last category is Learning with Others which is a social strategy. Tactics identified in this category include practicing English with other students, asking for help from English speakers, asking English speakers to correct mistakes in conversation, asking questions in English, and trying to learn about the culture. They enjoyed spending time with native English speakers because they helped to identify and correct mistakes. Participants felt that making friends with Americans was a great way to naturally learn the language.

I really love to speak with the native speakers and I love to hang out with them, too. I always ask about my English if it is right or not to them when we are together. If my English were wrong, my friends could let me know what are my mistakes. This was so helpful to me. It's fun to have some conversations with my American friends in English. (18-year old male, Engager, Assimilator, Venezuela)

Summary

There was a wide range of learning preferences within the Levels 5 and 6 at University Language Institute. Overall, the participants at university Language Institute felt that the results of the instruments accurately described their learning style and learning strategy

preferences. The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) and the Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (AtlaS) were developed on western norms; yet, they are useful when describing how people from different countries perceive, process, and approach learning.

The Learning Style Inventory identified and described how students perceived and processed information by placing learners into the groups of Divergers, Assimilators, Convergengers, and Accomodators. The Divergers perceived information concretely and processed reflectively. They wanted to know why they needed to know the disseminated information. The Assimilators perceived information abstractly and processed reflectively. These learners want to know what information is necessary in order to complete a learning task. The Convergengers perceived information abstractly and processed through active experimentation. They liked to know how to complete a learning task. The Accomodators perceived information concretely and processed through active experimentation. These learners wanted to take risks and asked the question what if.

The Assessing the Learning Strategies of Adults identified and described the learning strategy preferences of the participants within the groups of Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers. The Navigators made and

plan and worked that plan through goal-setting, monitoring, and adjusting as the learning progressed. The Problem solvers thought critically and liked to test assumptions, generate alternatives, use external aids and identify resources for learning tasks. Engagers enjoyed learning with others and saw the value of the learning task when there was reward and enjoyment experienced.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning provided tactics for how the English as a Second Language learners.

This instrument helped to identify what tactics the students used and what tactics could yet be employed when learning English as a Second Language. The strategy categories included Using All of Your Mental Processes, Remembering More Effectively, Compensating for Missing Knowledge, Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning, Managing Your Emotions, and Learning with Others. These areas were developed to help strengthen students' English language abilities in the skill areas of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.

The consideration of learning style and learning strategy preferences is key when planning learning opportunities for English as a Second Language students. The teacher needs knowledge of these preferences in order to give multiple perspectives of the way that the students

learn. This knowledge will help the teacher to plan learning tasks that will be more beneficial to the students. As a result, the students' acquisition of English will be enhanced and accelerated.

Chapter V STUDENT LEARNING

In Second Language acquisition there are many different ways that students acquire and assimilate information. Information is gained through the use of learning styles and strategies. There is a connection between the students learning styles, learning strategies, and how they learn. Participants commented on learning style and learning strategy preferences through journals, observations, and interviews. These data sources collected information related to different themes. These themes were Best Learning Opportunities, Difficulties in Learning, Helpful Teacher Actions, and Similarities and Differences in Educational Activities. Within the classroom, these themes addressed the most beneficial and difficult means to learn English, as well as the impact that the teacher has on the learning process. In addition, the students revealed similarities and differences of learning opportunities between education in the United States and in their native country.

Best Learning Opportunities

The journals, observations, and interviews gleaned information about what learning opportunities most

benefitted the participants. Learners thought that the best learning opportunities were (a) brainstorming with others, (b) being given many examples, (c) giving presentations, (d) participating in games or drama, (e) listening to well-organized lectures, and (f) dialoguing with the teacher. Almost all 97.2% of the participants described in their journals the activities from which they learned best.

Some participants felt that the best activities involved working with others. These students thought that group discussions were greatly beneficial. They revealed that they learned best and thoughts evolved when ideas were shared with classmates. They benefited from talking about their ideas and learning from others' perspectives which were based on experiences. In Knowles' assumptions of self-directed learning, the second assumption deals with the importance of the learners experiences as a valuable resource (p. 20). Through group discussions, these language learners acquired more knowledge about the subject. The individuals in this study expressed their thoughts on learning with others when they wrote,

I like to work in groups because I can learn from others and share knowledge. (32-year old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

I think that the homework in a group is best because I can practice my English with my

-classmates, and I can learn more about them. Group activities are good because it is in a more natural atmosphere, so we can brainstorm more easily with our friends. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

Some respondents thought that they learned best from activities in which they were given many examples from the teacher. These learners stated that they typically needed to know "how" to accomplish a learning task (Kolb, 1986) and liked to look at language by taking it apart in order to put it back together in a way that made sense. Sometimes these learners indicated that they preferred to work by themselves with the skill instead of with other people. Normally, the students were interested in having many different opportunities to practice the specific language skill. They especially liked watching the university students tape interviews and speeches because it showed them the process of how to present themselves in these situations.

I think that all of the speaking and listening activities were helpful. Watching the university students tape interviews benefited me the most in the learning process. Each part of this activity helped me learn new things. (19-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, India)

I like to watch other people making speeches. Listening to them, I can learn new information about something which I don't know. I can compare the speaker with me. (26-year old male, Problem Solver, Diverger, Turkey)

Other students also asserted that they liked participating in presentations that were good practice for real life. Some of the learners were risk takers who benefited most from actively participating in the classes. Often times, these students volunteered to help the teacher with demonstrations. These learners liked practicing their English through making presentations in English. Often, presenting with other students was a well-liked activity because they could strengthen their speaking skills not only as they presented but also as they created the presentation. They were outgoing and liked to see the connection between the learning opportunity and real life.

Adult learners greatly benefit from "learning that is relevant to the living task of the individual" (Conti & Fellenz, 1989, p. 3). Participants appreciated activities that could help them with their English in order to communicate better in everyday life.

I like the speeches because I can learn to use different words to talk. They are very exciting, and a very easy way to learn so I liked this activity very much. (19-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Pakistan)

The video speech was very hard but it was very helpful for me to see my mistakes so I can speak better in English. (25-year old female, Engager, Converger, Mexico)

I really enjoyed the "Success in Life" speech because I could learn new things about making a speech and day to day life. (20-year old male, Navigator, Diverger,

Korea)

In addition, some of the learners preferred learning with others through group activities like games or drama. These students learned through fun activities that involved other people, and they also learn through feeling. All of these activities were fun and also include the affective domain. Since these students were typically energetic, they liked to be actively involved in the learning opportunity with other people. For example,

The drama was great because we worked in a group and everybody gave ideas so we could learn more about each other and get more ideas (25-year old female, Engager, Converger, Mexico).

I enjoyed creating a drama with my classmates because I could think with my classmates and I really enjoyed that time. I enjoyed making this funny story line with my classmates as characters because I know their personality (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan).

I learn best by playing games because it is a group activity so we can talk and listen and learn easier. It is interesting and fun! When I don't understand something, I can ask another student and they will explain it. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan)

Clearly organized lectures are better for other students. These students preferred learning through logically sequenced explanations about the language skills and liked to hear and record the information. This was beneficial for learners because after class they could go

home and re-copy their notes in order to process the acquired material. Also, students learned best by looking for resources and finding the ones that suited their learning needs. Journals reflected that the teacher is often a primary resource for English language learners, but they also use additional resources.

When the teacher talks to me and explains about the lecture, I understand the material better. Also, when the teacher gives me study handouts and worksheets, I can process the information better. I like to take notes in class and then take them home to look at later. (24-year old female, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

Participating in dialogues with the teacher proved to be an asset to other learners. Some students had to "think about their thoughts" which was often accomplished through direct communication with the teacher. They were analytical when participating in class and often developed many questions therefore benefiting from dialogues with the teacher. Sometimes, they would work with other students, but usually these learners preferred working by themselves.

I learn better when the teacher asks me questions about the vocabulary words that we are working with in class. It makes me understand clearer. (29-year old male)

I benefited from asking the teacher questions about the lesson. It helps me to understand and put the information together. I also like to answer questions because I learn more when I talk about the material.

(19-year old male)

Learning Style Implications

Members from each learning style group described what activities were best due to their learning style preferences of Divergers, Convergengers, Accommodators, and Assimilators. There were the following number of responses found in each group: Divergers -- 12 (34%) responses, Convergengers -- 10 (29%) responses, Assimilators -- 5 (14.25%) responses, and the Accommodators -- 8 (22.75%) responses.

Divergers perceive information concretely and process information reflectively and like the Accommodators learn best by collaborating with others (Kolb, 1984, p. 78). These participants benefitted most by brainstorming alternative ideas with others and then reflectively making connections between their experiences and learning in order to create meaningful learning experiences. One student wrote, "Working with others helps me to practice English more which is a much better way for me to learn easily" (19-year old female, Diverger, Problem Solver, Korea). Therefore, these students also like lots of examples in order to grasp the material better. Another student added, "Every meaning of vocabulary benefitted me because you always used very interesting examples, and I could understand

easily. I could use the vocabulary after I learned it" (19-year old female, Diverger, Problem Solver, Taiwan).

Lastly, teacher observations revealed that when Divergers saw the value of the learning activity, they often exerted more effort in order to gain meaning from the class activities.

The Convergents in this study perceived information abstractly and processed information through active experimentation. They liked to participate in activities only after careful thought. These learners learned best by thinking about the theories and then testing their understanding by actively participating in the activities.

They liked to try new things and to participate in activities such as recording speeches with university students in the television studio. One student stated, "The video speech gave me confidence. First, I could know more expressions, and then I could explain my feeling in English" (17-year old male, Engager, Converger, Saudi Arabia).

Learning how to make application of the information acquired was also considered to be one of the best parts of the learning opportunities. An additional student stated, "I understand more than I did before. I can even understand in American settings. I've improved my knowledge and now can get into conversations more" (17-year old female, Problem

Solver, Converger, Venezuela). Practice is the best key for these students to process and understand the material.

Another participant stated, "When I was writing my story, that was very good for me for practicing the use of the new words that we learned" (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil). Teacher observations showed that these students processed material best with more practice.

Assimilators learned best by participating in dialoguing with the teacher. These participants learn by perceiving information abstractly and then processing the information learned by reflecting on it. They learned best by receiving the facts from the teacher, thinking about the facts, and then being asked to respond to the teacher's questions about the disseminated material. One Assimilator stated, "The best part of the class was when the teacher asked questions about the vocabulary. It made us start to think and to remember" (17-year old male, Navigator, Assimilator, Mexico). This dialogue helped the students to understand the material and begin to piece the information together or "fuse the ideas together" (18-year old male, Engager, Assimilator, Venezuela). In addition, this student also stated that he enjoyed learning opportunities that helped him learn how "to think quickly and to talk it through." Teacher observations showed that these activities

kept the students mentally focused which helped the students to be more interested and involved in the learning process.

Accommodators learned best by participating in hands-on activities. These participants learn by perceiving information through concrete experience and processing it through active experimentation. They felt that the best classes were those in which they could get involved in the learning process with other students like conducting interviews or creating speeches for speaking class. One Accommodator stated,

Interviewing my friend was an interesting opportunity for us. It made me scared, but it made me to think quick on my feet. I also enjoyed going to the TV studio because I could look as the television people used imagery. (28-year old female, Navigator, Accomodator, Venezuela)

I really liked making the informative speech. It was fun and was a good experience. I became nervous when I speak in front of other people so that was good practice to do. I also enjoyed the interview that we did in class today. I never did interviews like that before, but I thought that was fun. (21-year old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan)

Interviews revealed that these participants also liked working with Americans on different projects because they were able to process the knowledge of their English skills by practice in real life settings. Students felt that when they talked with native English speakers, they could better

assess their listening and speaking abilities. For example,

I think the opportunity to know more American people and practice is a wonderful opportunity and is more dynamic. It is a good deal because we can practice our speaking. We can know our aptitude in similar situations to the conversation. (28-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Venezuela)

Learning Strategy Implications

In addition, comments from the data collected for this study showed how these students learned best related to their learning strategy preferences of Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers. There were the following number of responses found in each group: Navigators -- 14 (39%) responses, Problem Solvers had 10 (27%) -- responses, and Engagers had 12 (34%) -- responses.

The Navigators liked to receive information in an organized way which helped them to gain a clear understanding and to see the relevance in learning. This is demonstrated through their commonly utilized learning strategy of planning and monitoring used to make sense out of the learning task. Acquiring information by lectures is shown important for Navigators in this study. This is demonstrated by:

I like to learn best through lectures and explanations by the teacher. Also, I like to organize explanations of the process to help me understand better. (19-year old male, Navigator,

Diverger, India)

Lectures help because it helps to organize my thoughts. (32-year old female, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

In addition to lectures by the teachers, the Navigators wrote in their journals that they learned best when the teacher "asked questions" about the material covered in class. Teacher observations showed that these students were able to understand the information better after they verbalized what they learned in class, therefore focusing and organizing.

Problem Solvers also learned from lectures for varying reasons. First, Problem Solvers liked to identify many resources to utilize in the learning process. Most importantly for Problem Solvers was to identify the primary resource to gain the needed information; in the classroom, this may be considered the teacher. Then, they looked for additional resources such as books and newspapers and also included their peers for added information and clarity. A Problem Solver from Korea stated:

When the teacher talks to me and explains about the lectures, I understand the material better. Also, when the teacher gives me study handouts and worksheets, I can process the information better. I like to take notes in class that I can look at again later. (24-year old female, Problem Solver, Accommodator, Korea)

In addition, Problem Solvers see critical thinking as an important part of the learning process. "Presentations are a good way to learn English because I have to think about my thoughts. Also, I have to speak, so I need a lot of time to prepare; therefore, I use repetition to help me learn" (23-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan). Within this category, Problem Solvers also focused on how to utilize memory. A Problem Solver from Brazil stated, "I like going places because real-life learning helps me to learn and to remember".

Engagers learn best by working with others. They benefited from lessons that have group work. An Engager from Bolivia stated: "I think that the homework in a group is best because I can practice my English with my classmates, and I can learn more about them." In addition, Engagers learned through the use of metamotivation which includes reward and enjoyment. They liked activities that were fun. This student from Bolivia also felt that "the games were especially fun." An Engager from Vietnam added, "The drama was a lot of fun to do with my classmates." In addition, Engagers are motivated by feelings and also were stimulated to learn through activities that included music.

Teacher observations showed that music got the Engagers attention and then stimulated an interest in language

learning which increased acquisition

Summary

Participants preferred various learning opportunities due to individual differences. Some enjoyed brainstorming with others and participating in games and drama. While others learned best from interacting with the teacher to assimilate acquired information from a lecture. Most students liked to have many examples when acquiring vocabulary and participating in formal or informal speaking activities. All of these individual differences are linked to learning style and learning strategy preferences. A knowledge of this information gives the teacher different colored lenses to look through when planning the learning tasks. This will make learning a pleasurable experience and greatly benefit all involved in the process.

Difficulties in Learning

In addition to describing the best activities, students described the difficulties experienced while participating the learning opportunities. Various learners had the most difficulty with (a) translation gaps, (b) limited time to practice, (c) uninteresting topics, (d) note-taking, and (e) making guesses. All of the participants discussed the difficulties faced while participating in learning opportunities in their journals.

Some students had difficulty with gaps in vocabulary and pronunciation between languages. These students were very concerned with details; therefore, when they could not find the exact word, phrase, or meaning, they became very frustrated. This was especially true for students from Asian countries because their native written and spoken language are completely different than English. On the other hand, the language acquisition is at a slower rate from the students from Spanish countries whose language is similar to English. Students are usually perfectionists and feel badly when they make mistakes with incorrect pronunciation or using the wrong words. For example,

Pronunciation is hard. Sometimes I have to repeat a word 2-3 times before I can say it right. I feel very bad when I can't understand. (26-year old male, Problem Solver, Diverger, Turkey)

Sometimes I can't get some parts of conversation because the words are unfamiliar to me. Giving a good answer is also hard because sometimes I add some unnecessary sentences to try to fix mistakes I already made. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

Listening to slang is hard because if someone talks to you in slang, it's difficult to know the meaning. (18-year old male, Engager, Assimilator, Venezuela)

Other students had difficulty with learning English under time constraints. These students often took a longer

time to process the language; therefore, they had a hard time processing information quickly. They were not able to respond to the teacher's questions without much time to prepare their thoughts. In addition, since the University Language Institute is an Intensive English Program, the students are required to move at a faster rate through the program which is not ideal for all students. Some participants also commented that they would have like to have had more practice on certain skills but were unable to because of time constraints. For example,

Learning new vocabulary is very difficult because it is a process you never finish. There are a lot of words you have to learn, and sometimes the time is short to keep a lot of words. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

Remembering all of the vocabulary was so difficult because there are too many vocabulary words, and I don't have time to learn them well. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Korea)

When a student was not interested in the topic covered for the English lesson, learning was difficult. Some of the students had a hard time focusing on the lesson if the subject did not pertain to their personal need. A few students did not need to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language, so if there was class time devoted to it, those individuals were not very interested. Adults have a desire to learn knowledge that can be immediately applied

in their lives (Knowles, 1980, p. 45). Therefore, when the learning task does not meet the students' needs, the learners do not see the value in the task. Also, if the students had to give a speech about a topic in which they were not personally interested, then they found it hard to do.

It is hard for me to do something that I am not interested in. For example, if we give a speech about a topic that I do not know about or like. It is difficult because it is hard to talk about something that I am not interested in. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan)

According to Knowles (1975), when students are interested in the learning, they become self-directed which leads them down a natural path of inquiry.

Learning Style Implications

Comments from the data collected for this study showed how these what learning activities were difficult for these participants. These comments were related to Learning Style preference. There were the following number of responses found in each group: Divergers -- 12 (33%), Convergents -- 9 (25%), Assimilators -- 5 (14%), and Accommodators -- 10 (28%).

Since making connections between experience and learning is very important for Divergers, they often became frustrated when they were not able to do so. This is

especially hard for English as a Second Language students because there are many times that when they reflected on the disseminated information, there were gaps in the connections due to translations made between the two languages. These gaps prevented them from perceiving the information concretely.

The vocabulary in context is hard because the words are very different than in my own language.

The letters are totally different. It is hard sometimes to make connections between the two languages. (19-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, India)

To study academic vocabulary is hard because, it is hard to remember the words since I have never seen them before. Also, using them in speaking is hard because I have a hard time connecting the ideas. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan)

The Convergents felt that the activities in the class moved fast because time was limited; therefore, some of the participants thought they needed more practice on specific skills. These individuals thought that they needed more pronunciation activities to help with their articulation. In addition, they wanted more time to practice public speaking activities to sharpen these skills and to feel more comfortable in these situations. For example,

Sometimes the pronunciation of some words are difficult. We can practice more. Also, practicing in real life is hard. (19-year old male, Navigator, Converger, Mexico)

I never have given a speech in front of cameras. When

I was speaking, it was hard for me. I need more practice. (17-year old male, Engager, Converger, Saudi Arabia)

It is difficult to keep the meaning of the words, but just with practice I'll remember them. Because we got a bunch of words, it's kind of hard to keep all these words. I need more practice in real situations. (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil)

Interviews conducted also revealed that students usually thought there was not enough time to practice due to the condensed period of time in which they have to learn. The students wanted to have more time to practice so they could become more proficient in specific techniques in skill areas. For example, many students have difficulty with listening to natural English conversations because native Americans speak too fast for them to understand. Therefore, the students wanted more time to practice conversational skills with Americans in real-life settings.

Teacher observations also noted that sometimes the students need to take the initiative to practice more English with their peers, but they struggle with practicing because of having peers who also speak their native language. One student wrote, "It's hard to talk enough in English because I talk a lot of Portuguese and Spanish. If there were no Portuguese speakers, the process to learn would be faster" (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil). Teacher observations noted that

English language skills develop better when the students seize the opportunities to practice as much as possible.

Assimilators need time to process information perceived. In these English as a Second Language classes, most of the Assimilators struggled with putting the information together under time constraints. When the participants did not have much of an opportunity to think before they spoke, they were often frustrated with themselves and the learning process. For example,

I like the extemporaneous speech because I am not good at speaking yet. It is hard for me to speak in English without preparing. Also, listening and immediate summarizing is beyond my ability. (25-year old male, Engager, Assimilator, Korea)

Teacher observations confirmed that Assimilators have the most difficulty participating in learning activities if they are not adequately prepared. The Assimilators had more trouble with impromptu activities than the other students. Sometimes these learners could not think fast on their feet to participate. Yet with practice Assimilators improved in this area.

Accommodators prefer learning experiences that meet their personal interests. These students like to be personally involved in learning task. Yet, observations revealed that Accommodators had difficulty with learning experiences that involved topics that were not interesting

or unfamiliar.

When I want to learn something, I need to be interested in it. Some of the topics of the speeches, I was not interested in; however, I want to tell you about Japanese food (23-year old male, Engager, Accommodator, Japan).

If the topic or subject was more interesting, I could speak better. But today's topic was difficult to me, because I never think about school in Japan before" (21-year old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan).

Accommodators learn through concrete experiences and like to be actively involved in the learning process. As a result, these learners often have difficulty when there is not an opportunity to learn and to practice through this mode. This is especially difficult for these students when learning English because as teacher observations have shown, there are inconsistencies in some of the language acquisition rules. This can be frustrating for Accommodators because when they think that they have a concrete rule to apply, it is accompanied with an exception to the rule. This is displayed in the following example,

Writing essays are the hardest part of learning English because of the different grammar rules and because of the inconsistencies in the rules. Also, speaking is hard because it is difficult to use the grammar correctly to make a sentence. (24-year old female, Problem Solver, Accommodator, Korea)

Learning Strategy Implications

Comments from the data collected for this study showed how these what learning activities were difficult for these

participants. These comments were related to Learning Strategy preference. There were the following number of responses found in each group: Navigators -- 14(39%), Problem Solvers -- 10(28%), and Engagers -- 12(33%).

Navigators had trouble with activities that involved skills such as listening to other peers and note-taking. Teacher observations showed that many times the Navigators liked to be the individuals who were giving the instructions; therefore, listening was at times a difficult skill to learn. There is an element of difficulty which comes from being accustomed to leading.

Note-taking was also hard for the Navigators. It is a very needed skill for these participants; yet, it is a very slow and detailed skill to acquire. Navigators liked to learn how to take notes but often got frustrated in the learning process because this is a time consuming process and they are very time conscious. Yet, they also struggled with this because they saw the value in it and wanted to perfect this skill. One participant thought, "Note-taking is hard for me, but I overcame this difficulty as I tried and worked hard." (20-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, Korea). Observations confirmed that the Navigators often struggled with this skill but after repeated practice were able to utilize and benefit from note-taking. These

participants found that note-taking helped them to organize the material covered in class and proved to be a helpful tool when preparing for evaluations.

On the other hand, Problem Solvers have difficulty with making guesses. They are learners who "generate alternatives and consider various solutions" (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 12) and who feel most comfortable with open-ended questions. Yet, these learners have trouble guessing the exact word in multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank activities. One student stated, "Sometimes the fill in the blank activities with vocabulary are difficult because I have a hard time making guesses. I sometimes don't know which one to choose" (17-year old female, Problem Solver, Converger, Venezuela).

In addition, Problem Solvers like to know how to complete a task. Therefore, these students became frustrated when they were not able to understand how to do what the activity required. Articulating the English sounds may be difficult for some students because not all languages have the same sounds. Therefore, understanding how to articulate with standard pronunciation can be especially frustrating the Problem Solvers.

Pronunciation is hard because I cannot figure out the sounds very easily. The sounds are very different. It is hard for me to know and understand how to say the words right. Also, the

sounds are not like Japan so I have to work harder than the other students. (23-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

Teacher observations revealed that in language learning the students from Asian countries became the most frustrated when they could not understand how to produce correct sounds in their pronunciation; this was especially true of Problem Solvers. Since the letters in their alphabet are different from English, it is hard for the students to make connections between the letters and sounds. It is not easy for students to learn new sounds in adulthood because the sounds are not familiar to their base of perception. In addition, when the students are Problem Solvers, they had an even more difficult time with pronunciation. These learners are naturally interested in how to do something and therefore became frustrated when they were not achieving this goal.

Engagers have difficulty working by themselves. They did not like tasks that require them to be isolated from the rest of the group because they are networkers. They seek activities that are enjoyable, so they see individual activities as boring and non-productive.

It is hard to do exercises by myself because when I don't understand, I need extra help to do the assignment. When I don't have a friend to help motivate me to work or to keep practicing, it is hard. They help me to move forward when they talk with me and when they help me. (19-year old male, Engager,

Accommodator, Angola)

In addition, Engagers are very self-conscious of the speaking element in language learning because they consider it to be an important skill that they utilize in their language acquisition. They take learning personal; therefore, their self-worth is validated or damaged by their peers and they may struggle with this skill (James, 2000). One participant stated, "Speaking in front of others is hard because the words don't always come out right. I try but it is very hard sometimes. I need to work on this more" (21-year old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan). Teacher observations confirmed that when Engagers are learning to speak in front of others in a new language, they may be self-conscious and tell the group to excuse their poor English. Oxford (1990) states that due to additional fears that some English as a Second Language Learners may have in learning, it is important to create a safe learning environment for the students to learn and develop English skills.

Summary

Participants had difficulty with various learning activities due to individual differences. Some participants had trouble completing learning tasks in a short amount of time and often needed more examples to

illustrate different language skills. Other participants had difficulty taking notes in class and needed considerable time and practice to refine this skill. There were also some participants who had a difficult time completing learning tasks that did not meet their personal interests. A common difficulty with many participants was the gaps found between languages in written and spoken forms. All of these difficulties were linked to learning style and learning strategy preferences found among learners.

Teachers Actions That Help Students

"The behavior of the teacher probably influences the learning climate more than any other single factor" (Knowles, 1970, p. 41). A teacher's methods of instruction can enhance or detract from learners language acquisition.

Data were collected by journals and teacher observations as to how the teacher best helped or hindered students' language learning. These comments were analyzed related to learning styles and learning strategies. The respondents felt that the teachers who helped them the most were those who (a) gave plenty of time to help and detect mistakes, (b) presented directions and lessons in a clear way, (c) used many examples, (d) provided real-life learning opportunities, and (e) encouraged students.

Some participants felt that the teacher's efforts to give ample time to assist the students in comprehending the lesson was extremely helpful. These students received individual attention as needed and felt that this extra time helped them to better grasp the language. Sometimes, students from different countries will not ask questions during class because in their country it is disrespectful to the teacher to do so. Therefore, the availability of the teacher on an individual basis gave them the opportunity to clarify questions. As a result, on many occasions mistakes were more frequently detected and corrected. These students really appreciated the extra time and help that the teacher gave because in their home countries the teachers walk in to teach a lesson and then walk out when the "allotted" time is gone. Those teachers do not give extra time or help to the students.

Teachers in my home country do not take any extra time to help us with our needs. They see teaching strictly as a job giving us the knowledge that they think we should know. They write on the board for one hour while we copy. When the teachers are done, they leave the classroom. (17-year old male, Engager, Converger, Saudi Arabia)

Other participants thought that the teacher's explanation of the material was very helpful in order to gain a clear understanding of the language skill. These

learners were often very organized people and benefited from lessons that were also well organized and easy to follow. As they were following the lesson, heads often nodded to acknowledge their understanding. They also benefited from the teacher's questions about the language skill because the act of responding helped them to think about and assimilate the lesson. The clear organization of material helped the students to learn the material and the teacher's questions about the lesson helped the students to see what areas needed further work to understand. They enjoyed the classes because the teacher would help the students until they had complete understanding.

The teacher helps a lot. She speaks very clearly in an organized way. This is really helpful. She helps us to understand things that can be hard to understand. When we went to the TV studio, she helped us to understand what was being said and done. (19-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Pakistan)

The teacher helps by detecting my mistakes through asking me questions about the material. As she asks me questions, I see my mistake for myself. (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil)

The teacher teaches until we get it. (23-year old male, Problem Solver, Assimilator, Japan)

A number of participants liked the examples that the teacher gave in class. These students often wanted to know how to complete an English task with lots of details. For example, they appreciated sample speech outlines to show

how to create an informative speech. These guidelines gave them a clear picture of what the teacher expected and helped them to know what needed to be done in order to help the audience to see the relevance in the speech.

The teacher taught me how to give different kinds of speeches in front of my classmates. She told me how to organize the speeches and how to give the speech to the class. She also helped with my pronunciation so everyone could understand and with my words and actions see everyone would remember what I said. (28-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Venezuela)

Most of the students appreciated real-life learning opportunities. As adults, the reason why adults pursue education is to meet a need in their lives. "Adult learners have different responsibilities, choice, and time demands than children" (Smith, 1982, p. 38). Therefore, students like when the teacher presents knowledge in a way that is applicable to their daily needs and goals. English as a Second Language adults have desire to better understand the personal goals, needs and interests of the people in their lives. They think that this is important when living in another country because it can help communication with others on a daily basis.

I want to live in America. Since many people from different countries live in the USA, I must know more about them. Listening to my classmates have interviews about the schools in their countries was very interesting. I like this opportunity that the teacher gave us because I learned more about my

classmates' cultures and I liked to listen to the different accents. Most important, I learned more about my friends so I can understand them better. I enjoyed the whole lesson because it will help me with my study in the USA. (19-year old male, Problem Solver, Diverger, Austria)

Students who learn from the affective domain appreciated the teacher's kind words of encouragement. This helped them to think in positive terms which strengthened the students' confidence and in turn helped them to perform better in the learning task. Some students were very self-conscious of speaking in front of others; therefore, they needed this strength. Teacher observations showed that when these students were learning English as a Second Language many needed to work on gaining confidence. This was often improved through repeated practice in a safe learning environment where the students felt comfortable participating in public speaking activities. In order to create a comfort level for the students, encouragement and patience are a necessity.

The teacher always cheers me up when we have a speech. She gives me positive words and helps me see how I can do better. Also, the teacher gives us time to prepare and report. The teacher helps us learn English when it is very hard. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan).

Learning Styles Implications

These comments were analyzed related to learning

styles. Out of the 36 participants, there were 20 responses about teacher actions that help. In the learning style categories, these responses were distributed as follows according to various learning styles: Divergers -- 7 (35%); Accommodators -- 7 (35%); Convergents had 4 (20%); and Assimilators -- 2 (10%).

Divergers perceive information concretely and process it reflectively. Therefore, they learned best from teachers who took the time to respond to the student's questions that developed from the student's thoughts when they reflected on the material. "The teacher helped us when I had specific questions and when I had problems. She always made sure that everyone understood" (19-year old male, Problem Solver, Diverger, Austria). Since Divergers are reflective, they need time to process the acquired information. One Diverger stated, "The teacher always gave us enough time to prepare and to report" (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Taiwan). Teacher observations revealed that Divergers liked to be given the flexibility to think of various ways to respond and to complete assignments. As a result, they sometimes had a hard time deciding which was the best way to accomplish the learning task.

Convergents preferred teachers who focused on "how" to

sharpen their English skills. One Converger stated that the teacher helped "detect my mistakes and showed me how I can improve my English" (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil). These learners perceive information abstractly and process knowledge through active experimentation, so they also learned best from teacher's who helped them to construct knowledge by "building a better vocabulary by getting new words and helping to use the new words in different contexts" (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil). Teacher observations showed that Convergents are curious learners who like to understand and then continually practice.

Assimilators preferred teachers who presented the facts and ideas and who then provided opportunities to mentally put the information together. One participant stated, "The teacher teaches us until we get it" (23-year old male, Problem Solver, Assimilator, Japan). This preference is a result of their learning style preference which is to perceive information abstractly and to process information effectively. Teacher observations revealed that these learners liked to receive information in a clear and organized way and liked to be challenged to think deeply.

Accommodators perceived information through concrete

experience and process information through active experimentation. The Accommodators in this study liked teachers who presented the students with a variety of ways to learn in real-life settings. One participant stated, "They give us a lot of homework and many activities for us to do. More activities like going to the television studio and interview would help us" (28-year old Navigator, Accomodator, Venezuela). In addition, they are conscious of their surroundings and appreciate teachers who provide a "positive learning environment" (23-year old male, Engager, Accommodator, Japan). Teacher observations noted that Accommodators liked teachers who provided learning experiences that gave them the opportunity to discover more about themselves and the ways that they best learn. Usually, this was achieved when they participated in small group discussions that made them think and talk about current issues in today's world.

Learning Strategies Implications

These comments were analyzed related to learning styles and learning strategies. Out of the 36 participants, there were 20 responses about teacher actions that help. In the learning style categories, these responses were distributed as follows according to various learning strategies: They were distributed as follows

among the learning strategy categories: Problem Solvers -- 10(50%); Navigators -- 5(25%); and Engagers -- 5(25%).

Navigators are task oriented. Their focus is on how the information is taught. Therefore, they liked teachers who gave clear directions and were easy to understand. They learned best from teachers who gave clear directions because these students are very organized and learned best by information being disseminated in a methodical way. They wanted the teacher to be like a compass giving direction for how to chart their path in learning; "The teacher gave us good directions. Everything depended on her because she gave us the opportunity to learn" (19-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, India).

In addition, another participant stated, "The teacher's teaching us is easy to understand. That's why we can follow her class" (34-year old male, Navigator, Accommodator, Japan). Teacher observations revealed that unlike the Engagers, the Navigators were more concerned with the dissemination of material versus the relationships with the teacher.

Problem Solvers in this study indicated that the teachers they found to be helpful (a) provided details and examples, (b) gave opportunities to learn English by seeing how something is done, and (c) helped with their memory.

Problem Solvers along with Navigators indicated that they learned best from teachers who provided details. Problem Solvers need details to understand how to complete a learning task, and Navigators like to use details when planning a learning task. In addition, Problem Solvers wanted examples to help them understand. A typical comment was,

The teacher helps me to understand the vocabulary first. Then, she gives me examples to understand. All the time when she compare with my country helps me to catch the point. She teaches me giving examples, showing pictures to understand, playing games. I think she teach us easy ways to understand the topic of each activity we do in class. (17-year old female, Problem Solver, Converger, Venezuela)

In addition, Problem Solvers benefited from teachers who gave opportunities to learn English through activities that show how something is done. When taking a tour in the university's television studio, a Problem Solver commented how he enjoyed going behind the scenes to the control room to see how shows are produced. He was fascinated with what the students were doing and how they were doing it.

Lastly, Problem Solvers appreciated how the teacher helped with their memory. One student wrote, "Sometimes, I forget some of the expressions, but you're a great teacher and always make me remember them with your games and methods" (17-year old female, Problem Solver, Converger,

Venezuela). Interviews showed that Problem Solvers are especially interested not only in learning the material, but in maintaining a high level of English proficiency through using memory strategies.

Teachers can easily help or hinder Engagers because these learners take learning personally and relationships are important to them. Responses of Engagers showed that these learners described helpful teachers as those who

- (a) were kind and cared about their students and
- (b) encouraged their students.

Engagers, especially English as a Second Language learners, appreciate when their teachers take a true interest in helping them. Various student impressions were reflected in statements from students' journals such as "The teacher is great! She is the most caring and nice teacher I ever met" (21-year old male, Engager, Accommodator, Japan). "She is so kind. She is a good and kind teacher" (27-year old male, Engager, Diverger, Korea). Interviews revealed that many times they are not accustomed to having teachers who care about the students because in many cases the students commented that the teachers in their home country saw their job as solely that a job and did not really care about the students needs and interests. In addition, Engagers are motivated by praise and encouragement. They

are feeling oriented; therefore, they need to be esteemed to help with self-motivation. One student stated, "The teacher always encourages me, so I don't lose hope" (25-year old male, Engager, Assimilator, Korea). Observations confirmed that the Engagers looked for the teachers to give them positive words of encouragement as a form of motivation and strength.

Summary

Teachers set the tone for learning in the classroom. They can either make a learning opportunity a positive or a negative experience. Therefore, teachers create an efficient and effective environment for learning with the knowledge of individual learning preferences of the students. This was accomplished in this study by administering the Learning Strategy Inventory (LSI) to identify learning style preference, the Assessing the Learning Strategy of Adults (ATLAS) and the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning to discover what language learning tactics the students are utilizing. Additionally, more data was collected through the use of students' journals. Students feel comfortable journaling about their thoughts of learning opportunities which provides the teacher insight about the students perception of the class and give knowledge of how to create learning opportunities

to best suit the students needs and interests.

Strengthening ESL-Related Learning Strategies

Numerous studies have indicated that there are different tactics that may be used to enhance language learning acquisition. English as a Second Language students have different strengths and weaknesses in the use of various tactics. This instrument, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), was used to identify specifically what tactics the students were using to learn English and further, what they could do to better improve their language acquisition skills. The journals revealed that the learners thought that the tactics which helped to strengthen their language learning skills the most were (a) using visual cues, (b) reading for pleasure in English, (c) guessing meaning of words in context, (d) repeated practice in speaking situations, and (e) working with others.

Some participants felt that reviewing English with visual cues helped to strengthen their language skills. Since they came from various backgrounds and are accustomed to different ways of learning, individual differences exist in perception of the material. Therefore, there is a need to employ a variety of visual and auditory tactics to help ensure understanding. These students realized that they needed more practice in English with visual and auditory

cues such as flash cards, mental pictures, and rhymes. In addition, when students learn another language, there are some natural gaps in learning; therefore, using visual cues help to eliminate these gaps and to create a clearer understanding of the language. The students found that the visual cues helped to retain information when learning a large number of English words. For example,

I do not practice my English all of the time. I always have many Spanish speakers around me and I do not speak English with them. Therefore, I feel my learning process has been slow. I need to practice my English constantly with everybody around me. In this way, I would remember more effectively new words. I must try to review the English lesson often, so I could establish my knowledge. Finally, I should use important visual techniques when it is difficult to retain new English words" (25-year old female, Venezuela).

Some participants felt that reading for pleasure strengthened their English skills. These students felt that doing this helped to build their English vocabulary and to increase their reading comprehension skills. Students who were often deficient in this area noted that this is attributed to the lack of implementation of learning tactics that help to mentally practice and process information about the English language. Feedback from the students indicated that they needed to use additional tactics to improve mental processing of other language skill areas. In addition to reading for pleasure, the

students were interested in writing notes, messages, letters, or reports in English, watching English language TV shows, talking with native English speakers, summarizing new information learned, and finding patterns in English. They saw that also they must not only practice English at school but take these tactics learned at school and use them at home. They came to realize that there are interesting books and magazines to read in English which can be fun and informative. For example, one participant wrote,

Now I know that it is really important to read everything in English; like books, magazines, newspapers, etc. This technique helped to obtain much more knowledge about vocabulary words in this language" (32-year old female, Venezuela).

Teacher observations noted that anytime students see that learning must be transported from school to home there is a increased rate of language acquisition.

Some students found that it was necessary to guess the meaning of vocabulary terms using context clues in order to help build vocabulary in English. This can help to fill in the gaps that are in language learning. Teacher observations found that many times the student can look at a word and know the meaning in their language but have trouble expressing the meaning applying it in English. Tactics that students are learning to use include guessing

the meaning of a word, reading without looking up every word, predicting what the other person will say, or using synonymous language. Students have learned that they do not have to use the dictionary as much when they are using context clues. For example,

Using context clues helps me to stop and to think about the language. I feel like I can understand more English and I don't have to rely on my dictionary as much. (32-year old, Navigator, Converger, Venezuela)

Working on this strategy area requires students to take risks and to try using new words in English even though they are not sure if they are right. Therefore, the students need to learn that with practice and experience, they can improve which will build their confidence and simultaneously build their English speaking abilities.

Some students wanted repeated practice in speaking activities. These students found that more practice brings improvement in language acquisition and in confidence. When confidence is built, the students start to take control over their learning becoming more self-directed which also brings increased language acquisition. Students responded that they need to work on the area of self-confidence by continuous practice. For example,

I am a nervous person in all aspects, but I am more when I am speaking in English in front of American speakers. Often I felt that my face is red and that my voice is trembling when I am speaking. But I need

to have control over my emotions, because I am here to learn English and it is normal to make mistakes. The most important thing is to continue trying and to give a hundred percent effort"(20-year old female Bolivia).

Teacher observations showed that students learn better when they realize that perfection is not required in language learning, but it is the process that is important. Many then relax and find more pleasure in learning and in turn learn more easily at a faster rate.

Lastly, many students found that learning with others proved to be very helpful when learning English. Due to educational training, some participants were not accustomed to learning with other students. Yet, when students began to work with each other they started to see the value in collaboration and adult principles at work. These individuals began to see that they could learn from each others knowledge and experiences which facilitates adult learning. As a result, students learn that "self-directed learning usually takes place in association with various kinds of helpers, such as teachers, tutors, mentors, resource people and peers" (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

Summary

There are many different tactics that learners may use when acquiring English as a Second Language. Identifying the tactics employed by language learners can improve the learners approach to gain knowledge and skill in the

language. Learners benefited from reading for pleasure in English and guessing meaning of words in context. Many learners also benefited from using visual cues in learning such as flash cards and mental pictures. Even though participating in speaking situations and working with others was difficult for some learners, they greatly benefited from the skills that this practice developed. For learners, the act of thinking about the way they approach a learning situation is beneficial within itself.

Similarities and Differences in Educational Activities

Participants in this study were from many different countries including Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Venezuela, and Vietnam. The participants from the different countries recorded similarities and differences that they found between schools in their country and here in America. The reoccurring themes pertained to (a) student resources, (b) class activities, and (c) student-teacher relationships.

Resources

Resources are a crucial element in learning regardless the level of education or country in which the education is attained. Resources aid the students in the learning process; therefore, it is crucial to identify and utilize

those resources best for the learners and the task at hand. When comparing similarities and differences from schools in their country to here in America, participants from Korea, Japan, and Bolivia made reference to the availability of resources provided for learning opportunities. First, the students from Korea really liked listening activities conducted in the language lab because the tape system was user friendly and easily accessible. They also made the following observations as to the accessibility they have to resources for language and media classes in their country.

Each university has a language lab, but for using the place I need to have permission because the language lab is usually locked. In major classes like mass media communication, we have activity in the studio like in the USA, and we have to give a speech although the topics are limited in Korea. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

Also, the participants from Japan made reference to the availability of media for students use. In the English as a Second Language classes at the University Language Institute, the students enjoyed having the opportunity to record their voices and listen to their pronunciation and speaking abilities. In addition, these students from Japan also had availability to media resources in their country.

In Japan, we also use a recording system. It is very useful. We don't learn how to do a speech or activity like discussing with each other. (23-year old male, Engager, Accommodator, Japan)

Participants from Bolivia expressed that there was the availability of technical resources was beneficial in the learning process. A student from Bolivia found the media resources in the television studio at the university to be an asset in practicing her English and assessing her ability in the language. This student thought that there schools in America have similar resources for student use to those in Bolivia. The schools in Bolivia also have language and media laboratories "where we can go for practice or for learn more about something" (20-year old, female, Engager, Assimilator, Bolivia). This was important to the student because she was able to maintain and advance in her knowledge and use of technical equipment.

Students from additional countries such as Pakistan and Vietnam noted the lack of resources in their countries' schools. The Pakistani felt that American schools have a greater amount of financial resources to draw from; therefore, the schools have more media equipment for the students to use. "America has more use of technology because of its financial resources. In my country, we don't have the opportunity to use media in the classroom". (19-year old Navigator, Accommodator, Pakistan) In addition, the student from Vietnam added that they also lack resources in the classroom. Usually the classes have basic

items but lack technology. "We do not have as many computers in the classes as you do here in America". Of course, students from many countries do not have comparable technological resources in their schools as are in America.

Class Activities

Students come to classes at University Language Institute with similar and different ways in which they approach a learning task based on how they operated within classes in their home countries. The methods employed by the teacher to disseminate the material is key in learning. Interactions between the teacher and the students and the students with each other are important in the learning process. Therefore, creating and facilitating appropriate learning opportunities are essential in the English as a Second Language classes. In order to do this, information about the students needs, education background, learning style and learning strategy preferences is helpful. Smith stated that these are interrelated factors in learning how to learn (Smith, 1982, p. 17). In the data collected, students talked about how the teachers structured the classes in their home country and then looked at how the classes are structured here in America. Many students found that there different approach in classes at the University Language Institute. The classes offered are

based on a learner-centered approach that enables students to learn how to learn which represents Smith's (1982) theory in which adult learning is a "purposeful effort to foster learning by persons who have become largely responsible for their own comings and goings, in other words, adults" (p. 38). The Korean students saw this as important because it is an element of education that is missing in their country. The teachers have a high position of respect and authority in the country. As a result, they maintain great control over the classes and give little opportunity for the students to take control over the learning situation. This is contrary to adult learning principles which encourage the learners "to have input into what, why, and how they will learn" (pp. 47). In Korea, there is not a heavy use of adult learning principles. The classes are more teacher-centered in which the teachers lecture, and there is little class participation. The Korean students addressed how the group discussions are limited in their countries, and students do not have much freedom to express their thoughts and point of view in the class.

When I studied in my college there was mostly lecture and there was no group discussion. They asked some questions but if we have a question we must talk after class. Also, there is rarely drama in the classroom.

(29-year old male, Navigator,
Diverger, Korea)

Although, the topics are limited in Korea. But, in Korea there are rarely group conversations. Usually we just have a professor's lecture. (20-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Korea)

In addition, many Japanese students are not accustomed to a learner-centered approach. In Japan, the focus is on the teacher's lecture and not on the students needs. There are not adult learning principles employed. The teachers impart the knowledge, but there little opportunity for interaction within the classroom. When they take classes at University Language Institute, these students initially do not take a very active part in group discussions because this is not a common practice in Japanese classrooms. In order to help the students become more actively involved, the teacher needs to employ adult education practices which includes providing "a climate that minimizes anxiety and encourages freedom to experiment" (p. 49). They are more independent learners, but as time progresses some of the students relax and participate more in group discussions. Also, these students are not used to other speaking activities such as making speeches. Some Japanese students enjoyed participating in these activities while others struggled with the differences in producing English sounds. For example,

It is different from Japan. We listen to the tape and answer some questions. I have never done interview like this before in Japan, so I was so excited to

listen to another's speech. (23-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

I always think that the way to talk English and Japanese there are so many differences between them. Of course, that but I can say the way to talk is totally different. (21-year old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan)

In here I can understand in English so I can study more clearly. In my country, Japan, we just study and have a test. They are not fun or interesting. I never do these activities before so I really enjoyed this time. (19-year old female, Problem Solver, Diverger, Japan)

The course is completely different because in Japan, we just listen to the teacher's lecture, but here, we can learn and enjoy. (34-year old male, Navigator, Accommodator, Japan)

Students from Venezuela come from a background in which they are provided some opportunities to take charge of their learning in different ways. Participants talked about having group discussions in their country and at times are may express their ideas about possible learning activities and opportunities. Therefore, when they come to America, they are more open and willing to participate in classes. These students loved to talk and to participate in class, so they felt comfortable in group discussions. In addition, these students liked to have and to play games while learning. They found many similarities in the speaking activities, lectures, and tests between the class activities in their country of Venezuela and here in

America.

Everything is really similar like the speeches and formed the same, lectures and expressions are used in the same way. Actually, there is a difference, we don't have games which is very sad but thank you for your games. (17-year old female, Problem Solver, Converger, Venezuela)

These activities are very similar in my country. I had to do many speeches during my studies in Venezuela. However, I feel that there is more difficult due to different language. (24-year old female, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela)

In my university, I needed to give speeches, take test, listen in class and take notes. When I studied in my country, I never used the language lab. (28-year old female, Navigator, Accommodator, Venezuela)

Students' journals and interviews revealed that schools in Austria provide students with real-life learning opportunities. In Austria, the students frequently went on trips to places where they could see and apply knowledge in a practical way. In addition, they were accustomed to participating in speaking activities such as group discussions and public speaking which gave them a solid English base. Therefore, it was easier for these students to participate in group activities or to make a speech. For example,

We focused more on presentation, and speeches about a topic. In my former school, it was very important that you can present yourself and your topic in the best way you can. In Austria, in my country, it is also important to give a good speech. (19-year old male, Problem Solver,

Diverger, Austria)

Real-life learning relates to students needs in their daily lives. Therefore, it is important for adults to "learn on an ongoing basis in everyday, real-world situations" (Kitazawa, 1991, p. 31). For English as a Second language students, these activities applied to their everyday speaking needs and helps them to work through speaking difficulties in a non-threatening environment.

Students from Bolivia were also very spontaneous learners who liked to work together with other students. They enjoyed being actively involved in the classes and benefited from group discussions, games, and any other activity that involved people. They appreciated teachers who "employed dynamic methods like you use". Some teachers in their country created classes to include these type of activities while "many teachers employ the traditional evaluation so the student cannot participate" (20-year old female, Engager, Assimilator, Bolivia). Teacher observations stated that the Bolivian students easily adapted and performed very well in the classes.

In addition, interviews with students from Taiwan revealed that there was a fairly large adjustment that had to be made when they entered school here. These students are also used to a stricter environment with less variation

in learning methods, and the classes learner-centeredness was not fostered. In Taiwan, the students do not have a voice or many choices in learning situations in their schools. In addition, they had difficulty with grammar and writing because the rules and the system of writing English is very different from those in Taiwan; therefore, it took much time for these students to acquire English language skills.

The participants' from Mexico stated that the classes in their country were both similar to and different from the class activities in their home country. Students from Mexico have formal evaluations to determine the students comprehension of material; yet, some of the students in special high school programs did not receive official grades for their work. In addition, the class size is larger in Mexico because they do not split grade levels into different sections. All of the students in each grade level were in one room. This lead to less group work and teacher attention. One participant stated,

The English classes that I had in Mexico were very similar in my school we used to do exams. They didn't give us grades for our work. I think because this is a higher level and in Mexico most of the schools they didn't divide us into groups, we were all in the same room. (17-year old male, Navigator, Assimilator, Mexico)

Relationships

Journals, observations, and interviews revealed that classes students took in other countries were teacher-centered versus being student-centered. When the teachers focus themselves instead of the students, the teachers may appear to be self-centered instead of others-centered. Thus, this is not an effective way to build relationships.

Fellenz & Conti (1988) noted that attitude plays a big role in the relationships developed within the class. The teacher can either open the door or close the door to building relationships by their attitude. Students notice the attitude of the teacher towards the class. "Good teachers have an open mind, are willing to admit mistakes, and do not have favorites and....Are conscious of the students' feelings" (Fellenz & Conti, 1988, p. 9) When teachers have this kind of attitude, they are not focusing on themselves but on building relationships with the students. These actions tell the students that the teachers care about them and helps to create unity within the class. Students from other countries besides America are not always accustomed to having strong relationships with the teachers because the teachers are more so authority figures and do not display much concern for the students needs and feelings. Thus, creating a teacher-centered

approach in the classes. These students expressed that the material was presented in a way that was convenient for the teacher and not necessarily best for the students. In addition, interviews revealed that the teachers in Korea do not have a relationship with the students instead there is a distance between the teachers and the students. The classes in this country are large and often there is not much opportunity to learn about others and from others. Yet, the students rarely speak in classes because the teachers do not provide many opportunities for dialogue with classmates or teachers. In addition the students do not even get many opportunities to participate in public speaking activities. For example,

It is totally different from speech class in my country. They are scarcely speeches. There are only reading and grammar. So we Koreans are not used to speaking. In my country, we also have listening homework by audio tape, but we don't discuss each other after that. (25-year old female, Engager, Assimilator, Korea)

Teacher observations noted that often the younger Koreans enjoy classes in America because it offers new and different ways of learning that they had not experienced before.

During interviews, participants stated that the teachers in Venezuela see teaching as a job that only lasts as long as they are at school and there is not a strong

rapport between students and teachers. "The teachers come to school, teach us, and then go home. They do not stay after class to help the students"(35-year old, male, Navigator, Diverger, Venezuela). Therefore, these students appreciated the extra time and effort that the teachers at University Language Institute spent helping them.

Journals and interviews revealed that the participants' teachers in Mexico do not interact with the students as much during class. One student stated, "Most of the teachers just speak to us" (25-year old female, Engager, Converger, Mexico). In addition, they think that the teachers here are more helpful and understanding. The other difference is that they have to make a bigger effort when studying here in another country, but that is to be expected.

Summary

Teachers in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language need to be sensitive and aware of the similarities and differences found among various cultures. When students enter a learning situation, there are many factors to consider. Resources, Relationships, and Class Activities are all important factors to look at when facilitating English as a Second Language instruction.

Summary of Student Learning

Identifying and describing individual differences enlightens both the teacher and the students in the process of learning. Learning preferences are developed from these individual differences which makes this knowledge valuable for all involved in the learning activities. Learners have a deeper and fuller learning experience as their interests, needs, and goals are considered in the development of class activities. This demonstrates that the teacher is truly interested in them which feeds students motivation, participation, and appreciation of the learning process. All of these factors are keys to success when learning English as a Second Language.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Many people come to America to pursue academic and professional training. Prior to receiving this training, many of these individuals need to sharpen their English skills in an efficient and effective way. Therefore, they take classes in Intensive English Programs where they can acquire language skills in a short span of time. When these people enter the program, there are many cultural factors that they also bring along. These students have certain ways of learning based on previous training and experiences from different countries. Learning styles and learning strategies are embedded in the way that they process and apply English skills in the learning tasks. When learning a second language, students may come into contact with teachers or other students in the program with different learning preferences; therefore, it is important for the learners to understand their own learning preferences in order to better interact and communicate with others. In addition, teachers need to be able to recognize students learning preferences in a quick and reliable way (Reid, 1998, p. 44). This knowledge is needed in order to create a learning environment conducive for

adult learners acquiring English as a Second Language.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the learning styles and learning strategies of students involved in the University Language Institute program. This involved measuring their learning styles and strategies and describing their perceptions related to the application of the learning process. Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) was used to identify the appropriate learning style categories for each participant. Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS) was used in this study because of its ability to classify participants into their preferred learning strategy category. Also, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) was given in order to find ways to assess English as a Second Language students' approach to learning English. Journals, interviews, and teacher observations were used in order to gather and assimilate the information. These data collection tools gleaned information about (a) how students describe learning projects, (b) how styles and strategies influence the application of material learned in class, and (c) how teacher actions helped students in the learning process.

This was a descriptive study that involved 36 students at University Language Institute located in Tulsa,

Oklahoma. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from a variety of sources. The quantitative data were comprised of scores from the LSI, ATLAS, and SILL instruments. For each instrument utilized, scores were recorded and reported. Quantitative scores were reported through frequency distributions. In addition, qualitative data were gathered through journals, interviews, and observations.

Summary of Findings

Learning Styles and Strategies

The distribution of learning strategy preferences of learners in the intensive English program at University Language Institute is similar to the distribution of learning strategies in the general population. This study found that the Learning Styles Inventory classifications were as follows: Divergers--38.8%, Assimilators--16.7%, Convergents--16.7%, and 27.7%--Accommodators. In addition, this study found that 38.8% of the participants were classified in the ATLAS group of Navigators, 27.8% were classified as Problem Solvers, and 33.3% were classified as Engagers. These findings were similar to an earlier study at Southern Nazarene University where it was discovered that 37.3% were Navigator, 26.9% were Problem Solvers, and 35.8% were Engagers (Turman, 2001, p. 97). Chi square was

used to compare the frequencies observed in this study with the norms for ATLAS. There were no significant differences in the findings observed in this when compared with the ATLAS norms where participants were almost equally distributed into the three learning strategy preference groups.

Learning Opportunities

Participants in this study reported benefits and difficulties experienced while participating in learning tasks according to learning style and learning strategy preferences. There were varying responses of the participants according to their learning style perspective; however, these responses were consistent of the characteristics of their learning style and learning strategy groups. The Divergers benefited from receiving instruction from the teacher and then discussing the information in brainstorming sessions with their peers to develop their understanding of how to use English vocabulary terms. By doing this, connections were made as to how to use the terms in their daily life. The primary frustrations for Divergers arose with when there were problems with making connections due to gaps in translations made between two languages.

Convergers benefited from first thinking about the

language and then actively participating in activities using the English language like dialogue. These participants preferred continuous practice in order to process and understand the language. Convergers had difficulty when class activities moved fast because they like to work slower by spending more time focusing on specific skills. Assimilators learned best by receiving knowledge about the language from the instructor and then being mentally stimulated to think about the ideas by responding to questions from the instructor. Assimilators had difficulty when required to think fast on their feet. Sometimes, they were not able to answer the teacher's questions and asked for more time to think.

Accommodators benefited from exciting real-life learning opportunities that involved native English speakers by participating in joint projects with university students like conducting interviews or taping speeches. They had difficulty with learning opportunities that did not personally interest them. In addition, they became frustrated with inconsistencies of rules found in English because of their concrete understanding of material.

There were varying responses of participants' perspectives about the classroom activities based on their personal learning strategy preferences. Navigators liked

to receive instruction in a clear, organized way due to their learning strategy preference of planning. They often benefited from well-organized lectures and explanations. In addition, they learned best by responding to teachers' questions, which helped them to internalize and assimilate the language. Yet, they often had difficulty with note-taking because they wanted to instantly have a perfect product and this skill took time to acquire and perfect. In addition, they were sometimes impatient when working with other students because they naturally wanted to be the leader using their ideas for group projects.

Problem Solvers learned best from a variety of resources with the primary resource being the teacher. In addition, they gleaned insight from additional resources such as books, newspapers, and their peers. They also liked to think critically about the learning experiences and utilize repetition in order to strengthen memory. These participants had difficulty with making guesses because they were more comfortable with responding to open-ended questions. Since Problem Solvers like to know how to complete a task, they often had difficulty when they could not figure out a learning task, such as practicing how to pronounce certain sounds.

Engagers learned best through fun activities with

other students like games and drama. They enjoyed group projects and were best motivated to learn by practicing with their peers. Therefore, these participants had difficulty when they had to work by themselves. Yet, they often became self-conscious when making presentations in front of the class. They also did not do well with learning tasks that they thought were boring or in their opinion that were not related to their goals.

Helpful Teacher Actions

When responding to the teacher actions that were helpful to them, participants expressed what the teacher did to help them learn best based on learning style and learning strategy preferences. Divergers are reflective in the processing of information; therefore, they learned best from teachers who were patient with the students and allowed for adequate time to help students with their questions. Convergors like to process information learned through active experimentation; therefore, they liked teachers who helped them to build their knowledge by giving opportunities to get involved in the learning process through various activities. Assimilators process information by reflection; therefore, they preferred

teachers who presented the facts and then helped to fuse everything together. Accommodators process acquired information by active experimentation; therefore, they benefited when the teacher presented the students with learning opportunities in real life settings.

Navigators are task oriented and organized in the learning process; therefore, they preferred teachers who gave clear directions and were easy to understand. Problem Solvers love to learn by knowing how something is done, so they like details in the form of examples; therefore, these learners found teachers to be helpful who provided details and examples, gave opportunities to learn English by seeing how something is done, and helped with their memory.

Engagers are feeling oriented and learn a lot through the affective domain; therefore, they benefited from teachers who were kind and cared about their students and encouraged their students.

ESL-Related Learning Strategies

The English as a Second Language participants used varying strategies to acquire the language. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) helped to identify which strategies the participants were using and presented the students with additional strategies that they could use

to help improve weak areas of language learning. The SILL helped the participants to stop and evaluate what specifically they were doing to learn English. The strategy categories are in the following areas: Remembering More Effectively, Using all Your Mental Processes, Compensating for Missing Knowledge, Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning, Managing Your Emotions, and Learning with Others. Remembering More Effectively showed students could improve English skills by using visual auditory cues such as flash cards, mental pictures, and rhymes. Using All Your Mental Processes showed students that they can improve their English skills by using strategies such as writing notes, messages or reports in English, watching English shows, reading for pleasure in English, talking to native speakers, summarizing new information learned, and finding patterns in English. Compensating for Missing Knowledge helped students to fill in language learning gaps by suggesting strategies to use like using context clues to determine the meaning of a word, using prediction in order to facilitate active listening or reading skills, and acquiring synonymous language in order to build a stronger vocabulary. Organizing and Evaluating Your Learning involved planning and managing time, creating goals, and thinking about

progress. Managing Your Emotions involved taking control over affective learning strategies in order to be more effective in language learning including recording feelings and thoughts in diaries, talking about thoughts and feelings, and rewarding self accomplishments. Learning with others focused on interacting with others students, asking for help from native English speakers, and learning more about the culture of the country.

Adult Learning

Andragogical Concepts

Learning in the English as a Second Language classroom utilizes andragogical concepts such as self-directed learning principals.

Students came from environments that were more teacher centered; therefore, there is a need to facilitate self-directed learning in the classroom.

The learner-centered approach is an effective way to organize the learning environment even for international students who have come from a background that does not promote this approach. Findings made through journals, observations, and interviews of participants at the University Language Institute indicated that andragogical concepts are exercised in the classroom and judged by the students as helpful in the learning process. Malcolm Knowles developed the foundational assumptions of andragogy

over 30 years ago; yet, his insight and knowledge about adult learning have revolutionized these field of education. The basis of his teaching see the adult learner "as a primary source of data for making sound decisions regarding the learning process" (Knowles, 1970, p. 183). Malcolm Knowles(1975) along with Stephen Brookfield (1986) have been major contributors to the field of adult education which include the principles of self-directed learning.

Knowles' first assumption in the andragogical model has to do with adult learners need to know (Knowles, et at., 1998, pp. 64-65). Adults need to know why they are learning in order to participate in learning activities (p. 133). Adult learners in Intensive English Programs have various reasons why they are learning English as a Second Language based on their goals. Therefore, they need to see the relevance of the material taught in class and to make a connection between their goals and the information gleaned in class.

The second assumption in the andragogical model includes self-concept (Knowles, 1998, p. 65). Self-concept involves self-direction which is attained as the adult learners see that they are "responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives" (p. 65). Participants in

the Intensive English classes are becoming self-directed in nature. Many times students come from countries where the classes are teacher centered and do not facilitate self-directed learning. When they come to America, they have goals and interests that they are pursuing; in the classroom, they need to be given opportunities to be self-directed in the daily learning activities in order to achieve these goals and interests.

The third assumption involves the role of the adult learners' experiences (Knowles, 1998, pp. 65-67). Since over 50% of the participants are between the ages of 17-25, many are in the stage of planning and preparation to achieve their goals. They do not have many experiences in the stage of adulthood; yet, the students' experiences are developing as they are acquiring their English language skills. Even though many are just beginning adulthood, they have life experiences to draw from. Many of these students' experiences with the English language come from high school language classes where English was taught with limited communicative learning activities. Therefore a teacher-directed and controlled approach is often the expectation of the learners as they enter the classroom. In addition, there are students who are in the age bracket of 26-35 who bring more flavor to the classes through the

foundation which they have laid in life. They often have life experiences that have helped them develop more wisdom, understanding, and maturity than the younger group. These participants have sometimes studied English in high school or the university and have been exposed to the language through different opportunities to travel to English-speaking countries or have conducted limited business with American companies.

The fourth andragogical assumption pertains to the adults' readiness to learn. Readiness to learn is found within the learners' current stage of life. Many students that come to the University Language Institute have already established their readiness to learn through making a commitment to learn the language by moving to another continent. By doing this, they have made financial and time commitments. Therefore, commitment and motivation to learn are often seen in the students who participate in the program.

The fifth assumption of the andragogical model is connected to the adults' orientation to learn. Adults learn better "when they are presented in the context of application to real-life situations" (Knowles, 1998, p. 67).

Adults' learning is based on life's needs or problems. It is often related to jobs, crises, and other important life

events. When students learn a second language, they want to practice their language skills in real-life settings. For example, they enjoy doing assignments like interviews with native English speakers. Also, they like going to different places like the library, college classes, places of business and basically any place where they have a need to communicate in English.

Finally, Knowles' last assumption of his andragogical model has to do with motivating factors such as self-confidence and satisfaction. When students are learning English as a Second Language, there is a great need to have a positive self-image that is often attained by reaching language-learning goals. This leads to a boost in the students morale and gives them confidence for further language learning opportunities. Many English as a Second Language students are intrinsically motivated which gives them an incentive to reach for the next language-learning goal because they see this as a continuous process.

Brookfield(1986) identified two forms of self-direction. The first dealt with a variety of techniques utilized by the learner like "specifying goals, identifying resources, implementing strategies, and evaluating progress" (p. 47). ULI's goal is to create a learner centered environment that facilitates learning for the academic and

professional goals of the students. These general goals lead to more specified goals developed by the learner. For example, if the student's goal is to enter the university then there is a need to pass the TOEFL test and students must have practiced the related English skills. In general, classes offered in the University Bridge Program are changed and altered according to the students' needs and interests. At University Language Institute, the teachers first give the students ideas as to what resources may be used when learning the language needed to accomplish their goals. Then the teacher encourages the learners to find ways to utilize different resources. Next, students were encouraged to select, use, and develop the learning strategies that best aided the learning process. Lastly, students evaluate their progress as they progressed within the level and from one level to the next. The second form includes how the learners undergo a personal change of consciousness and "contemplate ways in which they can transform their personal and social worlds" (p. 47). The participants in this study have benefited from thinking and talking about the way that they learn because it helps them to see their strengths and weaknesses in learning English as a Second Language. Therefore, these individuals have been able to practice new ways of learning and improve how

they learn by evaluating their learning.

Addressing Individual Differences

ATLAS

ATLAS is not culturally bound even though it was developed on western concepts and normed on North American groups.

ATLAS is a valid and reliable tool for addressing the individual differences of English as a Second Language students in University Language Institute.

This study supports findings made in previous studies (Ghost Bear, 2001; James, 2000; Willyard, 2000;) that the ATLAS is a valid and reliable instrument in determining learning strategy preferences for adult learners. It was also discovered that the ATLAS is a valid and reliable instrument for the students of Gambia College in Africa (Pinkins, 2001). This supports the fact that the ATLAS is a beneficial tool to use with students from cross-cultural backgrounds. In these studies, the characteristics of the learning strategy preferences groups were consistent indicating that the original ATLAS categories are stable.

Navigators are logical learners who like to have a clear understanding of the task at hand and then often like to work on their own so they can maintain control over the learning situation. In this study, the Navigators wanted to know what material was going to be covered in class ahead of time. In addition, they needed a clear, methodical step-by-step explanation of the way to acquire

various language skills. These participants were leaders in class activities who liked to express their ideas and to see their ideas implemented. Therefore, they were at times impatient when working with other students. In addition, they always liked to monitor their progress by comparing their past English skills with current skills. Then, these participants would look to the future to set language-learning goals. Teacher observations conveyed that many of the Navigator's are goal oriented and consistently check their progress as the move from one level to the next level constantly looking ahead.

Problem Solvers are critical thinkers who are always looking for a detailed explanation full of facts and examples. In this study, these students took a lot of time asking questions about the subject matter. They gleaned more knowledge of the English language by research of various resources like books and magazines; yet, the primary resource was often the teacher. This is especially true for the Asian Problem Solvers because there is a high regard for the teacher's authority and knowledge of the subject matter. Until recent years in Korea, teachers were respected on the next authority level under royalty. Problem Solvers were curious learners who liked to learn through participation in activities that allowed for

discovery methods to be employed.

Engagers are passionate learners who learn out of the affective mode. These learners put their whole heart into their learning and like to try new things. They were very conscious of what the teacher and the other students thought of them, and they did everything possible to keep good rapport with their classmates. They did not like working by themselves but instead enjoyed group projects. In addition, these learners worked very hard when they were interested in the project. They valued learning opportunities that had relevance and immediate application in their day-to-day life.

Recommendations for ATLAS

This study was one of two studies that utilized ATLAS to determine the learning strategy preferences of non-native English speakers. The ATLAS instrument was accurate in describing learning strategy preferences. The results from the ATLAS were successful in giving the teacher ideas as to how to better facilitate learning activities within the classroom. This instrument is user-friendly and easy to use with learners regardless of their nationality. Therefore, teachers can easily incorporate ATLAS into classes to help ensure a better understanding of the ways that the students approach learning tasks. It is

recommended that the teachers consider giving this instrument at orientation or in a class at the beginning of the session.

In addition, it is recommended that ATLAS be used to assess the learning strategy preferences of teachers at Intensive English Programs. This can give a more holistic perspective of the individual differences found among the teachers and students. Discussions of these learning strategy preferences can not only give a better understanding of these individual differences but may also lead to clearer communication among the members of the class. Therefore, the ATLAS may be a beneficial and practical instrument for teachers and students at Intensive English Programs to use when determining learning strategy preferences.

ATLAS Descriptors

Additional descriptors for each ATLAS group can add clarity to the description and understanding of international students' learning strategy characteristics in each group.

While this study confirmed the cross-cultural characteristics of learners in the three ATLAS groups, it also provided added detail to each group's descriptions. As a result of data collected, additional descriptive words can be provided by the participants which add clarity to the understanding of the characteristics of the Navigators,

Problem Solvers, and Engagers.

This study showed that the Navigators are very focused learners who learn best from a practical approach. They are more concerned with facts than people. In addition, these learners are interested in knowing "what" and need to learn information that is beneficial in order to carry out their goals and to meet their needs. Therefore, these learners can be viewed as "Functional" learners who are "specially fitted or used for which a thing or person exists" (Langenscheidt's Dictionary, 1997, p. 309). Navigators are focused and purposeful learners who thrive on making a plan and seeing the plan come together. One participant stated, "I have gained more confidence with more and more practice, and this has given me better results in learning English" (19-year old male, Navigator, Diverger, India).

The Problem Solvers in this study like to find different ways to complete a task. They are project minded and acquire knowledge best by using discovery methods to heighten understanding and to uncover new comprehension of a language task. Therefore, they can be viewed as "Experiential" learners. These students are interested in learning by going, seeing, and doing. One Problem Solver stated, "I like going places because real-life learning

helps me to learn, to react, and my memory" (21-year old male, Problem Solver, Converger, Brazil). They are critical thinkers who are concerned with "how" to complete a task, and they are not satisfied until all of their questions have been answered in detail. They give detailed responses when asked questions. In fact, a descriptive phrase attributed to Problem Solvers is "ask them what time it is, and they will build you a clock" (Ghost Bear, 2001, p. 376).

Engagers are passionate about life and learning. They rely heavily on learning with others and highly value relationships. Many times Engagers do not like to learn without others because they desire networks and find it boring to work alone. Therefore, these learners can be viewed as "Relational" learners. For example, one Engager stated, "I liked the drama because the drama was a lot of fun to do with my classmates" (17-year old female, Engager, Diverger, Vietnam). When these students are learning a new language, there is a fear that they often have when speaking in front of people. Again, this is because they highly value relationships. For example,

I really enjoyed making the informative speech. It was fun and was a good experience. I became nervous when I speak in front of other people so that was good practice (21-year old female, Engager, Accommodator, Japan).

When Engagers are interested they in learning, they become involved. Thus, the language acquisition is more effective.

Recommendation for Additional Descriptors

This study concerning the learning strategies of English as a Second Language learners has revealed additional descriptors for the ATLAS groups of Navigators, Problem Solvers, and Engagers. These descriptors provide additional insight about the ways that these groups of learners take on the path of learning. Therefore, it is recommended that further analysis of additional studies to be conducted in order continue to add further understanding and meaning to each ATLAS group.

Learning Styles Inventory

Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory can apply to international students.

Individual differences can be identified and accurately described by the Learning Styles Inventory.

Individual differences have been identified by Kolb's Learning Styles Instrument and confirmed accurate by journals, observations, and interviews. The participants in each group of learners fell into all four different modes of the Learning Styles Inventory.

First, the Divergers learn from the affective or the feeling mode. In this learning style, the perception of

material comes from being able to learn from specific experiences (Hainer, E.V., 1990). In this study, the students in this group related well to other people by being very sensitive to feelings and other people. Many times these participants enjoyed working with others and would take their peers' ideas into consideration when completing a learning task. Therefore, they processed material by watching and being good listeners. These learners viewed things from different perspectives and always looked for meaning in the learning activity. These participants would not make a judgement before first carefully watching the example or the task at hand.

Convergers learn from the cognitive mode or the thinking mode. In this study, they perceived information based on the way they logically analyze the ideas. These learners were very systematic in planning how to approach learning activities. After these students had thought through the task at hand, they acted on their intellectual comprehension of the learning opportunity. Convergers often processed material by acting on their thoughts. After they were convinced how to approach the learning situation, they would take risks to try new things. These learners were productive and accomplished that which they set out to do.

Assimilators also learn out of the cognitive or thinking mode. They perceive information cognitively by logically thinking about the ideas. In this study, these learners would think about their thoughts for speaking activities and then processed them by "putting the pieces of the puzzle together" (Willyard, 2001, p. 169). One participant stated that "the best part of the class was when the teacher would ask us questions about the vocabulary. It would make us start to think and to remember" (17-year old male, Navigator, Assimilator, Mexico). These students were intellectual and always looked for meanings from different perspectives.

Accommodators' perception is from the affective mode. They are feeling oriented and sensitive to their teacher and classmates. In this study, these participants learned best by being actively involved in a learning situation and doing an activity. Also, these learners were risk-takers who liked to try new approaches to learning. They had fun trying activities such as taping speeches in the television studio, conducting interviews with American university students, and doing other activities that were sometimes intimidating to other students. Their main question was "what if". The following example was typical of their approach: "I think that the opportunity to know American

people and practicing my English is a wonderful opportunity and dynamic" (28-year old female, Navigator, Accomodator, Venezuela). Other students respected these learners and were often influenced by Accommodators ideas and actions.

Recommendation for Learning Style Inventory

This study was one of many studies that looked at the learning style preferences of English as a Second Language Learners using the Learning Styles Instrument (LSI). This instrument provided insight into how students cognitively perceive and process information. It is a useful instrument which crosses cultural boundaries and gives accurate assessment of the individual differences found within learning style preferences. It is recommended that English as a Second Language teachers utilize this instrument when considering their students learning preferences. After giving this assessment, teachers should compare the results with the students learning traits. This could clarify questions that teachers have about why students approach learning in certain ways and help to create an understanding of how to create a classroom that is more conducive for learning.

Perception

Although learning styles and learning strategies are defined differently, they both measure an element of perception.

A key factor when looking at individual differences in learning styles and learning strategies is perception. Learning styles as conceptualized by Kolb (1984) and learning strategies as conceptualized by Conti and Fellenz (1991) measure different concepts. Yet, both instruments identify individual differences which include elements of perception. Learners perceive information in different ways. Some learners perceive information in the cognitive domain while other learners acquire information through the affective domain. Learning styles and learning strategies view perception from differing domains. Kolb views perception as the way learners receive and understand knowledge. The Accommodators and Divergers funnel information through the affective domain of Concrete Experience while the Convergents and Assimilators channel new knowledge through the cognitive domain of Abstract Conceptualization. Conti and Fellenz (1991) refer to perception as the way students enter a learning task. Engagers usually perceive new knowledge through the affective domain (Conti & Kolody, 1999, p. 14). Navigators and Problem Solvers normally perceive information through the cognitive domain. The findings in this study confirmed that learning strategies are based on how learners approach a learning task based on perception.

SILL

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning is a valid and reliable instrument to find tactics to enhance language learning.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is a beneficial means of finding how English as a Second Language Learners acquire the language. It provides tactics that help students to become more effective in their approach to learning English. This instrument is useful in making students aware of tactics that they currently use when learning English and further helps them to see what additional tactics could be utilized when learning the language. The SILL gives language students ideas that can not only aid them in learning English but may also be applied in daily activities outside of school.

Recommendations for the SILL

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL) is best used to determine the tactics which students use in order to learn English as a Second Language. The use of this instrument gives students a better realization and understanding of how they attack learning English as a Second Language. Teachers should consider using the SILL in not only upper level classes but intermediate classes as well. The use of the SILL can determine what tactics the students are already using when learning English and also find what areas need to be targeted in language development. When this instrument is utilized in intermediate classes, students have an opportunity to strengthen and sharpen their use of learning tactics while

they are enrolled in the Intensive English Program. This gives them the opportunity work closely with the teachers to develop these tactics and make a more effective learning process when acquiring English as a Second Language. In addition, teachers could form learning teams which discuss their learning tactic preferences. By interacting with each other through discourse, the students can find that they have knowledge and experience that may benefit their peers when shared thus facilitating learning. These discussions could be recorded and reviewed by the learners to help determine pertinent ideas to implement.

Teachers

Learning style and learning strategy information can provide teachers with useful insights for addressing individual differences among international students.

Students come to University Language Institute with various ways to approach learning. Many of the participants in this study have demonstrated that their learning styles often differ from the primary teaching methods employed in their native country. Over 60% of the students in this study perceive information concretely through the affective domain. However, in these students' home countries, teachers tend to use methods that come out of the cognitive domain by using abstract, lecture-based methods to communicate material to the students.

Studying learning styles and learning strategies can unearth new knowledge for teachers both about themselves and about the students to the teachers. First of all, it is imperative that teachers have a knowledge and understanding of how they themselves learn in order to better facilitate learning activities for the students in the English as a Second Language program. Teachers use their own personal learning preferences in setting up the activities over which they have control such as the teaching environment. This is done quite often without the teacher realizing what has been done. Unfortunately, when teachers do this, it can lead to an unfair disadvantage for some students. Therefore, teachers need to be made aware of learning style and learning strategy preferences in order to provide more beneficial learning opportunities for all students. This knowledge offers the teacher a better understanding of the way that the students comprehend material and perform in various learning situations. Therefore, the teacher can instruct the students on how they can more effectively learn English as a Second Language. This can assist students in the as learning-how-to-learn by, "possessing or acquiring, the knowledge and skill to learn effectively in whatever situation one encounters" (p. 19).

There are three ingredients in the learning-how-to-learn process. First, learners "need to know about learning itself for success in learning" (Smith, 1982, p. 20) Second, the learners' learning styles are the methods people use when they think, approach problems, and process information in learning activities (pp. 23-24). Third, training is needed which are "deliberate efforts to help people become better at learning and more successful in the educational arena" (p. 25).

In English as a Second Language, teachers need to empower students with ways to become more effective learners. Students need to be given opportunities to learn in a non-threatening, accepting environment which leads to success. As teachers learn more about the students learning styles and strategies, they can more effectively facilitate learning opportunities in the class that best equip students with ways to acquire and assimilate information.

Learning-how-to-learn includes the three subprocesses of planning, conducting, and evaluation (Smith, 1976, p. 6). As students learn English as a Second Language, they are quite often interested in setting learning goals, taking charge of their learning, and especially seeing or evaluating how they have progressed in language

acquisition. Therefore, in order for teachers to help students develop their learning-how-to-learn skills, it is important for them to know general adult learning principles and the learning styles and learning strategy preferences of these groups of learners.

Brookfield (1986) suggests six principles to facilitate effective teaching-learning situations which are applicable in University Language Institute's program. First, as in Brookfield's principles of learning, voluntary participation is exhibited by these students. This is attained by their decision to attend ULI. Also, mutual respect is established between the teacher and students through continuously being aware of and attentive to the students' needs, interests, and learning style and strategy preferences. Collaboration is drawn upon to foster respect, understanding and cohesion within the classroom. The students at University Language Institute know that the teachers will spend tireless hours before and after classes working them to have a complete understanding of the material they need to accomplish their goals. As learning style and learning strategy preferences are understood communication within times of collaboration is more effective and knowledge is conveyed in a clearer way. Next, action and reflection are drawn upon to utilize

students learning style and learning strategy preferences and to further develop ways of learning that had not yet been tapped into by students. This facilitates learning to the fullest and maximizes the learning opportunity which leads to more rapid progress in the English language acquisition. Learning activities that involve critical reflection skills through mentally challenging assignments are implemented in the classroom in order to develop higher order thinking skills. Finally, self-direction is fostered through helping the students learn how to learn through the implementation of various teaching methods that employ learning opportunities that not only use style and strategy preferences but tap into those that have not yet been cultivated.

Student-Centeredness vs. Teacher-Centeredness

Students acquire information best with a student-centered approach in second language acquisition. This study showed that a student-centered approach keeps the focus on the students' interests, needs, and goals which facilitates learning in a more effective way. In English as a Second Language, focusing activities around the students learning preferences and needs gives them an opportunity to excel in learning in a way that is comfortable to the students and also helps to develop weak

areas in learning which assists students to get the most out of the language learning situation. Therefore, English as a Second language teachers should consider creating and conducting learning opportunities with the students learning strategy and learning style preferences in mind. Students should keep weekly journals recording what benefited them the most in the learning activities and what was difficult. This can help teachers and students continuously track the students' learning and gain insights that help make the class better. The students begin to feel that the class is not only the teacher's class but their class as well and that learning does not have to be an individual effort but can be a team effort in which every member has an important part to play.

Design

Researchers need to rethink the research question of what teachers do to hinder learning.

Researchers should look closely at the population before they address what teachers do to hinder students learning. Many times culture and environment have an impact on whether or not a student feels free enough to express himself/herself in this area. This is for two primary reasons respect and fear.

First, students from Asian countries greatly respect

teachers as authority figures. Often teachers in Korea have more authority and respect than even the parents. They see the teacher as one who should not be questioned. Therefore, when they come to America, they bring along those same basic practices. So when these students are asked this question in an educational research project, they do not know how to respond to this issue. As a result, they leave this issue unaddressed in their responses. These students would first blame themselves for a problem before blaming the teacher. Students from Spanish countries also are taught to have great respect for the teacher, but would be more free to voice their thoughts if it could be done in confidence. Much of what is done is out of respect and fear of the teacher.

Students from any part of the world usually have a fear of the teacher in the sense that this person makes the decision of whether the class is passed or failed. Therefore, even on student evaluations the true student perspectives are not always conveyed because they do not want to chance making the professor upset and not passing the course. Many times they will express their thoughts when they know that the expression may be done in a safe environment. Yet, students will do what it takes to get through a class.

Recommendation for Adult Learning

Facilitating learning opportunities with adult learning principles is key when instructing English as a Second language to adults. Adult learning centers the learning activities around what the learner needs to know and helps the learner to see that they are the primary source of data (Knowles, 1970, p. 183). Educators in Intensive English Programs (IEP) should afford students learning opportunities that are based on these foundational principles. The students in these programs need to be treated as adults and encouraged to incorporate their experiences into the learning process. According to Knowles (1970), the learning should be centered around the students goals and needs. This is best accomplished by conducting a needs assessment on the first day of class. The teacher should find out why each student is studying English and then develop class activities based on these goals and needs. This is a step in self-direction which facilitates ownership in learning. Also, throughout the course of the classes the teacher should give the students the opportunity to choose what learning activities would benefit their language acquisition. In addition, since many adult students prefer to learn through real-life experiences, they need to be taken on trips to places of

business, college classes, and anywhere else in which they can practice their English with native speaking Americans. Implementing these principles in a real-life setting will develop confidence and create satisfaction naturally. Therefore, educators in English as a Second Language Programs must be aware of adult learning principles and apply with language learners. The foremost principle to keep in mind is that Learning Is For Everyone!

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APPENDIX

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 7/8/02

Date: Monday, July 09, 2001

IRB Application No ED01140

Proposal Title: LEARNING STYLE AND LEARNING STRATEGY PREFERENCES IN INTENSIVE
ENGLISH INSTITUTES

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Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI:

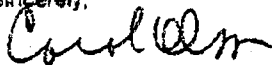
Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Melody G. Shumaker

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: LEARNING STYLE AND LEARNING STRATEGY PREFERENCES IN AN INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM

Major Field: Applied Educational Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Mt. Airy Christian School, in Mt. Airy, Maryland; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Southeastern College in Lakeland, Florida in December 1994; received Master of Arts degree in Education from Oral Roberts University, in May 1997, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Occupational and Adult Education at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2001.

Experience: Employed at University Language Institute as an Instructor of English as a Second Language.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Association of Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages, National Association of Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages, and Phi Kappa Pi Education Honor Society.