LEARNING STYLES MEET CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Candidate's thesis

Satu Sauvola

University of Jyväskylä

Department of languages

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HUMANISTINEN TIEDEKUNTA
KIELTEN LAITOS

Satu Sauvola
Learning styles meet classroom activities

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Aistihavaintoihin perustuvia oppimistyylejä ja niiden roolia kielten opiskelussa on tutkittu vähän. Kyseisen alueen tutkimus on keskittynyt todistamaan, että luokkahuoneessa on useita oppimistyylejä teettämällä oppilailla itsearviointitestejä. Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat perinteisesti olleet yliopisto-opiskelijat ja tutkimukset on toteutettu Yhdysvalloissa. Muilla koulutustasoilla tutkimusta oppimistyyleistä ei ole juurikaan tehty.

Oppimistyyli on käsitteenä melko epäselvä ja se sekoitetaan usein kognitiivisiin tyyleihin ja oppimisstrategioihin. Kaiken lisäksi oppimistyylit on jaettu alalajeihin, joista aistihavaintoihin perustuvat tyylit ovat yksi osa. Nämä ovat myös tämän tutkimuksen kohde.

Tulevana opettajana etsin jatkuvasti uusia ja monipuolisia opettamistapoja, joilla voisin auttaa oppilaitani oppimaan helpommin ja tehokkaammin. Tutkimukseni päätarkoitus oli selvittää oppilaiden mielipiteitä englannin tehtävien ja heidän oppimistyyliensä yhteensopivuudesta sekä tarkastella, mikä tukee heidän oppimistaan ja mikä taas estää sitä. Tutkimusta varten suunnittelin kaksiosaisen kyselyn yhdeksäsluokkalaisille oppilaille. Kysely tehtiin syksyllä 2009.

Tulokset osoittivat, että useimmat oppilaat kaipaisivat huomattavasti lisää vaihtelua englannin tunnin tehtäviin. Jokaisen oppimistyylin oppilaat kokivat, ettei heidän oppimistyylejään huomioida tarpeeksi. Erityisesti taktuaaliset, käsillään oppivat, oppilaat antoivat ehdotuksia englannin tunnin tehtävien monipuolistamiseksi. Yllättäen myös auditiiviset oppilaat, joiden oppimistyyli vastaa paremmin perinteistä oppimiskäsitystä, esittivät paljon parannusehdotuksia. Lisäksi kävi ilmi, että internetin, television ja radion käyttö englannin tunneilla on vähäistä, vaikka juuri ne mahdollistaisivat helposti useamman oppimistyylin aktivoinnin. Vaikka tutkimuksen otos on pieni (23 oppilasta), antaa se joitakin viitteitä luokkahuoneen todellisesta tilanteesta ja oppimistyylien asemasta siellä.
asiasanat: learning style, perceptual learning style

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1 Introduction

The term learning style, as pointed out by Dörnyei (2005:120), is rather vague and often overlaps with terms such as cognitive style and learning strategy. In addition, learning styles are further divided into perceptual learning styles. Auditory, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic styles rely on sensory experiences, i.e. sight, hearing, touch and movement. These are the focus of the present study.

Learning styles based upon sensory experiences are still a somewhat unknown field of study. Reid (1987:91) claims to be one of the first researchers to examine the learning style preferences of non-native ESL students. However, her subjects, similarly to several other studies (see for example Peacock 2001), were university students. Furthermore, earlier research on learning styles has concentrated on Chinese students whose results often have differed from those of others (Peacock 2001:3). Overall, there is little research done of the learning styles of non-native English speakers other than Chinese.

As a future teacher, I am interested in finding new and varying ways of giving information and proper tools to my students to help them make their learning easier and more efficient. As Peacock (2001:4) states, recognising and strengthening students' learning styles through versatile exercises and experimental teaching methods increase motivation to learn a language. Therefore, I wished to discover what is currently done in the English classroom to support learning styles, what the students themselves feel enables their learning and what, on the other hand, they feel could be done better. To do this, I conducted a questionnaire consisting of two parts to a group of 9th grade students in late autumn 2009. The main purpose of the present study is to report on the learners' experiences and opinions about their learning material and English activities with regard to their learning styles. By doing so I hope to help future teachers to develop and diversify their teaching. I will do this by comparing the variety of classroom activities to the needs of each learning style. As the research sample was small, the conclusions drawn here should be taken with caution. However, the present study provides some insight into the situation in the Finnish classrooms and hopefully encourages further research.

I will begin by giving a short account of earlier research in this area and the status of learning styles in the English classroom in Finland. Secondly, I will present the results of the questionnaire by examining each learning style individually and also the tasks suitable for these styles. I will also

give examples of the pupils' responses and by this show that there is indeed a need for both further research and changes in teaching English. Finally, I will compare the results to those of previous studies and compare the situation in the classroom to the instructions presented in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004) concerning learning styles.

2 Learning styles in foreign language learning

2.1 Learning style

The focus of education is gradually moving from teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching. As a result, there has been an increasing interest in studying learning styles. The concept of learning style is rather complex and as such it is difficult to define. There often is confusion between the terms learning style, learning strategy and cognitive style which sometimes can even be seen used as synonyms. However, there is a difference between the terms. **Cognitive styles** describe how the learner processes information (Leino and Leino 1990:39), whereas learning style and strategy focus on how the learner acquires that information. As Slack and Norwich (2007:53) explain it, **learning strategies** are more varying as the learner decides his or her approach to each task separately, whereas **learning styles** are more automatic and can be considered personality traits. Reid (1995, as cited by Peacock 2001:1-2) adds that learning styles are "natural, habitual and preferred ways" of acquiring information. Also Peacock's (2001:1) definition states that learning styles are preferred methods of learning. As personality features, learning styles are rather stable. However, by making the learner more aware of these features, learning styles can be adjusted. According to a theory by Dunn and Dunn (1978:4), learning style is a structure of four categories, namely environment (classroom design), emotional (motivation, responsibility), sociological (group work, individual work) and physical (perceptual learning styles, mobility). Dunn and Dunn argue that learners can be made conscious of these categories and elements, which then helps the learners to make use of them.

Leino and Leino (1990:9-15) introduce various models of learning styles. Some models portray learning styles as cognitive methods for acquiring information through rational thinking, others claim that information is collected by intuition. A third learning style structure (Leino and Leino 1990:9-15) states that information is gathered empirically through experience and senses. Perceptual learning styles, which fall into the category of physical elements in Dunn and Dunn's

(1987) model, is a term used for the learner's way of absorbing and organising information by using his or her senses. Reid (1987:89), one of the first researchers studying perceptual learning styles, names altogether six types of sensory learning styles: visual (learning through sense of sight), auditory (learning by listening), kinesthetic (learning by comprehensive physical involvement), tactile or tactual (learning with hands), group and individual. The present study will concentrate on the first four of these types. Also, it must be noted that kinesthetic and tactile learning styles are sometimes used synonymously although they have a different focus. In the present study they are examined separately.

2.2 ESL and EFL students' learning style preferences

For decades learning results were thought to be dependent upon the learner's intelligence or lack of attention during classes and poor scores in exams were considered a result of a low IQ. The public opinion changed to point the accusing finger towards teachers and the teaching methods used in schools (Dunn and Dunn 1978:1-2). Gradually, the focus of interest has turned more and more towards a learner-centred view and individual differences are considered and accepted to a greater extent. Therefore, there is also an increasing awareness for different learning styles and a growing need of variable teaching methods. Now, when lifelong learning is a popular trend, it has become vital to be able to analyse and improve one's own habits and learning methods.

Earlier research on sensory learning and perceptual learning styles was rather one-dimensional. According to Dunn and Dunn (1978:13), studies concerning perceptual learning styles preceding the 1960s only considered visual and auditory senses as the researchers were yet unaware of the existence of kinesthetic and tactile learning styles. Therefore, the results often acknowledged either of the two as being dominant, which probably could be seen in classrooms as well. Today, nearly everyone would reply positively when asked if they thought people learn through different senses. Following this change in the general opinion, there has been a growing number of studies concentrating on learning styles in second and foreign language learning. To detect learning style preferences of individual students, researchers often have to rely on self-reporting questionnaires of which Reid's PLSPQ (Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire) is one of the best known. Her questionnaire consists of several statements about each of the six learning styles (Reid has included group and individual learning in her definition) which the learner reviews on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Apart from Reid's (1987) pioneering questionnaire study, also Melton (1990, as cited by Peacock 2001:3), Jones (1997, as cited by Peacock 2001:3) and Peacock (2001) have examined the learning style preferences of EFL and ESL students. The results of these studies show that students prefer kinesthetic and tactile learning styles above others, whereas the teaching methods mostly suit auditory learners. However, the studies were often either conducted in the United States or they focused merely on Chinese students. In both cases, the studies generally involved university students. Most research concerning younger learners in elementary and secondary level is from the 1970s and as such outdated. Furthermore, Reid (1987:91) remarks that not enough research is done on the learning style preferences of non-native speakers of English. Also Peacock (2001:3) acknowledges that there are only a few studies on non-Chinese EFL students. Therefore, there is a need for new research on this subject at all levels of education.

2.3 Learning styles in Finnish classrooms

According to Dunn and Dunn (1978:2), learning styles were first introduced to education when trying to find a way to help learners with problems. Also in Finland information about learning styles is mostly adapted to special education of students with various problems such as learning difficulties or physical disabilities (Kivinen 1993:228). However, teaching learning strategies is included also in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004), which would imply that skills needed to learn are being taught in every Finnish school.

As presented in the Finnish Basic Education Act (BEA 628/1998:1-2) one objective of basic education is to "improve children's capacity for learning". This means that it should be part of every child's education to learn about the learning process and efficient ways of learning, that is, children should be taught to learn. In addition, interviews carried out by Peacock (2001:13), where students reported having acquired their learning styles in school rather than at home, support this thought. In Finland, school's responsibilities in students' learning was further widened in this direction as teaching learning strategies was included in the most recent National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCC 2004). As of the year 2004, it is part of basic education to teach not only new skills and knowledge but also learning and working methods which enable lifelong learning.

Not only are learning skills part of NCC's conception of learning but they are also mentioned in NCC's (2004:18-19) definition of school as a special learning environment. School should aim to create an environment which encourages one to try a variety of learning and working methods and

where it is possible for students to receive help in evaluating their own learning and ways of working. Further, students should be assisted to identify what is characteristic of their learning process and give them a variety of options on how to change their habits if necessary. Overall, it is specifically described in NCC (2004:19) that students' learning styles, similarly to their cultural background and individual differences, must be taken into consideration when planning teaching. It is further specified that teaching learning skills should also be part of foreign language teaching in the secondary school (years 7-9), along with language and culture skills (NCC 2004:140-141).

Reiss (1985, as cited by Tornberg 2005:20) claims that successful students are able to analyse their learning and methods they use to complete tasks whereas less successful students can only give vague explanations of how they have worked. Lennon (1989, as cited by Tornberg 2005:20) supports this and adds that successful students are aware of their competence of completing tasks as well as the possible lack of certain skills. All in all, it seems obvious that it is vital for any learner to know their abilities and limits. Metacognition, that is, the learner's awareness of how, what and why he or she is learning and the willingness to evaluate one's results and methods, is important in language learning according to Tornberg (2005:20-21). These are the skills that students should be taught, also according to the Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC:19).

2.4 Benefits of adjusting teaching to learning styles

There seems to be a consensus among researchers that any efforts made to consider learning styles in the classroom activities positively affect students' learning. Reid (1987:90) emphasises that accommodating teaching to learning styles improves students' overall learning results, increases both motivation and efficiency and enables a positive attitude towards the language being learned. Peacock (2001:14) adds that applying information about students' individual learning styles to the English classroom adds their confidence as language learners. Dunn and Dunn (1978:13-14) also support this by reporting that approximately 90 percent of teaching is carried out through the questioning and answering technique which is helpful only for students with auditory preference, a group which forms only a small portion of the entire class.

Despite the fact that the advantages of acknowledging learning styles are obvious and widely recognised, little is done to enforce theory and words into action. According to Peacock (2001:11-12), 81 percent of teachers believe that a mismatch between teaching and learning styles leads to learning failures, frustration and lack of motivation among students. However, most of their

students felt their learning styles were not properly taken into account in the teaching. Furthermore, both Peacock and Reid show that teachers often are oblivious to what would contribute to their students' learning or they have an opposite idea of what the students expected from the teaching. As explained above, learning styles are also mentioned in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004). However, in Finland, hardly any research is done in this field of study. Therefore, further training for teachers is necessary to ensure that the advice presented in the NCC to include teaching about different learning methods is, and overall even can be, followed.

Reid (1987) claims that a mismatch between learning styles and teaching styles causes demotivation, poor learning results and frustration. However, there is no empirical research testing this theory although it has received a significant amount of theoretical support from various researchers (Peacock 2001:3-4). Collecting appropriate data to test Reid's claim would be a great asset for classroom teachers, who could then adjust their teaching to students' needs more efficiently and thus improve learning. Thus, there is a need for empirical study to investigate the advantages, or possible disadvantages, of adapting teaching to learning styles.

3 Data and methods

3.1 Research question

In the present study, I intend to examine the relationship between 9th grade pupils' learning style preferences and the activities used during English classes via a two-part-questionnaire. As the earlier research in this area is often limited to examining native English speakers and Chinese-speaking ESL students (for example Peacock 2001), research is needed to investigate the learning style preferences of other non-native English speakers as well. Also, previous research has only examined whether students are able to identify their learning styles and which learning style they seem to prefer (Reid 1987, Peacock 2001). I believe that there is enough evidence that there are different learning styles represented in each classroom and that now it is time to examine how well those learning styles are considered in classroom activities and teaching. It is important to investigate learning styles among students as adapting teaching styles to learning styles has a positive effect on students' learning outcomes as well as on their confidence as ESL learners and motivation to learn (Reid 1987, Peacock 2001).

The research questions of the study are:

    1. Do students think the diversity of classroom activities used in the English class is adequate?

    2. Is there a connection between different learning styles and the classroom activities? Does every learner get something out of the lessons?

3.2 Data: questionnaire

After careful consideration, I decided to carry out this study with Finnish 9th grade pupils. This was done because the 15-16-year-old pupils, in their last year in secondary school (year 9), already have several years of experience of English language learning. Furthermore, the pupils have had nine years to find out learning habits that suit them. The pupils came from two comprehensive schools: one from Central Finland and the other from Northern Finland. My original plan was to carry out the study for a larger group in only one school but due to difficulties in receiving proper permissions on time and answers from an adequate number of pupils, the questionnaire was conducted in two schools. In the end, I received 23 answered questionnaires. Although the sample is not sufficient in terms of drawing any generalisations, it is sufficient for this level of study.

Since "question wording is a crucial element in maximizing the validity of survey data obtained by a question-asking process", according to Sudman and Bradburn (1982:1), I was particularly careful when planning my questionnaire, considering especially that my sample is a group of 9th graders who most likely are not familiar with the special vocabulary concerning language learning and teaching. It is important that the questions are comprehensible to the subjects and also that the questions encourage the pupils to answer them as well as they can. Besides the correct wording of the questions, also deciding the length of the questionnaire is important; it cannot be too short so that it covers the research question extensively, but it cannot be too long either, since it would be tiring and demotivating for the subjects. After finishing the first draft of the two-page long questionnaire, I discussed its efficiency with my pro seminar-tutor and also my peers. The questionnaire was tested by a small (seven participants) pilot group before finalising it for the test group.

The final questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was to gain knowledge of what is done during the English classes, what the pupils would like to do and whether they think the English classes are versatile enough for their needs. This was done through 16 four-point-scale statements

and five open or semi-open questions. The 16 statements included multiple questions about the frequency of different types of classroom activities, two closed questions where the students continued the given sentences in any way they wanted and three general open questions. The second part of the questionnaire was a learning style test, which was to show the diversity of learners in the English classroom and also to serve as a comparison to the responses received from the pupils. It also served as a guide to the pupils to consider their studies and the English classes from the point of view of effective learning. Further, the second part included 16 four-point-scale statements, which were adapted from Kalaja and Dufva's (2005) questionnaire, and two open questions. The test included statements which the pupils could compare to their learning on a four-point-scale (disagree-somewhat disagree-somewhat agree-agree) and multiple questions. The pupils then counted their points and checked from a given description of learning styles which one seemed to suit them. Finally, the pupils were asked three questions about how well they think the material used during English classes go together with their learning styles and what could be done to improve their learning. The learning style test was placed at the end of the questionnaire since I did not want to affect the pupils' responses regarding their wishes and ideas on what should be done to improve their learning.

The four-point-scale was used to reduce the number of uncertain answers as the pupils were forced to choose a distinct stand. To avoid misunderstandings and to assure that blank papers were not returned, the questionnaire was in Finnish. This also enabled the pupils to express themselves more clearly. For the school in Northern Finland the questionnaires were sent by mail with specific instructions of the 20-minute time limit and of how to fill in the questionnaire. I delivered the questionnaires to the school in Central Finland personally and gave the students short instructions of what to do.

3.3 Methods of analysis

To analyse the data, I decided to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to complement each other as using only either of them separately would result in a very one-dimensional view of the data. The second part of the questionnaire, which was a learning style test, will be analysed only quantitatively to show the proportions of the four learning styles in the classroom.

I will consider the first section, which is the 16 statements concerning classroom activities, of the first part of the questionnaire separately and in greater detail by giving first an insight of the

common features emerging from the answers. Then I will examine the statements from the point of view of each of the four learning styles and compare students' responses to their learning styles. Further, I will examine the open questions, that is, the students' learning experience and their suggestions for improvements, and report interesting or unusual answers separately. After examining both sections, I will discuss the results and possible general conclusions that can be drawn from them. However, it must be noted that the results should be taken with some caution as the size of the data is relatively small and the learning styles examined exclude individual and group work preferences, which are also considered learning styles by Reid (1987:95-97) but were omitted from the present study as they are not sensory based learning styles.

4 Learning styles and classroom activities

In the following chapter, I will discuss the results of the questionnaire. I will begin by introducing the learning styles represented in the classroom. Secondly, I will introduce general points that arose from the students' answers with regard to the relationship between their learning styles and the exercises used during English classes. Thirdly, I will examine the four learning styles, that is auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic learners, individually and discuss what students of different learning styles feel enables their learning and what, on the other hand, could be improved. This division is done due to one background hypothesis that auditory style is generally dominating and, therefore, taken better into consideration in the classroom above other learning styles. I will provide examples of the responses of the students who have been given an identification code by their learning style, A for auditory, V for visual, T for tactile, K for kinesthetic and C for combination. Finally, I will discuss the future developments, that is, what could be done to improve students' learning experiences and compare the results to those of previous studies.

4.1 Learning styles represented in the English classroom

The final part of the questionnaire was a test for the students to discover their learning style preference. According to Reid (1987:96-97), non-native learners of English often prefer "learning by doing", that is, they show preference to tactile and kinesthetic learning styles. Indeed, the tactile learning style preference proved to be strongly represented in the research group in the present study although auditory style was the dominant one. The figure below, which has been divided to five sections, the four major styles and combination styles, shows the proportions of each learning style of the whole group (Figure 1). As expected, the auditory learning style proved to be the most

preferred style, as a total of nine pupils out of 23 were tested to have auditory preference. Whether this is because the pupils are auditory learners or because they have suited their learning style to the teacher's teaching style, is unclear. This point will be further discussed in the section of auditory learners. Furthermore, the visual learning style, which is often the second dominant learning style, was in clear minority and preferred by only one pupil. Following the results of Reid's (1987) and Peacock's (2001) studies, the tactile and kinesthetic learning styles were strongly represented, as they were preferred by a total of nine pupils. The remaining four pupils' learning styles were combinations of two or more learning styles. These combinations included two pupils with tactile-kinesthetic preference, one pupil with audio-visual preference and one pupil who received equal points for all four learning styles. As can be seen, the learning styles preferring movement were strongly represented in the research group.
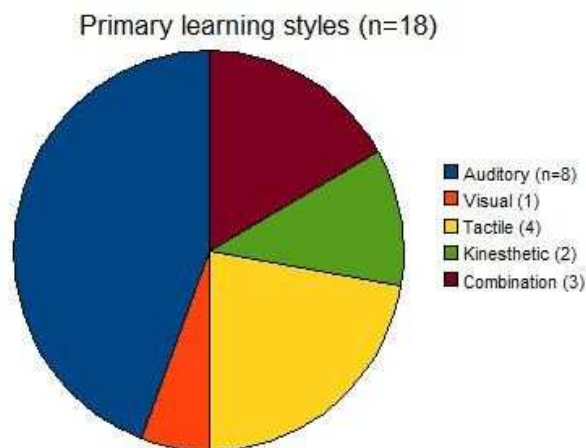

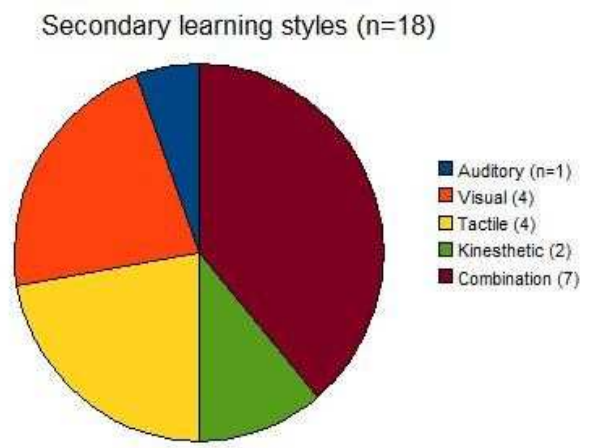Figure 1: Primary learning styles of 9th grade students

Firgure 2: Secondary learning styles of 9th grade students

As the learners often use various ways of absorbing and organising information, their secondary (or minor as Reid (1987:94) calls it) learning styles in which they received second highest scores, were also examined (see Figure 2). In this category the number of auditory learners was notably small whereas the visual learning style and combinations were more frequent. This implies that the students' learning could be aided by tasks activating several senses simultaneously, as also Peacock suggests (2001:15).

4.2 Match or mismatch?

According to Dunn and Dunn (1978:4), learners should be guided to identify and develop their learning styles in order to help them learn more efficiently. To do this, teachers should be made aware of the different learning styles and how to support them, also according to the Finnish

National Core Curriculum (NCC 2004:19). Therefore, the students in the study should also have information of this area beforehand. The students were asked whether learning styles are familiar to them from English classes. The result was that 11 had heard about them during English classes before and 12 said they had never heard of them. The following question inquired whether learning styles have been discussed in any other class, to which 11 students responded affirmatively and 10 negatively. Most said that learning styles are familiar to them from student counselling, which was not surprising. Thus, teachers seem to recognize that learning styles may have something to do with efficient learning. However, the results of the study indicate that the theory and knowledge do not translate into teaching.

One of the questions was about the students' experiences of how their learning styles are considered during English classes. Generally speaking, the tactile-kinesthetic students were most uncertain and the auditory students were most satisfied as the following examples by an auditory student (A1) and a student with combination learning style (C4) demonstrate:

Example 1

    A1: Todella hyvin, kaikki sujuu tunneilla (oppiminen)
       [Very well, everything goes well during the classes (learning)]

    C4: Tarpeeksi hyvin.
       [Well enough]

Overall, nine students responded that their individual learning styles are either well or well enough considered, four students were uncertain, five felt their learning style is not acknowledged at all and four students left the question unanswered. Therefore, the good news is that half of the students feel their learning style is considered during English lessons; the bad news is that half of the class was uncertain or felt that there is no connection between English activities and their learning styles and also that the pleased group mostly consists of auditory learning style. Out of the five students who felt disregarded, two were auditory students and three tactile ones. These students felt that improvements are needed, as the tactual learner (T2) below:

Example 2

    T2: No vois siellä kyllä olla erilaisia tehtäviä!
       [Well there could be different kinds of exercises!]

The traditional teacher-dominant teaching style, which judging by students' answers seems to be

used in the research classroom as well, mostly supports auditory students and leaves others somewhat disregarded. It is clear that the transition from audio-visual teaching to multi-sensory teaching is still slowly developing.

In order to ensure the activation of every student regardless of their individual learning style, Peacock (2001:15) suggests that teachers should strive for a balanced teaching style which would include aspects from every learning style without favouring any specifically. Thus, teaching should be constructed of versatile exercises and multiple helpful devices, such as handouts, pictures, projects or discussions, to give experiences to all senses. This would not only make individual classes more interesting but it would also aid students to discover working methods that are most suitable for them. To see whether this idea has been adapted to Finnish language classrooms, I asked the students what they thought about the versatility of their English lesson material and whether the working methods are ever alternated. The responses were rather inconsistent as students generally claimed that the activities are versatile enough but reported later that the activities used during English classes tend to be similar and are rarely varied. More than one student complained that the class routines were boring and should be changed as can be seen from the following examples by a tactile (T3) and two auditory students (A4 and A5):

Example 3

> T3: Yleensä kaikki on saman tyylisiä, vois olla monipuolisempaa.
> [Usually everything is similar, they could be more versatile.]

> A4: samoja kaavoja, voisi välillä muuttaa
> [same patterns, they could be varied sometimes]

> A5: Joo aika tylsää kun kappaleet käsitellään samalla tavalla.
> [Yeah it's rather boring when the chapters are always discussed in the same way.]

As can be seen from these examples, the students are experiencing some degree of frustration and lack of motivation which suggests that their needs as learners are not considered. Furthermore, some of the students offered concrete suggestions for improvements. These suggestions often had something to do with practical exercises (see example 4:A4) and the students in question were often learners who need physical involvement to learn, that is, tactile or kinesthetic learners as T2 in the following example:

Example 4

> T2: Samoja tehtävätyyppejä käytetään jatkuvasti samallalailla, toivoisin lisää käytännön tehtäviä.
> [Same task types are used all the time in the same way, I would like to see more practical tasks.

A4: kaipaisin lisää sellaisia käytännön harjoituksia esim. näytelmiä ryhmässä yms.
[I would want some more of those practical exercises e.g. plays in groups etc.]

There were also those who obviously hoped for changes but could not put into words what those changes could be exactly. Here the usefulness of Peacock's balanced teaching becomes clear: if the activities done during classes showed more versatility, students would find methods that work best for them and would consequently be able to suggest these methods for the teacher. However, finding suitable working and learning methods is not an easy task, especially if one does not know what options one has. Furthermore, teachers should aid students in this quest which is what is proposed should be done in the Finnish National Core Curriculum (2004:18) as well.

4.3 Pupils' experiences

In order to improve students' learning, Reid (1987:101) suggests that they should be encouraged to identify and develop their individual learning styles. Overall, the responses of the pupils show that while the teacher's instructions and the instructions of text book tasks are given through several senses (auditory, visual and tactile), the actual tasks of the English lessons are notably one-sided as explained above. In the following chapter, I will discuss questionnaire results of each learning style individually and the classroom tasks activating pupils of each style. I will begin by explaining shortly the characteristics of each learning style and continue by reporting pupils' responses.

4.3.1 Auditory learners

Auditory learners learn by listening; they remember best the things they have heard. Therefore, oral explanations, either quietly to themselves or to another pupil, discussions or quiet background-music should accompany written tasks. Furthermore, pupils with auditory learning style preference can be encouraged to, for example, record their own speech or teach vocabulary or grammar to other pupils or family members.

The general idea often is that pupils learn by listening to the teacher who spends the lesson by talking and possibly writing on the blackboard. This method of teaching is easy for the teacher to execute but only activates visual and auditory pupils. Furthermore, as the present study shows, these "traditional" learners comprise only less than one half of the whole class indicating that multi-sensory teaching is required. Out of the 23 pupils, nine had primary, and two pupils secondary, preference for the auditory learning style. In addition, although auditory tasks are often well

represented in language classes, many pupils reported that even though the teacher's instructions are usually oral and they listen to the textbook chapters, they do not think that their learning style is considered well enough. Similarly to other types of learners, also auditory pupils hoped to see more variation in tasks.

The responses of the auditory learners differed from all others in one interesting aspect: several pupils (see example 5:A7, A9 below) reported that they have difficulties in concentrating while studying at home and hope, therefore, that grammar and vocabulary would be practiced more at school.

Example 5

> A7: Opettajan pitäisi jankata asioita enemmän
>   [The teacher should repeat same things more.]

> A9: Tunnilla koska en kotona jaksa keskittyä.
>   [At school because I can't concentrate at home.]

When considering this wish from the point of view of the auditory learners, it becomes evident why they feel a need for change. Obviously, they benefit from the teacher-centred form of teaching, that is to say, the auditory aid that the teacher offers during classes. It was surprising how many auditory learners felt their learning style is not considered enough in teaching. For listening comprehension, for instance, auditory pupils, similarly to others, wanted more music, television and radio to be used as can be seen in the example below by two auditory pupils (A4 and A5):

Example 6

> A4: vähemmän kirjoittamista, enemmän oppimista!
>   [less writing, more learning!]

> A5: Pitäisi. Sanat vaan eteen ja kuuntelemaan erilaisia englanninkielisiä lauluja.
>   [Yes they (=teaching methods) should (be changed). Just give us the lyrics and let's listen to songs in English.]

Also in these examples it becomes evident that pupils wish for more variety in English tasks, music being one option. As one pupil said, using music would greatly "clarify many things". Auditory pupils also hoped that they could answer listening comprehension tasks orally instead of writing down their answers, which is the normal procedure. Auditory pupils, contrary to kinesthetic ones as described later, were very specific in their suggestions for improvements and seemed to be more determined to achieve changes. However, they were also the most inconsistent in their responses.

While they reported that the English lessons are variable enough, they also commented that they want more variation in tasks in different areas such as grammar and discussing textbook chapters. Furthermore, auditory pupils also expressed many concrete proposals for improvements, such as having more group work and listening comprehension tasks, along with a less noisy environment to achieve better learning conditions.

The first part of the questionnaire included statements about various classroom activities. The responses of the pupils are shown in Figure 3 below:

n=23

5 We use the computer
6b We have debates, discussions
7a We listen to music
7b We listen to television programmes
7c We listen to radio programmes
9a Teacher's instructions are oral
9c Teacher's instructions are both oral and written
10b Instructions for tasks are oral (the teacher explains them)
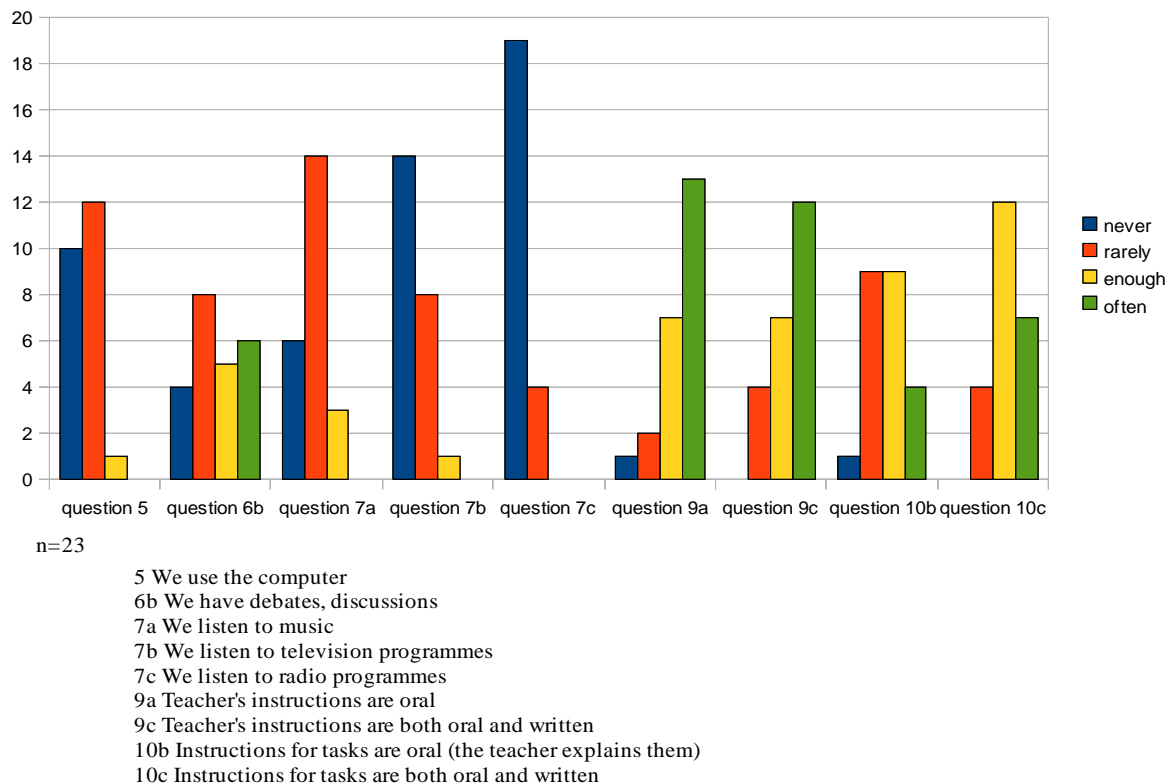10c Instructions for tasks are both oral and written

Figure 3: Auditory tasks done during English class

As for auditory tasks, I asked the pupils to evaluate how often they use the computer, have discussions or debates or listen to music, television programmes or radio. All of the above-mentioned tasks enable the activation of pupils with auditory learning style preference. As can be seen in Figure 3, pupils reported that they never or rarely listen to music (never 6/23, rarely 14/23), television programmes (never 14/23, rarely 8/23) or radio (never 19/23, rarely 4/23). This result is rather unexpected considering how easily these activities, which can be related to the pupils' own world and youth culture, can be arranged. I also enquired how the teacher and the textbook give instructions. As mentioned before, the pupils reported that the teacher's directions as well as explanations of tasks are often enough (often 13/23) oral.

4.3.2 Visual learners

pupils who learn through their eyes are called visual learners; they remember what they see, whether it is images or pieces of text. To improve their learning, they can write down oral instructions, underline the main points of a text or draw mind-maps or charts. Further, by providing visual aid, such as images, PowerPoint-presentations or using an overhead projector, the teacher can improve the success of visual learners in the classroom.

Unfortunately, the sample included a close to non-existing number of visual learners as only one pupil had primary preference for visual learning style, and thus generalisations of the situation in language classrooms cannot be drawn. However, six pupils had secondary preference for visual learning and one audio-visual learner. Therefore, there seems to be a certain need for visual aids as well. In addition, as the whole class reported on the frequency of various visual tasks done during English class, some careful conclusions can be made.

As described above, visual learning can be assisted by, for example, underlining important points, written tasks and instructions, different types of pictures, mind-maps and charts. To find out how theory is adapted to practice, the pupils were asked to assess how often activities such as these are used during English classes. The chart (Figure 4) below shows the distribution of the responses:
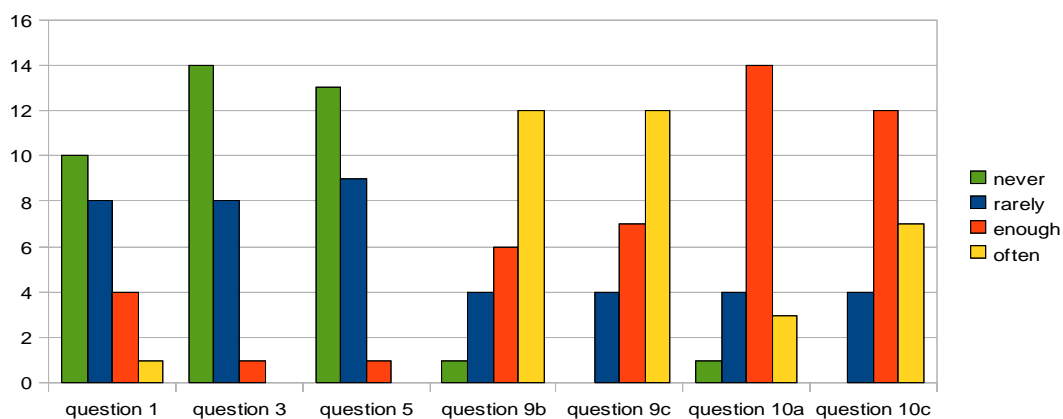
n=23

1 We underline main points from textbook chapters
3 We draw pictures, mindmaps or similar
5 We use the computer
9b Teacher's instructions are written
9c Teacher's instructions are both oral and written
10a Instructions for tasks are written
10c Instructions for tasks are both oral and written

Figure 4: Visual tasks done during English class

As can be seen, besides teacher (often 12/23) and task (enough 14/23) instructions being written, visual aids are rarely used. Many pupils reported that underlining was never done (10/23) and additional eight pupils said that it is rarely done, as were mind-maps (never 14/23, rarely 8/23). Furthermore, the use of technical devices such as computers and internet, where there is a huge amount of visual material available, were rarely utilised (never 10/23, rarely 12/23). Also a comment from the sole visual learner (V1) supports the use of computer:

Example 7

    V1: internetti koska pystyisi harjoitella tehtäviä helposti, tietokoneohjelmat että pystyisi tehdä tehtäviä
      ja kotitehtäviä
      [the Internet, so that I could practise tasks easily, computer programs so that I could do tasks and
      homework]

However, this learner was not the only one who hoped to have more visual material included in the teaching. Several tactile learners, as will be described in the following chapter, wanted more use of the traditional blackboard, computer and games. It is obvious that incorporating material activating more than one sense would be beneficial, as every learner would receive some amount of suitable input.

4.3.3 Tactile learners

Tactile learners acquire and process information by using their hands. Touching and working with different materials, making notes or merely holding a pen in one's hand may assist these learners. The pupils can be encouraged to make notes and incorporate different materials to, for example, different vocabulary themes (e.g. scented paper for vocabulary concerning food and soft paper for the names of various animals).

It was rather surprising that the second most preferred learning style was that of the hands-on preference, namely tactile style: seven pupils had it as their primary learning style and an additional four as their secondary preference. Out of the four groups, the tactile pupils were the ones who expressed most discontent concerning the classroom activities. Similarly to others, their suggestions mostly concerned increasing the variety of exercises but they also made wishes specifically concerning their own learning style as comments from T1 and T2 below demonstrate:

Example 8

    T1: Sellasta suullista keskustelua, ja olis joku teksti englanniks ja suomenkielisiä lauseita, jotka pitäs ettiä tekstistä.
        [Oral discussion and that there would be a text in English and Finnish sentences which should be found from the text.]

    T2: Muistiinpanoja, roolileikkejä yms. esim leikittäisiin kaupassa asiointia tai tien etsimistä
        [Notes, role-plays etc. for example we could play shopping or finding the way]

Practical exercises along with games and oral tasks such as discussions were common suggestions by the tactile learners in the research sample. Furthermore, pupils wanted to use the computer, radio and television programmes in the classes more often. Every exercise listed here was to be incorporated with writing notes or receiving a written translation of the exercises to make the tasks more "hands-on" experiences. Similarly to pupils with visual preference, tactile learners wanted to answer tasks by writing or drawing their answers. Further, some pupils even expressed a demand that more exercises from their textbook should be done or the teacher should provide them with material outside the book. Their wishes are hardly unexpected when looking at the frequency of tactile exercises in the English lessons in figure 5 below:
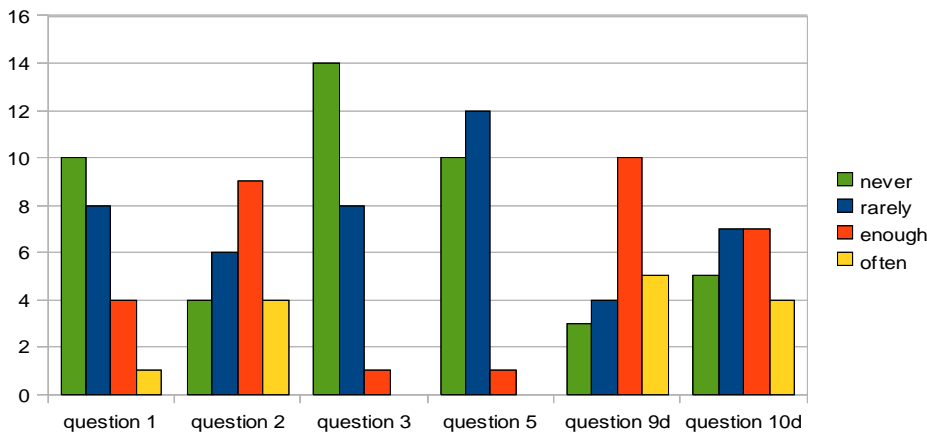
n=23

1 We underline the main points from the textbook chapters
2 We write notes
3 We draw pictures, mindmaps or similar
5 We use the computer
9d Pupils write down teacher's instructions
10d Pupils write down instructions for tasks

Figure 5: Tactual tasks done during English class

The results show clearly that tactile tasks are rare in the English classes. As it was explained earlier, teacher and task instructions are given both in writing and orally and pupils are often asked to write down the instructions in their notebooks. However, pupils never (10/23) or rarely (8/23) underline

important points from the textbook chapters. Furthermore, notes (never 4/23, rarely 6/23), mind-maps or pictures (never 14/23, rarely 8/23) or using the computer (never 6/23, rarely 11/23) are rare even though these simple, and easily available, tasks would not only activate tactile pupils but also the visual ones. Also the exercises suggested by the pupils themselves, such as using music or computer programmes, would provide aid, and at least highly welcomed change, to learning.

4.3.4 Kinesthetic learners

Learners who feel uncomfortable sitting in one place for a long period of time may have a kinesthetic learning style preference, that is, they learn through movement. This can be the most challenging learning style to incorporate in language teaching as there often is not enough time or even physical space in the classroom to move around. However, exercises such as role-plays, games and dramas may help kinesthetic learners. In addition, the pupils can be encouraged to move around while they study or keep short breaks to move around.

Reid (1987:97) reports that non-native learners tend to prefer learning through physical involvement which creates the assumption that those learning styles would be highly represented. However, similarly to the number of visual learners, also kinesthetic learning style was in clear minority. Only two pupils had primary preference and three pupils secondary preference for this whole body learning. Still, close to a quarter of the class consists of kinesthetic learners who need experiential tasks such as role-plays, board games or each-one-teach-one exercises and even this small number of responses gave an interesting view of the sensations of the kinesthetic learners. Therefore, in the following paragraphs I will discuss how the kinesthetic learning style is considered in the English classes and what the general feeling of the learners seems to be regarding the suitability of the English activities to their learning style.

Learning through movement often proves to be challenging to realise in the limited time of a single lesson. Therefore, needs of pupils with preference for the kinesthetic learning style are frequently left unnoticed. Whether it is the issue of learning vocabulary and grammar or practising listening comprehension, the overall atmosphere of the kinesthetic learners in this research sample showed clear signs of confusion and unawareness. To the question of whether English tasks are variable enough, the kinesthetic pupils answered unanimously that the classes show enough diversity in tasks. However, when asked about what could be done to improve their learning, the kinesthetic learners either gave general suggestions which had little to do with their learning style, or said they

do not know what to do (as pupil C1 below) or left the question entirely unanswered:

Example 10

> C1: Aika samalla tavalla, mutta en tiä miten korjata muuten
> [In a rather similar way, but I don't know how to fix this otherwise]

This ambiguity of the responses may be the result of lack of knowledge of different learning methods: the pupils have not been introduced various kinds of methods of learning and therefore, they do not know what possibilities there are to improve their learning. The reasons behind this phenomenon become more obvious when reviewing the responses concerning kinesthetic tasks. As figure 6 below demonstrates, these types of activities are rare in the English classes:
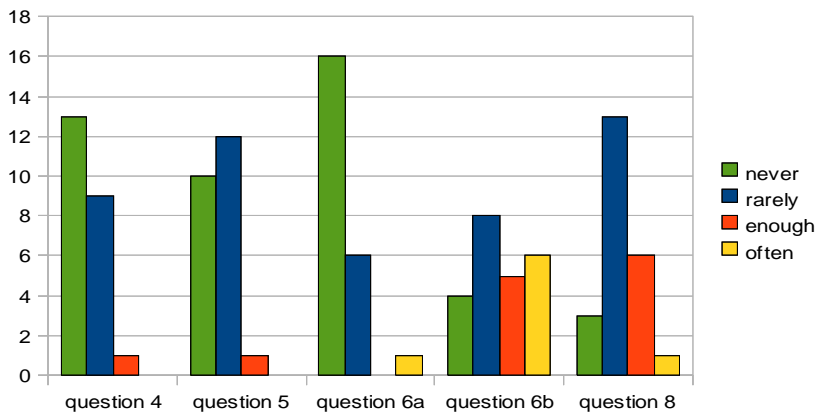
n=23

4 We play different types of board games
5 We use the computer
6a We prepare dramas
6b We have discussions, debates
8 Pupil acts as a teacher

Figure 6: Kinesthetic tasks done during English class

As can be seen, board games (never 13/23, rarely 9/23), the each-one-teach-one technique where a pupils acts as a teacher (never 3/23, rarely 13/23) or computer programmes (never 10/23, rarely 12/23) are either never or rarely realised in the English classes. These are the most obvious and possibly the easiest ways of incorporating kinesthetic experiences to learning. Also dramas or role-plays are rarely practised (never 16/23, rarely/23). Discussions and debates (enough 5/23, often 6/23), on the other hand, were rather frequent. Overall, the kinesthetic input is rather small-scale and could be experimented on more often to improve kinesthetic learning and the overall classroom atmosphere. However, it must be remembered that the sample was very small and any generalisations made here should, therefore, be taken with caution.

5 Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship between 9th grade pupils' learning styles and the activities used during English classes. To do this, I administered a two-part questionnaire for 23 pupils. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to discover whether the activities are varied enough, what kinds of activities are done during classes and what the pupils think should be done to improve their learning. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a learning style test and two open questions about the compatibility of learning styles and English activities and the pupils' ideas for improving the situation.

The main result of the present study, which clearly brought up the voice of the pupils, is that there is a need to change or at least to diversify English classes and the exercises used. As I have reported, half of the pupils in the research sample felt that their learning styles are considered well enough, whereas the other half felt that they were noted poorly or not at all. All in all, almost every pupil expressed a wish to increase the variety of activities. Especially the use of technical tools such as the Internet, music and television was frequently on top of their wish list.

However, the results and any generalisations made here should be taken with caution. The sample of the present study was small, 23 pupils, and there was only one visual learner in the group. Therefore the results give only a glimpse of the situation in the English classrooms. Furthermore, the questionnaire also had its limitations. There could have been more precise instructions for the open questions to ensure elaborated responses instead of short replies which were difficult to interpret. The four-scale system is also problematic as it forces the respondents, who might interpret the questions differently, to take a clear stand. Generalisations and more reliable conclusions can only be found through more extensive research with more participants. Furthermore, no comparison between boys and girls was made here, as it did not seem to be an issue in any previous studies either and this could be an interesting addition to further research. However, despite its limitations, the present study hopefully gives some ideas to teachers on how to improve their teaching and the learning enthusiasm and efficiency of their pupils.

Previous study on the area of learning styles has concentrated mostly on identifying pupils' learning styles whereas the present study aimed to discover how the learning styles are considered in teaching. As the focus of the present study was rather different from that of earlier research on the area of learning styles, it is difficult to make comparisons between them. Furthermore, earlier research has relied on self-reporting questionnaires when identifying pupils' learning styles.

However, it is also possible for the teacher to diagnose the learning styles of his or her pupils by actively observing the reactions of pupils to various teaching methods. Providing a variety of experiences of teaching helps pupils to become more aware of their personal working habits and develop them further. As demonstrated above, introducing and supporting individual learning styles and strategies, which is one of the goals set in the Finnish National Core Curriculum, has been successful in practice only to some extent. There is still room for improvement, and by listening to the pupils' wishes and combining those to the pedagogical goals set for example in NCC positive results can be achieved.

Although the advantages of adapting teaching to pupils' individual learning styles are significant, it must be remembered that learning styles are only one factor in the complex process of learning and cannot therefore be the only basis for designing teaching. A comfortable classroom and safe and supporting working environment create a solid base for learning to begin. However, learners' own activeness and willingness to work are essential. pupils cannot expect to receive information without having to process it first by themselves and consciously making an effort to learn. Some pupils in the research sample had fortunately realised this already as demonstrated in the following example:

Example 11
     T4: (oppisin paremmin jos) keskittyisin enemmän
          [(I would learn better if) I concentrated more]

Furthermore, successful learners constantly review their learning processes and, according to Chapelle and Roberts (1986, as cited by Nel 2008:53), are able to adapt their learning style to the situation at hand. Therefore, pupils should be active doers instead of passively waiting for the teacher to do all the learning for them. Each pupil has a unique style of acquiring and organising information and no style is usually better or more efficient than another. Still, the process of adapting one's learning style can be a difficult one and should be, therefore, guided by the teacher.

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Appendix

Vastaa kysymyksiin huolellisesti pitäen mielessä englannin tuntien kokemukset yläasteajalta. Mieti vastatessasi omia oppimis-ja opiskelutapojasi.

A) Kuinka usein seuraavia tehtäviä tehdään englannin tunnilla? Ympyröi kokemustasi vastaava numero.

**1 ei koskaan
2 harvoin
3 sopivasti
4 usein**

1. Alleviivataan yhdessä kappaleesta pääkohdat   1   2   3   4

2. Kirjoitetaan muistiinpanoja tunnilla käytävistä asioista   1   2   3   4

3. Piirretään kuvia, käsitekarttoja tms.   1   2   3   4

4. Pelataan erilaisia lautapelejä   1   2   3   4

5. Käytetään tietokonetta   1   2   3   4

6. Suullisia harjoituksia

    a) näytelmiä tai roolileikkejä   1   2   3   4

    b) väittelyjä, keskusteluja   1   2   3   4

    c) muuta? _____

7. Kuunnellaan

    a) musiikkia   1   2   3   4

    b) tv-ohjelmia   1   2   3   4

    c) radio-ohjelmia   1   2   3   4

    d) muuta? _____

8. Oppilas toimii opettajana (=opetetaan/selitetään sanoja, kielioppia, kappaleiden sisältöjä

    parille tai ryhmälle)   1   2   3   4

9. Opettajan antamat ohjeet

    a) ovat suullisia   1   2   3   4

    b) ovat kirjallisia (monisteella, taululla, kalvolla)   1   2   3   4

    c) ovat sekä suullisia että kirjallisia   1   2   3   4

    d) kirjoitetaan ylös (oppilas kirjoittaa)   1   2   3   4

10. Tehtävien ohjeet

    a) ovat vain kirjallisia   1   2   3   4

b) ovat vain suulliset (opettaja selostaa)	1	2	3	4
c) ovat sekä kirjallisia että suullisia	1	2	3	4
d) kirjoitetaan ylös (oppilas kirjoittaa)		1	2	3	4

B) Vastaa vielä seuraaviin kysymyksiin. Jatka lauseita annetuille viivoille haluamallasi tavalla.

1. Haluaisin että kielioppia ja sanastoa harjoteltaisiin enemmän_____

_____

_____

2. Haluaisin että kuuntelisimme enemmän _____

_____

ja että kuuntelutehtäviin saisi vastata (piirtäen, kirjoittaen suullisesti, muuten?) _____

_____

_____

3. Pitäisikö erilaisia havainnollistamiskeinoja (tv, radio, tietokoneohjelmat, internet) käyttää enemmän? Mitä apuvälineitä toivoisit englannin tunnille?

4. Ovatko englannin tunneilla käytetyt tehtävät mielestäsi monipuolisia? Mitä kaipaisit lisää?

5. Vaihdellaanko eri osa-alueilla käytettyjä tehtäviä vai käytetäänkö samoja tehtävätyyppejä jatkuvasti (kielioppia harjoitellaan tietyllä tavalla, kappaleet käsitellään aina samalla tavalla jne.)? Mitä pitäisi muuttaa?

OPPIMISTYYLIT
(mukailtu Kalajan ja Dufvan Kielten matkassa - opi oppimaan vieraita kieliä (2005)
oppimistyylitestistä)

**Seuraavassa testissä kysytään oppimiseesi liittyviä kysymyksiä. Mieti vastatessasi omia
opiskelu- ja oppimistapojasi: miten sinä opit parhaiten?**

I. Vastaa ympyröimällä kokemustasi vastaava numero tai kirjain.

1 ehdottomasti eri mieltä
2 jokseenkin eri mieltä
3 jokseenkin samaa mieltä
4 ehdottomasti samaa mieltä

1. Ymmärrän tehtävän paremmin, kun opettaja selittää ohjeet suullisesti   1 2 3 4

2. Opin paremmin, jos saan liikkua ja toimia luokassa   1 2 3 4

3. Opin paremmin, jos opettaja kirjoittaa asiat taululle   1 2 3 4

4. Opin paremmin, jos teen muistiinpanoja opittavista asioista   1 2 3 4

5. Opin paremmin jos saan tunnilla tehdä asioita kuuntelemisen tai lukemisen sijaan   1 2 3 4

6. Muistan tunnilla kuulemani asiat lukemiani asioita paremmin   1 2 3 4

7. Opin paremmin, jos teen opittavista asioista esimerkiksi käsitekartan (mind-map)   1 2 3 4

8. Ymmärrän tehtävän paremmin jos saan lukea ohjeet   1 2 3 4

9. Minusta on tunnilla mukavaa tehdä jotain muutakin kuin istua paikoillani   1 2 3 4

10. Pidän enemmän "perinteisestä" opetuksesta: opettaja puhuu, oppilaat kuuntelevat   1 2 3 4

11. Opin enemmän oppikirjaa lukemalla kuin opetusta kuuntelemalla   1 2 3 4

12. Muistan asiat paremmin, jos saan työstää jotain käsilläni   1 2 3 4

13. Liian värikkäät kuvat luokan seinillä häiritsevät keskittymistäni   1 2 3 4

14. Muistan parhaiten tunnilla kuulemani asiat   1 2 3 4

15. Opin sanastoa parhaiten kun kirjoitan sanoja itselleni ylös vihkoon   1 2 3 4

16. Läksyjä tehdessäni opettelen asiat esim. roolileikkien avulla   1 2 3 4

Merkkaa ympyröimäsi numerot ja laske pisteet yhteen:

Auditiivinen	Visuaalinen	Taktuaalinen	Kinesteettinen
1.	3.	4.	2.
6.	8.	7.	5.
10.	11.	12.	9.
14.	13.	15.	16.
Yht. _____	Yht. _____	Yht. _____	Yht. _____

Olet nyt testannut mikä oppimistyyli sopii sinulle parhaiten. Vastaa vielä

seuraaviin kysymyksiin.

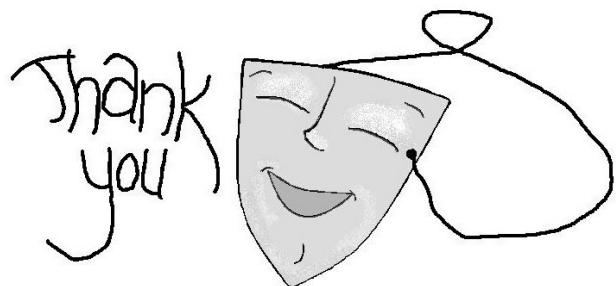1. Onko oppimistyyleistä puhuttu englannin tunnilla?

Kyllä ☐   Ei ☐

Entä jollakin muulla tunnilla?

☐Kyllä, millä_____   ☐Ei

2. Miten hyvin englannin tunnilla tehdyt tehtävät vastaavat oppimistyyliisi?

3. Mitä englannin tunnilla pitäisi tehdä, jotta oppisit paremmin?

Kiitos vastauksistasi!

Oppimistyylit
(mukaillen Kalajan ja Dufvan Kielten matkassa - opi oppimaan vieraita kieliä (2005))

Auditiivinen oppija oppii kuuntelemalla puhetta ja suullisia selityksiä. Etenkin uusien asioiden oppimista ja muistamista auttaa, jos oppija lukee itselleen ääneen tai hiljaa kuitenkin huulia liikuttaen. Vierasta kieltä opetellessa oppijan kannattaa kuunnella kasettinauhoja tai tarkkailla opettajan selostusta tai luokassa käytäviä keskusteluja. Oppija oppii ja muistaa paremmin, jos hän voi opettaa opeteltavan asian jollekin tai keskustella opettajan tai ystävän kanssa. Vieraan kielen sanastoa tai suurempia kokonaisuuksia opetellessa oppijan kannattaa selittää opiskelemansa asia itselleen ääneen tai nauhoittaa selitys kasetille ja kuunnella se sitten yhä uudestaan läpi. Oppijan kannattaa pyytää opettajalta suulliset ohjeet kirjallisten tueksi.

Taktuaalinen oppija oppii parhaiten käyttämällä käsiään. Hänelle sopii oppiminen, jossa tehdään laboratoriokokeita tai rakennetaan opittavasta asiasta malli. Myös erilaisten materiaalien koskettelu ja niiden kanssa työskentely auttavat oppilasta muistamaan. Vieraita kieliä opiskellessa oppijan kannattaa tehdä muistiinpanoja opittavasta asiasta: käden kirjoittamisliike auttaa muistamaan ja ymmärtämään asiat. Luokan kanssa tehtävät projektit (pari- tai ryhmätyönä) auttavat myös muistamista. Keskittymistä lukemiseen auttaa, jos oppija samalla esimerkiksi hypistelee "stressilelua".

Kinesteettinen oppija oppii parhaiten kokonaisvaltaisten kokemusten kautta eli olemalla koko vartalolla mukana oppimistilanteessa. Oppija muistaa opeteltavan asian parhaiten tekemällä: esimerkiksi osallistumalla tunneilla roolileikkeihin. Erilaisten ärsykkeiden yhdistely (esimerkiksi kasettinauhan kuuntelu ja siihen liittyvä toiminta, vaikkapa tanssi!) auttaa oppijaa ymmärtämään ja oppimaan uusia asioita. Vieraiden kielten sanastoa opetellessa oppijan kannattaa kokeilla samalla esimerkiksi kuntopyörän polkemista tai kävelyä; oppijan täytyy kuitenkin muistaa pitää taukoja, jolloin hän pääsee liikkumaan vapaasti.

Visuaalinen oppija oppii hyvin, kun hän näkee ja lukee oppikirjojen sanat tai sen mitä on kirjoitettu taululle, työkirjaan tai kalvoille. Hän muistaa ja ymmärtää asioita ja ohjeita paremmin, kun hän saa itse lukea ne. Hän ei kaipaa paljoakaan suullisia ohjeita tai selityksiä, sillä hän pystyy oppimaan asioita itsenäisesti suoraan kirjasta. Muistamista auttaa, jos oppija tekee muistiinpanoja opetuksen aikana ja kirjaa suulliset ohjeet ylös: näin hän voi myöhemmin palata asioihin ja lukea niitä itse. Hänen kannattaa alleviivata muistiinpanoja, tekstien pääkohtia ja kirjoittaa sivun reunoille omia huomioita, jotka auttavat muistamista. Oppijan kannattaa kokeilla esimerkiksi tiivistelmien, käsitekarttojen ja taulukkojen tekemistä oppikirjan kappaleista, sanastoryhmistä tai kielioppikokonaisuuksista. Ennen kuin alkaa lukemaan tekstiä, oppijan kannattaa silmäillä läpi mahdolliset kuvat, taulukot, kartat ja isot otsikot.