

# THE BALANCING ACT OF TEACHING:

A comparison between EFL teachers' views and a textbook analysis of the role of perceptual learning styles in Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks

Master's Thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Suomessa vieraan kielen opiskelu aloitetaan tavallisimmin kolmannella luokalla, ja suurimmalle osalle oppilaista tämä kieli on englanti. Tällöin oppilas alkaa rakentaa kuvaa sekä englannin kielestä että itsestään englannin kielen opiskelijana. Onnistumisen kokemukset ovat tässä vaiheessa tärkeitä, ja yksi tapa niiden mahdollistamiseen on oppilaan oppimistyyliä vastaava opetus. Kolmannen luokan englannin oppitunneille osallistuu kuitenkin heterogeeninen ryhmä erilaisia oppijoita, minkä vuoksi on käytettävä vaihtelevia opetusmenetelmiä. Tässä tutkimuksessa keskityttiin seuraaviin oppimistyyliihin: visuaalinen, audittiivinen, kinesteettinen, taktiilinen sekä ryhmässä ja yksin oppiminen. Näistä erityisesti kinesteettistä ja taktiilista tyyliä pidetään nuorten lasten oppimistyyleinä.</p> <p>Oppikirjojen tarjoama materiaali oli tässä tutkimuksessa olennaista, sillä viimeaikaisten tutkimusten perusteella selkeä enemmistö vieraan kielen opettajista Suomessa käyttää oppikirjoja opetuksessaan usein. Tämä tutkimus lähtee liikkeelle siitä, miten kattavasti oppikirjat tarjoavat materiaalia erilaisille oppijoille. Tärkeää oli myös selvittää opettajien asenteita oppimistyylien tukemista kohtaan. Suomessa vastaavanlaista tutkimusta ei ole tehty, mikä yhdessä oppikirjojen jatkuvan arvioinnin tarpeen kanssa antoi selkeän motivaation tutkimukselle. 63 kolmannen luokan englanninopettajaa vastasi kyselyyn, minkä lisäksi viisi oppikirjasarjaa analysoitiin tarkkojen kriteerien avulla.</p> <p>Kyselyn perusteella oppimistyylien tukemista pidettiin tärkeänä. Opettajilla oli lisäksi melko positiivinen kuva oppikirjojen tarjoamasta materiaalista edellä mainittujen kuuden oppimistyylin suhteen. Taktiilisia oppijoita tukevaa materiaalia oli opettajien mielestä kuitenkin selkeästi vähiten. Tekstikirja-analyysin perusteella kinesteettisiä, taktiilisia ja ryhmäoppijoita tukevaa materiaalia löytyi huomattavan paljon vähemmän kuin muuta materiaalia. Tämän tutkimuksen perusteella ainakin taktiilisia ja mahdollisesti kinesteettisiä oppijoita pitäisi tukea selkeästi nykyistä enemmän.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Published materials such as textbooks, teacher's guides and CDs are undeniably valuable assets for a teacher of English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL). In fact, textbooks often form the core of an EFL course in Finland as teachers tend to follow the textbooks when choosing texts, exercises and the order of new grammar items to be covered in class. Recent research by ToLP (n.d.) confirms this as a great majority of foreign language teachers in Finland have been found to rely heavily on textbooks in their teaching. In fact, in this particular study, 98 % of foreign language teachers responding were found to use textbooks often. The same percentage for exercise books was 95 % and 90 % for audio and picture material related to textbooks. These percentages seem to give an extremely unambiguous picture of the role of textbooks and exercise books (hereafter referred to only as textbooks) in the foreign language classroom in Finland. There are, of course, several reasons behind the popularity of textbooks as the primary teaching material. For instance, using a familiar textbook might help teachers reduce the amount of time spent planning lessons as the more teachers use certain textbooks, the easier it becomes to plan lessons around them. In other words, a teacher might develop a system of using some parts of a textbook that have proven to be useful while omitting parts that have not worked so well. Another reason could simply be tradition: teachers use textbooks because their teachers used textbooks. Textbooks might also be the primary teaching material in foreign language teacher training, setting an example for novice language teachers. Whatever the reason, at their best textbooks help plan well-functioning lessons that suit the teacher and offer something for every pupil in the classroom. Nevertheless, there are pros and cons to using textbooks in lesson planning and teaching and teachers should be aware of the possible limitations a specific textbook has. The limitations could be seen in any of the various factors that construct a specific foreign language textbook such as layout, storyline or the functionality of the exercises. The problem might also lie deeper in the designers' view of foreign language learning. All in all, language textbooks should go through constant evaluation for researchers, teaching material designers and, finally, teachers to better understand the meaning of textbooks as the primary teaching material in Finnish foreign language classrooms.

At the same time there is a great deal of research done in the field of foreign language teaching that helps us view and understand learning a foreign language in new ways (see e.g. Dunn et al. 1994; Peacock 2001; Tight 2010) and that research should

therefore be tied to the modern foreign language materials design and evaluation. The present study aims for that exact goal with a focus on research on perceptual learning styles (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual) and its implications for EFL teaching. This research is connected to EFL textbooks used in Finnish schools with the help of the teachers who use these books and also by analysing the textbooks with specific criteria. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers (N= 63) filled in a questionnaire about the role of textbooks and perceptual learning styles in the EFL classroom. The teachers were able to show strong or partial agreement or disagreement with the possibility of remaining neutral as well. The answers were analysed by counting the number and percentage of teachers of different opinion while at the same time examining the possible effects of background factors on the responses. The textbook analysis was conducted by counting the number of activities that were considered to support each perceptual learning style. In other words, the aim of the present study was to evaluate how well modern Finnish EFL textbooks acknowledge perceptual learning styles from the teachers' point of view as well as from the point of view of the textbook analysis.

The EFL textbooks in question were aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, that is to say pupils aged 8-10 years, as in Finland it is usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade where pupils first encounter formal learning of a foreign language. In 2009 for approximately 90 % of pupils that language was English (SUKOL n.d.). When those pupils enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade they start to build an image of themselves as EFL learners. This is where perceptual learning styles and language learning come to the picture: if those pupils are taught in a way that matches their learning styles, learning EFL might seem more pleasant and possibly less difficult. Consequently, they might have positive learning experiences and experiences of success which would lead to them constructing a more positive picture of English as well as of themselves as EFL learners. To sum up, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks play a significant role in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL classroom, influencing the teaching and therefore the learning experiences of the pupils, which might have wide-ranging consequences for the pupils' future experiences of and attitudes towards EFL learning. At this stage it is important to point out that the results of studies on the benefits of matching teaching to different learning styles are somewhat contradictory as not all studies indicate that pupils clearly benefit from teaching tailored to match their perceptual learning styles. These counter-arguments and indecisive results are discussed in later chapters.

The validity of different tools used to measure pupils' perceptual learning styles as well as the teachers' ability to recognize which pupil favours which style is not discussed in the present study for three major reasons. Firstly, the starting point of the pre-

sent study is the fact that learners are different and that in every EFL classroom there are learners with different perceptual learning styles, which means that those learners would most likely benefit from varied teaching that acknowledges different perceptual learning styles in a balanced way. Secondly, determining the learning styles of pupils is not the concern of an EFL textbook as its function is to offer the possibility for varied teaching that matches the learning styles of the pupils. Finally, the line has to be drawn somewhere and the vast amount of research on determining a pupil's perceptual learning style simply does not fit the scope of the present study. All in all, by narrowing the scope to perceptual learning styles in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks used in Finland from two viewpoints – including the EFL teachers and the textbook analysis – the present study aims to provide an extensive and thorough view on the significance of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks as the primary teaching material for learners with different perceptual learning styles.

The present study approaches the topic from several viewpoints. Chapter 2 discusses the literature on learning styles in general as well as on perceptual learning styles in more detail. Similarly, teaching material design will first be discussed generally before viewing the matter in regard to perceptual learning styles. The chapter finishes by giving several implications for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade foreign language classroom according to what is suggested directly in the literature covered in the present study as well as what could be justified in the light of that literature. In Chapter 3 the methods of data gathering and analysis are covered. This includes presenting the research questions along with the hypothesised results as well as the research participants. In this chapter a closer description of the questionnaire with its piloting and modifications is also given, after which the textbook analysis along with its specific criteria is introduced. Finally, the analysis methods used in the present study are explicated and justified. Chapter 4 focuses on presenting the results on the questionnaire's part. In addition, each textbook included in the present study is covered separately from the teachers' viewpoint. Similarly, Chapter 5 presents the results of the textbook analysis by covering each textbook at a time and finally giving an overall view on the role of perceptual learning styles in the textbooks. Chapter 6 contains a comparison between the teachers' responses and the results of the textbook analysis. Finally, Chapter 7 moves on to conclude the present study by giving an overall view on how textbooks support different perceptual learning styles in Finland at the moment according to the two sets of results presented in the study. Some implications for future research on the matter are also given.

## **2 PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

The present study starts off by defining the term ‘perceptual learning style’ as well as examining the possible effects of supporting perceptual learning and then moves on to discuss the implications these points have in the foreign language classroom. Finally, the significance of those implications for teaching material design is discussed in more detail along with a more general discussion of designing teaching material.

### **2.1 Theorising learning styles**

Before discussing the literature on learning styles more specifically, it is important to point out a few underlying notions of the present study. It should be emphasised that every learner is an individual and that a learner’s learning style is only one part of the whole that makes that learner an individual and somehow different from other learners. This individuality has a strong connection to the constructivist notion of learning which Kupias (2007: 100) is referring to when she states that knowledge cannot be transferred but rather, it is constructed by the learners themselves in their own individual ways. How learners understand new things is controlled by their previous experiences among other things, which gives processing new information a very individual nature. From this notion we move on to learning styles, that is to say one of the factors that contribute to individual learning.

There is certainly no lack of available definitions for learning styles in the field of learner differences. Learning styles have been viewed in numerous manners such as learning with the help of particular senses or perceptual learning styles, multiple intelligences or other individual differences among learners. In addition, learning styles are often closely connected to affect and learning strategies, which makes isolating and explicating the term even more challenging. Of course, it is clear that the parts of a learner’s behaviour or ways of thinking that are due to the learner’s learning style cannot be recognised or isolated. In addition, affect, learning strategies as well as various social variables such as class, race and gender have their roles to play. The possible effects of these other variables do not, however, change the underlying notion of the possible benefits of varied teaching discussed in Chapter 1. That is, in every classroom there are learners with distinct perceptual learning styles and a heterogeneous group of learners is

therefore likely to benefit from balanced teaching that supports different perceptual learner groups. In addition, sometimes it seems to be the case that definitions overlap which might make the literature on learning styles seemingly complex. As Ehrman et al. (2003: 314) point out, terms such as *learning style*, *cognitive style*, *personality type*, *sensory preference* and *modality* are often used interchangeably. As there are some differences in viewing learning styles as well as perceptual learning styles in the field of learner differences it is important to make the view of the present study as explicit as possible straight from the beginning.

Gardner's ground-breaking Theory of Multiple Intelligences, including intelligences such as the linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial and bodily-kinaesthetic, has without question affected several studies and later theories on learning styles. Gardner (1993: 63-64) states that certain kinds of input activate a certain intelligence and whether a specific kind of input activates an intelligence or not is determined by genetics. In addition, Gardner (1993: 8) argues that it is possible to combine these relatively independent multiple intelligences in a variety of ways. For the present study this has important implications even though multiple intelligences cannot be equated with perceptual learning styles and the actual process of looking for similarities between these two views is somewhat problematic. However, these two ways of viewing learning do have similar implications for teaching. Firstly, Gardner's statement implies that a certain kind of input is needed a certain intelligence to be activated. Consequently, when introducing new and difficult information in class different pupils might benefit from different kinds of input. This is one of the underlying notions of the present study and one that will be discussed in more detail during the upcoming chapters. Secondly, it would seem that according to Gardner, multiple intelligences are not simply learned but genetically determined. Thus there are bound to be individual differences in regard to learning even among pupils with similar educational backgrounds. The effects of variables such as class, gender or race have undoubtedly a role in learning but the existence of individual differences despite extrinsic factors seems to be difficult to deny. Nevertheless, Gardner (1993: 59) later adds that an incontestable list of human intelligences can never be composed. Similarly, it has to be remembered that the list of perceptual learning styles used in the present study offers only one possible view on the matter. This list has, however, been selected in the light of recent research on perceptual learning styles especially in regard to primary school pupils. Moreover, the underlying notion of any such list would still be the variety in which pupils learn and the ways in which those various ways of learning could be supported. Since Gardner there has been

a great deal of research on learning styles and other individual differences among learners and the present study presents and discusses a few of those relevant to the concept of perceptual learning styles.

Dunn et al. (1994: 2) state that having a learning style means that learners have ways of concentrating, processing and retaining information new and difficult for them. They also stress the individual nature of this interaction. Similarly, Ehrman et al. (2003: 314) state that we commonly use the term learning style to describe brain activity that is associated with acquiring and processing information. The key point in their definition is that learning styles refer to something that is preferred by the learner. Riazi and Riasati (2007: 98) continue along these lines as they state that some learners prefer sight and others hearing. Prashnig (2000: 17) views learning styles as ways of analysing and approaching information. She makes an important distinction between learning styles and learning strategies by defining learning styles as tendencies that determine the strategies learners use. In other words, learning strategies relate to conscious activities whereas learning styles involve spontaneity. Cohen (2003: 279) lists a considerable amount of learning styles including being visual, auditory and hands-on but only describes them in a very general manner as approaches to learning a language.

Oxford (2003: 273) defines learning styles similarly by stating that they are general patterns that in relation to learning offer broad direction. She continues, however, by pointing out how different learning styles can make one teaching method seem enjoyable to some learners and unappealing to others. Subsequently, it is once again stated that learning styles are a question of preference. In addition, Oxford mentions that there are three continuums for sensory, social and cognitive style dimensions and that every learner can be placed somewhere on these continuums. The sensory style dimension includes visual, auditory and hands-on with extroverted and introverted, that is to say group and individual, forming the social style dimensions. The cognitive style dimension includes preferences such as the detail-focused and holistic. There is clearly some disagreement or at least variety in how to classify learning styles but it seems that most of the time researchers are in fact discussing somewhat similar phenomena with interchangeable terms. All in all, at this stage of the present study it can be stated that learning styles, regardless of which theory is being discussed, are manners in which a learner prefers to acquire and process information as well as grounds for preferring one teaching method over the other. If learning styles can be viewed as preferred ways of learning it is only logical to assume that perceptual learning styles can therefore be seen as perceptual preferences of some sort. However, the research on perceptual learning styles is

not quite as unambiguous as this and it is therefore useful to understand what can be meant by the term as well as its relationship to other terms closely connected to it.

Dunn et al. (1994: 2) offer a useful starting point to the discussion of perceptual learning styles by stating that perceptual learning, or perceptual strength as they refer to it, is one of the elements of learning style. In other words, perceptual learning style and learning style are not equivalent terms but parts of the learning style hierarchy. The term 'perceptual strength' implies that it might not only be a question of preferences but possibly a question of more fundamental differences among learners. Whether perceptual learning styles are indeed determined by genetics to an extent or not, is, however, a question for future research to answer. Nevertheless, the idea of perceptual strength is an important one for the present study as it implies that the perceptual preferences pupils have are ways in which they learn best. That is, these styles are not preferred for some arbitrary reason but for the ways in which they support learning. Consequently, when pupils have the chance to learn in a way that supports their perceptual strengths and learning, it is easier for them to concentrate, process and retain new and difficult information. In practice, having a particular perceptual learning style can be seen in the examples of, for example, Riazi and Riasati (2007: 117) who define visual learners as learners who prefer to read and see words (including those that are being spoken) as well as look at pictures. Auditory learners are described as learners who prefer to converse, interact and listen.

The view of the present study is based on the classification used by Reid (1987) in her ground-breaking study on the learning style preferences of ESL students. In this study she described six learning style groups including visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinaesthetic (moving), tactile (touching), group and individual learners. There are two major reasons for choosing this classification as the basis of the present study. Firstly, research done by Reid in the field of learning styles has been acknowledged by several researchers (see e.g. Peacock) and is also the basis of numerous modern theories, some of which have already been discussed earlier in the chapter. The perceptual learning styles as used by Reid (1987) therefore cover most of the style dimensions mentioned in the research literature in the present study rather nicely. Secondly, this particular classification is very user-friendly as the six styles are rather unambiguous in relation to several other classifications in the field. Consequently, there is less room for misconceptions, which is an important feature in any qualitative study. As a result, when analysing the questionnaire responses of the EFL teachers the unambiguity of the terms increases the reliability of those responses.

At this stage it is useful to point out a few shared aspects in the definitions used in the field that, given the definition used by the present study, might cause confusion. Firstly, perceptual learning styles are often discussed as learning styles without the prefix perceptual in the literature. For instance, Kupias (2007: 108) states that learning styles include the visual, the auditory and the kinaesthetic styles. The reason for this might lie in the recent popularity of perceptual learning styles, which can be seen e.g. in the persistently growing amount of different measuring tools for perceptual learning styles – some of them being more based on research than others. Secondly, in definitions as the aforementioned the lack of either the tactile or kinaesthetic style or both is rather common. This might be due to several reasons as, for example, using either one of the terms kinaesthetic or tactile as an umbrella term to discuss both styles. However, in the present study it is made very clear that these terms cannot be used interchangeably.

## **2.2 The effects of supporting perceptual learning**

In the field of language learning and teaching there are numerous exponents of varied teaching. In the study presented by Tight (2010: 803, 820) mixed-modality teaching that included visual, auditory and tactile/kinaesthetic elements led to good results in vocabulary learning and retention. In fact, it was the most beneficial teaching style in the study, which might indicate that varied teaching reaches more pupils than favouring one perceptual learning style in teaching. Moreover, it has been found that the more versatile methods the learner uses the better learning results can be achieved (Griffiths 2008). In contrast, using e.g. mostly visual and auditory teaching methods does not offer pupils enough opportunities to learn in their preferred ways. The reasons behind unbalanced teaching methods such as this might relate to tradition, habit or unawareness, possibly even conflicting views on the significance of perceptual learning styles. Whatever the reasons behind favouring one or two learning styles are, studies as the aforementioned should not be ignored. Also, Tight's conclusion would further support the underlying notion of the present study in that learning the preferred perceptual learning style of every pupil in the classroom is not only time-consuming, problematic and possibly even impossible to do in a reliable way but also unnecessary if pupils do indeed benefit from a mixed-modality teaching that aims to support every perceptual learning style in a balanced way. Ehrman et al. (2003: 324) state that learners need to be provided with every



advantage and have the possibility to begin in a way that is relatively stress-free. They view learning in their preferred style the way to this stress-free start for learners. Consequently, this would mean enabling as many learners as possible to learn as much as possible. The stress-free start discussed by Ehrman et al. is surely one of the factors that help pupils create a positive image of themselves as EFL learners as well as EFL itself. The importance of building this positive image of EFL was already briefly mentioned in Chapter 1.

Motivation has a strong connection to the positive image and positive experiences of learning EFL and it has been connected to matching learning styles with teaching styles. Again, following the idea that mixed-modality teaching has the possibility to reach more learners, Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 123, 130) state that varied learning activities increase the possibility of at least some of those activities relating to the strengths and coping ability of the learners. In their opinion, this would make the activities more comfortable for the learners, which would in turn increase their motivation. They add that when it is possible for learners to learn in a way that best suits them they are able to experience what they are capable of, which affects their self-esteem in a positive manner. It is understandable that when learning happens as naturally as possible, according to the way a pupil prefers to learn, it causes less stress and frustration. Again, this point can be linked to the already mentioned ideas of positive learning experiences and a stress-free starting point for learning. Prashnig (2000: 29) feels that achieving something and being aware that it has not involved stress and frustration increases motivation among pupils. Whether 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupils are yet aware of the ways in which they learn is a different question. Nevertheless, the possibility of increasing motivation among pupils is increasingly important in the primary grades where learners first start learning a foreign language. To motivate students from early on is certainly something that EFL teachers should, and most likely want to, aim at. A useful reminder by Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 125) is that learning a language requires a great deal of revision and going through the same material, which might cause boredom. Thus, acknowledging different learning styles does not only facilitate learning but also prevents that boredom. By using mixed-modality teaching methods the teacher might therefore not only help different learners to learn in the way that best suits them but also any one learner to stay motivated even though that learner does not have multiple perceptual strengths. This aspect of mixed-modality learning is an interesting one and it is useful to keep in mind that one of the aims of mixed-modality teaching could be to offer variety for one single pupil along with the primary aim of trying to reach as many pupils in the classroom as possible.

Motivation is also mentioned by Haley (2001: 360) alongside academic achievement in relation to the benefits of varied teaching, more specifically teaching according to Gardner's MI theory.

On the flipside of achievement and motivation are failure and frustration. According to the findings by Peacock (2001: 15) these are caused when teaching styles do not match with learning styles. Similarly, Prashnig (2000: 23, 25) feels that traditional teaching emphasises certain skills that do not reach all pupils. Consequently, the pupils who do not learn in these ways do not learn how to learn, an important skill in our rapidly changing modern world. These pupils do not understand why they are not succeeding in their studies, which has a negative effect on their self-esteem and motivation. Prashnig goes as far as to say that these pupils will lose interest in studying for the rest of their lives. The present study does not want to commit itself on the matter but the aforementioned statement should not, however, be ignored. To what extent this mismatch affects pupils' lives and studies in the future is difficult to predict in a universal sense but there is still most likely some truth to Prashnig's statement. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that early experiences of school affect pupils' image of school, which can have consequences later in their studies. Thus, in regard to children starting to learn the first foreign language it is extremely important that their teachers are aware of the possible consequences of this sort of mismatch as the aim of every foreign language teacher teaching the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade should be to provide their pupils with a stress-free start in their foreign language studies as mentioned before. Some more rarely mentioned, yet noteworthy benefits of varied teaching include, for instance, the affective aspect mentioned by Haley (2001: 359). The results of a pilot study she presents in her article indicate that teachers who use varied teaching strategies might be viewed in a more positive light by their students. Teachers in the study felt that this could be partly due to the flexibility and choice that varied teaching offers for learners. Next, the possible effects of varied teaching on learning are examined more closely

### **2.3 Varied teaching as a way of enabling and reinforcing learning**

One of the highlighted aspects of varied teaching is that anyone can learn and those who are struggling with learning might not be comfortable with the ways they are expected to learn. Prashnig (2000: 29) is very confident of this as she states that people are capable of learning almost anything if they have the chance to do it in their preferred

style. It is not an entirely unproblematic idea but a noteworthy one and could at least work as a motivator for a teacher trying to reach all the pupils in the classroom by using varied teaching methods. This statement would perhaps require more research and development of both teaching material and methods among other things in order to strengthen it. Tight (2010: 823) discusses vocabulary learning and introduces a somewhat similar idea even if from a different perspective as he suggests that one perceptual learning style preference should not be seen as more advantageous as the other for learning L2 vocabulary. He feels, in the same way as Prashnig, that all learners can be successful if the conditions are suitable. There are, of course, other factors than learning styles in the classroom that affect learning. Thus supporting different perceptual learning styles is just one part of the goal of creating suitable conditions for every pupil in the classroom. Varied or mixed-modality teaching is, however, one of the ways of getting closer to that goal. In fact, Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 125) state that the Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) approach, according to which teaching should be varied and acknowledge learner diversity, is likely to reduce variation in proficiency by putting the different abilities among learners to use. This variation in proficiency is a familiar problem to language teachers and perhaps even more so to EFL teachers in Finland because of the vast amount of English learners are exposed to almost on a daily basis outside of school. Thus, there can be major differences in the amount of English input of pupils according to, for example, their hobbies and other leisure activities. This is sure to have an effect on proficiency levels, which increases the importance of providing every pupil the teaching that best suits their preferred learning styles in the classroom.

An important aspect of perceptual learning styles that frequently appears in the literature is that few learners prefer only one learning style. Kupias (2007: 110) points out that it is rare if not impossible that a learner strongly prefers only one learning style since usually there are either two styles equal in strength or one style that clearly does not belong to the learner's preferences. This might indicate that one learner is able to benefit from different teaching styles. If so, it might be possible to support and reinforce the learning of one pupil in several manners by using teaching styles that match different perceptual learning styles. In other words, varied teaching and the acknowledging of varied learning styles might not just help different learners perform better academically but strengthen the learning of one pupil in different ways. This is, of course, speculation but something that researchers, teaching material designers and teachers should be aware of and something that certainly requires more research in the future. Moreover, as mentioned before, variety in a teacher's teaching methods might help motivate single

pupils, which only increases the importance of researching the effects of varied teaching. In addition to preferring more than one learning style it is implied in the literature that it is possible for a learner to develop different ways of learning. Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 126), basing their views on Gardner's (1983, 1999) Multiple Intelligence Theory, encourage teachers to use varied teaching styles in order to support the development of those intelligences that are not originally preferred by particular learners.

Dunn et al. (1994: 17-18) introduce a somewhat thought-provoking point that should be considered when discussing the effects of match or mismatch between learning and teaching styles. According to them, most students who are not keeping up with the rest of the class prefer tactile or kinaesthetic learning, sometimes auditory learning but never visual. In other words, underachieving students would benefit more from teaching that supported these particular styles instead of the visual style which is very often emphasised in the traditional classroom. Dunn et al. (1994: 111-112) continue by pointing out the significance of match and mismatch among younger children. They state that even though touching, feeling, moving and experiencing are the ways in which young children learn, teachers tend to ignore these two learning styles, that is the kinaesthetic and the tactile style, and favour visual and auditory learning. Listening and reading are important skills in classrooms where teaching is done by telling or writing on a chalkboard and testing with auditory and visual methods. For this reason, students who succeed in their studies are often visual and auditory learners. Dunn et al. also bring out the worrying motivational problems among tactile and kinaesthetic learners: when these learners cannot keep up with the rest of the group their self-confidence suffers which leads to either withdrawal or resentment against school. In addition, even though some older students start combining tactile and visual styles or developing auditory strengths, many students cannot be supported by visual and auditory methods even at a later age. Dunn et al. (1994: 116) even offer some figures that further strengthen their views on the matter. Approximately 20 % of primary school children have a strong visual memory and with auditory memory that figure falls to approximately 12 %. This means that most primary school children do not belong to either of these groups. In fact, until primary school children start getting close to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, most of them do not have a strong auditory memory. This sort of memory is needed if we want a child to remember at least 75 % of what has been said during 40 or 50 minutes. Hypothetically this would mean that when a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teacher only uses visual and/or auditory teaching methods during a lesson, less than half of the class can remember three fourths of the lesson. Of course, this is only a theoretical example and, of course, these percentages do not apply

in every single EFL lesson. Nevertheless, the example gives some idea of a possible, frightening scenario where most pupils do not have the possibility to learn in the way they are expected to. Consequently, it might be well-advised for primary school teachers to keep these possible percentages in mind when choosing teaching material and planning lessons. This point will be revisited in the present chapter when discussing teaching material.

Not all researchers are unanimous in regard to the benefits of matching learning styles with teaching styles and materials. Kassaian (2007: 54) states that several researchers feel that harmony between a student's learning style and both the teacher's teaching style and teaching materials increases the student's chances of performing well and that it also helps the student feel confident and less anxious. However, Kassaian (2007: 58) also points out that research findings in the field are somewhat controversial, which is the basis of the study presented in the article. The findings of that study confirm this controversy in some regard as visual learners in the study benefited from a matching teaching style but auditory learners did not. According to Kassaian, one reason behind this controversy could have been that all learners in the study were used to a more visual teaching style and the familiarity of that teaching style helped them encode, retain and retrieve items better. In contrast, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupils who have only just started studying EFL are not likely to have a great deal of experience of learning English. This would eliminate the effects of familiarity of one teaching method over the other. That is, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade pupils have not yet got accustomed to teaching methods that favour the visual and auditory styles in regard to EFL and could therefore be argued to be able to benefit from teaching methods that best suit their perceptual learning styles without the risk of confusion over new and different teaching methods. In other words, it could be argued that the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders might be more open to varied or mixed-modality teaching and e.g. learners who are more kinaesthetic than visual or auditory might benefit from kinaesthetic methods without becoming confused over unfamiliar teaching methods. Moreover, perhaps learners who have got accustomed to a certain teaching style, e.g. visual or auditory, that does not match with the learners own learning styles would have more academic success if they had been exposed to varied teaching methods from early on.

These statements require a great deal of support from future research along with studying the possibility of getting accustomed to a teaching style in the first place. One important finding of the study presented by Kassaian (2007: 74) was that the effects of visual and aural teaching styles were not similar in relation to short- and long-term

memory. In fact, aurally encoded items were better retained from the long-term memory in comparison to visually encoded items in which memory loss was greater. Consequently, the study does show positive results for using varied teaching styles in some respect. In conclusion, in order for researchers to be able to prove the benefits of supporting perceptual learning styles a great deal more research is needed. Moreover, this research on learning and teaching styles should be connected to teaching materials as well as to other conditions affecting learning in classrooms such as lighting, furnishing and fixtures in order for researchers to be able to better determine the roles each of these factors play in learning. Research on perceptual learning styles has, however, already implied several benefits of matching learning styles with teaching styles that should not be ignored even if some of that research is somewhat contradictory. Next, some implications for bringing out these benefits in practice are presented.

#### **2.4 Practical implications for foreign language teaching**

Understanding the meaning of different perceptual learning styles has several practical implications for foreign language teaching. Some researchers offer rather detailed advice for foreign language teachers whereas some discuss the implications in a more general manner. The more general approach to teaching different learners will be discussed first followed by a discussion of the implications related to each perceptual learning style.

In the study presented by Andreou et al. (2008: 671) findings suggest that L2 teachers should not favour a specific learning style in their teaching but aim for a balanced teaching style that accommodates numerous learning styles. This should include using various manners of presenting new information and materials as well as presenting the learners with various activities. Similar findings are presented by Peacock (2001: 15) who argues that instead of matching teaching styles with learning styles in an EFL classroom, it might be more beneficial for teachers to present information in various ways and not focus on any one style as a class is usually heterogeneous in regard to perceptual learning styles. In other words, the view of the present study on teaching different learners is very similar to Peacock's as he does not argue against matching teaching styles with learning styles but offers a more general approach on how to acknowledge the various perceptual learning styles in a classroom; one that does not require defining the learning styles of every pupil in the classroom. This is precisely the mixed-modality

teaching method discussed earlier in the chapter. Peacock does, however, suggest that EFL teachers would benefit from being aware of their students' learning styles. This is most likely true, but brings out the question of the validity of various learning style instruments, which is not, as already mentioned, the focus of the present study. As mentioned earlier, learners rarely have only one preferred perceptual learning style. Moreover, those preferences can change as learners get older. In relation to these notions Dunn et al. (1994: 118) suggest that teachers first use material that support learning according to a learner's primary perceptual style and then strengthen that learning through the learner's secondary and tertiary styles. Even though this might seem to be a difficult task for a teacher of a large, heterogeneous classroom, it can be argued that varied teaching as its best can accomplish this exact goal when the same material is revised several times, favouring different perceptual learning styles. Of course, it is unlikely that during the process every pupil will receive teaching in the order that best suits them, that is, first according to their primary and later to their secondary and tertiary perceptual preferences but it does not mean that learners will not benefit from this sort of varied teaching. On the contrary, the present study sees the view of Dunn et al. as only adding to the potential benefits of varied teaching. Prashnig (2000: 83) offers a very useful and compact general approach to teaching that acknowledges different learning styles. This kind of teaching means giving visual, auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic instructions and drawing up lesson plans that ensure that, most of the time, pupils receive instruction that best suits their learning style but that their flexibility is also tested every now and then. Consequently, new things will be taught through all sensory channels and through concrete experience.

One shared opinion in the literature seems to be the need to increase awareness among material designers and teachers in regard to learning styles. Riazi and Riasati (2007: 98) believe that teachers should match their style and materials with the learners' learning styles in order to achieve the learning outcome that has been aimed for. They feel that more information about students' learning preferences should be available for teachers as well as material designers and syllabus planners since a language learning syllabus should not be a product of designers' own views and experiences but something that is more likely to please the students with different learning preferences. To illustrate this, one possible problem with e.g. EFL teaching material design is most likely the fact that even though there are a great deal of research results available, tradition is too strong an influence for designers to take advantage of this valuable new information. It does not mean that teaching material designers do not want to offer the best

possible material for pupils, rather they are not aware of all the possible factors that require changing in order for the material to better suit its target group. The question is if 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL material designers are able to include varying activities in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks when they are not aware of the possible benefits of mixed-modality teaching. In addition, Ehrman et al. (2003: 324) point out the importance of teachers seeing the connection between teaching and learning styles. They state that teachers vary in their teaching and learning styles and for that reason it might help for teachers to realise how their styles affect learners whose preferences differ from those of the teachers', even if they did not intend to interfere with their pupils' learning. Peacock (2001: 15-16) has a similar view on the topic as one of his suggestions for the EFL classroom is that teachers should recognise their own teaching styles and strive for balanced teaching. He is aware of the difficulty of offering something for every perceptual learning style during a single lesson and therefore suggests that, if possible, the EFL teacher should use two complementary instructional methods, such as visual and auditory. In addition, Peacock points out the importance of acknowledging different learning styles when planning and selecting materials for EFL classes. Next, the discussion will move on to a more detailed look at how these different styles, that is visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual learning, can be supported in a foreign language classroom.

#### **2.4.1 Visual learners**

To teach visual learners, who prefer learning by seeing, Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 127) suggest using material such as charts, pictures, posters and videos but also bring up more abstract ways to facilitate the learning of visual pupils as they point out that words have a strong connection to pictures. Some examples they give of taking advantage of this aspect are asking pupils to imagine an ideal house or, in fact, telling them "not to think of a pink pig" which is sure to bring an image of a pink pig to the pupils' minds. According to them, the latter example is a useful way of activating the visual-spatial intelligence according to the MIT approach but the example might as well be under the visual learning style as the important point here is learning by seeing. Peacock (2001: 15) has similar ideas on supporting visual EFL learners as he mentions using videos and handouts in the EFL classroom. He also encourages teachers to write important information on the board or OPH and asking students to take notes and read. Of course, the recent development in technology can also be seen in the variety of teaching aids:



equipment such as the SmartBoard and document cameras is more and more common in classrooms around Finland, which is great news especially for visual learners as more and more material can be shown relatively effortlessly to the whole class. Dunn et al. (1994: 43) recommend using materials such as films and books that have pictures. They also mention the use of visuals including transparencies and chalkboard. Another approach they suggest is stressing literature and the whole word.

Supporting visual learners is probably the least challenging task for teaching material designers as including pictures and charts in textbooks is almost an obvious phase in the production of any textbook. In fact, including pictures in textbooks is most likely thought to be a given rather than something aimed to support visual learners in particular. However, visual features can include other factors than pictures and charts. Textbook designers can support visual learners more specifically in various ways; highlighting important points in texts by using different colours or fonts, using picture wordlist especially in regard to difficult words or asking learners themselves to highlight, circle or underline certain parts in texts or exercises are only some of the possible ways of acknowledging visual learners in particular. Of course, books aimed at children do often contain pictures and it is therefore only natural to include them in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks as well. Perhaps the underlying notion, even if indirectly, is still the idea that children often respond well to pictures and are interested in looking at them along with reading a text. To sum up, visual learners are usually acknowledged extremely well in textbook design even if indirectly with the help of the high number of pictures that can be found in almost any textbook. Visual learners can, however, be supported more directly as well.

#### **2.4.2 Auditory learners**

According to Peacock (2001: 15), auditory EFL learners could benefit, for example, from discussions, lectures and oral explanations and instructions from the teacher. Dunn et al. (1994: 43) advise teachers to use tapes and, actually, allow book reports on tape. This method is probably an unfamiliar one for a great deal of primary school EFL teachers in Finland but given that there are enough resources and time to carry this sort of method out, it might facilitate the learning of pupils who struggle with writing and reading. Dunn et al. also suggest the use of discussion methods and stressing phonics among other things.

In the modern Finnish classroom auditory learners are most likely acknowledged in a number of ways. Listening to texts, repeating words or sentences after the teacher, singing, listening to songs and rhymes as well as talking to a partner are typical to a Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL lesson. In fact, these ways of learning are present in a majority of Finnish textbooks aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Of course, teachers have the last say in how to use a textbook regardless the possible exercises and audio available but at least it is relatively effortless for a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teacher in Finland to acknowledge auditory learners simply by following the textbooks. Also, some textbooks include a CD which can usually be found attached to the cover of the textbook. Some publishers even provide extra material online in order to support the textbooks. Consequently, pupils have the possibility to listen to texts, songs and other audio material presented in the textbook at home as well, which offers a nice opportunity for increasing the amount of input pupils are exposed to. Even though it is not as simple to add an auditory feature to an exercise as it is to add a visual one, auditory learners are sure to receive the support they need in the Finnish EFL classroom as well as outside the classroom in some cases. Moreover, this can be done simply with the help of published materials given that teachers decide to take advantage of the auditory material in a particular textbook. Again, whether textbook designers have auditory learners in mind in particular or not when adding these auditory features to a particular textbook cannot be said for sure. The important point is, however, that auditory learners receive the support they need. It can be argued that auditory features are an obvious part of any modern foreign language textbook in Finland as the communicative aspect of language receives more and more attention. Of course, speaking is a natural part of any language and it would therefore be unwise to ignore the auditory features. There are, however, differences in how and to what extent auditory learners have been taken into account in different 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks, which makes comparing the textbooks an important and interesting task.

### **2.4.3 Kinaesthetic learners**

The kinaesthetic learning style is too often ignored in the classroom. Arnold and Fonseca (2004: 128) feel that the need for movement that all of us have is completely overlooked in many classrooms, which reduces the potential value that movement has for maintaining attention. They suggest this to be changed by introducing for example role-play, drama and project work in the foreign language classroom. Similarly, Peacock

(2001: 15) suggests the use of exercises that include problem-solving and drama. Andreou et al. (2008: 671) point out that some items, such as phonology and semantics, should be taught by e.g. favouring concrete experience. The results of a closer study on teaching phonological awareness in primary grades by Rule et al. (2006: 200) support this idea as they indicate that kinaesthetic and tactile teaching methods might strengthen and add to phonological awareness material. Dunn et al. (1994: 24) offer a range of useful ideas for teaching kinaesthetic learners such as making it possible for children to complete tasks in different parts of the classroom, moving from one area to the next after completing a task. Movement should be incorporated into each lesson if possible for those who need it. However, Dunn et al. feel that the opportunity should be offered to kinaesthetic learners as a privilege that might be taken away if abused. As a result, teachers will be able to trust their students more. More specific examples of methods and materials for kinaesthetic learners from Dunn et al. (1994: 43) include materials that take the large muscles into consideration, such as large blocks or alphabet squares. Similarly to Arnold and Fonseca they suggest drama and role play. In addition, the possibility for concrete experiences such as cooking, building or walks are important. On a side note in regard to kinaesthetic learning, in some schools in Finland at-work exercises have sometimes been used to activate pupils and to prevent such things as bad posture and possible problems that can be caused by sitting in the same position for longer periods of time. In other words, physical activities have already been connected to ergonomics, which is a useful starting point also for kinaesthetic learning. However, they should also be connected to learning styles and learning itself, incorporating them into lessons more regularly in order for especially young learners to stay motivated and alert while at the same time providing the more kinaesthetic learners a chance to learn in a way that best suits them. Also, at-work exercises are usually something that specific teachers endorse and not something that is commonly accepted as a fixed part of any lesson. By having kinaesthetic activities in textbooks and other teaching materials teachers can both promote ergonomics and support kinaesthetic learning.

In a Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook kinaesthetic activities are usually related to group work such as polling classmates and moving around in the classroom while doing this or acting or playing in a small group. Individual kinaesthetic activities are present as well even if in smaller numbers, such as in work-outs that ask the pupils to perform movements such as jumping, running or squatting. It is still a somewhat disappointing fact, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, that kinaesthetic activities are rather rare in textbooks compared to, for example, visual and auditory ones. It is natural that the

number of kinaesthetic activities is lower than that of visual activities due to the relative easiness of adding a visual feature to an exercise. In fact, exercises with kinaesthetic activities do often include a visual aspect as polls usually include a chart and games such as board games almost always need a visual basis. Work-outs can also have images of children jumping or squatting or performing any other physical activity in order for pupils to better understand what is asked from them. Nevertheless, increasing the amount of kinaesthetic activities in textbooks should not be an impossible task. This point will be revisited when analysing and discussing the different 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks.

#### **2.4.4 Tactile learners**

Tactile learners are not often mentioned as a separate group in the literature. There are, however, some researchers that treat the tactile learning style as a distinct style. For instance, Peacock (2001: 15) would let tactile learners focus on hands-on work which could include giving them hard copies whenever possible. In regard to kinaesthetic and tactile learning Dunn et al. (1994: 112) remind teachers that even though materials for these types of learning are usually motivating, often game-like, students may view them as childish and embarrassing. For this reason, they stress the importance of children feeling positive about the materials being used. Even though Dunn et al. refer to kinaesthetic and tactile learning, it is a useful point to keep in mind when planning or choosing material for any kind of learning. According to Dunn et al. (1994: 43) tactile learners could benefit from materials such as puzzles and sandpaper letters or numerals as these materials are manipulative. They also mention allowing pupils to use, for example, the chalkboard, magnetic board or computer frequently. Another useful example would be to have the pupils trace letters and words.

In the modern classroom this could mean allowing the children to use new technology such as document cameras or a SmartBoard given that they are available in a particular school. Teaching aids such as the abovementioned, the SmartBoard especially, allow the combining of many of the suggestions given by Dunn et al. For instance, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers could have their pupils tracing words on the SmartBoard or solving puzzles on the document camera or SmartBoard. As everything on the SmartBoard can basically be done by touching, the device offers ideal opportunities for supporting tactile learners. As technology advances, there are most likely to be more and more options to

choose from when teaching EFL in a primary school. The possible implications modern technology has on the EFL classroom are beyond the scope of the present study, but taking advantage of this technology is an important reminder as new teaching aids are sure to offer something for learners with different learning styles. Moreover, hopefully these learner differences are acknowledged also in the future when planning new teaching aids. Nevertheless, whether the more modern teaching aids are available in a particular school or not, every teacher is sure to have access to materials that might aid tactile learners. For instance, fashioning sandpaper letters and numerals should not be a problem for any 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teacher. Dunn et al. (1994: 116) go on to add clay, fabrics, water and uncooked macaroni among other things on their list of materials that support tactile learning. In other words, the list of materials that might help tactual learners in an EFL classroom is virtually endless given that teachers have the time and energy to think of, develop and realise manipulative teaching materials for their pupils.

While 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers might have access to the material and technology needed to construct activities suitable for tactile learners, the extent to which textbooks are used requires tactile activities from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks as well. Moreover, if those textbooks are meant to serve as a core for an entire course as often seems to be the case with Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks this need to acknowledge different learners becomes even greater. However, tactile activities such as handling manipulative materials or tracing letters and words do not seem to have a traditional role in Finnish EFL textbooks. If including kinaesthetic activities in textbooks is somewhat challenging in comparison to adding visual or auditory ones, it would not be surprising if the number of tactile activities learning was even lower than that of kinaesthetic activities. It could be argued that supporting tactile learning requires more attention to the existence of different perceptual learning groups than supporting visual or auditory learning as for a rather long time the two groups have had a self-evident role in foreign language textbooks. Another reason for the lack of tactile activities in primary school textbooks could be the fact that tactile learners are not always separated from kinaesthetic learners. In addition, textbook designers might not view tactile learners as large a group among primary school pupils as they are according to some experts (see Prashnig 2000). Consequently, it could be argued that often when a tactile activity appears in a textbook, it is there because of a particular aim to support tactile learners and not by coincidence, which might be the case with some visual or auditory activities. Whatever the reason for the possible lack of tactile activities in Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks, there are most

likely differences between different textbooks in regard to acknowledging tactile learners. These possible differences are examined from different angles in Chapters 4 and 5.

#### **2.4.5 Group learners**

According to Peacock (2001: 15) group learners could benefit from exercises done in small groups. Moreover, he feels that students should be encouraged to meet outside the classroom. This is an interesting idea and should not be ignored by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers in Finland. Meeting other pupils outside class might come naturally to most pupils, which is something a teacher should take advantage of. Encouraging pupils to listen to music or watch a movie in English with a friend offers a stress-free way of getting accustomed to the language. The idea might be taken even further: making English music and movies homework for the weekend or possibly a longer holiday might seem like an effortless task for a beginner EFL learner. Still, it has the possibility to affect learning in several positive ways. Firstly, being exposed to English in real-life situations outside class might make pupils realise one of the many ways of using English, which might help motivate pupils. Secondly, being able to follow a song or watch a movie without reading every word in the Finnish subtitles offers pupils a chance to realise how much English they can already understand even though they have only begun studying the language. For example, understanding a joke that works best in English and cannot be translated directly into Finnish in the subtitles is sure to give a pupil successful experiences in EFL. Finally, being exposed to English is one of the most important aspects of learning the language. Watching an English movie or listening to an English song has the possibility of increasing the pupils' vocabularies among other things. These factors combined with the group factor – including a friend in the homework – are sure to help group learners outside class.

In EFL textbooks group learners have traditionally been taken into account by introducing group and pair work such as discussions with a partner or in small groups and the previously mentioned polls and games. The simple fact that there are a number of pupils in the classroom during an EFL lesson offers an ideal environment for group exercises. Organising support for group learners at home might set a challenge for most teachers, and for that reason it is a known custom for a great deal of EFL teachers to save some of the individual activities in the textbooks for homework. Of course, all of the exercises done in class should not consist of group activities as individual learners

should be acknowledged in the classroom as well. Nevertheless, if a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook has enough group work to offer, it would be logical to take advantage of it in class every once in a while. The amount of group activities in Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks varies most likely in much the same way as the amount of activities aimed at any other perceptual learning group, even if visual and auditory activities seem to have a stable place in the textbooks. Comparing the different textbook series is important for gathering information about how and to what extent group learners have been acknowledged in the modern textbooks. Whatever the result is, it could be argued that group activities have their place in primary school textbooks and textbook designers should have no trouble including them in any 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook.

#### **2.4.6 Individual learners**

For this purpose Peacock (2001: 15) suggests encouraging self-directed studying and giving attention to individuals. The latter suggestion is most likely something that EFL teachers in Finland and abroad as well would like to invest time and energy in but which is not always possible in a classroom full of learners with different needs. As already mentioned in relation to group learners, exercises outside class are a noteworthy idea for supporting individual learners as well when modified appropriately. Individual learners prefer working alone, which means that listening to a song, watching a movie or reading a book alone in English might also be considered as homework for pupils. These examples could be offered as a choice along with the group activities in order for pupils to be able to choose the alternative that best suits their preferences. Exercises outside the classroom can be done in a more relaxed manner without the pressure of the clock, teacher or other pupils, which is good news for those individual and group learners who feel stressed about participating in an EFL class. Individual activities should not, however, be ignored in class as an entire lesson dedicated to group work would not only be stressing for pupils who prefer working on their own but might also cause other problems such as high noise levels or problems concentrating when at no point of the lesson pupils are allowed to work quietly on their own. In fact, some teachers are known to use individual activities as a way of calming the class down and helping pupils to concentrate on studying especially when group or pair work has led to off-topic talk. There are traditionally a great number of individual activities in Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks which to choose from. The interesting question is if the relation between the

number of individual and group activities in the textbooks is balanced or if either one of the group has been given more attention by the textbook designers.

## **2.5 Perceptual learning styles in foreign language teaching materials**

Textbooks, that is to say textbook designers, have to carry out a great deal of tasks as they have to take several aspects of language learning and teaching into consideration. The research literature on learning is extremely vast with its different theories on learners and the ways in which they learn the best. In addition, textbook designers have their own experiences and views on learning. There are countless ways in which to apply these theories and views to designing foreign language textbooks with purposeful activities that make it possible for as many pupils as possible to learn as much as possible. Moreover, those textbooks should be appealing to teachers or other people who in charge of choosing the suitable textbook series for their schools. All in all, textbook designers face a great deal of demands when designing new material. However, as McGrath (2002: 41) puts it, textbooks are never perfect and the focus should be on finding the most suitable one. According to him, a textbook should be suitable for the students and the teacher as well as follow the official syllabuses. The present study cannot possibly discuss all of these demands as the sheer number of possible standpoints is too immense to be covered in one study. Thus, the scope is narrowed down to how textbooks can support learners with different perceptual learning styles and how well that is realised in actual textbooks.

So far we have come to the conclusion that varied teaching that supports learners with different perceptual learning styles can facilitate learning as well as motivate learners and that teaching that is not varied can lead to failure and frustration among learners. In other words, there are strong arguments for using varied teaching methods that support visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual learning. In addition, it has already been mentioned that language teachers in Finland rely heavily on textbooks in teaching. It is therefore very important to understand how textbooks take account of perceptual learning styles. The more general aspects of teaching material design are discussed first before moving on to examine what the literature on teaching material design has to say about the role of perceptual learning styles in textbooks. Teaching based on textbooks is, of course, a common phenomenon outside of Finland as well and several researchers and authors have commented on the extent to which teachers use



textbooks in class. McGrath (2002: 11-12) feels that basing teaching on a coursebook is understandable if the coursebook suits the needs of the class. He does still bring up the noteworthy fact that teachers decide how to use that certain coursebook; some parts are included in the lesson plans and some are omitted. The selection should be based on the ability to notice the needs of the learners and teachers should be able to do this even if they have not had a chance to directly affect the selection of the coursebook being used. McGrath adds that, in addition to including and omitting certain parts of the book, using a coursebook means the ability to extend, adapt and supplement if necessary. Consequently, even though the present study is concerned with the suitability of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks for different learners, it is important to remember that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers are the ones who decide how to use the books and to what extent. That is, the same EFL textbook might have highly different roles, practical applications and meanings for pupils in the hands of different EFL teachers. Thus it is extremely important to study the views of those teachers in relation to the textbooks' suitability for different learners. According to Rubdy (2003: 53), one of the important features of a textbook is whether the teacher has to compose a great deal of extra material to make it practicable or whether the book can be used on its own. Also, the person selecting the textbook should consider whether the student's copy of the book provides enough content for the course or should it be complemented with the attendant teaching aids. This is the exact point that the present study aims to clarify in the case of the Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks.

Perceptual learning styles can be acknowledged in several practical ways. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge all perceptual learning styles equally and not favour any one style. However, according to the experiences of Islam (2003: 262), coursebooks offered for beginners do not support kinaesthetic learning but favour auditory and visual learning. Islam agrees with several researchers in that one style should not be emphasised when teaching. Prashnig (2000: 157, 193) has a very similar view on perceptual learning styles in society. She feels that visual and auditory learning are the focus of the Western society even though most primary school pupils are kinaesthetic or tactile. In fact, as pointed out by Jaakkola (2000: 17) by the time children turn 9 years old, the ways in which they think and learn are still highly concrete and holistic. She refers to Piaget's theory of cognitive development according to which children this young are not yet at the formal operational stage. In addition, Viita-Leskelä (2000: 34) draws attention to the fact that several grammatical concepts are still unfamiliar to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in their mother tongue, which is something that foreign language teaching should take into consideration. As mentioned by other researchers above, action-based methods should be

favoured in the foreign language classroom. If we apply these views to Finnish schools, it can be said that according to research the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL pupils who are beginning to learn their first foreign language, English, are presumably primarily kinaesthetic or tactile and concrete in their thinking. Several researchers, however, suggest that textbooks aimed at children this age do not take these matters into consideration as well as they should. If this is indeed the case, primary school teachers who rely heavily on textbooks in their teaching are not accommodating all learners in regard to their cognitive developmental stage and perceptual learning styles. This is not the most pleasant starting point for the present study but textbook series can, of course, differ substantially which is why further analysis of specific textbooks is needed before commenting on the situation in Finland at the moment. Next, before moving on to presenting the teachers' views and the results of the textbook analysis, the focus will be on the methods used in gathering and analysing the data.

### **3 DATA AND METHODS**

Next, the process of studying the views of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers is discussed in more detail. Also, the textbook analysis along with its criteria is introduced. This is done by first taking a closer look at the research questions and then moving on to present the participants, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers and the EFL textbooks they use. Finally, the process of data collection is described in more detail including the piloting of the questionnaire, the criteria for the textbook analysis well as a description of the methods of analysis used to interpret the data collected with the help of the questionnaire and the separate evaluation.

#### **3.1 Research questions and hypotheses**

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How important is supporting different perceptual learning styles to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers?
2. To what extent do specific 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks support different perceptual learning styles according to the teachers?
3. To what extent do the textbooks support different perceptual learning styles based on the textbook analysis and do the results differ from the views of the teachers?

By answering these questions, the present study aims to give an extensive view on both the way in which 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers view different perceptual learning styles and their significance in the classroom as well as the current situation of the suitability of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbooks for learners with different perceptual learning styles.

Based on the research presented in Chapter 2, some hypotheses of the possible results can be made. Firstly, as the research on perceptual learning styles is vast and sometimes contradictory, it could be argued that teachers have diverse views on the importance of the matter. Moreover, teachers are as diverse as their pupils in that they have different educational backgrounds and experiences as well as different social backgrounds. Indeed, teachers have their own perceptual learning styles and preferences which might lead to different teaching styles. All in all, the importance of supporting different perceptual learning styles to a teacher is a result of several conscious and unconscious factors and cannot therefore be predicted in advance. However, the hypothesis of the present study is that it is a matter that teachers with their often busy schedules

cannot attend to as much as they would like to. Whether they feel that it is important to them or not is difficult to predict. Secondly, there are several factors that might affect the views of the teachers on the textbooks they are currently using. This could also be true in the case of a single textbook for several reasons such as the experience of the teacher or the familiarity of the textbook. Also, it has to be remembered that when using a questionnaire respondents might interpret any one question differently from what was intended. They might also answer according to what they feel is expected from them. These issues along with other possible problems related to using a questionnaire are discussed later in the chapter. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of the present study is that teachers are not going to find an even amount of material from the textbooks for all six different perceptual learning styles. Especially tactile and kinaesthetic learners are most likely to be ignored to some extent. This hypothesis can also be applied to the textbook analysis. Furthermore, the role of the material offered for visual and auditory learners is presumably dominant. Finally, there is most likely going to be some resemblance between the results of the textbook analysis and the views of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers in regard to the relatively low number of kinaesthetic and tactile exercises. The teachers might also share the idea of the hypothesised dominance of visual and auditory activities in the textbooks. Of course, as the results of the textbook analysis can only be hypothesised at this point, this cannot yet be said for sure. In addition, even if we find the hypothesis to be true, there is still the question of how great of a dominance we are looking at and whether the teachers see that dominance as great as the textbook analysis might point to.

### **3.2 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers and the textbooks they use**

There are several reasons for including EFL teachers in an evaluation of EFL textbooks. McGrath (2002: 20) views teachers as important links between textbooks and learners, and that they are able to work with the goals of that material in mind or, in fact, impair those goals. Consequently, he feels that the possible views of teachers on textbooks should not be ignored but researched actively. Another reason for studying the opinions of teachers in relation to textbook evaluation, also from McGrath (2002: 180-181) is the somewhat obvious fact that teachers are able to assess the suitability of a particular textbook continuously. Teachers plan and teach lessons based on textbooks and they are in a key position to observe the effects. Nevertheless, McGrath points out that usually this

sort of assessment is rather temporary and the interest teachers have in teaching materials is more restricted than this. Teachers are focused on learning outcomes and teaching materials are therefore seen as a tool in achieving these outcomes. McDonough and Shaw (2003: 201) believe that teachers have substantial knowledge on learners and this knowledge should therefore be connected to research on learning styles. The developments of this research are helping us to better understand learning styles and we should turn to teachers for support for the research. In conclusion, the present study sees teachers as a natural source of information on textbooks and their suitability for different learners. Of course, it has to be remembered that teachers are human and can never be completely objective because of their differing experiences and views. They are still in a key position in regard to evaluating textbooks in real-life use, which is an important addition to the textbook analysis evaluation which is bound to be more superficial than the experiences of teachers actually using the textbooks in lessons.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire that was first piloted. Next, the questionnaire along with its piloting is discussed before moving on to the criteria and methods of the textbook analysis.

#### **3.3.1 The questionnaire**

The questionnaire was divided into background questions and two sets of statements. In the background questions, experience in teaching in a primary school was considered as an important point. As McGrath (2002: 4) states, experienced teachers know what sort of responses to expect from the learners in relation to the published material being used in class. In addition, the familiarity of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook being used was taken into consideration in a similar comparison. This is because teachers who have spent several years using the same textbook might have a different view on the usability of that particular textbook than teachers who have used the same book for only a brief time. The explanation for this can be found from McGrath (2002: 4) when he points out that using a familiar coursebook gives teachers a better picture of which parts of that book to include and which to omit from lessons. It could be hypothesised that teachers

who have little experience of using a particular textbook in class might be more sensitive to the relatively low number of activities suitable for a particular perceptual learning style whereas more experienced teachers might have overcome that problem by using their own material or by modifying some of the material in the textbooks. Consequently, being able to use a textbook, even if in a somewhat modified form, might give the more experienced teacher the idea of a well working textbook even when that was not the case. On the other hand, experience might help teachers realise the lack of certain types of exercises or texts as the novelty has already worn off. All in all, the relationship between the teacher's familiarity with a certain textbook and the teacher's views on that textbook falls far from being self-explanatory, which makes it an interesting subject for research.

The first set of statements was composed to learn more about the importance of acknowledging perceptual learning styles in class – that is, to answer research question number one – and the second to examine to what extent the textbooks supported particular perceptual learning styles according to the teachers. In order to facilitate responding and reduce the time spent responding, all statements were Likert-scale type multiple choice statements on the scale of 1-5. For the same reason, the questionnaire was in electronic form, which did not only ease responding but also the analysis of the data. The answers of the teachers were automatically gathered into an Excel table, which facilitated the analysis of the answers a great deal and also reduced the possibility of miscalculation. The 1-5 scale (1 signalling strong disagreement and 5 signalling strong agreement) enabled the respondents to strongly disagree, strongly agree or something in between. There was also the possibility to have no opinion on a particular question, which hopefully reduced the amount of uncertainty in the responses as respondents were not required to respond when they were unsure about their response. Of course, there are some other problems related to a study concerning the views of the respondents. Firstly, respondents might answer according to possible hypothesised stereotypes about perceptual learning or according to what might put them in a more positive light. These stereotypes could include, for example, the assumption that textbooks do not offer material for tactile learners as the term 'tactile' itself might sound strange and unfamiliar. This is a problem even when the respondents remain anonymous as in the present study. Secondly, the answers might be affected by various factors such as the time of the day, the time available for responding, the mood of the respondent etc. These are, however, factors that cannot be predicted or affected and the data gathered with the help of a questionnaire is therefore always somewhat problematic. Nevertheless, by having a

higher number of respondents, that is a higher number of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers participating in the study, the possible negative effect of these variables was hopefully mitigated. The validity of the questionnaire was also improved by giving the teachers a short definition of each perceptual learning style along with a few examples of how the styles could be supported. It is still important to point out that the respondents might have had very differing views on perceptual learning styles and the data received from the questionnaire was necessarily based on those diverse views rather than normative criteria.

As already mentioned, the questionnaire included open-ended and multiple choice background questions as well as statements to which the teachers responded on a scale from 1 to 5. The reason for this can be found in Alanen (2011: 148) when she makes a difference between questionnaires including a number of open-ended questions analysed qualitatively and ones including multiple choice questions analysed quantitatively. She points out that already familiar research subjects can be examined with the help of precise statements or multiple choices. It could be argued that the six perceptual learning styles used in the present study were not new information to the respondents. Consequently, including precise multiple choice questions or statements in the questionnaire was the most reasonable way of approaching the topic. Open-ended questions would not have offered additional important data for the study as the main aim was to examine the teachers' views on specific points. Also, with 63 teachers responding to the questionnaire it would have been unnecessarily laborious to analyse their responses if open-ended questions had been used. Alanen (2011: 148) mentions that open-ended questions are more suitable for a low number of respondents or in case studies. However, the present study aimed to offer information on the situation in Finland by examining the opinions of a smaller population meant to represent the whole country to some extent and for this reason multiple choice questions or statements were the most suitable method for gathering information on the teachers' views. A possible problem with this method was the extent to which the statements actually measured the teachers' view on the importance of supporting diverse learners. A higher number of both statements and participants would have mitigated the problem but this would have been beyond the scope of the present study. The data was collected in September and November 2011 as teachers are well-known to have a busy schedule in the beginning of a new school year. Consequently, they were thought to be better available after the first month of school. Approximately 400 teachers from different parts of Finland were approached by email contain-

ing a link to the electronic questionnaire. As 63 teachers replied, the response rate was less than 20 %.

### **3.3.2 Piloting**

The piloting took place in August and September 2011 before sending the questionnaire to respondents as described earlier. The pilot questionnaire was in paper form as there were only 5 respondents who were also asked to comment on the pilot questionnaire when responding. This way they were able to write feedback on the margins of the pilot questionnaire and as it was also possible to discuss the feedback face to face, it was easier for the respondents to present their ideas while having the actual pilot questionnaire at hand. The respondents were all teacher students close to graduation. All of them had had some experience of teaching English and therefore experience of using textbooks. They had also been asked to measure the time spent responding so that it was possible to shorten that time by modifying the questionnaire when needed. The most important reason for choosing teacher students close to graduation as the pilot group was that they all had experience in questionnaires, both composing and responding, which was important when asking for feedback in regard to the ease of responding and the intelligibility of the questions and statements in the questionnaire. Of course, they were presumably not as familiar with the textbooks as more experienced English teachers but as the piloting was an important method for gathering information on the functionality of the questionnaire, the teacher students gave valuable and useful feedback which led to several important modifications. Firstly, it took slightly longer than 15 minutes for some of the teacher students to respond, which led to modifications to make the questionnaire shorter. Secondly, one statement was removed as it was overlapping with another statement. Finally, the instructions were clarified, which included stressing the notion of responding with a particular textbook in mind as well as having the examples of supporting each learning style in both the second and third part of the questionnaire. It is clear that with a low number of respondents it is not possible to generalise how any real-life respondent might experience the ease of responding to the questionnaire. Piloting does, however, give valuable extra information on these matters as even the help of a second opinion tends to open up the way in which one question can be interpreted. In addition, the possibility to discuss the possible faults of the pilot questionnaire face to



face with the respondents helped clear out any misunderstandings in regard to the feedback.

### **3.3.3 Criteria for the textbook analysis**

In the textbook analysis the focus was on the third research question. That is, the aim was to find out how sufficiently the six different perceptual learning styles had been acknowledged in the textbooks. The criteria had been partly composed with the help of the literature presented in Chapter 2 under the heading Practical implications for foreign language teaching. Of course, not all possible ways of supporting the different perceptual learning styles could be mentioned in the literature presented in the present study. Nevertheless, the literature gave important guidelines and principles for understanding the activity types that suit the different learners. It is, of course, important to remember that even the textbook analysis could not have been completely objective as even when given the proper guidelines and background information on perceptual learning styles there are bound to be slight differences in how different people view the matter. However, the aim was to provide an overall picture of each textbook series and report on any significance findings or differences among the different textbooks. Thus small differences between the textbooks did not affect the suitability of one textbook over the other. Also, by combining the results of the textbook analysis with the teachers' views the present study was able to give a thorough picture on how these textbooks were seen by someone examining the textbooks with the help of theories and literature as well as by people who use them on a day-to-day basis and are able to observe the concrete results continuously.

The exercises and texts in the textbooks were examined for visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual activities. This was done by counting the number of activities suitable for each type of learner. The textbook analysis was done without having read the answers of the teachers in order for the evaluation to stay as objective as possible. The most significant problem was whether a particular text or exercise could be estimated as suitable for a particular perceptual learner style. However, as mentioned before, the evaluation was based on the literature on the field and when such confusion occurred, the text or exercise in question was examined in the light of the literature. When, however, an item could be seen to support various types of perceptual learning styles, it was counted separately for each style. Consequently, the same item can be

found in several categories. This was expected as items in textbooks often combine material suitable for different learners. For example, in a single exercise, the pupil might be asked to look at a picture of a forest full of animals and then ask a friend where a certain animal is located. This particular exercise would support at least visual, auditory and group learning, possibly even tactile if the pupils were asked to place a finger on each animal mentioned. In conclusion, every text and exercise was looked at separately from the point of view of each learning styles. Thus the possibility of labelling an item to support only one perceptual learning style when actually it has the possibility to support several different styles was decreased.

Each textbook series examined included both a textbook and an exercise book, hereafter discussed separately instead of using the umbrella term 'textbook' for both types of book for the sake of clarity. Textbooks in the present study were analysed in a different manner than exercise books simply because of the nature of the two types of books. As all the exercise books in the present study were constructed in the same manner in that they included clearly defined exercises it was possible to simply count the number of exercises supporting particular perceptual learning styles. In contrast, textbooks were composed in somewhat different manners. That is, the chapters in the textbooks were not as clearly defined as the exercises in the exercise books. Moreover, it was not always clear when a particular text was meant to be listened or read aloud as some of the textbook series provided a CD for the pupil and some did not. Also, the teacher's CD might have included audio that was not included in the pupil's CD. The fact that the textbooks did not offer clear instructions on how to cover each chapter in the same way that the exercise books did in regard to the exercises – that is, whether a text should be read aloud or with a partner or simply listened to – it would not have been possible to categorise a text as an individual or group activity. For this reason it was more logical to analyse the textbooks by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, which included looking for significant differences between the textbooks and counting the more unique features of each textbook. For example, when a certain textbook included significantly more songs, picture vocabularies or board games than other textbooks, it was mentioned in the analysis along with the number of those activities that were considered unique to that textbook.

When examining the textbooks and exercise books from the point of view of a visual learner, items such as pictures, charts, big headlines, underlining and other ways to emphasise text as well as organisation of text were categorised as visual activities. Under the auditory category, items such as conversation, listening exercises, music and exer-

cises that include explaining a word to a friend were counted. Kinaesthetic activities included e.g. role play, acting, project work, concrete experiences such as cooking and games that require movement. When looking for material for tactile learners, items such as puzzles, hand-outs, exercises that required writing on the board, working on the computer and handling manipulative materials such as sandpaper or fabrics were categorised as tactile. Finally, texts and exercises that required team effort were categorised as group activities and ones that were meant to be done alone as individual activities. In regard to the exercise books, the number of each activity type in each exercise book was gathered into a table. These tables can be found in Chapter 5 where they are presented separately under each textbook series. Due to the nature of the textbooks information on them cannot be found in a table, which means that the textbooks are only presented verbally. One significant reason for this was the fact that textbooks usually contain less material than exercises books, which was definitely the case in the present study. Consequently, textbooks are also discussed more briefly than exercise books. The criteria for the analysis were not, of course, exhaustive and as mentioned before, no criteria could be as there are always differing views on the matter of what counts as supporting a particular perceptual learning style. However, as already mentioned, the present study aimed to discover significant differences between textbooks and exercise books.

### **3.4 Methods of analysis**

In the present study mostly quantitative but also qualitative methods were used to analyse the results. The teachers' responses were analysed quantitatively by first gathering all the responses to the statements in separate tables and then by cross-referencing the responses. In other words, the first stage included studying each statement separately with a focus on one variable at a time. Cross-referencing the responses included comparing two variables in the responses, which led to conclusions on the possible effects of one variable to another. For example, when a number of teachers responded similarly to a statement, the responses of the teachers were compared in other parts of the questionnaire as well for any other possible similarities that might have explained the reasons behind the responses. Presenting the results with the help of tables was useful for two reasons. Firstly, it gave a clear picture on the teachers' views on each statement as the focus was on the number of teachers responding in a specific way. According to Alanen (2011: 158) visual presentation of the results can be easily read, which relates to

this clarity of results. Secondly, as tables were used in presenting both sets of results, the teachers' views and the textbook analysis, relating results could be placed in a single table allowing the comparison between the two sets of results in one table instead of two separate graphs. This further facilitated the analysis and helped answer the third research question.

The textbooks were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Even though these two research methods are often thought to be extremes, according to Dörnyei (2007: 25) it is rather a question of a continuum. The texts in the textbook – including pictures – and the exercises of the exercise books were first analysed qualitatively as each text and exercise had to be analysed individually for precise information on how they could be used during a lesson and how they should therefore be categorised. This was done by examining the texts and exercises through the suggestions found in the background literature. The challenge, as Dörnyei (2007: 125) points out, in this type of qualitative analysis is the unsystematic nature of the process. Moreover, he feels that qualitative analysis can only reach a certain level in describing the data as the real-life situation is usually more complex. Of course, this problem could not be completely avoided in the present study. It was, however, mitigated by the clear criteria given for analysing the texts and exercises. The main analysis method used in the textbook analysis was, however, quantitative content analysis as the main aim was to count the number of certain types of texts. According to Dörnyei (2007: 245) the main difference between qualitative and quantitative content analysis are the predetermined categories used in the quantitative analysis, which clearly pointed to a quantitative analysis method in the present study.

Even though it was impossible to systematically categorise the texts and exercises, the total sum of each activity type found in them was the main concern of the textbook analysis. Dörnyei (2007: 270) mentions the term 'quantitizing' which is used to describe transforming qualitative data into quantitative. It could be argued that this was the case in the present study as the number of texts and exercises was not of importance. Instead, a single text or exercise could, and in most cases did, contain two or more activities which were then counted. Of course, the number of the activities was not obvious in the texts and exercises and it was therefore determined during the textbook analysis. In other words, the texts and exercises were transformed into the number of activities they contained. Consequently, the total sum of each activity type was given and presented in a table. A more qualitative method would not have been possible, e.g. the description of the textbooks with qualitative terms instead of specific numbers of activities. This was

because of the high number of texts and exercises in the six textbook series and the problems it would have presented when comparing the results with the teachers' views which were presented quantitatively. Instead, both sets of results were presented in tables and then further discussed. To answer the third research question the two sets of results were combined by including them in a single table for each textbook series.

## **4 PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLES AND TEXTBOOKS AS SEEN BY THE TEACHERS**

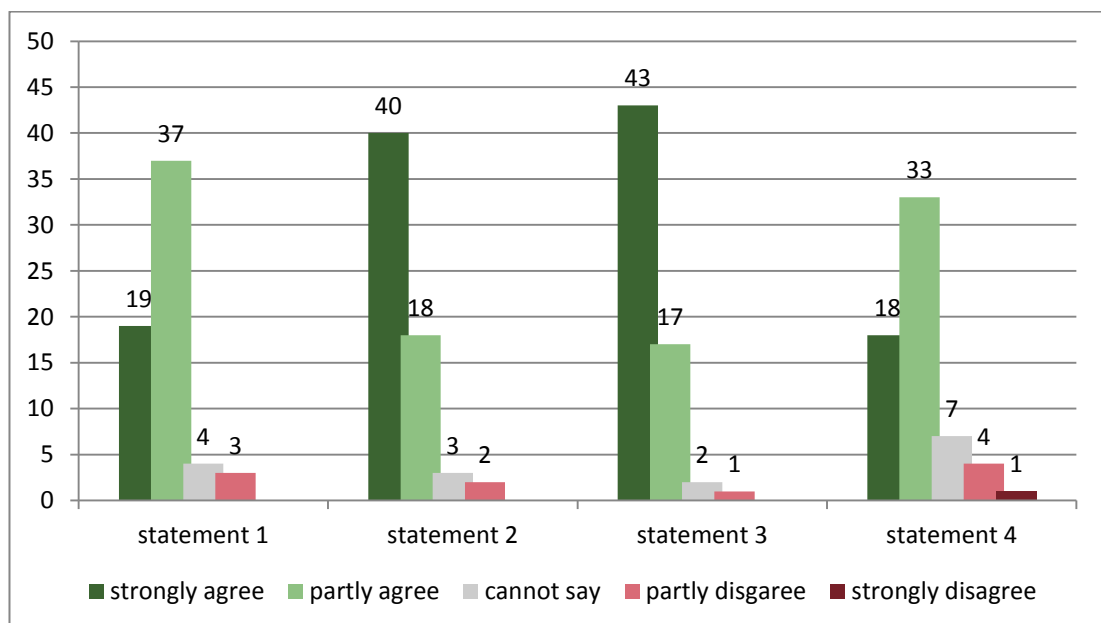
The present chapter introduces the responses of a total of 63 EFL teachers from different parts of Finland who filled in the questionnaire on perceptual learning styles and EFL textbooks. For practical reasons textbooks and exercise books were not separated in the questionnaire at the risk of teachers – consciously or unconsciously – focusing excessively on the exercise book. This was a possible scenario as exercise books are usually more explicit on the activities they include whereas textbooks depend more on the teachers' choices (see Chapter 5). However, covering textbooks and exercise books separately would have prolonged the questionnaire possibly causing fewer teachers to respond. Also, as textbooks usually follow a certain pattern they can be argued not to affect the results significantly whether included in the analysis or not (see Chapter 5). Moreover, textbooks usually contain considerably less material than exercise books reducing the significance of teachers focusing excessively on the exercise books. The present chapter begins with an introduction of the teachers' views on perceptual learning styles followed by a closer examination of the textbooks as seen by the same teachers. Finally, possible cross-references are examined by studying the relationship between the teachers' responses in different parts of the questionnaire. For the sake of clarity, in all the tables dark green is used to signal strong agreement and light green to signal partial agreement. Similarly, dark red is used for strong disagreement and a lighter red for partial disagreement. Neutral responses are represented with a neutral grey respectively. Next, the respondents' views are introduced by examining the significance of perceptual learning styles in their classrooms.

### **4.1 The significance of supporting perceptual learning styles**

The questionnaire included eight statements on the significance of perceptual learning styles in teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL, referred to as statements 1-8 in the present study. The position of perceptual learning styles in the teachers' classroom was important for the present study for two main reasons. Firstly, how teachers view perceptual learning styles could affect the way they see them in the textbooks and exercise books. For example, a teacher who does not acknowledge these styles in general might not find them in the books either. Secondly, how teachers view the styles might also affect the way

they use the books. In other words, teachers who consider perceptual learning styles to be an important part of learning might aim to support different perceptual learning styles by choosing varied activities from the textbook and exercise book in a way described in Chapter 2. Consequently, as these teachers have spent time looking for varied activities from the books they might have a different view on the matter. This is, of course, speculation but gives reason for examining the views of the teachers more thoroughly before analysing their responses in regard to the textbooks and exercise books themselves. The teachers were asked to respond to the statements on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with 1 showing strong disagreement and 5 showing strong agreement (see Chapter 3). First, responses to statements 1-4 are examined followed by the responses to statements 5-8. Statements 1-4 were the following: 1. I acknowledge all learning styles in my teaching, 2. I consider acknowledging different learning styles to be important, 3. I believe that by acknowledging different learning styles better learning results can be achieved and 4. I am ready to spent extra time for lesson planning in order to acknowledge learning styles. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2, strong or partial agreement with the first four statements was extremely high.

Table 1. Responses to statements 1-4.

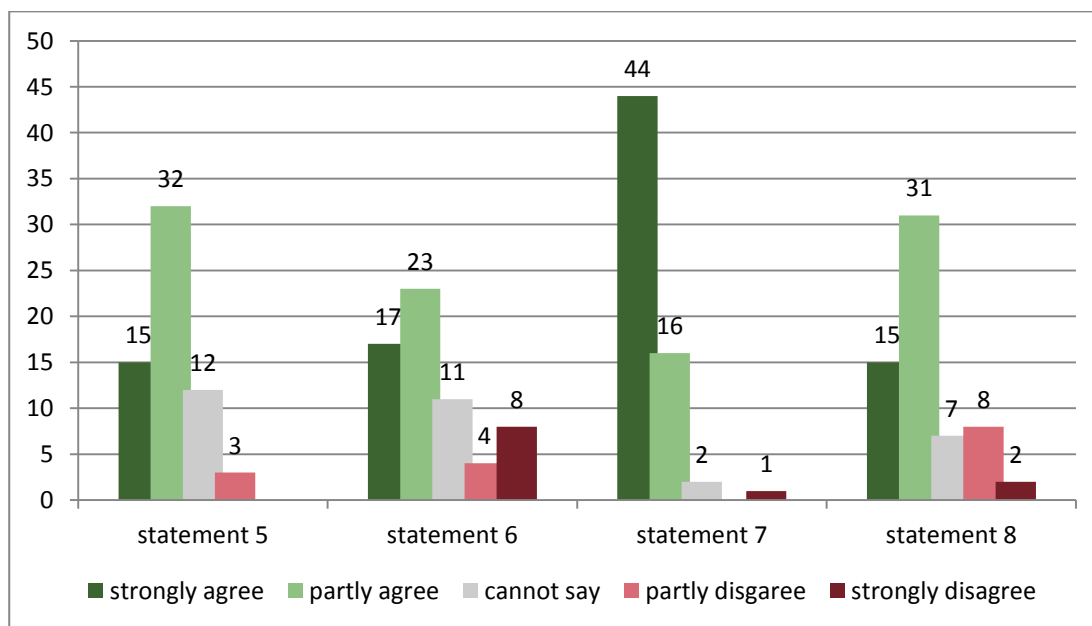


As can be seen from Table 1, only three teachers disagreed with statement 1 to some extent, none strongly. All in all, a total of 56 respondents or 89 % agreed with the statement strongly or partly. Consequently, most teachers felt they were taking all styles into consideration to some extent. Similarly, 40 respondents – approximately 63 % – considered acknowledging learning styles to be important. It was no surprise, then, that

most respondents also agreed to some extent with statement 3 as there were only three respondents who did not either strongly or partly agree with the statement. 43 respondents or 68 % agreed with statement 3 strongly and 17 or 29 % partly making the respondents extremely unanimous on the matter. From this it could be concluded that almost every teacher believed that by acknowledging different learning styles better learning results could be achieved. 18 respondents agreed strongly, 33 respondents agreed partly and only five respondents disagreed with statement 4. In other words, 81 % of the teachers were somewhat ready to spend extra time for lesson planning in order to acknowledge learning styles.

Statements 5-8 were the following: 5. I want to be sure that I acknowledge different learning styles variedly in my lessons, 6. I would like to apply information on learning styles to my teaching methods but there is not enough time for it, 7. I believe that supporting different learning styles makes learning more enjoyable and 8. I have enough information on learning styles in order to apply it in lessons. Although not as strong as with statements 1-4, agreement was still highly frequent.

Table 2. Responses to statements 5-8.



A total of 47 respondents – 76 % – agreed with statement 5 either completely or partly. It was therefore clear that most teachers wanted to be sure that they acknowledged different learning styles variedly to some extent. In regard to statement 6 there was a more noticeable variation as 23 respondents agreed partly and 17 respondents strongly while a total of 8 teachers disagreed strongly and 4 partly. In addition, a total of 11 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. All in all, 64 % of the respondents agreed and 19 %



disagreed to some extent making the teachers somewhat less unanimous. However, most teachers seemed to be strongly or partly of the opinion that even though they would like to apply information on learning styles to their teaching methods there was not enough time for it. Results such as these further strengthened the importance of examining the matter from varied viewpoints; as the respondents were otherwise relatively unanimous in regard to the first eight statements, variation such as this naturally raised an interest on the possible reasons behind any divergent opinions. Statement 7 was met with exceptionally strong agreement with a total of 44 respondents agreeing strongly and 16 partly. Thus altogether 95 % of the respondents agreed to some extent with the statement. Consequently, a clear majority believed that supporting different learning styles makes learning more enjoyable. In regard to statement 8 there was more variation, which was the case with statement 6 as well. It is useful to point out that both statements related to the information teachers have on learning styles. In fact, all other statements had a more straight connection to how the respondents experienced supporting different perceptual learner groups. Even though 31 respondents agreed partly and 15 strongly with statement 8, there were still 10 respondents who disagreed with the statement to some extent and seven respondents who remained neutral. In other words, 16 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement to some extent. However, 73 % of the respondents agreed with statement 8 to some extent, which pointed to most teachers feeling strongly or partly that they had enough information on learning styles in order to apply it in lessons.

## **4.2 Discussion**

Next the first research question – how important supporting different perceptual learning styles is to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers – is discussed further. Even though the number of respondents was relatively low in the scale of the whole country, the high level of agreement between the 63 teachers in the present study gave good reason for drawing suggestive conclusions, helping us to better understand the situation in Finland.

According to the teachers' responses, supporting different learners was considered to be important in general. Moreover, most teachers wanted to be sure that this was achieved during their EFL lessons. A majority was also willing to spend extra time in order to acknowledge the styles and the teachers who disagreed with the statement seemed to be experiencing a lack of time. Consequently, their unwillingness to spend

the extra time might have depended on their already busy schedules and not on a lack of interest. Again, for a clear majority the support and acknowledgment made learning more enjoyable and helped achieve better learning results. Even though most of the teachers felt they had enough information on perceptual learning styles, there was a majority who experienced it to be challenged by the lack of time. All in all, statements 1-8 gave valuable background information on how the teachers experienced supporting perceptual learning styles. Consequently, their responses in regard to the textbook series might be better understood.

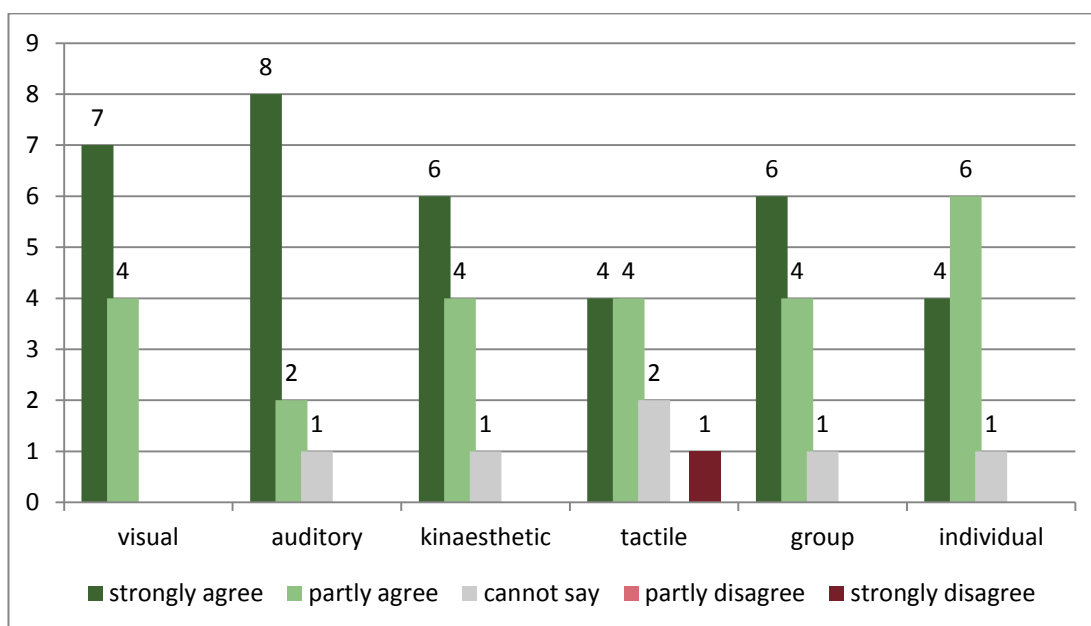
### **4.3 Textbooks and perceptual learning styles**

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, the recent ToLP project has led to the conclusion that a vast majority of foreign language teachers in Finland rely on textbooks and exercise books to a great extent. Even though the number of teachers in the present study was relatively low, their responses do further support this conclusion. According to their responses, out of the 63 EFL teachers in the present study 50 used the books during every lesson and 13 during most lessons. Consequently, it can be said that all teachers in the present study relied heavily on EFL textbooks and exercise books. In fact, when asked how often the teachers used material outside of the books, 19 teachers chose the alternative “very rarely” and 23 teachers “less frequently than every second lesson”. The teachers were able to respond on a scale from 1 to 5 – similarly to the first eight statements in the questionnaire – when stated that the textbook and exercise book they were currently using acknowledged visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group or individual learners well. Two teachers reported to be using a series not included in the present study. Consequently, the teachers’ responses in regard to this part of the questionnaire could not be used. Similarly, one teacher reported to be using two different series, which meant omitting the teacher’s responses from this section as it could not be said for sure which series the teacher had in mind when responding to the statements. Nevertheless, the responses of the remaining 60 teachers could be used. Next, their views on specific textbook series in regard to their suitability for different learners are presented. For a more exact description of each series see Chapter 5.

### 4.3.1 All Stars 3

From the 63 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 11 used *All Stars* during their lessons. In regard to this particular textbook series there was relatively little variety in the teachers' responses and disagreement with the statements was extremely infrequent as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Responses to the statement: "The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well." *All Stars 3*

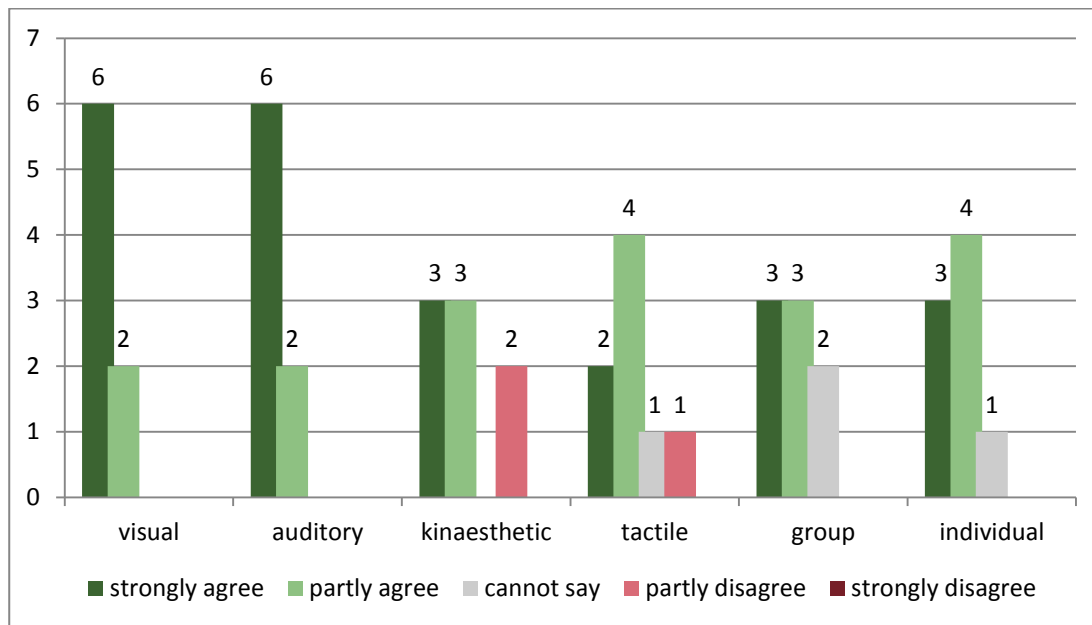


Most teachers agreed to some extent, often strongly, when stated that *All Stars* acknowledges all perceptual learner styles. Only one teacher disagreed and two were neutral in regard to tactile learners. Neutral responses could also be found in regard to auditory, kinaesthetic, group and individual learners but no more than one per learning style. Consequently, the teachers shared very similar views on this particular textbook series. In fact, all teachers agreed with the series acknowledging visual learners well.

### 4.3.2 Let's Go! 3

A total of eight 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers reported that they were using the textbook series *Let's Go!* The teachers were once again relatively unanimous even if the number of respondents in regard to this specific textbook series was rather low.

Table 4. Responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well.” *Let’s Go 3*

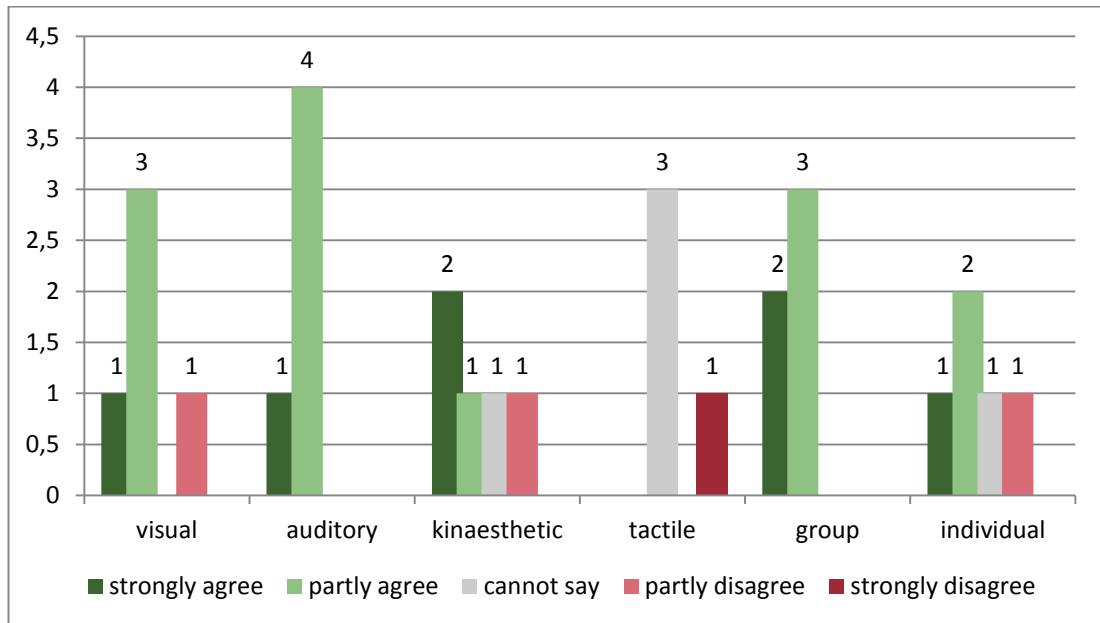


As can be seen in Table 4, all teachers agreed to some extent, most of them strongly, when stated that *Let’s Go!* acknowledges visual and auditory learners well. In fact, all other learner types were acknowledged rather well according to the teachers as only two respondents disagreed partly in regard to kinaesthetic learners and one in regard to tactile learners. None of the respondents showed strong disagreement in regard to any of the learner types.

### 4.3.3 What’s On? 3

The textbook series *What’s On?* was used by only five 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers in the present study making this series the most infrequent one. In addition, in one of the responses there was no rating given in regard to tactile learners. However, the teachers were rather unanimous in regard to most of the learner types.

Table 5. Responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well.” *What’s On? 3*



According to the responses, most teachers agreed either strongly or partly when stated that the series acknowledged visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, group and individual learners. In regard to tactile learners there was some variation as three teachers remained neutral and one disagreed strongly. There was also partial disagreement in regard to visual, kinaesthetic and individual learners even though most teachers did agree with the statements to some extent.

#### 4.3.4 Wow! 3

*Wow!* was clearly the most frequently used textbook series in the present study with a total of 25 users among the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers. The teachers were rather unanimous except on the series’ suitability for tactile learners. Again there were two blank responses in regard to kinaesthetic and individual learners, as can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well.” *Wow! 3*

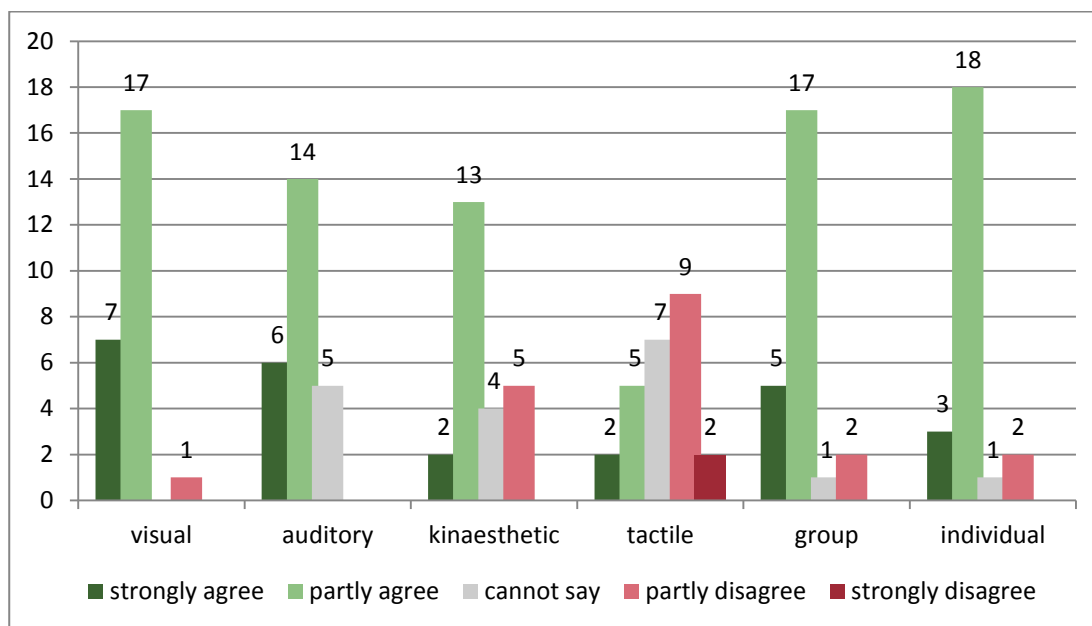
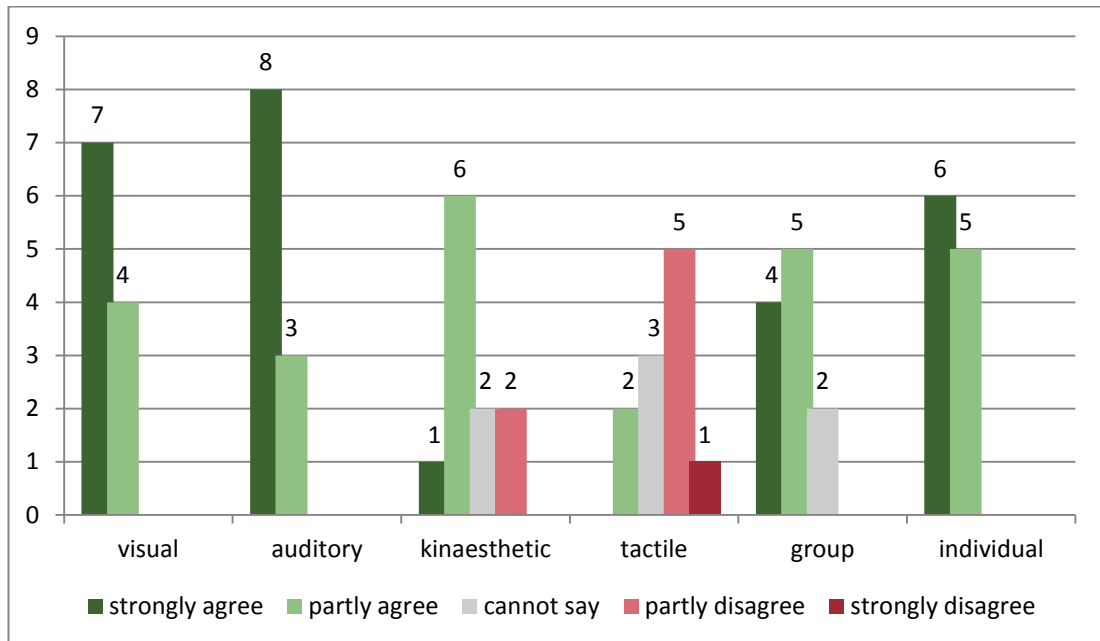


Table 6 shows how most teachers agreed to some extent on *Wow! 3* acknowledging visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, group and individual learners. According to their responses, tactile learners were not acknowledged well. In fact, more respondents disagreed than agreed with the statement as nine teachers disagreed partly and one strongly. A total of seven respondents were neutral on the matter and another seven teachers agreed with the statement to some extent.

#### 4.3.5 Yippee! 3

According to the responses, 11 teachers used *Yippee!* in teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL. This particular textbook series had the teachers agreeing mostly with some variance especially in regard to kinaesthetic and tactile learners.

Table 7. Responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well.” *Yippee! 3*



As Table 7 shows, visual, auditory and individual learners were rather well acknowledged in the series according to the teachers as they all agreed with these particular statements. Acknowledging group learners received similar responses with nine teachers agreeing with the statement to some extent and two remaining neutral. However, the teachers were not as unanimous in regard to kinaesthetic and tactile learners. Two teachers disagreed partly and two remained neutral on kinaesthetic learners and a total of five teachers disagreed partly and one strongly on tactile learners. In addition, three remained neutral on the matter. In other words, only two teachers agreed with the textbook series acknowledging tactile learners. Moreover, that agreement was only partial. The teachers’ views on supporting perceptual learning styles have now been examined along with the extent to which textbooks accomplish this particular goal according to them. Next, any significant cross-references in the teachers’ responses will be discussed for a better understanding of the variation seen in Tables 1-7.

#### 4.4 Cross-references and discussion

In the questionnaire there were several background questions including the respondent’s age, experience in teaching, experience in using a specific textbook series and frequency of use. The opinions and background information of the teachers were cross-referenced

whenever the opinions clearly differed. In practice this meant looking for statements with two or more respondents disagreeing as agreement was the most frequent response to almost every statement. Two or more respondents were required as only then was it possible to examine whether the respondents shared other views that might have explained the shared disagreement. First, the results of the cross-reference are introduced followed by conclusions on the possible effects of background factors.

The first statement “I acknowledge all learning styles in my teaching” had three teachers disagreeing partly. However, there were no other questions or statements in the questionnaire where all three would have had similar responses, which led to the conclusion that their responses to statement 1 did not directly relate to other parts of the questionnaire. Statement 4, “I am ready to spent extra time for lesson planning in order to acknowledge learning styles”, was the next one to receive additional attention as a total of five respondents disagreed with the statement to some extent. Four out of the five teachers used the same textbook series, Wow!. All of them agreed strongly on statement 6, “I would like to apply information on learning styles to my teaching methods but there is not enough time for it”. This was an interesting finding as both statements 4 and 6 related to the time available for planning and teaching. In fact, strong agreement with statement 6 could directly explain disagreement with statement 4. In other words, the five teachers might have disagreed with statement 4 because of the lack of time they were experiencing.

Statement 5, “I want to be sure that I acknowledge different learning styles variedly in my lessons”, had three teachers disagreeing partially. However, similarly to statement 1, the teachers did not seem to have shared opinions in regard to any other questions or statements. The next statement to be examined more thoroughly was statement 6; “I would like to apply information on learning styles to my teaching methods but there is not enough time for it”. This statement caused a high degree of variation in the teachers responses as a total of 12 teachers disagreed with the statement strongly or partly. In other words, these teachers felt they did have enough time for applying information on learning styles. Nearly all 12 teachers agreed to some extent with statements 1-5, 7 and 8 with only one teacher remaining neutral in regard to statement 5 and another in regard to statement 8. According to these responses, they all considered supporting perceptual learning to be important. Moreover, they felt they had enough information on perceptual learning. Thus it was not surprising that they all disagreed with statement 6 as these 12 teachers were clearly showing commitment to supporting different learners. Of course, it would have been possible for some of them to experience lack of time even if they felt



strongly on the matter. Their responses to other statements do, however, give the impression that these 12 teachers were willing to make time for supporting different learners.

The teachers' responses to statement 8, "I have enough information on learning styles in order to apply it in lessons", gave reason to study some of the teachers' responses more carefully as 10 teachers disagreed to some extent with the statement. There was only one other statement which had them responding similarly. In regard to statement 6, "I would like to apply information on learning styles to my teaching methods but there is not enough time for it", nine out of 10 teachers agreed to some extent while one teacher remained neutral. This was an important statement in regard to statement 8 as both related to information on learning styles. According to the responses and the connection between statements 6 and 8 it could be argued that supporting different learners was a source of stress to these teachers. They clearly experienced a lack of both time and information in regard to supporting perceptual learning styles, which led to the conclusion that these teachers felt they had insufficient resources for supporting different learners.

In addition to statements 1-8, some variation was presented in the statements related to the five textbook series. Instead of covering each textbook series separately the focus is on kinaesthetic and tactile learning for two main reasons. Firstly, the most significant disagreement related to these two learning styles throughout the questionnaire. Secondly, by adding all textbook series into the analysis of these two learning styles it was possible to have more material for the cross-reference making it more reliable. Consequently, it was possible to examine whether the teachers who disagreed with the statements "The textbook series I am using acknowledges kinaesthetic/tactile learners well" had similar backgrounds or shared any other views on perceptual learning styles.

A total of 11 teachers disagreed to some extent when stated that the textbook they were currently using supported kinaesthetic learners well. When cross-referencing this information to their other responses, it was discovered that all of them had been working as primary school teachers for 5-22 years. In other words, it could be argued that all of them were somewhat experienced teachers. 10 teachers out of the 11 agreed with statement 2, "I consider acknowledging different learning styles to be important" while one teacher disagreed partially. Similar results – 10 agreeing and one disagreeing – were found in regard to statement 6, "I would like to apply information on learning styles to my teaching methods but there is not enough time for it". All 11 teachers agreed with statement 3, "I believe that by acknowledging different learning styles better learning

results can be achieved” as well as statement 7, “I believe that supporting different learning styles makes learning more enjoyable”. An interesting point in the responses of these 11 teachers was that they all agreed with statements 2, 3 and 7. Of course, no definite conclusions can be drawn from a relatively low number of responses. Some suggestions can, however, be made on the connection between the responses of these 11 teachers. Kinaesthetic learning is often connected to games and the more exciting or fun exercises, which relates somewhat directly to statement 7, making learning more enjoyable. As these 11 teachers considered supporting diverse learners to be important in general as well as in making learning more enjoyable, they might have demanded more from the textbooks in regard to kinaesthetic learning. Moreover, the fact that they saw a connection between supporting diverse learners and learning results (statement 3), might have added to these demands. As already mentioned, no conclusions can be drawn based on the responses of 11 teachers and further research is needed to confirm these suggestions. This does not, however, mean that speculations such as these were somehow unnecessary or redundant as they might help us build a better picture of how the teachers view perceptual learning styles in published material.

Similar results were found in regard to tactile learning. Altogether 21 teachers out of the 63 – one third – disagreed either strongly or partly with the statement “The textbook series I am using acknowledges tactile learners well”. In addition, 16 teachers remained neutral on the matter even though a closer examination revealed that the responses of these 16 teachers had not been particularly neutral in regard to other statements. It was therefore clear that tactile learning was not acknowledged in the textbook series as well as other learning styles according to the teachers in the present study and that this was a matter that caused disagreement and confusion among them. 19 teachers out of the 21 agreed with statement 2, 20 with statement 3, 18 with statement 6 and 19 with statement 7. These results were remarkably similar to the ones found in regard to kinaesthetic learning and similar conclusions could therefore be drawn. Of course, it is useful to remember that agreement was frequent in general in the present study whereas disagreement was the more significant factor in drawing conclusions. All in all, the results clearly point to kinaesthetic and tactile learning being the least supported styles according to the teachers, tactile even more so than kinaesthetic. Other conclusions need further research.

## 5 TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

The textbook analysis included altogether five different textbook series. Next, each series will be presented separately by giving an overall picture of the amount of suitable material for each perceptual learning style. As mentioned earlier, textbooks and exercise books are presented separately rather than under the umbrella term ‘textbook’ for the sake of clarity. The exercise books are given far more attention than the textbooks for the simple reason that they had a great deal more material for analysis. Again it is important to emphasise that these figures cannot and therefore are not meant to be in any way exhaustive or unchallengeable for several reasons. Consequently, even though each activity was examined individually with great care at the analysis phase, no exact figures are given for a few reasons. Firstly, the textbook analysis is not based on actual teaching experiences. For this reason some of the aspects in the books might have gone missed. Secondly, what constitutes as supporting a particular perceptual learning style is neither uncomplicated nor self-explanatory. Finally, the literature on which the evaluation is based on is not unambiguous and there is always the risk of misinterpretation. Also, not all research on perceptual learning styles is unanimous, which makes the analysis necessarily somewhat ambiguous. These problems are rather impossible to untangle, which will most likely remain an issue for as long as textbooks and exercise books are analysed. However, as already mentioned, the classification used in the present study was rather intelligible, which helped mitigate the problem of ambiguity. Each part of a book was examined from the perspective of all six perceptual learning styles, allowing a better understanding of the ways in which any part could support learning. This method became increasingly useful during the analysis as several items clearly supported one or two styles at first sight, which could have led to disregarding other possible aspects of these items. Fortunately there were only very few items that could not be categorised with confidence. Moreover, it was usually the items visual features that caused confusion. As both textbooks and exercise books in the present study were highly visual regardless of these few items, this slight confusion did not affect the results significantly. In addition, the first textbook series to be analysed, *What’s On?*, was evaluated twice by the same person repeatedly in order to test the reliability of the criteria. The results of the two separate analyses did not differ to the extent that it would have affected the results. Thus it can be said that, especially when significant differences in the figures are visible, the results presented below can offer important, reliable

information for both material designers and teachers using the material. Next, each textbook series is presented separately in alphabetical order.

## **5.1 All Stars 3**

*All Stars* is an EFL textbook series published by Otava. All Stars 3 analysed below is aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and includes the textbook *Reader* and the exercise book *Activity Book*.


### **5.1.1 Reader**

*Reader* followed the same principles as other textbooks presented in the present study in that it could be said to support visual and auditory learners solely because of the nature of textbooks. Texts were supported by pictures and in class they are most likely listened to or even read aloud. For this reason, *Reader*, as well as other textbooks in the present study, could be said to support visual and auditory learners. Also, there were a few songs to further support auditory learners in particular. In addition to visual and auditory learners, *Reader* did not offer a great deal of activities for different learning styles. There were two board games in the textbook that need to be mentioned here for they both contained activities that could be seen to support visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile and group learners, which made these games extremely varied. In the squares of both board games there were instructions such as “Draw a banana on the board” or “Run to the door”, which combined several ways of supporting the different perceptual learning styles (see Appendix II). Nevertheless, there were no additional activities that could be said to support any of the perceptual learning styles in particular. Of course, an exercise book might have been designed to offer more variation to support the related textbook. This makes it important to examine both the textbook and exercise book when analysing the extent to which a particular textbook series supports different learners. All in all, *Reader* was strongly visual and auditory with a few kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities.












### 5.1.2 Activity Book



*All Stars 3 Activity Book* was a somewhat traditional exercise book with exercises that supported the texts of the related textbook. The book was highly visual with a great number of pictures and other visual features. The number of auditory activities was relatively lower. When analysing the book, auditory activities could be recognised by looking for a specific CD symbol next to the exercise number (see Example 1). Other signs for auditory activities were words such as ‘explain’, ‘tell your partner’, ‘interview’ and ‘read to your partner’. Auditory activities in this particular book – as well in other exercise books in the present study – were not difficult to recognise as most of the time the instructions for an exercise clearly signalled whether the exercise included auditory activities. *Activity Book* also offered the pupils a CD attached to the back cover of the book allowing them to listen to the chapters in *Reader* as well as to the related picture wordlists in *Activity Book*. Example 1 shows one of these wordlists.


Example 1. A picture wordlist in *All Stars 3 Activity Book*. 108


 **1** Kuuntele ja toista kuvasanaston sanat.


**Pets**


<input type="checkbox"/>  a parrot [ˈpærət]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a budgie [ˈbʊdʒi]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a cat [kæt]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a hamster [ˈhæmstə]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a goldfish [ˈgəʊldfɪʃ]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a tortoise [ˈtɔːtəʊs]
<input type="checkbox"/>  a rat [ræt]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a dog [dɒg]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a rabbit [ˈræbɪt]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a guinea pig [ˈɡiːni piɡ]	<input type="checkbox"/>  a spider [ˈspaɪdə]	

 Are you a hamster?  


No, I'm not.  


Is she a goldfish?  


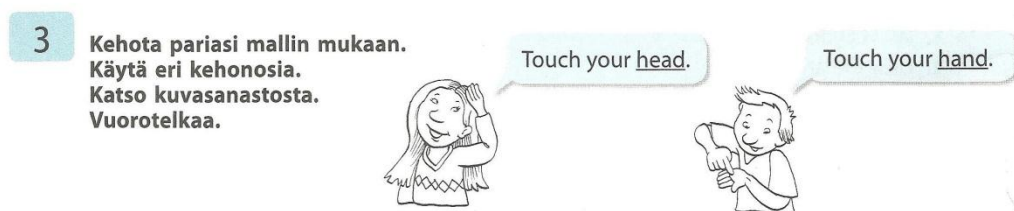
No, she isn't.  




In fact, any form of talking or listening such as explaining, repeating or interviewing could be seen to support auditory learners, which made recognising these activities relatively mechanic in comparison to kinaesthetic and tactile activities.

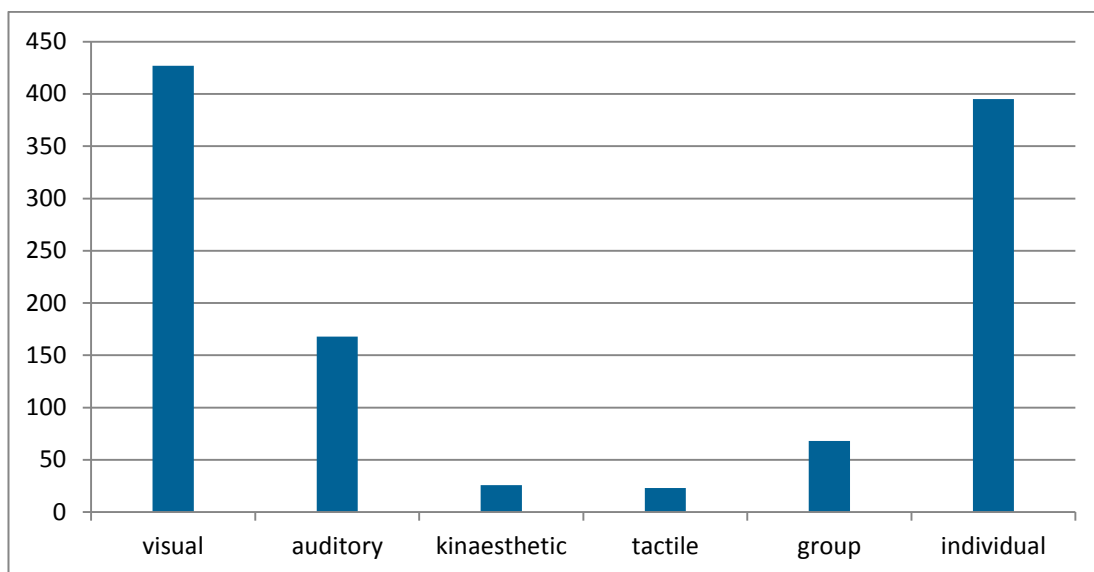
The latter activity types were not always clearly visible in the instructions of an exercise, which led to the need to thoroughly analyse an exercise to better understand the possible uses it had in the EFL classroom. Basically this meant imagining pupils working on the exercise and understanding all the phases pupils had to go through when doing the exercise. For example, interviewing other pupils in the classroom clearly supported auditory and group learners as the exercise required talking and listening. However, after taking a closer look the exercise might have also included a kinaesthetic activity for this type of exercise often requires the pupil to move around in the classroom looking for someone suitable for the interview. In contrast, the word ‘interview’ might have appeared in an exercise where no movement was required. For example, interviewing the person sitting next to you would not have contained a kinaesthetic activity. This further strengthened the need for a thorough analysis allowing the recognition of activities which were not visible in the instructions. In this particular exercise book there were polls that required moving and were therefore categorised as kinaesthetic activities. In addition, exercises such as the so called action songs which were present in other textbook series as well (see Appendix II) could be found. In these songs the pupils were asked to follow the instructions given in the song. These activity songs were naturally categorised as kinaesthetic activities as they required movement. Tactile activities included e.g. exercises that required touching (see Example 2) or using a dice.

Example 2. A tactile activity in *All Stars 3 Activity Book*. 82



In other words, the kinaesthetic and tactile activities of *Activity Book* required touching, moving or working with extra material. The number of individual activities was far higher than that of group activities. Categorising the exercises in *Activity Book* did not cause noticeable confusion and Table 8 therefore gives a reliable view of what this particular exercise book had to offer for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders with different perceptual learning styles.

Table 8. The number of each activity type in *All Stars 3 Activity Book*.



As Table 8 shows, *Activity Book* contained a relatively high number of both visual and individual activities. The number of auditory and group activities was low in comparison. The number of kinaesthetic and tactile activities was substantially lower than the amount of any other activity type.

## 5.2 Let's Go! 3

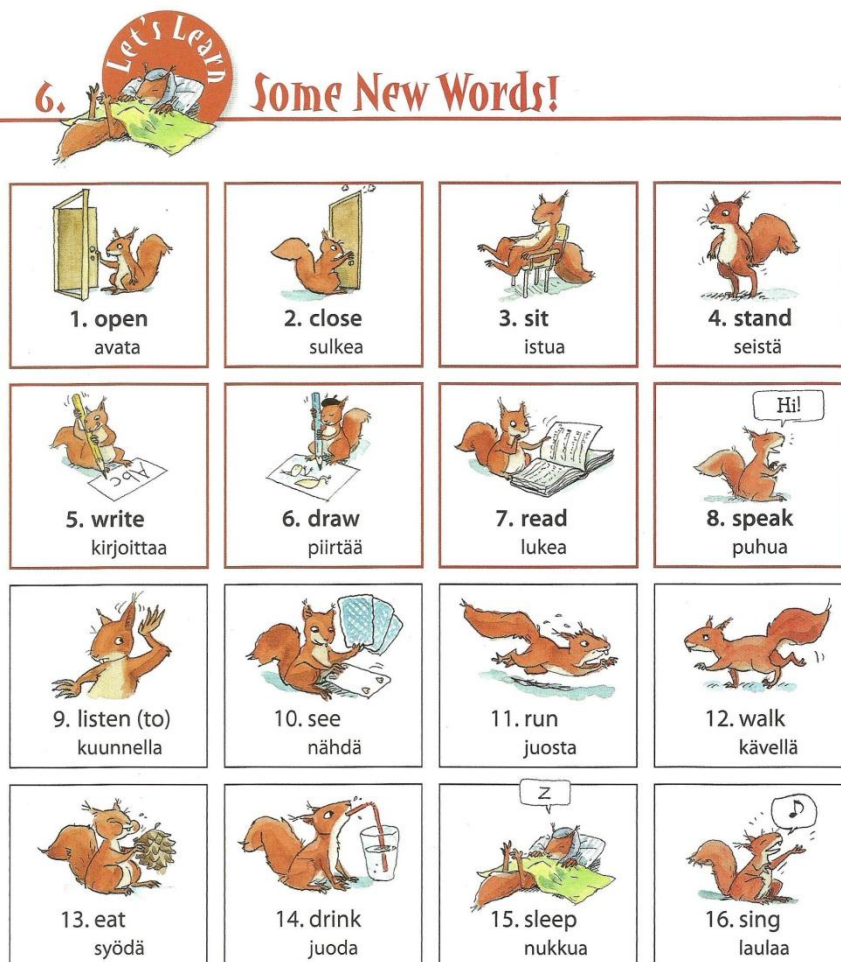
*Let's Go!* is a textbook series published by Tammi. The present study examined *Let's Go! 3* including the *Storybook* and *Activity Book* with the former serving as the textbook and latter as the exercise book.

### 5.2.1 Storybook

*Let's Go! 3 Storybook* differed slightly from the other textbooks in the present study by its appearance. The textbook was published in hardback, which strengthened the idea of a storybook. There were, however, no stories in the textbook as the idea and structure of the chapters resembled the chapters of any other textbook in the present study. In other words, the heart of every chapter was a short dialogue normally introducing new vocabulary or grammar items which were then practised through the exercises in the exercise book. *Let's Go! 3 Storybook* was a highly visual textbook and as was the case with other

textbooks, it could be said to support auditory learning through the listening and possible reading of the chapters. In addition to this, the textbook included picture wordlists such as the one in Example 3.

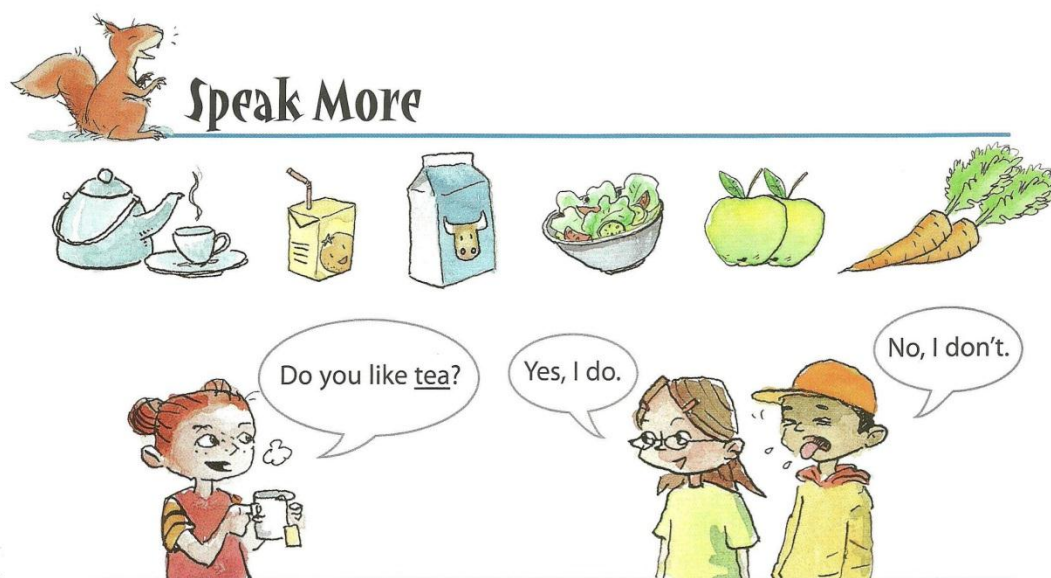
Example 3. Picture wordlist in *Let's Go! 3 Storybook*. 38



38

Moreover, *Storybook* offered six short songs including a song called “*If You’re Happy*” that was seen as an activity song and therefore a kinaesthetic activity (see Appendix II). The auditory nature of the textbook was further strengthened through the “Speak More” sections where the pupil could practice the key structures of the chapter through short lines. In Example 4 the key structure is ‘Do you like’ along with the suitable answers to the question (‘Yes, I do.’/‘No, I don’t.’).





All in all, *Let's Go! 3 Storybook* was a highly visual and colourful textbook with a focus on auditory learning as well. There were no kinaesthetic or tactile activities in the textbook with the exception of one kinaesthetic song. Next, we will examine how and to what extent the exercise book, *Activity Book*, supported different learners.

### 5.2.2 Activity Book

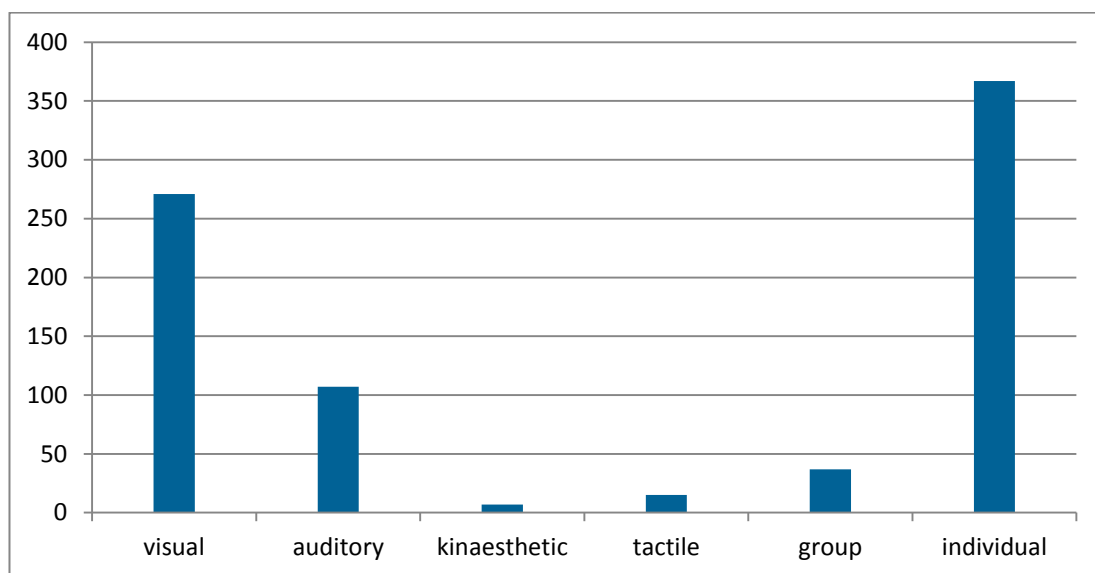
However visual other exercise books in the present study were, a shared feature between all of them was the consistent light blue colouring of the books. Consequently, *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book* was unique in that it followed the strong colouring of the related textbook at least to some extent. Different units – each unit composed of three chapters – had different theme colours and colourful pictures had been used in places throughout the exercise book (see Appendix II). Moreover, each chapter had one or two pages with a colourful tree and animals. On these pages there were exercises that either asked the pupil to talk about the related textbook chapter with the help of clues or presented the key grammatical item introduced in the related textbook chapter. In Example 5 this key item is the verb 'like'. The related exercise 6 has also been marked with headphones signalling a listening exercise.



In other words, *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book* was without question a highly visual exercise book. As Table 9 shows, auditory activities were not nearly as frequent as visual activities. They were, however, frequent and resembled the auditory activities of other exercise books included in the present study to some extent. Auditory activities included, for example, listening exercises, songs, pair work and board games that required talking. Categorising these exercises as auditory activities did not present any difficulties as listening exercises were marked with headphones (see Example 5) and songs with a note (see Appendix II). In addition, as with other exercise books in the present study, instructions for the exercises in the book clearly marked whether some sort of auditory activity was required for the exercise. For example, the words 'explain', 'tell', 'ask' and 'interview' were signs of an auditory activity. Kinaesthetic activities were infrequent in *Activity Book* and included, for example, a short poll that required the pupil to move around in the classroom and a board game that contained kinaesthetic activities such as standing up, walking and running. These exercise types were similar to other exercise

books in the present study. Tactile activities were slightly more frequent than kinaesthetic. They were, however, still rare and consisted mostly of games or exercises that required a dice. Individual activities were the most frequent activity type in the exercise book. In fact, group activities were significantly less frequent than individual activities as can be seen from Table 9.

Table 9. The number of each activity type in *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book*.



According to the results presented in Table 9 *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book* offered a great deal of individual and visual activities for learners with the amount of auditory activities being slightly smaller. Group activities were significantly less frequent than individual activities. The number of kinaesthetic and tactile activities was significantly lower than that of any other type of activity.

### 5.3 What's On? 3

*What's On?* is a Finnish EFL textbook series published by Tammi. The results presented below cover *What's On? 3* which is aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The textbook, *Read It*, will be presented first followed by the exercise book, *Do It*.

### 5.3.1 Read It

Again, in a textbook such as *Read It* it could be assumed that every text will be either listened to or read aloud alone, with a partner or in a group. Also, in every chapter there were one or more pictures. A textbook does not traditionally contain exercises or instructions as in most cases its texts are seen to support the related exercise book or vice versa. Indeed, textbooks are traditionally used to familiarise the pupils with a new text by reading and listening to the text, which is followed by exercises from the exercise book to support the learning of new language items. Consequently, *Read It* could be said to support visual and auditory learners because of the traditional ways of using a textbook. Another important point that affected the analysis was that because of the lack of instructions it could not be said whether the textbook favoured individual or group learners. The teacher alone decides whether texts are read alone or with a partner or in a small group.

In addition to the aforementioned visual and auditory features *Read It* offered the pupils a great deal of specifically marked songs, 13 in total. There were a few songs that could be clearly categorised as tactile activities. For example, in the *Mosquito Rap* in Chapter 7 (see Appendix II) pupils were told to scratch their legs, clap their hands and turn around among other things. For this reason the song could also be categorised as a kinaesthetic activity. In summary, the strength of *Read It* seemed to be the number of additional auditory activities – the 13 songs – from which a few also contained visual, kinaesthetic and tactile activities. Moreover, these songs were rather long; often a whole page was dedicated for a single song along with the relevant pictures. The number of tactile and kinaesthetic activities in total was, however, rather low with only a few activities that could be seen to support tactile or kinaesthetic learners.

### 5.3.2 Do It

In *Do It* there were relatively few items that caused confusion when categorising them according to which perceptual learning style they supported. For example, listening exercises were clearly marked with a rabbit with headphones, singing was marked with a singing rabbit and games with a rabbit holding a dice (see Appendix II). Some exercises, mostly games, did not specifically mention whether they should be done individually or in pairs or small groups. Consequently, these exercises required more specific in-

structions from the teacher in the classroom, which means that the teacher was once again the one to decide the amount of pupils working together on the exercise. Of course, any exercise could have been used differently from the instructions by the teacher, but this was already a question of modifying the teaching material and one to be left for future research. In regard to board games these exercises were categorised as group activities as board games are traditionally seen as group activities. Despite the possible risk of categorising some of the games inappropriately, the difference between the number of group and individual activities in the book was still significant. Thus, the relatively low number of these games did not have an effect on the overall results.


In general, visual activities included pictures, charts and exercises that emphasised certain parts of texts. Also, exercises that required an imaginative input were included in visual activities. Auditory activities were relatively easy to recognise and included, as already mentioned, exercises that featured a rabbit with headphones as well as exercises that contained singing, conversation or oral explanations. In other words exercises that had e.g. the words ‘sing’, ‘ask’, ‘talk’, ‘explain’ or ‘listen’ in the instructions were categorised as auditory activities. In Example 6 this can be seen more clearly; exercises 2b and 3a have a rabbit with headphones as a symbol for a listening exercise.

Example 6. Auditory activities in *What’s On? 3 Do It.* 46




**2b. Kuuntele ja toista.**



chair	/tʃeə*/	ketchup	/ketʃəp/
chocolate	/tʃɔːklət/	watch	/wɒtʃ/
cheese	/tʃiːz/	touch	/tʌtʃ/
chips	/tʃɪps/	which	/wɪtʃ/
chin	/tʃɪn/		



Charlie, don't touch the chocolate and chips.  
Touch the chair.



**3a. Kuuntele ja toimi ohjeen mukaan.**

Eat	Drink	Bite	Pick up
			

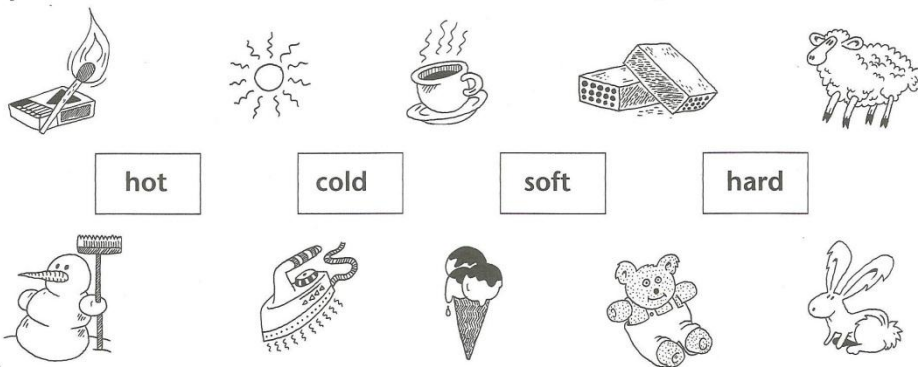
**3b. Ohjaa pariisi toimimaan samalla tavalla.**

In 2b the pupil is asked to listen to and repeat the words and in 3a to listen and act according to instructions. In 3b the pupil is asked to instruct a friend according to exercise 3a. Also, in Example 6 it is easy to see how visual features were connected with the other perceptual learning styles as both 2b and 3a have pictures in them. Moreover, it could be argued that the important verbs in exercise 3a have been emphasised by having them in boxes, which further supports visual learners.

Kinaesthetic activities included exercises that required the pupil or pupils to move around in the classroom such as in the various polls that could be found in the book (see Appendix II). In addition, *Do It* contained several workouts and exercises or games with tasks that could be performed in different parts of the classroom. Acting and role play were also considered as kinaesthetic activities when they clearly required movement rather than a simple conversation with a partner. Categorising exercises as tactile activities was not nearly as simple but by following the implications presented in Chapter 2 there were only a few items that remained unclear in regard to their significance to tactile learners. The main principle in this case was the presence of extra material that the pupils could hold in their hands such as dice – which was one of the most common examples of a tactile activity – or an exercise that asked the pupil to touch or feel something such as in Example 7 (exercise 4a). In this exercise the pupil is instructed to ask a partner to touch a picture that has something cold, hot, soft or hard in it. Again, this exercise could also be seen to support other learners as well. Visual learners might find the pictures and keywords in boxes useful and as the exercise is done in pairs it also supports group learners.

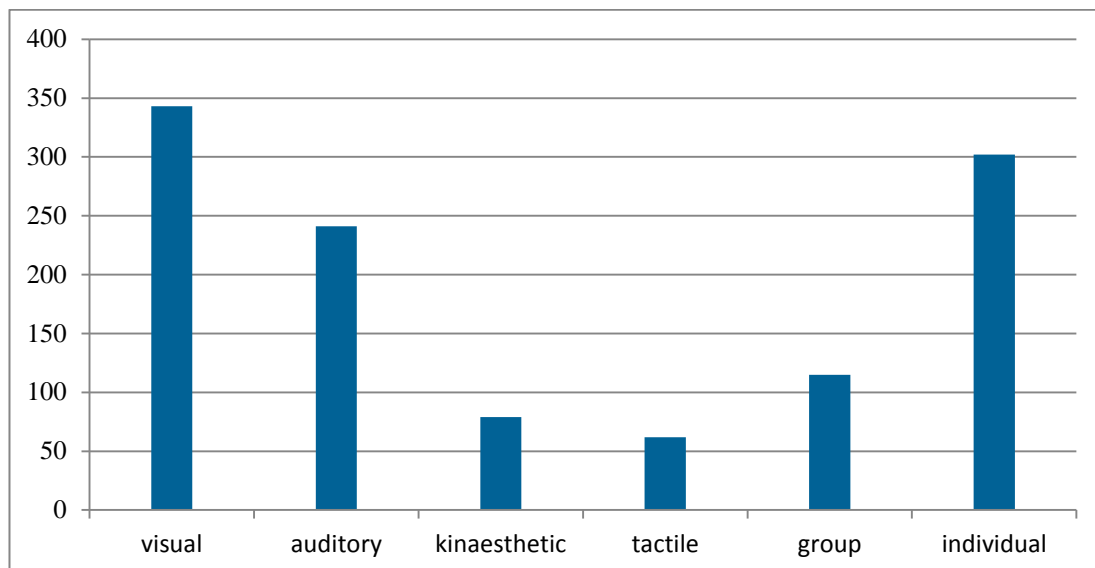
Example 7. A tactile activity in *What's On? 3 Do It. 12*

4a. Pyydä pariasi koskettamaan kuvaa, jossa on jotakin kylmää, kuumaa, pehmeää tai kovaa. Aloita sanomalla *Touch something . . .*



Group activities included work done in pairs or groups and individual activities work done without the help of another pupil. Next, the number of activities offered for each perceptual learning style is given in Table 10.

Table 10. The number of each activity type in *What's On? 3 Do It*.



In Table 10 it can be seen that visual, individual and auditory activities were most frequent in *Do It*. Tactile, kinaesthetic and group activities were less frequent yet not rare. At this point it is useful to bear in mind that each exercise could be seen to support different perceptual learning styles and considering any one exercise as to include a visual activity, for example, did not exclude the possibility of the exercise supporting other styles as well. In fact, it was possible for an exercise to support all six perceptual learning styles simultaneously. Consequently, in the tables presented in the present study, the relatively low number of a particular activity type does not directly mean that the equivalent learner type was somehow ignored in the book. Of course, any significant differences between the numbers of different activity types have to be acknowledged. We will come back to this point in Chapter 6.

### 5.4 Wow! 3

*Wow!*, published by WSOY, is a Finnish EFL textbook series. The present study examines *Wow! 3* aimed at 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The textbook, *Wow! 3 Study Book*, is covered first followed by the exercise book *Wow! 3 Busy Book*.

### 5.4.1 Study Book

As already mentioned, Finnish EFL textbooks usually include chapters – short or longer texts that present dialogues, parts of longer storylines or some other unbroken stretches of text – that are supported with the exercises of the related exercise book. *Wow! 3 Study Book* was no exception: the subtitle of the textbook, *Ice-cream Island* referred to a daydream land where the main character of the book met different characters and learned new things through talking with them. The book was extremely colourful and to illustrate this, the different characters on the island were all wearing different coloured clothing according to the ice cream flavour each of them was named after (see Appendix II). In other words, visual learners were sure to find pictures with strong colours to look at in the book. For auditory learners there were seven short songs in the book. Moreover, the textbook included a CD attached to the back cover of the book. The CD contained the audio to the first six pieces of text which served more as an introduction than as actual chapters in the textbook. The audio to the actual chapters was not included on the CD. However, the CD offered the pupils the chance to listen to the word lists of each chapter found in the exercise book as well as to the extra material found at the end of the textbook. All in all, *Wow! 3 Study Book* was yet another strongly visual and auditory EFL textbook aimed at Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. No clearly kinaesthetic or tactile activities could be found in the book and as with other textbooks in the present study, the number of group and individual activities could be argued to depend on the teacher's way of using the book. For example, texts could be read alone or with a partner or in small groups, which are all usual techniques in a traditional 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL lesson. Next, the extent to which different learners were acknowledged in the related exercise book, *Busy Book*, is examined.

### 5.4.2 Busy Book

*Wow! 3 Busy Book* continued on the highly visual line found in *Study Book*, which could be seen in the high number of pictures. Other visual activities included charts and highlighted text such as the circled text in Example 8 where key words are given to support writing sentences. Pictures were, however, clearly the most frequent visual feature in the book.



Example 8. Highlighted words in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*. 128

18 Kirjoita sanapareista lauseet viikkoosi.

a dress – lovely

a swimsuit – red

pyjamas – new

shorts – cool

Auditory activities included exercises that required listening, repeating, singing or talking to another pupil or pupils. In *Busy Book*, exercises that involved listening – and often repeating – were marked with a CD while songs were marked with a CD and a clef (see Appendix II). There were a number of short rhymes and songs in the book, which increased the number of auditory activities respectively. Example 9 shows a rhyme found in Chapter 3.

Example 9. A rhyme in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*. 29

1 Kuuntele ja toista loru.



*Red and blue  
And black and white.  
Hot and cold  
And day and night.*

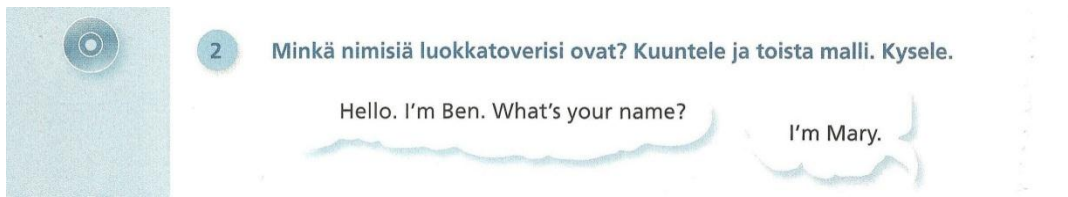
*Green and orange  
And yellow, too.  
You love me  
And I love you.*

hot [hɒt] kuuma  
cold [kəʊld] kylmä  
a day [deɪ] päivä  
a night [naɪt] yö  
love [lʌv] rakastaa

In Example 9 the pupil is asked to listen to and repeat the rhyme. Again, it is easy to see the strong visual nature of the book as the picture actually takes up more space than the text. On the blue space there are supporting words for the rhyme. All in all, *Wow! 3 Busy Book* had a variety of activities for visual and auditory learners.

Kinaesthetic activities were once again more difficult to find and were clearly the least frequent activity type in the exercise book. Kinaesthetic activities consisted mostly of polls as the one in Example 10 where the pupil is quite simply instructed to ask classmates for their names after listening to the example.

Example 10. A poll in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*. 18



Exercises such as the activity song “Head and shoulders” and a board game which had different tasks in every space including moving in the classroom were also categorised as kinaesthetic activities (see Appendix II). The board game was also categorised as a tactile activity as many of the tasks in the game require touching or working with extra material. Of course, working with the dice was already seen as a tactile activity. Also, the activity song had the possibility of being a tactile activity even though the pupil was not specifically instructed to act according to the lyrics of the song. However, an activity song as this is traditionally used as a sort of workout, which gave good reason for categorising the song as tactile. Other tactile activities included other board games that required using a dice, for example, the well-known Snakes and Ladders. There was also an exercise in the book that instructed the pupil to ask a partner to put various school supplies in, on, under or behind something (Example 11). In other words, in Example 11 the pupils are working with extra material as even though they usually use a book and a pencil for nearly every exercise, in this exercise they are not used for writing. In fact, in Example 8 an everyday school supply, such as a pencil or a notebook, is used to make the prepositions ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘under’ and ‘behind’ more concrete to the pupil. Consequently, in principle the objects used in the exercise could be replaced with anything available in the classroom that fits the pupil’s hand. All in all, it could be argued that the exercise emphasises the sense of touch as the prepositions are made concrete through it.

Example 11. A tactile group activity in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*. 107



The ratio of individual activities to group activities was extremely high as can be seen in Table 11. In fact, individual activities were the most frequent activity type in *Busy Book*. As mentioned earlier, group activities included both pair and group work.

Table 11. The number of each activity type in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*.

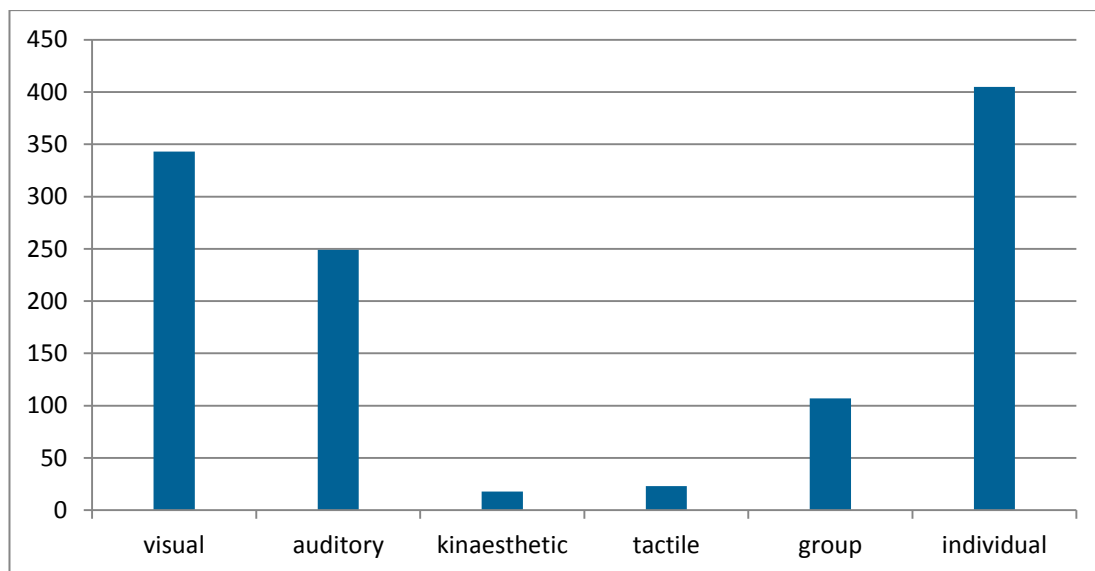


Table 11 shows that *Wow! 3 Busy Book* contained a relatively high number of individual, visual and auditory activities. In comparison to individual activities, the book had a rather low number of group activities as was mentioned earlier. The number of kinaesthetic and tactile activities was seemingly low; there was a significant difference between the number of these two activity types and any other activity type.

## 5.5 Yippee! 3


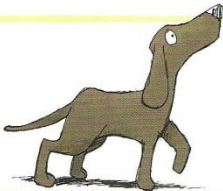


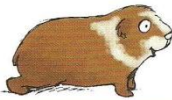




*Yippee! 3* is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook series published by WSOYpro. The textbook, *Reader*, is covered first after which the exercise book *Writer* is presented.

### 5.5.1 Reader

As was the case with several other textbooks, the chapters of *Yippee! 3 Reader* were constructed of short dialogues that introduced a new language item to be learned. Every chapter also contained an Extra section that had extra material for the pupil. For exam-

ple, the eight board games that were found in the textbook were all extra material (see Appendix II). These board games were, however, marked as exercises in the related exercise book as well and for that reason they were categorised only once when analysing the exercise books. Consequently, they were not seen to increase the number of any activity type in the textbook. This is because of practical reasons; the board games were marked as exercises in the exercise book where the more specific instructions for each game could also be found. In other words, the textbook simply functioned as the base for the game. There were also additional texts for the pupil to read on these extra pages or simply a picture with the word ‘Listen’, signalling that there was an audio for the picture on the teacher’s CD. Once again, the textbook offered a great deal of material for visual and auditory learners. Example 12 shows a word list with pictures that visual learners would most likely find useful. Word lists such as these could be found in almost every chapter in the ‘Start’ section which came before each actual chapter.

Example 12. A picture wordlist in *Yippee! 3 Reader*. 35.

	<b>a cat</b> [kæt]		<b>a dog</b> [dɒg]		<b>a hamster</b> [hæmstə(r)]
	<b>a rabbit</b> [ræbit]		<b>a guinea pig</b> [gini pig]		<b>a mouse</b> [maʊs]
	<b>a fish</b> [fɪʃ]		<b>a frog</b> [frɒg]		<b>a budgie</b> [bʌdʒi]

35

Other learners were not acknowledged in the book except for the base for each board game that could be found in the textbook. Of course, the board games were acknowledged in the analysis of the exercise book and were therefore not ignored in the analysis of the textbook series in total. Next, the analysis will move on to the exercise book *Writer*.

## 5.5.2 Writer

Both textbooks and exercise books in the present study were highly visual and *Yippee! 3 Writer* was no exception. There were a great number of visual activities in the book although a unique feature in *Writer* was the somewhat high number of exercises that required drawing. To illustrate this, in Example 13 the pupil is asked to draw various school supplies in the right boxes.

Example 13. A drawing exercise in *Yippee! 3 Writer*. 63



Even though drawing is most likely something that several pupils enjoy it has to be remembered that there are pupils who dislike it or feel that they are not talented drawers. Consequently, when drawing exercises are a frequent exercise type in a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL exercise book, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grader who does not enjoy drawing might find using the book unpleasant. This might have important implications for the way the pupil experiences studying EFL in the future as well. Also, drawing skills should not be directly related to a pupil's skills in EFL in any way: pupils who experience difficulties in drawing should not feel that they are not succeeding in EFL. This is yet again a matter of how pupils see themselves as EFL learners. Of course, this cannot be considered as a universal phenomenon but it does offer a useful reminder on the importance of variety in exercises as well as the possible consequences of using an exercise type that does not directly relate to the pupils' skills in EFL. In contrast, for some pupils drawing is undoubtedly an excellent way of strengthening the learning of new and difficult items. Thus, drawing exercises themselves can be useful as long as skills that do not directly relate to EFL are not valued excessively. In addition to drawing, items such as pictures, highlighted text,

charts and exercises that required an imaginative input were categorised as visual activities. In this way *Yippee! 3 Writer* resembled other exercise books in the present study.

Auditory activities were constructed in a way similar to other exercise books in the present study. These activities included exercises containing words such as ‘listen’, ‘discuss’, ‘say’, ‘sing’, ‘repeat’ and ‘interview’. Moreover, as was the case with other exercise books in the present study, the instructions of the exercises immediately revealed whether the exercise included an auditory activity. In fact, both visual and auditory activities were without question the easiest to recognise as they formed the most unambiguous activity types in the present study. Visual activities could be, of course, categorised based on the appearance of an exercise and auditory activities based on specific words used in the instructions as well as the possible symbols – headphones, a CD, a clef or a note – next to the exercise. In *Yippee! 3 Writer* headphones were used to symbolise a listening exercise and a note to symbolise an exercise involving singing. In Example 14 both symbols are used and once again the instructions including the words ‘listen’ and ‘sing’ clearly point to an auditory activity.

Example 14. An auditory activity in *Yippee! 3 Writer*. 149





**13** Kuuntele ja laula.

Yummy, yummy, yummy.  
I have ice cream in my tummy.  
Oh dear. I feel funny.  
I have jelly in my tummy.



The kinaesthetic activities of *Writer* were found in exercises such as polls along with some exercises instructing the pupils to touch their eyes, ears, mouth, nose etc. (see Appendix II). As the exercises involved touching they also included tactile activities. Other examples of tactile activities in the exercise book were board games and tracing letters. Example 15 shows how pupils are instructed to trace the letters ‘F’ and ‘W’ which usually seem foreign to Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> graders as they are somewhat infrequent letters in Finnish.

**6 Kirjoita mallin mukaan.**

 F	f
W	w
 Fred	five <b>5</b>
 Will	a watch 

thirteen 13

As attention is drawn to the shape of the letters this exercise could be argued to support tactile learning. In other words, when tracing the letter ‘F’ pupils need to focus on the shape of the letter in order to repeat it as closely as possible, allowing them to pay extra attention to every pencil stroke. By having the pupils repeat the shape of the letter multiple times – even though it is not mentioned how many times exactly – this exercise could be argued to support learners in assimilating the shape of the letter. To what extent this particular exercise supported tactile learners is another question and one to be left for future research. However, as tracing a letter with a finger could easily be considered a tactile activity relying heavily on the sense of touch, Example 15 could be argued to include a tactile aspect as well even if a less effective one.

There was a significant difference in the number of individual and group activities as can be seen in Table 12. Once again the number of individual activities clearly exceeded that of group activities. Of course, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers have the possibility of modifying individual activities into group activities by asking the pupils to work together on specific exercises. Modifying exercises is, however, outside the scope of the present study and does not change the fact that several EFL teachers use EFL textbooks and exercise books during every lesson without modifying the exercises to any significant extent.

Table 14. The number of each activity type in *Yippee! 3 Writer*.

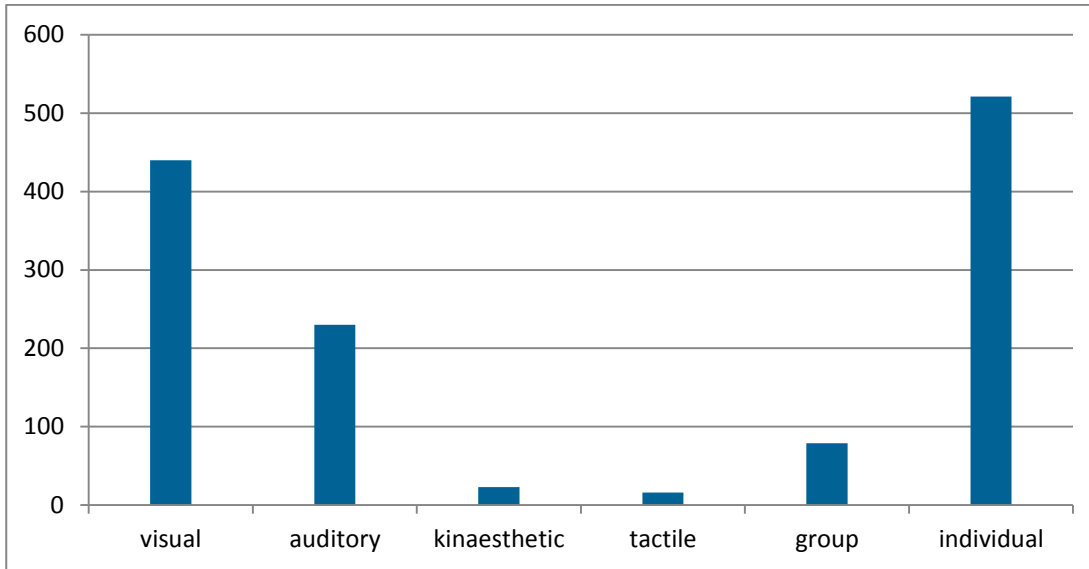


Table 12 shows a clear division of activity types in *Yippee! 3 Writer*. The number of individual activities was extremely high with over 500 individual activities. Visual activities were frequent as well. Auditory and group activities were somewhat less frequent with kinaesthetic and tactile activities being the least frequent activity type in the book.



## **6 THE TEXTBOOKS FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES**

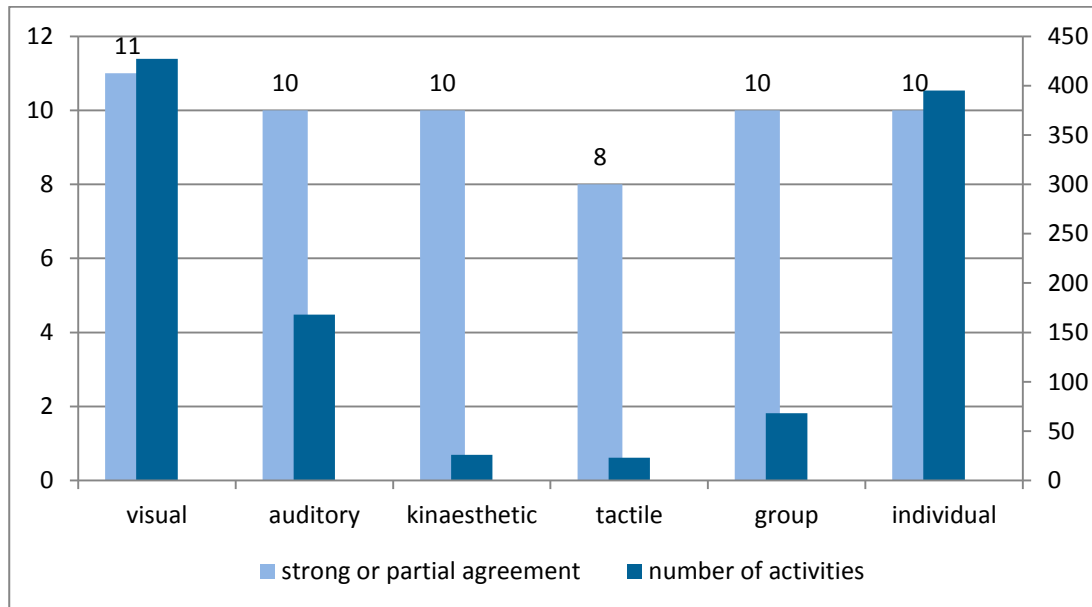
At this point the textbooks and exercise books have been examined from the teachers' point of view as well as with the help of the textbook analysis. Next, the results of these two sets of data are combined for a more thorough picture of each textbook series. Consequently, conclusions can be drawn about the extent to which different perceptual learning styles were acknowledged in each textbook series. In addition, any possible contradictions between the two sets of results are discussed in more detail. Finally, suggestions for the reasons behind such variances are given along with the overall situation in Finland. In the tables presented below the two sets of results – the teacher's views and the results of the textbook analysis – have been combined. Moreover, only agreeing responses from the teachers have been acknowledged without separating strong and partial agreement. This comparison method was chosen for a number of practical reasons. Firstly, the number of teachers who agreed with a specific series acknowledging different learners well offered a perfect point for comparison in regard to the textbook analysis. In other words, comparing this particular number of teachers with the actual number of each activity type found in the textbook analysis presented a clear view on how the two sets of results differed. Thus there was no need to include disagreeing or neutral responses here. Secondly, separating strong and partial agreement would not have affected the comparison as the focus was on significant differences between the two sets of results. Of course, more detailed information was important when answering the second research question on the teachers' views in general. Thirdly, given that the results of the textbook analysis were not exact numbers, it was only logical to compare them with a more overall picture of the teachers' opinions instead of exact information on partial and strong agreement. Finally, as exact information on the teachers' opinions has already been presented in Chapter 4, it is possible to return to the chapter for a more detailed description of the teachers' responses when needed. Thus, there was no need to include more detailed information on the teachers' views in the present chapter.

### **6.1 All Stars 3**

As already mentioned in Chapter 4, the 11 teachers using All Stars 3 in their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL lessons were remarkably unanimous in their responses. Table 13 shows the clear agreement among the teachers with 8-11 of them agreeing on the series acknowledging

the six perceptual learning styles. The results of the textbook analysis, however, pointed to somewhat contradictory conclusions.

Table 13. The number of agreeing responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well” in comparison to the number of each activity type in *All Stars 3 Activity Book* found in the textbook analysis.



Unlike the responses of the teachers, the results of the textbook analysis implied that kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities were significantly less frequent than visual and individual activities in the exercise book. Auditory activities were also relatively infrequent. Moreover, the related textbook included only two kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities in the form of two board games. For this reason Table 13 gives an accurate picture of the extent to which the textbook series acknowledged different learning styles. It is important to point out that once again in regard to tactile learners there was some variation in the teachers’ responses as one teacher did disagree with the textbook series acknowledging tactile learners. This further supports the hypothesis of tactile learning causing confusion as it is a relatively infrequently used term in real life situations. However, the only learning styles that were supported according to both sets of results were visual and individual. Otherwise the teachers’ views seemed to differ significantly from the textbook analysis as the teachers felt that auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile and group learners were all supported while the textbook analysis pointed to relatively low numbers of these four activity types.

## 6.2 Let's Go! 3

Again a relatively low number – eight teachers – reported to be using *Let's Go! 3* in their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL lessons. The responses of the eight teachers were, however, extremely unanimous giving useful information for the comparison. In regard to this particular textbook series the teachers seemed to feel that all learner types were acknowledged rather well. The textbook analysis did, however, give a very different view on the matter as can be seen from Table 14. According to the textbook analysis, the textbook, *Story Book*, was highly visual and had a special focus on auditory learning. In addition to one kinaesthetic activity no other activity types were visible in the book. In other words, the material found in the textbook did not significantly alter the image given by Table 14 as the differences between the numbers of the six activity types were still noticeable.

Table 14. The number of agreeing responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well” in comparison to the number of each activity type in *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book* found in the textbook analysis.

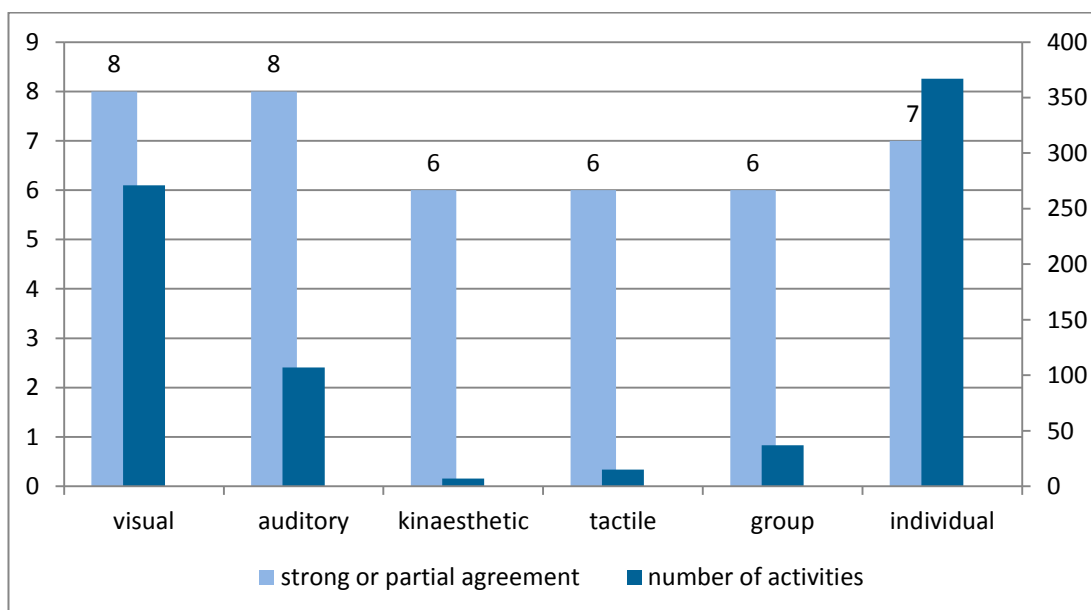


Table 14 shows how the teachers felt that auditory learners were rather well acknowledged in the series. The results of the textbook analysis, however, pointed to a relatively low number of auditory activities. Even though auditory activities were found in numbers in the related textbook, the ratio of visual activities to auditory activities was still significantly high whereas the teachers felt that both visual and auditory learners were rather well supported. Similarly, there was a noticeable difference in the results in re-

gard to kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities which were found to be the most infrequent activity types in the textbook analysis. However, the teachers felt that kinaesthetic, tactile and group learners were acknowledged in the textbook series and the responses of most teachers therefore differed noticeably from the results of the textbook analysis. In regard to individual learners the two sets of results were rather similar as according to the teachers individual learners were relatively well acknowledged and according to the textbook analysis individual activities were the most frequent activity type in the exercise book. To sum up, even though the teachers felt that *Let's Go! 3* supported all perceptual learner groups to some extent, the results of the textbook analysis pointed to a low number of kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities. In addition, the number of auditory activities was not as high as the teachers' responses implied.

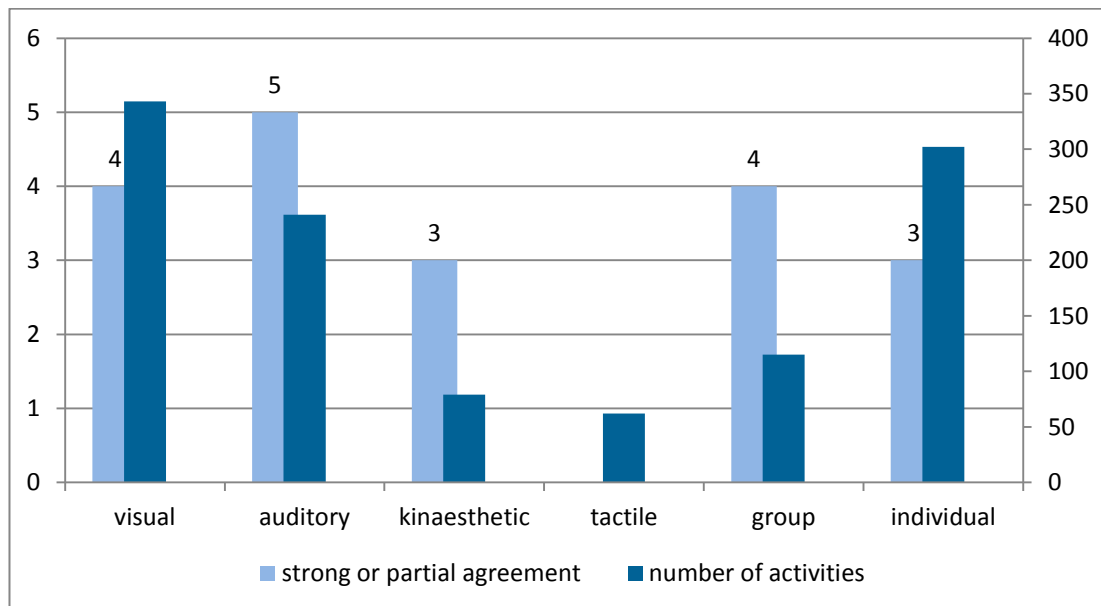
### 6.3 What's on? 3

According to the teachers' responses, only five 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers were using *What's On? 3*. The results of the questionnaire were somewhat contradictory when compared to the results of the textbook analysis. As already mentioned, according to the textbook analysis *What's On? 3* was a highly visual and auditory textbook series. However, there were a low number of kinaesthetic and tactile activities in the textbook. According to the textbook analysis, the exercise book contained a high number of visual, auditory and individual activities. The number of other activity types was clearly lower. However, as adding a visual, auditory or individual activity in an exercise is relatively effortless compared to adding kinaesthetic and tactile activities, the relatively lower number of the latter activity types was not highly concerning. That is, adding a picture to an exercise comes almost naturally in contrast to including movement or touching in an exercise. Of course, variety is crucial in an exercise book but this does not mean that every exercise should include activities for each perceptual learning style. In fact, it would be unreasonable if not unnecessary to ask exercise book designers to offer the same amount of activity types to all six perceptual learning styles. For example, even when an exercise book is already strongly visual, adding a picture and therefore a visual activity to an exercise which clearly includes e.g. a tactile activity should not be considered to be inadvisable.

What is important is the frequency of each activity type so that different learners can feel supported during each lesson in a way that helps them stay focused and motivated.

Consequently, learning does not present itself as an impossible task and the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders can enjoy studying EFL. This is, of course, an ideal scenario which cannot always be reality as other factors affect the motivation and focus of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader as well. However, when a pupil's perceptual learning style is acknowledged by the designers and the teachers, we can move closer to that ideal scenario. All in all, according to the textbook analysis, *What's On? 3* was a good example of a textbook series that included activities for all perceptual learning styles even if the number of kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities could have been higher. Next, the two sets of results are compared in Table 15.

Table 15. The number of agreeing responses to the statement: "The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well" in comparison to the number of each activity type in *What's On? 3 Activity Book* found in the textbook analysis.



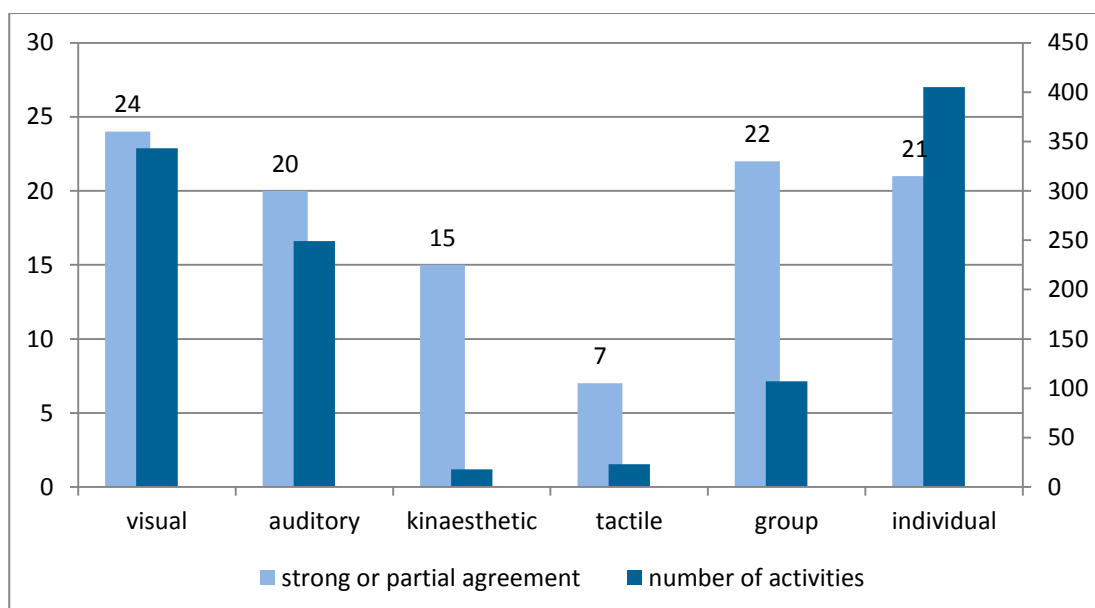
Even though the number of respondents in Table 15 was relatively low, some conclusions could be drawn based on the comparison. As can be seen from Table 15, there were some major differences in the two sets of results. Firstly, according to the teachers, visual learners were not as well acknowledged as auditory learners. According to the results of the textbook analysis it was quite the opposite as visual learners were clearly the most acknowledged group in the exercise book and the textbook being highly visual only strengthened the result. Of course, as Table 15 only covers the exercise book and the textbook, *Read It*, did contain songs, the difference between the number of visual and auditory activities in the series could be slightly decreased. However, that difference would still remain obvious according to the textbook analysis. Secondly, according

to the teachers group learners were acknowledged more than individual learners. Again, the results of the textbook analysis pointed to the opposite as group activities were relatively infrequent and individual activities were the second most frequent activity type in the textbook series. In regard to tactile and kinaesthetic learners, however, the two sets of results resembled each other to some extent. None of the teachers felt that tactile learners were well acknowledged in the series and in the textbook analysis tactile activities were the most infrequent activity type. Kinaesthetic learners were perhaps more acknowledged in the teachers' opinion than what the results of the textbook analysis pointed to. All in all, the most significant difference between the two sets of results related to group learners with somewhat different views on visual, auditory and individual learners.

### 6.4 Wow! 3

Comparing the teachers' views and the results of the textbook analysis in regard to *Wow! 3* was a unique task in that a total of 25 teachers used the textbook series according to the questionnaire. Consequently, a more thorough picture of this particular textbook series could be composed. Table 16 shows interesting differences and similarities between the teachers' views and the textbook analysis.

Table 16. The number of agreeing responses to the statement: "The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well" in comparison to the number of each activity type in *Wow! 3 Busy Book* found in the textbook analysis.

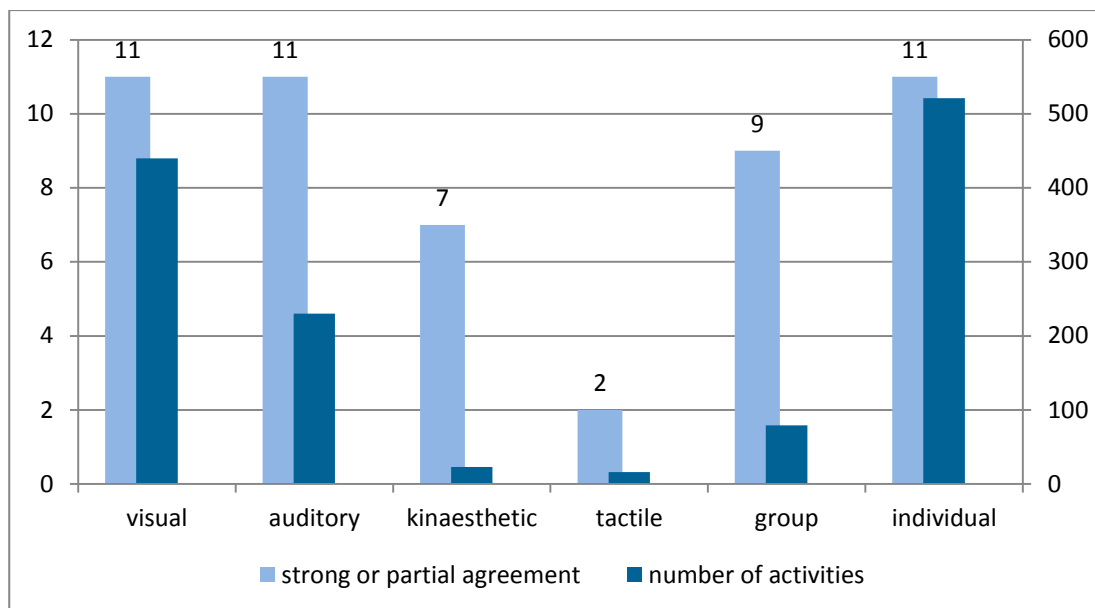


In general the two sets of results resembled each other to a high extent. There were, however, two noticeable differences as well. Firstly, most teachers felt that kinaesthetic learners were acknowledged to some extent in the series. However, according to the textbook analysis kinaesthetic activities were clearly the most infrequent activity type in the exercise book with a substantial difference to the number of visual, auditory and individual activities. In addition, no kinaesthetic activities could be found in the related textbook. An even higher number of teachers agreed to some extent on the series acknowledging group learners. In contrast, the textbook analysis pointed to group activities being the third most infrequent activity type in the book. As group activities were not explicitly marked in the related textbook, it could be argued that according to the textbook analysis group learners did not receive as much attention as visual, auditory and individual learners in *Wow! 3*. In regard to visual, auditory and individual learners, however, the two sets of results pointed to similar findings as according to both the teachers' responses and the textbook analysis these three perceptual learner groups were rather well acknowledged in the series.

### **6.5 Yippee! 3**

Yippee! 3 was used by 11 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers in the present study. Even though clear agreement can be seen in Table 17 in relation to visual, auditory, group and individual learners, kinaesthetic and tactile learning caused some disagreement among the teachers. Moreover, tactile learning did not seem to cause a great deal of confusion as in regard to this particular textbook series most teachers seemed to have a somewhat clear opinion on the topic. Even though there were noticeable similarities between the two sets of results, some of the differences found need to be discussed further. Once again it has to be pointed out that in Table 17, the results of the textbook analysis only include the exercise book. The related textbook was visual and auditory as mentioned in Chapter 5 even though the auditory nature of the textbook depends heavily on the teacher's teaching methods. The textbook did not, however, include tactile or kinaesthetic activities in addition to the eight board games which were taken into account in the analysis of the exercise book and are therefore visible in Table 17.

Table 17. The number of agreeing responses to the statement: “The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well” in comparison to the number of each activity type in *Yippee! 3* Writer found in the textbook analysis.



The important differences in the table above relate to auditory, kinaesthetic and group learners. All 11 teachers agreed to some extent with *Yippee! 3* acknowledging auditory learners. In contrast, the textbook analysis pointed to a relatively low number of auditory activities. There were, however, a great number of auditory activities in the exercise book, which highlights the issue discussed earlier: adding visual activities into an exercise is a rather uncomplicated task, which might lead to a significantly high number of visual activities in an exercise book. Thus Table 17 offers an important reminder on the topic as what is essential is the apparently noticeable frequency of auditory activities in the exercise book. In other words, even though visual and individual activities were clearly more frequent than auditory activities, the number of auditory activities was still rather high, which pointed to the exercise book acknowledging auditory learners to some extent. The actual contradicting results in the two tables relate to kinaesthetic and group learners as 7-9 teachers agreed with the textbook series acknowledging these two learning styles whereas the textbook analysis pointed to a different scenario. The textbook analysis found an extremely low number of kinaesthetic activities in the exercise book and even though the number of group activities was higher, it was still noticeably low. This would not support the view of the teachers who believed that the series acknowledged group learners. The similarities between the two sets of results were clear with visual and individual learners being acknowledged according to both the teachers and the textbook analysis. The teachers’ responses on tactile learners led to an interest-



ing pattern in Table 17. In fact, agreement in regard to tactile learners was the most infrequent response. Altogether six teachers disagreed to some extent with the textbook series acknowledging tactile learners. The textbook analysis could be argued to support this image as tactile activities were extremely rare in *Yippee! 3 Writer*. In conclusion, the teachers felt that all perceptual learner groups, with the exception of tactile learners, were acknowledged to some extent in *Yippee! 3* whereas according to the textbook analysis kinaesthetic and group activities were infrequent in the exercise book as well. The two sets of results resembled each other to some extent in regard to visual, auditory, tactile and individual learners.

## 6.6 Discussion

At first sight the comparison of the teachers' responses and the results of the textbook analysis seemed to point to two major conclusions. Firstly, the teachers mostly considered the textbook series to support all perceptual learning styles to a far greater extent than what the textbook analysis pointed to. Secondly, even though the teachers felt that all learning styles were rather well supported, several teachers agreed with the results of the textbook analysis in that kinaesthetic and especially tactile learners were somewhat ignored. This was the case with all the textbook series included in the present study except for *All Stars 3* and *Let's Go! 3* which were seen to support all learning styles rather well even if one teacher did disagree with this statement in regard to tactile learning. Interestingly enough, according to the textbook analysis the number of kinaesthetic and tactile activities in both *All Stars 3* and *Let's Go! 3* was significantly lower than that of any other activity type. Next, suggestions about the possible reasons behind the differing results are given along with the overall situation in Finland, which is done by combining the two sets of results.

As mentioned earlier, one hypothesis in the present study related to tactile learners. It was suggested that tactile learners might cause confusion among the teachers, which could be argued to be true in most cases as only 40 % of all suitable respondents – the 60 teachers mentioned earlier – felt that the textbook series they were using supported tactile learners. In other words, most teachers, the remaining 60 %, either disagreed with this statement or remained neutral. This is an extremely significant result as no other learning style received a similar response from the teachers. In fact, all other learning

styles were supported to some extent according to a noticeable majority of the respondents.

The two sets of results differed mostly in regard to kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities even though tactile and kinaesthetic learning did cause variance in the teachers' responses. Contradictory results such as these might be due to a number of reasons, which can only be implied here as further research and more exact questions on the three learning types are needed for understanding the teachers' views on these styles better. A few possible background factors could, however, be suggested based on the literature on perceptual learning styles as well as the teachers' responses. Kinaesthetic learning is most likely a familiar concept to most 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers as it is a relatively frequently used word in the field of learning in general and the word has also been used in relation to computers, games and other technology-related items in our everyday lives. All in all, the unfamiliarity of the word 'kinaesthetic' is most likely not the reason behind the contradicting results. Perhaps 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers tend to modify exercises slightly in order to make them more kinaesthetic, which in turn would give them the impression that the textbooks and exercise books support kinaesthetic learning. It could also be a question of preference: teachers might choose to use as many kinaesthetic activities as possible while at the same time ignoring other activity types. Consequently, the number of kinaesthetic activities might seem higher to them than it actually is. Also, the teachers' material might contain additional kinaesthetic activities, which might alter the teachers' opinion of the series even though the pupils' material – the textbooks and exercise books – did not offer that much material for kinaesthetic learners. Moreover, the pupils' material might prove to contain more kinaesthetic activities than what was found in the textbook analysis when actually put to use in a real-life situation in the classroom. The reason might also be in the increasing number of kinaesthetic activities in published material. In other words, if the series they were using before contained even fewer kinaesthetic activities, the series they were currently using might seem to support kinaesthetic learners more than was actually the case. Of course, if this was the reason behind the contradicting results, it would be comforting to know that at least the number of kinaesthetic activities was on the rise. One final reason, which has to do with all six learning styles, could be the differing views teachers have on kinaesthetic learning or any other learning style. It is possible that teachers simply see kinaesthetic learning as something different from the view presented in the present study.

In regard to tactile learning the reasons behind the contradicting results could be very similar to those related to kinaesthetic learning. One important difference could, howev-

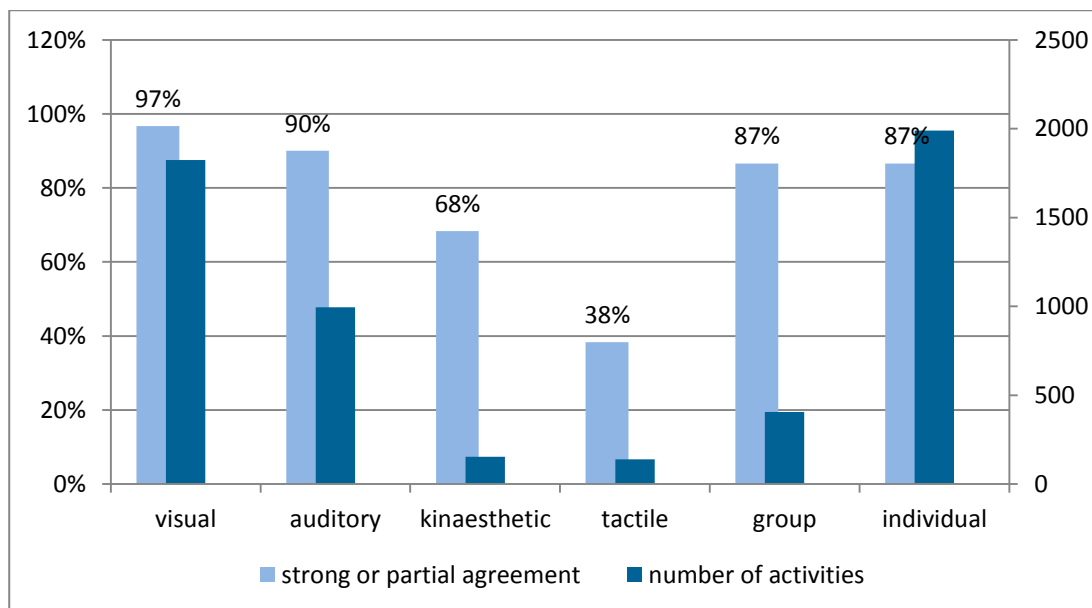
er, lie in the term ‘tactile’ itself. As was already mentioned, among the six learning styles tactile learning is most likely the most infrequently met in the everyday lives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers. For this reason, it was only natural to assume that several teachers would either disagree with their textbook series acknowledging tactile learners or remain neutral on the matter. If tactile learning was indeed a somewhat unfamiliar concept to several teachers in the present study, it would have been illogical for the teachers to blindly assume that the series they were using acknowledged tactile learners. However, the unfamiliarity of tactile learning could have led to false ideas on what actually counts as tactile learning, which might have led to the contradicting results between the two sets of results. That is, even though according to the textbook analysis tactile activities were infrequent in all the series, some teachers might have counted activities that were not in fact tactile as tactile activities. It has to be mentioned that whenever the teachers did feel that tactile learners were not acknowledged by the textbook series they were using, it could have simply been due to the fact that those teachers shared the view of the present study. In other words, they had similar ideas on what counts as tactile learning and were similarly not pleased with the number of tactile activities found in the textbook series.

Again, the number of group activities might have been viewed similarly by the teachers as kinaesthetic activities. Consequently, the contradictions between the two sets of results could have been due to several reasons relating to e.g. the use of textbooks and exercise books in class. However, in regard to group learning it is quite impossible to bring up the unfamiliarity of the term or differing views on what counts as group learning as group as a term is quite self-explanatory. For this reason it is rather difficult to understand why almost every teacher in the present study felt that group learners were acknowledged by the series they were currently using while the results of the textbook analysis pointed to a completely different situation. Group activities were without question far more infrequent than individual activities, which can be seen in the tables presented in Chapter 5 as well as in the present chapter. Perhaps the problem here related to tendencies and preferences as EFL lessons in Finland at the moment are somewhat focused on communication and collaboration. Consequently, even if the EFL textbook series offered fewer group activities than individual activities for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, the teachers could have grown accustomed to using as many group activities as possible during lessons while leaving the individual activities as homework. Consequently, teachers themselves would not have been present when their pupils worked on a number of individual activities, which in turn could have skewed the teachers’ view on the ratio

of group activities to individual activities in the pupils' material. Whatever the reasons, the views teachers had on the number of kinaesthetic, tactile and group activities in the textbook series they were using differed noticeably from the results of the textbook analysis, which offers an interesting starting point for future studies on the subject.

The overall situation in Finland according to the teachers seemed to be rather good for visual, auditory, group and individual learners. Kinaesthetic learners were somewhat less supported by the textbook series while tactile learners were noticeably less acknowledged in all textbook series with the exception of *All Stars 3* and *Let's Go! 3* which supported all learner types relatively well according to the teachers. Otherwise ranking the books from best to worst on any continuum was problematic with the low number of respondents that reported to use each textbook series. Thus, basing the ranking on small variations between different textbook series would have raised a question of reliability and validity. What was important, however, was the overall picture the responses gave. That is, the teachers saw all five textbook series as to support all learner types except for kinaesthetic and especially tactile learners. The overall percentages can be seen in Table 18 which can be said to resemble the tables given for each textbook series. Consequently, in general the teachers in the present study seemed to have similar views on each textbook series.

Table 25. The overall percentages of agreeing responses to the statement: "The textbook series I am using acknowledges x learners well" in comparison to the overall number of each activity type in the five exercise books found in the textbook analysis.



It is important to remember that Table 18 is based on overall agreement and does not offer specific information on strong and partial agreement. However, as mentioned before, as the number of respondents in the present study was relatively low in the scale of the whole country, the focus has to be on significant differences and overall direction of the responses especially when reporting the overall situation. In addition, as Table 18 aims to give an approximate number of each activity type, it is logical to give approximate percentages of the teachers' views as well. However, as the respondents in the present study were from different parts of the country, had different teaching experiences and were from different age groups it could be argued that Table 18 gives a suggestive view on the situation in Finland by representing the views of a very heterogeneous group of teachers.

The results of the textbook analysis gave a different view on the matter. In Table 18 the overall number of each activity type in the five textbook series offers a different approach to the extent Finnish 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook series support diverse learners. No percentages can be given here as the number of each activity type cannot be compared to any total number of activities in the five exercise books. This was due to the fact that each exercise could, and often did, contain several activity types. Again it can be argued that the ratios visible in Table 18 resemble the ratios of each table related to the five exercise books. For this reason it can be said that Table 18 gives a thorough and reliable overall picture of the current situation according to the textbook analysis. In conclusion, there were significant differences in the two sets of results, which can be best seen in the table above. Next, the significant findings and conclusions are presented in the concluding chapter of the present study. In addition, suggestions for future research are given.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to examine the role of perceptual learning styles in the classrooms of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers and most of all in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook series in Finland. The 63 teachers who responded to the questionnaire were mostly of the opinion that supporting perceptual learning styles varyingly was worthwhile as it could improve learning results as well as make learning more enjoyable. A common problem among the teachers was a lack of time. Moreover, some of the teachers felt that they did not have enough information on perceptual learning styles. All in all, the results of the questionnaire pointed to the teachers being interested in supporting different learners given that they had the required resources to do so. In other words, the teachers' responses gave a very optimistic view, even if only a suggestive one, on the current situation in Finland. This was important information for the present study for two major reasons. Firstly, knowing that the teachers were mostly interested in supporting learners with different perceptual learning styles gave their responses more validity – teachers who strive for balanced teaching and recognise its the possible benefits are most likely to take a questionnaire on the matter more seriously. If most teachers had not been interested in the topic, their responses might not have reflected the true suitability of the textbooks for different learners as this might also have signalled a lack of familiarity and commitment to the research. Secondly, the teachers' interest gave reason to believe that pupils would get the support they needed given that the textbook series had suitable material in them. In other words, material suitable for supporting pupils with different learning styles would be taken advantage of by the teachers. This, of course, was not one of the research questions of the present study but related to the topic very strongly as it has to be remembered that however extensively textbook series supported different learners, it is always the teacher who decides how to use the material in class.

The textbook series were approached from two perspectives including the teachers' views on the books as well as the textbook analysis. Firstly, the overall picture of the teachers' views on the five textbook series seemed to be rather positive: all learning styles were acknowledged in the textbook series except for tactile learning which caused variation in the teachers' responses in regard to nearly every textbook series. This variation was stronger for some textbooks than others. However, as the number of teachers who responded was relatively low in the scale of the whole country, ranking the textbook series from the most suited to the worst suited to any one learning style was problematic. This was not, however, the aim of the present study as the focus was on the

overall situation. In conclusion, all learning styles were relatively well acknowledged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook series according to teachers except for tactile learning. The results of the textbook analysis led to similar conclusion in regard to visual, auditory and individual learners even if auditory activities in the exercise books were relatively more infrequent than visual and individual ones. Tactile activities were also found to be one of the most infrequent activity types in all five textbook series, even if the teachers' responses pointed to a slightly more positive situation. Kinaesthetic and group activities were, however, infrequent based on the textbook analysis. In fact, kinaesthetic activities were at least as infrequent as tactile activities if not even more infrequent. The number of group activities was not as low but in comparison to individual activities group activities were significantly more infrequent. Reasons for these contradictions in the two sets of results have been given in Chapter 6 including e.g. differing views on what supporting different learning styles can mean in real-life situations as well as a different understanding of the exercises of the exercise books in regard to what activities they include.

Three major conclusions can be made based on the results and to answer the three research questions. Firstly, teachers are mostly interested in supporting diverse learners. Moreover, they believe that the support can lead to beneficial consequences for the pupils. Secondly, the five textbook series acknowledge all learning styles relatively well except for tactile learning according to the teachers. Finally, the results of the textbook analysis pointed to a more negative image of the textbook series as both tactile and kinaesthetic activities were highly infrequent and group activities noticeably more infrequent than individual activities. Based on the results it could be argued that at least tactile learning should be acknowledged more as both the teachers' views and the textbook analysis pointed to a low number of activities for tactile learners in the textbook series. This was hypothesised in Chapter 3, and it is a worrying conclusion as it was already mentioned that tactile learning is a common if not one of the most common learning styles among 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Thus, tactile learners should receive a great deal more attention in the future given that a high number of pupils in Finland are indeed tactile.

Based on the results of the present study a great deal of further research can be suggested. Firstly, as most of the literature used in the present study was not Finnish, it would be important to examine whether young children – including 3<sup>rd</sup> graders – in Finland are indeed as tactile as the literature might suggest. From this it would come natural to study the effects of the possibly low number of tactile activities offered in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL textbook series on the mostly tactile pupils. Secondly, the views of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL teachers should be examined more specifically by using varying research

methods allowing them to explicate how they determine the different learning styles and how they view the current situation in Finland. This further research should include a far higher number of participants, a more specific questionnaire followed by interviews with the teachers. Classroom observation could be used to better understand the possible ways of realising an exercise in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL classroom. Also, interviewing the textbook series' designers could offer an interesting approach on the topic. Questions about the importance of supporting learning styles as well as explicating each learning style should be included in the interview for researchers to build a thorough picture of the situation and possibly understand why tactile and possibly kinaesthetic learning was not as well acknowledged as other learning styles and why group activities were more infrequent than individual activities. Thirdly, the actual effects of acknowledging the six learning styles in class should be researched more thoroughly in Finland. For example, examining the effects of the support on learning in regard to pleasantness and learning results should be the focus of further research as these two points are increasingly important in the modern 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EFL classroom. The possibility of making learning more pleasant through preventing boredom or increasing motivation should be included in this research. Finally, the possibility of supplementing the list of six learning styles or possibly removing a style from the list should be thought of based on new research and possibly according to which grade is being researched. In relation to this it would be very important to explicate what is meant by each learning style and how exactly they can be acknowledged in published material and in class.



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## APPENDIX I

### Questionnaire for the 3rd grade EFL teachers

#### Oppimistyyliit 3. luokan englannin oppikirjoissa

Opiskelen englanninopettajaksi Jyväskylän yliopistossa ja teen gradua alakoulun 3. luokan englannin oppikirjoista ja niiden sopivuudesta erilaisille oppijoille. Tutkimuksessa keskityn erityisesti seuraaviin tapoihin oppia: visuaalisesti (näköaistin avulla), auditiivisesti (kuuloaistin avulla), kinesteettisesti (liikeaistin avulla), taktiilisesti (tuntoaistin avulla), ryhmässä ja yksin. Käytännön syistä näistä tavoista käytetään tässä kyselyssä termiä oppimistyyliit. Oppimistyylien huomioinnilla tarkoitetaan opetusmenetelmiä, jotka tukevat yllämainittuja tapoja oppia.

Vastaaminen vie aikaa noin 15 min ja tapahtuu täysin anonymisti. Vastaamista helpottaa, jos pidät lähettyvillä käyttämääsi 3. luokan englannin teksti- ja tehtäväkirjaa. Jokaisen sivun lopussa olevaan Vapaa sana -kenttään voit halutessasi lyhyesti avata vastauksiasi tai kirjoittaa muita ajatuksiasi asiaan liittyen.

Huom! Kaikki tässä kyselyssä esitetyt väittämät koskevat 3. luokan englannin oppitunteja sekä näillä oppitunneilla käyttämääsi kirjasarjaa. Oppimistyyleillä tarkoitetaan nimenomaan edellä lueteltuja tyyliä.

#### I TAUSTATIEDOT

1. Ikä

Valitse  20-25  26-30  31-35  36-40  41-45  
 46-50  51-55  56-60  61-65  66-70

2. Koulutus ja valmistumisvuosi

---

3. Kuinka kauan olet toiminut alakoulun opettajana (kuukausina tai vuosina)?

---

4. Kuinka kauan olet opettanut englantia alakoulussa (kuukausina tai vuosina)?

---

5. Minkä nimistä teksti- ja tehtäväkirjaa käytät tällä hetkellä 3. luokan englannin oppitunneilla (kirjojen nimet ja numero, esim. Let's Go! 3 Storybook ja Activity Book)? Jos käytät useampaa kuin yhtä kirjasarjaa 3. luokan englannin opetuksessa, valitse yksi kirjasarja tätä kyselyä varten.

---

6. Kuinka kauan olet käyttänyt kyseisiä kirjoja opetuksessasi?

Valitse  useita vuosia  joitakin kuukausia  
 enemmän kuin vuoden  joitakin viikkoja  
 noin vuoden  joitakin päiviä

7. Kuinka usein käytät kyseisiä kirjoja 3. luokan opetuksessasi?

- Valitse  joka oppitunnilla  harvemmin kuin joka toisella oppitunnilla  
 suurimmalla osalla oppitunneista  hyvin harvoin  
 noin joka toisella oppitunnilla

8. Kuinka usein käytät kyseisten kirjojen ulkopuolista materiaalia opetuksessasi?

- Valitse  joka oppitunnilla  harvemmin kuin joka toisella oppitunnilla  
 suurimmalla osalla oppitunneista  hyvin harvoin  
 noin joka toisella oppitunnilla

Vapaa sana

## II OPPIMISTYYLEIEN MERKITYS OPETUKSESSA

Vastaa seuraaviin väittämiin valitsemalla sopivin numero asteikolla 1-5.

1= täysin eri mieltä

2= jokseenkin eri mieltä

3= en osaa sanoa

4= jokseenkin samaa mieltä

5= täysin samaa mieltä

Ole hyvä ja lue ensin alla annetut esimerkit tavoista, joilla eri oppimistyytlejä voidaan huomioida.

### VISUAALISET OPPIJAT - NÄKÖAISTI

kuvat, taulukot, mielikuvitusta aktivoivat tehtävät, isot otsikot, alleviivaukset tai muut korostukset tekstissä

### AUDITIIVISET OPPIJAT - KUULOAISTI

pari- ja ryhmäkeskustelut, ääneen lukeminen tai selittäminen, kuuntelut, musiikki

### KINESTEETTISET OPPIJAT - LIIKEAISTI

roolileikit, näytteleminen, projektityöt, ruuanlaitto, retket, liikkumista vaativat pelit ja laulut, luokassa liikkuminen, jumpat

### TAKTIILISET OPPIJAT - TUNTOAISTI

palapelit, tulosteet, taululle kirjoittaminen, tietokone tehtävät, erilaisten pintamateriaalien, kuten hiekkapaperin tai kankaiden kanssa työskentely, kirjainten tai sanojen jäljentäminen, selkään piirtäminen, nopan käyttö

### RYHMÄOPPIJAT

pari- tai ryhmätyöt, pari- tai ryhmäkeskustelut, muiden ihmisten tapaaminen luokan ulkopuolella

### YKSILÖOPPIJAT

itsenäiset tehtävät, yksilöön keskittyminen

Huom! Oppimistyytleillä tarkoitetaan pelkästään yllä mainittuja tyytlejä.

- |  |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 1. Otan opetuksessani huomioon kaikki oppimistyylit.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 2. Pidän erilaisten oppimistyylien huomioimista tärkeänä.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 3. Uskon, että eri oppimistyyliä huomioimalla voidaan päästä parempiin oppimistuloksiin.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 4. Olen valmis käyttämään ylimääräistä aikaa oppimistyylien huomiointiin oppitunteja suunnitellessa. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 5. Haluan olla varma siitä, että huomioin oppitunneillani vaihtelevasti eri oppimistyyliä.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 6. Haluaisin soveltaa tietoa oppimistyyleistä opetusmenetelmiini mutta sille ei ole tarpeeksi aikaa. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 7. Uskon, että eri oppimistyylien tukeminen tekee oppimisesta mieluisampaa.                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
| 8. Minulla on tarpeeksi tietoa oppimistyyleistä pystyäkseni soveltamaan sitä oppitunneilla.          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
- Vapaa sana

### III OPPIKIRJOJEN SOPIVUUS ERILAISILLE OPPIJOILLE

Vastaa seuraaviin väittämiin edellisen osion tapaan asteikolla 1-5.

1= täysin eri mieltä

2= jokseenkin eri mieltä

3= en osaa sanoa

4= jokseenkin samaa mieltä

5= täysin samaa mieltä

Alla vielä esimerkit tavoista, joilla eri oppimistyyliä voidaan tukea.

#### VISUAALISET OPPIJAT - NÄKÖAISTI

kuvat, taulukot, mielikuvitusta aktivoivat tehtävät, isot otsikot, alleviivaukset tai muut korostukset tekstissä

#### AUDITIIVISET OPPIJAT - KUULOAISTI

pari- ja ryhmäkeskustelut, ääneen lukeminen tai selittäminen, kuuntelut, musiikki

#### KINESTEETTISET OPPIJAT - LIIKEAISTI

roolileikit, näytteleminen, projektityöt, ruuanlaitto, retket, liikkumista vaativat pelit ja

laulut, luokassa liikkuminen, jumpat

#### TAKTIILISET OPPIJAT - TUNTOAISTI

palapelit, tulosteet, taululle kirjoittaminen, tietokonetehtävät, erilaisten pintamateriaalien, kuten hiekkapaperin tai kankaiden kanssa työskentely, kirjainten tai sanojen jäljentäminen, selkään piirtäminen, nopan käyttö

#### RYHMÄOPPIJAT

pari- tai ryhmätyöt, pari- tai ryhmäkeskustelut, muiden ihmisten tapaaminen luokan ulkopuolella

#### YKSILÖOPPIJAT

itsenäiset tehtävät, yksilöön keskittyminen

#### **Käyttämäni kirjasarja huomioi hyvin...**

	1	2	3	4	5
1. visuaaliset oppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. audittiiviset oppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. kinesteettiset oppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. taktiliset oppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. ryhmäoppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. yksilöoppijat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Vapaa sana

Olen kiinnostunut saamaan tietoa tutkimuksen tuloksista keväällä 2012.

sähköposti

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## APPENDIX II

### Examples of tasks supporting different learning styles

Example 1. An extract of a board game in *All Stars 3 Reader*, 41.





Example 2. An action song in *All Stars 3 Activity Book*, 40.

 **6** Kuuntele. Laula ja leiki mukana.

## Ten little fingers

One little, two little, three little fingers.



Four little, five little, six little fingers.

Seven little, eight little, nine little fingers.



Ten little fingers on my hands.

Ten little, nine little, eight little fingers.



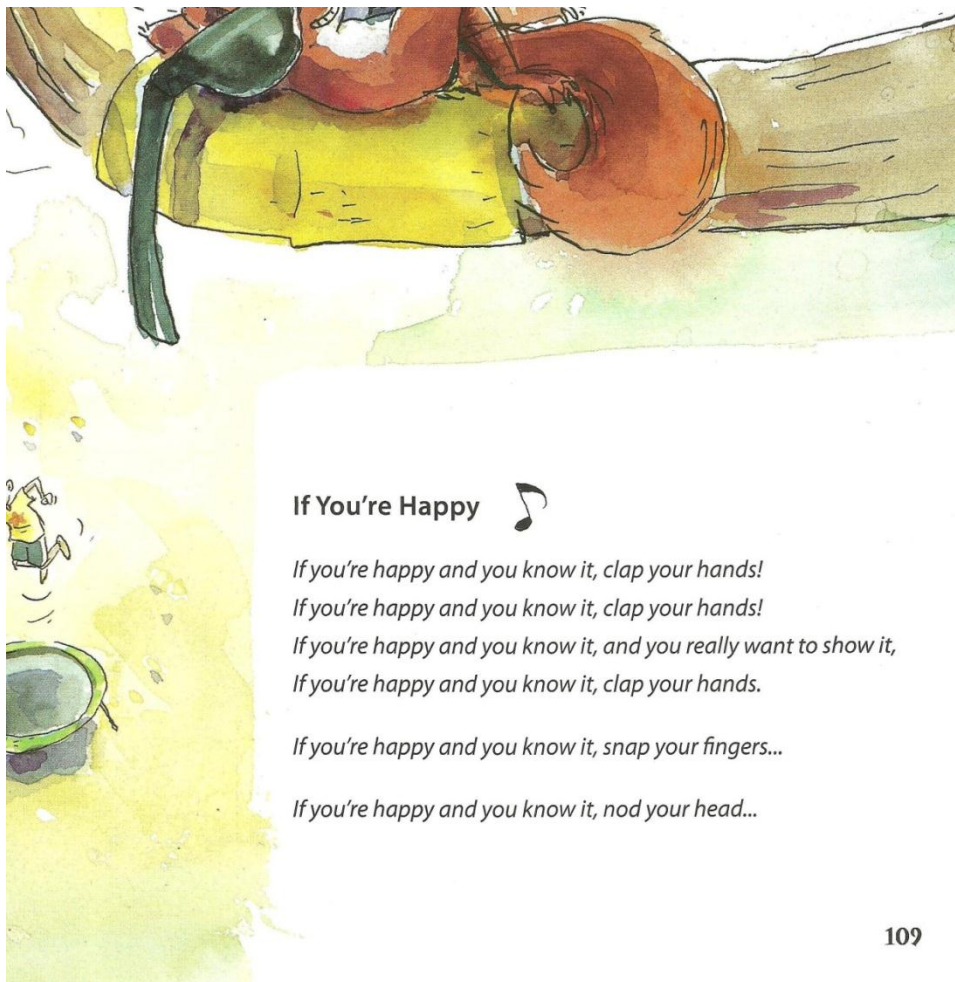
Seven little, six little, five little fingers.


Four little, three little, two little fingers.



One little finger on my hand.

Example 3. A kinaesthetic activity song in *Let's Go! 3 Storybook*, 109.



**If You're Happy** 


*If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!*  
*If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!*  
*If you're happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,*  
*If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.*

*If you're happy and you know it, snap your fingers...*

*If you're happy and you know it, nod your head...*


Example 4. An example of the use of colours in *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book*, 17.

**Homework**




**3. Täydennä lauseet sopivilla väreillä englanniksi.**


1. The elephant is \_\_\_\_\_.




2. The cat is \_\_\_\_\_.




3. The dog is \_\_\_\_\_.



4. The rat is \_\_\_\_\_.



5. The fox is \_\_\_\_\_.



Example 5. A song in *Let's Go! 3 Activity Book*, 42.

**5. Let's Learn Some New Words!**



 **1. Kuuntele ja laula mukana.**

### Family Song

*Mums and dads and aunts and uncles.  
Aunts and uncles,  
Aunts and uncles.  
Brothers, sisters, cousins, too.  
That's my family.*

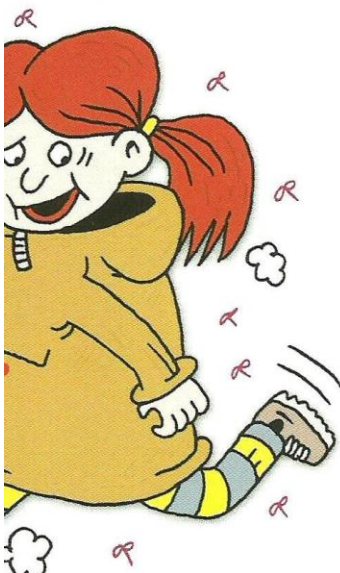
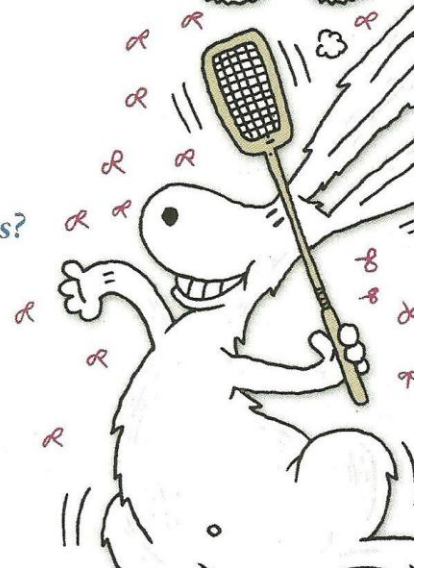


## Mosquito Rap

*Scratch your leg,  
Smack your arm,  
Turn around,  
Clap your hands.  
How many mosquitoes?*

*Scratch your ear,  
Smack your cheek,  
Turn around,  
Clap your hands.  
How many mosquitoes?*

*Scratch your back,  
Smack your mate,  
Turn around,  
Clap your hands.  
How many mosquitoes?*



Example 7. A board game in *What's On? 3 Do It*, 40.



10. Heitä noppaa ja etene. Sano englanniksi, mitä kuvassa on.  
Kun osaat, saat rastia kuvan ruokapelistä.  
Pelin loputtua laske pisteesi yhteen.

The board game grid consists of 10 rows and 5 columns. The right side of the grid is a 'JACKPOT' section with point values from 1 to 15. The grid contains various food items and point values in circles. A large blue arrow points from the top right towards the center of the grid.

Row	Col 1	Col 2	Col 3	Col 4	Col 5	Points
1	Peas in a pod	Spaghetti	Carrot	Butter	Candy	15 POINTS
2	Cucumber	Cheese, Spaghetti, Candy (1p)				14 POINTS
3	Orange	Apple, Orange, Strawberry (1p)				13 POINTS
4	Bean	Bean, Carrot, Donut (1p)	Candy (5p)			12 POINTS
5	Carrot	Pear, Ice cream, Corn (1p)	Cheese, Donut (2p)	Banana		11 POINTS
6	Ice cream	Ice cream, Banana (1p)	Carrot, Carrot, Orange (2p)			10 POINTS
7	Chocolate	Strawberry, Carrot, Orange (1p)	Banana, Banana, Orange (2p)	Pear		9 POINTS
8	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		8 POINTS
9	Chocolate	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		7 POINTS
10	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		6 POINTS
11	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		5 POINTS
12	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		4 POINTS
13	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		3 POINTS
14	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		2 POINTS
15	Cheese	Cheese, Donut	Strawberry	Orange		1 POINT

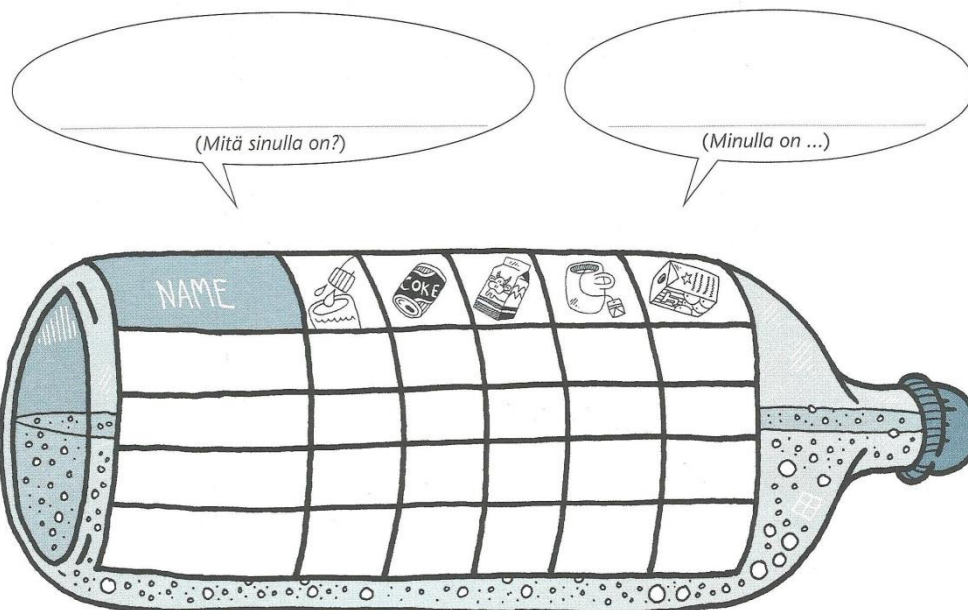
**JACKPOT**

15 POINTS  
14 POINTS  
13 POINTS  
12 POINTS  
11 POINTS  
10 POINTS  
9 POINTS  
8 POINTS  
7 POINTS  
6 POINTS  
5 POINTS  
4 POINTS  
3 POINTS  
2 POINTS  
1 POINT

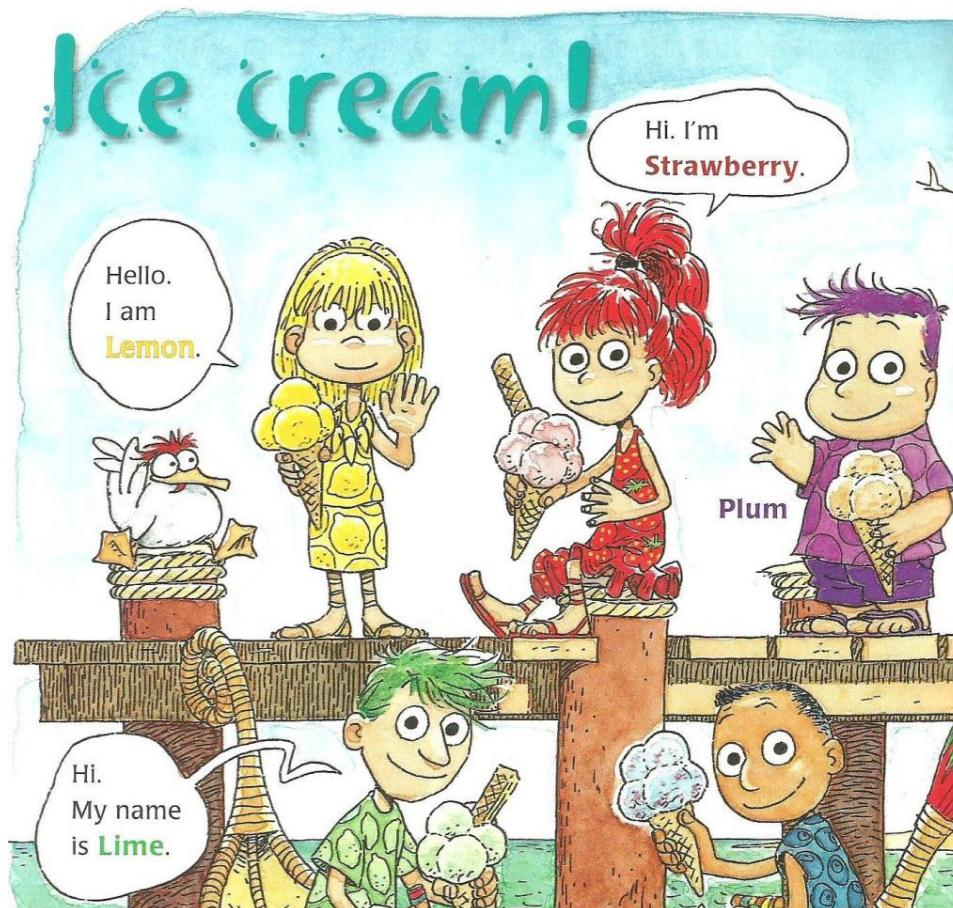
KUINKA MONTA PISTETTÄ KERÄSIT? MERKITSE RASTI.

Example 8. A poll in *What's On? 3 Do It*, 48.

- 5b. Kysy mitä muilla on.  
Kirjoita ensin puhekupliin englanniksi kysymys ja vastauksen alku.  
Merkitse vastaus rastilla.



Example 9. Some of the characters of *Wow! 3 Study Book*, 6.





# 4 Lemonade, please

## 1 Kuuntele ja toista.

lemonade	[lemə'neid]	sitruunajuoma	<b>Bananas?</b>
<b>hungry</b>	[hʌŋgri]	nälkäinen	Haluatko banaaneja?
<b>an apple</b>	[æpl]	omena	<b>No, thanks.</b>
juice	[dʒu:s]	mehu	Ei kiitos.
<b>want</b>	[wɒnt]	haluta	<b>Lemonade?</b>
some	[sʌm]	hieman	Haluatko sitruunajuomaa?
a drink	[driŋk]	juoma	<b>Yes, please.</b>
OK!	[əu'kei]	Hyvä on!	Kyllä kiitos.
<b>how about</b>	[hau ə'baut]	entä	
<b>thirsty</b>	[θɜ:sti]	janoinen	
Wow!	[wau]	Vau!	
<b>cold</b>	[kəuld]	kylmä	

Kuuntele lukukirjan kappale 4.



## 2 Kuuntele ja laula mukana.

### FOOD



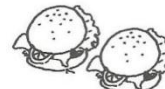
**pizza**  
[pitsə]



**chips**  
[tʃips]



**spaghetti**  
[spə'geti]



**hamburgers**  
[hæmbə:gəz]



**potatoes**  
[pə'teitəuz]



**salad**  
[sæləd]



**chicken**  
[tʃikin]



**fish**  
[fi]

**I'm hungry!**

food ruoka  
[fu:d]

Example 11. An action song in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*, 83.

5 Kuuntele ja laula mukana.

*∴ Head and shoulders,  
Knees and toes,  
Knees and toes. ∴*

*Eyes and ears,  
And mouth and nose.  
Head and shoulders,  
Knees and toes,  
Knees and toes.*



**a shoulder**  
[ˈʃəʊldə\*]  
olkapää

**a knee** [niː]  
polvi

**a toe** [təʊ]  
varvas

83

Example 12. An extract of a board game in *Wow! 3 Busy Book*, 103.



## FINISH

30 Touch your hair.

29 Play basketball.

28 Write your name on the board.

27 Touch your ears.

26 Play floorball.

25 Ask your friend "How are you?"

24 Draw a stamp on the board.

23 Play volleyball.

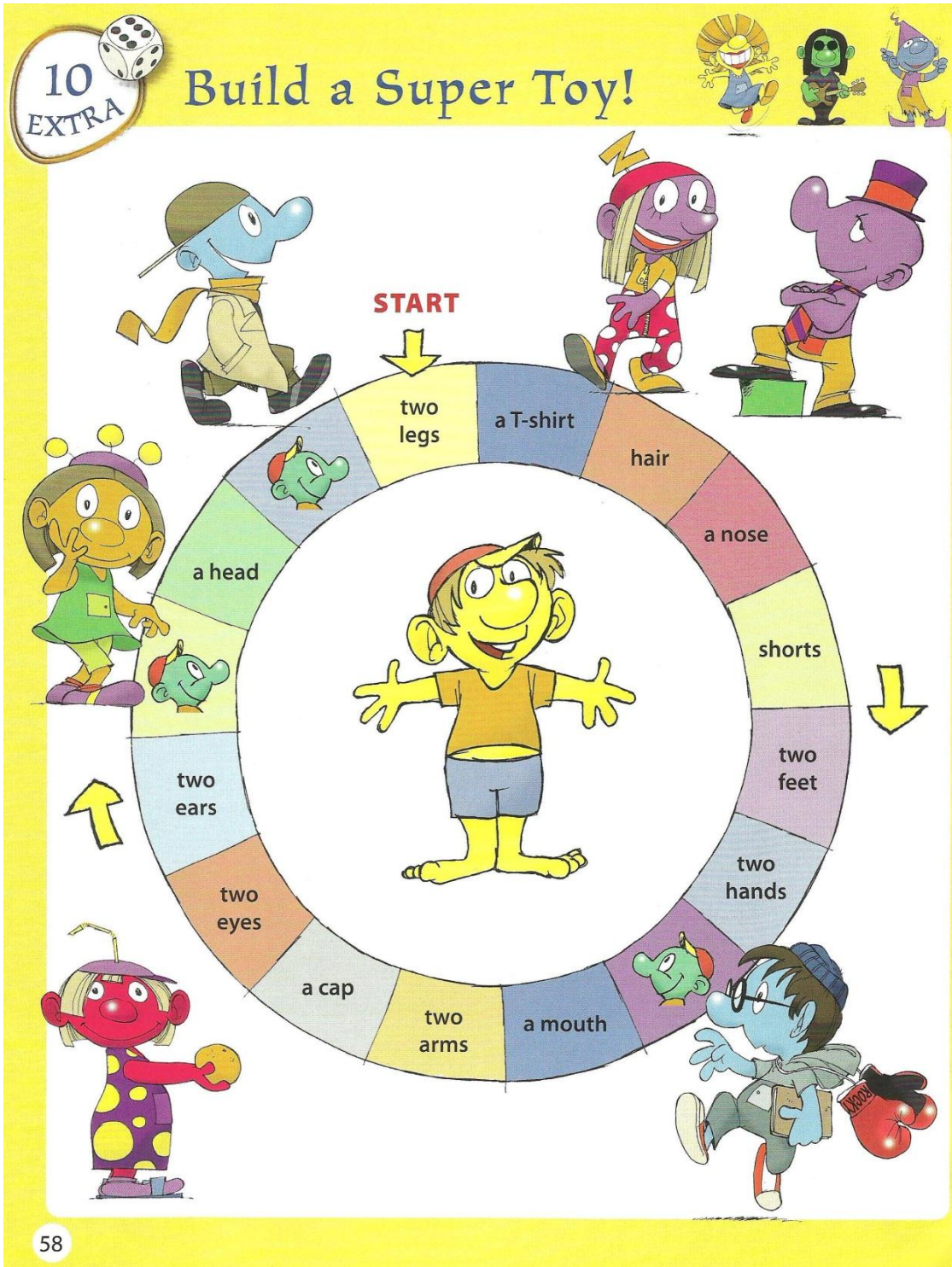
22 Close your eyes and count to five.

**clap** [klæp]  
taputtaa

**count**  
[kaunt]  
laskea

**ask** [aːsk]  
kysyä

Example 13. A board game in *Yippee! 3 Reader*, 58.





**7** Kuuntele ja toimi ohjeiden mukaan.



**8** Kuuntele ja laula.

Touch your eyes.  
Touch your ears.  
Touch your mouth.  
Touch your nose!

Touch your arms.  
Touch your legs.  
Touch your feet.  
Touch your toes!



touch  
[tʌtʃ]  
koskettaa

