

Lesson: Study Skills – Learning styles

Level: Pre-intermediate and above

Age: Secondary / Adult

Time: 60 minutes

Language objectives: to encourage learners to consider their own and each other's learning styles; to promote understanding of the use of communicative (less traditional) activities in the classroom

Key life skills: recognising and appreciating different social and personal styles of learning

Materials: one copy of worksheets A and B per pair of students



Teacher's notes

Procedure

1. Ask the class what kinds of activities they usually do in their English classes. Collect these ideas as a spider diagram on the board. Elicit examples, e.g. if they suggest games, ask them to explain one of the games they have played in class. This tends to highlight differences between learners' experiences from different countries and backgrounds.

2. Divide the class into pairs (A and B) and hand the worksheets to each pair. (Go through the statements to check understanding with lower levels.)

Each learner should interview his or her partner using the questions on their worksheet.

Each statement needs to be ranked 0–10. Zero (0) means they completely disagree with the statement and 10 means they completely agree with the statement. It is important that learners know there are no wrong or right answers; the aim of the activity is discussion and thought.

3. Invite learners to feedback by sharing some of their findings with the class. For larger classes, regroup pairs into groups of four to briefly compare their findings first.

For higher-level learners (intermediate and above), ask pairs to prepare a summary of their findings using both and neither, e.g. both / neither of us thought that ...

If learners are capable, open up a whole-class discussion about different ways of learning and effective ways of teaching.

4. Regroup the learners into pairs again.

Give them a language point that is suitable for their level i.e. elementary: a / an, pre-intermediate: basic comparatives and superlatives, intermediate: the present perfect, etc and ask them to prepare a five-minute activity on the chosen language point based on their findings.

Learners will need reminding of the spider diagram of ideas on the board (step one). Learners could use a selection of course and resource books for ideas. Learners rarely get the chance to explore materials in this way and enjoy the freedom. It's also interesting from a teacher's perspective to see which books or activities catch their interest.

5. Finally, group the pairs into groups of four and ask the groups to try their activities out on each other. Monitor the activity carefully to provide support when necessary and see for yourself what works and what doesn't.

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Partner A

Interview your partner

On a scale of 0–10 how much do you agree with the following statements?
(0 = don't agree at all, 10 = totally agree)

Name of partner: _____

- 1. A dictionary is important for studying English.
- 2. I need to be corrected whenever I make mistakes.
- 3. Speaking in class is important.
- 4. I am embarrassed when I make mistakes.
- 5. I need to write down new vocabulary to remember it.
- 6. I learn new grammar or vocabulary by practising it in writing.
- 7. Translating is important.
- 8. Seeing how a word is written is important for me to remember it.
- 9. I can remember a word after hearing it only once.
- 10. I enjoy reading activities.

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Partner B

Interview your partner

On a scale of 0–10 how much do you agree with the following statements?

(0 = don't agree at all, 10 = totally agree)

Name of partner: _____

- 1. I don't like it when I am corrected.
- 2. I enjoy speaking activities.
- 3. It is better if the teacher explains a word in English (not translating).
- 4. I like learning grammar rules.
- 5. I enjoy reading activities.
- 6. I learn better when I write things down.
- 7. It doesn't matter if we make some mistakes when we are speaking, as long as people can understand us.
- 8. I like playing language games in class.
- 9. I prefer to work alone.
- 10. I don't know how I learn best.