



ADAPTING TEACHING METHODS TO MATCH LEARNING STYLES IN EFL

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18129787>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 28th December 2025

Accepted: 29th December 2025

Online: 30th December 2025

KEYWORDS

EFL, learning styles, teaching methods, language acquisition, visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners, learner-centered approach.

ABSTRACT

adapting teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles is essential in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom to enhance student engagement and improve language acquisition. This paper explores various learning styles commonly found among EFL learners and discusses how tailored teaching strategies can meet their diverse needs. By aligning instructional techniques with learners' preferences—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing—educators can foster more effective and inclusive learning environments. The study highlights practical approaches and the benefits of flexible teaching methods, ultimately advocating for a learner-centered approach in EFL education.

Introduction

The growing diversity in classrooms poses challenges for EFL teachers, who must address the unique needs of learners with varying preferences and strengths. Recognizing that students absorb information differently is crucial for effective instruction. Learning styles—defined as the preferred ways individuals process information—play a significant role in how learners engage with new language material. This paper reviews the importance of adapting teaching strategies to fit these styles to maximize language learning outcomes.

Main body

Matching learning styles with teaching methods has become a very important aspect of improving the quality of EFL teaching. All learners bring different ways of processing and absorbing information into the classroom, which may significantly influence their engagement and achievement in language learning. Disregarding these differences, traditional "one-size-fits-all" methods result in disengagement and slower achievements. Hence, for an EFL teacher, acquiring information about and responding to the different learning styles is vital to fostering students' full potential and to making a class more interactive and open to individual differences. Learning styles are the ways people like to perceive, interact with, and retain information. In EFL contexts, such styles include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing. Visual learners learn better through images, charts, and visual props; auditory ones learn well with listening and speaking activities; for kinesthetic learners, there has to be some sort of physical action involved with movement, whereas reading/writing learners learn better when working with texts. By pinpointing these preferences, it will also

enable the teacher to construct more relevant lessons that are more appealing to the learners, thus effecting better retention and application of the language [1]. Visual learners often thrive when lessons incorporate pictures, diagrams, videos, and graphic organizers. In an EFL classroom, teachers can use pictures to introduce new vocabulary, charts to explain grammar rules, and videos to provide contextual language use. This approach helps visual learners make connections between words and their meanings or functions. For instance, presenting verb tenses with a timeline graphic or using illustrated flashcards can allow these learners to “see” language structures in action, making abstract elements more tangible and easier to understand [2].

Auditory learners absorb language best through listening and speaking. To engage these learners, EFL teachers should emphasize activities such as listening to recordings, participating in conversations, and repeating phrases aloud. Songs, podcasts, and dialogues in English allow auditory learners to pick up pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary naturally. Group discussions or oral presentations also provide opportunities for these learners to process language through hearing and speaking, which can significantly improve their comprehension and fluency.

Kinesthetic learners, who learn by doing, require movement and hands-on activities to grasp new language concepts fully. In EFL classrooms, role plays, language games, and physical involvement in activities like acting out scenarios or using objects relevant to vocabulary can enhance learning for these students. This engagement not only helps kinesthetic learners retain new knowledge better but also increases motivation by making lessons less passive and more interactive. Incorporating movement into learning thus becomes vital for sustaining attention and aiding memorization for this group. Reading/writing learners prefer interacting with text, which aligns well with traditional classroom practices but needs to be strategically adapted. For these learners, extensive reading, writing exercises, and note-taking are essential. Encouraging these learners to write essays, keep journals, or summarize texts allows them to process language through output, deepening their understanding of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Additionally, providing written instructions and handouts supports their ability to study independently and reinforces learning through repetition in written form [3].

Despite the clear benefits of tailoring methods to learning styles, teachers often face challenges in implementation. Large class sizes, limited resources, and time constraints can make personalized instruction difficult. Moreover, students rarely have purely one preferred style; most are multimodal learners who benefit from a combination of methods. Thus, rather than rigidly categorizing learners, teachers should aim for a flexible, balanced approach that integrates multiple teaching techniques to cover a spectrum of preferences, ensuring no learner is left behind.

The advantages of adapting teaching methods in EFL extend beyond improved language skills. When learners are engaged through their preferred channels, they experience greater motivation, confidence, and autonomy in the learning process. Tailoring instruction promotes active participation and helps build individualized learning strategies, allowing students to take ownership of their progress. Over time, this inclusive, student-centered approach fosters not only language competency but also lifelong learning skills.

Adapting teaching methods to match learning styles in the EFL classroom is an effective strategy to enhance language acquisition and learner engagement. Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing learners each require distinct approaches, and successful teachers are those who recognize and incorporate these differences skillfully. While challenges exist, adopting a flexible, inclusive style-sensitive pedagogy enriches the learning experience and contributes to more successful outcomes for diverse student populations. EFL educators should, therefore, prioritize understanding learners' styles and continuously refine their teaching to support the unique needs of every student.

Conclusion

Adapting teaching methods to match learners' styles is vital in the EFL context. By understanding and addressing visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing preferences, teachers can create dynamic and effective learning experiences. While challenges exist, a flexible, learner-centered strategy promotes engagement, supports differentiated instruction, and ultimately contributes to successful language acquisition. EFL educators should prioritize these adaptations to meet the diverse needs of their students and optimize educational outcomes.

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