



**Universitat**  
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## **MASTER'S THESIS**

# **IMPROVING STUDENTS' PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF LEARNING STYLES**

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**Master's Degree in Teacher Training**

**(Specialisation/Pathway *English and German*)**

**Centre for Postgraduate Studies**

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Key words:

English as a Foreign Language, Learning Styles, VARK Questionnaire, Production skills.

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## **Abstract**

It is commonly known that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students usually have difficulties when they are asked to comprehend, and specially produce both written and oral texts. In fact, production skills (speaking and writing) are known to be the ones with which students have the most problems, and there are numerous studies that demonstrate this. Therefore, teachers must maximise all their professionalism to facilitate the development of students' competences related to the English language, and not follow traditional methodologies that may neither include all types of learners nor bring out the best of students. Thus, this paper deals with the use of learning styles in the instruction of speaking and writing skills in EFL classes, with the main purpose being to eventually apply this methodology to all the skills. Accordingly, based on the theoretical background, a study will be conducted with 25 first year Post-Obligatory Secondary Education students with the objective of truly identifying the benefits and drawbacks of using learning styles in EFL classes. Finally, based on the results and the opinions of the subjects, who generally state that this methodology is quite beneficial and necessary, a didactic proposal that may help students take advantage of their learning styles will be suggested.

**Key Words:** English as a Foreign Language, Learning Styles, VARK Questionnaire, Production skills.

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## **1. Introduction**

English as a Foreign Language (EFL from now onwards) has become one of the most important subjects at schools, due to its situation as the lingua franca that gives non-native speakers with different mother tongues (L1s from here onwards) the possibility, for example, to communicate with other people in English for business or cultural reasons. As a result, it would seem reasonable to affirm that teachers should put a lot of emphasis on the learning process and students' performance of English. However, non-native English learners tend to find difficulties with the learning process entailed both when trying to comprehend and produce this language. For this reason, both students and teachers ought to do their best to find a way to bring out the best in themselves, their abilities, their capacities, and their way of learning and take advantage of them.

### 1.1. Justification

This line of research has been chosen due to three different aspects observed during my experience as an English student and as an English teacher. Be as it may, all of these causes will be duly justified throughout this paper with facts and opinions that will support or reject them.

Firstly, from my personal experience as a student of EFL, I have realised on many occasions that both my non-native colleagues and myself have found the so-called production skills (writing and speaking) the most difficult to perform in the English language.

Secondly, also from my experience as a student, I have observed that teachers usually offer a unique methodology (which may be the one that convinces them the most) but does not give students much freedom to learn in the way that best suits them. As a result, I would like to test whether a methodology that includes the preferred learning styles of the students makes their learning process more efficient and easier.

Finally, I personally believe that this new methodology can help students

not only in their academic life, but also in their personal and professional lives, as they will be more efficient if they know their capabilities and use them to their advantage.

## 1.2. Objectives

Taking into account that the core intentions of this paper, which are: a) to help students become familiar with and understand their own particular learning style(s) which will facilitate their foreign language learning process; b) to provide students with tools and resources which are helpful for their organisation, time management and learning development and; c) to propose a flexible methodology applicable to all skills (although, as will be explained in more detail, this dissertation is going to focus on writing and speaking) that would be useful for all types of learners, the whole study will try to reach these goals.

To achieve these objectives, this study will be divided into three main sections. First of all, a theoretical background will be constructed, pointing out the ideas of several experts on central topics and their opinions about some of the main controversial issues regarding learning styles. In this part, some of the results of study cases carried out by different authors and their conclusions will be compared and discussed. The last part of this section will be devoted to the revision of the most important educational laws that must be taken into account when analysing the methodologies used in the Spanish Educational System.

The second part of this paper includes an initial experiment in which a learning-style-based methodology is introduced of in a real class of Post Obligatory Secondary Education students. The learning style(s) of these pupils will be analysed and the students in question will be informed of their main learning style, in order to use them afterwards to apply a new approach focused on learning styles to some activities related to writing and speaking. Finally, students will be given a questionnaire in which they will be asked to express their sensations and opinions about the method used.

Thanks to the results and analysis of this questionnaire, a conclusion will

be extracted and in section 6, a didactic proposal with some writing and speaking activities using this methodology will be suggested.

## **2. Literature review**

In order to fulfil the main objective, a theoretical background by authors who have previously conducted research on this topic will be provided. In this way, the development of the study, the collection of data, and their subsequent analysis, will have a theoretical basis and will be supported by arguments previously studied by experts in the field. For this reason, several thematic blocks have been included: a) the instruction of production skills and their difficulty for EFL students; b) a revision of the traditional language teaching and learning field which does not take learning styles into account; c) the origin and the definition of learning styles, their different classifications according to the different models, from which the VARK Method (which stands for Visual, Aural, Reading and Writing, and Kinesthetic) and its webpage will be extensively detailed; d) some previous studies that have analysed the correlation between learning styles and EFL learning; and, e) finally, a section dedicated to European, Spanish and the Balearic Islands' own legislations in relation to EFL, since the students who will be the individuals of the study are being subjected to the application of these laws and, therefore, this will have implications for them which will be better analysed with the help of the current legislation.

### 2.1 Traditional classes

Traditionally, conventional English classes have followed the *teacher-centred* methodology -the teacher takes the active role in class and they totally manage the class- and focused on the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learners. In this way, teachers, who are the ones who master the knowledge, make the decision of what to teach the students as well as other decisions “concerning the curriculum, teaching methods, and the different forms

of assessment” (Lak, Parvaneh & Soleimani, 2017, p.1). Students, on the other hand, are considered ignorant in learning and teaching, they are simply passive agents who absorb the teachers’ knowledge (sometimes without even understanding it) and put it on a piece of paper on the day of the exam to forget about it the following day. Freed and Huba (2000) as cited in Lak, Parvaneh and Soleimani (2017) state that with this approach “[t]here is no room for student’s personal growth” (p. 3). Accordingly, traditional classes are those in which “instruction is closely managed and controlled by the authority of the classroom (i.e., the teacher)” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, as cited in Lak, Parvaneh & Soleimani, 2017, p.3) and the role of the students is simply to “respond in agreement to teacher questions, and where whole-class instruction is preferred to other methods” (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, as cited in Lak, Parvaneh & Soleimani, 2017, p. 3). This causes students to be frustrated, since they do not feel engaged with the methodology and teachers “have less motivation for innovation in teaching” (Emaliana, 2017, p. 60).

Furthermore, teachers, instead of innovating, are accustomed to organising their classes by just following a textbook and explaining the contents and the exercises proposed by the book, which in the majority of cases are based on grammar, and on the positive linguistic transferences between the target and the native languages. This is the reason why teachers do not care about students’ necessities, learning styles, abilities, difficulties, etc., because they focus too much on covering all the contents instead of critically selecting them, by using different methodologies (Emaliana, 2017). On the other hand, “students tend to be more competitive and individualistic because they have less opportunity to think aloud or interact” (Emaliana, 2017, p. 60), and this has significant consequences on students’ learning performance. According to the main coexistence principles, group cohesion is indispensable for the prevention of conflicts in class, and with these methodologies, with which teachers do not need to worry about students’ necessities, they reinforce students’ lack of empathy, insecurity, etc. (Emaliana, 2017)



Bisschoff and Du Plessis (2007) explain the importance of taking into account different types of diversities in a class. Specifically, the authors devote a whole section to the “invisible diversity” (p. 246) in which they include students’ learning styles. In this sense, Bisschoff and Du Plessis (2007) establish that “many classrooms ignore the implications of diversity of learning styles” (p. 248). In fact, Rogers (2001) as cited in Bisschoff and Du Plessis (2007), states that the conventional approach “homogenise[s] the learning process of a diversity of students” (p. 248) and “makes them think that other pedagogies are either not right or are only useful outside the classroom” (p. 248). In this way, the students think that their learning style is not the right one and they are forced to adapt themselves to the particular methodologies used by the teacher. Consequently, many teachers see their students as frustrated and unmotivated, and sometimes it is not because they are not interested in the subject, but because the traditional methodology does not help them express themselves as people and develop their abilities according to their psychological and learning method. It is considered that “a teacher cannot consistently ignore a whole sector of the class simply because their learning styles do not correspond to the teacher’s preferred teaching habits” (Bisschoff & Du Plessis, 2007, p. 248). Hence, this Master (MA) dissertation suggests that traditional methodologies should be put aside and learning styles should be recognised and used in class to motivate and facilitate students’ learning and acquisition process.

## 2.2 Production skills.

When learning a language, beginners should focus on the four main areas of a language, namely, comprehension and production of oral texts, and comprehension and production of written texts (in other words, listening, speaking, reading and writing). However, this dissertation will focus on text production skills for the reasons detailed below. It is commonly known that EFL students (specially secondary school students) usually have difficulties with

their English performance. It is remarkable, though, that teachers insist on students trying to imitate native speakers' production of the language, when they should know that this is extremely difficult, since the acquisition of a language differs from the process of learning. While the process of acquisition is preceded by a need to communicate, by spontaneous relationships and by total environmental immersion, formal language learning is subject to self-monitoring or self-correction of the linguistic production that takes place when the speaker has time to reflect on and observe their production (Canera & Elbes, 1998). Therefore, if the objective is that students learn the aspects of the language to, eventually, acquire it, teachers -in this very superficial environment for learning a language that is high school- must maximise all their efforts and professionalism to facilitate the students' process of learning.

Specifically, production skills (speaking and writing) are known to be the two skills with which students have the most difficulty, and there are numerous studies that prove this. Rattanadilok Na Phuket (2015), for instance, notes that "[m]astering English writing skill is a very difficult task for the learners of English as a foreign language (EFL)" (p. 99). In this sense the author claims that a "good writing requires a text with complexity of syntax and morphology, a wide range of vocabulary, and a good command over conventional forms" (Rattanadilok Na Phuket, 2015, p. 100). It is almost impossible for one not to make a single mistake since EFL students do not even master all the aspects of writing previously detailed in their mother tongue, so it is very difficult for them to do it in a language that, in most cases, they are still learning. The study conducted in this paper determined that EFL students' most frequent errors are related to "literal translations" from their mother tongue, "verb tenses," "prepositions," "word choice," "verb forms," and "spellings" (Rattanadilok Na Phuket, 2015, p. 99). In the study, the aspects of a good writing were divided into three sections: "grammar, lexis, and writing mechanics" (Rattanadilok Na Phuket, 2015, p. 103). In this case, the grammatical aspect was found to be the most difficult one for students to master. Ashraf, Bilal and Fareed (2016) also

state that “[w]riting is the most challenging area in learning [a] second language” (Ashraf, Bilal & Fareed, 2016, p. 82), since students must master “syntax and morphology, a wide range of vocabulary, and a good command over conventional forms and over the means of signaling the relation of the texts” (Rattanadilok Na Phuket, 2015, p. 100). For this reason, one of the main hypothesis exposed in this paper is that the choice of resources and activities to deal with all the aspects that have to do with this skill, will determine the grade of success of the students.

On the other hand, as far as the speaking skill is concerned, Al Hosni (2014) highlights the fact that “it has been widely noticed that [students] face many difficulties in speaking English” (p. 22). One of the main reasons could be because the instruction of English oral production has not been considered important in recent decades. Previously, it was common that speaking was thought to be a skill that one acquires over time and by transferring writing strategies and techniques onto the oral production skill (Al Hosni, 2014). This, together with the grade of difficulty that practising the oral production of a language in an artificial environment implies and the approach teachers use to teach this skill, could be some of the main reasons why students find several difficulties in their oral production of the English language. According to the aforementioned study, shyness, going blank, little linguistic immersion, and linguistic interferences are the most feared aspects that EFL learners have to face when orally producing a discourse in English, and it suggests that these obstacles could be improved with the use of “teaching strategies” that match students’ necessities, that may be, learning styles (Rababa’h, 2005, as cited in Al Hosni, 2014, p. 24). The study about the factors that influence students’ errors in their speaking performance, conducted in this article, shows that one of the main errors detected is that “teachers focus on teaching grammar points and vocabulary items rather than teaching speaking..” (Al Hosni, 2014, p. 26). This approach could work for some of the students, but the results could reflect that another methodology (adapted to all types of students) is needed.

In summary, the authors previously mentioned remark the idea that this enormous difficulty for English language learners to fully master the production of oral and written texts is compounded by their low motivation towards the English classes. In fact, Ashraf, Bilal and Fareed (2016) go as far as to mention that this lack of interest that leads pupils not to become more involved in improving these aspects is due to the fact that they are incapable of realizing the importance of learning this language. Graham and Perin (2007), as cited in Ashraf, Bilal and Fareed (2016) believe that “students’ [...] abilit[ies] can be improved by fostering their interest, motivation and enjoyment for writing [and speaking].” Others, however, stress that neither the teachers nor the resources used, such as textbooks, as Derwing and Rossiter (2002) point out, use the appropriate strategies for each type of students’ learning styles (Mazlan, Mohamad Nor & Rajab, 2015). In this sense, this dissertation will analyse if adapting the materials used in class to the necessities of each student's learning style favours their academic success.

### 2.3 Learning styles

According to Keefe (1979), as cited in Brent and Felder (2005), the concept *learning style* may be defined as “[the] characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” (p. 58). They show the proclivity or predilection of individuals for the way they process any information (Skehan, 1991, as cited in DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003). That is, depending on the subjects’ “heredity, educational background, situational requirements, age, or other factors” (Lawrance, 1993 as cited in DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003, p. 86), they prefer to be taught and provided with materials and resources adapted to their preferred learning style. For example, some students are comfortable with a more theoretical and methodical learning, while others acquire the information through observation and in a more realistic and practical way. On the other hand, some prefer

individualistic work while others learn more with group exercises. Some students prefer the teacher to explain the lesson in a more visual way with diagrams and drawings, and other students get more out of the lesson by listening to what the teacher says (Brent & Felder, 2005). Be that as it may, there is no one style that is universally better or worse, but each one of them has a different impact on each person, providing them with advantages and difficulties (Brent & Felder, 2005). It is significant that, even though it is true that everyone can be classified into a type of learner depending on their learning style, the fact that a student has one preferred learning style does not mean that they do not have any other influences from other learning styles.

Additionally, it is important not to confuse learning styles with learning strategies, because although they are often used as synonyms, there is a big difference between these two concepts. First, learning strategies refer to the way in which students have to solve potential learning obstacles that may arise throughout their cognitive development process (DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003), and “[t]hese strategies can be learned, and students can consciously choose to apply one or another learning strategy to a given learning situation” (Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1985, as cited in DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003, p. 86). Conversely, as mentioned above, learning styles have an inherited component and mark the personality of each individual. That is, when a person unconsciously prefers to work with a particular learning style because the absorption of information is more accessible for them in this particular way (whether working alone, or together, with more aesthetic sources of information or more functional, etc.) is also unconsciously reflecting a part of their personality. Therefore, it must be taken into account that as people's personality evolve because of their personal growth and their exposure to different solutions, so does their learning style (DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003).

Given the influence that the theory of learning styles seems to have on the development of human competences, it is logical that in schools, where

these competences are enhanced and introduced, teachers should understand the styles of their students, take advantage of their benefits, and adapt the content to the premises of the theory of learning styles. In this way, this relatively revolutionary theory in education has recently spread and timidly raised in schools. In addition, researchers support this assumption and believe that the "compatibility" between the learning style used by the teacher in their classes and that of their students reinforces the student's success rate. In contrast, the "mismatch" between the two learning styles has a "negative impact" on their development (Oxford et al., 1991, as cited in DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003, p. 86; Felder & Henriques, 1995), since "[the d]isparity in teaching and learning styles is the root of the problems that many students face" (Ahmad, Mulalic & Shah, 2009, p. 10). For this reason, teachers should combine tasks and methodologies that include students' most used learning styles (DeCapua, Verna & Wintergerst, 2003).

Regarding the origin of learning styles, while one belief is that this concept is quite recent and little known, the truth is that Aristoteles in 334 BC already mentioned that there were lots of differences between children when it came to learning and their ways of learning. Later in time, Vigotsky and Piaget, two of the most influential psychologists and experts in children's development of language, confronted their ideas on the different ways children acquire a language, the importance of context and the environment to reach this goal, and innate elements in children's cognitive development that have an effect on their language production. Later, authors such as Howard Gardner, David Kolb and Neil Fleming classified the types of learning styles in different ways (Haswell, 2017). In the case of Garner, he thought that students learn in different ways, and that the best way to evaluate this was to accept that there are different types of learning and "came up with the idea of multiple intelligences" (Haswell, 2017, p. 3). Thus, Garner considers multiple types of intelligences using different parts of the brain in which he believes all kinds of personalities are reflected. In this sense, he established a distinction between: a) Spatial; b)

Linguistic; c) Logical; d) Mathematical; e) Musical; f) Intrapersonal; g) Interpersonal; and, h) Bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. (Haswell, 2017).

Contrastly, Kolb developed the "Experiential Learning Cycle," which is based on the principle that the main factors that have an impact on human beings' learning styles are: a) genetics; b) life experiences; and, c) our environment. According to the learning style model developed by Kolb, when a person wants to learn something, they must process and work on the information they collect. In this cycle "there are four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualism, and active experimentation" (Haswell, 2017, p. 5).

Finally, Neil Fleming also developed a theory related to learning styles. In it, he created the VARK approach, which refers to the distinction of types of learners. Thus, he distinguishes between: a) Visual (learners who prefer to receive the information through images, maps, symbols and other visual aids); b) Aural (this type of student learns more easily with the production and comprehension of oral texts); c) Reading/Writing (which is useful for pupils who prefer working with the production and comprehension of written texts); and, d) Kinesthetic learners (those who give more importance to feelings, real-life experiences or demonstrations). These are classified according to "the[ir] instructional preference in which students, or people in society prefer to take in and give out information" (Haswell, 2017, p. 4). Fleming also thought that teachers need to know their own learning styles and take advantage of them in the classroom. He explains that "[w]hen a teacher understands his or her own style, he or she will be able to understand the teaching style [he or she] prefer[s]" (Haswell, 2017, p. 5). Thus, by knowing this information, the teacher would be aware and realise that he or she is merely using the learning style in class that best suits himself or herself, without bearing in mind that this can negatively influence students. For this reason, Fleming urged teachers to "incorporate all students' instructional preferences in the classroom" (Fleming & Mills, 1992, as cited in Haswell, 2017, p. 5) so that they can work with a learning

style beyond that of their teacher. Fleming was so involved with the necessity the society had with their awareness of their learning style to, eventually make the most of their capabilities, that he decided to develop a "learning style preference questionnaire," becoming the first researcher to give this practical air to the theory of learning styles through the creation of a questionnaire (Baume & Fleming, 2006, as cited in Haswell, 2017, p. 4).

There are a huge number of classifications and tests regarding learning styles, such as Reid's (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group and Individual learners, with the Perceptual Learning Style Questionnaire) or, Felder and Soloman's Index of Learning Styles (differentiated between Active or Reflective, Verbal or Visual, Sensing or Intuitive, and Sequential or Global). However, for the realisation of this dissertation, Fleming's VARK questionnaire has been used, since it was the first test created regarding learning styles. For this reason, the main characteristics of the questionnaire, the different questionnaire variants that exist on the official VARK website, and the analysis of the answers will be described below. In addition, the reviews received by this questionnaire for its lack of scientific basis have also been incorporated.

The VARK questionnaire (that is, Visual, Aural, Reading/writing and Kinesthetic) was launched in 1987 by the University of Lincoln and consists of 16 questions about everyday situations in which one has to choose from four possible options, and each of the options belongs to a different learning style. The reason why the number of questions is so narrow is because "if there are too many questions (25+) some people take the questionnaire less seriously and some may become bored with it or provide spurious answers because of survey fatigue" (VARK, n.d). A peculiarity of this test is that, because what counts for the final results is the final number of options chosen related to each learning style, the subjects can choose more than one option in each statement. Therefore, when calculating the percentage of the subject's learning style(s) preference, they must focus on the totality of answers, instead of the totality of questions, which, for obvious reasons, may differ. As for the analysis of the



answers, it is worth mentioning that it is quite simple. As already mentioned, each of the four answers corresponds to a learning style preference. Therefore, the subject can manually check with the help of a rubric how many answers they have given of each learning style. Another way of completing the questionnaire is on the official website where subjects answer the items, and afterwards the database itself analyses their answers and gives them the results automatically. Furthermore, one can choose several variants of the questionnaire depending on the target addressees. In this sense, it is noticeable that, although the original questionnaire is quite general and anyone could feel identified with the daily situations proposed, on the official website there is a version available for younger people, one for athletes, and one for teachers and trainers. In these, questions and answers are suitable for these types of learners.

Regarding the criticism received, detractors of the VARK model, such as Li et al. (2016), criticise, first, the validity of the questionnaire itself, stating that some of the questions are ambiguous and not congruent, which makes the result of the questionnaire not actually match the actual preferences of individuals. However, it is worth mentioning that on the website, in the part where the percentage of the individual is communicated in each of the styles, there is a satisfaction survey, in which the subjects are asked some personal questions (sex, age, origin) like if it was the first time that they face the questions of the questionnaire, whether the result was expected, not expected, or if they had not considered this issue before, and finally the occupation of the subjects (teacher, student, trainer, manager, employee, etc). The data collected in this survey in 2012 reveal that 58% of individuals and their expectations matched the result of the questionnaire, while only 4% disagreed with the result.

Another argument against the most recurrent (and probably the most debated and controversial) method relates to the fact that there is no scientific evidence to support the theory that students benefit from their knowledge of learning styles. In this regard, the Department of Psychology of the University of

Glasgow (n.d) states that "there is insufficient evidence that this is effective enough to justify the time and money that must be devoted in order to fully implement the theories" (p. 18). Fleming (2012) defends this argument by explaining that it is true that the method has not been scientifically approved, but neither rejected, and that "Absence of evidence is not the same as evidence of absence" (Fleming, 2012, p.1).

The third and final reproach to the VARK method is the fact that the learning styles that Fleming designed tend to typecast students in a certain style, thus negatively affecting their motivation (The Guardian, 2017). The creator of VARK, however, specifies precisely that learning styles can change and evolve over the years. In addition, the VARK contemplates the multimodal style, with which it defines "[t]hose who do not have a standout mode with one preference score well above scores" (Vark, n.d. b, p. 8). Fleming also refers to bimodal individuals to those who have two different preferences in their learning styles.

#### 2.4 Correlation between the two aspects

Many experts have investigated the veracity of learning styles and the correlation between these and the academic success of students. An example of the study of this influence are those detailed below. However, it is worth mentioning that although many have conducted studies on overall student outcomes, very few have been found to actually focus on the skills that this paper focuses on. Having mentioned that, it is important to highlight that the four studies on which this section focuses have similar characteristics, although from different points of view and conclusions.

First of all, a study by Matthew Peacock in 2001 stands up for the idea that if students had different learning styles from their teachers' teaching styles, they would not take advantage of their EFL classes. For this reason, he took Reid's classification of the learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinaesthetic, Group and Individual learners) and he studied the reliability of one

of Reid's two major hypothesis, in which it was proposed that "a mismatch between teaching and learning styles causes learning failure, frustration, and demotivation" (Peacock, 2001, p.2). To reach his goal he asked 206 Chinese EFL students and 46 teachers of the Department of English at the city University of Hong Kong to do Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire and compared the results. Moreover, all the teachers were asked their opinion on Reid's hypothesis and they were invited to write comments, and 71 students were also interviewed and asked about how they feel when their teacher has a different teaching style to their own learning style, and if they know the origin of their learning style (when and how they learned it). The results confirmed the hypothesis, since a high degree of students and teachers agreed with the hypothesis. Therefore, it may be stated that, according to this study, learning styles have a knock-on effect on their EFL performance. Moreover, it could be said that the teachers' teaching style also has an impact. However, this last consideration exceeds the scope of our paper (Peacock, 2001)

Secondly, Andreou E., Andreou G., and Vlachos, (2008) conducted a study which intended to respond to the "relationship between Greek students' learning styles and performance on English phonological, syntactic, and semantic tasks" (p.666). To do so, 452 Greek students between the ages of 18 and 26 who were studying EFL were randomly selected. The students had to sort through the 12 statements of the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) that Kolb proposes to evaluate students' learning styles. The conclusion of this paper was that classes should be centered on learners and should always be planned having the needs and learning styles of the learners in mind, so that the teacher "does not excessively favour any one learning style—or rather, one that tries to accommodate multiple learning styles" (Andreou E, Andreou G., & Vlachos, 2008, p. 671). Furthermore, the authors emphasise that "[s]tudies have repeatedly shown that matching teaching styles to learning styles can significantly enhance academic achievement" (Andreou E., Andreou G., &

Vlachos, 2008, p. 671). Therefore, it may be affirmed that this study supports the hypothesis that learning styles can be determinant for the academic development of students.

Thirdly, Aliakbari and Tazik's piece of research (2019), which is one of the few projects dedicated to the relationship between learning styles with speaking and writing skills, aims to elucidate whether there is a correlation between each student's learning style and their academic performance in the writing part. In order to have enough information to refute or reject the main hypothesis, 22 EFL students from Iran were evaluated and provided with a modified version of Reid's questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 30 sentences about situations related to learning styles which students have to evaluate according to their level of agreement. In addition, some texts written by the students as homework were also collected. The results of this study are in line with those of the text mentioned above. In this sense, the results also show that the focus on learning styles reinforces and helps improve academic results in the writing part. The authors, however, also stress the fact that there are many different types of learning styles in the same class, and therefore it is very difficult to favour all students (Aliakbari & Tazik, 2019). Thus, this article also urges teachers to work with classroom learning styles in an equitable and balanced way so that all learners benefit from the new classroom approach.

Nevertheless, while many studies advocate the importance of learning styles in the classroom, there is also a percentage of authors who claim that learning styles do not have any influence on students. An example of this is the article written by Boohan, Stevenson and Wilkinson (2014). They proposed that learning styles influence students' academic outcomes. A population of 276 students from Belfast was taken for the study. The materials used were a questionnaire to find out the students' learning styles, and an extract of the individuals' academic results. The results determined that this correlation did not exist, since the connections were very weak and there could be small coincidences (Boohan, Stevenson & Wilkinson, 2014).

## 2.5 Legislation

Due to the fact that the subjects that will participate in the study are students of a public school, whose curriculum, therefore, is subjected to the regional, national and European laws, we believe it is relevant to include a brief review of the treatment of EFL in these laws. In addition, it will also be interesting to focus on the importance given to the adaptation of materials, resources and methodologies in order to get more out of the learners and their learning.

Firstly, the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a Comprehensive Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Languages (2018), establishes that language is vital for students' cognitive and social development, and it has an effect on multiple aspects in life. Furthermore, it emphasises the idea that "the lack of language competences" is an obstacle for their potential professional career (European Commission, 2018). For this reason, "schools are becoming increasingly aware of the necessity to make sure that all children, regardless of background and first language, acquire a very good level of the language of schooling, if appropriate through special support measures." (European Commission, 2018). Thus, this proposal stands up for a teaching style centered on "helping [students] to improve language competence according to needs, circumstances, abilities and interest." (European Commission, 2018). According to the proposal, different tools used in language learning "have proven efficient for different categories of learners." In this sense, teachers could take advantage of this and learn "how [different methodologies] can best support their teaching practice" (European Commission, 2018).

The LOMCE, Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, for the Improvement of Educational Quality (2013), also emphasizes the fact that the command of a second or even a third foreign language has become a priority in education as a consequence of the globalisation process in which we live, while it is shown to be one of the main deficiencies of our educational system. The Act strongly supports multilingualism, redoubling efforts to ensure that students are fluent in at least one first foreign language, whose level of oral and written

comprehension and oral and written expression is decisive in promoting employability and professional ambitions. However, it does not take into account the needs of all the students. In this sense, although it does propose that measures of flexibility and methodological alternatives be established in the teaching and assessment of the foreign language for disabled students, especially for those who have difficulties in oral expression, it does not mention those students who do not have disabilities or specific learning needs, but who have other types of needs related to their personality, circumstances or type of learning of each student.

At a regional level, the Decree 45/2016, of 22 July, for the Development of the Communicative Competence in Foreign Languages at State Educational Centres in the Balearic Islands (2016), refers to the guidelines laid down by the European Union which emphasises that the mastery of foreign languages is a priority because of their key role in social cohesion, personal and economic development and professional mobility. Multilingualism, therefore, is understood as a basic value to promote coexistence and increase the prospects of European citizens' integration into the labour market. These guidelines should be placed within the framework of the Balearic Islands, a multilingual and multicultural society with two official languages: Catalan, which is the language of the Balearic Islands, and Spanish.

In this case, there is also no perceived intention to help EFL students with strategies and techniques that may favour their learning style or any other need related to their learning that they may have. However, a small mention could be made to the assessments that are taken into account as regards non-language subjects taught in foreign languages. In this respect, schools implementing non-language subject teaching in foreign languages should provide for attention to diversity (where learning styles could be encompassed) and appropriate support measures for learners who need it (such as specific methodologies for such learning styles). However, as this aspect stands out from the limits of this work, it will not be deepened further.

### **3. The study**

As has been mentioned several times, it is important for teachers to take into account students' learning styles when teaching both productive and receptive skills. However, for reasons of time and space, in this dissertation we have decided to focus on production skills since they are considered the most difficult skills for students' to acquire when learning a foreign language, as previously argued. This study, then, aims to discern whether the methodology based on the adaptability of content according to student's preferences, works. To do this, a group of students will answer the VARK questionnaire and then a methodology for learning writing and speaking with a variety of different exercises for each type of student will be offered. Finally, students will be asked their opinions about the method, if it has helped them, etc. Therefore, there are some questions that need to be answered:

- 1) The different learning styles of each of the students.
- 2) The feasibility of implementing a methodology based on student learning through the introduction of isolated specific activities.
- 3) The degree of student satisfaction with the use of this methodology.

#### 3.1 Study population

The subjects chosen were a group of 25 first year *Post-Obligatory Secondary Education* students from a secondary school in Palma de Mallorca aged between 16 and 18. The gender of the subjects, although not relevant for this study, is 9 boys and 16 girls. The selection of this group as the sample for this dissertation was not random; more specifically, out of the groups of learners the researcher had access to, this group of 16-18 year olds is believed to be the one with which the effect of learning styles can be most clearly seen. In other words, it is assumed that the students in this more advanced course have a higher level of understanding and production of the English language than other groups. Therefore, most of the errors and other difficulties in their performance

of the language could potentially be the result of either the students' use of their learning styles or punctual mistakes they may make, but not due to lack of level.

## 3.2 Research materials

### 3.2.1 VARK Questionnaire

For this study, different methods of data collection will be used, one (or more than one) to answer each of the issues proposed. Firstly, to identify students' preferred learning styles, the VARK questionnaire, as already explained in section 2, will be used, because it was the first test created regarding learning styles, it was designed by a team of experts in this field, and has since been used in many studies focused on learning styles. This questionnaire (which can be found in Appendix 1), as previously specified, determines, from the decisions of the subjects, the learning style with which that person feels most comfortable.

It is worth mentioning that, although for this project the VARK questionnaire will be used for academic purposes, the truth is that identifying our learning style(s) can be useful in any circumstance of our daily life. That is precisely why this questionnaire proposes 16 ordinary situations to the subjects with four different possible ways of solving them. Thus, they had to choose one or more of the options provided in each question. In previous chapters it has been remarked that there are more than one version of the questionnaire, to adapt as much as possible to the circumstances of the individuals. More specifically, the questions found in the questionnaire addressed to young people are related to day-to-day situations a teenager may face. The questions proposed are related, for instance, to their relationships with family and friends, academic feedback, the use of electronic devices and online platforms, means of entertainment, etc. Some other examples of these questions are:

*You have a problem with your knee. Would you prefer that the doctor:*

- demonstrated what was wrong using a model of a knee;



- showed you a diagram of what was wrong;
- described to you what was wrong; or,
- gave you an article or brochure that explained knee injuries.

*You need to give directions to go to a house nearby. You would:*

- tell them the directions;
- write down the directions as a list;
- draw a map on a piece of paper or get a map online; or,
- walk with them.

*You have been selected as a tutor or a leader for a holiday program. This is interesting for your friends. You would:*

- show them the list of activities in the program;
- show them the map of where it will be held and diagrams about it;
- describe the activities I will be doing in the program; or,
- start practising the activities I will be doing in the program.

It is important to remember that, as explained in section 2, since each of the four options in each question stands for one of the different VARK learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, Kinesthetic), and the subjects can select more than one option, the data collected will be examined on the basis of the total number of answers obtained from each subject, and not of the total number of questions proposed (16 questions). The answers collected in the questionnaire will be used as a first step to becoming familiar with the learning styles of these subjects; afterwards, we will be able to design activities adapted to each type of student.

In addition, one of the advantages of this test is that it already has an automatic data analyser. Therefore, we decided to send the students the questions of the VARK test for young people via a Google Form questionnaire. The reason why this platform was chosen is due to the fact that the students are used to using this method, and it is a comfortable and quick way to control that everyone does it at the same time. Moreover, it is possible to thoroughly control the students' answers and detect those who may be answering the

questionnaire in a random way. The answers given by each student in each test will then be inserted into an Excel spreadsheet database.

### 3.2.2 Productive activities.

The students will be asked to complete some writing and speaking tasks; there will be different materials for them to choose from according to the results they obtained in the VARK questionnaire; that is, the primarily visual learners will be able to choose some activities designed for this type of learner and so on, thus, better suiting their necessities. It is noteworthy that some of the ideas to find out which type of activities fits each learning style have been extracted from a document published by the Academic Center for Excellence (n.d). On the one hand, the writing activities will be aimed at learning how to write an informative essay. Even if each of the materials and adaptations are quite different, they all have the same objective. There will be four tasks, the first two will be devoted to the theoretical part of what students need to know about the informative essay before writing it. In these, each type of learner will have the same information in different tasks and they will have to choose one depending on their learning style (if they are multimodal they will be asked to choose the activity that they think will be more useful for them). The third task will be for the students to plan their essay, and, again, they will find a different task for each of the learning styles. Finally, the final task will be for all of them, independently of their learning style, and it will consist of writing a complete informative essay.

As for the speaking activities, on the other hand, the students will be asked to complete four tasks related to economy and money matters, since this is the topic of the unit. As well as in the writing activities, students will also encounter in each activity some options so that they choose the adaptation that best suits them according to their learning style. In the first activity, which students will have some time to think about, they will have to answer some of the questions related to money. The second activity is a *Would You Rather* game, in which students will have to choose (justifying their answer) between

two situations they are proposed. The third activity is aimed at students reaching an agreement among different options. Lastly, the fourth activity is a pronunciation exercise in which students will have to classify some words depending on their pronunciation.

### 3.2.3 Satisfaction Questionnaire

Finally, after the students have worked on the activities suggested in this research, they will fill in a questionnaire especially designed to answer the questions proposed at the initial stage of the study (feasibility of the application of the proposal and the degree of satisfaction of the students towards it). Therefore, this questionnaire's items (see Appendix 3) are divided into three thematic blocks. The first block will be about the writing activities the students have been exposed to. In the second block, the subjects will be asked to answer some questions related to the speaking exercises. Finally, the last block will cover a more general area, asking the students to evaluate the experiment as a whole, that is, giving their opinion about it.

### 3.3 Procedure and administration

All of these experiments will take place during the teaching training period at the secondary school the researcher was ascribed to. The order in which the elements of the study will be managed will be detailed below.

Firstly, at the beginning of the class period, the VARK questionnaire will be sent to the students via a Google Form questionnaire, which they will all complete at the same time in the computer room in a tutorial session. The results will then be entered into the database and forwarded to the students. From this, materials corresponding to the methodology used for this paper will be provided. Finally, the satisfaction questionnaire will also be distributed through Google Form questionnaire, since, as mentioned above, this is the fastest way to ensure that all the students will complete the task and will not be able to cheat.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1 VARK test

The first day of class, the chosen group of students was provided with the Google Form with the questions from the version for younger people of the VARK Questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was answered in class by 23 students, and the other two were asked to do it at home, since they did not attend class that day. Nevertheless, this situation neither conditioned students' answers nor negatively affected the development of the investigation since the questions were about their preferences according to some situations. In other words, the questionnaire did not contain questions to analyse students' level of English, knowledge of a particular aspect, etc. It is important to say that before answering the test, students were vaguely informed of the objective of this study. However, some of the students were quite interested in knowing which type of learner they were, and they showed a positive predisposition to the experiment.

After having received all the results in the Google Form designed, these were introduced to the VARK database to be analysed. The results of each of the tests were added to a chart, which was afterwards shown to the students (see Table 1 below):

**Table 1. Students' results of the VARK test**

Student	Visual	Auditory/aural	Reading/Writing	Kinesthetic	Result
Student 1	5	2	4	5	Multimodal
Student 2	3	7	5	5	Mild aural
Student 3	6	11	2	8	Mild aural
Student 4	3	13	4	5	Very strong aural
Student 5	9	7	5	4	Multimodal
Student 6	6	5	5	7	Multimodal

<b>Student 7</b>	0	4	10	3	Very strong read/write
<b>Student 8</b>	5	5	4	5	multimodal
<b>Student 9</b>	2	5	6	6	multimodal
<b>Student 10</b>	6	5	6	5	multimodal
<b>Student 11</b>	1	5	5	5	multimodal
<b>Student 12</b>	6	9	5	4	Mild aural
<b>Student 13</b>	5	8	8	4	Multimodal
<b>Student 14</b>	3	5	3	10	Strong kinesthetic
<b>Student 15</b>	8	8	6	6	Multimodal
<b>Student 16</b>	2	3	6	5	Multimodal
<b>Student 17</b>	4	3	4	4	Multimodal
<b>Student 18</b>	6	10	2	8	Multimodal
<b>Student 19</b>	5	6	6	6	Multimodal
<b>Student 20</b>	12	8	7	8	Multimodal
<b>Student 21</b>	1	6	9	5	Mild Read/Write
<b>Student 22</b>	5	6	8	7	Multimodal
<b>Student 23</b>	5	8	9	9	Multimodal
<b>Student 24</b>	2	6	7	8	Multimodal
<b>Student 25</b>	4	2	4	6	Mild kinesthetic

Table 1 shows the number of answers from each learning style each student got. Finally, the coloured cell shows the determination the VARK database gave each student depending on their answers. After counting the results of all the students that answered the test, it may be stated that the vast majority of them are multimodal, that is, they prefer a combination of all the learning styles to develop their learning process. More specifically, 17 students are multimodal, four learners are mild aural or very strong aural, two pupils preferred the reading and writing style, and two students were classified as

kinesthetic learners by the VARK database. It is quite shocking, however, that the results did not identify any visual learners. We believe that this is striking because of the great amount of visual materials, creative designs young people have these days, which could expectedly have an effect on their lives and in their way of acquiring knowledge.

**Figure 1: Classification of students according to their preferred learning style**

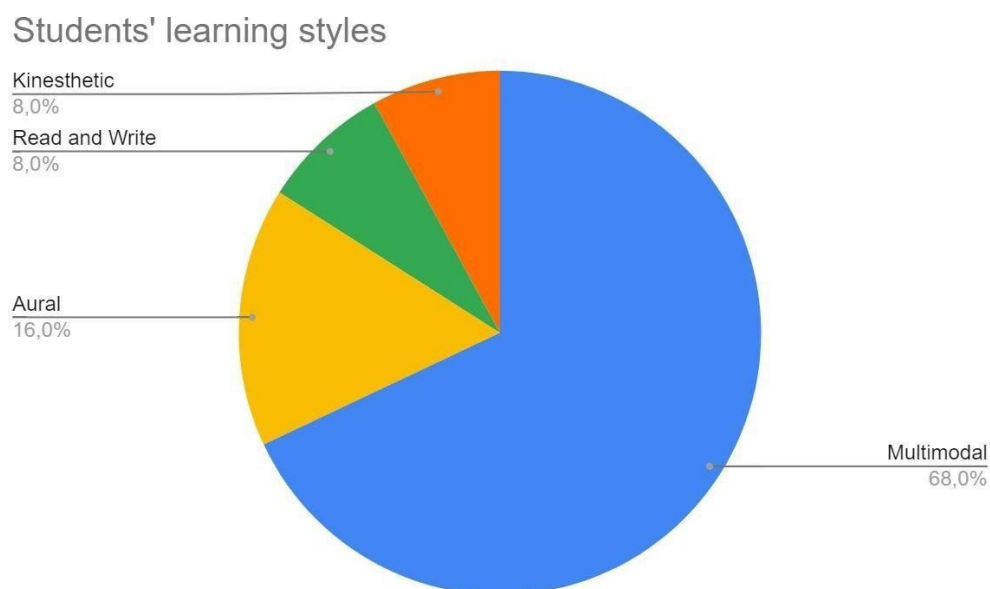


Figure 1 shows, in a more illustrative way, the percentages and quantity of students who share the same learning style. In this sense, for obvious reasons, there is no representation for the visual learning style. As for the Aural or Auditory students, they represent 16% of the class and in this group of students there are three mild aural learners and one very strong aural student. Regarding the students who prefer reading and writing, an 8% of the total of the class belongs to this group. It should be noticed that 50% of this type of learners are mild and the other 50% very strongly prefer this style. As far as the kinesthetic learners are concerned, an 8% of the class are kinesthetic, one half of which are strongly kinesthetic and the other half mild kinesthetic. Finally, the most surprising piece of data, as previously mentioned, is that 68% of the total students appear to be multimodal.

Pending the results of the satisfaction questionnaire, in which a question is devoted to this situation, all these signs suggest that the best way to use this methodology with this specific group would be combining the different strategies used for all the learning styles. However, we should not forget that 32% of the students from this group have a very defined way of learning. Therefore, before applying the learning styles' methodology, all these aspects should be taken into account.

#### 4.2 Productive activities.

This section will describe the adapted activities that have been proposed to the students. It is worth mentioning that in this case, it has been decided not to analyse the results of the exercises, since very little time was devoted to the application of this methodology in class, and therefore it would be very difficult to detect improvements by analysing their academic results. For this reason, these activities (some examples of which, done by the students, will be shown in Appendix 5) are simply for students to see how the method works and to be able to give more information based on their experience in the final questionnaire.

It is also important to explain that speaking and writing activities were originally planned, as explained in more detail in the Methodology section. However, due to the state of alert as a result of the COVID-19 and the mandatory confinement, the oral exercises that were to be carried out had to be suppressed. Fortunately, the writing exercises were adapted so that they could still be carried out, although telematically. In this sense, the activities were posted on the Google Classroom platform, to which all students had access. Concerning the time spent on the activities, it should be mentioned that no changes were necessary in this respect. Hence, these exercises were carried out in 2 sessions, as planned.

As far as the activities are concerned, they all focus on the same type of writing task previously planned which is the informative essay, since it was the

next type of writing these students had to learn in the curriculum. In this way, in the first session the students learnt how to write an informative essay. In addition, the exercises in session two were thought to help students write an informative essay by themselves.

The planning for both sessions was as follows:

### SESSION 1

- Explanation of what learning styles are and the methodology we are going to use (10 minutes).
- **ACTIVITY 1 (20 MINUTES): *What is an informative essay? I***
  - **Visual learners:** Read the information available in your Student's Book on pages 84 and 162 and fill in the following worksheet as complete as possible. Imagine that the text is a hamburger, so each ingredient of the hamburger should correspond to a part of the essay. For example: Bread: Introduction (in this part we briefly present the topic of your essay...), Lettuce: (...), Tomato (...), Meat (...), Bread: Conclusion (in this part...). Upload the completed worksheet to Google classroom (this worksheet can be found in Appendix 2).
  - **Aural learners:** Watch this Video (paying attention to these parts: 00:00-1:56 and 6:24-8:08) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKKDH2whXzw&t=10s> and read pages 84 and 162 from your Student's Books.
  - **Reading and Writing learners:** Read the information on pages 84 and 162 (Student's Book) and summarise the information in your notebook. Upload a picture of your summary to Google Classroom.
  - **Kinesthetic learners:** Create a poster (very basic) with the information found in the Student's Book pages 84 and 162), drawing it or using *Canva*, *Poster Maker*, *PosterLabs* or any other app you may know. Upload your poster to Google Classroom.



- **ACTIVITY 2 (20 MINUTES):** *What is an informative essay? II*
  - **Visual learners:** Create a chart with all the connectors and other useful sentences we can use in each of the parts of the text. This chart will be used by the other students to prepare the final writing task. Upload your chart to Google Classroom.

Example of a chart:

PART OF THE TEXT	CONNECTORS
Introduction	
Paragraph 2	
Paragraph 3	
Conclusion	

- **Aural learners:** Record your voice discussing the video you just watched comparing it to the explanation on pages 84 and 162 (Student's Book).
- **Reading and Writing learners:** Organise the information you have in a powerpoint Presentation. Upload your Powerpoint Presentation to Google Classroom.
- **Kinesthetic learners:** Present and explain the poster and record yourself. Upload the recording to Google Classroom.

## SESSION 2

- **ACTIVITY 3 (15 MINUTES):** *Preparing your own informative essay.*
  - **Visual learners:** Choose a topic and create an outline with your ideas. Upload your outline to Google Classroom.
  - **Aural learners:** Choose a topic and write your ideas while you say them aloud. Upload your ideas to Google Classroom.

- *Reading and writing learners*: Write and organise your ideas using colours and markers. Upload your ideas to Google Classroom.
  - *Kinesthetic learners*: Take some notes about what you want to talk about and type them on your computer. Upload your ideas to Google classroom.
- **ACTIVITY 4 (35 MINUTES):** *Writing my informative essay.*
- *All the learning styles*: Write an informative essay. Upload your essay to Google Classroom.

The content of the activities, as well as one of the main resources for designing these activities, was the textbook they use in class, *Advantage 1*, by Carter and Grant (2017a), and edited by Burlington Books. On the other hand, the adaptations made to each activity have been inspired by a document by the Florida State University (n.d.), which specifies what type of activities are preferable for each student style. In addition, this classification is based on the VARK, which is the same as that used for this paper.

#### 4.3 Satisfaction questionnaire

After having completed all the activities, the 25 students were asked to answer a questionnaire in which they had to give their opinion on certain aspects of the experience. Moreover, due to the sanitary crisis, they were not able to complete the speaking activities designed; however, in this questionnaire they were also asked some questions on the possibility of applying this methodology to the speaking skill in the future. Finally, students also gave a general opinion on the methodology and its applications to learning EFL.

As far as the writing activities are concerned, students were asked five questions. The first question has to do with the improvement of students' interest and degree of satisfaction with the writing activities and asked the

students whether they liked choosing among the different activities or not. The results for this question are quite positive for this study, because 20 out of the 25 students, which represent an 80% of the pupils, liked choosing the activity that best suited them. On the contrary, just 5 of them answered “no” to this question. Therefore, according to these results, it would be positive for students to apply this methodology in class.

In question 2 students had to answer if they think they learned more or not, and, basing on their answers, they affirm to have definitely learned more. In this sense, 16 (64%) students considered that it was useful for them, while 9 (36%) students did not think that they have learned more. Questions 1 and 2 were expected to have similar results. However, there are more students who believe that they have not learnt more than those who did not like the method. Thus, there might be learners who may have liked working with learning styles, but they think that they are more useful than the traditional methods. Besides, question 2 asks whether they learned more or not, but there may be students who think that this method is as useful as the traditional one, and they marked “no”, which is not negative at all.

Question 3 is aimed at approaching the didactic proposal in section 6 to the perceptions of the students, and this question suggests whether students would like to work together with different materials depending on their learning style, or they would prefer to work in small groups. The answers for this question were surprising, since 16 students (64%) prefer to work in small groups, and 9 of them (36%) would like to work with the rest of their classmates. It is obvious that the majority of the students have chosen working in small groups, so the majority of the activities would be designed for students to be grouped according to their learning styles. However, one third of the class wants to work all together, so a small amount of the activities proposed could also be aimed at working all together.

The fourth question is intended to make learners choose between, all of

them having the same final task (even though they have had different practice activities depending on their learning styles) or doing different final tasks according to their preferred learning style(s). The answers for this question are quite ambiguous, in the sense that there is not a preferred answer. More particularly, 12 students, which represent 48% of the class would like to have the same final task as their classmates. However, 52% of the students (13 students) would rather have different final tasks depending on their learning style. For this reason, due to this minimal difference in the results, there will be a variety of final tasks, some of which will be similar for all the students, and others will be more diverse.

To finish with this section, question 5 gives students more freedom of expression, since they were asked in what aspects they think exercises 1, 2 and 3 and their adaptations have helped them. It is interesting that they had the possibility to express themselves in their mother tongue, so that they were more comfortable and more precise in their explanations. Even if a minority of the subjects stated that these activities did not help them because they were tedious and they preferred to adapt themselves to the traditional activities, a wide majority expressed that with these activities they could be more focused on the process of writing and expression rather than on the concepts they had to learn. Moreover, some of them also stated that with this methodology they acquired the concepts and the structure of the essay faster, so they were more efficient in their writings. Some of the students even commented that they would like to use this method with other activities and subjects. To sum up, it can be concluded that the majority of the students gave positive feedback to the method.

It must not be forgotten that one of the core objectives of this study is to focus on the most difficult skills for students (writing and speaking) to, eventually, introduce learning styles to the learning process of each of the four basic skills. It is for this reason, and due to the current situation, that the

questions about potential activities are all related to the speaking skill, although they could have been related to each of the remaining skills. Therefore, students were firstly asked if they would have liked to have speaking activities adapted to their learning style(s), and their answers were positive for the hypothesis of the paper, since 19 students (76%) admitted that they would have liked to practise their speaking skills with adapted activities according to their learning style(s). As if this were not enough, the same amount of students believe that with this method their speaking skills would improve. The last question of this section was also related to working together or working in small groups, and the results for these questions were more equitative, in the sense that 11(44%) pupils preferred to work together, and 14 (56%) in small groups. Therefore, since the didactic proposal will include some speaking activities, this information will have to be taken into account.

Finally, the last section was devoted to a more general opinion on the experiment. In this sense, students were asked whether they think that teachers should identify pupils' learning styles and adapt their materials to the students capacities and necessities and a vast majority of 22 subjects (88%) agreed with the idea that teachers should get to know their students better at the beginning of the course. This is quite noteworthy, since as far as these students are concerned, their teachers, the educators that are supposed to provide them with values and knowledge for them to build a future, do not know them enough to help them make the best out of themselves.

On the other hand, students answered whether they have ever thought it would be possible for them to learn more with a different methodology than the traditional one (or the one their teacher uses) or not. A huge amount of the subjects answered that they had never thought of using a methodology different from the traditional one, and they found it very useful. They also comment that sometimes they feel that the traditional structure of a class is not enough for them to acquire the message of the session, and that teachers tend to become

accustomed to one specific method because it may be easier for them and they do not realise that they have different capacities.

In the last question students had to evaluate the experience from 1 to 5, and one student (4%) determined that this methodology deserved 2 points of satisfaction, 4 students (16%) gave it 3 points, 15 subjects (60%) gave 4 points, and the methodology received 5 points from 5 students (20%). In summary, the experience resulted positive for the students, since their average level of satisfaction was 3,96 points.

## **5. Conclusion**

The core objective of this dissertation was to determine whether the methodology based on adapting students' teaching materials to their learning style(s) benefits their learning process or not and is more useful for them than their usual classes, so that they make the best of themselves and their capacities and abilities. The main idea was to focus its introduction on the speaking and writing practices, which are the most difficult for them in general, to eventually apply to all the skills.

After having investigated the topic, revised the opinions of the experts in the field, developed an experiment with a real group of students and having analysed these results, it can be concluded that this methodology is beneficial for students. The experiment shows how a huge percentage of students would like their teachers to know them better. They also evidenced that for them it has been useful and enjoyable to know a little bit more about themselves and their learning style, the way to make profit of their capacities and abilities. They valued the methodology with a quite positive average score of 3,96 point out 5 levels of satisfaction.

Therefore, with all this feedback, introducing learning styles in EFL classrooms is believed to be a positive action for students. Even if it seemed obvious that getting to know your students and how their learning process works, students could be skeptical about this revolutionary method, the vast

majority responded satisfactorily. For this reason, a didactic proposal based on these results will be suggested in the following pages.

This dissertation, however, has faced some limitations. First of all, in order to conduct a more complete investigation it could have focused on all the skills the students practise in their EFL classes. In this way, more committed information could have been extracted from the whole experience in class. Another limitation was time. More realistic results could have been obtained from the students if they would have been working for a longer period of time with learning styles and their applications to EFL. Moreover, this limitation of time provoked that teaching styles were not included in the paper. In this sense, when checking and investigating information for the paper, we found out that some experts assert that teaching styles have a direct influence on students' learning styles and their way of preparing for an exam. Nevertheless, due to time and extension issues, this has not been developed. Finally, there is a huge limitation that has had a knock-on effect on this paper and the subjects. The rise of Covid-19 made educational centres close and students take classes from home. Therefore, it was a big change for students, who had never experienced something like this, but also for this investigation, since at the moment of schools closure, the experimental activities and the satisfaction questionnaire were already created and prepared but had not been carried out yet. As a consequence, due to this situation, the speaking activities had to be removed, and the writing activities had to be adapted to telematic teaching. Moreover, in the questionnaire, the speaking part had to become hypothetical so that students could give their opinion without actually having done any speaking activity with this methodology.

If these impediments had not existed, further research could have been done in the teacher's teaching styles, the application of the method to all the skills, and the carrying out of the speaking part of the investigation.

## **6. Didactic proposal**

This section is devoted to the presentation of a didactic proposal based on the introduction of learning styles and their academic applications to the class, specifically to the speaking and writing skills. Firstly, some general aspects, such as context, important legislations, key competences, assumptions, and assessment criteria will be dealt with. Afterwards, five different tasks in which students' learning styles are being taken into account will be proposed. Each of these tasks will follow the same structure: a) Plan and content of the activity and its adaptations to each of the learning styles; b) the competences covered; c) materials used; d) the teacher's role during the performance of the task; and, e) the potential extensions the activity could have.

### 6.1 Context

These tasks are addressed to a group of 25 students, 16 girls and 9 boys, with ages between 16 and 18 years. They all are in the first year of *Bachillerato*, so their level of English should be around B1+, according to the parameters of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages first published by the Council of Europe in 2000 (CEFR). It is worth mentioning that in this proposal the students with curricular adaptations have not been given the importance they deserve. However, since this methodology is so flexible that it could be adapted to any piece of content, the specific content of these students could be also combined with the introduction of learning styles in class.

### 6.2 Legislation

As mentioned in section 2, the students who are to introduce this new methodology are also subjected to the Decree 45/ 2016, 22 July, for the Development of the Communicative Competence in Foreign Languages at the State Educational Centres in the Balearic Islands, and to the Organic Law 8/2013, 9 December, for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE). Therefore, in this part the main aspects from the two laws that must be taken



into account when preparing a lesson will be further explained. Firstly, the Decree 45/ 2016, 22 July, for the Development of the Communicative Competence in Foreign Languages at the State Educational Centres in the Balearic Islands establishes some points interesting for this proposal. First of all, one of the main objectives is to establish a reference framework to improve the students' communicative competence. Furthermore, the lingua franca must be the language of the subject. Moreover, in accordance with their pedagogical autonomy, schools must include in the annual general programming, learning situations and activities in foreign languages in order to enhance the linguistic competence of the students (Govern de les Illes Balears, 2016). As for the LOMCE, the content of the subjects is integrated, among others, by the competencies, or capacities to apply the content specific to each lesson in an integrated manner, and by the criteria for evaluating the degree of acquisition of the basic competencies and the achievement of the objectives of each subject and educational stage. One of the most revolutionary changes with respect to the previous Educational laws, therefore, was the introduction of seven main competences which, nowadays, are one of the core focus of the Spanish educational system (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). More specifically, we can distinguish between seven different basic competences:

- 1) Linguistic competence. It deals with the ability to use the language.
- 2) Mathematical competence. It has to do with logical and mathematical reasoning.
- 3) Digital competence. It helps students use ICT tools safely and correctly.
- 4) Learning to learn. This competence is the most important one for us, because it deals with the capacity of the students to develop learning techniques (which may be related to their learning styles).
- 5) Social and civic competence. It refers to the students' capacity to relate to others and actively participate in debates and discussions.
- 6) Initiative and entrepreneurship. It has to do with creativity and project management.

- 7) Conscience and cultural expressions. With this competence, students learn to appreciate the importance of the expression through culture.

### 6.3 Assumptions

To do these activities, it is important to take some factors into account. First of all, it would be convenient that students were informed of what learning styles are, some characteristics of each of the different kinds and their benefits in education and in the subjects' daily life. Moreover, it is essential that students have beforehand answered a questionnaire to identify their learning styles. For this proposal the VARK Questionnaire is recommended, since the activities designed are based on the VARK classification of learning styles. It is also assumed that students need to be given very clear instructions, as this is the first time that these students are in contact with this methodology. Besides, for each of the activities suggested, some assumptions will be taken into account, which will be detailed in the Planification section.

### 6.4 Assessment criteria

Because this methodology is quite flexible, it does not have to have an effect on the assessment of the subject, as long as we make sure that the different adaptations to the same activity imply the same level of difficulty and effort. Regarding the means to assess the students, they can be assessed either through the traditional means, or through a different method adapted to their learning styles. It all will depend on several factors, such as the amount of time the students would have been working with the method, or their grade of adaptation and satisfaction with this methodology.

### 6.5 Tasks

As previously mentioned, the students would already have done the VARK test to know their preferred learning style(s). Then, the teacher would post a table with the results of the test. Therefore, from the beginning of the course (or, at

least, before the teacher starts using this methodology), the students would know their results in the VARK test. Thus, the initial procedure would be to make sure that everyone understands the methodology and knows their learning style. To do this, the first time the teacher uses this method, they would explain the approach, giving this information:

*This activity has 4 variants (1 for each learning style). You will have to look at your learning style on the table you have and do the exercise in the modality of your style. That is, for example, if your learning style is auditory, you will have to do the auditory part of the activity. In the case that you are multimodal, you should choose the modality that you think will help you the most.*

We must not forget that in this study the focus is on the utility of the learning styles. In this case, the utility of these adaptations in class would be evaluated through an observation grid (see Appendix 4) and the development of the students' results, if the students had been in contact with this method during an extended period of time. Moreover, since this is a methodology which, to be able to see the results via an academic improvement, it needs to be applied at the beginning of the course, at some point after some units taught with this methodology a satisfaction questionnaire could also be given.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the tasks proposed are focused on topics related to the academic syllabus of the First of *Bachillerato* course. Furthermore, some of the activities included are designed to be done individually or in groups, and other activities can be done with the whole class (everyone with their learning-style adaptation). In addition, it may be adapted to any type of topic, academic level and circumstance. Besides, as previously mentioned, a specific proposal for students with Special Educational Needs has not yet been designed but this method is so flexible that any type of content (either adapted or not) can be included with it. This flexibility also provides learning at school the inclusive perspective that the current educational system wants to achieve. We will now outline each of the four tasks.

**Task 1. Would You Rather? game.**

In this oral activity students would be given some questions in which they would have to choose one of the options and justify their answer.

**Questions:**

1. *Would you prefer to get pocket money from your parents, or to ask them for cash whenever you need it?*
2. *Would you prefer to be given money or a different gift for your birthday?*
3. *Save money or spend it all?*
4. *Would you rather earn lots of money doing a job you hate or not earn a lot doing a job you love?*
5. *Would you rather be rich or powerful?*

**Adaptations for each of the different modalities:**

- **Visual learners:** Students will be shown these images to portray the key ideas they are being asked. Therefore, they would have a mental image of what they are being asked.<sup>1</sup>



- 
1. (Photographer's Choice, n.d.) and ([Untitled illustration of a mother giving money to her daughter]., n.d.)
  2. (McKinney, J., 2014) and (Plush Design Studio, n.d.)

3.



or



4.



or



5.



or



2

- Aural learners: Either the teacher or one of the student's partner would read the questions for them.
- Reading and Writing learners: The students would be provided with a printed version of the question, so that they can read them for themselves.
- Kinesthetic learners: Think of the consequences that each of the decisions you may make would have.

## Content

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<sup>23</sup>. ([Untitled image of saving money], 2018) and ([Untitled illustration of a payment], n. d.)

4. ([Untitled illustration of a rich but unhappy man], 2013) and ([Untitled illustration of a happy woman at work], 2018)

5. ("Man and money", 2018) and ([Untitled illustration of a powerful woman], n.d.)

This activity (adapted from Carter & Grant 2017a and Pepper 2013) is aimed at learning vocabulary about economy and ordinary money conversations. Moreover, with these activities, students would revise their understanding of the structures *Would you rather?* and *Do you prefer?* These contents are both part of the academic syllabus of the Balearic Islands and in several textbooks addressed to learners of this level. This activity is designed to be done in class, either in pairs, in groups or individually. Be as it may, this activity must be improvised, that is, without telling the students the questions beforehand, so that they cannot prepare the answer and the teacher can also see their capacity to improvise.

To do this specific activity, it is assumed that students would have had some notions of the vocabulary and would have already studied the constructions *Would you rather* and *Do you prefer*. Therefore, this activity can be done at any moment of the unit devoted to economy, except from its introduction. It could be a perfect activity to revise the vocabulary of the unit before an exam, for instance.

The basic competences that can be evaluated in this activity are KC1, KC4, KC5, and KC6. The Linguistic competence (KC1) is covered for obvious reasons in this activity, as it is directly related to the study of a language and its communication. The Learning to Learn Competence (KC4) is present in this activity, because at the same time that students are learning elements of the language, they are also learning how to give importance to learning styles in class. If this exercise was to be done in pairs or in groups, students would have to work with their Social and Civic Competence (KC5), since they would be working with others. Finally, The Initiative and Entrepreneurship Competence (KC6) would be used if students would have to work together, because they would have to self manage the turn they should take, the moderator, etc.

### Materials

For this activity students would just need the questions, a printed copy of them, and a printed copy of the images for the visual learners.

### Teacher's role

This activity has been designed to be a students-centred activity. However, it depends on the use the teacher would like to give to the activities. If the aim was to evaluate students' production, the teacher would have to take a passive role, going around the class and listening to their students one by one to assess each of them. If this activity was an activity to practise, the teacher would have a more relaxing role, helping the students, debating their answers with them, etc.

### Potential extension

This activity could be used as a brainstorm or a warm up exercise to eventually write an opinion essay or a final task (adapted to each learning style) whose main goal was to make people conscious of our society's problem with consumerism and obsession with money.

### **Task 2.** Reaching a decision.

In this activity students, in pairs, should order these elements according to the importance they give them when buying a product. Then, they should discuss and develop their answer.

1. *Price*
2. *Packaging*
3. *Utility*
4. *Sustainability / Eco Friendliness*
5. *Fashion/ Trendy*

### Adaptations for each of the different modalities:

- Visual learners: Visual learners could, at the same time they are saying what they think, write some keywords down with a green or red marker about the advantages and disadvantages they find in each element.
- Aural learners: Aural learners would just need to listen carefully to what their partner is saying.
- Reading and writing learners: This type of learner would need to take some notes of the agreements reached.
- Kinesthetic learners: These learners would have five cards with the five elements, and they would have to physically order them.

### Content

This activity is also related to the economy unit mentioned in Task 1. However, the core objective of this activity is to debate with a partner and to reach an agreement on a specific topic. These contents are also found in Carter and Grant (2017b), addressed to learners of this level. The design of this activity seems to be the same as the ones used in the official level examination. Thus, it could be a great exercise to prepare students for these examinations, as an in-class examination, or simply as an exercise of the course.

The assumptions taken into consideration for this activity are quite similar to the ones in the previous exercise. Students would have certain knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar constructions used in this type of exercises, since it would not be the first time they do them in class.

Regarding the competences in this activity, it is noteworthy that KC1, KC2, KC4, KC5, and KC6 are present. First of all, KC1 is provided for obvious reasons. KC2 is difficult to find in subjects like English, but in this case, since students would have to debate about prices and other economy matters, their KC2 is used. Besides, we can find KC4, as in all the tasks, because one of the main objectives of the task is for students to learn how to benefit from their learning styles in class. Since this activity is a debate, inevitably KC5 is found.



Finally, KC6 is covered, because students would need to be able to manage their debate for themselves, and be creative.

### Materials

The materials used in this activity would be some cards (for the kinesthetic learners), some markers, pieces of paper and pens (for the visual and the Read and Write learners).

### Teacher's role

This activity is students-centred. As in Task 1, depending on the objective of the activity, the role of the teacher would be to assess (in a potential exam) or to help students (in an ordinary class).

### Extension

One possible extension for this activity could be to imagine that students are youtubers, and they should give some tips to their audience to go shopping.

**Task 3.** Differentiate between  $\text{ŋ}$  and /n/.

In this activity, students should classify the following words according to the underlined sound (WB page 48 ex. 4):

1. *sign*

5. *been*

9. *mean*

2. *singing*

6. *being*

10. *meaning*

3. *thin*

7. *scene*

4. *thing*

8. *seeing*

Adaptations for each of the different modalities:

- Visual learners: Visual learners would have drawings of the articulation of the tongue to produce each of the sounds. They would, after, create a chart to classify the words.

- Aural learners: Aural learners would have to listen to the pronunciation of the words and classify them.
- Reading and writing learners: This type of learners would read each word aloud and classify them.
- Kinesthetic learners: Kinesthetic learners could identify the sounds by saying them aloud and being conscient of the articulation of the tongue. That is, they would learn the sound by actually doing the sound and knowing how to produce that sound.

### Content

This activity is devoted to the differentiation of two different sounds. This is quite important in the students' syllabus, because in the external examination to gain access to university (spanish PBAU) there is an exercise about pronunciation, although not in this format of question. This specific exercise was extracted from Carter and Grant (2017b).

The main competencies involved in this activity are KC1 and KC4. This activity is purely linguistic to know more about the pronunciation of the words that students may use when communicating with another person in English. Therefore, the most important competence in this activity is KC1. Because of the objective of this paper, KC4 is also included, since students are learning the best for them to learn pronunciation.

### Materials

For this activity, students would just need the actual exercise, a piece of paper, a pen, and the pictures of the tongue articulation for some of them.

### Teacher's role

The role of the teacher in this activity is more active than in the previous activities. If they do the exercise all together (obviously everyone with their materials), the role of the teacher would be to moderate and manage the class,

as well as to be the motivator so that the students are focused on the exercise and motivated.

### Extension

An extension of this activity could be to present every week a different pair of sounds, and when learners have studied all the sounds, they would be prepared to start doing exercises similar to the ones in the PBAU exams.

### **Task 4:** Writing a story.

In this activity students would have to create a story, write a storybook and represent it. For this specific exercise it is assumed that students would have been working with the structure and the contents on how to write a story in previous sessions. It is also assumed that students know how *Storyjumper*, an application to design storybooks, works. This activity will be done in balanced groups. Students will be able to create their groups with the only premise that there has to be at least one student of each learning style in each group. If there are problems when doing the groups, the teacher will set them accordingly. The instructions given to the students are the following:

- 1) You are going to create a story. It has to include all the parts that we studied during the last class (Introduction, problem and resolution).
- 2) You will have to think of a story with a moral, create a storybook on *Storyjumper* (16 to 20 pages of story and sound recording), and represent the story in class.
- 3) Although all the students of the group must participate in each of the parts of the creation of the story, each member will be the coordinator of one of these parts:
  - Visual learners: in charge of the design and the visual part of the story.
  - Aural learners: in charge of the audio recording of the story.

- Read and writing learners: Coordinator of the written part of the story.
- Kinesthetic learners: coordinator of the representation of the story.

### Content

This activity is quite different from the previous ones, since in this project students are not using their learning styles for an individual profit, but for a common result. Thus, the main idea for this task is for students to learn how to write a storybook, but also how to work cooperatively benefiting from the capacities and abilities of all the students.

Therefore, the competences that intervene in this activity are KC1, KC2, KC4, KC5 and KC6. First of all, KC1 and KC4 are covered due to the reasons exposed in other activities (it is a linguistic activity, and students are learning how to take profit to their learning styles). Because of the fact that students are dealing with a digital tool, *Storyjumper*, it can be stated that KC2 is essential in the activity. Since the students need to work in groups and respect each other's opinions, they will be working with KC5. Finally, KC6 is very important in this task, since each one has a responsibility with one part of the activity, and they need to manage the situation.

### Materials

The materials needed in this task are electronic devices with an Internet connection and an audio recorder, and a space for the students to practise the representation.

### Teacher's role

This activity is student-centred, so the teacher could help students with their stories and scripts, revising if the structure of the story is correct and catchy, checking if the roles of the coordinators are being accomplished, etc.

### Extension

This activity could be the prolongation of a traditional class in which students are explained the main characteristic of a story. Moreover, a theatre contest in English could be organised, all the students from different courses could participate and the winners could have some privilege, such as choosing a film to watch in class, or getting one extra point in an exam, etc.

### **Task 5:** Learning how to write a formal email

Students would all be given a photocopy of the same formal email (found in Appendix 7), and they would have to identify:

- 1) The main parts
- 2) Language related
- 3) Some topics or situations in which a formal email is needed

To complete this information they would have to look for some information on the Internet. Each type of learners would have to search in different means:

- Visual learners: outlines and images found in Google images.
- Aural learners: Youtube.
- Reading and Writing: blogs and web pages.
- Kinesthetic: Examples of formal emails found on the Net.

### Content

In this activity students would be introduced to the formal email, its main features and structure. Besides, they would also learn the best means of looking for information in a more efficient and pleasant way depending on their learning style. One of the specific assumptions to do this activity is simply that students should have basic notions on how to use the Internet. However, since students these days are digital natives, this would not suppose a problem.

The basic competences covered in this activity are KC1, KC2, KC4 and KC6. Since it is an activity that deals with the use of language and strategies

used in the students' process of learning, KC1 and KC4 are involved in this activity. Moreover, a great part of this activity is focused on the use of the Internet, so the students would also potentiate their Digital Competence (KC2). Furthermore, they would also have to be autonomous enough to create their own notes about how to write a formal email. Therefore, students would have to use their KC6 to have a creative initiative to create their notes and follow them.

### Materials

The materials used for this activity are electronic devices with Internet connection.

### Teacher's role

This activity is for students to potentiate their autonomy and their individual work, so it is centred on the students. However, the role of the teacher should be to revise the information the students find on the Net, and check its veracity. Moreover, since this activity is quite tempting for the students, in the sense that they might use the electronic device with other purposes than looking for the required information, the teacher should also manage the class to prevent these situations from happening.

### Extension

A possible extension for this activity could be that the students put themselves in groups and debate the information found on the Net, and sharing it with the other groups, so that all the students would eventually have the same agreed notes.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: The VARK Questionnaire for Younger People

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and click the box next to it. Please click more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

1. *You want to plan a surprise party for a friend. You would:*
  - make lists of what to do and what to buy for the party;
  - draw a map and make a special design for the invitation;
  - talk about it on the phone or text others; or,
  - invite friends and just let it happen.
  
2. *You have a problem with your knee. Would you prefer that the doctor:*
  - demonstrated what was wrong using a model of a knee;
  - showed you a diagram of what was wrong;
  - described to you what was wrong; or,
  - gave you an article or brochure that explained knee injuries.
  
3. *You have been selected as a tutor or a leader for a holiday program. This is interesting for your friends. You would:*
  - show them the list of activities in the program;
  - show them the map of where it will be held and diagrams about it;
  - describe the activities I will be doing in the program; or,
  - start practising the activities I will be doing in the program.
  
4. *You want some feedback about an event, competition or test. You would like to have feedback:*
  - that used graphs showing what I achieved;
  - that used examples of what I have done;
  - that used a written description or table of my results; or,
  - from somebody who discussed it with me.
  
5. *You need to give directions to go to a house nearby. You would:*
  - tell them the directions;
  - write down the directions as a list;
  - draw a map on a piece of paper or get a map online; or,
  - walk with them.
  
6. *You are about to buy a new digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?*
  - reading the details about its features;
  - the salesperson telling me about it;
  - it is the latest design and looks good; or,
  - trying it.

7. *You are going to make something special for your family. You would:*
  - decide from pictures in magazines;
  - find written instructions to make it;
  - talk it over with my friends; or,
  - make something I have made before.
  
8. *A new movie has arrived in town. What would most influence your decision to go (or not go)?*
  - you see a preview of it;
  - you read what others say about it online or in a magazine;
  - it is similar to others you have liked; or,
  - hear friends talking about it.
  
9. *You have to present your ideas to your class. You would:*
  - write out my speech and learn it by reading it again and again;
  - write a few key words and say them again and again;
  - gather examples and stories to make it real and practical; or,
  - make diagrams or get graphs to help explain my ideas.
  
10. *A website has a video showing how to make a special graph. There is a person speaking, some lists and words describing what to do and some diagrams. You would learn most from:*
  - watching the actions;
  - seeing the diagrams;
  - reading the words; or,
  - listening.
  
11. *I like websites that have:*
  - interesting design and visual effects;
  - interesting information and articles in print;
  - audio channels for music, chat and discussion; or,
  - things I can click on and do.
  
12. *Do you prefer a teacher who likes to use:*
  - field trips, case studies, videos, labs and hands-on practical sessions;
  - an overview diagram, charts, labelled diagrams and maps;
  - a textbook and plenty of handouts; or,
  - class discussions, online discussion, online chat and guest speakers.
  
13. *You are learning to take photos with your new digital camera or mobile phone. You would like to have:*
  - clear written instructions with lists and bullet points;
  - a chance to ask questions and talk about the camera's features;
  - diagrams showing the camera and how to use it; or,
  - examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.
  
14. *You are about to hook up your parent's new computer. You would:*
  - phone, text or email a friend and ask how to do it;
  - unpack the box and start putting the pieces together;

- follow the diagrams that show how it is done; or,
- read the instructions that came with it.

15. Remember when you learned how to play a new computer or board game. You learned best by:

- clues from the diagrams in the instructions;
- listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions;
- reading the instructions; or,
- watching others do it first.

16. After reading a play you need to do a project. Would you prefer to:

- read a speech from the play?;
- draw or sketch something that happened in the play?;
- act out a scene from the play?; or,
- write about the play?

## Appendix 2: Worksheet writing activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Hamburger Writing

Main Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Closing Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

Super Teacher Worksheets - [www.superteacherworksheets.com](http://www.superteacherworksheets.com)

(Hamburger paragraph writing, n.d)



### Appendix 3: Satisfaction questionnaire

1. Did you like being able to choose the activities that best suit you?
  - Yes
  - No
2. Do you think you've learned more with these activities than you could have learned with more traditional activities?
  - Yes
  - No
3. Do you think that you should work all together in class combining different strategies (each of you with a different adaptation according to your preferences), or you should work in small groups depending on your learning style?
  - All together
  - In small groups
4. Are you in favor of everyone having the same final task for (just like you had with the informative essay), or do you think that tests and assignments should also be subjected to your learning styles?
  - Everyone should have the same final task
  - We should have different final tasks depending on our learning style
5. In what aspects of writing do you think exercises 1, 2 and 3 and their adaptation have helped you? You can use your mother tongue to answer.

### Potential speaking activities

1. Would you have liked to do speaking activities like these in which you can choose?
  - Yes
  - No
2. Do you think your speaking skills would improve more with this methodology than with original ones?
  - Yes
  - No
3. Regarding speaking, do you think that you should work all together in class combining different strategies (each of you with a different adaptation according to your preferences), or you should work in small groups depending on your learning style?
  - All together
  - Small groups

## In general...

1. Do you think that teachers should get to know your learning styles at the beginning of the course to adapt their schedules to your needs? \*
  - Yes
  - No
  
2. Had you ever thought it would be possible for you to learn more with a different methodology than the traditional one (or the one your teacher uses)? What did you feel? You can use your mother tongue to answer.
  
3. From 1 to 5, how would you rate this method, which includes learning styles?

Not useful at all

Very useful

1

2

3

4

5

### Appendix 4: Didactic proposal: Observation grid

	Items	Positive	Needs improvement	Negative	Comments
activities	Helpful				
	Clear				
	Suitable topics				
Students	Motivation				
	Academic results				
	SS feel comfortable				
Observations					

## Appendix 5: Examples of activities done by the students

### Task 1

#### Aural learner

#### Multimodal (visual activities)

##### NOTES OF THE VIDEO

-An informative essay is an essay that provides information on a particular topic.

-Essay Structure → Five Parts

Introduction → introduce the topic

Body → with three paragraphs

Conclusion → Summarise the main points

-Planning to do the writing

1. Who, What and why am I writing?

1.1. Pre-writing, write three points about the main idea

2. Drafting, what parts have to be in each paragraph

Introduction → attention grabber, thesis, my opinion on the topic, my three main points, examples of points

Body → use a transition word like foremost and paragraphs are not a page so we will have to reduce them after

Conclusion → we normally started with In conclusion or in summary

3. Revise, revise to make better, is my writing clear?, did I include quotes? and did I make my point?

4. Edit, did I use complete sentences?, are my spelling, capitalization, and punctuation correct?, did I re-read it to hear how it sounds? and did I let someone also read it?

5. Publish, re-write, written or typed, publish your essay and enjoy your reward

### Hamburguer

Main idea: I will do an essay talking about CS:GO, a computer game which is categorized as one of the most difficult FPS.

Detail 1#: What is FPS and CS:GO.

Detail 2#: How to play CS:GO.

Detail 3#: The different professional competition that there are.

Closing Sentence: Repeat what is CS:GO

#### 1 paragraph

**Opening:** Introduce the topic and basic facts

#### 3 paragraphs

**Body:** Present more information such as history, how it developed what makes it special

#### 1 paragraph

**Closing:** Summarise the main points

#### Step 1

TOPIC (who or what)	AUDIENCE (to whom)	PURPOSE (reason)	PRODUCT (format)
.....	Teacher	.....	Essay

#### Step 2

- **Introduction:** Attention grabber  
Thesis  
My opinion on the topic  
My 3 main points  
Examples of points

#### Step 3 Revise

#### Step 4 Edit

#### Connectors:

In addition, however, since, therefore, to, similarly, I think, in fact, generally, all in all

#### Reading and Writing learner


### Task 2

## Reading and writing student

**English**

**Informative essay**

**Information about adjectives**

- Adjectives come before nouns and after with the stative verbs and *to be*.  
"A black cat", "He looks upset"
- The adjectives' number is the same for singular and plural →  

- Adjectives follow a specific order: opinion – size or age – shape – colour – origin and material.  
A fantastic, new Japanese car.

**Informative essay.**

An informative essay is a type of text that informs the reader about a certain topic, with factual and objective information. The model is as follows:

It starts with the opening, where the topic is introduced with some basic facts, followed by the body, where information such as the history of the subject is explained, and finally by the closing, which summarises the main points of the text.

**Info about connectors**

- Connectors are used to help organize, join and relate ideas within the text.
- The connectors of purpose *in order (not) to* and *to* are followed by the base form of the verb.
- The connector of purpose *so that* is followed by a noun/pronoun + *will* or a modal verb.

PARTS OF THE TEXT	CONNECTORS
Introduction	You could start with an alarming fact of the topic you choose. Avoid phrases like, "Since the beginning of man," "According to the dictionary" or "There is something that's sweeping the nation." You have to catch the reader's interest.
Paragraph 1 (Body) <i>Each paragraph of the body normally presents and discusses a different fact relating to the main topic. The writer's opinion or ideas should not overpower the facts but may be included in this part of the essay.</i>	Foremost, again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, ... etc...
Paragraph 2 (Body)	at the same time, but at the same time, despite that, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet emphasis... etc...
Paragraph 3 (Body)	after all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly summary
Conclusion A conclusion paragraph will close off the essay with a short recap of what has been discussed as well as a reminder of the main topic or point the essay addresses.	To conclude, In conclusion, Finally, Evidently, To sum up, On the whole, Summarising, In closing, All in all, By and large, All things considered, In summary...

### Aural learner (transcription):

The main difference between the explanation of the book and the video is that the book divides the information of the essay into three or four paragraphs while the video divides it into five. The video says the basis of an informative essay, like the topic, the audience, the purpose, the format, etc. The book only says that it has to have an opening, a body and a closing. The video also says some connectors to help you write the informative essay, but the book has more examples of connectors.

### Multimodal (Visual activities)

## Task 3: some examples

### AN INFORMATIVE ESSAY

#### 1. Organise your ideas.

##### Opening:

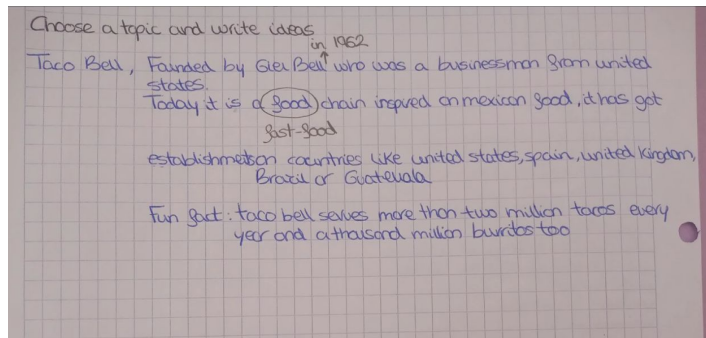
- McDonald's is a chain of fast food.
- Founded in 1940.
- By brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald.

##### Body:

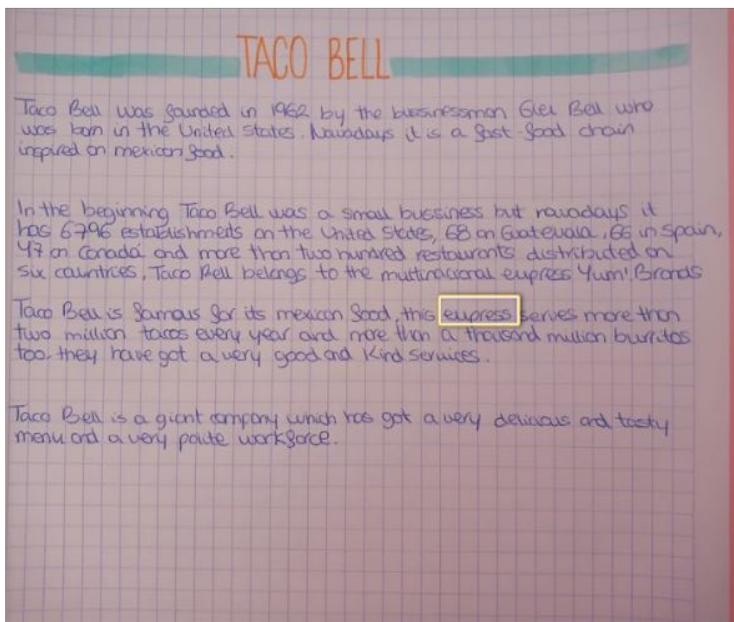
- They opened their first food stall in 1940 in California.
- The style of the food at the beginning was Bar-B-Q.
- They had a menu of 20 dishes, but at the end of the World War II they restructure it.
- On December of 1948 the menu had 9 dishes, like hamburgers or chips.
- Also restructured the business, the attention time went from 15 to 1 minute.
- The term "fast food" was born.
- The company began to expand, got many partners who contributed money to the cause.
- Developed such well-known icons as the Big Ma or the Happy Meal.
- Obesity situation on the the U.S.
- They were forced to throw messages in favor of a healthy life i also added salads.
- One fun fact is that, in 1961 they created the University of Hamburguer.
- In 1990 a McDonald's was opened on Rusia to celebrate de destruction of the URSS.

##### Closing

- Nowadays McDonald's still thinking of new ideas to improve their business.



## Task 4: Some examples



### McDonald's

McDonald's is a chain of fast food outlets founded in 1940 by brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald. They started like a small business and nowadays is one of the most popular and richest in the world.

It all began when they opened their first food stall in 1940 in California, they had a menu of 20 dishes, most of them were Bar-B-Q style, due to its popularity in ~~was most popular on~~ US. But after the World War II they decided to remove it. So the menu was reduced to 9 dishes, also they restructured the business, the attention time was from 15 to 1 minute and there the term "fast food" was born. Not long after the company started to expand, ~~get~~ many partners invested money in the company ~~who contributed money to the cause~~, and developed such well-known icons as the Big Ma or the Happy Meal to get popularity. Finally they became one of the richest empires of the moment.

Despite their importance there was an obesity situation on the US, they were forced to throw messages in favor of a healthy life and also added salads at the menu. Even though they won many enemies also started in funny facts. In 1961 they created the University of Hamburguer, for people who wanted to work on McDonald's, also in 1990 a McDonald's was opened in ~~on~~ Rusia to celebrate de destruction of the URSS.

So McDonald's is a successful empire that nowadays still thinking of new ways to improve the business.

## Appendix 6: Some students' opinions on the Satisfaction questionnaire

### Writing activities

Student	Commentary	Translation/corrected version
1	He podido centrarme en el estilo de ejercicio que me va mejor y así darme cuenta de cómo es más adecuado hacer los ejercicios. De este modo puedo utilizar más este tipo de método y desarrollarlo bien.	I've been able to focus on the style of exercise that works best for me and thus realise how to best do the exercises. This way I can use this kind of method more and develop it well.
4	Creo que se me ha hecho más fácil hacer la redacción gracias a que ya tenía estructurado lo que quería decir, como lo quería decir y los conectores que debía utilizar.	I think it was easier for me to do the writing because I had already structured what I wanted to say, how I wanted to say it, and the connectors I had to use
6	I think that task 3 has helped me a lot to organise what I have to write in every paragraph without leaving me anything and know which topics I have to talk about.	-
7	They helped me know better how to prepare a writing and thinking about a topic and some ideas about it before writing.	-
10	The exercises helped me organise even better the writing, the ideas, and their expression.	-
15	All of them helped, but number two I like more than the other two.	-
23	ha millorat la meva comprensió	My comprehension has improved

### In general

Student	Commentary	Translation/corrected version
1	Realmente nunca me había parado a pensar qué tipo de método era el mejor para mi, ya que, aunque el profesor explique de un modo en clase, posteriormente yo lo aplico a un modo diferente para estudiar y hacer tareas. Ahora sí que me he dado cuenta de que tengo un estilo particular de aprendizaje que me va mejor, así que, sí, creo que aprendería más si los profesores usaran otro método, sin yo tener que adaptar luego su explicación para aprenderla/estudiarla mejor.	I had never really stopped to think about what kind of method was best for me, since, although the teacher explains in one way in class, I later apply it to a different way of studying and doing homework. Now I have realised that I have a particular learning style that suits me better, so, yes, I think I would learn more if the teachers used another method, without me having to adapt their explanation later to learn/study it better.
4	Si, lo he pensado más de una vez, creo que mirando cómo aprende cada alumno más y de una manera más eficiente se podría aprovechar el tiempo y sería mucho mejor.	Yes, I have thought about it more than once, I think that looking at how each student learns more and in a more efficient way could be a better use of time and would be much better.

6	Jo pens que ens pot anar millor per poder fer les activitats d'una manera més còmoda cap a nosaltres i m' he sentit molt còmoda fent d'aquesta manera la redacció	I think we can do better to be able to do the activities in a more comfortable way for us, and I have felt very comfortable doing the writing in this way.
7	I never thought I would learn more with this methodology, even though I am a multimodal learner, I felt comfortable being able to choose which method to use.	-
10	No, it is more easy do it in this way. Maybe is very long to do, but in the final task is useful.	-
11	Yes, because during the years all changes, and, why couldn't learning methodologies change too?	-
15	SÍ, hay muchos otros métodos, el tradicional en general es insuficiente.	YES, there are many other methods, the traditional one is generally insufficient.

### Appendix 7: worksheet formal email

#### Termination Effective Immediately



**Justin Cuyler** <jcuyler@yesware.com>



to me ▾

To whom it may concern:

Please be advised that, effective immediately, we have terminated your account with Yesware due to repeated violation of our terms of service.

We regret having to take this action, but after discussions with you MONTH(S) AND DATE(S) regarding YOUR COMPANY's overall message volume and persistent use of unsolicited email addresses, we have seen no change in your usage pattern.

The manner in which you are using our service jeopardizes our reputation as well as the level of service we are able to provide thousands of other customer accounts.

Sincerely,

Justin Cuyler

(Williams, 2017)