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**DEPARTAMENTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN, POSTGRADOS Y
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**SELF-ASSESSMENT: A TOOL TO HAVE MORE
INDEPENDENT ENGLISH LEARNERS**

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Superior en Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés”.**

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**Facilitar el conocimiento para el proceso de aprendizaje en los
estudiantes, desarrollando la independencia de una manera
activa.**

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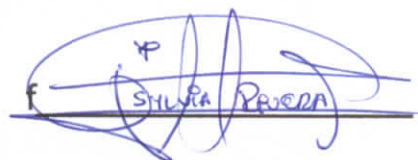
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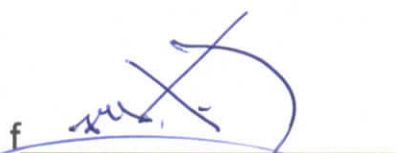
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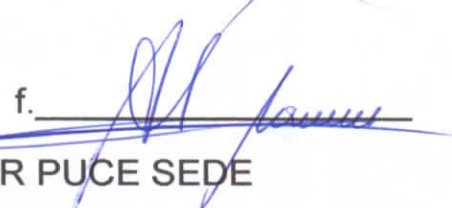
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Yo, Silvia Natalia MontachanaCaiza, portadora de la cédula de ciudadanía # 180346930-1 declaro que esta investigación presentada como informe final, previo a la obtención del título de “ Diploma Superior en Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés” son totalmente personales, originales y auténticos.

En tal virtud, declaro que el contenido, las conclusiones y tanto efectos legales como académicos que se derivan del trabajo propuesto de investigación y de la redacción de este documento son y serán de mi sola y exclusiva responsabilidad legal y académica.



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RESUMEN

Aprender un nuevo idioma es un proceso que puede causar dificultades a varios estudiantes. A causa de esto es importante ofrecerles guía y corrección apropiadas, pero a algunos estudiantes no les gusta ser corregidos delante de sus compañeros. Esta es una oportunidad de hacer que se conviertan en individuos más responsables de su propio aprendizaje y de que se den cuenta de que ellos también pueden mejorar su conocimiento.

Aplicando la autoevaluación, los estudiantes pueden trabajar en esas áreas que representan un desafío para ellos, y al mismo tiempo, encontrar formas de mejorar las habilidades que ellos ya poseen. Algunas técnicas de la autoevaluación son discutidas en este trabajo, y varias de las ventajas y las desventajas que este proceso trae consigo. Para asegurarse de que este proceso es útil, tanto maestros como estudiantes deben estar listos para ciertos cambios.

ABSTRACT

Learning a new language is a process that can cause students some difficulties. Because of this it is important to offer them proper guidance and correction, but some students do not like when they are corrected in front of the class. This is an opportunity to have them become more responsible on their own learning and realise that they are also able to improve their knowledge.

By applying self-assessment, students can work on those weak areas that represent a challenge for them, and at the same time, find ways to better those skills which they already possess. Some self-assessment techniques are discussed in this work, and a few advantages and disadvantages that this process may bring with. To make sure this process is useful, both teachers and students need to be ready for changes.

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INTRODUCCIÓN

Learning a new language is a rather long process. Because of that, it is important to know that some students could have some difficulties in this process. To develop their creativity when learning, it is essential to help them not to become dependent on their teacher. On the other hand, some students do not like when they are corrected in front of the class, which is a good idea to turn the classroom into a place where they feel free so that they become more responsible of their own learning and realise that they are also able to improve their own knowledge.

When they notice and identify their abilities and weaknesses, they will be capable of improving the (new) knowledge with the guidance of their teacher. Knowing this, the teacher should be conscious that they must give them enough tools to overcome certain problems. The teacher also has to apply activities which could help to identify their learning style and take advantage of it. If the students discover that they learn better by doing a specific activity, they will find that it is not difficult to learn the whole language and they will apply self-assessment to get rid of mistakes and errors which are common when learning a language.

The teacher should be ready to help them and try to explain the things that they cannot understand, but they also have to face the fact that some students will not always accept their teacher's guidance and will look for ways not to make the (same) mistake repeatedly. This step is really good for

them, because both the teacher and students will grow up and develop their personality. One of the aspects to be considered is that even though applying self-assessment could be interesting for some students, some of them could not find it easy and useful and might get confused and disappointed. This type of student, who depends so much on their teacher, has to work really hard if they want to solve their learning problems.

Teachers should be very creative and use their knowledge in a correct way if they want to get good results. They have to consider that students are not all the same and have different needs. It is our job to help them satisfy those needs.

CHAPTER I

1.1-Self-Assessment

“We often need someone else to tell us how well we did something. We also tend to be too much critical of ourselves because we do not want to be thought of as immodest. If we think of learning as a never-ending process then the students we teach should be aware of that. There is a way to involve our students, to make them more aware, active and responsible for the results of their work, and to motivate them at the same time. This can be done by introducing self-assessment into their work, by practicing it and making it a habit” (Purtic, MELT No. 2, 2005)

Self-assessment appeared in 1980 with the publication of a Council of Europe text on the topic (Oskarsson, 1980). As time passes by, more and more programmes around the world have tried to add self-assessment into the learning and evaluation process, with varying degrees of success.

Self-assessment consists on having learners correct or assess their own work, performance, effort or progress. It should be a built-in part of English language teaching and each teacher should decide how often they want to do it. Considering the level, group’s needs, and certain factors –such as time – it can be done in L1.

1.2 Purposes of self-assessment

According to Watson Todd (2002) several reasons for using self-assessment have been suggested, including:

- Self-assessment is a prerequisite for a self-directed learner. If a goal of learning is for learners to be self-sufficient and independent in language use, then training and experience in self-assessment are needed.
- Self-assessment can raise learners' awareness of language, effective ways of learning, and their own performance and needs.
- Self-assessment increases motivation and goal orientation in learning.
- Some aspects of language learning, such as effort and learner beliefs, can only be assessed through self-assessment.
- Self-assessment can reduce the teacher's workload.

(Watson Todd, 2002)

1.3. A Learner-Centred Approach

"A learner-centred approach in language instruction is founded on the concept that the learner is central in the learning process. Learners learn primarily because of what they bring to their classroom experience in terms of their perceived needs, motivations, past experiences, background

knowledge, interests, and creative skills. Learners are active as opposed to passive recipients of knowledge. They may assume a decision-making role in the classroom, often deciding what is to be learned, through which activities, and at what pace. Learners can also produce materials and provide realia for the classroom. Teachers, on the other hand, are seen as facilitators, helpers, and resources (Campbell and Kryszewska, 1992)”

Paying attention to the previous explanation, self-assessment offers a quite complete way for students to also assume their role of responsible individuals, who do not need to rely completely on their teachers. It is very important to make students aware of the fact that even the most qualified and experienced teacher does not have all the answers to their questions, and that answer they might be looking for could come from their own research, hence, their effort on learning by themselves.

1.4. Self-assessment instruments

Some self-assessment instruments, while powerful when used for learning purposes, are inappropriate for evaluation purposes. These include learner diaries; the task-based self-assessment instruments of Tudor (1996) by which learners are encouraged to analyse various aspects of their learning, such as their difficulties in completing a task; and the critical incidents in learning of Singh (1998). These instruments are very subjective—indeed, subjectivity is the reason of critical incidents— and produce qualitative information that cannot be converted into scores for evaluation

purposes. Self-assessment instruments that produce quantitative information that can be used for evaluation purposes fall into two categories: global self-assessments and self-marking instruments.

1.4.1. Global self-assessment

It is in the area of global self-assessment that Oskarsson's (1980) work is most influential. Oskarsson suggested that global self-assessments could be conducted through rating scales and checklists. However, both of these, as Oskarsson suggests, are very problematic. To illustrate this, here are example questions used to measure learners' speaking ability:

- Give yourself a rating for your speaking skills on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 means *I am completely fluent in English* and 0 means *I cannot speak English at all*.
- Can you ask someone to help you to arrange an appointment with a doctor?
- Can you express sympathy using phrases like *I am sorry to hear that*?

At face value, these questions may seem fairly straightforward. But if we were to apply Oskarsson's question format to teaching, we would produce questions such as:

- Give yourself a rating for your classroom management skills as a teacher on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is a perfect classroom manager and 0 is a complete incompetent.
- Can you explain the meaning of *behave*?
- Can you give clear instructions for a jigsaw reading activity?

As a teacher, for all of the items, you might feel that your answer depends on the teaching situation. In fact, it may even seem unfair to ask items like these.

It is then when we must understand that working on self-assessment activities might fall into the category of *subjective tasks*. A learner who thinks that they have to work more on pronunciation, for example, might not coincide with what their teacher or classmates believe about their performance. Therefore, having students find those own ways for “grading” what they do is a matter of getting to know our students and their expectations, likes, dislikes, and so on.

A question in designing self-assessment activities is how they can be directly related to learners’ experiences. At the task level, the process of completing the task and the finished product provide a clear focus for and input into self-assessment. Next come some commonly used activities which open an idea on how self-assessment can be applied.

1.4.2 Portfolios

The most obvious and widely-used learning instrument that could be used as input for self-assessment is the portfolio. A portfolio is "a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas" (Genesee and Upshur, 1996:99). Since the portfolio is evidence to learners of their own efforts, progress, and achievements, it is suitable for self-assessment. To use a portfolio as self-assessment for evaluation purposes, questions to guide the self-assessment must be provided. Sample questions could include the following:

- To what extent did you achieve your goals in learning during this course?
- To what extent did you improve your reading? List some of the problems you faced while reading and how you solved those problems.
- To what extent has your knowledge of vocabulary improved? List the new words you have learnt from your portfolio.
- To what extent has your confidence in using English improved?

By referring to their portfolios in answering these questions, learners have concrete evidence of their performance and are not forced to rely on their intuition and possible bias about their performance or ability.

1.4.3 Pre- and post-course writing

A second way of starting using self-assessment is pre- and post-tests writing. Learners can be asked to write two essays about their attitudes towards learning English, one at the beginning and another at the end of the course. Comparing the two, learners are able to see the extent of their development through the course.

Whereas self-marking instruments applied to a given task provide a snapshot of the learner's performance at a given moment in a course, a comparison of self-marking on pre- and post-course writing can give a clear indication of the learner's development and improvement throughout the course.

1.4.4 Learner contracts

A third potential instrument for global self-assessment is the learner contract (Dickinson, 1987). At the beginning of a course, learners identify two or three goals they want to achieve in the course, tasks and materials that can be used to reach these goals, and ways of measuring the extent to which the goals have been reached. For example, a learner may decide to increase his or her speed in reading. The learner can then identify some texts with comprehension questions to be used as practice and set a target level of achievement, such as an increase in reading speed of 50 words per minute while retaining a minimum of 70% for comprehension questions answered correctly.

A learner contract, then, provides an organised series of tasks throughout a course and makes attaining specific goals an integral part of the learning process. The choice of goals in learner contracts can be left to the learner or can be controlled by the teacher to match the objectives of the course.

1.5 Assessment activities

Although classroom teachers usually assume full responsibility for all aspects of the testing process, each phase in the assessment process offers valuable opportunities to involve learners. For Coombe and Kinney (1999), the following sample activities involve students in deciding what is to be tested, selecting or producing appropriate materials, writing test questions, administering listening tests, and scoring such tests. All of these activities can be adapted for different skill areas, as these have been adapted to listening.

- ***Student-generated exams.*** Students design and produce listening tests which they later administer and score. Typically, student-generated exams are produced in groups and given to other groups of students. Student-generated exams provide teachers with interesting insights into what information and skills students value.
- ***Test committee activities.*** Different groups of students are given different test-related responsibilities. Such responsibilities can be rotated over time, so all students have opportunities to be involved in various aspects of the test.

- **Legislative activities.** Students are given certain decision-making powers regarding their tests. Such powers might include agenda-setting, voting on various aspects of test content, administration, and marking.
- **Producing an answer key.** Students work in groups or as a class with a written transcript of the listening passage they heard in order to produce a key that will be used to mark their tests.
- **Peer-correction.** Students are responsible for accurately marking and scoring each other's tests.
- **Self-correction.** Students are responsible for accurately marking and scoring their own tests.

(Coombe and Kinney1999,1)

1.6 Important considerations of self-assessment

In their work, Coombe and Kinney claim that when identifying (the) target phases in the assessment process and selecting and planning specific activities, teachers should consider several important issues, such as:

- **Classroom context.** How will class size, grouping (ESL/EFL), seating arrangement, and available equipment affect the expected outcome?
- **Student population.** How will student-related factors such as age, maturity level, student conduct, proficiency level, range of abilities, or gender affect their ability to participate successfully in selected learner-centred activities?

- **Test weight.** How important is the test?
- **Practicality.** How much or how little will the anticipated student involvement hinder or expedite the assessment process?

(Coombe and Kinney 1999,1)

All the previous information should 'help teachers help their students' find the most appropriate ways for them to be more involved in the process of self-assessing their work.

Using self-assessment in the classroom should be seen as a way for teachers to make their job easier. Eventually, instructors could become less responsible for students' results. Even though, this does not mean that they are going to work completely on their own. On the other hand, students deserve a chance to actively participate in the teaching-learning process, from which they are an essential part, and tell what they feel they know or do not know.

Chapter II

2.1. Language Learning focused on different Learning Styles

2.1.1 The Learning Style Inventory and the Four Basic Learning Styles

In 1971 David Kolb developed the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) to assess individual learning styles. Research on the instrument has identified four statistically prevalent learning styles: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating. The following summary of the four basic learning styles is based on both research and clinical observation of these patterns of LSI scores (Kolb, 1984, 1999a, 1999b). These descriptions have been taken from Kolb, Boyatzis, and Mainemelis work *Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions* (1999)

2.1.2 Diverging

The Diverging style's dominant learning abilities are Concrete Experience (CE) and Reflective Observation (RO). People with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different points of view. It is labelled "Diverging" because a person with it performs better in situations that call for generation of ideas, such as a "brainstorming" session. People with a Diverging learning style have broad cultural interests and like to gather

information. Research shows that they are interested in people, tend to be imaginative and emotional, have broad cultural interests, and tend to specialize in the arts. In formal learning situations, people with the Diverging style prefer to work in groups, listening with an open mind and receiving personalized feedback.

2.1.3 Assimilating

The Assimilating style's dominant learning abilities are Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Reflective Observation (RO). People with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into concise, logical form. Individuals with an Assimilating style are less focused on people and more interested in ideas and abstract concepts. Generally, people with this style find it more important that a theory have logical soundness than practical value. The Assimilating learning style is important for effectiveness in information and science careers. In formal learning situations, people with this style prefer readings, lectures, exploring analytical models, and having time to think things through.

2.1.4 Converging

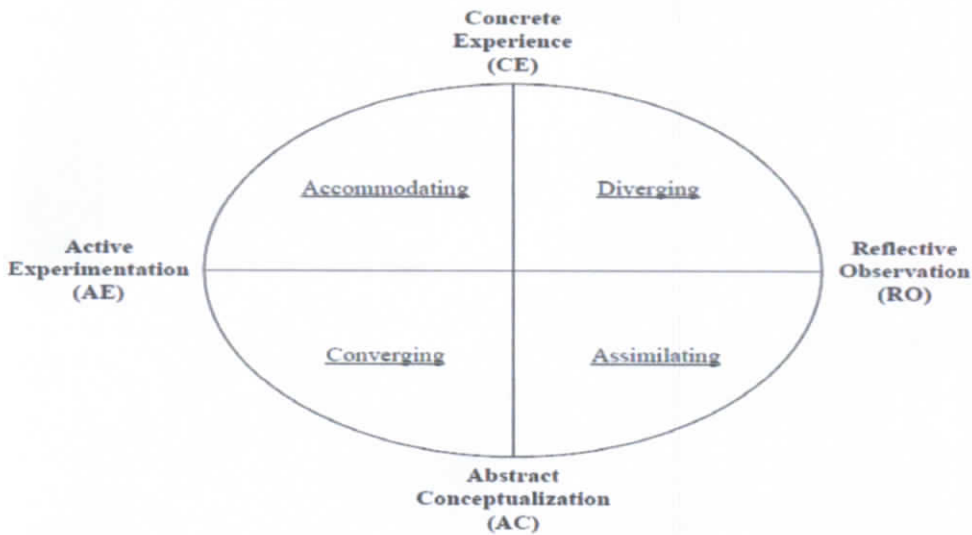
The Converging style's dominant learning abilities are Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE). People with this

learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. They have the ability to solve problems and make decisions based on finding solutions to questions or problems. Individuals with a Converging learning style prefer to deal with technical tasks and problems rather than with social issues and interpersonal issues. These learning skills are important for effectiveness in specialist and technology careers. In formal learning situations, people with this style prefer to experiment with new ideas, simulations, laboratory assignments, and practical applications.

2.1.5 Accommodating

The Accommodating style's dominant learning abilities are Concrete Experience (CE) and Active Experimentation (AE). People with this learning style have the ability to learn from primarily "hand-on" experience. They enjoy carrying out plans and involving themselves in new and challenging experiences. Their tendency may be to act on "gut" feelings rather than on logical analysis. In solving problems, individuals with an Accommodating learning style rely more heavily on people for information than on their own technical analysis. This learning style is important for effectiveness in action-oriented careers such as marketing or sales. In formal learning situations, people with the Accommodating learning style prefer to work with others to get assignments done, to set goals, to do field work, and to test out different approaches to completing a project.

The Experiential Learning Cycle and Basic Learning Styles (Kolb, 1984).



(David Kolb, Boyatzis, 1984.1)

2.2 Factors that Shape and Influence Learning Styles

The above patterns of behaviour associated with the four basic learning styles are shown consistently at various levels of behaviour. During the last three decades researchers have examined the characteristics of learning styles at five particular levels of behaviour: Personality types, early educational specialization, professional career, current job role, and adaptive competencies. Following there is an explanation of each, according to Kolb, Boyatzis, Mainemelis's work.

2.2.1. Personality Types

ELT follows Carl Jung in recognizing that learning styles result from individuals' preferred ways for adapting in the world. Jung's

Extraversion/Introversion dialectical dimension as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) correlates with the Active/Reflective dialectic of ELT as measured by the LSI; and the MBTI Feeling/Thinking dimension correlates with the LSI Concrete Experience/ Abstract Conceptualization dimension. The MBTI Sensing type is associated with the LSI Accommodating learning style and the MBTI Intuitive type with the LSI Assimilating style. MBTI Feeling types correspond to LSI Diverging learning styles and Thinking types to Converging styles.

The above discussion implies that the Accommodating learning style is the Extraverted Sensing type, and the Converging style the Extraverted Thinking type. The Assimilating learning style corresponds to the Introverted Intuitive personality type and the Diverging style to the Introverted Feeling type. Myers (1962) descriptions of these MBTI types are very similar to the corresponding LSI learning styles as described by ELT (see also Kolb, 1984, pp: 83-85).

2.2.2 Educational Specialization

Early educational experiences shape people's individual learning styles by instilling positive attitudes toward specific sets of learning skills and by teaching students how to learn. Although elementary education is generalized, there is an increasing process of specialization that begins at high school and becomes sharper during the college years. This specialization in the realms of social knowledge influences individuals'

orientations toward learning, resulting to particular relations between learning styles and early training in an educational specialty or discipline. People with undergraduate majors in the Arts, History, Political science, English, and Psychology tend to have Diverging learning styles, while those majoring in more abstract and applied areas like Physical Sciences and Engineering have Converging learning styles. Individuals with Accommodating styles have educational backgrounds in Business and Management, and those with Assimilating styles in Economics, Mathematics, Sociology, and Chemistry.

2.2.3 Professional Career Choice

A third set of factors that shape learning styles stems from professional careers. One's professional career choice not only exposes one to a specialized learning environment, but it also involves a commitment to a generic professional problem, such as social service, that requires a specialized adaptive orientation. In addition, one becomes a member of a reference group of peers who share a professional mentality, and a common set of values and beliefs about how one should behave professionally. This professional orientation shapes learning style through habits acquired in professional training and through the more immediate normative pressures involved in being a competent professional.

Research over the years has shown that social service (i.e., psychology, nursing, social work, public policy) and arts and communications professions

(i.e., theatre, literature, design, journalism, and media) comprise people who are heavily or primarily

2.2.4 Diverging in their learning style

Professions in the sciences (i.e., biology, mathematics, physical sciences) and information or research (i.e., educational research, sociology, law, and theology) have people with an Assimilating learning style. The Converging learning styles tends to be dominant among professionals in the fields of technology (i.e., engineering, computer sciences, and medical technology), economics, and environment science (i.e., farming, forestry). Finally, the Accommodating learning style characterizes people with careers in organizations (i.e., management, public finance, educational administration) and business (i.e., marketing, government, and human resources).

2.2.5 Current Job Role

The fourth level of factors influencing learning style is the person's current job role. The task demands and pressures of a job shape a person's adaptive orientation. Executive jobs, such as general management, that requires a strong orientation to task accomplishment and decision making in uncertain emergent circumstances require an Accommodating learning style. Personal jobs, such as counselling and personnel administration, that require the establishment of personal relationships and effective communication with

other people demand a Diverging learning style. Information jobs, such as planning and research, that require data gathering and analysis, as well as conceptual modelling, have an Assimilating learning style requirement. Technical jobs, such as bench engineering and production that require technical and problem-solving skills require a convergent learning orientation.

2.2.6 Adaptive competencies

The fifth and most immediate level of forces that shapes learning style is the specific task or problem the person is currently working on. Each task we face requires a corresponding set of skills for effective performance. The effective matching of task demands and personal skills results in an adaptive competence. The Accommodative learning style encompasses a set of competencies that can best be termed Acting skills: Leadership, Initiative, and

2.2.7 Action

The Diverging learning style is associated with Valuing skills: Relationship, Helping others, and Sense-making. The Assimilating learning style is related to Thinking skills: Information-gathering, Information-analysis, and Theory building. Finally, the Converging learning style is associated with Decision skills like Quantitative Analysis, Use of Technology, and Goal-setting (Kolb, 1984).

Relations Between the Basic Learning Styles and Five Levels of Behavior.				
Behavior level	Diverging	Assimilating	Converging	Accommodating
Personality types	Introverted Feeling	Introverted Intuition	Extraverted Thinking	Extraverted Sensation
Educational specialization	Arts, English History Psychology	Economics Mathematics Sociology Chemistry	Engineering Physical sciences	Business Management
Professional career	Social service Arts Communication	Sciences Research Information	Technology Economics Environment	Organizations Business
Current jobs	Personal jobs	Information jobs	Technical jobs	Executive jobs
Adaptive competencies	Valuing skills	Thinking skills	Decision skills	Action skills

Source:Experiential Learning Theory – Previous Research and New Directions. Kolb, Boyatzis, Mainemelis.

2.3 Matching Teaching Styles with Learning Styles

Knowledge of one's own learning style is essential in —learning to learn (Smith and Associates 1990). Teachers should help students discover their own learning preferences and provide constructive feedback about the advantages and disadvantages of various styles. Also, teachers should respect the learners' present preferences and encourage their development, while at the same time creating opportunities for students to experiment with different ways of learning.

Instructors may use instruments and activities specially designed for L2 learners such as Willing's Activity Work Sheets (1989) and Kinsella's Classroom Work Style Survey (1996) to identify students' learning styles. Although this kind of assessment is not comprehensive, it does indicate

students' preferred general learning habits. It also helps students understand their own learning styles so that they can capitalize on their strengths. As a result students can enhance their learning power by being aware of the style areas in which they feel less comfortable, and by working on their development, thus, providing avenues to foster their intellectual growth.(Eliason, 1995).

Similarly, teachers can use the survey results to identify strong style patterns in their classes, which they should consider when designing learning tasks. For example, in our ESL Teaching class at Northern Illinois University (NIU), Dr. Richard A. Orem, the instructor, used the SOS-L2 checklist to diagnose students' general learning styles. This showed us how to assess students' learning styles and made us more aware of our own strengths and weaknesses in learning so that we could effectively use our strengths and compensate for our weaknesses.

Different learning strategies benefit learners differently. After a certain amount of practice and use, students will know how and when to use learning strategies to deal with their language problems. Consequently, they will become comfortable with the idea of assuming responsibility for their learning.

Chapter III

3.1. Advantages and disadvantages of self-assessment

The following is a general view of what a result of self-assessment can be, taking into account different aspects that can be assessed.

First of all, a self-assessment aims to help a person identify their own areas of strengths and weakness to create an action plan for implementing change. It can address specific skills, such as communication, leadership, listening and social abilities, but can also focus on more tangible abilities, as in a professional or trade skills. A self assessment's subjective nature can call its accuracy into question. Use a self assessment as a starting point toward personal and professional growth.

3.1.2 Advantages of self-assessment

3.1.3 Personal Growth

Personal growth can arise from the introspection necessary to perform a self assessment. Reflecting on different areas of your life such as relationships, spirituality and communication skills identifies positive and negative qualities to encourage and abate. According to the University of Sydney, Australia's Self and Peer Assessment website, self assessment for personal growth is

most effective when used under supervision from a life coach or teacher to help guide the process of implementing change.

3.1.4 Exposure

Exposing areas of strengths and weaknesses is the first step in your development. Many people do not take time to identify areas of their life that need improvement. A self assessment will help you discover the different characteristics, patterns and reactions that affect your relationships, professional life and social experiences. The assessment exposes issues and strengths that aren't evident in daily consciousness. An effective self assessment enables you to explore specific areas of your life such as your needs, desires and expectations.

3.1.5 Self Awareness

A self assessment helps you become more self-aware, enabling you to take a more objective look at your behaviour, choices and actions to make them productive and beneficial. Self awareness also improves your personal interaction with other people because you take into consideration the way others perceive you and how you perceive yourself.

3.2.1. Disadvantages of self-assessment

3.2.2. Subjectivity

A self-assessment is limited because it is by its very nature subjective. You are left with the responsibility to rate and assess different areas of your life. Your communication filters, life experiences and self-perception will all alter the accuracy of the assessment. A self assessment may be more useful as a revelation of your personal perceptions than an accurate look at your life.

3.2.3. No Accountability

After completing the assessment you may have limited motivation for change. A self assessment begins and ends with you, leaving the challenge in your hands to change areas of weakness. If another person is included in the assessment process, accountability can be created that will help you change and stay committed to your word.

3.3. Preparing students for self-assessment

Students may have little exposure to different forms of assessment and so may lack the necessary skills and judgements to effectively manage self and peer assessments. There may also be a perception amongst students that the academic is 'shirking' their responsibilities by having students undertaking peer assessments. In this situation students may be reminded of the Graduate Student Attributes. This also highlights the need to fully prepare

and equip students for their own assessment and for the assessment of others.

It is helpful to introduce students to the concepts and elements of assessment against specified criteria in the first weeks of class when you explain the unit of the study outline. This requires taking time and setting groups, activities or unit of study to discuss what is required, and to provide guidance on how to judge their own and others' contributions. Students will need to be assisted to develop criteria that match the learning outcomes with regards to the output and process of the group work. If assessment criteria for each element are set up and clearly communicated, your role will also change to one of the facilitator into guide.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Nowadays, it is more important to provide our students with the right motivation and tools so that they become more independent learners of English – and other languages. In this way, they will be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This last fact will offer them the opportunity of working on those areas which they need to improve and to make sure that there are plenty of ways for them to progress and achieve success on their own, depending on the skill – and sub-skills – that both them and their teachers have noticed to be causing trouble.

There are several activities that can be used to have students understand what they are expected to do when it comes to assessing themselves. Even though the aim of each of those activities is to help learners improve a specific area, at some point they will notice that, for example, writing a journal will help them better their writing skills and eventually their reading abilities. This is a type of intrinsic motivation which, again, they will discover by themselves as the process is established and developed.

Another important aspect of this study is that having students work in pairs or groups offer a different and really interesting application of self-assessment. It is clear that sometimes students find it quite hard to ask their tutors for help, but it is rather easy to share ideas and exchange opinions in a freer

way among classmates. Peer-assessment is a practical initiative that can be applied along with self-assessment. Nevertheless, teacher's support is one of the most important aspects since students will always have something to ask for.

Recommendations

A process such as self-assessment has to be guided and clearly established from the very beginning, which is why the teacher does need to know in advance what they expect from their students and let them know about those wishes, so that both parties "are in the same path". As not every activity suits every student, it is really important to find the ones that are best for the group's needs. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to find out what those needs are.

Constant feedback from the teacher is a must so that a process of interaction is built at the beginning and is kept during all the time that the activity – or activities – that have been designed are put into practice. It is then when patience from the tutor must be present. As the objective is to see improvement and high results, more work will be involved. If students are asked to do their part in a certain way, teachers must definitely 'practice what they preach'.

Finally, students need to be positive about the outcome of the activities that they are asked to complete. Constant motivation is one – if not the most –

important aspect of this kind of work. Both the teacher and the students have to understand that nothing changes overnight and that any effort will show results sooner or later.

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