LEARNING ‘LEARNING STYLES’

by:
Gina T. Fontanillas
Head Teacher III, Bataan School of Fisheries

Learning about learning styles matters!

Undoubtedly, the school plays a very crucial role in English promotion and in making someone capable of using the language. The English classroom should be then a breeding ground for English users and speakers, but various conflicts continually arise and are currently experienced by the teachers and the students in the classroom. For instance, there is always a deafening silence every time the teacher commands the students to speak only in English; thus, inducing a “nosebleed world” for this sole language policy. Some students often opt to remain silent even if they have queries to ask, opinions to share, and concerns to air. When scrutinized, the problem is always bonded with the students' perspective that the use of the English medium is none but a taxing activity. Worst, they have the fear of communicating in the said language because they really do not comprehend at all, where reading an English piece and listening to the English teacher become totally tedious and futile.

To make English learning meaningful and fruitful to the learners, different teaching strategies have been used by the teacher as a springboard in teaching English, yet many students still consider it a difficult subject. Despite the great effort to enhance English achievement, students' low level of comprehension and lack of communication skills still persist.

Indeed, the child is central in the educational process. The more we know about him, his exceptional qualities, his strength and flaws, how he learns, and what boosts and diverts his learning and others, the better we can provide for his education. However, students are different from each other and learn in different ways, and this is connected to their personality types and to their preferred way of doing and viewing things. It is believed that most people favor some particular method of interacting with, taking in, and processing stimuli and information. Based
on this concept, the idea of individualized "learning styles", simply considered as various approaches or ways of learning, originated in the 1970s, has gained popularity in recent years.

The fact that students learn English at different rates because of their individual differences should be heeded because educators must be responsible for motivating the students, and for making sure that they become involved in learning. It is, therefore, the teachers’ task to address the students’ needs. Teaching styles should match learning styles. However, in the present classroom situation, teaching English does not place much emphasis on the teaching process but rather on the content. Most teaching strategies still concentrate almost exclusively on the content and not on the process. If strategies were made explicit, most people could become competent learners, and when their teachers and trainers also understand how to present innovative materials based on one’s learning preference, the results may be victorious. In the same manner, the worth of understanding one’s learning style is to develop one’s natural approaches to learning and to develop the facility to learn in ways that may call for more attention and effort. Learning how to learn in different ways that are most natural to them, students are more likely to take on the challenge to go forward.

Thus, learning about learning styles matters!

References: