

## Perceived Communication Competence and Learning Styles in the New Normal



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**ABSTRACT:** The student has appreciated and adapted to the new normal phase. In the two years, they spent at home doing their modules and online classes, they have adapted quickly, as these students are in the technological age. This study intended to assess the communication competence and learning styles of the Bachelor of Elementary Education at St. Michael's College, Higher Education Department. It specifically aimed to answer the effect of the new normal modality of communication competence and learning styles in terms of visual, auditory, visual/iconic, and kinesthetic. This study utilized a descriptive correlation study research design, a simple random sampling procedure, and a survey questionnaire for learning styles and communication competence. Results revealed that some students were under moderate and high. The researchers used the mean and standard deviation Kendall Tau Rank, and Shapiro-Wilk Test to determine the significant relationship between learning styles and communication competence variables. The researchers recommended a program considered "Upgrading Learning Styles and Fundamental Communication Capabilities" to enhance and improve the learners' skills in different aspects, boost their confidence, and enhance their abilities in using English as a communication tool and learning.

**KEYWORDS:** Communication competence, New Normal, Learning Styles

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Learning modalities are the sensory channels or pathways through which individuals give, receive, and store information. Perception, memory, and sensation comprise the concept of modality. According to Bruner (2015), humans assimilate knowledge about the environment through four sensory modalities: visual (observing pictures, symbols or diagrams), auditory (listening, discussing), visual/iconic (reading and writing), and kinesthetic (using tactile sensory abilities such as smell and touch).

New normal learning modalities plays a big role with regards to communication competence of every students, it has huge implication to the communication skills of the students since education is very difficult to attain now a days. The abrupt switch to fully online learning has been particularly stressful for many instructors and students who prefer in-person instruction (Hodges et al. 2020). In this regard, it was difficult for the students to study and access school using the required learning modalities of this new normal, such as this online or modular class due to the unavailability of students' gadgets, technologies, and inaccessible living areas.

Hence, the researchers aimed to determine the perceived communication competence of students in the new normal. The researchers were also aimed to know the level of the learning styles of students in the new normal based on their preferred learning styles: such as visual, auditory, iconic, and kinesthetic; and determine the significant relationship between communication competence and students' learning style.

The researchers conducted this study in the school year 2022-2023. It includes their observations and investigations on Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students under the College of Education and the findings on the perceived communication competence and learning styles of students in the new normal.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study was aimed to determined students' perceived communication competence and learning styles in the new normal of the BEED students in St. Michael's College, Iligan City. Specifically, it attempted to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of communication competence perceived by the respondents?; (2) What is the level of the respondents learning styles in the new normal modality in terms of: 2.1 visual; 2.2 auditory; 2.3 visual/iconic; and 2.4 kinesthetic; (3) Is there a significant relationship between the communication competence and students learning style?; (4) What development program can be crafted based on the findings of the study?

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### 2.0 METHODS

The researchers employed a quantitative method. This study employed the descriptive correlational research design as the research design in this research. It was used to determine the extent to which two or more variables are related among a single group of people. Simply put, it examined whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in another variable. Findings from correlational studies enable researchers to determine whether or not and the degree to which two variables change together. For instance, if the two questions conducted in this study have a high correlation; one that gets high in one question will also get a high score in the other. The respondents of the study were the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students under the College of Education in St. Michael's College, Higher Education Department. There would be a random selection of students per level and the total of the desired sample population are 100 respondents.

The researchers used two instruments in gathering the data, the learning channel preference questionnaire reproduced by O'Brien (1985) and Subekti's (2019) "Self-perceived communication competence and communication apprehension". The instrument of this study was a face-to-face survey in collecting and gathering the necessary data of the respondents regarding their perspectives and opinions about the perceived communication competence and learning styles of students in the new normal. The paper used a Likert scaling in determining the extent of perceived communication competence and learning styles of students in the new normal. The questionnaire had undergone pilot testing to ensure validity.

The researchers validated the communication competence and learning styles instrument to fit the respondents' views and perceptions. The researchers piloted using thirty (30) Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students in St. Michael's College, Iligan City, to re-validate based on the culture suitability of the respondents using Cronbach Alpha for internal consistency.

### 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1. Level of Communication Competence as Perceived by the Respondents**

Communication Competence	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I am able to give my peer sitting next to me directions to my favorite restaurant in English.	2.88	.537	Moderate
2. I am able to translate a spoken utterance from Mother tongue dialect into English in my group.	2.86	.493	Moderate
3. I am able to do a role-play standing in front of the class in English (e.g., ordering food in a restaurant).	2.76	.622	Moderate
4. I am able to give a short self-introduction without notes in English.	3.04	.790	Moderate
5. I feel I can speak English less painfully.	2.61	.650	Moderate
6. I am sure I can manage to make myself understood in English.	3.08	.545	Moderate
7. I know I can manage to speak English using words I know even if it is not correct.	2.68	.665	Moderate
8. I am able to speak without being nervous.	2.43	.782	Low

The table above shows the level of communication competence which has the highest mean of 3.19 which was interpreted as moderate as perceived by the respondents. The lowest mean has 2.40 which were interpreted as low and, the overall mean of the communication competence of the respondent in terms of communication competence is 2.78 which were described as moderate.

This implies that the perceived communication competence has a neutral result which helps students to become better at English in different ways. It means that the student's communication competence could be improved when they are competent. Despite the new normal, the communication skills of the students remain enhanced allowing them to interact and broaden their minds on a particular subject.

Effective communication occurs when a desired outcome is the consequence of a deliberate or unintentional exchange of information that is transmitted by a variety of individuals and conducted in the intended manner. This can take place either intentionally or unintentionally. This effects further guarantees that the message will not be distorted in any way during the interaction process. Communication that is both effective and efficient will provide the desired effect, maintain that effect, and even have the ability to improve the effect of the message. Therefore, good communication achieves the goal for which it was designed or constructed in the first place. One or more of the following could be considered goals: to bring about change; to inspire action; to raise awareness; to educate; or to communicate an idea or perspective. Talking and listening are essential components of effective communication (Velentzas & Broni, 2014).

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**Table 2.1. Level of the Respondents Learning Styles in the New Normal Modality in terms of Visual**

Indicator	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I remember visual details.	4.04	.790	High
2. When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head.	4.08	.774	High
3. I have improved my presentation gestures.	3.80	.682	High
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>.580</b>	<b>High</b>

The table shows the level of the respondents' learning styles in the new normal modality in terms of Visual, which has the highest mean of 4.08 which was interpreted as high. Then, the lowest mean has 3.80 which were interpreted as high and the overall mean has 3.97 which were described as high.

This implies that the set of data in terms of visual is the student's preferred style while learning. The visual offers good outcomes and it impacts the development of students' high-order thinking skills, visual listening, and visual information. This has developed the student's skills in the new normal for accessing and comprehending new knowledge even in the visual aspect which makes their learning effective and literate.

Effective communication will help instructors have a presence in the classroom. They could send unwanted messages if they do not know things about their body language; new technologies allow new ways to engage with pupils (Duta et al., 2015). Not all people can understand the topic itself without the skills of visuals. According to Moore (2017) and the findings of the literature review that Majid et al. (2017) conducted, the teaching and learning process should only occur if communication exists. Therefore, teachers with excellent communication skills are better positioned to cultivate a positive learning and teaching environment for their students.

**Table 2.2. Level of the Respondents Learning Styles in the New Normal Modality in terms of Auditory**

Indicator	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I have improved my listening skills.	3.90	.732	High
2. When I am listening, it helps if I doodle on a piece of paper.	3.42	.819	High
3. If I am teaching someone something new, I tend to give them a verbal explanation.	3.71	.782	High
4. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable talking through with the teacher exactly what I'm supposed to do.	3.60	.682	High
5. If I am explaining to someone I tend to explain to them in different ways until they understand.	3.63	.646	High
6. I tend to say I hear what you are saying.	3.60	.778	High
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>.440</b>	<b>High</b>

The table above depicts the level of the respondent's learning styles in the new normal modality in terms of Auditory, which has the highest mean of 3.90 which was interpreted as high. Then, the lowest mean has 3.42 which were interpreted as high and the overall mean has 3.64 which were described as high.

Students improved their listening skills by adapting to the new normal modalities using Google Meet or Zoom application for learning discussions, YouTube as their reference, and Podcast as their guide. Students who learned by auditory mean benefit from listening to online lectures and group discussions. Listening to the opinions and others' points of view will also lead students to communicate and acquire ideas that will help build good relationships with others.

According to Benson 2017, Learning is an ongoing process, and in this context, a process refers to a series of activities that ultimately produce a result. In this context, learning barriers can either slow down or halt the learning process. Nevertheless, these obstacles can be addressed with an efficient learning approach to develop learning tailored to the learner's needs. One of these obstacles is a mismatch between the teaching method and the learning strategy. This barrier could have been caused by ineffective presenting methods, approaches, and tactics to the learners. Effective learning can be facilitated by first identifying the learner's preferred mode of information intake.

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**Table 2.3. Level of the Respondents Learning Styles in the New Normal Modality in terms of Visual/Iconic**

Indicator	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I need to think things through before speaking or writing.	4.05	.757	High
2. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable watching what the teacher is doing.	3.94	.664	High
3. I feel especially connected to other people because of how they make me feel.	3.58	.806	High
4. When I am worried, I can't sit still, fiddle and move around constantly.	3.58	.945	High
5. If I am angry, I tend to raise my voice and tell people how I feel.	3.70	.859	High
6. I find it easiest to remember, things I have done.	3.93	.728	High
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>.494</b>	<b>High</b>

The table above the level of the respondent's learning styles in the new normal modality in terms of Visual/Iconic, which has the highest mean of 4.05 which was interpreted as high. Then, the lowest mean has 3.58 which were interpreted as high and the overall mean has 3.80 which were described as high.

The effects of the new normal learning modalities on the visual/iconic style as they utilized the online platforms, students became productive independently, managed their time, and were flexible in their assigned work or tasks. Students need to think things through before speaking or writing to perform well on the output they will do. As a result, academics have given a significant amount of attention to determining the learning styles of the students, particularly in light of the New Normal.

According to Surjono (2011), kinesthetic learners relied on experience-based modalities and preferred hands-on labs and simulations to receive information most effectively; through traditional e-learning curriculums, "hands-on" activities were not always feasible. A perceived barrier was e-learning for kinesthetic learners due to its distant and non-interactive nature; however, online education inspired students' creativity and critical thinking by encouraging them to create and connect new ideas to apply to a practical setting. Kinesthetic learners benefit from hands-on learning opportunities, which may be limited by the virtual format brought on by the current global situation. With the advancement of e-learning, healthcare programs could adopt a conducive online environment to allow students resources to develop a foundation of knowledge transferable to clinical practice (Wood & Sereni-Massinger, 2016).

**Table 2.4. Level of the Respondents Learning Styles in the New Normal Modality in terms of Kinesthetic**

Kinesthetic	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I prefer to do practical activities.	4.02	.724	High
2. I often use my hands when I talk.	3.50	1.078	High
3. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable giving it a try myself and work it out as I go.	3.86	.667	High
4. I remember things best by doing and practicing the activity or imagining it being done.	3.90	.674	High
5. Most of my free time is spent doing physical activity or making things.	3.78	.733	High
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>.494</b>	<b>High</b>

The table shows the level of the respondent's learning styles in the new normal modality in terms of Kinesthetic which has the highest mean of 4.02 which was interpreted as high. Then, the lowest mean has 3.50 which were interpreted as high and the overall mean has 3.81 which were described as high.

This implies that students prefer to do practical activities as they learned from the discussions made by the teacher. They want to work on practicum and physical activities for them to master, be active, and use their creative thinking skills. The teachers also test students' understanding, performance, and capabilities. A physical presentation of the data helps kinesthetic learners comprehend information the best.

Students were asked to leave feedback for each activity using an anonymous online questionnaire, designed to capture their perceptions on their learning experience. Based on the responses received, a number of recommendations have been formulated to help practical educators make decisions on the modes of delivery of certain activities and for certain student cohorts, when pivoting to increased distance learning. Students indicated they would prefer to conduct some activities using take-home kits in the future,

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paving the way for beneficial long-term changes to the delivery of some practical activities beyond the times of the pandemic (Bishop et al., 2021).

**Table 2.5. Summary of the Level of the Learning Styles of the Respondents in terms of Visual, Auditory, Visual/Iconic and Kinesthetic**

Subscales	Scoring Scale	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>QI</i>
Visual	1.00 – 1.79				
	1.80 – 2.59	1	1.0	2.00	<i>Low</i>
	2.60 – 3.39	18	18.0	3.189	<i>Moderate</i>
	3.40 – 4.19	45	45.0	3.84	<i>High</i>
	4.20 – 5.00	36	36.0	4.59	<i>Very High</i>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.97</b>
Auditory	1.00 – 1.79				
	1.80 – 2.59				
	2.60 – 3.39	31	31.0	3.17	<i>Moderate</i>
	3.40 – 4.19	59	59.0	3.75	<i>High</i>
	4.20 – 5.00	10	10.0	4.48	<i>Very High</i>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.64</b>
Visual/Iconic	1.00 – 1.79				
	1.80 – 2.59				
	2.60 – 3.39	19	19.0	3.12	<i>Moderate</i>
	3.40 – 4.19	62	62.0	3.77	<i>High</i>
	4.20 – 5.00	19	19.0	4.57	<i>Very High</i>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.80</b>
Kinesthetic	1.00 – 1.79				
	1.80 – 2.59				
	2.60 – 3.39	15	15.0	3.12	<i>Moderate</i>
	3.40 – 4.19	62	62.0	3.71	<i>High</i>
	4.20 – 5.00	23	23.0	4.55	<i>Very High</i>
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.81</b>

The table shows the summary of the level of the learning styles of the respondents in terms of visual, auditory, visual/iconic, and kinesthetic. As an overall interpretation, respondents scored high for most learning styles; this result can be interpreted as students in the new normal learning modalities have their preferred learning styles in acquiring their knowledge and new information. They have different styles in adapting and how they will apply it in their daily life. Despite the new normal, learning occurs between the teacher and the students because of the learning styles and their communication competence.

Traditional face-to-face learning is a content-perceived relevance modality that makes use of advanced technology processes understandable in modern instructional technology. This contrasts the new normal learning process, in which evolution is inextricably taught in the human process of technology learning (Dziuban et al., 2018).

**Table 3. Relationship between the Communication Competence and Students Learning Styles**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	p-value
Communication Competence	Visual	.243
	Auditory	.181
	Visual/Iconic	.296
	Kinesthetic	.320

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

The table shows the significant relationship between communication competence and students' learning styles. It shows a significant relationship between communication competence and students' learning styles in terms of visual having .008,

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visual/iconic having .001, and kinesthetic having .001. This study implies a relationship between communication competence and learning styles in terms of visual, visual/iconic, and kinesthetic. It is because students have different ways of communicating in their surroundings. In the learning process students also have different approaches to their learning styles in acquiring information, having discussions, and interacting with others.

According to Warren Chappell, as cited by Zubaidi (2014), studies show that excellent communication helps people receive and share information better, define and understand goals, build rapport, promote self-confidence, and avoid adverse effects of conflict and confusion. Mostly, communication is effective when it involves the choice of an excellent communication channel that serves a specific purpose. It is essential to use the channel appropriately; the information is presented appropriately for the target audience and one's ability to comprehend messages and reactions others give (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2007).

### Proposed Development Program

#### “Upgrading Learning Styles and Fundamental Communication Capabilities”

##### Rationale

Some students need help in adapting their learning styles due to sudden in-person and online learning changes. However, understanding their preferred learning methods and how to modify them for the new normal will help students flourish at this unique moment in higher education. This development program entitled "Upgrading Learning Styles and Fundamental Communication Capabilities" aims to enhance and improve the learners' skills in different aspects, boost their confidence, and enhance their abilities in using English as a and learning. It helps the learners to become competent and effective communicators with the proper and accurate use of the strategies they gained from this program. This program also enhances the student's learning styles, such as Visual, Auditory, Visual/Iconic, and Kinesthetic, for comprehending new knowledge, listening to build good relationships, becoming flexible, and conquering actual activities. Through this program and learning modalities, students will gain strengths and be able to adapt and apply changes for themselves to develop their expertise.

##### Objectives

When the program is over, the instructors will be able to:

1. Create learning approaches that depend on different factors such as background knowledge, motivation, and materials.
2. Develop a toolbox of techniques that they may use in different situations.
3. Test the students' capacity for learning.

Area of Concerns	Activities	Objectives	Person Involved	Monitoring Plan
<b>Imaginative Thinker</b>	Boosting students to be creative on their own by giving them written outlines, handouts, and slides:	Improve the visual mode to communicate meaningfully in a way that the audience can understand.	Teachers	Attendance Output
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generating idea maps, sketches, or illustrations as they research or organize projects or papers</li> <li>viewing documentaries or educational videos</li> <li>finding images or other pictures that are relevant to their learning</li> <li>taking notes visually</li> </ul>		Students	
<b>Sufficient Listener</b>	Motivating students to be observers by discussing, asking frequent questions, and reciting information:	Strengthen empathy and understanding of the other person's perspective.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>posing inquiries and discussing the course material or concepts</li> </ul>			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• having a study group participation</li> <li>• giving a study companion a lesson or an explanation of what they are studying</li> </ul>	
<b>Good reader and writer</b>	<p>Inspiring students to rewrite, reread the material, and take notes during the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combining notes into many active study techniques, such as writing up the visual details from charts and graphs</li> <li>• reviewing and summarizing the information on the class website or in the handouts</li> </ul>	Enhance their skills to be a good writer.
<b>Activeness and Alertness</b>	<p>Nurturing students to learn hands-on and physical experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• instead of sitting in a chair, consider lying down or moving about as they study</li> <li>• generating examples from the real world to illustrate concepts or ideas</li> <li>• as they exercise or stroll, they can listen to recordings of their classes or other instructional resources</li> </ul>	Enhances study techniques that work better for kinesthetic learners.
<b>Good communicator</b>	<p>Motivating students to be interpersonal communicators by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group presentation</li> <li>• public speaking</li> <li>• being a mediator in the conflict</li> <li>• written communication</li> </ul>	To help to increase the interest and attention of the target.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The study has been concluded that the valuable findings clearly show the perceived student's communication competence and learning styles. According to the results, the new normal learning modality as perceived by students in terms of communication competence helps students to become better communicators and better at English in different ways, which belongs to the moderate level. The new normal learning modality as perceived by students in terms of the learning styles such as visual, auditory,

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visual/iconic, and kinesthetic was highly applied by them. As a result, the researchers created a development program that the students would use. The proposed development program was helping the students be knowledgeable and proficient in different communication and learning styles.

### 5.0 RECOMMENDATION

**Faculty.** This study would enable them to determine students' perceived communication competence and learning styles in the new normal of BEED students so they can have their helpful response regarding this problem. This study would help the teachers to know the strategy they would use as the students have different learning styles.

**Future Researchers.** This study would enable them to seek other solutions to study students' perceived communication competence and learning styles in the new normal of every learner. It would help them explore this problem in advance and find support, evidence, or any factors that may cause it.

**BEED Students.** This study would enable the BEED students to widen their knowledge of the factors affecting their communication competence brought by this new normal. It would help them to have their combat to prepare themselves for the challenge of this new normal that may cause problems in their communication competence.

**School Administrators.** This study would help the school administrators determined students' perceived communication competence and learning styles in the new normal of BEED students and allow them to address their response regarding this particular problem. This study would help the administrators to know the students' communication competence as they learn about their preferred learning styles.

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