

TEACHING SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES TO LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Since the late 1980s, second language researchers and cognitive scientists have investigated the role of strategies in learning a language. They agree that explicitly teaching language-learning strategies helps students learn a second language (Kormos 2017). In fact, learners who use learning strategies, such as monitoring and tracking how they learn, tend to succeed more at school than their classmates who do not use such strategies (2017). As a result, it is more important than ever for teachers to consider teaching learning strategies in their language classrooms.

This week, Teacher's Corner explores teaching learning strategies to benefit language learners, both those with and without language learning difficulties. The strategy of self-regulation is particularly important; it refers to how involved a learner is in his or her own learning process (Kormos 2017). The activity presented here gives teachers a simple technique to teach self-regulated learning, which helps learners set their own goals, monitor their own progress, and evaluate their own outcomes. In this sense, learners are involved in their own learning processes and can utilize such learning strategies again in other language-learning contexts. Use this process for any assignment or activity that learners would do in class. The more they incorporate this type of strategy, the more comfortable they will become, and the more likely they will be to use it in the future.

LEVEL

Any level

GOALS

Students will be able to:

- Identify a language-learning goal
- Create a plan of action to meet the goal
- Monitor their progress in meeting the goal

- Evaluate their success in fulfilling their goal

MATERIALS

- 3 different colored markers for each student
- Large sheets of paper

PROCEDURES

This activity will be modeled using an assignment to write a 5-sentence paragraph that summarizes one's morning routine (see Appendix A). However, any assignment or activity can be used with this process.

1. Preparing for the self-regulation activity
 - a. Tell students that following this activity, they are going to write a paragraph using what they've learned about the standards of a good paragraph.
 - i. Hand out the assignment description and tell students to read through the assignment individually.
 - ii. Have students turn to a partner and explain in their own words what the assignment asks them to do.
 - iii. Bring the class together and ask students to reiterate the steps of the lesson.
 - b. Ask students to think about what they want to accomplish during this assignment.
 - i. Have them turn back to their partners and discuss what possible goals they have.
 - ii. Ask students to share some of their ideas; the teacher writes some of these ideas on the board as examples.
 - iii. Explain that now students will write down two goals they have for this assignment and one personal writing goal. For example, "I will write a clear controlling idea"; "I will make sure to write five sentences that support my controlling idea"; "I will work hard to make sure each sentence has a subject and a verb."

- iv. Give students 5-10 minutes to come up with their goals. As they work, the teacher should walk around to check in with learners and discuss what they write.
2. Enacting a self-regulation strategy
 - a. Give each student a large piece of paper and three different colored markers.
 - b. Tell students to divide their paper into 3 columns and to write each column heading in a different color.
 - i. Column 1 has the heading: *goals*
 - ii. Column 2 has the heading: *plan*
 - iii. Column 3 has the heading: *evaluate*
 - c. Have students write their three goals (from Step 1) in the first column.
 - d. Explain that now students must come up with a plan to meet their goals. To help them, ask them to consider the following questions as they develop their plans:
 - i. How much time do I need to work on this activity?
 - ii. What should I do before I write?
 - iii. Where can I check or ask questions when I need help?
 - iv. How will I decide if every goal is met? When will I know I'm done?
 - v. What do I need to do to meet my personal goal? What will I do to check that work?
 - e. Give students time to work individually on an outline of a plan. Tell students to have a plan that follows an order or a checklist. For example, they could create a series of steps: "First, I will... Then, I will..." Or they could create a list of things they want to do that they can check off when completed.
 - i. Some students might need more guidance. Give them specific suggestions. For example, suggest that they have a plan that has a specific number of tasks listed, or suggest they use prompts such as, "First, I will..."

- ii. Teachers can move around the classroom and check in with students as they work on their outlines.
 - iii. After creating their outlines, students should write their plan in the second column.
 - f. Self-regulation includes self-monitoring, so remind students that as they work on their assignment, they should follow their plan. This might mean they do any or all of the following:
 - i. Once they complete a task listed on their outline, they cross it off the list.
 - ii. Students make notes on their plan explaining what they did and when.
 - g. After students have finished their plan, they can move on to complete the assignment.
- 3. The final part of a self-regulation strategy
 - a. When students have finished their assignments, but before they turn them in, have them evaluate their work according to their original goals.
 - i. Tell students to take out their assignment and their chart.
 - ii. Post the following questions on the board and have students fill in Column 3 with the answers.
 - a) How does your final work compare to your original goals? Write two sentences explaining your answer.
 - b) How useful was your plan? Which strategy worked best? Which strategy didn't work?
 - c) How would you change your plan for a similar assignment in the future?
 - d) Where in this process were you most successful?
 - b. Once students have finished this part of the activity, have them submit the assignment and chart. After the teacher has evaluated and returned the assignment and chart, review the whole process. Reviewing gives students another opportunity to reflect and consider how to support their own learning process in the future.

Reference

Kormos, Judit. *The second language learning processes of students with specific learning difficulties*. Routledge: New York, 2017.

APPENDIX A

Assignment: Writing Summaries of Morning Routines

Directions

Write a one-paragraph summary of your morning routine. The summary must follow these guidelines:

- Write 5-7 complete sentences.
- Include a topic and controlling idea in your first sentence. For example, your topic is your *morning routine* and your controlling idea is *how you describe your morning routine*. Is it busy? Is it slow? Is it always changing?
- The next 4-6 sentences should explain what you do in the morning. They should also show how your routine is an example of your controlling idea.
- Your final sentence should be a final thought explaining how you feel about your morning routine.

Format

- The first line should be indented.
- You should include a title.
- Your name should be written on the top left-hand side of the paper.