



Module 7

Learning Strategies

Approaches to Language Teaching: Extension

Video Length: Approximately 13 Minutes
Notes to the Trainer

Required Readings

Participants should go through Readings A and B for this module prior to viewing the video. Observation tasks and reflection questions will draw directly on content from these articles. Rebecca Oxford's *ERIC Digest* article "Language learning strategies: An update" is also highly recommended. For information on accessing it, see Module 7 with its *List of Additional Readings and Resources in Shaping the Way We Teach English: Readings and Resources*.

Before Viewing

As you work through this module, use pairs or groups whenever you think it might be effective. After each group activity, debrief the answers and use them for further discussion of various points. Refer back to the main points when appropriate. It is important that teachers apply the concepts in the module to their own classrooms and situations. One goal for this module is to build participant awareness of the existence and use of learning strategies in individual learners. A second goal is for participants to begin thinking about teaching strategies they can use in their classes that will help their learners develop their own set of learning strategies to facilitate learning.

See Appendix A for additional handouts that can be used for general observation and discussion tasks with any of the modules.

This is a schema activation activity. Its purpose is to lay a groundwork and reference point that participants can use as a basis for the processing of the information from the video and readings and from discussion with each other. This activity assumes that participants have all studied, and maybe even learned, another language at some time in their lives.

Very simply, have participants think back to that time and make a list of the kind of things they did that helped them learn the language. They should provide as many details as possible.

Debrief

Next have participants discuss their lists with others in their group to help trigger additional memories and get more ideas that might also apply to themselves. Have them hold on to these lists for the *Summary Discussion* portion of this module as well.

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Preview Vocabulary

Terms	Definitions
Affective	Related to learner feelings, attitude, values, and motivation.
Autonomy	The ability to make your own decisions; to direct your own learning.
Cognition	Mental processes, especially those used in learning, such as thinking, remembering, classifying, recognizing, synthesizing, etc.
Crocodile tears	Fake tears that a person uses to pretend to be sad or sorry.
Evolve	To change gradually; gradual development.
Facilitate	To make it easier for something to happen; here, for students to learn.
Gap(s) in learning	Learning that did not happen, which creates a problem for natural development towards mastery. In this module there is a gap in student learning as a result of interrupted schooling.
Infer	To understand an idea or a piece of information by using other information.
Metacognition	Global understanding of thinking or mental processes that enables learners to recognize, monitor, and organize those processes in themselves. Also called "global strategies."
Overlap	When two things, processes, ideas, etc. overlap, it means that each contains some aspects or parts of the other, or that part of one covers part of the other.
Pidgin	An incomplete, perhaps slightly changed form of a language often spoken by people who need to use the language for specific purposes but have no need for mastery.
Predict	To know what is going to happen before it happens; something that is systematic enough that one can anticipate what will happen.
Schema activation	Accessing underlying knowledge that learners already have about a topic, context, structure, etc.
Strategy; strategy instruction	A tool, plan, or method used for accomplishing a task. Strategy instruction teaches students about strategies, teaches them how and when to use strategies, helps students identify personally effective strategies, and encourages them to make strategic behaviors a systematic part of their learning.

Now start the video. Listen to the introduction. Complete the guided observation and reflection tasks for each of the video segments. The next part of the manual is for trainees and is available on separate pages for ease of copying.

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Introduction, Expanded Narrative

The strategies described in Readings A and B below are only some examples of possible strategies. A strategy might be a teaching strategy in one classroom context and a learning strategy in another. As strategies are mostly “invisible” mental processes, you will need to analyze what you see and hear, and in some cases, *infer* what strategies may be at work in the tasks that follow.

Module Focus

The focus of this module is on:

- Language learning and communication strategies.
- Metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Students can become better learners if they are able to use learning strategies. Good language learners develop their own set of these strategies. In second language acquisition literature, strategies carry different definitions and fall into a variety of categories. Some common concepts are:

- Learning or academic strategies.
- Metacognitive and cognitive strategies.
- Social and affective strategies.

The teacher’s role is to consciously build strategy training into the lessons to help students develop their own strategies. First, teachers need to learn about their students’ backgrounds, identify student problems, and find out what strategies learners are currently using. They can do this through observation, by informally talking with the students, interviewing them, or having formal consultations. They then need to help students figure out which strategies might work best for them. As students become more adept at identifying and applying strategies for themselves, they become better self-teachers.

Video Segment #1, Observation Guide: Watch, Analyze, Infer [Read before viewing.]

Viewing Task A

At the beginning of the video, you will hear and see a list a characteristics and strategies that are shared by successful language learners. While listening, try to make notes on as many of them as you can recall. Check with others and compare your lists, adding them as needed. Can you agree on a definition for “success” in your learners?

This module takes an in-depth look at a single classroom case. Here are some additional things to look for in this module.

- Types of strategies in the classroom.
- Language-specific skills.
- Affective factors.

Viewing Task B

1. Review the content in Readings A and B for this module. Note that teaching and learning strategies are closely related. What strategies do the articles describe? As you watch the video, make note of any strategies from the readings that you see or hear the teacher talks about in the video.

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2. View the video again. List the *language-specific skills* that students use in the class and the activities that students are doing. Note which skills are used during each activity and how they are integrated. What strategies might be at work?

3. View the tape a third time and try to list *affective factors*, both those that the teacher planned or used and those that seem part of the class dynamic. What strategies might be at work from this perspective?

Reflection

[Read and answer after viewing.]

For this section, compare your notes with those of others in your group for items 1-3 from the previous *Viewing Task B* section for this module. Discuss what was the same or different and why. Use the following reflection questions as a discussion guide.

1. How would you categorize most of the strategies that you observed (whether directly or through inference)? Were they teaching or learning strategies, or some combination of both? When is learning “self-teaching” in a strategies context? Which specific strategies do you think the students in this class are utilizing as they do the activities? One thing the teacher talked about was the challenges her students had. What were some of these challenges and how did they affect learning? What kinds of challenges do your own students face?

2. Compare notes on language-specific skills and activities. How are the skills integrated in the activities? What strategies does the teacher model or use to help students focus on important points and understand content? Do you use any of these? If so, which ones, and how do you use them?

3. What affective factors were present in the organization of the classroom space? In the lesson format and way the teacher had students do the work? Do you think they were effective? Explain your answer to others in your group.

Summary Discussion

1. Take out the list you wrote as part of the *Before Viewing* (schema activation) activity about your own language learning experiences. Also take your list of successful learner characteristics and strategies from the previous *Viewing Task A* activity. Compare them. Which of the items are the same? Which are different? What gaps do you see? Do you think these items provide a good description of a successful language learner? Would you add anything? Subtract anything?

2. Referring back to the various notes you created during this module, consider the following:

- Are you aware of the kinds of strategies your own students use? What are the ones you see used most frequently? Are some of your students more “successful language learners” than others? Explain.
- Are there any of the strategies from this module that you consider to be more important in a classroom than others? Explain.

3. After viewing this module, do you think you will try to use some of these strategies in your class? Why or why not? If yes, which ones will you try? Which ones do you think might be most successful with your particular students? How will you go about diagnosing students and introducing strategies in the classroom? You can use this information for the next section, *Now You Try It—An Action Plan*.

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Now You Try It—An Action Plan

Step 1

You can read some of the articles on the topic of learning strategies (see Module 7 Readings A and B plus the List of Additional Readings and Resources in *Shaping the Way We Teach English: Readings and Resources*). Using the video, you have seen a few examples and ideas from other teachers' classes.

Now, think about your own classes and your answers to the summary questions above. How could you use some of the strategies and techniques listed to accomplish or improve on work you have already done with the following items?

- Create a trusting classroom atmosphere that encourages risk-taking and participation.
- Build student confidence in their ability to use the language.
- Improve learners' cognitive processing.
- Activate schema.
- Help students transfer their skills to appropriate language use in your situation, perhaps for content classes that are taught in English, for Internet accessibility, for understanding music and movies, or for talking with foreigners.

Talk about your ideas with a partner or with your group.

Step 2

By yourself or with a partner, design a portion of a lesson that includes the use of some of the strategies you listed.

Step 3

Share your plan with others. Explain what activity would come before and after your segment. Get peer ideas and feedback.

Step 4

Change your design, as needed. Try it with your class. If you are not teaching, ask the trainer or another experienced teacher for feedback.

Note

You may have noticed a variety of posters, wall and bulletin board displays in the video for this and other modules. Written reminders for learning strategies and other classroom information can help students with the learning process. Some teachers purchase such items, but many teachers (and even students!) make them from inexpensive or recycled materials as well. For ideas, see the following.

How to Make a Great Poster

Author: Dina F. Mandoli, University of Washington, Department of Botany

Web site: <http://www.aspb.org/education/poster.cfm>

ProTeacher! Bulletin Board Ideas

Web site: <http://www.proteacher.com/030004.shtml>

Teacher Helpers, Bulletin Board Ideas

Author: Kathy Schrock

Web site: <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/bulletin/>

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Answer Key to Module 7, Learning Strategies

Here are some suggested directions for answers to the questions for this module. Actual answers may vary depending on local context and the kinds of experience that viewers bring to the task of interpreting and applying video and text concepts.

Module 7, Video Segment #1, Watch, Analyze, Infer

1. Teaching strategies used or discussed by the teacher:
 - Diagnosing learner needs and strengths.
 - Using a wide range of activities.
 - Drawing topics and activities from many sources.
 - Creating activities that transfer language skills from the English class to other classes or academic areas (e.g., biology, test-taking).
 - Activating students' background knowledge about the content they already know so that they can transfer it to new domains (e.g., crocodiles, lizards, folktales).
 - Strategically forming student pairs and groups for support and use of shared knowledge. Students were placed in groups and each given a different topic to work on so that they had to communicate the results of their group work to the rest of the class.
 - Using graphics and multimedia (photos, video, images, and student work on the walls) to facilitate understanding.
 - Using graphic organizers to help learners find and organize information.
 - Providing cues, support to enable learners to improve comprehension and production.
 - Having learners take notes. In some cases, students referred to their notes as they spoke.
 - Giving students time to self-correct, to spontaneously contribute information, and to ask questions.
2. Language activities. This teacher makes effective use of a wide range of activities. She draws on topics and activities from many sources. She has diagnosed her students' strengths and challenges, and she builds them into her teaching plans. She also helps students figure out which strategies work best for them and develop a related set of activities.
3. Affective factors. Things of interest that we saw in this class include respect for student ideas and a positive reaction to humor. Students were engaged in social learning interactions through group and whole-class work. They felt comfortable talking and adding to their group's report and even other groups' reports as they felt moved to do so. They connected their own personal experiences with the class content.

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Module 7 Reading A, *ERIC Digest #E638: Strategy Instruction* Author: Pat Beckman

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Overview

For more than two decades there has been an abundance of research regarding strategy instruction. Originally, most of this research focused on the effects of strategy instruction on students with learning disabilities. Researchers are currently looking at how strategy instruction affects all learners.

What is a strategy?

In general, a strategy is a tool, plan, or method used for accomplishing a task. Below are other terms associated with strategy instruction, some of which are discussed in this digest:

- **Cognitive Strategy:** a strategy or group of strategies or procedures that the learner uses to perform academic tasks or to improve social skills. Often, more than one cognitive strategy is used with others, depending on the learner and his / her schema for learning. In fact, research indicates that successful learners use numerous strategies. Some of these strategies include visualization, verbalization, making associations, chunking, questioning, scanning, underlining, accessing cues, using mnemonics, sounding out words, and self-checking and monitoring.
- **Cues:** visual or verbal prompts to either remind the student what has already been learned or provide an opportunity to learn something new. Cues can also be employed to prompt student use of a strategy.
- **Independent, Strategic Learner:** the student who uses cues and strategies within his / her learning schema, asks clarifying questions, listens, checks and monitors his / her work and behavior, and sets personal goals. A strategic learner knows the value of using particular strategies through experience, and is eager to learn others that might prove beneficial.
- **Learning Strategy:** a set of steps to accomplish a particular task, such as taking a test, comprehending text, and writing a story. A first-letter mnemonic is often used to help the learner follow the steps of the strategy.
- **Metacognition and Self-regulation:** the understanding a person has about how s/he learns (personal learning schema) including the strategies used to accomplish tasks, and the process by which the learner oversees and monitors his / her use of strategies.
- **Mnemonic:** a device for remembering, such as a first-letter mnemonic for writing: PLAN (Pay attention to the prompt, List main ideas, Add supporting ideas, Number your ideas) (DeLaPaz, Owen, Harris and Graham, 2000). Rhyme, rhythm, music, and key-word mnemonics are also useful memory tools.
- **Strategy Instruction:** teaching students about strategies, teaching them how and when to use strategies, helping students identify personally effective strategies, and encouraging them to make strategic behaviors part of their learning schema.
- **Learning Schema:** the sets, or mixes, of strategies that the individual learner uses automatically to perform, produce, communicate, or learn. It can take years to develop a personal learning schema.

What has been learned about the effectiveness of strategy instruction?

Many students' ability to learn has been increased through the deliberate teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This is especially true for students with significant learning problems—

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strategy instruction is crucial for them. It has been demonstrated that when struggling students are taught strategies and are given ample encouragement, feedback, and opportunities to use them, students improve in their ability to process information, which, in turn, leads to improved learning. Because not all students will find it easy to imbed strategy use in their learning schema, differentiation of strategies instruction is required, with some students needing more scaffolding and individualized, intensive instruction than others.

Why is it important to teach children to be strategic?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 focus on improved achievement by all students. IDEA mandates that all students access and progress in the general education curriculum. This includes students with disabilities, English language learners, and gifted students. NCLB has established performance goals that drive the efforts of public schools, especially in establishing proficiency in reading / language arts and mathematics by all students by the year 2013-2014. The outcomes listed below help ensure student progress. Additionally, when students become strategic, independent learners, they also become literate and productive lifelong learners.

What happens to students when they become strategic?

The following outcomes can be expected:

- Students trust their minds.
- Students know there's more than one right way to do things.
- They acknowledge their mistakes and try to rectify them.
- They evaluate their products and behavior.
- Memories are enhanced.
- Learning increases.
- Self-esteem increases.
- Students feel a sense of power.
- Students become more responsible.
- Work completion and accuracy improve.
- Students develop and use a personal study process.
- They know how to "try."
- On-task time increases; students are more "engaged."

What are the most essential strategies to teach?

This is determined, in large part, by assessing what successful, efficient learners do. It has been found that they use numerous strategies across subjects and tasks, such as those listed above under "cognitive strategies." They know when to use strategies and for what purposes. An attempt to identify the most essential strategies students should learn is an impossible task; it depends on the needs of the learner and the requirements of the curriculum. However, student use of the following strategies often leads to improved student performance (lists are not inclusive):

- Computation and problem-solving: Verbalization, visualization, chunking, making associations, use of cues.
- Memory: Visualization, verbalization, mnemonics, making associations, chunking, and writing. These are usually more effective when used in combinations.
- Productivity: Verbalization, self-monitoring, visualization, use of cues.

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- Reading accuracy and fluency: Finger pointing or tracking, sounding out unknown words, self-questioning for accuracy, chunking, and using contextual clues.
- Reading comprehension: Visualization, questioning, rereading, predicting.
- Writing: Planning, revising, questioning, use of cues, verbalization, visualization, checking and monitoring. How are students taught to use strategies? Effective strategy instruction is an integral part of classroom instruction, regardless of the content being taught; it is not an additional subject. In the transactional strategies instruction (TSI) model, strategies instruction takes place all year long with the teacher giving explanations and modeling. Teachers continually praise students for using strategies and use teachable moments to discuss them. Students are encouraged to help their peers become more strategic.

What are the basic steps in teaching strategy use?

The following order of steps should be followed:

- Describe the strategy. Students obtain an understanding of the strategy and its purpose—why it is important, when it can be used, and how to use it.
- Model its use. The teacher models the strategy, explaining to the students how to perform it.
- Provide ample assisted practice time. The teacher monitors, provides cues, and gives feedback. Practice results in automaticity so the student doesn't have to "think" about using the strategy.
- Promote student self-monitoring and evaluation of personal strategy use. Students will likely use the strategy if they see how it works for them; it will become part of their learning schema.
- Encourage continued use and generalization of the strategy. Students are encouraged to try the strategy in other learning situations.

To what extent is strategy instruction taking place in classrooms?

Currently, there are little data available to determine how many teachers teach strategic learning skills, how many are even aware of their existence, or if they are aware, have the skills to teach them. Few teachers demonstrate to their students their own personal strategy use. In general, teachers are not aware of the importance of these skills. The fact that there is such little data leads to the assumption that strategy instruction is not a general classroom practice. Following are a few possible explanations for this:

- Early strategy instruction research was done specifically with learning disabled populations. General education preservice and inservice programs have not generalized these research findings to all learners.
- How students learn takes a back seat to what is learned. Teachers assume students will "get it" on their own, or with more teacher-directed instruction or practice.
- The idea of focusing on the learner is still in its infancy.
- "Educator overload" is a factor. Teachers, experiencing the pressures of accountability for student progress, feel they don't have time to "learn one more thing," especially something they are not convinced will improve student learning.

Numerous researchers are assisting educators in turning strategies research into practice. An increasing number of strategies instruction curricula are available, especially in reading and writing.

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Resources

- Beckman, P. & Weller, C. (1990). Active, independent learning for children with learning disabilities. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 21/22, 26-29.
- Cornford, I.R. (2002, 7 December). Learning-to-learn skills for lifelong learning: Some implications for curriculum development and teacher education. Paper presented at the AARE annual conference, Sydney.
- De La Paz, S. (1999). Self-regulated strategy instruction in regular education settings: Improving outcomes for students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 14, 92-118.
- De La Paz, S., Owen, B., Harris, K. & Graham, S. (2000). Riding Elvis' Motorcycle: Using self-regulated strategy development to PLAN and WRITE for a state writing exam. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 15, 101-109.
- Deshler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., Lenz, B.K., Bulgren, J.A., Hock, M.F., Knight, J., & Ehren, B. J. (2001). Ensuring content-area learning by secondary students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 16, 96-108.
- Hamman, D. (1998). Preservice teachers' value for learning-strategy instruction. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 66, 209-222.
- Harris, K.R. & Graham, S. (1996). *Making the writing process work: Strategies for composition and self-regulation*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.
- Keene, E.O. & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Logan, J.W., Olson, M.W., & Lindsey, T.P. (1993). Lessons from champion spellers. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 13, 89-96.
- Meichenbaum, D. & Biemiller, A. (1998). *Nurturing independent learners*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.
- Pressley, M. & Woloshyn, V. (1995). *Cognitive strategy instruction that really improves children's academic performance*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

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Module 7 Reading B, Strategy Training for Second Language Learners, *Eric Digest* EDO-FL-03-02 Author: Andrew Cohen

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Overview

Students of foreign language are being encouraged to learn and use a broad range of language learning strategies that can be tapped throughout the learning process. This approach is based on the belief that learning will be facilitated by making students aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use. The most efficient way to heighten learner awareness is to provide strategy training—explicit instruction in how to apply language learning strategies—as part of the foreign language curriculum. This digest discusses the goals of strategy training, highlights approaches to such training, and lists steps for designing strategy training programs.

Goals of Strategy Training

Strategy training aims to provide learners with the tools to do the following:

- Self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning.
- Become aware of what helps them to learn the target language most efficiently.
- Develop a broad range of problem-solving skills.
- Experiment with familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies.
- Make decisions about how to approach a language task.
- Monitor and self-evaluate their performance.
- Transfer successful strategies to new learning contexts.

Strategies can be categorized as either language learning or language use strategies. Language learning strategies are conscious thoughts and behaviors used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge and understanding of a target language. They include cognitive strategies for memorizing and manipulating target language structures, metacognitive strategies for managing and supervising strategy use, affective strategies for gauging emotional reactions to learning and for lowering anxieties, and social strategies for enhancing learning, such as cooperating with other learners and seeking to interact with native speakers.

Language use strategies come into play once the language material is already accessible, even in some preliminary form. Their focus is to help students utilize the language they have already learned. Language use strategies include strategies for retrieving information about the language already stored in memory, rehearsing target language structures, and communicating in the language despite gaps in target language knowledge.

Frameworks for Strategy Training

Although no empirical evidence has yet been provided to determine a single best method for conducting strategy training, at least three different instructional frameworks have been identified. Each has been designed to raise student awareness of the purpose and rationale of strategy use, give students opportunities to practice the strategies they are being taught, and help them use the strategies in new learning contexts.

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One framework, proposed by Pearson and Dole (1987) with reference to first language learning but applicable to the study of a second language as well, targets isolated strategies by including explicit modeling and explanation of the benefits of applying a specific strategy, extensive functional practice with the strategy, and an opportunity to transfer the strategy to new learning contexts. The sequence includes the following steps:

- Initial modeling of the strategy by the teacher, with direct explanation of the strategy's use and importance.
- Guided practice with the strategy.
- Consolidation, where teachers help students identify the strategy and decide when it might be used.
- Independent practice with the strategy.
- Application of the strategy to new tasks.

In the second framework, Oxford et al. (1990) outline a useful sequence for the introduction of strategies that emphasizes explicit strategy awareness, discussion of the benefits of strategy use, functional and contextualized practice with the strategies, self-evaluation and monitoring of language performance, and suggestions for or demonstrations of the transferability of the strategies to new tasks. This sequence is not prescriptive of strategies that the learners are supposed to use, but rather descriptive of the various strategies that they could use for a broad range of learning tasks.

The third framework, developed by Chamot and O'Malley (1994), is especially useful after students have already had practice in applying a broad range of strategies in a variety of contexts. Their approach to helping students complete language learning tasks can be described as a four-stage problem-solving process.

- (1) Planning. Students plan ways to approach a learning task.
- (2) Monitoring. Students self-monitor their performance by paying attention to their strategy use and checking comprehension.
- (3) Problem Solving. Students find solutions to problems they encounter.
- (4) Evaluation. Students learn to evaluate the effectiveness of a given strategy after it has been applied to a learning task.

Options for Providing Strategy Training

A variety of instructional models for foreign language strategy training have already been developed and implemented in a variety of educational settings. Seven of these are described below.

General Study Skills Courses. These courses are sometimes intended for students with academic difficulties but can also target successful students who want to improve their study habits. Many general academic skills can be transferred to the process of learning a foreign language, such as using flash cards, overcoming anxiety, and learning good note-taking skills. These courses sometimes include language learning as a specific topic to highlight how learning a foreign language may differ from learning other academic subjects. Foreign language students can be encouraged to participate in order to develop general learning strategies.

Awareness Training. Lectures and Discussion. Also known as consciousness-raising or familiarization training, this consists most often of isolated lectures and discussions and is usually separate from regular classroom instruction. This approach provides students with a general introduction to

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strategy applications. Oxford (1990) describes awareness training as “a program in which participants become aware of and familiar with the general idea of language learning strategies and the way such strategies can help them accomplish various language tasks” (p. 202).

Strategy Workshops. Short workshops are another, usually more intensive, approach to increasing learner awareness of strategies through various consciousness-raising and strategy-assessment activities. They may help to improve specific language skills or present ideas for learning certain aspects of a particular foreign language. These workshops may be offered as non-credit courses or required as part of a language or academic skills course. They often combine lectures, hands-on practice with specific strategies, and discussions about the effectiveness of strategy use.

Peer Tutoring. “Tandem” or peer tutoring programs began in the 1970s in Europe and are flourishing in many universities across the United States. Holec (1988) describes this system as “a direct language exchange” program that pairs students of different native language backgrounds for mutual tutoring sessions (e.g., an English-speaking student studying Italian and a native-Italian-speaking student learning English). Requirements of the tutoring sessions are that students have regular meetings, alternate roles of learner and teacher, practice the two languages separately, and devote equal amounts of time to each language. Often, students exchange suggestions about the language learning strategies they use, thus providing an ad hoc form of strategy training.

Another approach to peer sessions is to encourage students who are studying the same language to organize regular target-language study groups. Students who have already completed the language course may also be invited to these meetings. Less proficient students can benefit from the language skills of more proficient students, and more proficient students may yield better insights into the particular difficulties of the target language than a teacher.

Strategies in Language Textbooks. Many foreign language textbooks have begun to embed strategies into their curricula. However, unless the strategies are explained, modeled, or reinforced by the classroom teacher, students may not be aware that they are using strategies at all. A few language textbooks provide strategy-embedded activities and explicit explanations of the benefits and applications of the strategies they address. Because the focus of the activities is contextualized language learning, learners can develop their learning strategy repertoires while learning the target language. One advantage of using textbooks with explicit strategy training is that students do not need extracurricular training; the textbooks reinforce strategy use across both tasks and skills, encouraging students to continue applying them on their own.

Videotaped Mini-Courses. Rubin (1996) developed an interactive videodisc program and accompanying instructional guide aimed at raising students’ awareness of learning strategies and of the learning process in general, to show students how to transfer strategies to new tasks and to help them take charge of their own progress while learning the language. Using authentic language situations, the instructional program includes 20 foreign languages and offers the opportunity to select the language, topic, and difficulty level. Materials are structured to expose students to various strategies for use in many different contexts.

Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI). SBI is a learner-centered approach to teaching that extends classroom strategy training to include both implicit and explicit integration of strategies into the course content. Students experience the advantages of systematically applying the strategies to the learning and use of the language they are studying. In addition, they have opportunities to share their preferred strategies with other students and to increase their strategy use in the typical language tasks they are asked to perform. Teachers can individualize strategy training, suggest language-specific strategies, and reinforce strategies while presenting the regular course content. In

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a typical SBI classroom, teachers do the following:

- Describe, model, and give examples of potentially useful strategies
- Elicit additional examples from students, based on students' own learning experiences
- Lead small-group and whole-class discussions about strategies
- Encourage students to experiment with a broad range of strategies
- Integrate strategies into everyday class materials, explicitly and implicitly embedding them into the language tasks to provide for contextualized strategy practice

Teachers may conduct SBI instruction by starting with established course materials, then determining which strategies to insert and where; starting with a set of strategies they wish to focus on and design activities around them; or inserting strategies spontaneously into the lessons whenever it seems appropriate (e.g., to help students overcome problems with difficult material or to speed up the lesson).

Steps for Designing Strategy Training

The approaches outlined above offer options for providing strategy training to a large number of learners. Based on the needs, resources, and time available to an institution, the next step is to plan the instruction students will receive. The following seven steps are based largely on suggestions of strategy training by Oxford (1990). The model is especially useful because it can be adapted to the needs of various groups of learners, the resources available, and the length of the strategy training. See Cohen (1998) for a thorough description of these steps.

1. Determine learners' needs and the resources available for training.
2. Select the strategies to be taught.
3. Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training.
4. Consider motivational issues.
5. Prepare the materials and activities.
6. Conduct explicit strategy training.
7. Evaluate and revise the strategy training.

Conclusion

The guidelines for implementing strategy training programs provide a variety of options for tailoring the training to meet the needs of a large number of students, as well as to the needs of the individual institution or language program. The most important considerations in the design of a strategy training program are the students' needs, the available resources (e.g., time, money, materials, availability of teacher trainers), and the feasibility of providing this kind of instruction.

When including strategies-based instruction in a foreign language curriculum, it is important to choose an instructional model that introduces the strategies to the students and raises awareness of their learning preferences; teaches them to identify, practice, evaluate, and transfer strategies to new learning situations; and promotes learner autonomy to enable students to continue their learning after they leave the language classroom.

Note

The information in this digest was drawn from Chapter 4 of Cohen (1998).

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