Styles and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers’ Guide
Andrew D. Cohen & Susan J. Weaver

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Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge all of the language learners, teachers, and researchers who have come before us, providing the foundations for a strategies-based approach to teaching languages. Their efforts and insights have allowed us to see how increased learner autonomy and learner-focused teaching can improve the processes of teaching and learning languages.

We would especially like to thank all of the students and teachers who have participated in our workshops, seminars, video and research projects. The following people assisted us in the preparation of the first version (1997): Jonathan Paradise, Molly Wieland, Nancy Stenson, Yelena Borisova, Tao-Yuan Li, Kimberly Scott, Cheryl Alcaya, Karen Lybeck, Patricia Mougel, Anna Uhl Chamot, and Rebecca Oxford.

As for the rewritten version, special thanks goes to Martha Nyikos for her contributions and to Rebecca Oxford for her insightful work and training in the styles literature. Finally, we would like to thank Karin Larson and her colleagues at CARLA who have believed in our styles and strategies work over the many years and have made the workplace a true learning and teaching community. Without Karin’s solid support, this revised version would not have come to fruition.
Using the SSBI Guide

This publication is the revision of *Strategies-based instruction: A teacher-training manual* (1997) and includes feedback from users of that guide. The material is meant for second and foreign language instructors (both referred to here as L2 teachers) and has been field tested in eight summer institutes (with instructors of at least fifteen languages) and in language classes (most recently in Nanjing, China).

Each chapter begins with background material on topics related to styles-and-strategies-based instruction (SSBI) in the language classroom. This reference material is enhanced by hands-on tasks that show teachers ways to conduct SSBI with their own students. These tasks (in the Activity Handouts section) may be copied, adapted, and distributed for classroom use. The tasks represent several methods of instruction: presentations, paired and smallgroup discussions, interactive (handson) strategy practice exercises, reflective writings, inclass readings, and opportunities for designing strategiesbased activities and curricula from the participants’ own teaching materials.

Participants are given firsthand experience with using and evaluating strategies, as well as opportunities for discussing issues related to styles- and strategiesbased instruction. Participants are encouraged to share their insights and experiences throughout the course. We believe that every participant can make valuable contributions toward the content of any course. Thus, a practical handson approach, where the participants actively experiment with the strategies presented and reflect on their own language learning/teaching experiences, will help to prepare them for their students’ reactions to SSBI.

Teacher-trainers, administrators, and researchers use this material productively and there is a section about designing SSBI workshops and research sessions. But the ultimate goal of this manual is to help L2 teachers gain a better sense of the individual needs of their students. We hope it will provide the participating teachers with ideas about how to embed strategies into everyday class activities, how to positively reinforce the effective use of strategies, and how to encourage their students to find ways to take more responsibility for language learning.
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Chapter One

What is Styles- and Strategies-Based Language Instruction?

Styles- and strategies-based instruction (SSBI) is a learner-focused approach to language teaching that explicitly combines styles and strategy instructional activities with everyday classroom language instruction (see Oxford, 2001; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2001). The underlying premise of the styles- and strategies-based approach is that students should be given the opportunity to understand not only what they can learn in the language classroom, but also how they can learn the language they are studying.

Traditionally, it was assumed that if L2 teachers did their jobs well, students would learn and retain the language. It has become clear, however, that if students are not taking responsibility for their own language learning or are not motivated to learn, it may not matter how well the teachers are teaching. With this realization, the development of SSBI began.

The Evolution of Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction

1960s – Psychology of Learning
In the 1960s there emerged a focus on the learner and on learning to learn. Educators drew from cognitive theory, based on the information processing model with two kinds of knowledge: declarative knowledge, which dealt with the facts; and procedural knowledge, which focused on the procedures for using declarative knowledge. The cognitive theory approach was a departure from the behaviorist stimulus-response approach to learning which had spawned the audio-lingual method of having learners practice patterns over and over until they learned them. The tendency was now directed toward a more reasoned, controlled learning of rules and accepting that some rules were learned or “acquired” automatically.

1970s - Good Language Learner
The 1970s saw the advent of a rather prescriptive approach to language learner strategies, with the emphasis on what the good language learner can teach us (Rubin, 1975). Joan Rubin identified the following strategies used by good language learners:

- Making an effort to communicate and to learn through communication
- Finding strategies for overcoming inhibitions in target language interaction
- Making reasoned guesses when not sure
- Paying attention to meaning
- Monitoring their speech and that of others
- Attending to form (i.e., grammar)
- Practicing the language whenever possible

Decades later, these strategies are still among the most significant for language learners the world over.

1980s – Classifications of Strategies and Descriptions of Learners
The 1980s was marked by efforts to classify strategies. Language educators like O’Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and others created classification schemes which labeled strategies according to whether they had a primarily “metacognitive,” “cognitive,” “social,” “affective” or other function, drawing primarily on the rich L1 literature about reading strategies.
1990s – Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI)
In the 1990s there was a shift from simply describing and classifying strategies to experimenting with different kinds of interventions in the classroom. The interest was now on whether learners could enhance their language learning by either using new strategies or by using familiar ones more effectively. An example of such an intervention was the University of Minnesota experiment with intermediate learners of French and Norwegian (Cohen, Weaver, & Li, 1998). It was also during this decade that summer institutes in strategies-based instruction were started at the University of Minnesota. Chamot and colleagues initiated strategy institutes for language teachers through the National Capital Language Resource Center in Washington, D.C.

2000s – SSBI
This decade has seen styles and strategies-based instruction become one entity. Some language educators (like Oxford, 2001) have long insisted that language learner strategies need to be viewed through the perspective of the style preferences of the learners. As strategy classification systems have been sorted out and categories become more fine-tuned, there is a growing interest in how specific tasks might favor certain learning style preferences and call for certain language strategies. In other words, the one-size-fits-all approach is becoming custom fitted.

Self-directed Learning
As language teaching has become more learner-focused and interactive, there has also been an emphasis on helping students take more responsibility for meeting their own language learning needs (Brown, 2002; Chamot, 2001; Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; McDonough, 1999; Oxford, 1990, 2001; Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Students are asked to self-direct the language learning process and become less dependent on the classroom teacher. SSBI helps learners to become more aware of different learning strategies, to understand how to organize and use strategies systematically and effectively (given their learning-style preferences), and to learn when and how to transfer the strategies to new language learning.

SSBI has a series of components that develop the students’ relationship with learning strategy:

1) **Strategy Preparation**
There is no sense in assuming that students are a blank slate when it comes to strategy use. They most likely have developed some strategies, but may not use them systematically or well. The goal here is to find out how much students know about strategies and if they are able to use them.

2) **Strategy Awareness-Raising**
SSBI tasks explicitly **raise the students’ general awareness** about: 1) what the learning process may consist of, 2) their learning style preferences or general approaches to learning, 3) the kinds of strategies that they already use, as well as those suggested by the teacher or classmates, 4) the amount of responsibility that they take on for their learning, or 5) approaches that can be used to evaluate the students’ strategy use.

3) **Strategy Instruction**
Students are **explicitly** taught how, when, and why certain strategies (whether alone, in sequence, or in clusters) can be used to facilitate language learning. Teachers describe, model, and give examples of strategies.

4) **Strategy Practice**
Knowing about a given strategy is not enough. Learners must have the opportunity to try them out. These activities **reinforce strategies** that have already been discussed and
allow students time to practice the strategies at the same time they are learning the course content. These activities should include explicit references to the strategies. Students either:

a) plan the strategies that they will use for an activity,

b) have their attention called to the use of particular strategies while they are being used, or

c) “debrief” their use of strategies (and their relative effectiveness) after the activity has ended.

5) Personalization of Strategies

Learners evaluate how they are using the strategies and look at ways they can use them in other contexts.

In SSBI, it is the curriculum writers’ and the teachers’ role to see that strategies are integrated into everyday class materials and are both explicitly and implicitly embedded into the language tasks to provide contextualized strategy practice. Teachers may:

a) start with the established course materials and then insert strategies,

b) start with a set of strategies and design activities around them, or

c) insert strategies spontaneously into the lessons when appropriate.
Chapter 2
Learning Style Preferences

Why do some students have trouble understanding directions in the second language while other students get them easily? Why do some students do well in large groups, while others are at their best when they can work alone or with a single partner? What can you do to help each student when there can be such a variety of learners in your classroom? This chapter offers ways to handle the diversity of your students’ learning style preferences.

What are learning style preferences?

Learning style preferences refer to the way you like to learn. They are put into action by specific learning strategies (Ehrman, 1996, p. 49). Learning style has been referred to as “…the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others” (Dunn & Griggs, 1988, p. 3). According to Oxford and Anderson (1995), learning styles have six interrelated aspects:

1. The cognitive aspect includes preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning (usually referred to as cognitive styles).
2. The executive aspect is the extent to which learners look for order, organization, and closure in managing the learning processes.
3. The affective aspect consists of the attitudes, beliefs, and values that influence what learners focus on most.
4. The social aspect relates to the preferred degree of involvement with other people while learning.
5. The physiological element involves what are at least partly anatomically based sensory and perceptual tendencies of the learners.
6. The behavioral aspect concerns the learners’ tendency to actively seek situations compatible with their own learning preferences.

There are no positive or negative traits, only preferences, and even strong preferences can change. Students tend to learn better when the classroom instructor nurtures their learning style. If you can present language material in a variety of ways, the language styles of all of your students are more likely to be nurtured. For example, you could teach the present and past perfect tenses in your target language by having your students listen to a tape and then draw a chart in their notebook of a timeline that describes when to use each form of the perfect aspect. In this way, you teach to both the auditory and visual learners.

The value of learning styles

Research suggests that the greater the number of styles students can use, the more successful they will be at learning language. Research also shows that we all have learning style preferences and thus may tend to favor our preferred approaches in our learning. You can help students by getting them to think about learning in strategic terms and to expand or stretch their learning approaches. You can also accommodate to style differences by providing opportunities during class for your students to learn in different ways. You may already do this, but the idea is to vary the tasks so as not to continually favor one style preference over another.
Consider the perceptual style dimensions:

visual – relying more on the sense of sight, and learning best through visual means (either through text-based resources such as handouts, lists, flashcards, and other verbal sources; or through spatial information, such as charts, diagrams, pictures, and videos);

auditory – preferring listening and speaking activities (e.g., discussions, debates, audiotapes, role-plays, and lectures); and

hands-on – benefiting from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around. For those who remember words best by seeing them spelled out, you may want to write new words on the board or in a handout (when it doesn’t detract from the activity).

So, when it comes to learning new vocabulary, students who learn visually may benefit from writing the new words in their notebook or from seeing a still picture or video of the object or action which involves the new vocabulary in some way. Learners with an auditory preference may want to hear the words pronounced clearly several times or to hear themselves pronouncing them. For hands-on learners, it may help to perform the action to which the new words refer.

Vocabulary tasks which accommodate other style dimensions might include:

• a task where learners need to provide the gist of a story (which favors a global preference) using key words which include the use of new vocabulary, as well as a task requiring a focus on details including some new words that describe those details;

• a deductive task where rules about how new verbs are conjugated are given at the outset, as well as an inductive task where learners need to induce the rules about how the new verbs are conjugated;

• a small-group task favoring extroverted learners who enjoy trying out the new vocabulary in the group, as well as a task that learners perform on their own or as an entire class, where the more introverted learners are not necessarily called upon to pronounce the new words or to use them in sentences.

Assessing Learning Styles

Learning styles have been categorized from a variety of different perspectives and there are many types of assessments. Standardized tools have been developed to look at learning styles in terms of the senses people favor, their cognitive styles, and personality types (Reid, 1995). Keep in mind that instruments categorize learners and some students might think they are being labeled. It is important to remind them that we are capable of using different styles in language. Remind them that these instruments report preferences for learning, not absolutes – that we often alter our learning styles according to the circumstances, and that we can try new and different styles.

As a teacher, you might assess your students’ learning styles more informally. You might gather information by:

• observing the approaches your learners took with classroom tasks
• asking your students about their preferred methods for approaching tasks
• having your students keep journals about their preferred approaches
• having your students report to you about how they are dealing with a current language task.

The Learning Style Survey
We have included our own Learning Style Survey (constructed by co-author Cohen, with Rebecca Oxford and Julie Chi) in this chapter. It was developed with an interest in those style dimensions that seem to have the most relevance to language learning. The format of the survey and a number of the dimensions and items are drawn from Oxford’s Style Analysis Survey (1995). Other dimensions and some of the wording of items are based on the work of Ehrman and Leaver (Ehrman & Leaver, 1997, 2003; the E&L Questionnaire, 2001). There is also a young people’s version of this instrument appended to the end of this chapter, the Learner Style Survey for Young Learners (Cohen & Oxford, 2001).

The premise for the survey is that all language learners have a preference for how to learn. While they may have a general sense of their preferences already, this survey can help them deepen their understanding of those preferences by comparing and contrasting 11 different learning styles. Being aware of our own predispositions to learning helps us to understand and organize them better. It also help you as a teacher understand your approach to teaching, given that you are likely to teach to your own preferences. Having your students take this survey will help them begin to understand their own approaches to learning and can give you information about how they learn best.

We recommend that you and your students take the Learning Style Survey. The survey should be used to coach your students to use their preferred styles to their advantage and to “stretch their styles” by developing approaches that they may have resisted in the past. For example, if students discover or remind themselves that they are visual learners, they may wish (perhaps with your guidance) to create their own visuals. In addition, they may wish to team with auditory learners, at the same time that they tap into their own undeveloped auditory skills.

Consider the issues of style stretching for yourself. For example, if you are a visual learner, think of a lecture you may have attended where the lecturer did not include any visuals at all. In that situation, did you find yourself using other ways to support your visual learning style, such as by taking careful notes or by conjuring up your own images? Or did you rely more heavily on other strategies? Did you partner with someone else who was an auditory learner and was more adept at lectures? Did you “illustrate” your written notes to help you learn the material? No doubt you can think of other examples in which the teaching situation did not cater to your own learning preferences and where you needed other ways for coping with the situation. You are likely to have students in your classrooms with learning styles not fully “in sync” with your teaching styles. Consider how you can help these students, either by catering a bit more to their style preferences or by assisting them in stretching their style preferences.

Types of learning styles
The three tables (Sensory/Perceptual, Psychological/Personality Type, and Cognitive) that follow the survey on pages 14-16 (Cohen, Paige, Kappler, Demmessie, Weaver, Chi, & Lassegard, 2003), give an overview of the characteristics of each learning style and ways to facilitate learning for each type. Review the tables and think about where your students may fall, noting in the left column the percentage of your students showing a preference. Don’t be overwhelmed by the details. You may know your students well or you may need to make quick guesses – the goal is simply to gain
an overall sense of where your students might fall. Then, using the information from the hints and support column as a starting point, think about what you can do to help these learners gain the most from their culture- and language-learning experiences.

Activity 2: Style Matching Exercise (page 23) serves two purposes. One is for teachers to check their own understanding of learning style preference descriptions. The second purpose is to have the students do the matching activity to improve their understanding of the different styles.

Go back to your results on the Learning Style Survey. Consider the impact your own learning preferences have on your teaching.

- What are your predominant learning preferences?
- In what ways do you feel these preferences influence your teaching?
- Which style preferences receive the least amount of attention in your classroom?
- What are some simple ways you can adapt your teaching and the classroom to reach a more diverse audience?

**Working with learning styles**

Students who discover that they favor a certain learning style may want to compensate by taking on learning styles that don’t come as naturally for them. The following are some practical suggestions for dealing with learning style preferences in the classroom.

1. **Have your students consider the importance of learning styles**

You could lead a discussion about the role of learning styles. The following could be points that you bring to the discussion or that the students themselves raise:

- Awareness of our learning style preferences allows us to understand and organize our learning. Since some aspects of learning are usually out of our control (textbook, tasks, teacher, and topic), we can improve our chances of learning by knowing how we can work most comfortably, quickly, and easily.
- Being in control of our learning styles makes us more flexible learners, since the more ways we can learn comfortably, the better.
- Knowing how we learn best can make us more efficient, since the less amount of time needed to learn, the better.
- Awareness of our style preferences can make us more effective learners, since the more easily we can learn, the better.

2. **Be aware that there may be style conflicts between you and the students**

You have probably had times when your teaching style and the learning style of some students didn’t match. Research shows that such conflicts can impact learning. Some conflict situations that have emerged from research (Oxford & Lavine, 1992) include:

- The teacher was more analytic, reflective, and auditory; while the learner was more global, impulsive, and visual.
- The teacher was more open-oriented, while the learner was more closure-oriented.
- The teacher was more concrete-sequential, while the learner was more random-intuitive.
- The teacher was more concrete-sequential, visual, and reflective, while the learner was more random-intuitive, auditory, and impulsive.
• The teacher was more extroverted and hands-on, while the learner was more introverted and visual.

To avoid, or at least resolve, such conflicts, Oxford and Lavine suggest (as we have) that students’ and instructors’ styles be surveyed at the beginning of the course and that this information be used to understand the style dynamics for that particular class.

3. Use student information for the *Learning Style Survey*

When you have information about your students’ (and your own) learning styles, you can make the most of your students’ learning styles and help them find ways to stretch themselves to benefit most from your teaching styles. Put students in the learning driver’s seat by asking them how you can help make this (otherwise packaged course) become *their* course. If students do not have any initial ideas or the reaction seems awkward, take the lead by offering suggestions. For example, are there students who are interested in:

- forming a study group outside of class to prepare for exams?
- getting together outside of class to talk about study abroad destinations or plans?
- practicing conversation among themselves or finding native speakers outside of class?
- attending or learning more about relevant cultural events?
- watching films relevant to the target language and culture(s)?

After you help them generate ideas, circulate a sign-up sheet and ask at least one student in each category to be a facilitator. Thereafter, you can simply feed information to the facilitator(s) on things you see that might be of interest to that subgroup. This helps students take ownership over their learning according to their preferred styles and interests without having to depend on you for everything.

You might alter your teaching style somewhat to accommodate your students’ learning styles. Small adaptations may be enough to help your students. For example, rather than giving only an oral homework announcement, which may favor the auditory learners, also write it on the corner of the board in a list form for visual and closure-oriented students. A concrete-sequential student may wish to have the instructions laid out in numerical fashion while the abstract-intuitive learner wouldn’t necessarily care or might even be distracted by this level of detail! In other words, the more methods you can use to encompass the differing learning-style preferences, the better.

4. Encourage students to challenge themselves

What happens when you assign a reading text that is ambiguous or has difficult vocabulary or language structure? Students who are more *intuitive* have a number of strategies to get at the meaning. They could use their knowledge of the world or information from another section of the text that is intelligible and make a logical connection between the two. They could also use headings and subheadings, connectors, and other functional guidelines in the text.

Students who are more *concrete-sequential* may have a difficult time with the meaning. They may be more comfortable going from one word to the next and one sentence to the next – getting more and more frustrated as they go along. This is an opportunity to discuss the advantages of shifting style to accommodate a daunting language task and selecting strategies to support that style shift.
When you discuss styles directly, your students can be aware of which tasks will be the most and the least challenging for them. Help them make the link between style preference and the strategies associated with those styles. Open up the range of possible strategies and help your students select strategies for each language learning task on a more informed basis.

Students might misuse this information to reject certain classroom activities and assignments. Concrete-sequential learners may say, “I just cannot learn in that way” or “This activity doesn’t fit my style.” Remind them that the goal is not simply to be aware of their preferences but to help them understand the entire range of preferences. To be successful in the classroom, they should use as many style preferences as they can.
### Sensory/perceptual learning style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of learners</th>
<th>Support teachers can provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Visual</strong></td>
<td>Prefer charts, graphs, something to read, or a picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Tactile/Kinesthetic</strong></td>
<td>Prefer aids that can be touched, manipulated, or written; and may practice language by drawing and/or tracing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Auditory</strong></td>
<td>Prefer listening to lectures, conversations, tapes, etc., when learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Psychological type (personality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of learners</th>
<th>Support teachers can provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Extroverted</strong></td>
<td>Energized by the outside world; active, interaction-oriented, and outgoing; have broad interests; tend to reflect later (motto: “Live it, then understand it.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B Introverted</strong></td>
<td>Energized by the inner world; prefer concentration; focus on thoughts and concepts; have fewer interests, but deep ones; like to be reflective (motto: “Understand it, then live it.”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Random-Intuitive</strong></td>
<td>Like finding the big picture; enjoy formal model-building and abstract terms; focus on the future; look for possibilities; random access (when asked for 5 examples, they give 4 or 6 instead).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Concrete-Sequential</strong></td>
<td>Like to work step-by-step; follow directions carefully; tend to be linear and sensory-oriented; focus on the here and now; concrete sequential (when asked for 5 examples, they give exactly 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Closure-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Decision makers; action takers; make and follow lists; want quick closure and control; have a low tolerance for ambiguity; often jump to conclusions by wanting to know answers right away; often hard working and decisive; find deadlines helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Open-Oriented</strong></td>
<td>Information gatherers; like to take in a lot of information and experience before making a decision; think learning should be fun; can make work into play; might make lists, but don’t check off each item; tend to be flexible and open to change; have a high tolerance for ambiguity; see deadlines as artificial and arbitrary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cognitive Learning Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of learners</th>
<th>Support teachers can provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Global</strong></td>
<td>Enjoy getting the main idea and are comfortable communicating even if they don’t know all the words or concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Particular</strong></td>
<td>Need specific examples to understand fully; pay attention to specific facts or information; good at catching new phrases or words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Synthesizing</strong></td>
<td>Like finding the big picture; enjoy formal model-building and abstract terms; focus on the future; look for possibilities; random access (when asked for 5 examples, they give 4 or 6 instead).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Analytic</strong></td>
<td>Like to think and analyze; prefer contrastive analysis and discrimination exercises; not always sensitive to social/affective factors (tend to avoid social and emotional subtleties); often focus on grammar rules and generalizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Sharpeners</strong></td>
<td>Notice differences and distinctions among items while committing material to memory. Store items separately and retrieve them individually and can distinguish among speech sounds, grammatical forms, and fine distinctions of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Levelers</strong></td>
<td>Clump material to remember it by eliminating or reducing differences and by focusing almost exclusively on similarities. May ignore distinctions that promote accuracy in a social context. Tend to blur similar memories and to merge new experiences with previous ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Deductive</strong></td>
<td>Notice differences and distinctions among items while committing material to memory. Store items separately and retrieve them individually and can distinguish among speech sounds, grammatical forms, and fine distinctions of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Inductive</strong></td>
<td>Clump material to remember it by eliminating or reducing differences and by focusing almost exclusively on similarities. May ignore distinctions that promote accuracy in a social context. Tend to blur similar memories and to merge new experiences with previous ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Field-Dependent</strong></td>
<td>Notice differences and distinctions among items while committing material to memory. Store items separately and retrieve them individually and can distinguish among speech sounds, grammatical forms, and fine distinctions of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Field-Independent</strong></td>
<td>Clump material to remember it by eliminating or reducing differences and by focusing almost exclusively on similarities. May ignore distinctions that promote accuracy in a social context. Tend to blur similar memories and to merge new experiences with previous ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Impulsive</strong></td>
<td>Process material at a high speed with low accuracy; often take risks and guesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Reflective</strong></td>
<td>Process material at a low speed with high accuracy; avoid risks and guessing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Metaphoric</strong></td>
<td>Learn material more effectively if they can conceptualize aspects of it (e.g., the grammar system) in metaphysical terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Literal</strong></td>
<td>Prefer literal representations of concepts and like to work with language material more or less as it is on the surface.</td>
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Activity 1: Learning Style Survey — Assessing Your Learning Styles

Andrew D. Cohen, Rebecca L. Oxford, & Julie C. Chi

Format:
- Self-administered

Purpose:
The Learning Style Survey assesses your general approach to learning. It does not predict your behavior, but it is a clear indication of your overall style preferences.

Instructions:
For each item circle the response that represents your approach. Complete all items. There are eleven major activities representing twelve different aspects of your learning style. When you read the statements, try to think about what you generally do when learning.

Timing:
It takes about 30 minutes to complete the survey. Do not spend too much time on any item. Indicate your immediate response (or feeling) and move on to the next item.

For each item, circle your immediate response:
- 0 = Never
- 1 = Rarely
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Always

Part 1: How I Use My Physical Senses

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I remember something better if I write it down.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I take detailed notes during lectures.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I prefer to learn with TV or video rather than other media.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I use color coding to help me as I learn or work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I need written directions for tasks.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have to look at people to understand what they say.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I understand lecturers better when they write on the board.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Charts, diagrams, and maps help me understand what someone says.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I remember peoples’ faces, but not their names.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture rather than reading.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I need oral directions for a task.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Background sound helps me think.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I like to listen to music when I study or work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I can understand what people say even when I cannot see them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I remember peoples’ names, but not their faces.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I easily remember jokes that I hear.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I can identify people by their voices (e.g., on the phone).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more than watch the screen.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. I’d rather get started than pay attention to the directions.  
22. I need frequent breaks when I work or study.  
23. I need to eat something when I read or study.  
24. If I have a choice between sitting and standing, I’d rather stand.  
25. I get nervous when I sit still too long.  
26. I think better when I move around (e.g., pacing or my tapping feet).  
27. I play with or bite on my pens during lectures.  
28. Manipulating objects helps me to remember what someone says.  
29. I move my hands when I speak.  
30. I draw lots of pictures (doodles) in my notebook during lectures.

C Total:__________________

Part 2: How I Open Myself to Learning Situations

1. I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself.  
2. I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation.  
3. I learn better in the classroom than with a private tutor.  
4. It is easy for me to approach strangers.  
5. Interacting with a lot of people gives me energy.  
6. I experience things first, and then try to understand them.

A Total:

7. I am energized by the inner world (what I’m thinking inside).  
8. I prefer individual or one-on-one games and activities.  
9. I have a few interests, and I concentrate deeply on them.  
10. After working in a large group, I am exhausted.  
11. When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen.  
12. I want to understand something well before I try it.

B Total:

Part 3: How I Handle Possibilities

1. I have an inventive imagination.  
2. I try to find many options and possibilities for why something happens.  
3. I plan carefully for future events.  
4. I like to discover things myself rather than have everything explained to me.  
5. I add many original ideas during class discussions.  
6. I am open-minded to new suggestions from my peers.

A Total:__________________

7. I focus on a situation as it is rather than thinking about how it could be.  
8. I read instruction manuals (e.g., for computers or VCRs) before using the device.  
10. I like to know how rules are applied and why.

B Total:__________________

Part 4: How I Deal With Ambiguity and Deadlines

1. I like to plan language study sessions carefully and do lessons on time or early.  
2. My notes, handouts, and other school materials are carefully organized.  
3. I like to be certain about what things mean in a target language.  
4. I like to know how rules are applied and why.

A Total:__________________

5. I let deadlines slide if I’m involved in other things.  
6. I let things pile up on my desk to be organized eventually.  
7. I don’t worry about comprehending everything.  
8. I don’t feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic.

B Total:__________________
Part 5: How I Receive Information

1. I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I ignore details that do not seem relevant. 0 1 2 3 4
3. It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture. 0 1 2 3 4
4. I get the main idea and that’s enough for me. 0 1 2 3 4
5. When I tell an old story, I tend to forget lots of specific details. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: 0 1 2 3 4

6. I need very specific examples in order to understand fully. 0 1 2 3 4
7. I pay attention to specific facts or information. 0 1 2 3 4
8. I’m good at catching new phrases or words when I hear them. 0 1 2 3 4
9. I enjoy activities where I have to fill in the blank with missing words I hear. 0 1 2 3 4
10. When I try to tell a joke, I remember details but forget the punch line. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total:

Part 6: How I Further Process Information

1. I can summarize information easily. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I can quickly paraphrase what other people say. 0 1 2 3 4
3. When I create an outline, I consider the key points first. 0 1 2 3 4
4. I enjoy activities where I have to pull ideas together. 0 1 2 3 4
5. By looking at the whole situation, I can easily understand someone. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: 0 1 2 3 4

6. I have a hard time understanding when I don’t know every word. 0 1 2 3 4
7. When I tell a story or explain something, it takes a long time. 0 1 2 3 4
8. I like to focus on grammar rules. 0 1 2 3 4
9. I’m good at solving complicated mysteries and puzzles. 0 1 2 3 4
10. I am good at noticing even the smallest details regarding some task. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total:

Part 7: How I Commit Material to Memory

1. I make an effort to pay attention to all the features of new material as I learn. 0 1 2 3 4
2. When I memorize different bits of language material, I can retrieve these bits easily – as if I had stored them in separate slots in my brain. 0 1 2 3 4
3. As I learn new material in the target language, I make distinctions between speech sounds, grammatical forms, and words and phrases. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: 0 1 2 3 4

4. When learning new information, I may clump together data by eliminating or reducing differences and focusing on similarities. 0 1 2 3 4
5. I ignore distinctions that would make what I say more accurate in the given context. 0 1 2 3 4
6. Similar memories blur in my mind; I merge new learning experiences with previous ones. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total:

Part 8: How I Deal With Language Rules

1. I like to go from general patterns to the specific examples in learning a target language. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I like to start with rules and theories rather than specific examples. 0 1 2 3 4
3. I like to begin with generalizations and then find experiences that relate to them. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: 0 1 2 3 4

4. I like to learn rules of language indirectly through being exposed to lots of examples of grammatical structures and other language features. 0 1 2 3 4
5. I don’t really care if I hear a rule stated since I don’t remember rules very well anyway. 0 1 2 3 4
6. I figure out rules based on the way I see language forms behaving over time. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total:
Part 9: How I Deal With Multiple Inputs

1. I can separate out the relevant and important information in a given context even when distracting information is present. 0 1 2 3 4
2. When I produce an oral or written message in a target language, I make sure that all the grammatical structures are in agreement. 0 1 2 3 4
3. I not only attend to grammar, but check for appropriate level of formality and politeness. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: ___

4. When speaking or writing, a focus on grammar would be at the expense of attention to content. 0 1 2 3 4
5. It is a challenge for me to focus on communication in speech or writing while paying attention to grammatical agreement (e.g., person, number, tense, or gender). 0 1 2 3 4
6. When I am using lengthy sentences in a target language, I get distracted and neglect aspects of grammar and style. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total: ___

Part 10: How I Deal With Response Time

1. I react quickly in language situations. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I go with my instincts in a target language. 0 1 2 3 4
3. I jump in, see what happens, and make on-line corrections if needed. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: ___

4. I need to think things through before speaking or writing. 0 1 2 3 4
5. I like to look before I leap when determining what to say or write in a target language. 0 1 2 3 4
6. I attempt to find supporting material in my mind before I start producing language. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total: ___

Part 11: How Literally I Take Reality

1. I find that building metaphors in my mind helps me deal with language (e.g., viewing the language like a machine with component parts that can be disassembled). 0 1 2 3 4
2. I learn things through metaphors and associations with other things. I find stories and examples help me learn. 0 1 2 3 4

A Total: ___

3. I take learning language literally and don’t deal in metaphors. 0 1 2 3 4
4. I take things at face value, so I like language material that says what it means directly. 0 1 2 3 4

B Total: ___

Understanding Your Totals

Once you have totaled your points, write the results on the blanks below. Circle the higher number in each part. If they are close, circle both and read about your learning styles on the next page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1:</th>
<th>Part 7:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Visual</td>
<td>A ___ Sharpener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Auditory</td>
<td>B ___ Leveler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C ___ Tactile/Kinesthetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2:</th>
<th>Part 8:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Extraverted</td>
<td>A ___ Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Introverted</td>
<td>B ___ Inductive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3:</th>
<th>Part 9:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Random-Intuitive</td>
<td>A ___ Field-Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Concrete-Sequential</td>
<td>B ___ Field-Dependent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 4:</th>
<th>Part 10:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Closure-Oriented</td>
<td>A ___ Impulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Open</td>
<td>B ___ Reflective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 5:</th>
<th>Part 11:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Global</td>
<td>A ___ Metaphoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Particular</td>
<td>B ___ Literal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 6:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Synthesizing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Analytic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 7:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Sharpener</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Leveler</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 8:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A ___ Deductive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B ___ Inductive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before reading the next section, understand that this is only a general description of your learning style preferences. It does not describe you all of the time, but gives you an idea of your tendencies when you learn. Note that in some learning situations, you may have one set of style preferences and in another situation, another set of preferences. Also, there are both advantages and disadvantages to every style preference.

If on the sensory style preferences (visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic) you prefer two or all three of these senses (i.e., your totals for the categories are within 5 points or so), you are likely to be flexible enough to enjoy a wide variety of activities in the language classroom. On the other dimensions, although they appear to be in opposition, it is possible for you to have high scores on both, meaning that you do not have a preference one way or the other. Here are three examples: On the extroversion-introversion distinction, you are able to work effectively with others as well as by yourself; on the closure-open distinction, you enjoy the freedom of limited structure and can still get the task done before the deadline without stress; on the global-particular distinction, you can handle both the gist and the details easily.
Furthermore, learning style preferences change throughout your life, and you can also stretch them, so don’t feel that you are constrained to one style.

Part 1: How I Use My Physical Senses
If you came out as more visual than auditory (i.e., closer to the maximum 40 points on visual than on auditory), you rely more on the sense of sight, and you learn best through visual means (books, video, charts, pictures). If you are more auditory, you prefer listening and speaking activities (discussions, debates, audio tapes, role-plays, lectures). If you have any tactile/kinesthetic style preference, you benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around (games, building models, conducting experiments).

Part 2: How I Open Myself to Learning Situations
If you came out more extraverted on this survey, you probably enjoy a wide range of social, interactive learning tasks (games, conversations, discussions, debates, role-plays, simulations). If you came out more introverted, you probably like to do more independent work (studying or reading by yourself or learning with the computer) or enjoy working with one other person you know well.

Part 3: How I Handle Possibilities
If you scored more random-intuitive, you are most likely more future-oriented, prefer what can be over what is, like to speculate about possibilities, enjoy abstract thinking, and tend to disfavor step-by-step instruction. If your style preference was more concrete-sequential, you are likely to be more present-oriented, prefer one-step-at-a-time activities, and want to know where you are going in your learning at every moment.

Part 4: How I Approach Tasks
If you are more closure-oriented, you probably focus carefully on most or all learning tasks, strive to meet deadlines, plan ahead for assignments, and want explicit directions. If you are more open in your orientation, you enjoy discovery learning (where you pick up information naturally) and prefer to relax and enjoy your learning without concern for deadlines or rules.

Part 5: How I Receive Information
If you have a more global style preference, you enjoy getting the gist or main idea, and are comfortable communicating even if you don’t know all the words or concepts. If you are more particular in preference, you focus more on details, and remember specific information about a topic well.

Part 6: How I Further Process Information
If you are a synthesizing person, you can summarize material well, enjoy guessing meanings and predicting outcomes, and notice similarities quickly. If you are analytic, you can pull ideas apart, do well on logical analysis and contrast tasks, and tend to focus on grammar rules.

Part 7: How I Commit Material to Memory
If you are a sharpener, it is your tendency to notice differences and seek distinctions among items as you commit material to memory. You like to distinguish small differences and to separate memory of prior experiences easily from memory of current ones. You can easily retrieve the different items because you store them separately. You like to make fine distinctions among speech sounds, grammatical forms, and meaningful elements of language (words and phrases). If you are a leveler, you are likely to blend material together in order to remember it, by eliminating or reducing differences and by focusing almost exclusively on similarities. You are likely to blur similar memories and to merge new experiences readily with previous ones.
Part 8: How I Deal With Language Rules
If you are a more deductive learner, you like to go from the general to the specific, to apply generalizations to experience, and to start with rules and theories rather than with specific examples. If you are a more inductive learner, you like to go from specific to general, and prefer to begin with examples rather than rules or theories.

Part 9: How I Deal With Multiple Inputs
If you are more field-independent in style preference, you like to separate or abstract material from within a given context, even in the presence of distractions. You may, however, have less facility dealing with information holistically. If you are more field-dependent, you tend to deal with information in a more holistic or “gestalt” way. Consequently you may have greater difficulty in separating or abstracting material from its context. You work best without distractions.

Part 10: How I Deal With Response Time
If you are a more impulsive learner, you react quickly in acting or speaking with little or no thinking the situation through. For you, thought often follows action. If you are a more reflective learner, you think things through before taking action and often do not trust your gut reactions. In your case, action usually follows thought.

Part 11: How Literally I Take Reality
If you are a metaphoric learner, you learn material more effectively if you conceptualize aspects of it in metaphorical terms. You make the material more comprehensible by developing and applying an extended metaphor to it (e.g., visualizing the grammar system of a given language as an engine that can be assembled and disassembled). If you are a more literal learner, you prefer a relatively literal representation of concepts, and like to work with language material more or less as it is on the surface.

Tips for the learner
Each style preference offers significant strengths in learning and working. Recognize your strengths to take advantage of ways you learn best. Also, enhance your learning and working power by being aware of the style areas that you do not use and by developing them. Tasks that do not seem quite as suited to your style preferences will help you stretch beyond your comfort zone and expand your learning and working potential.

For example, if you are a highly global person, you might need to learn to pay more attention to detail in order to learn more effectively. If you are an extremely detail-oriented person, you might be missing out on some useful global characteristics, like getting the main idea quickly, and you can develop such qualities in yourself through practice. You won’t lose your basic strengths by trying something new; you will simply develop another side of yourself that is likely to be very helpful to your language learning.

If you aren’t sure how to attempt new behaviors that go beyond your favored style, then ask your colleagues, friends, or teachers to give you a hand. Talk with someone who has a different style from yours, and see how that person does it. Improve your learning or working situation by stretching your style!
Activity 2: Style Matching Exercise

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To provide participants an overview of the types of learning style preferences identified through research. The activity also shows how L2 teachers can accommodate a variety of learner characteristics in the classroom by providing a range of activities. The participants match learning styles to their general characteristics.

Time:
20 minutes

Materials:
Envelopes containing drawings of learners each with a style label and style descriptions (cut into strips)

Directions:
1. Have participants move into groups of 34 and give each group an envelope with the cutup paper strips. Tell them that their task is to work together to match the drawings of learners by learning styles with their descriptions. Their resources include the strips of paper, their background knowledge of various learning styles, their critical thinking skills, and the willingness of each group member to participate. Give them about 10 minutes to reach group consensus on the answers.

2. Monitor the groups and answer questions when appropriate. When each group finishes, hand out the full list of styles for selfchecking their answers.

[Note: Some of the participants may disagree with the “answers” based on outside knowledge of learning style theory and research. If this is the case, assure them that these characteristics were synthesized from a variety of sources and merely provide examples of learning style preferences.]

Wrap up:
Although the goal of this activity was to match the names of the styles with their descriptions, the underlying goal was to convey that there is a broad range of learning styles. The specific style names are less important than the understanding that differences among learners exist and that as teachers we need to design our lesson plans with these characteristics in mind. Again emphasize the concept that it is often helpful to view these styles as representing continua of approaches, rather than always strict and rigid categories (for the purpose of teaching). Ask if any of the participants can identify with a particular style.
Learning Style Descriptions* (to cut into strips)

Learns better by reading, seeing, observing; has difficulty with purely auditory instruction (i.e., straight lecture); tends to take copious notes; generally prefers solitary learning.

Loves to talk and listen; follows oral instructions easily; can have difficulty with the written word; prefers to have background noise when studying; enjoys group work.

Loves manipulative activities involving movement (games, making models); good gross and fine motor skills; tends to fidget and play with hands and hair; likes frequent breaks.

Likes to think and analyze; prefers contrastive analysis and discrimination exercises; not necessarily sensitive to social/affective factors (tends to avoid social and emotional subtleties); often focuses on grammar rules and generalizations.

Likes to guess and consider possibilities; tends to avoid analysis; can converse without knowing all the words; sensitive to socioemotional content.

Energized by the outside world; is active, interactionoriented and outgoing; has broad interests; tends to reflect later (motto: “Live it, then understand it”).

Energized by the inner world; prefers concentration; focuses on thoughts and concepts; has fewer interests, but deep ones; likes to be reflective (motto: “Understand it, then live it”).

Likes finding the big picture; looks for possibilities; would rather follow hunches and go by feel than be constrained by guidelines.

Likes to work in a step-by-step manner; follows directions carefully; tends to be linear and sensory-oriented.

Loves to make lists and follow them; wants closure and control; has a low tolerance for ambiguity; often jumps to conclusions by wanting to know answers right away; tends to be hardworking and decisive; prefers to plan and manage; sees deadlines as helpful.

Thinks learning should be fun; can make work into play; maybe makes lists, but doesn’t check off each item; tends to be flexible, spontaneous and open to change; has a high tolerance for ambiguity; sees deadlines as an artificial, arbitrary overlay.

Processes material at a high speed with low accuracy; often takes risks and guesses.

Processes material at a low speed with high accuracy; avoids risks and guessing.

Able to handle the language parts as well as the whole without be distracted.

Needs context in order to focus and understand something; takes each language part one at a time.

Focuses on the here and now; does just what is asked for, no more, no less.

Enjoys formal modelbuilding and abstract terms; prefers linguistic analysis of languages; focuses on the future; random access (ask for 5 examples, gives 4 or 6 instead).
Learning Styles Depicted (to cut up)

- Impulsive Izzy
- Reflective Ralph
- Hands-on Hal
- Concrete Connie
- Intuitive Irene
- Global Gary
- Introverted Iris
- Extroverted Ellie
Learning Styles Depicted (to cut up)

Field-Independent Ian  Field-Dependent Daichi  Sequential Sam
Auditory Alex  Visual Vera  Abstract Abby
Analytic Annie  Closure-Oriented Claudia  Open-Oriented Oliver
Range of Learning Styles: Names with Descriptions

**Visual Vera** – Learns better by reading, seeing, observing; has difficulty with purely auditory instruction (i.e., straight lecture); tends to take copious notes; generally prefers solitary learning.

**Auditory Alex** – Loves to talk and listen; follows oral instructions easily; can have difficulty with the written word; prefers to have background noise when studying; enjoys group work.

**Handson Hal** (Kinesthetic and tactile) – Loves manipulative activities involving movement (games, making models); good gross and fine motor skills; tends to fidget and play with hands and hair; likes frequent breaks.

**Analytic Anne** – Likes to think and analyze; prefers contrastive analysis and discrimination exercises; not necessarily sensitive to social/affective factors (tends to avoid social and emotional subtleties); often focuses on grammar rules and generalizations.

**Global Gary** – Likes to guess and consider possibilities; tends to avoid analysis; can converse without knowing all the words; sensitive to socioemotional content.

**Extraverted Ellie** – Energized by the outside world; is active, interaction-oriented and outgoing; has broad interests; tends to reflect later (motto: “Live it, then understand it”).

**Introverted Iris** – Energized by the inner world; prefers concentration; focuses on thoughts and concepts; has fewer interests, but deep ones; likes to be reflective (motto: “Understand it, then live it”).

**Intuitive Irene** – Likes finding the big picture; looks for possibilities; would rather follow hunches and go by feel than be constrained by guidelines.

**Sequential Sam** – Likes to work in a step-by-step manner; follows directions carefully; tends to be linear and sensory-oriented.

**Closureoriented Claudia** – Loves to make lists and follow them; wants immediate closure and control; has a low tolerance for ambiguity; often jumps to conclusions by wanting to know answers right away; tends to be hardworking and decisive; prefers to plan and manage; sees deadlines as helpful.

**Openoriented Oliver** – Thinks learning should be fun; can make work into play; may make lists, but doesn’t check off each item; tends to be flexible, spontaneous and open to change; has a high tolerance for ambiguity; sees deadlines as artificial and arbitrary.

**Impulsive Izzy** – Processes material at a high speed with low accuracy; often takes risks and guesses.
Reflective Ralph – Processes material at a low speed with high accuracy; avoids risks and guessing.

Field-Independent Ian – Able to handle the language parts as well as the whole without being distracted.

Field-Dependent Daichi – Needs context in order to focus and understand something; takes each language part one at a time.

Concrete Connie – Focuses on the here and now; does just what is asked for on a language task, no more, no less.

Abstract Abby – Enjoys formal modelbuilding and abstract terms; prefers linguistic analysis of languages; focuses on the future; random access (ask for 5 examples, gives 4 or 6 instead).

*This description of style differences is based in part on materials used in Rebecca Oxford’s keynote address, “Making the Most of Your Students’ Language Learning Styles and Strategies: The Tapestry Approach,” Carolina TESOL/FLANC Conference, Greensboro, NC, October 15, 1994. The illustrations of style preference types were made in 1997 by Daichi Ito, who at the time was an ESL student at the Minnesota English Center, University of Minnesota.
APPENDIX

Learning Style Survey for Young Learners: Assessing Your Own Learning Styles
Andrew D. Cohen & Rebecca L. Oxford (2001)

Purpose:
The Learning Style Survey for Young Learners is designed to assess your general approach to learning. It does not predict your behavior in every instance, but it is a clear indication of your overall style preferences.

Instructions:
For each item circle the response that best matches your approach. Complete all items. When you read the statements, try to think about what you generally do when learning.

For each item, circle your immediate response:

😊😊😊 = Often or always (3 pts)
😊😊 = Sometimes (2 pts)
😊 = Never or rarely (1 pt)

Part 1: How I use my physical senses

I remember something better if I write it down.  😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
When I listen, I see pictures, numbers, or words in my head. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I highlight the text in different colors when I read. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I need written directions for tasks. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I have to look at people to understand what they say. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I understand talks better when they write on the board. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
Charts, diagrams and maps help me understand what someone says. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊

A - Total ______

I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.  😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I like for someone to give me the instructions out loud. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I like to listen to music when I study. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I can understand what people say even when I cannot see them. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I easily remember jokes that I hear. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I can tell who a person is just by their voices (e.g., on the phone). 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more than I watch the screen. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊

B - Total ______

I just start to do things, rather than paying attention to the instructions.  😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I need to take breaks a lot when I study. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I need to eat something when I read or study. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
If I have a choice between sitting and standing, I’d rather stand. 😊😊😊 😊😊 😊
I get nervous when I sit still too long. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I think better when I move around (e.g., pacing or my tapping feet). ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I play with or bite on my pens during talks. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I move my hands a lot when I speak. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I draw lots of pictures in my notebook during class. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

C - Total ______

Part 2: How I expose myself to learning situations

I learn better when I study with others than by myself. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I learn better in the classroom than with a private tutor. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
It is easy for me to talk to strangers. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
Talking with lots of other students in class gives me energy. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

A - Total ______

I prefer individual or one-on-one games and activities. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
I only have a few interests, and I really concentrate on them. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
After working in a large group, I am really tired. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and just listen. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
Before I try something, I want to understand it real well. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

B - Total ______

Part 3: How I deal with tasks

1. I like to plan language study sessions carefully and do lessons on time or early. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
2. My class notes, handouts, and other materials are carefully organized. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
3. I like to be certain about what things mean in the target language. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
4. I like to know how to use grammar rules and why I need to use them. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

A - Total ______

5. I don’t care too much about finishing assignments on time. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
6. I have many piles of papers on my desk at home. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
7. I don’t worry about understanding everything in class. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
8. I don’t feel the need to come to quick conclusions in class. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️

B - Total ______

Part 4: How I receive information

1. I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
2. I don’t pay attention to details if they don’t seem important to the task. ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️ ☀️
3. It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture.  
4. I get the main idea, and that’s enough for me.  
5. When I tell a story, I forget lots of details.  

A - Total ______

6. I need specific examples in order to understand fully.  
7. I pay attention to specific facts or information.  
8. I’m good at catching new phrases or words when I hear them.  
9. I enjoy activities where I fill in the blank with missing words I hear.  
10. When I tell a joke, I remember the details, but forget the punch line.  

B - Total ______

Understanding your Totals

Once you have totaled your points, write the results on the blanks below. Circle the higher number in each part. If they are close, circle both and read about your learning styles on the next page.

Part 1:

A ______ Visual  
B ______ Auditory  
C ______ Tactile/Kinesthetic

Part 2:

A ______ Extroverted  
B ______ Introverted

Part 3:

A ______ Closure-Oriented  
B ______ Open

Part 4:

A ______ Global  
B ______ Particular

Part 1: How I use my physical senses

• If you are a visual person, you rely more on the sense of sight, and you learn best through visual means (books, video, charts, pictures).

• If you are an auditory person, you prefer listening and speaking activities (discussions, debates, audio tapes, role-plays, lectures). If you are a tactile/kinesthetic person, you benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around the room (games, building models, conducting experiments).
Part 2: How I expose myself to learning situations

- If you are *extroverted*, you enjoy a wide range of social, interactive learning tasks (games, conversations, discussions, debates, role-plays, simulations).
- If you are *introverted*, you like to do more independent work (studying or reading by yourself or learning with the computer) or enjoy working with one other person you know well.

Part 3: How I approach tasks

- If you like *closure* or to finish up or get things clear, you focus carefully on all learning tasks, meet deadlines, plan ahead for assignments, and want explicit directions.
- If you are more *open*, you enjoy learning by discovery (where you pick up information naturally) and prefer to relax and enjoy your learning without concern for deadlines or rules.

Part 4: How I receive information

- If you are a *global* person, you enjoy getting the main idea, and are comfortable talking to others even if you don’t know all the words or concepts.
- If you are a *particular* person, you focus more on details, and remember specific information about a topic well.
Chapter 3
Language Strategies

At least three primary (and several secondary) classification schemes can be applied to language learner strategies. The problem is they can conflict with one another. Strategies have been classified as follows:

- Expressly for language learners (in contrast to those for language use)
- According to skill area (e.g., listening or speaking)
- According to function (i.e., strategies for planning language learning, monitoring it while it is happening, and evaluating it afterward)
- By their suitability for learners at different ages or proficiency levels
- According to the languages or cultures associated with it (e.g., strategies for learning kanji in Japanese writing)

Table 1 at the end of this chapter (Cohen et al., 2003) lays these schemes out side by side so you can easily see what each classification does and which one (or combination) to use with your students.

Classifying Strategies by Goal

Language learning strategies are conscious processes used to learn a language while language-use strategies are conscious processes selected to use the material that is learned (however incompletely).

There can be a range of language learning strategies, including:

- identifying the language material that needs to be learned
- distinguishing this material from other material
- grouping the material for easier learning
- practicing material through participation in classroom activities and homework
- committing the material to memory using techniques such as repetition, the use of mnemonics, or some other memory technique

When you think about how you learned a language, you might recognize some of the strategies that you used to master new material. You can help your students use these strategies by modeling how you look up words or how to group material. You may already engage in instructional activities that help students group vocabulary by category into nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth. The difference here is that strategy instruction means explicitly calling attention to the fact that this activity can be a strategy that learners use on their own. For learning material (especially vocabulary), many learners find that the use of mnemonics and other similar memory strategies are helpful. These strategies are most successful when they are practiced consciously and systematically.
Language-use strategies can be categorized into four subsets:

- **Retrieval strategies** – conscious processes that learners use to call up language material from storage. Efforts at retrieval may involve trying to remember the correct verb in its appropriate tense or retrieving the meaning of a word when it is heard or read. Other examples include using a keyword mnemonic to call to mind a word, visualizing a verb chart to choose a grammar form, or recalling classroom language tasks to perform a similar task.

- **Rehearsal strategies** – conscious processes for practicing target language structures before using them. For example, before making a request to a teacher or a boss to be excused for the day, a student could prepare by rehearsing the subjunctive verb form. Some learners rehearse by repeating the pronunciation of a word or phrase out loud before using it to make sure that they are saying it correctly.

- **Communication strategies** – conscious processes used by learners to convey a message that is both meaningful and informative for the listener or reader when they don’t have all the language they need. A good example is when students want to explain technical information and do not have the specialized vocabulary. When language learners encounter problems or breakdowns in communication, they are likely to seek “first aid” devices to remain in communication. They may, for example, use communication strategies to steer the conversation away from problematic areas by expressing their meaning in some other way. Students paraphrase words or concepts, coin words, or use facial expressions or gestures in creative attempts to communicate and to create more time to think. Learners can also compensate for gaps by using literal translation from their native language or switching to their native language altogether. Finally, communication strategies can also include conversational interaction strategies such as asking for help, clarification or confirmation, and using fillers and other hesitation devices that are used by those fluent in the language.

- **Cover strategies** – the conscious processes that learners use to create an appearance of language ability so as not to look unprepared, foolish, or even stupid. As a teacher you may spot students using a memorized and partially understood phrase in an utterance in a classroom drill to keep the action going, laughing at a joke that they clearly don’t understand, simplifying a phrase by using only the parts that can be dealt with easily, “complexifying” through an elaborate circumlocution to avoid using a particular verb form or an unknown vocabulary word, or pretending to understand new target language.

**Classifying Strategies by Language Skills**

Strategies can be classified by skill area, which includes the **receptive** skills of listening and reading and the **productive** skills of speaking and writing. There are also skill-related strategies that cut across all four skill areas, such as vocabulary learning. Learners need to learn some words just to be able to understand them when they hear them, while others are needed for speaking or writing. Still
other words are learned for reading (e.g., academic terms or key newspaper vocabulary). Translation strategies also cut across all four skills. For instance, learners may translate strategically when they listen to someone talking or listen to a TV show – that is, they may just translate certain words or phrases to help in comprehension, rather than attempting to translate everything. A strategic use of translation in reading would also mean not embellishing the text with translations, but rather finding the words and phrases that must be translated for basic comprehension.

Likewise, translation strategies may help in effective speaking and writing. In writing, in fact, a percentage of learners may prefer to write out their text in their native language first and then translate it into the target language (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001). Many students prefer to think in the target language and to translate as little as possible from their native language. Nonetheless, some students may feel the need to use translation from their native language as a strategy both in learning and using the target language, at least at the beginning and intermediate stages of language learning.

In Appendix A of this chapter, you will find a skills-based inventory of language strategy use developed by Cohen, Oxford, and Chi (2001), the Language Strategy Use Survey. The survey includes revised items from Rebecca Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (in Oxford, 1990), as well as strategies identified and described in Cohen (1990). In Appendix B, you will find the Young Learners’ Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen & Oxford, 2002).

Just as an aside, we notice that the term skill is not only used in the global sense to refer to listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary learning, and translating; but also to activities like “summarizing a text,” “looking up a word in a dictionary,” or “paraphrasing.” At times these are also referred to as “strategies.” One way to distinguish them is to consider a skill as the ability to do something such as looking up a word in a dictionary and strategies are the means used to operationalize this skill. While this distinction is somewhat simplistic, it may help us differentiate between the two terms.

**Classifying Strategies by Function**

Strategies can be classified into four functional groups: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, or social (Chamot, 1987; Oxford, 1990).

- **Cognitive strategies** cover many of the processes or mental manipulations that learners go through in both learning the target language (e.g., identification, grouping, retention, and storage of language material) and in using it (e.g., retrieval of language material, rehearsal, and comprehension of production of words, phrases, and other elements of the target language). Cognitive strategies include using prior knowledge to understand new language material; summarizing language information mentally, orally, or in writing; and using visual imagery to learn new information or to solve a problem.

- **Metacognitive strategies** allow learners to control their language learning by planning what they will do, checking how it is going, and then evaluating their performance on a given task. Metacognitive strategy use is not always observable, but from time to time you may notice your students engaged in planning strategies – talking out how they are going to say something or making planning notes. They may also be consciously selecting the vocabulary and grammatical forms they will use. Then when the task is underway, they may be drawing on another set of strategies for monitoring how their speaking is going (such as self-correcting their language or compensating for difficulties by using paraphrase or gestures). You might see students evaluating what worked, identifying the problem areas, and identifying words
and grammatical forms to check on afterwards. You can help with identifying metacognitive strategies for learning and suggesting their use in the classroom.

- **Affective strategies** help students regulate their emotions, motivation, and attitudes and are often used to reduce anxiety and provide self-encouragement. For example, if students are preparing for a job interview in the target language, they might engage in positive self-talk focusing on their message rather than on the inevitable grammatical errors that will emerge. Dörnyei (2001) would further sub-classify what he calls the “self-motivating strategies,” which learners can use to increase or maintain their existing motivation. Research shows that learners’ self-motivating capacity is a major factor contributing to success. Even under adverse conditions and without teacher assistance, some learners are more successful at staying committed to the goals they have set for themselves than others. All students can succeed by self-motivation, especially if they are coached by their language instructors or their peers.

- **Social strategies** involve learners’ choices to interact with other learners and native speakers, such as asking questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for an explanation or verification, and cooperating with others in order to complete tasks. For example, a North American learner of Japanese living in Hawaii may develop and then consciously select a series of strategies for starting conversations with Japanese tourists in Waikiki. Though this could be a daunting challenge since rules for starting conversations with strangers differ across the two cultures, the pay off for using this type of social strategy could be greatly enhanced language and culture learning. These strategies can be particularly useful for study abroad students since starting conversations is an important way to create situations for language interaction—and it is through an abundance of interactive situations that students truly maximize their language learning.

### Putting Strategy Classification into Practice

While it is easy to make theoretical distinctions between strategies according to the learner’s goal (language learning vs. language use), the language skill involved (listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, or translation), or the function of the strategy (metacognitive, cognitive, social, or affective); the reality of actually determining how to classify any given instant of strategy use can be challenging. Take an example from the category, “Classifying Strategies by Function.” Suppose that a learner (Sam) practices in the target language the language he would use to introduce himself to a prospective employer in another country. At one instant, Sam may be using a cognitive strategy by finding and rehearsing the appropriate language material for introducing himself graciously and without too many grammatical errors. When Sam is consciously planning this strategy, then he is using a metacognitive strategy, especially during the moments when he thinks to himself that this is what he wants to do and then quickly plans how to do it. When Sam feels anxious about meeting the person who may become his future boss, then practicing is an affective strategy. Finally, if Sam is rehearsing his self-introductions to come across as more socially adept in the L2, then his practicing can serve as a social strategy. Not only can it difficult to determine the function a given strategy is performing, it may be performing several functions at the same time.
Classifying strategies by goal can also be challenging: an instant of strategy use may reflect both language learning and language use. For instance, the strategy of using a new adjective (e.g., the equivalent of “cute” or “cool” in the L2) in communication with a native speaker may help both in having the word stick in your memory and in determining the range of contexts in which the adjective can be used. Likewise, in classifying strategies by skill, strategies can cross-cut several skills. For example, producing a written summary of an article would engage the learner in moments at the intersection between reading and mentally composing a written summary, where there may be continual shift from comprehension to composition strategies in the mind.

The shifting (and even overlapping) roles of strategies in a classification scheme are challenging, but these three strategy schemes have helped both teachers and learners understand the support roles of language learner strategies.

**Other Ways to Classify Strategies**

Other strategy classification distinctions can benefit teachers and learners alike.

*Age:* The age of the learner may be an important variable in classifying strategies, as teachers who have taught wide age ranges can verify. In most cases, it is not an issue of whether the strategy itself is used only by older or younger learners, but rather one of how the strategy is described, since younger learners may not be familiar with terms used to describe such strategies. With older learners it may be possible to talk about metacognitive strategies used in planning, monitoring, and evaluating language tasks; whereas with young learners, it may be better to talk about strategies for thinking about what to do, looking at how it’s going, and for checking up on how it went.

*Proficiency level:* Strategy use can also be classified by proficiency level. Research suggests that learners at one proficiency level may favor certain receptive or productive strategies. For example, a study of mental translation into English by learners of Spanish at the University of Minnesota (Hawras, 1996, p. 54) found that beginners favored translating word-for-word even if it meant that their reading was painstakingly slow and disjointed. The advanced learners reported translating only when necessary. The bottom line is that learners with advanced proficiency may have greater ease at using more complex or sophisticated strategies.

*Specific language or culture:* Native speakers of some languages appear more likely to use certain language learning strategies than speakers of other languages. For example, English speakers might need to use a variety of visualization strategies to learn Japanese kanji characters, given that the characters do not have any connection to the English alphabet and look more like pictures. It is likely that native Chinese-speaking learners of Japanese would not need the same number or type of visualization strategies because the characters used for writing in their native language formed the basis for the development of Japanese kanji.

Another example can be found in the area of gender. If the target language has some clear and strictly followed patterns of address to men as opposed to women and the learners of this language come from a language background that does not have these distinctions, they may need to develop strategies for following these distinctions effectively so as not to offend members of either sex. Naturally, this would encompass culture learning as well, since gender distinctions are as much a cultural matter as they are a language one. In fact, in some cultures, a language learner would not be allowed to address a member of the opposite sex except in clearly defined circumstances.

We believe that while language and culture distinctions are of keen interest, it is better to assume that most strategies are available for learners of any language or background. While we all have our
preferred strategies for language learning, much depends on the learning situation and the specific learning task. There are going to be strategies relevant to a specific culture, but to classify language strategies according to how they pertain just to this culture would be a real challenge. If, for example, the issue were how to perform a series of speech acts (such as apologizing, complaining, or requesting), probably at least some of the strategies appropriate for performing these speech acts in Japanese would also pertain to performing the speech acts in other languages. If so, it would be because cultural features are often shared across cultures and are not exclusive to one or the other. So, for example, the deference shown in apologizing to a colleague for some work glitch might be the same to Chinese or Korean cultural groups.

**Strategy Chains and Clusters**

It may be easiest for a teacher conducting strategy instruction to deal with one strategy at a time. For example, describing and discussing the strategy of creating a mnemonic for remembering a problematic word, the strategy of speed-listening to get the gist of a rapid-fire telephone message, or an affective strategy of using words of self-encouragement just before making a crucial L2 apology. Nonetheless, strategies are actually used in consort with others, whether in sequence or in clusters. In fact, tasks usually require a number of strategies, which can be seen as chains or clusters of processes that are consciously selected. In the case of strategy chains, the learner uses the strategies in a predictable sequence, where the use of one strategy leads to another. In strategy clusters, a learner uses a group of strategies, perhaps simultaneously, in performing a task (Macaro, 2003).

Consider the set of strategies needed to look up a word in a bilingual dictionary. Most learners use more than eleven strategies or sets of strategies to look up a word from a reading passage, including remembering the alphabet, finding the entry, dealing with symbols in the entry, making effective use of the material in the dictionary, and coping with the mild anxiety that it may not be easy to find a suitable L1 equivalent for the word (Table 2). Similarly, a number of strategies and sub-strategies may be needed to make summaries in the margin while reading an L2 text, including identifying the key points, reconceptualizing the information at a higher level of generality, reducing the information to a word or phrase, and writing the information legibly in the margin (Table 3).

**Selecting a Classification that Works for You**

Thinking about your will help you find the right strategy system. The approaches to classification are, by and large, complementary to one another. They are overlapping ways of referring to the same strategies and may each be useful, depending on the purpose. The skills approach is complementary to a goals approach, because it puts the emphasis on strategies specific to a given skill area while learning language or using language that has been learned. You may also wish to emphasize the metacognitive strategies with your students while they are focusing on their reading skills, whether they are learning reading material for the first time or accessing reading material that has already been learned. You may also need to consider strategies that target age level, proficiency level, and language background. You may want to emphasize a skills-based approach since learners can more easily think of “making summaries in the margin as you read” as a reading strategy than as a metacognitive strategy. In reality it can be both, if the strategic purpose for these marginal summaries is for learners to consciously monitor how much they have understood while reading.

**Activity 1: Learning or Reinforcing Your Knowledge of Vocabulary** (at the end of the chapter) calls for learning or reinforcing the knowledge of ten less common words in English.
This gives you a chance to see the strategies that you use: (1) to both learn and use vocabulary, (2) to reinforce your vocabulary skills, and (3) to plan, conduct, and evaluate your own learning and reinforcement of vocabulary.

**Beyond the Notion of the “Good Language Learner”**

In recent years, researchers have found the profile of the “good language learner” too prescriptive. The more inclusive view is that there are a variety of ways for language learners to succeed. The important thing to realize is that good language learners do not necessarily use the same language strategies. Even if they do, they may not use them with the same language skills or in the same way. For example, one learner may focus on form only when reading and writing dense, academic prose; while another learner focuses on form also when listening to academic lectures and speaking on an academic topic. In addition, while the first learner’s style preferences might dictate a focus on form in a more global way while reading, the second learner may be more analytical and pay attention to minute details associated with the forms and rules of the target language.

Research on strategies for effective language learning has focused on (1) the identification, description, and classification of strategies; (2) their frequency of use and the learner’s success at using them; (3) differences in language proficiency level, age, gender, and cultural background that might affect their successful use of strategies; and (4) the impact of language strategy training on student performance in language learning and language use. Whether the strategies that a given learner selects are successful depends on many factors, including:

- the nature of the language task (its structure, purpose, and demands);
- the characteristics of the learner, such as learning-style preferences;
- the learner’s language aptitude;
- prior experience with learning foreign languages;
- motivation, cultural background, age, and personality characteristics;
- the language being learned; and
- the learner’s level of language proficiency.

No single set of strategies works for all learners or for all tasks. Students need to apply strategies that work for them. Language teachers must explicitly teach learners to be more aware of their learning-style and language strategy preferences.

Activities that can help in understanding strategy issues are **Activity 2: Factors Affecting Strategy Choice**, a paper ball activity that has participants consider the factors that influence their choice of strategy; and **Activity 3: Your Favorite Strategies**, where participants tell each other about their favorite strategies at a cocktail party. Both activities are at the end of this chapter.

**Distinguishing Learner Strategies from Teacher Strategies**

The strategies that teachers use to teach an L2 and the strategies that learners use to learn it are not necessarily the same. At the end of a summer institute a few years ago, teachers were invited to present a sample SSBI lesson to the group. A teacher of Japanese demonstrated the use of SSBI in teaching subject pronouns and present tense verb forms. She selected the pronouns *watashi* ‘I,’ *anata* ‘you,’
kare ‘he,’ and kanoja ‘she,’ and used the Japanese verbs for ‘to go’ and ‘to eat.’ She had developed some strategies for teaching these pronominal forms along with several verbs, and assumed that her teaching strategies were going to be adopted as the learners’ learning strategies.

Since co-author Cohen had studied Japanese (and struggled with the pronouns), he knew the problems native English speakers would have with this lesson. They would assume that subject pronoun use in Japanese essentially mirrors that of English, which it doesn’t! For example, in Japanese, the second person singular pronoun, anata, is considered rude and rarely used. Used more often is the more honorific –san, so Oscar Blurf would be referred to as Blurf-san or perhaps Oscar-san, but not as anata. Also, the third person pronoun is not used very often. Japanese speakers interpret from context who is being referred to, as the verb form doesn’t indicate person.

There are problems with assuming students will automatically adopt the strategies used in teaching. For one thing, we are assuming that strategies for teaching and for learning are the same. They may just as likely be different. Also, we are assuming that the learners perceive what these strategies are. They may not. They may pick up on our strategies and adopt them as their own, but often they do not, even when the teacher makes the strategies clear. It depends on both the learning-style and strategy preferences of the students. The well-intentioned teacher of the Japanese lesson was not really using SSBI because she was detached from the learners and their understanding of the material.

Teaching and learning are not flip sides of the same coin. Teachers need to separate clearly in their own minds their instructional strategies and the strategies their learners might use. They need to ask themselves, “What are some ways in which learners may attempt to learn this language material and in what ways might it be confusing to them?” Then, the next question would be, “What strategies might help them both learn the material and then use it? What strategies would they call upon if there is anything confusing about the material?” Then the challenge becomes how to make this strategy information available to learners.

**Teacher and Learner Responsibilities in the Language Classroom**

A goal of SSBI is to help learners take responsibility in the classroom. Clearly there is no one best way to do this. It needs to come from an enlightened stance on the part of both teachers and learners.

One way of exploring this issue is by looking first at teacher responsibilities as perceived by teachers and by learners, Activity 4: Teacher Responsibilities in the Language Classroom; and then looking at learner responsibilities, again as perceived by teachers and by learners, Activity 5: Learner Responsibilities in the Language Classroom. Both activities are at the end of the chapter. The results can help course participants—especially those who are currently teaching—gain insights into the teaching-learning connection. We have included the topic of “who has responsibility for what” under the general rubric of “strategies,” since sorting out where the responsibility lies in the language learning act can have a major impact on the choices learners make about what they will do to improve their L2 language skills.

To end this chapter on learner strategies, let us close with some practical suggestions from Nyikos (1991) on what teachers can do to support learners in their endeavors to be more systematically strategic in their language learning and language use, and what learners themselves can do enhance
Suggestions for Fostering Learner Strategy Use

Role of the Teacher

Establish an atmosphere of trust—an atmosphere where students feel comfortable asking for help and sharing their learning difficulties and successes or achievements.

Steps

A. Find out which strategies your students already employ in other subject areas.
   1. Strategies used in other subjects and social situations in their native language (reading, writing, listening, speaking)
   2. Strategies they can transfer to the target audience

B. Find out which strategies your students have employed in previous foreign language learning.
   1. Strategies that proved productive in the skill areas of vocabulary and grammar
   2. Strategies that proved less successful in the skill areas of vocabulary and grammar
   3. Strategies that became more frequent, automatic, and integrated over time and allowed a progression and combination in strategy use

C. Modeling
   1. Suggest and model multiple strategies for each teaching point and skill area, tapping into various senses. Provide a cultural context in which each strategy is most productive.
   2. Model ways to retrieve vocabulary based on situational cues. Daily cultural situations evoke associations of feelings, memories, and senses that can be used as mnemonic devices for vocabulary.

D. Adult learners need to know why they should spend time on developing strategies. A rationale provides a goal and helps students monitor their progress toward the stated goal.
   1. Provide the rationale using each strategy presented.
   2. Ask learners to state their own rationale, relating strategy use to their personal goals for language learning and motivation.

E. Practice: Give guided exercises and provide experiences to help students apply strategies to appropriate tasks.
   1. As an example, after learning vocabulary in commonly occurring phrases, strategies for informed guessing or inferring in reading passages may be modeled. These strategies may facilitate transfer to similar reading situations where the meaning of a phrase may be guessed solely on the basis of one vocabulary word and/or from the cultural context of the passage.
   2. Social/affective strategies can be modeled in a dialog, situated in a given cultural context. For example, in a dialog asking for the check at a Paris restaurant, socially appropriate questions can be asked by the student, but brisk, uninformative answers are given by the native “informant.” To plug in affective strategies like self-encouragement, the teacher can model the procedure by use of “asides” such as “It’s okay to keep asking the waiter for the written form of the check. How else can I pay the bill?” “Good, you’re doing fine; be persistent, don’t give in.”
F. Help students develop their own strategies as they gain experience in language learning.

1. Help students monitor the effectiveness of their present strategies to see if the strategies really work for them. Give alternative strategies, since learning tasks change and require different approaches to accommodate increasing linguistic awareness and communicative needs.

2. Have students try suggested strategies in their classwork, in the homework, and on their own. Ask students to write down which ones they found beneficial.

3. Have students alter suggested strategies to suit their learning styles. Some students find that they communicate best if they are allowed to learn it from charts. Others learn best if they study with a friend.

4. Have students create their own strategies. The foreign language classroom is an ideal place to allow student creativity.

G. Sharing sessions: Get everyone involved in sharing their learning discoveries and self-generated learning strategies as a regular part of the class. Students who are closely involved in the learning process often have fresh insights to share with fellow learners in simplified, understandable terms. Also, personal learning strategies are often quite amusing and students greatly enjoy sharing them in a supportive atmosphere. For teachers, they are informative, providing feedback on how students study (and the opportunity to see where ineffective strategies are being applied). Most importantly, sharing sessions are the ideal source of further strategies to enhance the teacher’s repertoire and can be shared with other classes.
Role of the Student

Monitor for effectiveness: Find out, observe what works for you. Be an aware learner. Resolve to:

1. Give suggested strategies a chance to take hold—some will seem cumbersome at first but can become automatic with practice. Think of learning to type or to drive a car. The conscious effort you needed to shift gears, drive, and pay attention to your driving instructor was tremendous and yet, over time, it becomes automatic and easy.

2. Try to alter the strategies that your teacher and classmates suggest to suit your learning style—not everyone is the same.

3. Share your insights with one another; it can be informative, supportive (you’re all in the same boat), and motivating.

4. Be aware of how and when you study best.

5. Be aware of your attitudes toward learning and toward strategies in general. If you don’t give learning tools a chance, you can’t find out if they might work for you.

6. Keep a list of possible strategies on hand. You might find that having a list of options in your notebook or journal is handy when the going gets rough.

7. Set short-term and long-term goals. Write a schedule for yourself. Time yourself on different types of assignments and break them into chunks. See how long certain tasks take. Getting to know yourself helps future study plans. Don’t leave studying to the last minute. (This is the most frequent strategy tip students give one another.)

8. After a test, sit down and think about what strategies helped you most. Write down what you resolve to do to prepare for the next test.

9. Reward yourself; it’s a great self-motivator. Small rewards like getting a snack or taking a music break help to dissipate tension and will refresh you for the next small chunk of learning.

Research on learning strategies has shown that different student performance can be largely traced to the inadequate use of appropriate learning strategies among less-successful students. Teachers who integrate strategies into their curriculum are able to increase significantly the effectiveness of their teaching—especially for less-successful learners. It could be said that teaching strategies help the student learn the foreign language; learning strategies enable students to master, and apply, the knowledge that the teacher has conveyed. It has been argued here that teaching strategies are only half of the learning equation. Appropriate application of learning strategies comprises the balance of the learning equation for successful learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification approach</th>
<th>Key definition</th>
<th>Types of strategies</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>Grouping material for easier learning</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Communication strategies</td>
<td>Methods like paraphrasing when the precise vocabulary isn’t known, “steering” the conversation away from unfamiliar topics, or holding the floor while searching for the appropriate word or phrase</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cover strategies</td>
<td>Creating the impression of control over material to cover unpreparedness or lack of knowledge (e.g., using a memorized and not fully-understood phrase in a classroom drill, using only the understood part of a phrase, or using a complex paraphrase to avoid conjugating an irregular verb).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies by language skill area</td>
<td>Methods to learn language that are related to a specific language ability area</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Strategies for becoming familiar with the sounds of the language and for listening to a conversation in it.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Strategies for improving reading ability such as skimming for the main idea and strategically summarizing material</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Strategies for planning, writing, and reviewing essays, allowing for multiple drafts of a paper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Strategies for practicing speaking, for engaging in conversation, and for keeping the conversation going when words or expressions are lacking.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary and translation strategies (which cut across the receptive and productive areas)</td>
<td>Strategies for: learning, reviewing, or recalling new vocabulary; translating back to the native or dominant language to understand or retain information; working in the target language as much as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies by function</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Strategies for identifying, grouping, retaining, retrieving, and using the necessary language material (e.g., using prior knowledge to comprehend material in the new language, summarizing language information mentally, using visual imagery, or selecting the appropriate words for the given context)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>Strategies learners use to plan what they will do, monitor while they are using the language, and evaluate their performance on the given task</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Strategies used by students to regulate their emotions, motivations, and attitudes – often used to reduce anxiety in learning situations and to provide self-encouragement (e.g., using positive self-encouragement to get through a speaking task).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Strategies for interacting with other learners and with native speakers (e.g., asking questions to clarify social roles and relationships, asking for an explanation or verification, and cooperating to complete tasks).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Looking Up Reading Vocabulary in an L2-L1 Dictionary

1. Deciding when to interrupt the flow of the reading and go find the word.
2. Remembering where the word appeared in the L2 text (to return there).
3. Remembering alphabetical order in the L2.
4. Removing inflections to find the word in the dictionary.
5. Deciding which alternative in the dictionary is the desired one:
   a. interpreting the abbreviated grammatical terms (e.g., n., n. pl., adj., vt., vi), and other abbreviations and symbols
   b. finding the L1 entry which seems the best fit (if more than one equivalent is given)
   c. identifying the function of the word in the text, which may call for checking repeatedly the definitions against the context where the word was found in the text
   d. dealing with the register of the word (formal, general, colloquial, slang) or the current frequency of use of the word
6. Determining the closeness of the L2 word to the definition in the L1.
7. Doing grammatical analysis in the original text to determine how to use the information in the dictionary entry.
8. Handling the phonetic script as a pronunciation guide for the word (if relevant).
9. Remembering the context of the text to continue reading meaningfully.
10. Remembering the L1 equivalent once back to the reading (sometimes the information doesn’t “stick” the first time).
11. Coping with the mild anxiety that the dictionary might not provide a suitable L1 equivalent.
   (Based on Neubach & Cohen, 1988)

Table 3: Making Summaries in the Margin While Reading a Text

1. Strategies for distinguishing key points from lesser ones:
   o Closely reading the paragraph(s) to identify the different points being made
   o Identifying the key points and distinguishing these from lesser and trivial points.
   o Using knowledge of the world to help in determining what the “key” points for this portion of the text are.
   o Using a dictionary to determine the meaning of seemingly key vocabulary.
2. Strategies for reconceptualizing the material at a higher level of generality, such as:
   o asking if the points selected as “key” are too “local” or specific, and
   o if so, determining how to represent the point in a more general way.
3. Strategies for reducing the material to a word or phrase to note in the margin.
4. Strategies for writing this note either in the L1 or the L2 (or another language).
   (Partially based on Cohen, 1993)
Activity 1: Learning or Reinforcing Your Knowledge of Vocabulary

Format:
Individual, interactive, whole group

Purpose:
To perform an individual learning task and to give participants a chance to discuss strategies for learning foreign language vocabulary (based on the participants’ own learning experiences). The participants are asked to learn or reinforce their knowledge of ten English words and to share their insights about strategies for learning new vocabulary with the rest of class. After this discussion, the technique used for the activity is described and discussed.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Copies of “Vocabulary Learning” (pages cut in half)

Directions:
1. Explain to participants that they are to learn or reinforce their knowledge of ten English words using any strategy or technique that they choose. They can work individually or with a partner. Ask them to pay attention to how they are learning the words and their meanings, that is, the strategies that they use. Their grasp of the words will be checked by having them write the definition when the word is read aloud or write the word when its definition is read.

2. Hand out the list of the vocabulary words (“Vocabulary Learning”). Give the participants 45 minutes to learn or refresh their knowledge of the ten words individually or in pairs. Do not give them any suggestions for specific strategies to use at this point.

[Note: If they question the authenticity of this kind of exercise, explain that students frequently learn vocabulary through definitions or translations (often using the list of words at the end of each chapter in a language textbook) despite teachers’ efforts to encourage students to learn words in context. The disadvantages of learning words out of context can also be discussed. Another option is to change the assessment of the ten vocabulary words so that the participants write meaningful sentences rather than just a word or phrase.]

3. Read aloud the “Vocabulary Test,” having the participants either write down the word or its definition, as appropriate. When finished, they can selfcorrect their tests.

4. Have them form groups of 3 to discuss their relative success with learning the words and to describe the strategies that they used to learn the new words (for 45 minutes).

5. Then have them share what they talked about in their groups with the rest of the class. Based on their responses, discuss the kinds of strategies that can be used to learn and remember new vocabulary in listbased contexts and in other contexts.

Discussion:
Expand on the strategies provided by the learners. Point out to them that whether or not they find a particular strategy appealing may be directly related to their learning style preferences (e.g., whether they are more visual, auditory, or hands-on; more global or more detail-oriented; more of a sharpener or a leveler; etc.) Activities can include:
1. Categorization (e.g., sorting to meaning, part of speech, formal vs. informal language forms, alphabetical order, or types of clothing or food);

2. Keyword mnemonics (i.e., finding a native language word or phrase with similar sounds, and creating a visual image that ties the word or phrase to the target language word; for instance, learning *pato* in Spanish by selecting the similar-sounding English word “pot” and by creating a mental image of a duck with a pot on its head);

3. Visualization (e.g., using mental images, photographs, drawings, charts, or graphs);

4. Rhyme/rhythm (e.g., making up songs or short rhymes);

5. Language transfer (using prior knowledge of native, target, or other language structures);

6. Repetition (repeating words over and over to improve pronunciation or spelling, trying to practice the words using all four skills: writing new sentences, making up stories using as many new words as possible, reading texts that contain those new words, purposely using the words in conversation and listening for them as they are used by native speakers).

You can also discuss the strategies in terms of transfer. For example, you can:

1. Mentally visualize or draw pictures of a reading, lecture, or conversation in order to help remember it;

2. Use charts to check if your writing is balanced (“I only have two advantages in this essay, but six disadvantages. Should I change my topic or should I add more advantages?”);

3. Create flashcards or a list of key words/phrases to help you when giving an oral presentation in class or to organize your writing;

4. Learn grammar or spelling rules by making up rhymes or songs (“*i* before *e* . . .”).

**Other activities for learning new vocabulary:**

1. Make vocabulary flashcards or keep a vocabulary notebook that contains not just lists of words and their meanings or translations, but also some of the following:
   a. pictures,
   b. sentences comparing different meanings of the same word,
   c. charts,
   d. words sorted by category,
   e. various grammatical forms of the same word,
   f. the mnemonics used to remember the words,
   g. where the word was found or who said it and in what context,
   h. contrasting of formal and informal words, as well as the affixes and roots of the words.

Flashcards are small and fit into a pocket or purse. It may also be useful to keep a tiny notebook to jot down words, along with an example of their use in a sentence and possibly a mnemonic to remember them. Later they could be transferred to a more complete notebook and/or to flashcards;

2. Make audiotapes (vs. written lists) of the vocabulary to practice the pronunciation of the words or to help “auditory” learners learn more efficiently;
3. Share words with other students in the class to expand vocabulary lists and/or strategies;

4. Select new words according to: interest, frequency, ease of learning, relative usefulness (professional, personal, or academic), language topic, “they’re going to be on the exam,” etc.

The goal of this discussion is to show that these same strategies can be used in many different contexts. It’s a matter of being both creative and aware that you are actively using strategies to help you learn. This discussion can also lead to planning class activities (practicing various taskembedded strategies and debriefing them explicitly) and making time for students to discuss their strategy use with each other. Ask participants to comment about the usefulness of this kind of activity for their own teaching contexts.

Wrap up:

Explain the technique used for this activity: Students engage in a learning activity without any prior strategy training or suggestions of strategies that could be used to facilitate the task. The students are then asked to describe to each other how they completed the task – namely, the strategies they used. The teacher then debriefs the activity by explaining its purpose and structure: it can be used to informally assess students’ learning strategies, provide an opportunity to share “successful” strategies, raise students’ awareness of possible strategies for a particular task, or to demonstrate the transferability of strategies across language tasks or skills.
Vocabulary Learning Activity

Directions: Learn the following ten words using any strategy or technique that you choose. You can work individually or with a partner. Pay attention to how you are learning the words and their meanings – that is, the “strategies” you use. You will be tested on either the word or its definition.

1. firkin (n) a small wooden vessel or cask
2. inchoate (adj) recently begun; rudimentary
3. spraddle (v) to walk with the legs spread apart
4. adjuration (n) solemn urging
5. tractable (adj) easily taught; docile
6. orison (n) a prayer
7. foment (v) to stir up; to instigate
8. mendicant (n) a beggar
9. piscatorial (adj) pertaining to fishing
10. immure (v) to imprison; to shut up in confinement

(Source: Adapted from López i Agustí, M., & Weaver, S. J. (1994). “Memory Techniques: Practical Ways to Learn Vocabulary.” Minnesota LEP Conference Presentation.)
**Vocabulary Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
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<td>2. pertaining to fishing</td>
<td>piscatorial (piskuhTOReeuhl)</td>
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<td>3. a prayer</td>
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<td>4. to stir up; to instigate</td>
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<td>5. easily taught; docile</td>
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<td>7. immure (imMYUR)</td>
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<td>9. adjuration (ædjuhrAshun)</td>
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**Activity 2: Factors Affecting Strategy Choice**

**Format:**
Interactive

**Purpose:**
To give participants a chance to talk in a group about the factors affecting strategy choice during the language learning process (adapted from Oxford, 1990). Groups of participants customize their own “paper ball,” which includes both predetermined factors and factors they come up with themselves. They prioritize these factors in order of importance. Another group then has to discuss the importance of these factors in the choice of language strategies.

**Time:**
45 minutes

**Materials:**
- Slips of paper ready to be wadded into paper balls. Sixteen of them have factors already appearing on them, along with a picture. Another 5-10 are left blank.
- Copies of “Factors Affecting Strategy Use” (half sheets of paper)

**Directions:**

1. Put the participants into groups of 56.
2. Each group prepares its own paper ball:
   a. Participants go through the 16 prepared factors and select those which they consider important to strategy choice in the language learning process.
   b. Then they identify any other factors which their group feels could determine strategy choice.
   c. They rank order the factors, with the most important on the top and the least important on the bottom.
   d. Once their set of factors has been determined, they wad them up into a ball, starting with the least important on the inside and adding factors until all those selected or hand-written are included, with the highest ranked one on the outside. In other words, they are to crush the first sheet of paper into a small ball, and then add the rest of the sheets one by one around the first sheet, crushing them together like a layered snowball. The result will be a paper ball that can be unwrapped like an onion, layer by layer.
3. Now each group gives another group its paper ball.
4. Each group stands and forms a circle. One member of the group throws the ball to another member who must read the outermost factor aloud and explain how it could influence choice of language strategies. Then that person throws the ball to another group participant, making sure that each member of the group is included in the exercise and that all the factors selected by a given group are read aloud and discussed by another group.
5. As the various groups perform the exercise, the leader monitors the discussions, answering questions and adding comments as appropriate. Allow about 15 minutes for the discussions.
6. After the groups have finished this activity, the groups that exchanged paper balls meet
together to discuss their respective rankings of the factors, as well as the significance of the factors they may have added to the ball.

Discussion/Wrap Up:

1. Participants return to their seats. They are given the half sheets (“Factors Affecting Strategy Use”) and groups are to indicate the factors that they added to their paper balls, as well as those that they may have deselected, giving their reasons for inclusion or deletion.

2. Suggest that the participants use the paper ball technique with their own students to reinforce language content or for discussing strategies. For example, the sheets could contain directions (“Ask the person on your right to use the verb hablar in a sentence”), questions (Che tempo fa oggi? ´What’s the weather like today?’), or topics for discussion (“What is one specific strategy that you use to learn vocabulary?”). These can be written in the target language and adapted to any aspect of the language content.
APPENDIX A

Language Strategy Use Survey

Andrew D. Cohen, Rebecca L. Oxford and Julie C. Chi (2002)

The purpose of this inventory is to find out more about yourself as a language learner and to help you discover strategies to help you master a new language. Check the box that describes your use of each strategy. Please note that “target” language refers to the new language you are learning.

### Listening Strategy Use

Strategies to increase my exposure to the target language:

1. Attend out-of-class events where the new language is spoken.  
2. Listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows, or see movies in the target language.  
3. Listen to language in a restaurant or store where the staff speak the target language.  
4. Listen in on people who are having conversations in the target language to try to catch the gist of what they are saying.

Strategies to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language:

5. Practice sounds in the target language that are very different from sounds in my own language to become comfortable with them.  
6. Look for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the new language with the sound of a familiar word.  
7. Imitate the way native speakers talk.  
8. Ask a native speaker about unfamiliar sounds that I hear.

Strategies to prepare to listen to conversation in the target language:

9. Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language; for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.  
10. Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.  
11. Prepare for talks and performances I will hear in the target language by reading some background materials beforehand.
Strategies to listen to conversation in the target language:

12. Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.
13. Listen for word and sentence stress to see what native speakers emphasize when they speak.
14. Pay attention to when and how long people tend to pause.
15. Pay attention to the rise and fall of speech by native speakers – the “music” of it.
16. Practice “skim listening” by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.
17. Try to understand what I hear without translating it word-for-word.
18. Focus on the context of what people are saying.
19. Listen for specific details to see whether I can understand them.

Strategies for when I do not understand some or most of what someone says in the target language:

20. Ask speakers to repeat what they said if it wasn’t clear to me.
21. Ask speakers to slow down if they are speaking too fast.
22. Ask for clarification if I don’t understand it the first time around.
23. Use the speakers’ tone of voice as a clue to the meaning of what they are saying.
24. Make educated guesses about the topic based on what has already been said.
25. Draw on my general background knowledge to get the main idea.
26. Watch speakers’ gestures and general body language to help me figure out the meaning of what they are saying.
## Vocabulary Strategy Use

**Strategies to learn new words:**

27. Pay attention to the structure of the new word.

28. Break the word into parts that I can identify.

29. Group words according to parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs).

30. Associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a word that is familiar to me.

31. Use rhyming to remember new words.

32. Make a mental image of new words.

33. List new words with other words that are related to it.

34. Write out new words in meaningful sentences.

35. Practice new action verbs by acting them out.

36. Use flash cards in a systematic way to learn new words.

**Strategies to review vocabulary:**

37. Go over new words often when I first learn them to help me remember them.

38. Review words periodically so I don’t forget them.

**Strategies to recall vocabulary:**

39. Look at meaningful parts of the word (e.g., the prefix or the suffix) to remind me of the meaning of the word.

40. Make an effort to remember the situation where I first heard or saw the word or remember the page or sign where I saw it written.

41. Visualize the spelling of new words in my mind.

**Strategies to make use of new vocabulary:**

42. Try using new words in a variety of ways.

43. Practice using familiar words in different ways.

44. Make an effort to use idiomatic expressions in the new language.
**Speaking Strategy Use**

**Strategies to practice speaking:**

45. Practice saying new expressions to myself.  
46. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.  
47. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way.

**Strategies to engage in conversations:**

48. Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.  
49. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.  
50. Direct the conversation to familiar topics.  
51. Plan out in advance what I want to say.  
52. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.  
53. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.  
54. Try topics even when they aren’t familiar to me.  
55. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.  
56. Try to figure out and model native speakers’ language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining.

**Strategies for when I can’t think of a word or expression:**

57. Ask for help from my conversational partner.  
58. Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym.  
59. Use words from my own language, but say it in a way that sounds like words in the target language.  
60. Make up new words or guess if I don’t know the right ones to use.  
61. Use gestures as a way to try and get my meaning across.  
62. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I’m talking to can understand what is being said.
### Reading Strategy Use

#### Strategies to improve my reading ability:

63. Read as much as possible in the target language.

64. Try to find things to read for pleasure in the target language.

65. Find reading material that is at or near my level.

66. Plan out in advance how I’m going to read the text, monitor to see how I’m doing, and then check to see how much I understand.

67. Skim an academic text first to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully.

68. Read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it.

69. Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and subheadings.

70. Make ongoing summaries of the reading either in my mind or in the margins of the text.

71. Make predictions as to what will happen next.

#### Strategies for when words and grammatical structures are not understood:

72. Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material.

73. Use a dictionary to get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.
**Writing Strategy Use**

Strategies for basic writing:

75. Practice writing the alphabet and/or new words in the target language.
   - This strategy doesn’t fit for me
   - I have tried this strategy and would use it again
   - I use this strategy and like it
   - I’ve never used this strategy but am interested in it

76. Plan out in advance how to write academic papers, monitor how my writing is going, and check to see how well my writing reflects what I want to say.

77. Try writing different kinds of texts in the target language (e.g., personal notes, messages, letters, and course papers).

78. Take class notes in the target language as much as I’m able.

Strategies for writing an essay or academic paper:

79. Find a different way to express the idea when I don’t know the correct expression (e.g., use a synonym or describe the idea).

80. Review what I have already written before continuing to write more.

81. Use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help find or verify words in the target language.

82. Wait to edit my writing until all my ideas are down on paper.

Strategies to use after writing a draft of an essay or paper:

83. Revise my writing once or twice to improve the language and content.

84. Try to get feedback from others, especially native speakers of the language.
**Translation Strategy Use**

**Strategies for translation:**

85. Plan out what to say or write in my own language and then translate it into the target language.

86. Translate in my head while I am reading to help me understand the text.

87. Translate parts of a conversation into my own language to help me remember the conversation.

**Strategies for working directly in the target language as much as possible:**

88. Put my own language out of mind and think only in the target language as much as possible.

89. Try to understand what has been heard or read without translating it word-for-word into my own language.

90. Use caution when directly transferring words and ideas from my own language into the target language.
APPENDIX B

Young Learners’ Language Strategy Use Survey

Instructions to students:
Below are a series of statements about language learning. In the blank . . .
Mark a plus (+) if the statement really describes you.
Mark a check ( ) if the statement is somewhat like you.
Write a minus (-) if the statement isn’t like you.

Listening Strategies
What I do to listen more:
___ 1. I listen to the radio in the language.
___ 2. I watch TV shows in the language.
___ 3. I go to movies that use the language.
___ 4. I listen to the language if I am in a , or go see movies in the language.
___ 5. If I hear people speaking the language, I listen.
Add anything else you do to listen more:

What I do to understand sounds:
___ 6. I find sounds in the language that are like sounds in English.
___ 7. I try to remember unfamiliar sounds I hear.
___ 8. I ask the person to repeat the new sound.
___ 9. I listen to the rise and fall of sounds (the music of the language).
Add anything else you do to understand sounds:

What I do to understand what I hear:
___ 10. I listen for the important words.
___ 11. I listen for what seems interesting.
___ 12. I listen for words that are repeated.
Add anything else you do to understand the meaning:

What I do if I still don’t understand what someone says:
___ 13. I ask the person to repeat.
___ 14. I ask the person to slow down.
___ 15. I ask a question.
___ 16. I guess the meaning from the person’s tone (such as angry or happy).
___ 17. I guess the meaning from how the person moves or stands.
___18. I guess the meaning from what I heard before.
Add anything else you do to if you still don’t understand what someone says:

Vocabulary Strategies
What I do to memorize new words:
___19. I group the words by type (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives).
___20. I match the sound of the new word with the sound of a word I know.
___21. I use rhymes to remember new words.
___21. I make a picture of new words in my mind.
___22. I write the new word in a sentence.
___23. I write the new word on a card.
___24. I go over new words several times at first.
___25. Later I go to remind myself about words I learned earlier.
Add anything else you do to memorize new words:

Speaking Strategies
What I do to practice speaking:
___26. I make the sounds of the language until I can say them well.
___27. I imitate the way native speakers talk.
___28. I say new expressions over to myself.
___29. I practice using new grammar forms when I talk.
Add anything else you do to practice speaking:

What I do to talk with other people:
___30. I start conversations.
___31. I change the subject if I don’t have the words I need.
___32. I plan what I am going to say.
___33. I ask the other person to correct me when I talk.
Add anything else you do to talk with other people:

When I can’t think of a word or phrase I want to say:
___34. I ask the person to help me.
___35. I try to say it a different way.
___36. I use words from my own language.
___37. I use words from my own language but say them with sounds from the new language.
38. I move my hands or body so the person will understand me.

Add anything else you do when you can’t think of a word or phrase you want to say:

What I do to read more:
39. I read a lot in the language.
40. I read for fun in the language.
41. I find things to read that interest me.
42. I look for things to read that are not too hard.

Add anything else you do to read more:

What I do to understand what I read:
43. I skim over a reading to get the main idea.
44. I look for important facts.
45. I read things more than once.
46. I look at the pictures and what is under the pictures.
47. I look at the headings.
48. I think about what will come next in the reading.
49. I stop to think about what I just read.
50. I underline parts that seem important.
51. I mark the reading in different colors to help me understand.
52. I check to see how much I understood.

Add anything else you do to understand what you read:

What I do when I don’t understand what I read:
53. I guess the meaning by using clues from other parts of the passage.
54. I use a dictionary to find the meaning.

Add anything else you do when you don’t understand what you read:

Writing Strategies

What I do to write more:
55. If the alphabet is different, I practice writing it.
56. I take class notes in the language.
57. I get write other notes in the language.
58. I write letters to other people in the language.
59. I write papers in the language.
Add anything else you do to write more:

What I do to write better:
___60. I plan what I am going to write.
___61. I use a dictionary or glossary.
___62. I read what I wrote to see if it is good.
___63. I ask someone to correct my writing.
___64. I rewrite what I wrote to make it better.
___65. I use the spell checker on the computer.
___66. I use the grammar checker on the computer.

Add anything else you do to write better:

What I do if I cannot think of a word or phrase I want to write:
___67. I ask someone for the word or phrase I need.
___68. I try to say it a different way.
___69. I use words from my own language.
___70. I use words from my own language but add new endings to those words.

Add anything else you do when you can’t think of a word or phrase you want to write:

Translation Strategies

What I do when I translate:
___71. I plan what I want to say or write in my language and then translate it into the new language.
___72. I translate when reading to make sure I understand it.
___73. While I am listening to someone, I translate parts of what they say into my own language to help remember it.

Add anything else you do when you translate:

What I do to think in the new language:
___74. I put my language out of my mind.
___75. I try to understand without translating.

Add anything else you do to think in the new language:

If you have time, read the survey again. Find strategies that interest you. Ask the teacher about them.
Chapter 4
Assessing Styles and Strategies

Findings Ways to Gather Learning Style and Strategy Information

There are formal ways of obtaining information, such as through written questionnaires, possibly even online. And then there are also the more informal methods, such as through the use of a learner’s log or diary. The following is an entry from the diary of co-author Cohen back in 1996 when he was studying beginning Japanese:

In class we get vocabulary words in lists without being given the appropriate context. For example we are given hidoi ‘terrible’ or shimpai ‘worrisome,’ and I just will not have a good sense of what it can be used with. I found myself in class today testing the teacher out ? throwing out adjectives until I got some that worked for describing her. This was in response to her request that we do so, and the adjective I ended up using for her was majime ‘hard-working. I also wanted to know if I could refer to a person as shimpai. (Cohen, 1997, p. 142)

Reports such as these can help both the learners and their teachers. This learner is reporting the failure of a vocabulary use strategy, checking his mental Japanese dictionary. The report also offers a likely cause of the difficulty in using the strategy – that the student had learned the words out of context and consequently did not have a good sense of how to use them.

Since language learning strategies are generally internal processes, finding ways to assess style preferences and language strategy repertoire with some accuracy is a challenge. But once we agree that it is important for learners to be aware of their style preferences and strategy repertoire, the issue becomes how to gather the data. Ideally, the data will be gathered by learners for their own purposes. Teachers can help in the process, but shouldn’t be responsible for analyzing or interpreting the results. That is for the learners to do. The following are some options for data collection.

Assessing Learning Style Preferences

1. Have learners respond to a set of oral interview questions or fill out a written questionnaire. Among other things, learners could be asked to describe:
   a. their learning style preferences,
   b. the activities they like and dislike in learning a target language,
   c. their own concept of the ideal language teacher, and
   d. any conflicts they have had with language teachers in the past (if any), including the nature of the class, the task(s) involved, and so forth.

2. Provide learners with an open-ended task with a series of options and find out about the learners from the option(s) that they select.

3. Watch how the different learners react in class to the given tasks.

4. Set up learning centers in the classroom where different kinds of activities are taking place (e.g., more visual, more auditory, more hands on; more global or more particular and analytic, etc.) and watch where students go and do not go.

5. Hold parent conferences and asked the parent to describe their offspring.
Assessing Language Learning Strategies

1. Have the learners answer questions (orally or in writing) about:
   a. The strategies they use, how effectively they feel they are using them, and the contribution of the strategies to the results on given tasks.
   b. Their reactions to a specific task or set of tasks – for example, whether they were able to finish it and, if so, how they did it; whether they felt they were successful at learning what they needed; and what would be necessary for them to improve their performance.

2. Observe the learners’ participation strategies in the class:
   a. whether they are among those who raise their hand and how often,
   b. the strategies they use for asking/answering questions or giving explanations in the target language,
   c. their note-taking strategies.

3. Lead a class discussion on strategies for a given skill or task such as:
   a. strategies students used for learning vocabulary on the last quiz, and
   b. strategies students used for responding to the vocabulary quiz.

What to Do with the Collected Data

As you can see, some of the gathered information would go right to the teacher to help improve instruction. Other data would stay with the learners for enhancing their performance. For example, they could keep track of their strategy repertoire and add to it, much as they would enhance a stamp collection or a photo album with new entries. With regard to style information, teachers may choose to construct learning style profiles of their classes based on information supplied by the learners. This could be done by a show of hands. The teacher asks, “How many of you came out more visual than auditory or hands-on? How many more auditory? How many more hands-on?” And so forth. It can be fascinating for the teacher to see the split among students on the various style dimensions, and it gives a better sense of the style differences that might need to be addressed by varying the classroom activities.
Chapter 5
Adding Motivation to Language Learning

Not only do language learners have preferred styles and strategies within their repertoire, they also experience shifts in motivation from one moment to the next. So let us look at motivation. *Motivation* comes from the Latin word *movere* ‘to move,’ and refers to a desire that causes a person to take action. “... Human action is spurred by purpose, and for action to take place *goals* have to be set and pursued by choice” (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998, p. 44, emphasis in original).

Educational psychology shows that successful learners are usually intrinsically motivated (spurred by internal interest in learning, not just by external rewards), believe in their own ability to accomplish a task or reach a long-term goal (*self-efficacy*), believe they have some internal control over the outcomes of learning (*internal locus of control*, as opposed to external factors such as luck or fate), show little or no evidence of *learned helplessness*, display a need for achievement, and desire both self-direction and relatedness with others (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Early work on motivation viewed it from a social-psychological point of view, where it was influenced by *instrumental* or *integrative* goals for language learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumental goals included students’ understanding of the benefit of learning the language for current or future employment. Integrative goals were more general and included students’ desires to know more about the speakers of the language and their culture, to study abroad, or to live within another culture. Testing of this model with L2 learners in Canada (see Gardner & Lambert, 1972) showed that integratively motivated learners were more likely to reach proficiency than the more instrumentally oriented students. Students with integrative goals capitalized on all practice opportunities, volunteered more answers in the classroom, were more precise and satisfied, and learned more (Gardner, 1985).

Other researchers questioned integrative orientation as the real driving force behind the choice that many students make to learn a language in the first place and their continuing efforts to develop proficiency in that language (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Ely, 1986; Dörnyei, 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In a study of foreign language learners, Ely (1986) found three motivational clusters, the first two corresponding to integrative and instrumental reasons for language learning and the third centering on the need to fulfill a language requirement (which might also be considered an instrumental motivation). Research shows that, for many foreign language learners, the instrumental orientation is more important than the integrative orientation, because such learners rarely have enough experience with the target language community to have clearly articulated (especially integrative) attitudes toward that community (Dörnyei, 1990).

Currently there is a trend to focus less on this instrumental/integrative distinction (which reflects a sociolinguistic approach to motivation) and more on a cognitive approach, which views motivation as constantly in flux and influenced by the nature of learner, teacher, and course variables (Dörnyei, 2002, 2003).

Dörnyei’s (1994) psycholinguistic approach to language learning motivation has three components:

- **Language level**: What is the social dimension of motivation for learning the given language? What values and attitudes are attached to this language by the learner?
• Learner level: What relatively stable personality traits do the learners exhibit in the classroom, such as confidence in their language ability (i.e., self-efficacy issues – whether the cause of success is luck, their basic ability, or special effort expended) and their need for achievement in language learning?

• Learning situation level: How interesting, relevant, and satisfying is the particular language course for the student? Is the instructor authoritarian or laissez-faire? Does the instructor model language behavior, present tasks, and give feedback in a motivating way? How cohesive or competitive is the group? Are the goals for the class and expectations for student performance clear and reasonable, with an articulated reward system?

In brief, learners may have motivational issues regarding:

• How good they perceive themselves to be at learning languages in general.
• How much they like the particular language.
• Their affinity for the people who speak the language in the sociocultural community.
• The particular language learning situation in their school or university.
• Their role as a learner enrolled in a given course.
• Studying with the given teacher.
• Learning with the given set of fellow students.

In addition, and of prime importance, learners may be more or less motivated by a given target-language task, depending on:

• How beneficial they see it in terms of their goals for learning the language.
• How interesting it appears to be.
• How self-confident they are about their ability to do well on it.

Then when they start doing a given language task, all of these may impact the learners’ motivation:

• The set-up of the task (e.g., physical conditions, grouping, etc.).
• Instructions from the teacher or the textbook.
• The prospect of feedback from the teacher on the task.

Subsequently, Dörnyei (2001) added another area to motivation in target language classrooms; namely, the role of the teacher in motivating language learners through their teaching practices. He identifies four principal aspects of motivational teaching practice (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 29; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002):

1. Creating the basic motivational conditions: establishing rapport with the students, fostering a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and developing a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

2. Generating initial student motivation: enhancing the learners’ L2-related values and attitudes; increasing the learners’ expectancy of success; increasing the learners’ goal-orientedness; making teaching materials relevant to the learners; and creating realistic learner beliefs.

3. Maintaining and protecting motivation: making learning stimulating; setting specific learner goals; presenting tasks in a motivating way; protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence; allowing learners to maintain a positive social image;
4. **Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation:** providing motivational feedback; promoting motivational attributions; increasing learner satisfaction; and offering motivating rewards and grades.

While no doubt teachers can increase student motivation through creative techniques, it is up to the teacher to decide what aspects of motivation to work on in their classroom.

**Activity 1: How Motivating Are You as a Teacher?** (at the end of the chapter) is an activity for teachers, focusing on ways they can motivate their learners (Dörnyei 2001). While teachers may think they are motivating learners at all times, there may be ways in which their practices are inadvertently and unwittingly *de-motivating* their students.

As noted above, Dörnyei (2002, 2003) points out that the process-oriented approach to motivation permits researchers to link motivation to L2 acquisition. This more micro-level and largely cognitive approach views motivation as constantly in flux and influenced by the nature of learner, teacher, and course variables. It was in the spirit of this view and drawing extensively from Dörnyei (2001a, 2001b) that Cohen and Dörnyei constructed an instrument, *Taking My Motivational Temperature on a Language Task* (see Appendix C), to be administered before, during, and after a group of learners do a language task in class.

The learners start by indicating the “motivational baggage” that they bring to this task. They indicate how good they think they are at learning languages, how much they like learning this particular language, how important it is for them to learn this language, how motivated they are to learn in this given learning situation, how motivating this language course is, how motivating this teacher is, how much they like learning with these peers, and how willing they are to do better than the other students. Then before they actually begin the task, they rate how beneficial they think the task will be, how interesting it is, and how confident they are that they will do well on it. As they begin doing the task, they indicate how motivating they find the set up of the task (e.g., the physical conditions, the grouping), and whether being anxious about doing the task will help or hinder. As they look ahead to completing the task, they consider how motivating a factor it is for them to think of the feedback they will be receiving on their performance. After completing the task, they consider how motivated they are to do other similar tasks in the future.

We recommend that you have the participants in the course take this *Motivational Temperature* instrument with one of the language tasks in this guide. We also have **Activity 2: Motivating the Reluctant Learner** (at the end of the chapter), which is intended as an exercise for teachers to look at how to reach unmotivated learners.

The SSBI curriculum assumes that most learners are eager to learn but need greater awareness of how to do it most effectively. But there is also the challenge of reaching reluctant language learners who are fulfilling a requirement or have been pressured to take a second language. Sometimes past efforts at language learning were so unsatisfactory that students can’t conceive of the experience being better this time around. With the reluctant learner, it may not matter how sophisticated the learner support package is. They simply don’t want to be taking the language class! So the challenge is turning this around, if possible.

**The Intersection of Motivation, Styles, and Strategies**

Learners and teachers alike get a better grasp of the concepts and their interrelationship when
learning style preference, language learner strategies, and motivation are linked to performance. Since learning styles, language strategies, and motivation have all been discussed, let us look at language tasks to demonstrate this dynamic intersection.

**Language Tasks**
A language learning or language using task is an activity which satisfies the following criteria: it is primarily meaningful but may also be intended to elicit certain grammatical forms, it has a goal which needs to be worked toward, it is evaluated by the outcome, and it has a link to the real world (Skehan, 1998). Tasks also vary by:

1. complexity of the task content (e.g., dealing with concrete and immediate information as opposed to information that is abstract and remote),
2. stressfulness of the communication, often depending on whether the task:
   a. is timed or untimed,
   b. involves spoken or written language,
   c. is performed alone or with others,
   d. is perceived as important or not
   e. needs to be error free or not
   f. allows the learner control over the goals
3. the learner’s ease at interpreting the task goal,
4. difficulty of the language needed to perform the task (and whether the learner is able to avoid the use of language structures being targeted in the task), and
5. familiarity of the task type and the ease of performing it (e.g., one-way or two-way communication, open as opposed to structured or fixed-answer responses).

The learners’ performance on such tasks can be determined by fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Fluency is measured by number of pauses, accuracy by percentage of error-free clauses, and complexity by level of subordination (Skehan & Foster, 1997). Depending on the amount of planning time available for the task, learners have been found to deal first with prioritizing accuracy and (to a certain extent) fluency. Only later do they plan for the use of more complex language (Skehan, Foster, & Mehnert, 1998).

**Styles, Strategies, and Tasks**
A visual representation of how styles, strategies, and tasks might intersect (Figure 1) starts with a language task (described in the figure as a series of contrasts from authentic to inauthentic, relevant to irrelevant, concrete to abstract, using difficult to easy language, and so forth). This task, then, is to be dealt with by a learner whose style preference is more visual, auditory, or hands on; more abstract-intuiting or concrete-sequential; more global or particular, and so on. In dealing with this task, the learner will draw on a series of strategies that are presumably consistent with his/her style preferences.

A case study by Gallin (1999) with intermediate ESL learners, for example, found a relationship between being more abstract-intuitive in cognitive style preference and being more likely to use the strategy of inferencing while reading. The three ESL readers in this case study who were better at inferring the gist were also more abstract-intuitive in their style preference. And the one reader who was clearly more concrete-sequential was good at some details but was not so good at inferring the gist. Gallin’s conclusion was that the learners’ preference for abstract-intuitive vs. concrete-
sequential learning styles might affect the strategies they use while reading in a second language. While the study did not look at motivation, it is likely that the concrete-sequential learners in her study did not find the inference items in the reading comprehension exercise to be motivating.

Let us take a hypothetical case where the task is to learn new vocabulary from a written text on the topic of “Avid Rooting by Sports Fans.” Learners who are both more introverted and also prefer the auditory (as opposed to the visual and hands-on) approaches to learning new vocabulary words and phrases might repeat the new words to themselves or out loud until they understand the new vocabulary (e.g., “die-hard fan,” “ardent,” “avid,” “obsession,” “basking in a team’s glory,” and “catharsis”). This approach motivates them because it gives them a sense that they are proactively learning.

More extroverted learners may prefer to engage the instructor or peers in conversation to learn the vocabulary. When words are not clear to them, they may use the strategy of repeatedly questioning until the form, meaning, and possible functions of the words in context have become clear. For them, interaction with others is a motivator in learning new vocabulary. If these extroverted learners are also hands-on and visual in their style preference, they may (for example) write the words on flash cards and ask native-speaking interlocutors to use each word in a meaningful utterance, perhaps grouping several together in the same utterance. Finding that this approach works may be further motivation for them.

Learners’ strategy selection is usually influenced by more than their style preference. In fact, it is difficult to determine just how much weight style preferences have in strategy selection for a task. Factors like age, prior experience in learning this language and other languages, current and intended levels of proficiency in the target language, language learning aptitude, personality and gender characteristics, and contextual variables (in or out of class, teacher and peer variables, and so forth) can affect the decision.

Consequently, no single group of strategies is appropriate for all learners or for all tasks. Different learners will apply the very same strategies in different ways. Language learning and language-use strategies need to be evaluated on their effectiveness for individual learners when the learners need and use them.

Activity 3: The Intersection of Styles, Strategies, and Motivation (at the end of the chapter) gives the participants (whether teachers or language learners) firsthand experience with how styles and strategies intersect with motivation in the performance of a task, in this case, on the topic of “avid rooting by sports fans.” If the activity is used with learners, then there may be a need to find a simpler text or another task. The current text is for participants with advanced language proficiency.
Figure 1
The Interaction of Style, Strategy, and Motivation on Given Task

A. LANGUAGE TASK
- Authentic ↔ inauthentic
- Relevant ↔ irrelevant
- Important ↔ unimportant
- Motivating ↔ non-motivating
- Appropriate level ↔ inappropriate level
- Useful ↔ not useful
- Clear task ↔ unclear task
- Familiar ↔ unfamiliar
- Easy language ↔ difficult language
- Teacher-initiated ↔ student-initiated
- Concrete ↔ abstract
- Open task ↔ closed task
- Independent ↔ cooperative
- Timed ↔ free

B. LEARNER’S STYLE PREFERENCES
- Visual ↔ auditory ↔ hands on
- Abstract-intuitive ↔ concrete-sequential
- Global ↔ particular
- Synthesizing ↔ analytic
- Impulsive ↔ reflective
- Open ↔ closure-oriented
- Extroverted ↔ introverted

C. LEARNER’S STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH THE TASKS

D. MOTIVATION AS IT FLUCTUATES ACROSS STAGES OF TASK
Activity 1: How Motivating Are You as a Teacher?

Format:
   Pairs, whole group

Purpose:
   To take a look at how language teachers may or may not be motivating their learners to learn, given their current practices, and to consider ways to increase the level of motivation in the classroom.

Time:
   45 minutes

Materials:
   Copy of “Principals for Motivating Learners”

Directions:
   1. Have participants think about the teachers who motivated them. Have them answer the question, “What characteristics did they have that motivated you?”

   2. Have participants review Dörnyei’s principles on the next page, consider their own experience, and ask themselves, “How motivating am I as a language teacher?” Have them identify situations where they were instrumental in generating enthusiasm toward language learning, whether in a class or with individuals.

   3. Have participants find a partner and share with them the results of their reflections on motivation in classes they have either taken or have taught.

Discussion/Wrap up:
   The discussion with the whole group can focus on insights that the participants had about how they can enhance their students’ motivation to learn the target language by following the four principle aspects of motivational teaching practice.
Principles for Motivational Teaching Practice
(Based on Dörnyei, 2001, p. 29; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002)

1. Creating the basic motivational conditions by
   - establishing rapport with the students,
   - fostering a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere (e.g., using and encouraging humor, being patient and tolerant), and
   - developing a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms.

2. Generating initial student motivation by
   - enhancing the learners’ L2-related values and attitudes,
   - increasing the learners’ expectancy of success,
   - increasing the learners’ goal-orientedness,
   - making teaching materials relevant to the learners, and
   - creating realistic learner beliefs.

3. Maintaining and protecting motivation by
   - making learning stimulating,
   - setting specific learner goals,
   - presenting tasks in a motivating way,
   - protecting the learners’ self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence,
   - allowing learners to maintain a positive social image, creating learner autonomy,
   - promoting cooperation among the learners, and
   - promoting self-motivating strategies.

4. Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation by
   - providing motivational feedback,
   - promoting motivational attributions,
   - increasing learner satisfaction, and
   - offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner.
Activity 2: Motivating the Reluctant Learner

Format:

Individual writing, group discussion, whole group

Purpose:

To consider the characteristics of the “reluctant” language learner. The participants are asked to write possible solutions and suggestions for motivating these learners.

Time:

30 minutes

Materials:

Paper, pens/pencils

Directions:

1. The topic of this activity is the “reluctant” learner. Have the participants move into groups of 3 and ask them to write about a personal experience with a “reluctant” learner and how they helped this student become more involved in the language learning process (45 minutes).

2. When the participants have finished their descriptions, they should pass their papers to another group member who reads the descriptions and responds, in writing, with additional suggestions for ways to motivate this learner by fostering learner autonomy and involvement (34 minutes).

3. After they have finished their responses, the papers are to be passed to another member of the group to read and write responses to the description and the suggestions. This process continues until all of the group members have read and responded to all of the descriptions.

4. Allow the groups 45 minutes to discuss the activity and their suggestions with other group members.

5. Finally, ask the groups for some examples of their descriptions and responses.

Discussion:

The goal is to briefly compare the participants’ experiences and suggestions for the “reluctant” learners. Focus on how strategies-based instruction might help these learners become more enthusiastic about learning.

Wrap up:

End the session by first summarizing how teachers and students may have differing roles, expectations, and ideas about learner autonomy. This summary should include ideas from tasks Teacher Responsibilities in the Language Classroom and Learner Responsibilities in the Language Classroom (Activities 4 and 5 in Chapter 3). In wrapping up the task, look at the ways that reluctant learners may become more open to the language learning experience.
Activity 3: The Intersection of Styles, Strategies, and Motivation

Format:
Individual, pairs, whole group

Purpose:
To provide participants an opportunity to observe their own learning style preferences, language strategy repertoire, and fluctuating motivation in the completion of a language task in a language of their choice.

Time:
60 minutes

Materials:
The article “Avid Rooting by Sports Fans,” a motivational temperature measure,

Directions:
1. Participants choose whether to listen to the article read aloud or to leave the room and read it on their own. They also select a partner or a small group with whom to summarize the article afterward in a nonnative language of their choice.

2. Participants take their motivational temperature with regard to the language they will use for summarizing the text before starting the task.

3. Participants either listen to Avid Sports Fans (which is read in a conversational tone) or read the text on their own.

4. Participants prepare a short summary of the material, first individually and then in pairs, with their language partner or small group. Again, they take their motivational temperature.

5. Participants take turns delivering their talk to a partner or group. At the end of this activity, they once again take their motivational temperature.

6. Participants engage in self-observation of style, strategy preferences, and motivational temperature on this task.

Discussion/Wrap up:
Participants are to debrief with the larger group about:

- the strategies they used,
- their style preferences and any conflicts that might have emerged between their preferred styles and what was requested of them,
- their level of success on this task, and
- fluctuation in their motivational temperature.
“Avid Rooting by Sports Fans” (Adapted from the NY Times, 11 August 2000)

1. Research has found that fervent fans become so tied to their teams that they experience hormonal surges and other physiological changes while watching games, much as the athletes do.

2. The self-esteem of some male and female fans also rises and falls with a game’s outcome, with losses affecting their optimism about everything from getting a date to winning at darts.

3. Psychologists have long suspected that many die-hard fans are lonely, alienated people searching for self-esteem by identifying with a sports team. However, recent research suggests just the opposite – that sports fans suffer fewer bouts of depression and alienation than do people who are uninterested in sports.

4. College sports fans are far more likely to wear clothing with their team’s logo on it the day after victories than after defeats in what has been referred to as “basking in reflected glory.” In other words, sports fans attain some sort of respect and regard not by their own achievements but by their connection to individuals of attainment. Likewise, fans tend to claim credit for a team’s success, saying “we won” to describe a victory, but tend to distance themselves from a team’s failure, saying “they lost” when describing a defeat.

5. While the run-of-the-mill spectator may abandon a team once it starts losing, more committed fans ride the same emotional roller coaster as the athletes. In addition, when their team loses, committed fans tend to blame their team’s failures on officiating or bad luck rather than the other team’s skill.

6. One recent study showed that testosterone levels in male fans (as measured by taking saliva samples) rise markedly after a victory and drop just as sharply after a defeat. In addition, male fans with a low self opinion registered the highest surges in testosterone after a victory.

7. For some fans the emotional roller coaster of watching a game can be addictive. Such fans feel a catharsis when they give free rein to their anger after a defeat or gloat openly in triumph after a victory.

8. It was also found that men and women who were die-hard fans were much more optimistic about their sex appeal and specifically about their ability to get a date after a victory. There were also more optimistic about their ability to perform well at mental and physical tests, like darts and word games.

9. Avid fans use their devotion to a team to fulfill their desire to belong to a group or a society. This deep attachment to a team can also lead to better mental health. Commitment to a team can buffer people from depression (e.g., a divorcée adopting the NY Knickerbockers giving her a new lease on life), as well as fostering feelings of self-worth and belonging.


Chapter 6

Language and Culture

“Speech acts,” a crucial intersection of language and culture, provide a challenging way for language learners to employ strategies in learning complicated language behavior. This is especially true when the L2 is dramatically different from the L1.

Language learners find out sooner or later that it is not enough to know the vocabulary of the given language. They discover that they need to determine the *situationally-appropriate* things to do:

- what can be said
- where,
- when, and
- how.

The problem is that the way we do things in our native language can work *against* the appropriate use of target-language forms. We are likely to experience negative transfer when we perform speech functions or *speech acts* in communication. We may well wish to perform the speech act the way we would in our native language and culture. Since speech acts take culture into account (e.g., who is being spoken to and in what context), they are an integral part of intercultural communication.

Speech acts are an element of *pragmatic ability*, which is the ability to deal with “meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)...[and to interpret] people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example, requests) that they are performing when they speak” (Yule, 1996). Speech acts are patterned, routinized utterances that speakers use regularly to perform a variety of functions like apologies, complaints, requests, refusals, and compliments. A speech act is an utterance with a basic or *propositional* meaning (e.g., “I am hot” = the speaker is feeling hot) and an intended effect or *illocutionary* meaning (e.g., “I am hot” = the speaker is asking that someone open the window). Because these utterances are routinized, they are generally predictable.

Take the example of apologizing. The apology has at least five semantic formulas or strategies that are specific to it:

1) the *expression of an apology*: A word, expression, or sentence containing a verb such as “sorry,” “excuse,” “forgive,” or “apologize.” In American English, “I apologize...” is found more in writing than it is in oral language. An expression of an apology can be intensified – in American English, usually by adding intensifiers such as “really” or “very” – e.g., “I’m really sorry.”

2) the *acknowledgment of responsibility*: degree of recognition of fault. This strategy includes a continuum of accepting blame: “It’s my fault”; expressing self-deficiency: “I was confused/I didn’t see/You are right”; lack of intent: “I didn’t mean to”; implicit expression of responsibility: “I was sure I had given you the right directions”; not accepting the blame/denying responsibility: “It wasn’t my fault”; or even blaming the injured party: “It’s your own fault.”

3) *explanation or account*: a description of the situation which led to the offense, serving as indirect way of apologizing. This explanation is intended to set things right. In some cultures this may be a more acceptable way of apologizing than in others. In cultures where public transportation is unreliable, coming late to a meeting and giving an explanation like, “The bus was late,” might be perfectly acceptable.
4) **offer of repair**: the apologizer makes a bid to carry out an action or provide payment for damage which resulted from his/her infraction. This strategy is situation-specific and is only appropriate when actual damage has occurred.

5) **promise of non-recurrence**: the apologizer commits him/herself to not having the offense happen again. This strategy is situation-specific and less frequent than the other strategies.

These five major strategies for the apology speech act are available to speakers across languages. Preference for one or more depends on the language and sociocultural situation. The following is an example of one such situation:

**You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with your boss. An hour later you call him to apologize. The problem is that this is the second time you’ve forgotten a meeting. Your boss gets on the line and asks: “What happened to you?”**

An Israeli Hebrew speaker with an American, English-speaking boss may appear to put more emphasis on the strategy of *explanation* than was expected. For example, the Israeli might apologize with, “Well, I had to take a sick kid to the doctor and then there was a problem with the plumbing…” These speakers would probably avoid the strategy of *repair*, because our research has shown that in the Israeli culture, the boss determines the next step (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981).

These basic speech act-specific strategies may be modified according to your familiarity with the person being apologized to (intimate to very formal) and the intensity of the act (its gravity, seriousness, or importance). The following is a relatively severe offense:

**In a cafeteria, you accidentally bump into a friend who is holding a cup of hot coffee. The coffee spills all over your friend, scalding his/her arm and soaking his/her clothing. Your friend shouts, startled: “Ow! Ouch!”**

As an Israeli Hebrew speaker, you might not need to intensify your apology – you simply say, “sorry,” a translation from the often-used *slixa* of Hebrew. This would not sound at all like an apology to the ears of your scalded friend if he/she is a speaker of American English. Then, in addition, while an average textbook answer might be, “I’m very sorry,” in American English “very” and “really” are different: “really” indicates true regret and “very” is used more for etiquette.

Also important here is the use of an interjection like “Oh!”: “Oh! Here, let me help get something on that burn and clean up the mess,” as opposed to, “I’m very sorry that I bumped into you.” Absence of interjections like “Oh!” in the discourse leaves a gap that signals nonnativeness (Cohen, Olshtain, & Rosenstein, 1986).

Let us say you want a window seat on a bus and need to get by the person in the aisle seat. You say the equivalent of “excuse me” in the target language and the addressee jumps up as if he/she had just stepped on your foot. You were unaware that in the target language there are other, more acceptable means of requesting access to the window seat: e.g., “Is it possible to sit there?” or “May I get by?” You have the vocabulary and grammar for the speech act strategy, but don’t know which forms to choose for the given situation. Because of that, you may fail to communicate effectively.

**Activity 1: Rating and Delivering Apologies** (at the end of the chapter) assesses both receptive and productive speech act ability. The receptive part of the task deals with apologies in English. The productive part can be in any language.
Strategies for Improving Speech Act Ability

Learners can acquire speech acts by simply being submersed in the target language and culture long enough that executing the speech comes naturally. However, there are problems with this approach in the case of adult learners. It may take many years (e.g., 10-15) to acquire speech act ability that is indistinguishable from that of the native speakers in the given speech community, especially in the case of certain speech acts, such as complaints and refusals. And if the speech act is one used infrequently (such as extending condolences to the family of a deceased person at the funeral), the learner may not acquire it at all.

Since learners (especially analytic ones who monitor their output carefully) won’t necessarily have the patience to wait around a number of years until their L2 speech act performance approaches that of the native speakers, they often look for a quicker fix. So another way to learn speech acts is through a textbook. But often textbook writers are not certain about what to include. The textbook may, for example, list a series of intensifiers, such as “so,” “awfully,” and “terribly,” without indicating which are the most frequently used. Often the textbooks either do not include speech act information or what they have is simplistic and based on the intuitions of the curriculum writers.

Along with (or despite) the textbook, students can learn speech acts in class if they are included in the curriculum. The challenge is for the teacher to create enough cultural and contextual meaning in the classroom to have this work. Learners can proactively acquire speech acts by gathering information about appropriate forms from target-language informants. This approach can be useful and informative and often starts with consciousness raising about what to ask – knowing what to ask a native speaker to complement the knowledge you already have.
Activity 1: Rating and Delivering Apologies

Format:
Individual and in pairs (by language)

Purpose:
To give participants a chance to exercise their perceptions of acceptable apologies and to produce apologies that are appropriate for the given situations.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Apology task sheet

Directions:
Participants are to do the speech act perception exercise on their own. You can ask for a show of hands to see how similarly participants rated the possible responses for the two apology situations.

For the four speech act delivery situations, participants are to find someone with whom they can do the exercise in an L2. Ideally one member of the pair would be a native speaker of that language and the other a learner. The purpose would be to see what apology-specific strategies the apologizers use, how appropriately they apologize, and what their insights are about the task.

Discussion/Wrap-Up:
The discussion can focus on the strategies used in both perceiving appropriateness of apologies and also in producing them. In other words, the participants should comment on how the features of the situation itself may have influenced the strategies that they used in responding to the given speech act situation.
Apology Task Sheet

Perception of Apology Situations:

Rate the following responses according to whether they are (1) acceptable, (2) more or less acceptable, or (3) unacceptable in an American English situation:

1) A student forgets to return a book to a professor. Student:
   a. ____ I’m sorry. I forgot it.
   b. ____ Oh, damn! I forgot it.
   c. ____ Sorry. I forgot.
   d. ____ Oh, I’m really sorry. I completely forgot.
   e. ____ Oh, well, I’ve had a lot on my mind lately.

2) A young woman bumps into your shopping cart at the supermarket and some of the groceries spill onto the floor. She turns to you and says:
   a. ____ Sorry.
   b. ____ Are you all right?
   c. ____ Please forgive me.
   d. ____ I’m sorry.
   e. ____ Very sorry.
   f. ____ Really sorry.
   g. ____ Oh, I’m really sorry. Here, let me help you.
   h. ____ I’m terribly sorry. Did I hurt you?

Production of Apologies:

1) You promise you’ll buy your neighbor medicine for her sick child while in town, but you forget. Your neighbor: “Did you get the medicine?” You:

2) You don’t stop in time at a red light and bump into the car in front of you. You both get out and see that there is damage to the other car. The other driver is very upset. You:

3) At a library, you accidentally bump into an older person who is holding a stack of books. The person is startled, but unhurt. A few of the books fall on the floor. You:

4) You promise to meet a friend at a bicycle store to help him/her choose the right bike. You forget the meeting. The next day, you see your friend. Friend: “Remember, we were supposed to meet at the bicycle store? I waited for you at the store for an hour. I didn’t want to buy the bike without you.” You:
Chapter 7
Designing SSBI Lessons

Background of Learners
You may know a fair amount about your students’ language background, but less about how they use that language background to process tasks in class. Give this issue some thought. For example, it may seem obvious what language this task will be performed in: French L2 learners are to read a short article on the front page of Le Monde and to write out their opinion of it in French before having a discussion about it in French. Whereas you might assume that their written opinion should be composed directly in French, some learners may benefit from writing it first in their native or dominant language before translating it into French. Others may write it directly in French, but have composed it in their minds in another language and mentally translated it when writing it out. So the languages which are actually used in performing the task may not be a given for the learners involved. It may depend on their learning style preferences, with some concrete-sequential and analytic students preferring to use translation.

The proficiency level of the learners may determine whether or not they deploy one language learner strategy or another, regardless of their styles preferences. Thus, the low and intermediate-level learners translating that Le Monde article may be more predisposed to translate from their L1 or a dominant language than the more advanced students. In addition, research suggests that there is a proficiency threshold which L2 learners need to reach before the strategies that they use effectively in their L1 can be used successfully in L2 tasks (see Sarig, 1987). But the problem is that we do not have clear guidelines though L2 research as to just what that threshold level needs to be.

Regardless of the strategy repertoire each learner has as a basis for learning the L2, we do know that SSBI lessons can be instated early on in the L2 learning process. It just may be that learners are more limited in the extent to which they can effectively use certain strategies. For example, beginning learners won’t be able to exercise analogy as a strategy in vocabulary learning or sorting out grammatical forms as readily as more advanced learners because their knowledge base for making analogies within the target language is more limited. They may still use analogy as a strategy in these instances but may not do as well as more advanced learners. Consequently, they may be more prone to make false analogies. So, for example, let’s say I have learned the verb inflections in Spanish L2 for regular –er verbs like comprender ‘to understand,’ but have yet to learn the inflections for irregular verbs like caber ‘to fit.’ Hence, I assume caber is inflected like comprender, and so for the first person singular present tense, I use *cabo instead of quepo.

While you may need to consider the age of the learners in your efforts at styles and strategies-based instruction, even young learners (grades 2 and above) can understand and become conversant in what L2 strategies are and how to use them.
Class Context

It may be valuable to write down a brief description of the class/teaching situation with which the SSBI task is to be used. To do this, take stock of what appears to be wanted and needed in terms of SSBI learner support. Perhaps learners could use support in their vocabulary learning. Perhaps they could benefit from work on reading strategies.

Write down the goals intended for the given SSBI task and the outcomes your students should be able to do by the end of the task.

Finding the Material for SSBI Tasks

1. Tasks adapted from existing materials

These tasks are already part of the existing language program, whether the source is the language textbook or other materials in the curriculum. The tasks can be made more “strategyfriendly” by allowing for the application of strategies, with varying degrees of modification.

For example, a reading passage from the language textbook could be adapted by having the students brainstorm for vocabulary words related to the topic of the reading and then having them discuss how anticipating possible vocabulary items and activating background knowledge might improve reading comprehension.

Another approach would be to distribute a list of vocabulary items from the text and have the students guess the topic of the reading based on these words. If a list of reading comprehension questions is included with the activity, these questions could also be used to activate the students’ prior knowledge and help the students anticipate language content.

2. Tasks that are new, created to supplement a strategies-based curriculum

These tasks are used with the tasks already in the curriculum and usually fill gaps that are in the existing course materials. For example, you could create a new task to further reinforce the language content in a particular skill area (listening, speaking, reading, or writing) or to practice for a special type of proficiency exam. You could create new tasks that focus on grammatical forms if the textbook does not contain many grammar-type drills. Because the tasks are meant to be used with a particular group of learners, you can embed specific strategies the students can practice at the same time the language content is being reinforced.

A series of skill-related activities illustrate SSBI tasks that can be integrated into an L2 class with little or no alteration (depending on the level of your students). They include a vocabulary task (*Learning or Reinforcing Your Knowledge of Vocabulary, Activity 1 in Chapter 3*), four reading tasks, a speaking task, a grammar task, and a writing task:

- **Activity 1: Reading Restoration**
- **Activity 2: Gap Reading**
- **Activity 3: Summary Reading**
• Activity 4: Skimming, Scanning, and Search Reading
• Activity 5: Speaking Strategy Role-Play
• Activity 6: Grammar-Learning Strategies
• Activity 7: Collaborative Writing Strategies

The Task Sequence

Steps
State briefly the specific steps you will use to teach the lesson. This should include:

1. A presentation or skill-getting phase where you describe how you will model your expectations and learning strategies.
2. A practice or skill-using phase where students really use the language to achieve the stated language and social (i.e., communicative) goal.
3. A debriefing or self-evaluative session where students reflect and share their strategies for leaning.

Planning
It is easy to find yourself in the middle of an SSBI lesson and realize that you need strips of paper pre-cut with certain information on them, or sheets of paper in certain colors, etc. In other words, it pays to determine ahead of time just what materials will be necessary to make the task work smoothly.

Assessment
How will you know if students have understood and retained what you have taught them about enhancing their language learning? Will you give them some language-learning tasks afterward which demonstrate to them and to you whether or not they picked up on the strategies? For example, if you work with your students on mnemonic devices for remembering vocabulary, you might have them learn new words using mnemonics and check to see how many of those words they were able to learn. Clearly, the best vehicle for demonstrating to the learners the value of systematic strategies is to have learners see the results for themselves.

Activity 8: Student Self-Evaluation of Strategy Use suggests some ways that learners might evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy use.

Transferring Strategies
Encourage learners to use these strategies with other tasks. In other words, support them in applying elsewhere their newly-acquired strategies, their newly-reinforced strategies, and the strategies that they already had in their repertoire. Your lesson plan could indicate these follow-up activities to further develop and practice the strategies in new task situations.

• Activity 9: Promoting Strategy Transfer by Language Learners focuses on what it means for learners to transfer strategies from one context to another.

• Activity 10: Frameworks for SSBI Lessons reinforces the elements of a successful SSBI lesson. The purpose is to discuss, through a jigsaw activity, three instructional frameworks for SSBI lessons to enhance language learner strategy use.

• Activity 11: Writing Lessons for SSBI lets you write lessons with SSBI principles into your teaching materials and to receive peer feedback and suggestions for additional activities.
Activity 1: Reading Restoration

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To raise awareness of strategies used in L2 reading – in this case, for restoring strips from a text into their original passage order, and to brainstorm with peers about possible strategies. Participants then report on the strategies they used and discuss their reactions to the task.

Time:
15 minutes

Materials:
Copies of four texts for the “Reading Restoration Task” cut into strips, in different envelopes (labeled a, b, c, d). Intact copies of the four texts to distribute after the task.

Directions:
1. Put the participants into groups of 3-4. Explain that each group will receive an envelope with strips of paper which, when put into the correct order, will form a series of paragraphs about reading strategies. Tell them that there are four different series of paragraphs. (The letters at the beginning of the paragraphs are an organizational feature of the activity.) They are to work as a group to put the strips into the correct order. Before beginning the task, ask examples of the kinds of strategies they could use to complete it (e.g., using their knowledge of rhetorical structure and transition words, experience using this technique with their students, various group communication or organizational skills).

2. Hand out the envelopes and monitor the groups as they put the paragraphs into order.

3. When all of the groups have finished, have the participants of each group examine the lists of strategy ideas cut into strips that the other groups put into order. Distribute to each group an intact copy of the reading ideas that were made into strips – for selfchecking answers and as a resource to use with their own students.

Discussion:
Discuss the different strategies, emphasizing those that the group finds most interesting or that they would share with their students. For example: “Just as you may relax before reading a text, there are many ways to relax before you begin to write, listen, or speak.” Or, “Texts can be read aloud into a tape recorder to listen to in the car, on the way to school, while waiting for the bus, walking to class, or relaxing in a coffee shop.” Or, “I don’t stop reading when I come across an unknown vocabulary word; I check to see if it is defined in the text or if I can understand it from the context of the reading.”

Wrap up:
Ask for brief comments about their reactions to this task and how they could use this activity or an adapted version of it with their own students.
Four Texts for Reading Restoration Task:

(a) Many people who are learning a foreign language want to read more outside of class, but they might not know what kinds of things they can do to read more often. To become a very good reader, you have to spend a lot of time reading and be in the right mood to read. Many people know this, but they still don’t spend enough time practicing their reading skills. If you have this problem, maybe the following strategies will be useful.

(a) One way to get more time for reading is to read whenever you have a few extra minutes. Make a photocopy of a short reading and carry it with you in your pocket. You can read it while you’re waiting for the bus, standing in line at the supermarket, or even while you’re making dinner. A few minutes of reading practice everyday can soon add up to many hours of reading practice!

(a) Another way to find more time for reading is to read right before you go to bed at night. Some psychologists say that this can help us remember what we’ve read more effectively because the brain has a chance to process the information while we’re sleeping. Even fifteen minutes of reading each night before you go to sleep can improve your reading skills quite a bit and can give you the extra practice you’re looking for.

(a) Also, try to keep up to date with current events by reading in the target language. For example, read newspapers and magazines in the target language instead of reading them in your native language. Or, if you live in a country where the language is spoken, try to watch the news on TV and listen to the news on the radio in addition to reading the newspaper. This way, you’ll get the same information and get more reading practice at the same time.

(a) Although spending a lot of time practicing your reading is important, you also need to have the right attitude about reading. Try to be positive and think of ways to make it fun. Read about subjects that are interesting to you and try to get yourself into the mood for reading.

(a) One way to get into the mood is to promise yourself some sort of reward after you’ve spent time reading. The reward could be anything you like or want to do. It could be some sort of special dessert or activity. For some people, the reward is that with all of the extra practice, they can read faster and understand more vocabulary. This is the best reward of all!

(a) With the right attitude and with more practice, reading in the foreign language will become easier and more fun. If you don’t have a lot of free time, reading for just a few minutes many times during the day can help give you extra practice. Try to think of other ways you can find time to read more outside of class and get in the mood for reading.
(b) Many foreign language students think that reading is only something they have to do for class. Sometimes they think the only purpose for reading is to study new material or to review what they have already read. But there are actually two different purposes for reading: reading for information and reading for pleasure.

(b) When you read for information, you are looking for the specific details, or for the main idea, of what you read. This is usually the kind of reading students associate with doing homework and preparing for tests. It is also the kind of reading we do when we read a newspaper or a letter from a friend we are hoping to find out new information. This is when you should use your skimming and scanning skills, whether in your native language or in the language you are learning.

(b) On the other hand, reading for pleasure has a slightly different purpose. You read something in the foreign language because you are interested in it. Whether you read magazines or academic texts, you’re reading for pleasure when you’ve chosen to read something simply because you’re interested in the topic. This kind of reading often involves topics related to your hobbies or career interests. Examples are reading foreign language photography magazines or engineering textbooks written in the foreign language.

(b) Another purpose of pleasure reading is to relax. There are many people who enjoy reading in their native language because it’s fun and relaxing. However, many students find it difficult to relax when they are reading in another language because the grammar is confusing or there are too many words that they don’t understand.

(b) A way to solve this problem is to choose pleasure reading materials that are not too challenging. Choose readings which are written specifically for students learning the language, or try to find texts that you have already read in your native language. The ideas will be familiar to you and you’ll have a better chance of understanding the words you don’t know.

(b) Also, don’t push yourself too hard or too fast. Take time to develop your reading skills and gradually move on to reading more difficult materials. No one can read a humor magazine written in a foreign language after just a few months of studying. It takes time and lots of practice to understand everything that is written for native speakers of a language, as well as a good understanding of the culture! In other words, choose your pleasure reading materials carefully. Developing good reading skills includes an understanding of how difficult (or easy!) the reading materials you choose are for your level of background knowledge of the topic.

(b) Therefore, you should practice reading in the foreign language for both information and for pleasure. Both of these purposes are important for developing good reading skills. As you become more proficient, you may find yourself reading for pleasure in the language you are studying a lot more often!
Some people think that they have to understand the meaning of every word that they read. But this is not true. The word may or may not be important for understanding the main idea of what you’re reading. When you don’t know the meaning of a word, don’t stop reading. You should try to make an educated guess about what the word means. There are several ways to figure out unknown words.

First, you can use the dictionary. Dictionaries are very useful. They break words into parts for you, tell you how to pronounce the word, and give other words which are related to the one you are looking up. Sometimes they also give examples of how the word can be used in a sentence. However, when you use the dictionary, don’t just look at the first definition of the word. Many words have more than one meaning and you should read the whole list of definitions before choosing the one you think fits best in the sentence. If you only look at the first one, and it happens to be the wrong one, what you’re reading can become even more confusing! Using a dictionary should help you understand what you read, not make it more difficult.

Also, don’t run to the dictionary every time you don’t understand a word. Try to make an educated guess of the meaning of the word and/or part of speech from the context (the rest of the sentence or the topic of the reading). Look for as many clues in the reading as possible. You have to read the whole sentence or you may even need to read the next sentence, or the previous one again, too. And sometimes even the next paragraph. To make an educated guess of a word, you have to use all of the information that you have available to you.

Other information you can use to guess the meaning of a word is to look for synonyms or examples of the words you don’t understand. Synonyms are different words which have similar meanings that writers use to make their writing more interesting and varied. And sometimes writers give examples or more specific explanations of certain words in the same sentence to help you understand their meanings. Look for special punctuation marks in the sentence, like commas or dashes examples or other explanations usually follow this kind of punctuation.

To make the best possible educated guess, you can do one other thing. You can put the parts of the word that you do know together with the parts that you don’t know. You can look for two words that are combined. Or you can look for special beginnings or endings of words, such as the grammar tense. Use your knowledge of how words are formed in the language to help you.

Remember, making an educated guess means choosing a word that makes sense in the sentence. Think about the meaning of the sentence as you make your guess. Look for other examples or explanations of the word in the paragraph, and try to determine what you already know about the word or about the topic of the reading. With practice, guessing becomes easier.
Many people have trouble relaxing when they are learning a new skill or improving an old one. This may be natural, but it is unfortunate. The more relaxed a person is, the faster s/he can learn. If you have trouble relaxing when you read in another language, here are some tips to help you.

First, read during the time of day when you feel most relaxed. Some people like to wake up early in the morning and start working right away. Other people have more energy and can relax more easily in the afternoon or evening. Choose a time that is best for you, and then try to stay with that time.

Second, read in a place that helps you feel relaxed. It could be in the public library, in a coffee shop, or in your room at home. Sit on your favorite chair or sofa or even on the floor and try to get comfortable. You might even want to try sitting on your bed. (But don’t get too relaxed and fall asleep!) Choose a place that’s comfortable and that works for you, and then try to stay with that place.

Third, read about something that you are interested in. Choose a topic that you already know something about or that you want to learn more about. It could be academic and serious, or lighthearted and funny. Many people relax best when they begin their reading by first working on something that they are interested in and then move on to less interesting topics. However, you could also reward yourself for getting through a boring or uninteresting homework assignment by picking up your favorite foreign language magazine and reading an exciting article or two.

Also, some people relax when they breathe deeply and think of relaxing subjects. They practice meditation or focus on happy thoughts. Before you begin to read, close your eyes and think about what you’re going to do. Imagine yourself reading, feeling comfortable and relaxed, and breathe deeply and slowly. Try not to get nervous about something that may be difficult to read. Instead, think about what you already know about the topic or the type of material you’ll be reading. And think about how good you’ll feel when you’ve finished!

One other way to relax is by giving yourself enough time to read. If you feel hurried or rushed while you read, you’ll probably have a hard time understanding the material. Try to put aside enough time each day for what you will read so that you don’t have to be in a hurry to finish. Make a schedule and stick to it. Instead of wasting your reading time talking on the telephone or listening to music, remember that reading is a skill that takes a lot of time and practice. You’ll be much more relaxed, and understand what you read much better, if you don’t have to rush.

You may have some other ideas on how to relax when you read. Do whatever works best for you. But remember, becoming relaxed does not happen overnight. It may sound silly, but most people have to work at relaxing before it comes naturally.
Activity 2: Gap Reading

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To demonstrate the use of reading strategies when words in the text are unknown. The participants are asked to answer general comprehension questions for a reading passage with deleted words. The participants are also asked to discuss how this kind of activity could be used with their own students.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
- Copies of “Society is Dead - We Have Retreated into the iWorld” (a text with words deleted, followed by comprehension questions)
- Copies of “Society is Dead - We Have Retreated into the iWorld” (full text)

Directions:
1. Ask the participants to move into pairs and distribute copies of the reading. Explain that their task will be to read a text which has words systematically deleted and then to answer ten comprehension questions on the text. They are not expected to fill in the blanks, as they would in a cloze test, but rather to read for general comprehension.

2. Ask the pairs to quickly generate a “strategy plan” for reading the text and answering the comprehension questions. Encourage the participants to think of potential difficulties and ask them to monitor their own performance. Emphasize that the purpose of this task is to read for general comprehension and therefore they do not need to understand all of the words of the text in order to answer the comprehension questions or to fill in the blanks.

3. When the participants are ready, have them begin the task, reminding them to “monitor” their own performance.

4. When all of the pairs have finished the questions, have them compare their answers. Then have them evaluate their own performance: (1) the relative success of their chosen strategies (and where they made changes to the original plan of strategy use), (2) their success at answering the comprehension questions, and (3) their reactions to this type of task. They should discuss what they did, how they did it, what they learned, and how they could use this knowledge (i.e., these strategies) for other tasks.

5. Distribute copies of the full text (especially for those who “need” to know because of their learning style preferences!).

Discussion/Wrap up:
Have the participants share their reactions to the task and their strategy use. Which strategies were successful? Have they used this technique before? How would they use this kind of task
with their own students? Ask about the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of activity, such as for demonstrating that one doesn’t need to understand every word to get the gist of a reading, or the relative difficulty students might have with this exercise. Discuss how this kind of task could be used for any type of reading, as long as it is chosen with care. Emphasize again that the full text is not needed because the purpose of the task is to answer the comprehension questions, not to understand each and every word.
Society is Dead - We Have Retreated into the iWorld

Directions: Read the story below and then answer the comprehension questions which follow.

I was visiting New York last week and noticed something I’d never thought I’d say about the city. Nightlife is pretty much dead, but day life — that insane mix of yells, chatter, clatter, hustle, and rudeness that makes New York so over-stimulating — was also a little different. It was quieter. As I looked across the _______ walking the pavements, I began to see why. There were little white _________ hanging down from their ears, or tucked into pockets, purses or jackets. The eyes were a little vacant. Each was in his or her own musical ________, walking to their soundtrack, stars in their own music video, almost ________ to the world around them. These are the iPod people.

Even without the white wires you can ________ who they are. They walk down the ________ in their own MP3 cocoon, ________ into others, deaf to small social cues, shutting out anyone not in their bubble. Every now and again some ________ start to emit strange tuneless squawks, like a badly tuned radio, and their ________ snap or their arms twitch to some strange soundless ________. When others say “Excuse me” or “Hi,” there’s no ________. It’s strange to be among so many people and ________ so little, except that each one is hearing so much.

Yes, I might as well ________ that I’m one of them. What was once an occasional musical diversion became a ________ obsession. Now I have my iTunes in my iMac for my iPod in my iWorld. I began to witness the glazed New York looks through my own ________ pupils, my white wires peeping out of my ________. I joined the cult a few years ago: the sect of the little white ________ worshippers. Every now and again I go to “church” — those huge, luminous Apple stores, pews in the rear, the clerics in their monastic ________ all bustling around or sitting behind the counter, like priests waiting to ________ confessions.

And, like all addictive cults, it’s ________. There are now 22m iPod owners in the United States and Apple is becoming a mass-market company for the first ________. Walk through any ________ in the United States these days and you will see traveler after ________ gliding through this social space as if on autopilot. Get on a subway and you’re surrounded by a bunch of commuters ________ into mid-space as if anaesthetized by technology. Don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t overhear, don’t observe. Just tune in and tune ________. It wouldn’t be so worrying if it weren’t ________ of something even bigger. Americans are beginning to ________ their lives.

Music was once the preserve of the ________ room or the concert hall. It was sometimes
solitary but it was primarily a ________ experience, something that brought people together, gave them the comfort of _________ that others too understood the pleasure of a Brahms symphony or that Beatles album. But ________ is as atomized now as living is. And it’s secret. That fellow next to you on the bus could be ________ to heavy metal or a Gregorian chant. You’ll never know. And so, bit by bit, you’ll never really know him. And by his white wires, he is indicating he doesn’t really ________ to know you.

But what are we missing? That hilarious part of an overheard _________ that stays with you all day; the child whose _________ on the pavement takes you back to your early memories; birdsong; weather; accents; the laughter of others. And those thoughts that come not by _________ your head with selected diversion, but by allowing your _________ to wander aimlessly through the regular background noise of human and mechanical life.

Not so long ago I was on a trip and _________ I had left my iPod behind. Panic. _________ then something else. I noticed the rhythms of others again, the _________ of the airplane, the opinions of the taxi driver, the _________ social cues that had been obscured before. I noticed how others _________ to each other. And I felt just a _________ bit connected again and a little more aware. Try it. There’s a _________ out there. And it has a soundtrack all its own.
Comprehension Questions:

1. What was it that was “dead” about New York City in the opinion of the author, and why?

2. According to the author, how has the iPod changed people’s public behavior?

3. Why does the author liken the iPod phenomenon to that of a cult?

4. What does he think iPod users are missing?

5. What recommendation does the author make at the end of the article?
Society is Dead - We Have Retreated into the World

I was visiting New York last week and noticed something I’d never thought I’d say about the city. Nightlife is pretty much dead, but day life — that insane mix of yells, chatter, clatter, hustle, and rudeness that makes New York so over-stimulating — was also a little different. It was quieter. As I looked across the crowds on the pavements, I began to see why. There were little white wires hanging down from their ears, or tucked into pockets, purses or jackets. The eyes were a little vacant. Each was in his or her own musical world, walking to their soundtrack, stars in their own music video, almost oblivious to the world around them. These are the iPod people.

Even without the white wires you can tell who they are. They walk down the street in their own MP3 cocoon, bumping into others, deaf to small social cues, shutting out anyone not in their bubble. Every now and again some unconsciously start to emit strange tuneless squawks, like a badly tuned radio, and their fingers snap or their arms twitch to some strange soundless rhythm. When others say “Excuse me” or “Hi,” there’s no response. It’s strange to be among so many people and hear so little, except that each one is hearing so much.

Yes, I might as well admit that I’m one of them. What was once an occasional musical diversion became a compulsive obsession. Now I have my iTunes in my iMac for my iPod in my iWorld. I began to witness the glazed New York looks through my own glazed pupils, my white wires peeping out of my ears. I joined the cult a few years ago: the sect of the little white box worshippers. Every now and again I go to “church” — those huge, luminous Apple stores, pews in the rear, the clerics in their monastic uniforms all bustling around or sitting behind the counter, like priests waiting to hear confessions.

And, like all addictive cults, it’s spreading. There are now 22m iPod owners in the United States and Apple is becoming a mass-market company for the first time. Walk through any airport in the United States these days and you will see person after person gliding through this social space as if on autopilot. Get on a subway and you’re surrounded by a bunch of commuters staring into mid-space as if anaesthetized by technology. Don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t overhear, don’t observe. Just tune in and tune out. It wouldn’t be so worrying if it weren’t part of something even bigger. Americans are beginning to narrow their lives.

Music was once the preserve of the living room or the concert hall. It was sometimes solitary but it was primarily a shared experience, something that brought people together, gave them the comfort of knowing that others too understood the pleasure of a Brahms symphony or that Beatles album. But music is as atomized now as living is. And it’s secret. That fellow next to you on the bus could be listening to heavy metal or a Gregorian chant. You’ll never know. And so, bit by bit, you’ll never really know him. And by his white wires, he is indicating he doesn’t really want to know you.

But what are we missing? That hilarious part of an overheard conversation that stays with you all day; the child whose chatter on the pavement takes you back to your early memories; birdsong; weather; accents; the laughter of others. And those thoughts that come not by filling your head with selected diversion, but by allowing your mind to wander aimlessly through the regular background noise of human and mechanical life.

Not so long ago I was on a trip and realized I had left my iPod behind. Panic. But then something else. I noticed the rhythms of others again, the sound of the airplane, the opinions of the taxi driver, the small social cues that had been obscured before. I noticed how others related to each other. And I felt just a little bit connected again and a little more aware. Try it. There’s a world out there. And it has a soundtrack all its own.
Activity 3: Summary Reading

Format:
Interactive in pairs

Purpose:
To demonstrate how learners can integrate strategies into a reading task, using all four skills and enlisting the support of graphic organizers in the presentation phase. The participants plan, monitor, and evaluate their strategy use throughout the task.

Time:
45 minutes

Materials:

Directions:
1. Ask the participants to move into pairs, and explain that they are going to read two different stories and then summarize the stories for their partners, without showing the stories to each other but by using other strategies to summarize and retell the stories. Suggest the following three strategies for completing the task: (1) draw pictures of the characters or main events in the story, (2) list the main events of the story in sequence, and (3) choose some key words or phrases to help remember the story. If they have questions about vocabulary, tell them to first ask their partners for help. After both stories have been summarized, they are to look for parallels between the stories and then make a list or chart (one per pair) that shows the similarities or patterns that they find: in the rhetorical structure of the stories, plots, vocabulary, grammar – anything they choose. They will then share their work with the rest of the class.

2. Hand out copies of the two stories, making sure that each person in the pair has a different story. (Note: Use a different color of paper for each story.) Tell the class to read their stories silently and then begin their summaries. Remind them not to show their partners the stories they have read, but to rely on their pictures or lists of words to retell the story.

3. Debrief by asking them to show their work to the rest of the class (one suggestion is to have each pair copy their chart or drawing of the similarities on the blackboard) and then describe the strategies that they used to complete the task. Ask for comments about what strategies they found useful and point out any differences among them.

4. Hand out copies of the vocabulary exercises. Instead of completing the entire exercise, have the participants fill out two or three of the items to get an understanding of how the exercise would work. Then, as a group, discuss the strategies and clues they used.

Discussion:
Ask for examples of the different strategies, emphasizing those that they find most interesting or that were most effective for completing the tasks. Which strategies do they usually use for this kind of task? Did they experiment with any “new” strategies? Which strategies would
they emphasize for their own students? Would they assign the strategies, elicit them from their students, or have the students work on their own to complete the task?

For the first part of the exercise (reading and summarizing), discuss ways that the strategies could be transferred to other tasks. For example, when reading a difficult text (even if it’s not a narrative story), try to draw pictures to help you understand it and remember it. When listening to a tape (or reading), take notes by writing down only the key words or phrases (not complete sentences).

Look for rhetorical similarities or patterns among texts: for example, narrative stories usually have an introduction, a conflict, and a resolution; or telephone conversations usually begin with a greeting and preliminary “chitchat” before the caller gives the reason for the call; or apologies in English follow “prescribed” patterns. Also point out that this kind of “information gap” activity (where each person needs to contribute for the task to be completed) can ensure that everyone in the class is participating. End by summarizing the strategies that were used during the task.

For the vocabulary part of the activity, discuss the various strategies embedded in the exercise: not stopping reading (or giving up entirely) when coming across a new vocabulary item because there is the possibility that a clue could be given in a sentence later in the text, avoiding immediate (and addictive) use of (or reliance on) the dictionary, making reasonable (even if incorrect) inferences and guesses from the context of the whole story and not merely the grammatical structure of the sentence in which the word occurs, using background knowledge of known vocabulary words and comparing their root structures to new words, and working with a partner to pool information and confirm information (because it is not only the teacher who has valuable information about the target language). Point out the difference between learning vocabulary in context vs. isolated words and summarize the strategies used during the task.

Wrap up:

Ask for comments about the participants’ reactions to this activity and how they could use this kind activity with their own students. What kinds of texts could they use? How could the activity be adapted for beginning readers? Hand out copies of the texts and vocabulary exercises so that each participant has a full set.
The Clever Judge

A Russian folktale

Once there was a very wise man who lived in a small house near the old Russian village of Morovza. This man was famous for his justice and wisdom, and although he lived by himself, he always welcomed visitors. People came from all over the countryside to have him settle their disputes.

One day two villagers came to him for guidance. The wise man said, “You have come here seeking my advice and I will try to resolve your problem as quickly as I can. What do you want to tell me?”

“Well,” the first man said, “I am a tailor and last week I left our village on business. I had one hundred gold coins which I had been saving for many years. I had worked very hard to earn them and I did not want to carry the coins with me, nor did I want them stolen while I was gone. So I asked this man to keep the coins safe for me. I wrapped them in a leather cloth and I gave them to him on the morning I left the village. When I returned from my trip, I asked him to return the money. He looked at me as if I were crazy and insisted that I had never given him any gold coins.”

“I see. Were there any witnesses who saw you give him the money?” the wise judge asked.

“Unfortunately, no. We had gone into the forest so that thieves could not watch us and there I handed him the coins.”

The judge looked somberly at the other man. “What do you have to say about this?”

“The man is a liar! I don’t know what he’s talking about,” the other man protested. “I never went into the forest with him and I never saw any gold coins. I have been accused of a crime that I didn’t commit. In fact, I never even met this man before today!”

The judge looked back at the first man. “Do you remember where you handed him the coins?”

“Yes. We were standing under a tall oak tree in the forest. My greatgrandfather planted that tree when he was a small boy and I can show you where it is with no trouble at all.”

“Then there was a witness to the crime,” the judge said. “But I am very old and I cannot walk without my cane. Since I cannot go to the forest with you, go to the oak tree and ask the tree to come here and verify your story.”

The man left quickly for the forest.

The judge waited and waited. Finally he lost patience. He turned to the other man and said with anger, “Where do you think he is? Hasn’t he reached the oak tree by now?”

“No, not yet,” the man said. “The forest is a great distance form here.”

They waited longer. The judge was furious. “Now do you think he’s reached the oak tree?”

“Yes,” the man said, “By now he must have reached it. But this is crazy. The oak tree will never come to talk to you. Besides, I am an innocent man and the tree could tell you nothing.”

“Perhaps. But let us wait until the man returns.”
Finally, the first man returned from the forest. He was tired and out of breath from running so far.

“Well?” the judge asked.

“The tree won’t come to see you,” the man said, panting. “I begged and pleaded with it, but the tree refuses to leave the forest.”

“Never mind,” the judge said. “The oak tree has already been here and told me the truth.”

“What do you mean?” the other man cried. “No tree came here! I’ve been with you the whole time.”

“Yes, that’s true, but how did you know that he had not reached the oak tree when I asked you?” the judge asked. “And how did you know that he had reached the tree when I asked you again later? Surely you were in the forest and you knew where the tree was. Surely you took the gold coins from this man. Now you will return the one hundred gold pieces and also pay a fine of ten silver coins for trying to cheat him.”

So, the tree was a witness without ever leaving the forest and justice was done.
The Golden Horse

*A Western folktale*

Once upon a time in the Old West, when everyone dreamed of finding gold in every river and stream, there was an old Indian chief who had a keen sense of justice and mercy. They called him Wise Bear. For many moons, Wise Bear had helped his villagers solve their disputes. Every wrinkle and line on his ancient face represented a problem that he had successfully resolved.

One day two men and a very old horse arrived in his village. Each man was holding a rope tied around the horse’s neck. Both men were shouting. The villagers gathered around them, trying to understand why the men were fighting. A young boy was sent to find Wise Bear, to seek his advice.

Wise Bear emerged slowly from his teepee and invited the two men to sit with him near the fire. “I will help you if I can,” said Wise Bear. “But only if you agree to accept my judgment.”

Both men agreed and began to tell their story.

“We found this old, gray horse standing near a stream while we were looking for gold. It is very special horse. She only drinks water when there is gold nearby,” explained the first man.

“Yes,” agreed the second man, “she is a very special horse, but not because she finds us gold. She is too old to look for treasure. We are rich enough.”

The first man shouted, “No! I want the horse! There is more gold to be found. She should be mine. I will be a poor man without her.”

“But she is my friend! You don’t care about anything!”

“Of course I care about the horse,” the first man said angrily. “But why should we be poor?!”

The men continued shouting until suddenly Wise Bear said, “Enough!”

The villagers leaned forward anxiously, waiting for Wise Bear to respond.

After a long pause, Wise Bear told the men that he had come to a decision. “There is a fair solution to your problem,” he said gravely. “You must cut the horse in half. In this way both of you can keep the horse.”

“What kind of solution is that?” said the first man. “The horse can’t find any more gold if she is dead!”

The second man nodded sadly and began to cry. “No, please do not let the horse die. I will give the horse to my partner instead. I would rather know that she is alive and unhappy than to see her die.”

Wise Bear smiled. “Then you shall have the horse.”

When the first man tried to protest, Wise Bear turned to him and sighed. “You are indeed a poor man. You have not yet learned the value of friendship. Love is more important than wealth.”

One more wrinkle appeared on Wise Bear’s face. Justice had been done.
The Clever Judge: Vocabulary in Context

Directions: Read the following sentences from “The Clever Judge” and try to guess the meanings of the underlined words. Write down the clues from the sentence or the story (or from your own previous knowledge) that helped you to guess the meaning. For example:

One day two villagers came to him for guidance.

**Guidance** probably means:

Clues:

When you have finished, discuss your answers with a partner. If there are words you still don’t understand, ask your partner to help you.

1. People came from all over the countryside to have him settle their disputes.
   **Settle their disputes** probably means:

   Clues:

2. You have come here to ask for my advice and I will try to resolve your problem as quickly as I can.
   **Resolve** probably means:

   Clues:

3. I wrapped them in a leather cloth and I gave them to him on the morning I left the village.
   **Wrapped** probably means:

   Clues:

4. Were there any witnesses who saw you give him the money?
   **Witnesses** probably means:

   Clues:

5. The judge looked somberly at the other man.
   **Somberly** probably means:

   Clues:
6. We were standing under a tall oak tree in the forest.
   **Oak** probably means:

   Clues:

7. But I am very old and I cannot walk without my cane.
   **Cane** probably means:

   Clues:

8. Since I cannot go to the forest with you, go to the oak tree and ask the tree to come here and verify your story.
   **Verify** probably means:

   Clues:

9. The judge was furious.
   **Furious** probably means:

   Clues:

10. “The tree won’t come to see you,” the man said, panting.
    **Panting** probably means:

    Clues:
The Golden Horse: Vocabulary in Context

**Directions:** Read the following sentences from “The Golden Horse” and try to guess the meanings of the underlined words. Write down the clues from the sentence or the story (or from your own previous knowledge) that helped you to guess the meaning. For example:

Once upon a time in the Old West, when men dreamed of finding gold in every river and **stream**, there was an old Indian chief who had a keen sense of justice and mercy.

**Stream** probably means:

Clues:

*When you have finished, discuss your answers with a partner. If there are words you still don’t understand, ask your partner to help you.*

1. For many moons, **Wise Bear** had helped his villagers solve their **disputes**.
   
   **Disputes** probably means:

   Clues:

2. Every **wrinkle** and line on his ancient face represented a problem that he had successfully resolved.
   
   **Wrinkle** probably means:

   Clues:

3. Every wrinkle and line on his **ancient** face represented a problem that he had successfully resolved.
   
   **Ancient** probably means:

   Clues:

4. A young boy was sent to find Wise Bear, to seek his **advice**.
   
   **To seek his advice** probably means:

   Clues:
5. Wise Bear emerged slowly from his teepee and invited the two men to sit with him near the fire.

   **Teepee** probably means:

   Clues:

6. She is too old to look for treasure.

   **Treasure** probably means:

   Clues:

7. The villagers leaned forward anxiously, waiting for Wise Bear to respond.

   **Anxiously** probably means:

   Clues:

8. The second man nodded sadly and began to cry.

   **Nodded** probably means:

   Clues:

9. When the first man tried to protest, Wise Bear turned to him and sighed.

   **To protest** probably means:

   Clues:

10. Love is more important than wealth.

    **Wealth** probably means:

    Clues:
**Activity 4: Skimming, Scanning, and Search Reading**

**Format:**
Individual or paired, whole group

**Purpose:**
To demonstrate how learners can use both search reading, skimming, and scanning strategies to extract relevant information from a newspaper article. Participants read through a newspaper text to list the possible origins for the name given to a city neighborhood.

**Time:**
20 minutes

**Materials:**
Text, “A Brief History of ‘Dinkytown’”

**Directions:**
1. Participants are to read individually or in pairs a newspaper text from the University of Minnesota Daily, and to list all the explanations provided as to why the city neighborhood adjacent to the East Bank campus of the University of Minnesota is called “Dinkytown.”

2. They are to note the extent to which they use:
   a. skimming – i.e., a rapid overall inspection of the text with periods of close inspection, to get a sense of the content and organization of the text reading,
   b. scanning – i.e., locating a specific symbol or group of symbols, such as finding a name or date in the text,
   c. search reading – i.e., attempting to locate information when not sure of its form.

3. The final product is to be a list of possible explanations with an indication of the strategies used to find each one.

4. The results are then shared with the whole group.

**Discussion/Wrap up:**
The discussion should include how these approaches to finding information in a text differ. In addition, if we consider these three approaches (skimming, scanning, and search reading) more as skills, then how they are operationalized by specific strategies? In other words, what specific strategies did readers use to skim the text? For example, one strategy can be to read rapidly through the whole text to get the gist of it. Another strategy could be to read rapidly to determine the type of text (e.g., fact, opinion, report, or hearsay). A scanning strategy could include looking for every occurrence of the word “Dinkytown” in the text and then reading carefully at that point. A further scanning strategy could be to look for words signaling subsequent explanations, such as the word “another” itself, such as in “Another definition…” A search reading strategy would
be to look for material of whatever kind throughout the text that seems to describe the label “Dinkytown.”

In reality, texts are often much longer than this one, which is when search reading strategies are particularly valuable. In a text of this length, the reader may simply read the whole text through very intensively. This is more difficult to do when faced with reading through the entire first section of the local newspaper, say, to find mention of something a person has suggested you read, but has forgotten the title of the article and where it was in the paper.
**A Brief History of ‘Dinkytown’ (The Minnesota Daily, February 28, 1996)**

For most new University students and visitors, the name “Dinkytown” often provokes a laugh. But for students who have been around the University long enough, Dinkytown sounds as normal as “Northrop” or “Coffman.”

Dinkydale, Dinkydome, Dinkytown.

In all seriousness, how did this neighborhood get its name?

There are many theories floating among the regular business owners and students in Dinkytown, but no one knows for certain which theory is more valid.

Even the librarian at the Minnesota Historical Society couldn’t give a definitive explanation. “I always thought it was a little town by the University,” said librarian Ruth Anderson.

This may seem to be an obvious explanation, given that Dinkytown covers just four square blocks bordered by 14th and 15th avenues and Fourth and Fifth streets. But that doesn’t offer a reason for the term “dinky.” Why not “Smalltown” or “Littleton”?

“Dinkytown” became the official name of the area in 1948, when the Dinkytown Business Association dubbed it “Dinkytown, U.S.A.” -

But Dinkytown has never been recognized by the U.S. Postal Service as the official name, said Ruth Howell-Weller of customer relations for the U.S. Postal Service. “Dinkytown has never been a town; it’s more like a neighborhood such as Uptown in south Minneapolis or Frogtown in St. Paul,” she said.

But if someone were to put the name “Dinkytown” on a letter along with a Minneapolis zip code, it would probably get there, said postal employee Gene Erickson of the Dinkytown Station.

Bob Hanson, owner of House or Hanson grocery store, said in a 1977 Daily story that he thinks the name is probably related to the old University Theater on Fourth Street. Hanson still owns the business, which has been in the family since 1932. Hanson said the theater had only four rows of seating when it opened and people would say they were “going to the Dinky.”

But Jose Trujillo, who manages the House or Hanson, where he has worked for 31 years, said “Dinkytown” might refer to the large male population or the University in its early days. Trujillo said the word “dink” means gentleman, and the University was full of young men who hung out in Dinkytown when the University first opened.

Although Webster’s Third New International Dictionary does not define “dink” as a gentleman, there are some possibly related explanations. “Dink” is an adjective that means “neatly dressed. After World War II many former soldiers came to the University, which increased enrollments dramatically. At that time, many men’s clothing businesses opened in Dinkytown, including Dayton’s.

Another definition of the word “dink” is a small, close-fitting cap, like a beanie. A dink was “traditionally worn by freshmen during their first term at school or college,” according to Webster’s dictionary. But no evidence has been found that students ever wore those beanies at the University.
One of the more common explanations of how the area got its name was to do with one of Dinkytown’s oldest buildings, located on the corner of Fourth Street and 14th Avenue. The word “Grodnik” is inscribed above the doorway of the building, and it is said to be translated from Polish as “little town.”

Doug Grina, owner of Al’s Breakfast, which was established in 1950, said this could be a possible explanation. “It makes pretty good sense to me,” Grina said. “Students thought it was funny and called it ‘Dinkytown.’”

Tom Dale, who works as a tailor in Dinkytown, said he doesn’t really buy the Grodnik theory. “It’s hard to find that they would define a town by what a building means in Polish,” he said.

Perhaps the most logical origin of the name “Dinkytown” is from the town’s history with the nearby railroad tracks. “Dinkies,” or “dinkeys,” are defined in Webster’s New World Dictionary as small railroad cars used for hauling freight, logging and shunting (shifting cars).

At the turn of the century, many dinkeys were stored in the railroad area near the south edge of Dinkytown. Although most business locals in Dinkytown have heard many theories, most were familiar with the railroad idea.

Kristen Eide-Tollesson, member of the Dinkytown Business Association, said she has been putting together a Dinkytown folk history. She said the derivation of the name has “never been definitively answered,” although she favors the railroad theory.

“Dinkytown was primarily made of memories of people who passed through here,” she said.

After doing business in Dinkytown for 34 years, Dave Watts of Dave’s Dinkytown Hairstylists said most of his older customers agree with the railroad theory.

Dale said the railroad idea makes sense because different groups of railroad workers like to put each other down about what kinds of jobs they perform. When he worked on the railroads in the late 1970s, he said the switchmen would tease the brakemen, and the carmen would tease the switchmen. etc.

Dale said the word “dinky” might have been a derogatory term referring to men who worked on the dinkeys. They probably used to sleep in cabooses and maybe people in town didn’t like that, he said.

Other locals, like Bud Platt, owner of Campus Drug for 2½ years, devise their own theory. Platt said initially the name probably was related to the railroad. But the reason the name has been maintained throughout the years is that it also relates to the size of the town, he added.

“It’s one of these things where people like to compare stories without caring one way or the other (about the true meaning),” Platt said.

Perhaps that’s part of Dinkytown’s charm. No one knows for sure where the name came from, but it’s a small flavor of the local history.
Activity 5: Speaking Strategy Role Play

Format:
Jigsaw

Purpose:
To raise awareness of strategies found useful for speaking a foreign language (based on a research study of the impact of strategies-based instruction on speaking skills) and to brainstorm about additional strategies. In small groups, the participants are asked to: (1) discuss and brainstorm strategies that can be used before, during, and after speaking, (2) perform a role-play situation (complaining to a neighbor about loud noise) in an L2 of their choice, (3) summarize their use of strategies during the role play, and (4) discuss their lists of strategies and reactions to the exercise in a jigsaw format.

Time:
45 minutes

Materials:
Three direction sheets copied on three different colors:
- “Preparing for a Speaking Task”
- “Performing for a Speaking Task”
- “Evaluating a Speaking Task”

Role play cards A and B (cut into strips and pasted onto note cards in two different colors)
Copies of “Strategies Useful for Speaking a Foreign Language”

Directions:
1. Divide the class into three groups. Explain to the participants that they are going to pretend that they are students learning a L2 and that they are going to simulate a classroom language task (a role-play situation). The goal is to have them imagine what a language student would do in this situation and become aware of strategies that can be used for speaking tasks. Each group focuses on a different set of strategies (before, during, and after speaking).

2. Give the first group “Strategy Role Play: Preparing for a Speaking Task,” the second group “Strategy Role Play: Performing a Speaking Task,” and the third group “Strategy Role Play: Evaluating a Speaking Task.” Explain that these are not complete lists of strategies, but a list of strategies generated from a strategies research project. As a group, the participants will read the list of strategies and brainstorm other strategies before, during, or after a speaking task. (5 7 mins)

3. Distribute the role-play cards so that there is an equal distribution of roles A and B within each group.

Role A: You are studying for an important exam for your English class. Since you study best in a quiet environment, you have chosen to study in your room at home. However, your upstairs neighbor has started playing rock music so loudly on the stereo that you are unable to concentrate. Pretend that you have gone upstairs to talk to your neighbor about the noise.

Role B: You have just returned from a hard day at school. To relax, you decide to listen to your favorite rock music on the stereo. Since it’s early in the evening, you don’t think your neighbors
will mind that you are playing your music more loudly than you normally do. As you start to relax and unwind, you suddenly hear a knock at your door.

The participants are to perform the role-play situation in pairs in whatever L2s they can. In order to do this, they may need to pair up with people from any of the three groups. They need to make sure that they experiment with the strategies from their list. (5 mins)

4. The participants then return to their group and discuss their reactions to the role play and the strategies that they used. (57 mins)

5. Next, the participants form triads consisting of one member from each of the three speaking-strategy groups (preparing, performing, and evaluating speaking). They can find each other through the color-coding of their strategy sheets. In these triads, they are to share with the other two people the strategies that they discussed in their groups. (15 mins)

6. Monitor the activity, answering questions and clarifying the activity as appropriate, and make sure that the original groups reform for discussion before individuals form jigsaw triads. Each triad should consist of a participant from each of the three original groups.

7. Distribute to each triads the handout entitled “Strategies Useful for Speaking a Foreign Language” that has a longer list of possible strategies that can be used before, during, and after speaking. (This list was first created as part of a research study by Cohen, Weaver & Li [1998] on strategies for speaking a foreign language. The experimental teachers in the study shared the list with their students and together they expanded it and used it to prepare the students for an oral proficiency exam.)

Discussion:
Ask for comments about the participants’ reactions to this task and how they see using it (or an adapted version of it) with their own students. Discuss the strategies that were used and their relative effectiveness for this task. What would they do differently next time?

Wrap up:
Suggest that the participants share this kind of strategy list with their students or create their own lists together. The students themselves may have excellent suggestions about the strategies that they use when learning and using a foreign language. Since strategy use can vary from task to task and skill to skill, the list of strategies may never be fully complete. If the students are aware of and know how to apply a broad range of strategies for a broad range of purposes, this flexibility will enhance their effectiveness when performing language tasks. Note that the task is explicit in its structure – the task is intended to raise students’ awareness of their patterns of strategy use while at the same time allowing them to use the language. We have found that this task often gives reluctant speakers greater confidence in their ability to speak. They see that the speaking act is actually comprised of a series of different components and can be related to strategically.
Preparing for a Speaking Task

1. Group Task (57 minutes)

Look at the following list of strategies. Do any of them look familiar? Have you used any of them before? How do you (and/or your students) usually prepare for a speaking task when learning a foreign language? As a group, brainstorm other strategies that may be useful for preparing for a speaking task and add them to the list.

Before you speak:

- Lower your anxiety.
  - Take a few deep breaths.
  - Encourage yourself with positive selftalk.
  - Visualize yourself succeeding.
- Identify the goal and purpose of the task.
- Activate your background knowledge. What do you already know about the task?
- Plan what you will say and organize your thoughts.
  - What vocabulary or grammar forms will you use?
- Predict the difficulties you might encounter.
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the purpose of the task or how to do it.

2. Pair Role Play (5 minutes)

You are to perform the role-play situation in pairs in whatever L2s you can. To do this, you may need to pair up with people from any of the three groups. Be sure that your role slips are different colors and also be sure to experiment with the strategies from your list. When you are finished, look at the strategy list again. Did you use any of the suggested strategies? Why or why not? Did you use any other strategies?

3. Group Task (57 minutes)

As a group, summarize the strategies that you used to prepare for the role play and discuss whether they affected your performance. What suggestions would you make for other learners? What is your reaction to the task itself?

4. Triad Jigsaw (15 minutes)

Now form a new group of three, with a representative from each of the original groups. Discuss your list of strategies and your group’s suggestions for preparing for a speaking task. Compare your reactions to the role play and how your list of strategies may (or may not) have influenced your performance. How could you use this kind of activity with your own students?
Performing a Speaking Task

1. Group Task (57 minutes)
   Look at the following list of strategies. Do any of them look familiar? Have you used any of them before? How do you (and/or your students) usually perform a speaking task when learning a foreign language? Do you monitor your performance? As a group, brainstorm other strategies that may be useful for performing a speaking task and add them to the list.

   While you are speaking:
   - Take your emotional temperature. If you are tense, try to relax and take a deep breath.
   - Encourage yourself by using positive self-talk.
   - Self-correct. If you hear yourself making a mistake, back up and fix it.
   - Be involved in the conversation.
     - Listen to your conversation partner.
     - Cooperate to negotiate meaning and to complete the task.
   - Monitor your speech by paying attention to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.
   - Compensate for any difficulties you may have.
     - Use circumlocution, synonyms, cognates, gestures, ask for help, make up new words, or guess which word to use.

2. Pair Role Play (5 minutes)
   You are to perform the role-play situation in pairs in whatever L2s you can. To do this, you may need to pair up with people from any of the three groups. Be sure that your role slips are different colors and also be sure to experiment with the strategies from your list. When you are finished, look at the strategy list again. Did you use any of the suggested strategies? Why or why not? Did you use any other strategies?

3. Group Task (57 minutes)
   As a group, summarize the strategies that you used during the role play and discuss how they may have affected your performance. What suggestions would you make for other learners? What is your reaction to the task itself?

4. Triad Jigsaw (15 minutes)
   Now form a new group of three, with a representative from each of the original groups. Discuss your list of strategies and your group’s suggestions for performing a speaking task. Compare your reactions to the role play and how your list of strategies may (or may not) have influenced your performance. How could you use this kind of activity with your own students?
1. Group Task (57 minutes)

Look at the following list of strategies. Do any of them look familiar? Have you used any of them before? How do you (and/or your students) usually evaluate a speaking task when learning a foreign language? Do you (and/or your students) plan for future tasks? As a group, brainstorm other strategies that may be useful after performing a speaking task and add them to the list.

After you speak:

- Reward yourself with positive self-talk.
- Evaluate how well the activity was accomplished.
  - Did you complete the task, achieve the purpose, accomplish the goal?
  - What would you do differently next time?
- Identify the problem areas.
- Plan for how you will improve the next time.
- Look up vocabulary and grammar forms you had difficulty remembering.
- Keep a learning log.
  - Write down your strategies, reactions to the task, and task outcomes.
  - Reflect on what works (or doesn’t work) for you. Add new strategies to your list.

2. Pair Role Play (5 minutes)

You are to perform the role-play situation in pairs in whatever L2s you can. To do this, you may need to pair up with people from any of the three groups. Be sure that your role slips are different colors and also be sure to experiment with the strategies from your list. When you are finished, look at the strategy list again. Did you use any of the suggested strategies? Why or why not? Did you use any other strategies?

3. Group Task (57 minutes)

As a group, discuss the strategies that you used for evaluating the role play and how they may have affected your performance. What suggestions would you make for other learners? What is your reaction to the task itself?

4. Triad Jigsaw (15 minutes)

Now form a new group of three, with a representative from each of the original groups. Discuss your list of strategies and your group’s suggestions for self-evaluating a speaking task. Compare your reactions to the role play and how your list of strategies may (or may not) have influenced your performance. How could you use this kind of activity with your own students?
Some Strategies Useful for Speaking a Foreign Language

Before you speak:

• Lower your anxiety.
  Take a few deep breaths.
  Encourage yourself with positive selftalk.
  Visualize yourself succeeding.
  Feel prepared.
  Use relaxation techniques.
  Find other ways to lower your anxiety.

• Identify the goal and purpose of the task.
  What are you going to learn or demonstrate in this exercise?

• Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the goal and purpose of the task or how to do it – Do you understand the directions?

• Activate your background knowledge.
  What do you already know about the task?
  What do you know about the topic?
  Relate the task to a similar situation; make associations.

• Predict what is going to happen.
  Predict the difficulties you might encounter.
  Think about the vocabulary and grammar forms you will need.
  Translate from English any words you don’t already know or use a dictionary.
  Think of other ways to get your message across if you don’t know the vocabulary: synonyms, antonyms, explanations, or nonverbal ways to communicate.

• Plan what you will say.
  Organize your thoughts.
  Prepare an “outline” (use notes, choose key vocabulary, draw pictures).
  Predict what the other person is going to say.
  Rehearse (practice silently, act out in front of a mirror, record yourself and listen).
  Encourage yourself to speak out, even though you might make some mistakes.
  Cooperate with your speaking partner.
**While you are speaking:**

- **Feel in control.**
  - Take your emotional temperature. If you are tense, try to relax and take a deep breath, funnel your energy to your brain rather than your body.
  - Ask for clarification (“Is this what I’m supposed to do?”), help (ask for a word, let others know when you need help), or verification (ask someone to correct your pronunciation).
  - Encourage yourself by using positive self-talk.

- **Concentrate on the task.** Don’t let what is going on around you distract you.
  - Use your prepared materials (when allowed).
  - Delay speaking. It’s OK to take time to think out your response.
  - Don’t give up. Don’t let your mistakes stop you. If you talk yourself into a corner or become frustrated, back up, ask for time, and start over in another direction.

- **Be involved in the conversation.**
  - Direct your thoughts away from the situation and concentrate on the conversation.
  - Listen to your conversation partner. Often you will be able to use the grammar or vocabulary that they use in your own response.
  - Cooperate to negotiate meaning and to complete the task.
  - Anticipate what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
  - Empathize with your partner. Try to be supportive and helpful.
  - Take reasonable risks. Don’t guess wildly, but use your good judgment to go ahead and speak when it’s appropriate, rather than keep silent for fear of making a mistake.
  - Think in the target language.

- **Monitor your speech by paying attention to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.**
  - Use new vocabulary. Try not to rely only on familiar words and phrases.
  - Self-correct. If you hear yourself making a mistake, back up and fix it.
  - Imitate the way native speakers talk.

- **Compensate for any difficulties you have.**
  - Use circumlocution, synonyms, cognates, gestures, ask for help, make up new words, or guess which word to use.
  - Adjust or approximate your message. If you can’t communicate the complexity of your idea, communicate it simply. Through a succession of questions and answers, you are likely to get your point across instead of shutting down for a lack of ability to relate the first idea.
  - Switch (when possible) to a topic for which you know the words. (Don’t do this to avoid practicing new material, however!)
After you speak:

- Reward yourself with positive self-talk or something more tangible.
  Give yourself a personally meaningful reward for a particularly good performance.
- Evaluate how well the activity was accomplished.
  Did you complete the task, achieve the purpose, accomplish the goal?
  What would you do differently next time?
  What strategies worked or didn’t work this time?
  Share your thoughts with peers and instructors. (Ask for and give feedback. Share your successful strategies with others.)
  Be aware of others’ thoughts and feelings.
- Identify the problem areas.
  Look up vocabulary and grammar forms you had difficulty remembering.
  Think of new ways to relax and encourage yourself to speak.
- Plan for how you will improve the next time.
  Try to think of new strategies you could use.
  Experiment with your classmates’ strategies or those suggested by your instructor.
- Ask for help or correction.
  Work with proficient users of the target language. Practice the task again if it helps.
  Talk to the instructor or your classmates if you have any questions.
- Keep a learning log.
  Write down your strategies, reactions to the task, and task outcomes.
  Try to judge how well you are improving.
  Reflect on what works (or doesn’t work) for you. Add new strategies to your list.
Role A: You are studying for an important exam for your English class. Since you study best in a quiet environment, you have chosen to study in your room at home. However, your upstairs neighbor has started playing rock music so loudly on the stereo that you are unable to concentrate. Feeling strongly that it is your right to study in peace, you go upstairs to talk to your neighbor about the noise.

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Role B: You have just returned from a hard day at school. To relax, you decide to listen to your favorite rock music on the stereo. Since it’s early in the evening, you don’t think your neighbors will mind that you are playing your music more loudly than you normally do. You feel strongly that it is your right to play loud music. As you start to relax and unwind, you suddenly hear a knock at your door.

Role B: You have just returned from a hard day at school. To relax, you decide to listen to your favorite rock music on the stereo. Since it’s early in the evening, you don’t think your neighbors will mind that you are playing your music more loudly than you normally do. You feel strongly that it is your right to play loud music. As you start to relax and unwind, you suddenly hear a knock at your door.

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Activity 6: Grammar Learning Strategies

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To use the strategies of visualization and relaxation to practice an English grammar form: *used to*. The participants are asked to visualize while listening to a short passage and then to use the mental images to practice the grammar form in a speaking activity.

Time:
20 minutes

Materials:
“Used to: Visualization Script”

Directions:
1. Tell the participants to pretend that they are learning English (if it is their L1). In this activity, they will relax and listen to a short passage with their eyes closed, and visualize the images in their minds as they listen. Then, they will use these mental images for a speaking activity. The purpose of the activity is to experience relaxation and visualizing as a strategy for learning grammar. The task involves strategies for listening, preparing to speak, and speaking. The grammar form they will practice is *used to*.

2. Have the participants put down their pens and notebooks and ask them to relax by getting comfortable in their chairs, closing their eyes, and breathing slowly and deeply.

3. Read the “Used to: Visualization Script” out loud in a pleasant, soft (relaxing!) tone of voice. The instructions indicate how the participants are to listen, to prepare for speaking, and to engage in conversation with a partner.

Discussion:
After the participants have finished speaking, ask them for their reactions to the strategies. Did the visualization help them with the speaking task? Were they relaxed? What other ways could visualization (or mental images) be used? What other ways do they try to relax when learning a language? Also discuss the benefits of activating background knowledge to prepare for a task, as well as the repetition of the grammar form in a meaningful context.

Wrap up:
Ask for reactions to this activity and how they could use it (or an adapted version of it) with their own students. Emphasize that strategies can be used in many different ways. They can and should be transferred to new tasks. Such relaxation and visualization strategies can hopefully be employed by learners on their own – whether in the learning of challenging grammatical structures, vocabulary words, pragmatic routines, or other daunting language material. It is important to keep the emphasis on learner-generated strategies, not those applied by a teacher, since the learning of grammar ultimately falls on the students’ shoulders.
I’d like to tell you about some wonderful memories that came back to me in a dream I had last night. Try to picture my dream in your minds as I describe it to you. Keep your eyes closed and breathe slowly and deeply. Relax. Here it is:

*It was summertime and it was a really beautiful day. The sky was blue and there were no clouds at all. It was one of those days where the sun is warm but the wind is cool.*

*I’m ten years old and I’m at my grandfather’s farm in the country. There’s a big white house with a garden full of flowers in front of the house. My grandmother used to grow beautiful roses every year. The barn is nearby, where my grandfather used to keep the hay for the horses. You can see where there used to be another barn, but now it’s just a pile of old, grey wood. If you look carefully, you can still see that some of the boards used to be painted red, but the strong sun has faded the color away.*

*My grandfather is telling me one of his stories. He used to tell me stories all the time about when his family lived in Russia. My grandfather used to walk to school every day and his mother used to give him warm pastries to eat for breakfast along the way. He used to carry them in his pocket to keep his hands warm on the long walk to school.*

Now, keeping your eyes closed, try to visualize yourself when you were young. Picture yourself as a child. Think of some things that you used to do when you were young. Bring back those memories, those past habits. Try to see them in your mind. [Pause]

Picture your memory and silently say to yourself what you used to do. If you used to go to the beach in the summertime with your family, you could say: “I used to go to Florida every summer. I used to sit on the hot sand. I used to love the taste of the saltwater.”

When you are ready, open your eyes and tell the person next to you what you used to do when you were young.
Activity 7: Collaborative Writing Strategies

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To demonstrate writing strategies intended for use in collaborative group efforts. The participants are asked to brainstorm ideas for an essay in a cooperative group format.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Copies of “Shopping in the Future” (Roles: Reader, Recorder, Facilitator) Note: Different color paper may be used for each role to help organize the groups.

Directions:
1. Explain that the purpose of the activity is to focus on pre-writing strategies, using the cooperative format, which is based on the concept that all members of the group need to participate in order to complete the task (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1991). In groups of three, the participants are asked to brainstorm ideas for an essay about what shopping will be like one hundred years in the future. After the brainstorming session, they will pretend that their homework assignment is to write the essay based on the ideas generated in the groups.

2. Put the participants into groups of three. Assign group roles by having the participants count off (onetwothree) and hand out the sheets according to the following: Role 1 is the reader, Role 2 is the recorder, and Role 3 is the facilitator. Have each member of the group read his/her handout without showing it to the other members of the group. Ask for suggestions about the kinds of strategies that the participants might need to use to complete this activity. For example, they may need to clarify, ask for repetition, practice notetaking skills, and cooperate with the other group members.

3. Allow fifteen minutes for the groups to brainstorm ideas. When they are finished, discuss the writing strategies they were aware of using within a cooperative group format and their reactions to this kind of task.

Discussion/Wrap up:
Have the participants focus on the activity itself, rather than the content. Was the activity enjoyable? Were they able to maintain their respective roles throughout the activity? Were there any difficulties or misunderstandings about the structure or intent of the activity? Which strategies did they use? How could they use this kind of activity with their own students? Have they ever experimented with the cooperative group format with their students?
What will shopping be like one hundred years from now?

Role: Reader

Directions:

• Your task is to brainstorm ideas about what shopping will be like in the future.

• Your role is to read each of the following questions out loud to your group.

• DO NOT show this paper to the other group members.

• Speak clearly and repeat your answer if someone doesn’t understand. Give your own ideas, too.

You have fifteen minutes for group discussion.

1. Where will people shop?

2. What kind of transportation will people use to shop?

3. What new technology will be available?

4. How will people pay for what they buy?

5. What kinds of things will people buy?

6. How much will things cost?

7. (Add your own question here)
What will shopping be like one hundred years from now?

Role: Recorder

Directions:

• Your task is to brainstorm ideas about what shopping will be like in the future.

• One member of your groups will read out loud a list of questions to be answered in your group.

• Your role is to write down all of the ideas that your group suggests on this sheet of paper (You don’t have to write complete sentences, use your notetaking skills).

• DO NOT show this paper to the other group members.

• Speak clearly and repeat your answer if someone doesn’t understand. Give your own ideas, too.

You have fifteen minutes for group discussion.
What will shopping be like one hundred years from now?

Role: Facilitator

Directions:

• Your task is to brainstorm ideas about what shopping will be like in the future.

• One member of your group will read out loud a list of questions to be answered by your group. The other member of the group will record your answers.

• Your role is to make sure every member of your group participates actively (including you!). In other words, encourage each person to give his or her ideas and ask the person to explain these ideas if you don’t understand them. Also make sure the group doesn’t spend too much time on one question.

• DO NOT show this paper to the other group members.

• Speak clearly and repeat you answer if someone doesn’t understand. Give your own ideas, too.

You have fifteen minutes for group discussion.

Examples of the kinds of things you can say:

To ask for more ideas:

_______, do you have any ideas?
What do you think, ________?
How many ideas do we have so far?
What else can we say?
What other suggestions do you have?

To say that you like an idea:
I like that!
That’s really creative!
Good idea!
Wow! That’s great!

To clarify meaning:

Could you please repeat that?
I didn’t understand what you said.
What do you mean?
Do you mean it’s ________?
Can you explain that more?

To keep the group focused on the task:

What’s the next question?
Let’s go on to the next question.
We need to move on, OK?
We’re running out of time.
How many questions are left?
Activity 8: Student SelfEvaluation of Strategy Use

Format:
Individual, whole group

Purpose:
To give the participants a reflective writing task where they can brainstorm about the kinds of student selfevaluation that might be included in SSBI work.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Sheet with guiding questions, pens/pencils

Directions:
1. Ask the participants to think silently for 23 minutes about ways that students can do their own selfevaluation. Have them consult the guiding questions appearing on the handout.
2. Then ask the students to write their ideas on paper for about 57 minutes. Encourage the participants not to begin writing immediately, but to think and reflect before writing.
3. Ask the participants to quickly share their written ideas with a partner (34 minutes).

Discussion:
As a group, ask for and discuss the ideas that were generated. Discuss the issue of the level of responsibility that students can take in order to enhance their future use of strategies. Explore the various types of selfevaluation that the participants have experienced as learners and those that they have experimented within their own classrooms.
Guiding Questions Regarding Student Self-Evaluation of Strategy Use

1. What needs to be evaluated in terms of their strategy use? The following are some areas that could be included in your deliberations. Comment or elaborate on them and add others:
   a. the reason for selecting that strategy,
   b. the total number of strategies used,
   c. the frequency with which certain strategies are used,
   d. the appropriateness of the tasks for which they are using them,
   e. 
   f. 

2. What can the students evaluate for themselves? Again here are some suggested areas. Comment or elaborate on them and add others:
   a. the ease with which they use the strategies,
   b. which strategies seem to go with other ones in sequence or in clusters,
   c. the way they actually use the strategies,
   d. 
   e. 

3. How can learners find out which strategies work best for them on certain tasks? Can they also find out why this is so?

4. How can this evaluation be utilized (i.e., what is the purpose/end result of evaluation)?
Activity 9: Promoting Strategy Transfer by Language Learners

Format:
Discussion

Purpose:
To discuss how strategies can be transferred across language skills and tasks, using a question and answer technique.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Copies of “Transfer Questions” (cut into strips and sealed into envelopes)

Directions:
1. Ask the participants to form pairs and distribute an envelope to each pair. Tell the participants that they will be discussing the answers to five questions about promoting strategy transfer across language skills and tasks.
2. The participants should open their envelopes and remove the question strips one at a time. The pairs should discuss each question for 34 minutes before moving to the next question. Emphasize that this is an opportunity for participants to give their opinions about how to promote strategy transfer.
3. When the participants have finished all of the questions, ask the whole group for answers to each question. Write comments on the board, overhead, or chart.

Discussion:
Include the opinions of all of the participants and emphasize that there are not always simple, prescriptive answers to the questions we may have about the best way to provide strategies based instruction for our students.

Wrap up:
Summarize the main conclusions that the group has reached.
Transfer Questions

1. How might learners transfer one or more strategies that they use for looking up a word in an L1-L2 dictionary while reading a text to an oral interaction situation where they don’t have time to consult a dictionary, but rather must consult their own “mental lexicon” instead?

2. Are there strategies used in completing verb conjugation tasks in typical homework assignments that could be consciously (and successfully) applied to the rapid, online conjugating of verbs in actual conversation? What are these and how might they work?

3. What kinds of strategies for inferring what the teacher meant in an oral anecdote in class could learners apply to inferring the meaning of a passage in a novel?

4. What strategies for using the appropriate level of formality in producing a written text can be transferred to dealing with levels of formality in speaking situations?

5. What strategies for listening to rapid speech might also be applicable to rapid reading as well?
**Activity 10: Frameworks for SSBI Lessons**

**Format:**
- Jigsaw

**Purpose:**
To discuss three different instructional frameworks for SSBI lessons to enhance language learner strategy use. While the first framework was developed by Pearson and Dole for L1 strategy instruction, the latter two by Oxford, Crookall, Cohen, Lavine, Nyikos, and Sutter (1990) and by Chamot, Anstrom, Bartoshesky, Belanger, Delett, Karwan, Meloni, and Keatley (2003) were developed expressly for L2 strategy instruction, with the third being the most recent. Using a jigsaw format, each participant will memorize the sequence of a framework and describe it to the other members of the group. Then the three frameworks will be compared.

**Time:**
- 45 minutes

**Materials:**
- Individual copies of the three frameworks for each of the participants (use different colors for each framework).

**Directions:**
1. Explain to the participants that they will be learning in a jigsaw format about three different instructional frameworks for delivering SSBI lessons. Read aloud this introductory paragraph to the whole group:

   *While limited empirical evidence has yet been provided to determine the best overall framework for delivering SSBI lessons, at least three different frameworks for learner strategy instruction have been identified. They have been designed to raise student awareness of the purpose and rationale of strategy use, to give students opportunities to practice the strategies that they are being taught, and to help students understand how to use the strategies in new learning contexts. All of the following sequences contain the necessary components of explicit strategies instruction: they emphasize discussions about the use and value of strategies, encourage conscious and purposeful strategy use and transfer, and allow students to monitor their performance and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they are using. In using one or more of these frameworks in the classroom, teachers should be encouraged to provide suggestive, rather than corrective, feedback to allow students to consider alternative ways of approaching different learning tasks.*
2. Then ask the participants to move into three groups: Group 1 will read and memorize Framework #1, Group 2 will read and memorize Framework #2, and Group 3 will read and memorize Framework #3. Group members are expected to help each other learn the frameworks using any strategies they wish. They will be asked to describe their assigned framework in smaller groups. Explain that they may wish to prepare notes in their larger groups to help them remember the elements of the framework, but that they should not use the handout itself when they describe the framework in the jigsaw group. Allow 10–15 minutes for this part.

3. Group the participants into new groups of three, making sure that each jigsaw group has a representative to describe each of the three frameworks. Their task is to describe their framework to the other two members of the group. (Note: It will be easier to organize the jigsaw groups if each framework is copied onto a different color of paper. This way, the participants are simply asked to get into groups of three by ensuring that each color [i.e., framework description] is represented in each group.) If the large group is not divisible by three, have the extra participants join established groups and ask those who have the same framework to describe it as a pair. Remind them that they should not use the handout when describing their respective frameworks – they should describe the framework from memory or use the notes that they prepared in the larger group. Let them know that they will receive a handout of all three frameworks at the end of the activity, so they do not need to take notes (unless they want to!) during the presentations. This should take about 20 minutes.

4. Have the participants return to their original three groups. Hand out the full copies of the different frameworks. For this part of the discussion, the participants should reflect on the strategies that they used to memorize the appropriate framework. Which strategies were successful? What would they do differently next time? How could they use this kind of activity with their own students?

Discussion/Wrap up:
Ask for comments about the activity and the frameworks, answering questions as appropriate. Ask them to emphasize how strategies were used to complete the task.
Framework #1

Pearson and Dole (1987) have suggested an approach to the sequence of first language strategy instruction that can also be applied to the study of foreign languages. This model targets isolated strategies by including explicit modeling and explanation of the benefits of applying a specific strategy, extensive functional practice with the strategy (ranging from highly structured practice to independent strategy selection and use), and the eventual transfer of the strategy to new learning contexts. Students may better understand the applications of the various strategies if they are first modeled by the teacher and then practiced individually. After a range or set of strategies have been introduced and practiced, the teacher can further encourage independent strategy use and promote learner autonomy by encouraging learners to take responsibility for the selection, use, and evaluation of the various strategies they have been taught.

1) Teacher Modeling  
   The teacher performs initial modeling of the strategy, giving a direct explanation of the strategy’s use and importance.

2) Guided Practice  
   Then the teacher leads the students through guided practice with the strategy.

3) Consolidation  
   The next phase is one of consolidation, where teachers help students identify the strategy and decide where it might be used;

4) Independent Practice  
   Then follows independent practice of the strategy by the students.

5) Application  
   Finally, the students are encouraged to apply the strategy to new tasks.
Framework #2

Oxford, Crookall, Cohen, Lavine, Nyikos, and Sutter (1990) outline a 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 language tasks.

1) **Language Activity**
   Ask learners to do a language activity without any strategy instruction.

2) **Discussion of Strategy Use**
   Have them discuss how they did it, praise any useful strategies and self-directed attitudes that they mention, and ask them to reflect on how the strategies they selected may have facilitated the learning process.

3) **Suggestions for Complementing Strategy Repertoire**
   Suggest and demonstrate other helpful strategies, mentioning the need for greater self-direction and expected benefits, and making sure that the students are aware of the rationale for strategy use. Learners can also be asked to identify those strategies that they do not currently use, and consider ways that they could include new strategies in their learning repertoires.

4) **Strategy Practice**
   Allow learners plenty of time to practice the new strategies with language tasks.

5) **Strategy Transfer**
   Show how the strategies can be transferred to other tasks.

6) **Strategy Practice with New Tasks**
   Provide practice using the techniques with new tasks and allow learners to make choices about the strategies they will use to complete the language learning task.

7) **Evaluating Strategy Use**
   Help students understand how to evaluate the success of their strategy use and to gauge their progress as more responsible and self-directed learners.
Chamot, A. U., Anstrom, K., Bartoshesky, A., Belanger, A., Delett, J., Karwan, V., Meloni, C., & Keatley, C. (2003) have created a five-stage guide for teachers to conduct strategies-enhanced instruction at the elementary school level. The following is excerpted from their strategy instruction manual (Chapter 3):

1) Preparation
   The teacher activates the students’ background knowledge of the strategies they already use to help them complete a specific task.

2) Presentation
   The teacher introduces the new concept or language skill, along with one or two strategies. To present the strategy, you want to embed it in the context of the content you are teaching, but you also explicitly teach the strategy. To do this, you will want to name the strategy, explain how to use it, tell when to use it, model it, and explain its importance.

3) Practice
   The content and language skills you are teaching serve as the material students use to practice the strategy. If the class contains students at varied levels of ability, then you might design different types of tasks for the practice phase to accommodate these differing ability levels.

4) Evaluation
   The evaluation phase focuses on student self-evaluation – their finding out which learning strategies work best for them on certain tasks and why, so they can refine their individual repertoire of strategies. Methods that you can use to encourage student self-evaluation of learning strategies include class discussions and learning strategies checklists.

5) Expansion
   In expansion, students learn to relate and transfer strategy use to other tasks, subject areas, and aspects of their lives. You may initiate a brainstorming session by sharing with your class different ways you have used a particular learning strategy. The class can continue brainstorming additional contexts in which it could be useful. You may then point out how to transfer a strategy from one context to another.
Activity 11: Writing Lessons for SSBI

Format:
Interactive

Purpose:
To allow the participants to incorporate SSBI principles into their own lessons and to receive peer feedback and suggestions for additional activities.

Time:
90 minutes initially. The institute/workshop leader and the participants may wish to allow more time for the actual writing of SSBI lessons. At our SSBI summer institutes at the University of Minnesota, we set aside the last morning for teachers wishing to focus on the writing of SSBI materials to do that, while another group plans teacher-development sessions, and a third group plans SSBI research projects.

Materials:
Participants are to supply their own teaching materials, if they brought them to the course. (Note: Participants can be invited prior to the course to bring along their own materials for the purpose of using them as a springboard for creating SSBI lessons.)

Directions:
Divide the participants into small groups, as appropriate. (Some may prefer to work individually.) They can be grouped according to: language; level (beginning, intermediate, advanced); teaching context (elementary, junior high school, high school, college, adult); skill (reading, writing, speaking, listening, integrated skills). Let them decide which grouping makes the most sense for them.

Part One: (45 minutes)
If they brought samples of their course materials to the workshop, have them work through these materials; identifying places where they could insert strategy instruction, adapt existing activities to include strategies, and create new materials to supplement the curriculum. Then, have them brainstorm ideas about one or more activity that they could adapt or create. If they didn’t bring materials, they could perhaps work from memory. If they are not currently teaching the course in which they wish to use SSBI, then they would perhaps focus more on the creating of prototype materials that could be used with the course they will teach.

Part Two: (30 minutes)
Have them move into larger groups to exchange their ideas. They should present their activities to the other participants and ask for feedback and suggestions. As part of each presentation, the participants should explain the rationale behind each activity.

Part Three: (15 minutes)
Debrief the discussions with the whole group and discuss any relevant issues that arise. Suggest that the participants take notes on the ideas that their classmates present to use as a reference after the course has ended.
Portions of this chapter are adapted from SSBI materials developed by Martha Nyikos, Language Education Department, Indiana University, 2002.


Compiled by Susan J. Weaver, Cheryl Alcaya, Karen Lybeck, Patricia Mougel and students of French and Norwegian at the University of Minnesota, Fall 1995.

Adapted from a text by López i Agustí, M. (1994).
Chapter 8
Designing a Workshop for SSBI Instruction

When designing a SSBI workshop, envision a program where participants “learn by doing” SSBI tasks rather than listening to you transmit information about SSBI. Before deciding on format and content, read Activity 1: Options for Providing Strategy Instruction for Teachers (Cohen and Weaver, 1998), at the end of this chapter. The article looks at different instructional models, including general study skills courses, awareness instruction through lectures and discussion, strategy workshops, peer tutoring, the insertion of strategies into language textbooks, and mini-courses on video/CD’s/internet.

The following questions will lead you through important considerations while designing your workshop.

Introduction & Rationale
- Audience: Who is your audience? What are their needs? What are their limitations? What are their skills? Other questions?
- Reasons for the workshop: What specific problems or issues are you hoping to address? How can you assist them (using the SSBI guide) in enhancing language learner outcomes?
- Broader rationale: What justification do you have for approaching the issues in this way?

Workshop Overview and Schedule
- Steps: What are the steps to your goals? What will the participants be expected to do? Is there a logical order to the transmission of information and the workshop tasks?
- Integration: How do the steps work together to address the specific issues?
- Time framework: How much time do you have to complete this workshop? How much time will be needed to complete each element?
- Piloting the workshop: Have you built in some time to try out, discuss, and possibly revise the various parts of the workshop (with colleagues or co-presenters) so that you have a sense of how long the elements will take and how they might be received?

Materials
- What worksheets will you use? What OHP transparencies or PowerPoint slides do you have or do you need to prepare for the workshop?
- What readings will you suggest as background or reference reading for the participants?
- Do you have feedback forms for participants? Do they ask for information that is helpful to this particular workshop?
- Other

Description of the Tasks
- Goals: What is the purpose of each task – relative to the larger goals?
- Steps: What will the workshop participants do in each task?
- Methodology: How will I best present this material – How will I best "reach" the workshop participants? How will the participants work in this task?
- Materials: What materials do you need for this task? (See above.)
- Time framework: How much time will be required to complete each element?
Reminders for designing activities:

- Vary activity types (discussion, brainstorming, whole group, lecture on new information), but in a meaningful way. Ask yourself, “What is the best way to learn each particular item (group work, individual, lecture, ...)?"
- Ensure that activities allow for or perhaps require the participation of all participants.
- Provide time for participants to reflect on what they learn.
- Be prepared to clarify details that may not come up in discussion.
- Provide some method for the participants to give you feedback on your workshop.

Self-Reflection

- How has this design process helped you think about the design of SSBI courses and workshops? What areas has it brought to your attention that you might not have thought about?
- What issues have not been covered by these questions that are of importance to you?
Sample Syllabus for an SSBI Course or Workshop

This sample syllabus is intended to be used with an SSBI course or workshop, including for-credit courses, as is the case at the University of Minnesota. Note that this section gives enough detail to serve as a syllabus for an entire course. If the intention is just to provide a workshop for a day or portion of a day, then you might only use a small portion of what is included in this syllabus.

Turn to Activity 2: Introducing the Course and the Syllabus at the end of the chapter for a description of how reviewing the syllabus can be used as the first task in an SSBI course. The syllabus presentation will give you practice with combining content material (in this case, a syllabus) with tasks that are intended to accompany, complement, and enrich the content material. As is also pointed out as a note to the task itself, this seemingly perfunctory exercise gives you an opportunity to observe the participants in both reviewing the syllabus and in asking about its structure and objectives.

Improving Language Learning: Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction

Course/Workshop Overview

The goal of this course (or workshop) is to facilitate your efforts either to provide styles- and strategies-based instruction (SSBI) in your own foreign/second language classroom, to assist you in developing teacher instructing materials for SSBI, and/or to support your research efforts in SSBI. Through a series of lectures, discussions, and hands-on activities, you will receive practical techniques for: (1) raising your students’ awareness of their strategies and learning style preferences, (2) reinforcing systematic and explicit strategy use in the language classroom, and (3) integrating styles- and strategies-based activities into daily lesson plans. During the course, you will be asked to use your own language learning and teaching experiences to understand the concepts being presented. Because the course has been designed in a workshop format, we will focus on the ideas generated from class discussions and activities, in addition to drawing on pre-prepared materials. On the last day of the course, participants will choose one of three tracks to generate a special institute project: (1) the development of SSBI lesson plans and activities for the classroom, (2) the design of an SSBI workshop for teacher educators, or (3) the planning of an SSBI research study.

Journal Entries: Students will keep a journal throughout the course to track their reactions to the course and material. Journal entries can include reactions to the material presented in the course, teaching/learning insights or experiences, reflections on philosophical/ methodological issues, and/or how to apply SSBI in the language classroom or beyond. Each student should submit at least two journal entries (minimum ½ page per entry).

Project Summaries: All participants will be encouraged (and credit students will be required) to create a special SSBI project. You will receive suggestions and feedback from institute instructors and other course participants as you learn how to apply SSBI to your own language context. Credit students will be asked to submit a one-page summary of their intended project, along with the submission of their course paper.

Course Schedule

[Note that the course outline will vary depending on the amount of time available and the preferences of the course organizer. In addition, this outline doesn’t include the numerous tasks that are associated with the given topics listed here.]

Day #1:

• An Introduction to SSBI - Description and Evolution
• Learning Style Preferences
• Classifying Language Strategies
Day #2:
• Classifying Strategies by Goal, Language Skills, and Functions
• Assessing Style Preferences and Learner Strategies

Day #3:
• Adding Motivation to Language Learning
• The Intersection of Motivation, Styles, and Strategies on Language Tasks

Day #4:
• Language and Culture
• Designing SSBI Lessons
• Designing a Workshop for SSBI
• Planning Research on SSBI

Day #5:
• Work on SSBI Projects: Classroom Lessons, Workshops, & Research
• Presentation of Projects
• SSBI Debate
• Closing Session: Goals, Intentions, and Commitments Regarding SSBI

Course Paper Options
If you register for graduate-level credits, you are required to submit a course paper. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and include a title page. The body of the paper should be approximately 5-7 pages in length. Be sure to include a one-page abstract (summary) of your paper.

The course paper must be received no later than _____

Choose one of the following options:

1. Research Review
   Review three research articles or book chapters on the topic of strategies or learning style preferences. Include the following in your write-up (approximately two pages per article/chapter):
   a. Reference information (title, author, etc.)
   b. Overview of the topic
   c. Research question(s)
   d. Research methodology (e.g., sample, treatment, instruments, procedures for data collection)
   e. Results
   f. Conclusions
   g. Your own interpretations of the implications for teaching/learning another language
   h. Abstract: Attach a one-page summary of the three articles to your paper. This summary should include the three references, a brief description of each of the three articles, and any concluding remarks.

2. Research Project Design
   a. Present your research problem, your rationale for dealing with this problem, and the research question(s).
   b. Research Design:
      1) Sample—who are the subjects—age, sex, background, any other characteristics of import to the study?
      2) Instrumentation—what is the proposed intervention (if any) and/or what observation schedules, questionnaires, tests, or verbal report methods will be used?
3) Data Collection Procedures—who will collect the data, where, when, for how long, under what circumstances, and in what manner?
4) Data Analysis Procedures—how will the data be analyzed, including any statistical counts from simple frequency tallies to computerized analysis?

3. Case Study I: Personal Experiences Teaching a Second Language
Write a case study describing your personal experiences teaching a second language and the impact that strategies-based instruction might have on your approach to teaching. Describe in detail your teaching context and discuss the interaction between strategy theory and practice. Identify any concerns you may have about strategies-based instruction and your teaching. Include a carefully constructed thesis statement in the opening paragraph and cite references to the literature as appropriate. Attach a one-page summary of the case study to your paper.

4. Case Study II: Personal Experiences Learning a Second Language
Write a case study describing your personal experiences learning a second language. Describe in detail your learning context(s) and discuss the strategies that you used. You may want to address the differences between your own language learning experiences and those of your students. Include a carefully constructed thesis statement in the opening paragraph and cite references to the literature as appropriate. Attach a one-page summary of the case study to your paper.

5. Case Study III: Interview of a Current L2 Learner
Interview a current L2 learner. Prepare a list of questions and include these questions in your summary of the interview (Q/A or narrative format). Describe the learning context and include a discussion of any (or all) of the following: strategy use, learning style preferences, barriers to language learning, motivation for language learning, and previous learning experiences. Include a carefully constructed thesis statement in the opening paragraph and cite references to the literature as appropriate. Attach a one-page summary of the case study to your paper.

6. Book Review
Write a review of a book that deals with learning styles and/or language strategies. Suggestions include:


Include the following in your written book review:

a. Introduction
   Identify the book, why you chose to review it, and a thesis statement.

b. Major points
   Outline the content of the book and identify 5-10 key salient points. This section is an objective report of the main points. Save interpretations and reactions for the next section.

c. Conclusions
   Draw some conclusions regarding the following: your overall reaction to the book, the strengths and limitations of the book as a resource (for students, teachers or researchers), and the usefulness of the book for yourself. Raise a question that has emerged for you as a result of reading this book.

d. Annotated Bibliography/Abstract
   Attach a one-page summary of your paper, including bibliographic information.

7. Alternative Project:
   Choose another project that more appropriately fulfills your objectives as a self-directed learner. Discuss your proposal with one of the course presenters.
Introduction of Course Participants and Their SSBI Goals

Assuming that your course or workshop is now adequately planned, what are some ways to get it off and running? There is no doubt that getting the course off to a good start is crucial. Here, then, are three activities that we have found beneficial for getting things going:

1. Suggesting an SSBI approach to introducing course participants to one another,
2. Providing participants an opportunity to consider their objectives for the course, and
3. Introducing course participants to SSBI experiential tasks.

Two activities at the end of the chapter help with this instruction.

Activity 3: Introducing Your Partner calls for the participants to introduce a partner, both as a way to get to know each other and as a way to observe and share the style preferences and strategies that they and their peers use in performing this task.

In Activity 4: Determining Your Goals for the SSBI Course, participants work with a partner in determining what they would like to get out of the SSBI course, perhaps flagging sections of the SSBI Guide that they consider particularly relevant and interesting to them.

Thirdly, some participants in SSBI courses come to the class expecting the format to be a “traditional” one, especially if they are coming from other countries where the typical model is one of lectures and discussion. We have found over the years that the most effective means for inculcating the ideas and procedures of SSBI into the minds (and hopefully, the hearts!) of the participants is through lots of hands-on tasks which help to underscore our point. It is one thing to talk about styles and strategies. It is another thing to experience it firsthand. It is this firsthand experience which enables and empowers participants to then return to their classrooms, administrative offices, or research workbenches, and plan similar experiential tasks for their students, teachers, and colleagues.

Here is a field note, intended to underscore the importance of giving practicing teachers an opportunity to experience SSBI for themselves by participating in hands-on activities: In August of 2003, co-author Cohen was co-teaching the SSBI course at Nanjing University (in Nanjing, China) to 263 EFL teacher participants from all over China. Several of the participants were compelled in the early stages of the course to openly and vociferously criticize the experiential approach that we were following as being unproductive, even a waste of time. By the last day or two even they had changed their tune. Even those who had come for research ideas discovered that it was through hands-on interaction with others (while working through SSBI tasks) that they gained the most valuable insights into how SSBI works and how they can make it work for their own contexts.

Wrapping Up the SSBI Course or Workshop

Now that we have considered some of the activities that can help get the course or workshop off to a good start, let us look at several tasks that can help participants get closure on an SSBI course. Both tasks are at the end of this chapter.

Activity 5: SSBI: A Debate on the Critical Issues is a debate in which the participants can address some of the issues that have been raised about a styles- and strategies-based approach to language instruction. Participants are asked to generate both “pro” and “con” arguments about the issues, and then to discuss these issues in an informal debate format.
Activity 6: Setting Goals for SSBI, Identifying Intentions, and Making Commitment, focuses on goals and intentions. Participants have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in the course and to set goals for how they will apply what they have learned and experienced.

Presumably, there will be a separate course evaluation for participants to fill out at the very end of the course, where they indicate the extent to which the course met their expectations, the most and least useful portions of the course, and suggestions for improvements.
**Activity 1: Options for Providing Strategy Instruction for Teachers**

**Format:**
In-class reading, discussion

**Purpose:**
To have participants read about and discuss options for providing strategy instruction for teachers, excerpted with slight updating from Cohen and Weaver (1998, pp. 10-15).

**Time:**
30 minutes

**Materials:**
The excerpted article “Options for Providing Strategy Instruction for Teachers” (following pages).

**Directions:**
1. Have the participants read “Options for Providing Strategy Instruction for Teachers” and explain that this reading is excerpted from an article by Cohen and Weaver (1998). The article outlines different forms of SSBI for teachers. As the participants read the excerpt, ask them to note sections that are most relevant to them and their colleagues.

2. When they have finished, put them into groups of 3-4 and ask them to discuss the reading, focusing on the areas that have the most relevance for them. Are there any additional issues that need to be addressed regarding the orientation of L2 instructors with regard to strategy instruction?

**Discussion:**
Open the discussion to the whole class, asking for their ideas. Write them on the board, on a viewgraph, or on a chart, as appropriate.
Options for Providing Strategy Instruction for Teachers

Andrew D. Cohen & Susan J. Weaver

There are various ways that program administrators can provide language teachers with the tools to provide their own strategy instruction for students, ranging from general awareness sessions to full-scale SSBI seminars. For example, the director of language instruction or an associate could provide short awareness-raising workshops and lectures. Secondly, language instructors could be asked to attend any of the numerous presentations, colloquia, and workshops on strategy instruction at professional conferences. Thirdly, in-service SBI seminars could be developed.

Of these options, in-service seminars provide the most extensive and efficient means for orienting classroom teachers in how to conduct their own styles- and strategies-based (or enhanced) instruction. O’Malley and Chamot (1990: 154) refer to this as “developing in teachers the understanding and techniques for delivering effective learning strategy instruction to students.” The participating language instructors can gain a better sense of the individual needs of their students and positively reinforce effective strategy use as the language course progresses. In addition, they can learn how to embed the strategies into everyday class activities and how to help students choose strategies related to specific curricular guidelines. Teacher orientation to SSBI can also prepare language teachers for the spontaneous introduction of strategies in their classes, thus providing both individualized and contextualized strategy instruction for all of their students.

These seminars could be offered as part of the pre-service orientation program for incoming foreign language instructors within specific language departments or be provided as in-service orientation across language programs. This kind of strategy instruction would ideally include several different approaches: lectures, outside reading of journal articles and book excerpts describing learning/teaching experiences and issues, paired and small-group discussions, hands-on strategy activities, observation of classes taught by teachers who have already implemented strategies-based instruction with their students, interactive sessions to practice the development of strategy-integrated lesson plans, and peer/student micro-teaching.

Lectures and readings on the theoretical and research contexts in which strategy instruction has developed can provide an important foundation upon which to examine any given set of strategies. However, experience shows that the amount of theory and the manner in which it is introduced needs to be tailored to the individual needs of the participants to be effective. For example, it may pay to intersperse the theoretical underpinnings with the practical applications so that teachers can see just how the theory and the practice relate to one another.

Discussions among teachers are likely to focus on the emergence of SSBI as a means of integrating diverse teaching philosophies, methodologies, and approaches to learning, as well as on philosophical and methodological issues concerning the language learning process. These discussions (in pairs or small groups) can create a meaningful classroom context for these instructors. Experience also shows that these developing teachers need numerous opportunities to reflect on the information presented in the seminar, as well as to discuss their own language learning and teaching experiences, to prepare them for their roles as facilitators of their own students’ reactions to the strategy instruction. This emphasis of the role of the learner as a source of knowledge about language learning and language use strategies may make the instructors feel more comfortable with these kinds of discussions in their own classes since they will have already had experience sharing similar ideas and suggestions.
A practical hands-on approach, where the participant instructors themselves actively experiment with the strategies presented, will help to prepare them to deliver SSBI to their own students and allow them to practice implementing the strategies at the same time. For example, they could take diagnostic surveys (e.g., learning style inventories and strategy assessment surveys), reflect on ways that they may differ from other language learners (e.g., think about and discuss their own language learning experiences and how individual learning style preferences and other factors can affect strategy choice), actively participate in strategy-enhancing activities for learners (e.g., learn new vocabulary with different mnemonic devices, answer general comprehension questions after skimming a text, rehearse short speeches, selectively attend to short listening passages), and engage in problem-solving or metacognitive discussions (e.g., in small groups or pairs, discuss ways to approach a particular task, isolate potential difficulties, make strategy choices, implement the selected strategies, and evaluate their effectiveness). After actively engaging in and reacting to authentic strategy use, the teachers can gain a better understanding of what to expect from their own students, as well as first-hand practice with generating multiple problem-solving techniques (i.e., choosing their own strategies). In this way, the instructors will truly experience the strategies before teaching them.

Participants may also find it useful to keep journals of their experiences during the SSBI orientation sessions to use as a resource when later called upon to present strategy instruction themselves. These journals could include affective reactions to the orientation, as well as ideas for the integration of strategies into various kinds of activities. Excerpts from these journal entries could later be compiled into a resource handbook for the teachers to use as support after the orientation program has ended.

Another useful resource for the teachers is the opportunity to observe authentic class sessions conducted by other language instructors who have already undergone the strategy instruction program. The teachers can meet to exchange ideas about specific aspects of the presented lessons and discuss how the strategy instruction fits into the overall language curriculum. It would also be beneficial, if possible, to have the teacher observer sitting in on the class talk with the students in the class to hear their reactions to being SSBI participants. It is the learners themselves who can provide some of the most significant and insightful comments about the realities of strategy instruction in the classroom. If there are not enough language classrooms to observe, teachers could also watch videotapes of class sessions taught by colleagues who regularly provide strategies-based instruction. These demonstrations of explicitly teaching strategy use to students in authentic contexts can be especially helpful in showing the teachers how the strategies are being embedded into a particular course curriculum.

An additional important feature of the SSBI seminar for teachers is the opportunity for teachers to practice integrating strategies into everyday lesson plans and developing strategies-based teaching materials. If the teachers only receive pre-prepared strategy materials to use with their students, they may have difficulty adapting the instruction to the needs of their own students. The seminar could provide the teachers with opportunities to generate their own ideas about how the strategies could be incorporated into their current language curricula by having them adapt existing course materials or create new teaching materials. This can be accomplished by having the teachers bring in actual lessons that they have already prepared and, in pairs or small groups, they could work together to brainstorm ways in which different strategies could be inserted into the activities, create new materials to fill in any gaps, and then share their ideas with the rest of the class. As a group, the participants could then generate several possibilities for presenting each activity and, by sharing these lesson plans, they would have access to a wide variety of ideas for strategy integration that
they could incorporate into future lessons. In addition, these activity-writing sessions can also serve as a feedback mechanism for both the teacher coordinator (to assess the effectiveness of the strategy instruction) and for the teachers (to gauge their ability to apply the content of the seminar in practical ways).

Finally, after the teachers have had opportunities to create new materials, as well as to integrate strategies into their existing lesson plans, they are likely to be willing and able to present short strategies-based language lessons to their peers to practice the instructional techniques before introducing them into their own classrooms. They would get further receptive practice with strategies from these presentations, as well as essential productive practice with teaching various strategies. These micro-teaching sessions can also be extended to small groups of current language students for additional teaching practice. This would provide authentic responses to strategy instruction from actual language learners, allowing the teachers to experience a simulated classroom atmosphere much like what they will eventually face. If possible, these sessions should be videotaped and used to generate discussions about the effectiveness of the lessons, allow the teachers to reflect on their teaching skills, and provide the teacher coordinator with additional insight into the teachers’ needs within and beyond the SSBI orientation sessions (e.g., to adjust the current SSBI curriculum, for follow-up support after the “official” orientation has ended, or for future orientation sessions).

Anna Chamot at George Washington University and her colleagues from the Washington DC area school districts have offered strategy seminars for same-language teachers as part of an ongoing series of research projects. The teachers who participate in these projects receive pre-packaged lesson plans, as well as instruction in creating their own materials, in order to provide students with strategy-integrated activities as part of the regular language curriculum. The teachers have opportunities to observe their same-language colleagues and are eventually able to conduct the class sessions without further help from the research team (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990; Chamot and O’Malley, 1994).

In contrast to the same-language approach, the SSBI summer institutes at the University of Minnesota have been created for teachers from different foreign language programs and no pre-packaged teaching materials are provided, other than examples from the course itself. The SSBI orientation program (which includes this current SSBI Guide; Cohen & Weaver, 2005), focuses on helping the teachers create and adapt their own instructional materials from the very beginning of the program. The teachers are responsible for applying the strategies to their own curricular needs and, when possible, are paired with teachers from their own language department to share lesson plan ideas. For the less commonly taught languages (e.g., Hebrew, Hindi, Irish, Norwegian, Portuguese, and so forth), the teachers are asked to form cross-language strategy support teams. Teaching suggestions are shared throughout the different foreign language programs, giving teachers contact with a wide variety of instructional materials, teaching philosophies, and performance criteria.

Both of these methods of providing teachers with ideas and materials for supporting their L2 learners in being more strategic have been successful in bringing fully integrated strategy instruction to a great number of students through the regular language classroom. The administrative decisions regarding the format for each or these seminars are based both on the needs of the institutions and the need to provide students with systematic strategy instruction which has been integrated into everyday classroom activities. The goal of this kind of seminar is to orient classroom language teachers (who will eventually provide strategy instruction for their own students) in the identification, practice, reinforcement, and transfer of language learning and use strategies via strategies-based instruction.


**Activity 2: Introduction to the Course and to the Syllabus**

**Format:**
- Lecture, discussion

**Purpose:**
To review the course syllabus (i.e., course content, structure, and objectives).

**Time:**
- 45 minutes

**Materials:**
- Copies of the course syllabus (as it appears above as “Sample Course Syllabus”)

**Directions:**
1. Welcome the participants to the course, acknowledge the course sponsor(s), and introduce the course presenters (their affiliations, language learning/teaching background, and their experience with styles- and strategies-based instruction).
2. Distribute copies of the course syllabus and have the participants read through it briefly. Describe the course: its content, its structure, and its objectives. Discuss course requirements, class schedule, and amount of participation expected. If it is possible to obtain course credits in your institution, then explain how this is accomplished.

**Discussion/Wrap-Up:**
Answer any questions about the course and its format. If appropriate, create a master list of the participants’ phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses to be distributed to the class.

**Note:** In this initial and seemingly perfunctory task, the course leader nonetheless has an opportunity to observe the styles and strategies that participants display in both reviewing the syllabus and in asking about its structure and objectives.
Activity 3: Introducing Your Partner

Format:
Pairs, whole group

Purpose:
To give participants an opportunity to gather information about another person in the course (whom they didn’t know before the course). They can take notes or just try to remember details. They will each give a 2-minute oral presentation about their partner to the whole group.

Time:
10-15 minutes

Materials:
Paper and pencil/pen if needed.

Directions:
1. Have participants turn to a course participant near them who was unknown to them at the start of the course.

2. Ask them to interview each other to gather enough information to present the other person to the whole group for 2 minutes. The interview can be in any language that is mutually understood, ideally in an L2 for the interviewer.

3. The participants may take notes or rely on their memory.

4. Tell them that they are free to choose whatever material they wish in presenting their partner.

5. Ask them to pay attention to the strategies that they use in deciding which questions to ask, in asking those questions, in collecting and recording the responses, in planning their introduction of this person to the whole group, and in delivering their introduction.

6. Ask them to be ready to summarize the strategies that they use for this task.

Discussion/Wrap-Up:
The discussion focuses on what the participants have learned about themselves with regard to their different language skills in L1 and/or in L2 when called upon to perform this task.
**Activity 4: Determining Your Goals for the SSBI Course**

**Format:**
Discussion

**Purpose:**
To allow the participants to reflect on their reasons for taking this course/workshop and to define their personal goals for it, using the “think-pair-share” technique.

**Time:**
45 minutes

**Materials:**
None

**Directions:**
1. Write the following questions on the blackboard:
   a. Why did you decide to take this course/workshop?
   b. What are your specific goals for it?
   c. How do you think styles and strategies-based instruction will affect your teaching? How will it affect your students?

2. Explain the “think-pair-share” technique to the participants.
   a. **Think:** Reflect on the questions without speaking. Jot down notes as you think about your answers. (5-7 min)
   b. **Pair:** In pairs, discuss your answers to the questions. (10-15 min)
   c. **Share:** Summarize your answers to the questions for the rest of the class. (3-4 min)

3. Suggest that the goals the participants set for themselves be concrete and objective so that they can evaluate their performance on the last day of class.

**Discussion/Wrap-Up:**
Summarize the discussion, noting any similarities and/or differences among the participants’ goals for the course, as well as their reasons for taking the course/workshop. Expand on their answers by emphasizing how the course content will address their needs.
Activity 5: SSBI: A Debate on the Critical Issues

Format:
Discussion

Purpose:
To address through a debate some of the issues that have been raised about a styles- and strategies-based approach to language instruction. Participants are asked to generate both “pro” and “con” arguments about the issues, and then discuss these issues in an informal debate format.

Time:
60 minutes

Materials:
Copies of “Debate: Critical Issues in SSBI” (“pro” and “con” forms)

Directions:
1. Explain to the participants that this session will be devoted to a debate on the “pros” and “cons” of SSBI. The goal is to allow them an opportunity to discuss the benefits of this approach to teaching, as well as address any concerns that they may have.

2. First, separate the class into two large groups: the “pros” and the “cons.” Distribute the handouts. Then, separate the two large groups into an equal number of smaller groups of 3-4 to facilitate discussion and brainstorming. They are to work as quickly as possible so that the majority of time can be spent on the debate itself. Keep careful track of time.

3. The activity is divided into six parts:
   (a) Have the small groups generate five arguments for their side (pro or con), writing their arguments on the handout in the appropriate space. Suggest that the group not spend too much time discussing the arguments themselves, but rather spend the time generating ideas. (10 minutes)
   (b) Have each small “pro” group exchange arguments with a “con” group. The “pro” group should present their five arguments quickly and then the “con” group should present their arguments. These arguments should be written down in the appropriate space on the handout. There should not be any discussion of the arguments at this point – only the exchange of ideas. (5 minutes)
   (c) Have the small groups return to their seats to add new arguments for the opposite position and write these down on the handout. (5 minutes)
   (d) Repeat Step (b) with the same pro/con groups. (5 minutes)
   (e) Have the small groups return to their seats and choose the “top five” arguments for their original position, using ideas generated from the above four steps. (5 minutes)
   (f) Once the groups have finished their lists, set up the room so that the two sides (the two large groups) can sit facing each other in a long line. Begin the debate by asking a member of the “pro” side to present one of the arguments. Allow any
member of the “con” side to reply. Then let the debate flow according to the ideas being presented. Rather than using a strict debate format, allow the participants an opportunity to discuss their ideas freely and exchange their arguments as each point comes up. Expect this informal debate to be lively and allow both sides to enjoy their roles as advocates or opponents of a strategies-based approach to teaching languages.

(30 minutes)

Wrap-Up:
Summarize the main points that were brought up during the debate. Point out that the participants may have to face opposition to a strategies-based approach (from students, other teachers or program administrators) and that they may be better able to articulate their opinions after this debate.
**SSBI: A Debate on the Critical Issues - “Pro”**

My Team’s Pro Arguments: Other Team’s Con Arguments:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

My Team’s Con Arguments: Other Team’s Pro Arguments:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

My Team’s Final Pro Arguments:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
**SSBI: A Debate on the Critical Issues - “Con”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Other Team’s Pro Arguments:</th>
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<th>Other Team’s Con Arguments:</th>
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My Team’s Final Con Arguments:

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
**Activity 6: Setting Goals, Identifying Intentions, and Making Commitments**

**Format:**
Discussion

**Purpose:**
To allow the participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in the SSBI course, to review the course goals they set, and to make commitments for how they will apply this knowledge in the future. They are asked to identify their intentions for possible action, as well as to make firm commitments for what they can be counted on to do.

**Time:**
90 minutes

**Materials:**
Any notes that the participants have on their goals coming into the course or goals that they may have jotted down during the course.

**Directions:**
1. Explain to the participants that they will be spending the last session reflecting on what they have learned in the course and how they intend to apply this knowledge. They will be asked to write out a list of goal statements, and then specify which are more like good intentions (possible directions for future activity) and which are actual commitments (goals attached to specific plans for action).
2. In preparing this list, participants may want to look back at the goals that they set for themselves at the outset of the course (*Activity 3: Determining Your Goals for the SSBI Course*), and to compare these with their goals upon completing the course.
3. Next, have them determine what intentions for action they have based on these goals – that is, ways in which they intend to apply SSBI to their own work as teachers, teacher-trainers, curriculum writers, researchers, or administrators. Some participants may not wish to do more than this at the current moment for a host of reasons.
4. Then, those participants who are motivated to do so and for whom it is feasible, are to generate a short set of actual commitments they would like to make for action in the near future. They are to make these commitments “real” by indicating details such as:
   
   (a) who will be involved (e.g., which colleagues, which learners, etc.).
   (b) the nature of the SSBI work (e.g., a course, a lecture, a workshop, a research project).
   (c) what actions will be necessary to ensure that the event or project actually happens.
   (d) the duration of this SSBI endeavor.
   (e) who will be in their support group to make sure the plan is carried out (e.g., one or more members of this SSBI course). It helps to exchange e-mails and phone numbers, again to make it “real.”
5. When all of the participants have finished writing out their personalized list of goals, intentions, and commitments, ask those who are willing to stand up and share with the rest of the group their intentions and their commitments with regard to SSBI. Explain to the participants that the advantage of actually standing up and stating one or more commitments is that it makes the commitment(s) more significant.

Wrap-Up:
Thank the participants for their contributions to the course. Suggest that they set up a “SSBI Support Group” with the other participants and with colleagues that they may also like to invite. These groups could be determined by region, by grade level, by language, or some other criteria. With the Internet, course participants from different parts of the world could conceivably be in the same support group.

¹ This article is excerpted with updating from Cohen and Weaver (1998, pp. 10-15).
Chapter 9
Planning Research on SSBI

You may be among the majority of those interested in SSBI who consider a research project involving SSBI to be the last thing on your mind. For you, either working in the trenches with language learners to help them enhance their strategies or in teacher development with SSBI is much more attractive. On the other hand, you may be among that small group of SSBI enthusiasts who, in fact, are concerned about answering important questions as to the impact of SSBI on language learners. And it is still accurate to say that there is a need for more research on SSBI, especially with regard to its long-term impact.

It is for the research enthusiasts that we would like to provide some brief guidelines.

Determining the purpose of the research

The starting point for an SSBI study would be generating a clearly articulated statement of the research problem or issue, for example:

“As instruments become increasingly refined for describing learning style preferences and language learning strategy choices, educators and the learners themselves would like a better sense of how these two sets of information relate, especially in the case of learners who successfully match their strategy choices to their style preferences so as to maximize their foreign language learning. This study seeks to relate styles preferences with strategy choices and how these relationships relate to language achievement.”

See Porte (2002), Johnson (1992), and Wallace (1998) for more on this issue of clearly defining the research topic (as well as on the other issues to follow).

Finding an experienced research mentor

Fashioning a research project and then planning it out in detail are not tasks for the rugged individualist. It is a case when many heads are better than one. We recommend that you make contact with a researcher experienced in conducting SSBI research so that you are not working in a vacuum or reinventing the wheel. Perhaps this individual would even agree to be co-investigator with you.

Choosing the optimal research design for the purpose

- Will you conduct a quantitative study (e.g., where you make comparisons across and within groups of learners), a qualitative study (e.g., where you generate profiles for a small sample of learners), or perhaps a combination of the two?
- Is your study intended to be a non-interventionist description of, say, the strategies that learners use? Or do you intend to have an intervention where you might provide strategy instruction for 12 weeks to one group and compare their strategy use and results to that of another learner group?
- If you are to use an intervention, will there be just one intervention or perhaps several at intervals over time?
- What will be the length of the research period (weeks, months, years)?
- Will there be just one study or a main study with sub-studies and possibly follow-up studies?
Writing a useful and comprehensive research plan that reflects the chosen design

Sound research calls for a detailed proposal, where you answer the following questions:

- What is your sample and how will you select your participants? What is the age, gender, and language background of the intended subjects? Are there any other characteristics of importance to the envisioned study?
- What is the proposed intervention (if any)?
- What are the instruments you will use and how will you ensure that the data collected are reliable and valid? Specifically, what kinds of journaling, observation schedules, questionnaires, tests, or verbal report methods will be used?
- What is your plan for data collection? Who will collect the data, where, when, for how long, under what circumstances, and in what manner?
- What is the plan for data analysis procedures? How will the data be analyzed, including statistical counts from simple frequency tallies that you can do by hand to more elaborate computerized analysis?

Most universities mandate the submission of a detailed proposal to the Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Research Board to ensure that ethical guidelines for the conducting of research are followed. If funding for the project is sought, sending the proposal to a human subjects committee is usually mandated.

Evaluating the plan before implementing it

It is a good idea to have colleagues review your research proposal before it is submitted to a funding source and/or to a Human Subjects Committee. It also makes sense to speculate about the various findings that are likely to emerge from the study and about ways these findings could be interpreted. You could also speculate as to the possible pedagogical implications if your findings come out one way or the other.

Oral Interviews and Written Questionnaires

Oral interviews and written surveys both elicit learner responses to questions or probes. How they differ is in the degree of structure in the questions or probes. Questions can range from those that ask for yes-no responses or indications of frequency (e.g. “never,” “seldom,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “always”) to open-ended questions asking respondents to describe or discuss language learning strategy behavior in detail.

In highly-structured interviews and questionnaires, the researcher has a specific set of questions to be answered in a set order. In this case the researcher has complete control over the questioning, and the respondent usually does not have an opportunity to elaborate on the answers. Data from this type of interview or questionnaire are uniformly organized for all respondents and lend themselves to statistical analysis. A common approach is to have multiple-choice alternatives or a list of strategies for doing a task, like reading an article. Learners rate each strategy according to how they used them (e.g., “pre-read the text to get an idea of its general meaning,” “looked for headings and subheadings as a clue to the meaning of the text,” “checked for a description of the topic at the outset or a summary at the end,” “guessed words from context,” “used a bilingual electronic dictionary with unknown words that couldn’t be guessed from context,” and so forth).

Sample structured instruments

The two locally developed style inventories have already been presented in Chapter 2, namely, the Learning Style Survey (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2001; http://carla.acad.umn.edu/about/profiles/
CohenPapers/LearningStylesSurvey.pdf) and the Learning Style Survey for Young Learners (Cohen & Oxford, 2001; http://www.carla.umn.edu/about/profiles/CohenPapers/Young_Style_Survey.doc). As indicated in Chapter 2, the format of the survey and a number of the dimensions and items are drawn from Oxford’s Style Analysis Survey (1995), while other dimensions (and some of the wording) are based on the work of Ehrman and Leaver (Ehrman & Leaver, 1997, 2003; the E&L Questionnaire, 2001).

Two locally-developed skills-based questionnaires for collecting information on learner strategies were presented in Chapter 3: one for adults – the Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2001; http://www.carla.umn.edu/maxsa/samples/SG.LanguageSurvey.pdf) and one for use with children – the Young Learners’ Language Strategy Use Survey (Cohen & Oxford, 2002; http://www.carla.umn.edu/about/profiles/CohenPapers/Young_Lg_Strat_Srvy.doc). These two strategy instruments include some items adapted from Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990, 1996a; see also Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Dreyer & Oxford, 1996). The Language Strategy Use Survey was submitted to confirmatory factor analysis based on a sample of 300 students, and was found to be both reliable and valid (see Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004: 264-265).

Unstructured and Semi-structured Instruments
At the other end of the spectrum are unstructured questions or probes that ask the respondents to discuss a certain area of interest. The duration and depth of the response and the choice of the focus are left largely to the respondent’s discretion. This unstructured approach to assessment gives the respondents freedom to pursue areas of interest with only minimal guidance from the interviewer.

There are also the semi-structured interviews or questionnaires, where a prompt gives some shape to the nature of the information desired (e.g., “How did you just read that magazine article?”), but the exact shape of the response is not predetermined. The respondents are free to give any description they wish. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires allow the learners to pursue topics of interest which may not have been foreseen when the questions were drawn up. Yet the reduction of structure also means that the volume of data is increased and the data are likely to be more individualized, which could prevent the researcher from determining overall patterns. Sometimes the data from semi-structured and unstructured instruments can be used effectively to identify dimensions that can then be used profitably in structured interviews or questionnaires.

While it can be engaging for a teacher to lead a group discussion with his/her students, the responses of some of the learners may be affected by social desirability. In that type of situation, with their peers listening, students may be fearful of producing a socially unacceptable answer. In addition, if certain students are unwilling to volunteer information in group settings, the information obtained is likely to be biased in favor of students who are more outspoken.

Teachers can ask learners to focus language strategy use for specific learning events. The interview or questionnaire could be filled out immediately after a language task with style and strategy questions specific to that task. Or the learners could be asked to imagine they were doing a certain task and to indicate their style preferences and likely strategy choices for completing that task.

Finally, if you use survey instruments, you may find that some of the items don’t apply to the classroom situation. Learners at different sites may interpret the items differently. This could be especially true if the measure is translated and used in different cultures around the world (Oxford, 1996b). We have developed young peoples’ style and strategy inventories to cater to differing ages, so the measures can be used with L2 learners in elementary school and in language immersion programs (Cohen & Gómez, in press).
Observations

Teachers are observing their learners all the time, but not systematically—that is, noting the frequency and duration of observations, using some form of note-taking or a predetermined observation schedule or checklist, and applying both qualitative and quantitative analysis to the results. Observers have a choice of taking broad notes of everything of relevance, of taking notes that focus on a few types of strategies or behaviors (Oxford, 1990), or of using an observation scale or checklist. An example of an observation scale is the Class Observation Guide (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985). The observer can combine the observation scale with note-taking to get more complete data.

It is a challenge for teachers and/or their assistants to apply such rigorous observational techniques to language learners, not only because teachers have lots of other things to do, but also because many of the language and language use strategies are going on inside the learners’ head and cannot be observed. Is it possible, for example, to determine through observation whether a learner is circumlocuting to describe an object (e.g., a bookend) when the vocabulary word is not available? Is it possible to observe a learner’s efforts to retrieve a word by means of a keyword mnemonic? Researchers who have used observations for investigating learning strategies have experienced frustrations in deriving descriptions of even those strategies which may be thought to be most observable. For example, Naiman, Frölich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) had difficulty determining when high-school students of French were using circumlocutions. Access to such language using strategies most likely must come from interviews, written questionnaires, and verbal report.

Observing the language learning strategies of the entire class may be more profitable than waiting for one learner or a small group to reveal their use of strategies. But then the observer runs the risk of collecting data only on the students who are more verbal and demonstrative during the class session, and this may limit the data to outspoken or extroverted learners. Many students may be left out of the strategy descriptions altogether, even though these students may have the most interesting strategies and results. In any case, observers need to make choices about their focus—whether, for example, to focus on a 15-minute role-play activity or to observe an entire class period to collect data on the use of speaking strategies. Of course there are types of observational data that can always be collected by noticing students’ facial expressions, gestures, and signs of alertness, as well as taking notes on what the students write in their notebooks.

Audio- and videotapes are often used to create a more permanent record of what took place during a learning activity. But even with all of the sophisticated ways of collecting video and audio taped data, there are countless instances of important events that somehow did not get captured. This is why the presence of live observers can play a crucial role in both the collection and the interpretation of the language strategy data. In addition, if the activity is videotaped, the investigator can replay the tapes for the learners and aid in the collection of verbal report data. In other words, the tapes could jog the memory of the learners about what they were thinking and doing in the classroom at that time. While some students’ behavior may change when a researcher or video camera is present in the classroom, repeated use of the device may help students to get used to it.

Verbal Report

Verbal report data collected before, during, and after learners perform language learning or language use tasks have been a
productive source of information about the learners’ strategies. It is important to note that verbal report is not one measure, but rather encompasses a variety of measures intended to provide mentalistic data about cognitive processing.

Verbal reports include data that reflect:
1) self-report: learners’ descriptions of their generalized learning behavior – for example, “I tend to be a speed listener,”
2) self-observation: the inspection of specific language behavior, either introspectively (within 20 seconds of the event) or retrospectively (“I just skimmed through the incoming oral text as I listened, picking out key words and phrases”), and
3) self-revelation: think-aloud, stream-of-conscious disclosure of thought processes while the information is attended to – for example, “Who does ‘they’ refer to here?”

Verbal reports are usually some combination of these three types (Radford, 1974; Cohen & Hosenfeld, 1981; Cohen, 1987). Self-report data tend to appear frequently on questionnaires which ask learners to describe the way they typically learn and use language. Self-observation implies reference to some specific instance(s) of language learning or use. For example, diary entries which retrospectively describe some language learning or language use event. Self-observational data are limited to within 20 seconds of when the language learning or use events take place, and are generated by the respondents simply describing (not analyzing) their efforts. Thoughts which are immediately analyzed constitute introspective self-revelation – for example, “Does this utterance call for the present or imperfect subjunctive? Let me see...”

**Studies Using Verbal Report**

There are numerous examples of L2 learner strategy studies where verbal report consists of self-report interviews and questionnaires (see, for example, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985; Wenden, 1985; Ramirez, 1986; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). In such studies, the learners answer oral interview questions or complete written questionnaires about their language strategies. Remember that questionnaire items referring to general behavior may elicit learners’ beliefs about what they do, rather than what they actually do. Verbal report methods primarily reflecting self-revelation and self-observation have been used to describe strategies in the learning and use of L2 vocabulary (e.g. Cohen & Aphek 1979, 1981; Neubach & Cohen, 1988; Chern, 1993; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Gu, 1994), L2 listening (e.g. Murphy, 1987; Vandergrift, 1992; Anderson & Vandergrift, 1996), L2 speaking (e.g. Robinson, 1991; Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Cohen, Weaver, & Li, 1998; Nakatani, 2005), L2 reading (e.g. Hosenfeld, 1984; Block, 1986; Cavalcanti, 1987; Kern, 1994; Auerbach & Paxton, 1997; see Brantmeier, 2002, for a recent review), L2 writing (e.g. Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987, 1990), and in the processing of entries in bilingual dictionaries (Neubach & Cohen, 1988).

The purpose of studies involving self-revelatory and self-observational verbal report is to get data that describe the language learning or language use event at or near the moment it occurs. Such data might more accurately reflect what learners actually do than the response to a questionnaire item calling for a description of generalized behavior. In effect, self-revelation and self-observation are intended to complement self-report — to produce convergent assessment of learner strategies.

Verbal report has also been used for investigating the subset of L2 language use strategies referred to as communication strategies, especially those used in compensating for gaps in communicative ability (e.g., Poulisse, Bongaerts, & Kellerman, 1986; Poulisse, 1989). In addition, verbal report is used with tasks which combine most or all of the strategy areas, such as in investigating the strategies used in language learning and use overall (see, for example, Cyr, 1996, Chapter 5, for a...

Pros and Cons of Verbal Reports
Numerous arguments can be made for and against the use of verbal report measures. Just a few of the criticisms include the following:

1. Supposedly introspective verbal reports may be too retrospective, in that it can take 20 minutes to report on 1½ seconds of mental processing (Boring, 1953).
2. Verbal report methods can be intrusive. For example, immediate retrospection distorts the reading process if the readers read more closely than normal, read sentence by sentence, or concentrate on the additional cognitive and metacognitive task (Mann, 1982).
3. Some respondents may be more adept than others at providing the appropriate amount of verbal report data, at the appropriate level of specificity.
4. Respondents may use different terms to describe similar processes or the same terms for different processes (Afflerbach & Johnston, 1984).

In defense of verbal reports, keep in mind that verbal report protocols can capture information that is otherwise lost to the investigator (Ericsson, 1988; Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Whereas the neurological origin of cognitive processes may not be available for inspection, the cognitive events themselves are often available through verbal report (Steinberg, 1986, p. 699). Many language learners underestimate the extent of conscious (or potentially conscious) processing because they are not attending to it. Furthermore, the directness of introspection gives it a character not found in any other investigation of psychological phenomena (Bakan, 1954). Research shows that verbal reports, elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the circumstances under which they were obtained, are, in fact, a valuable and a thoroughly reliable source of information about cognitive processes (Ericsson & Simon, 1980; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Finally, it needs to be pointed out that verbal report is not a replacement for other means of research, but a complement to them.

One point that emerges from the verbal report literature is the benefit of being clear about expectations with respondents. Even methodological hard-liners like Ericsson and Simon agree that instructions to the respondents make the verbal reports more complete (1993, p. 11). Pressley and Afflerbach report on a verbal report study where the subjects were both asked to summarize what they read and informed about the importance of summarization, a second study where respondents were asked to attend to content and style when reading, and studies where subjects were required to make inferences. The authors conclude that prompting respondents to use particular processes may be necessary: “...it is reasonable to prompt [processes] in order to assure that a sample of the target processes will, in fact, be observed” (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995: 133). Greene and Higgins note
the importance of designing prompts that can help writers better access detailed information from their short- and long-term memory (e.g., through the use of concrete examples and contextual cues) and of making clear to the respondents the purpose of the retrospective accounts (Greene & Higgins, 1994). It can also be valuable to have students go beyond reporting their thoughts to interpreting their processes as well (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995, p. 21).

Not only is it effective to prompt respondents about the use of the verbal report, instructing them on how to provide verbal report for a task improves the quality of the data. Ericsson and Simon found that after the instructions, there must be warm-up trials with tasks that yield easy-to-analyze think-aloud, introspective, and retrospective reports. They suggest that subjects be given these warm-up tasks until they are able to make verbal reports without confounding them with explanations and justifications (Ericsson & Simon, 1993, p. xxxii). This ensures consistency across subjects: “In some studies, more extensive warm-up procedures are used explicitly to train the subjects to conform to the think-aloud instructions” (Ericsson & Simon, 1993, p. 82). It should also be noted that some forms of verbal report are less intrusive than others. If respondents are checking off from an attached list the strategies they just used on an item, the activity may have a minimal influence on performance. If, on the other hand, the respondent gives an oral explanation of processing strategies (whatever they may be) without the use of a checklist, then the verbal reporting may possibly detract from performance on the testing task itself.

**A Validation Study of Verbal Report in L2**

There have been studies conducted expressly to determine the reactive effects of using verbal report methods in collecting data. One such study investigated the effects of verbal report on ESL reading. Nyhus (1994) looked at the attitudes of nonnative speakers of English toward the use of verbal report to get their reading comprehension strategies. The respondents were seven third-quarter students in the Command English Program in General College at the University of Minnesota—a bridge program for refugee and immigrant non-native speakers of English. Five of the respondents were Vietnamese, one was Chinese, and one was Russian. Most had been in the U.S. for two-to-three years. The study looked at their attitudes toward the effects of think-aloud and retrospective verbal report on their reading. They were also asked to assess verbal report as a research methodology.

The respondents were shown a videotape of the researcher reading aloud and providing a think-aloud verbal report from a sociology text. Three excerpts from a sociology text were used with the respondents. Two were for practice readings and the third was for data collection. Red dots were placed between sentences to remind the respondents to verbalize their thoughts. Two sets of interview questions were developed, with twelve questions being asked after the respondents’ initial think-aloud verbal report and eleven questions being asked after the respondents’ retrospective verbal report. The respondents were asked to read the text as they normally would but to verbalize all of their thoughts in English. Although they were told that they could read the text silently, all chose to read it out loud. Each respondent and the researcher then listened to the recording of the verbal report, and the respondents gave retrospective verbal reports by pausing the tape when they wanted to make additional comments about thoughts they had while reading the text. The researcher also had the respondents report on what they had been thinking but not verbalizing. Next, the researcher interviewed the respondents regarding their views about the think-aloud methodology. In addition, there was an interview to elicit attitudes toward the retrospective methodology after the task had been completed.

For the most part, the respondents viewed the effects that they attributed to verbal report as beneficial. Most felt that think-aloud verbal report affected their thinking about their reading in
a positive way. It enhanced their awareness and assessment of the reading process, including awareness of themselves as readers and of their interaction with the text. Only two of the seven had negative comments about verbal report, and these were the students whose English was the most limited. Performing the verbal report in English was most likely a detriment to those with poorer English skills.

Despite the cases of difficulty in verbal reporting in English, all respondents viewed verbal report as useful in some way. They saw it as a way to place students at a learning level, as a diagnostic tool for determining their specific reading needs, and as a study technique to be used alone or in small groups. The students saw the group approach as a particularly beneficial method of discovering new ways of thinking about a text. Retrospective verbal report (having readers listen to and comment on a playback of their think-aloud verbal report) was as seen helping readers, instructors, and researchers gain insight into readers’ thinking and reading processes.

The Nyhus study brings up the issue of whether there is a second language threshold below which verbal reporting in the target language is counterproductive. Upton (1993), for example, found that when given a choice of language for verbal reporting of English reading comprehension tasks, the more advanced native-Japanese-speaking EFL subjects chose English, while the less English-proficient respondents preferred to use Japanese. Researchers may choose at times to have the verbal report in the target language, such as when the respondents are speakers of a variety of languages or when the language of the respondent group is not known to the researchers and obtaining translations is unfeasible. However, researchers need to be aware that the practice of allowing verbal reports to be in the target language may be at the expense of collecting adequate data.

**Tips for Successful Use of Verbal Reports**

Here are some tips for successful use of verbal report in reading:

1. The teacher/researcher provides orientation for learners in verbal reports:
   - Students that the teacher models thinking aloud during a reading, while students read along silently.
   - Students then add their own thoughts aloud.
   - There is additional demonstrations/modeling by the teacher as needed.
   - Then students are grouped into pairs to practice thinking aloud. One student reads aloud and reports strategies/thoughts. The other student then adds his/her strategies/thoughts at the end.

2. Alternative ways to do verbal report:
   - Taking turns: One student reads a short passage and thinks aloud, while the others read silently. Then another student reads the passage and thinks aloud, and so on, until everyone has had a chance to engage in verbal report.
   - During silent reading activity, the teacher occasionally stops a student and the student thinks aloud.
   - During silent reading activity, the teacher periodically stops the class and students turn to a partner to think aloud.
   - Outside of class, students read silently then complete a checklist to report strategies.

3. Anderson and Vandergrift propose three types of verbal reports:
   - Self-report of typical strategies after a delay,
(b) Self-observation through immediate retrospection using video-stimulated recall after an oral proficiency interview (checking learners only when they appeared to have a difficulty understanding), and

(c) Self-revelation through immediate introspection (Anderson & Vandergrift, 1996).

Diaries and dialog journals
Diaries have been used as a tool to collect data on individual learners’ strategy use over a period of time (Bailey & Ochsner, 1983; Bailey, 1991). Diaries are usually unstructured and entries may cover a wide range of themes and issues. For example, the entries may include learners’ report of the cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies that they use daily in their language learning. For the most part, the verbal report in diaries and dialog journals constitutes retrospective self-report or self-observation since learners generally write their entries after the learning event has taken place. For example, learners could describe what they do when they do not understand the teacher’s instructions (an example of self-report) or could describe a specific incident in that day’s class session when they requested clarification of the teacher’s instructions (self-observation).

Depending on the language learning strategies being studied, the researcher may be able to elicit self-revelatory data from diary and dialog journal entries. The simplest way is to have students take notes during the language learning task and then transcribe their notes into diaries or dialog journals later that day. (These notes could be interspersed among the regular class notes involving new vocabulary, grammar, or whatever.) If the students take good notes, they may be able to reconstruct their thoughts with some accuracy.

There is another option for using diaries to obtain self-revelation during the writing process. While performing reading or writing tasks in the target language, learners could keep a separate page (e.g., the left-hand page in a dialog journal) or use a wide margin on the composition page to make comments about the difficulties that they are encountering in strategy use or in finding strategies to use during their reading and writing tasks. For example, learners could—at the moment of uncertainty—make a note that they are not sure if they have correctly understood or are unsure of a verb tense in a sentence. This way, they would record the problem before they forgot about it.

If learners write on self-chosen topics, the data may be cumbersome to read and may not suggest or support any hypotheses regarding language strategies. To avoid having learners not mention learning strategies at all, learners can be directed to write about specific language learning strategies. For example, in one instance the diary writer/learner focused on the specific cognitive strategies of inductive and deductive inferencing (Rubin & Henze, 1981). In the Oxford, Lavine, Felkins, Hollaway and Saleh (1996) study, students were asked to focus more broadly on their approaches to listening comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary.

Generally, the resulting information is more qualitative than it is quantitative, and the techniques
available for summarizing and analyzing quantitative data will not be as applicable (Bailey, 1991). However, as shown by Oxford et al. (1996), the qualitative data in a diary can be transformed into quantitative data through content analysis procedures. In any case, the aim of most diary studies is not to produce rigorous quantitative results which can be generalized to language learners as a whole; instead, diaries have been used to find out what is significant to the individual learners at a time when the focus is increasingly on learners (see, for example, Breen, 2001). A final plus with regard to diaries is that they can be kept anywhere by anyone. Learners have the option of writing for even several months before giving their diaries to a researcher for analysis. Therefore, diaries may be more conducive than dialog journals to research in less structured learning environments (e.g., a learner who visits the target culture and lives with a family for three months during summer vacation from school). One such diary was kept by Rivers (1979) during a trip she made to Chile.

**Ways to Assess Language Learning Styles and Strategies**

Each assessment method has benefits and drawbacks. The challenge for researchers is to choose an method that provides the type of information they need. Given the problems inherent in any assessment method, teachers and researchers may want to consider using a combination of assessment methods. So, to describe vocabulary learning strategies in a beginning-level university course in Japanese, we could ask, “How best might we describe the vocabulary strategies of these students?” We could start by asking how much could be obtained through oral interview or written questionnaire. If written questionnaire data would not be appropriate in this case, it would be possible to interview the learner(s) and to include verbal report techniques.

Next, we could determine whether any of the data could be collected by observing the learners and videotaping the conversations. As we said earlier, not many strategies are actually observable, but the researcher may see evidence of strategy use, such as translating words into the native language to better understand them aurally or in print, avoiding translation by trying to understand words from the context, gesturing when unsure of the vocabulary in speaking, appealing for assistance from someone else, and coining new words in the target language. As a backup to observations, the investigators could check the videotapes to see whether the use of any of these targeted strategies was captured on video. In addition, the videotape of the speaking task could be shown to the learners to prompt their memory. When to show the learners videotape can be an issue. On one hand, the researcher may want to replay the videotape for the learners soon after the actual vocabulary using task to avoid the effects of memory deterioration as much as possible. On the other hand, the researcher may want to view the videotape first to formulate questions for the learners.

Issues that can impact the choice of assessment method and the options within the method include:

- the purpose of the study (to generate hypotheses or to conduct a detailed case study of one learner),
- the number of learners,
- the available resources,
- the strategies to be studied,
- the types of language tasks for which the strategies are used (e.g., speaking or reading), and
- the context in which the language learning takes place (e.g., a university class or a three-month visit to a foreign country).

In any case, any research method needs to be adequately piloted with the intended sample in the local context before being used in data collection.
There are several books that describe and contrast different measures for assessing learning style preferences and language strategy choices. Reid’s (1995), edited volume on learning styles offers a series of chapters dealing with learning style measures with a focus on the visual, auditory, and hands-on styles. Ehrman’s (1996) book is intended to help foreign language teachers diagnose both the learning styles and strategies of their students, especially those who are not doing well. She discusses how to do observations and interviews, and how to use the results of questionnaires, tests, and language aptitude instruments in assisting the learners. The book includes case study information on 35 teenage and adult foreign language and English-second-language learners.

Researchers have a variety of assessment methods at their disposal and the methods can be combined in any number of ways to collect the most useful data for the given study. The field of language learning strategies may benefit most from a wide application of assessment methods in multiple research contexts.

**Activity 1: Designing an Instrument** provides an opportunity to design an instrument for collecting style or strategy data, whether an oral interview, a written questionnaire, an observation scheme, an approach to journaling, or a type of verbal report. **Activity 2: Debating Methods of Assessment** is a debate about these different approaches to assessment that gives participants a chance to think about and voice their opinions.
Activity 1: Designing an Instrument

Format:
Groups of five or more (depending on the size of the group).

Purpose:
To design an instrument for collecting strategy use information from learners on some task.

Time:
30 minutes

Materials:
Reference to Chapter 4 (the assessment section) of this guide

Directions:
1. Ask the participants to move into groups of five or more. Each group is to design an instrument, however basic, for collecting strategy use information from learners on a task of their choice. It could be an oral interview, a written verbal report.

2. The group is to describe the instrument in as much detail as possible including its specific purpose, its length and make up, the instructions for its use, and the means for analyzing the results.

3. As time permits, they could try it out with colleagues or fellow students.

4. The final step is to analyze the results.
References Cited


Mann, S. J. (1982). Verbal reports as data: A focus on retrospection. In S. Dingwall & S. Mann (Eds.), Methods and problems in doing applied linguistic research (pp. 87-104). Lancaster, UK: Dept. of Linguistics and Modern English Language, University of Lancaster.


