

Learning strategy instruction: in theory and in practice

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Introduction

In this article, we want to share with you our experiences of teaching pupils how to learn. This has been the aim of our STIR project (STrategy Instruction Research), where we have been working in two London schools with classes of 12-13 year old pupils. Jennie works in a large, mixed, inner-city school where many of the pupils come from the local minority ethnic communities. The other school is smaller and situated towards the suburbs, with a larger proportion of high attaining pupils.

We will begin by discussing some of the research evidence about strategy instruction; what learning strategies are, why we should teach them and how to go about strategy instruction. We will then move on to describing some of the issues we faced when we set about translating the theory into practice and how we have tried to resolve them.

Since learning to learn languages is not confined to French or German, the article will also discuss possible links to the English curriculum and some of the difficulties this presents.

What are learning strategies?

Before discussing the rationale for teaching language learning strategies, we need to define what they are. As modern languages teachers, it is particularly hard for us to identify them, as by definition, we are successful linguists. So when we were learning a new language in school, we often used these strategies automatically, without even being aware of them.

The easiest way to uncover them is to put yourself back into the situation of tackling a new language. Start by translating as much as you can of the following Dutch text:

Een appel is rood,
de zon is geel,
de hemel is blauw,
een blad is groen,
een wolk is wit ...
en de aarde is bruin.

En zou je nu kunnen
antwoorden
op de vraag ...
welke kleur de liefde heeft

from *Welke kleur heeft de liefde?* by
Joan Walsh Anglund (Zomer &
Keuning, Wageningen, Holland)



Given that MFL teachers are usually interested in the way any new language operates, it is likely that you managed to work out the meaning of most of the poem, although the last sentences may have caused some difficulties, since they are particularly dependent on some knowledge of grammar.

Now try to list the tools or strategies you used to make sense of a poem in a completely unfamiliar language. For example, you may have been quick to spot the cognates (words that look or sound familiar through knowledge of English, German, Spanish etc);

Reading strategies

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Your list probably includes at least some of the following strategies:

1. recognising the type of text. Most people spot almost immediately from the pictures and the layout that it is a poem in a child's book. So you already have some expectations of the content and the structure;
2. going for gist (e.g. by skipping inessential words);
3. using the pictures (although not everyone notices the little drawings behind the children);
4. substituting the word '*something*' for words you could not guess and using the pattern of the sentences to predict the meaning; in this case 'A *Something* is + Colour';
5. using common sense and knowledge of the world. Once we have established that the author is referring to the colours of the natural environment, we can make a safe guess as to the colour of the sun, clouds etc;
6. saying the text out loud;
7. breaking down an unknown word/phrase and associating parts of it to familiar words;
8. using punctuation for clues; question marks, capital letters;
9. identifying the grammatical category of words.

Furthermore, as a successful language learner, you probably used these strategies not one by one but in combination, so that as you read, you kept checking back to see if your first guesses were correct.

If you want to find out what other strategies effective language learners have in their repertoire, use yourself as a good example. What did you do to learn either your first foreign language or your second?

- How did you memorise vocabulary?
- How did you go about writing a text and then checking it?
- What did you do when listening to a radio programme or a tape and there was something you did not immediately understand?

- What did you do when you had something to say but did not know the precise word?

You may find it interesting to compare the strategies you identify to the checklists of strategies in Appendix Set I (Strategy Checklists). Which ones are you already using? Are there any that you do not use? Why? What does it tell you about your preferred learning style? You may also want to compare your strategies to the strategies you think your pupils use.

Why teach learning strategies?

These kinds of strategies are obviously very helpful in enabling us to tackle a new language, but we should not assume that all our pupils use them. Indeed, research (O'Malley and Chamot 1990) shows that although high attainers have a wide repertoire of strategies and use them frequently, low attainers have a much narrower range and use them less often. Johnstone *et al* (1993) in their study of Scottish primary school pupils learning Modern Languages (ML) notes that, whereas the class as a whole may identify fourteen to fifteen strategies, each individual pupil may only be using two or three. Furthermore a study by Macaro (1997) suggests that one of the factors holding back our under-achieving boys is their lack of strategies. So why not let pupils in on the secret and make our own knowledge explicit? There is beginning to be convincing evidence, summarised in McDonough (1999), that if we do, we can make a positive impact on pupils' performance.

On a broader educational level, there are other reasons for engaging in strategy instruction, since strategies are an essential tool in helping our pupils become independent learners. The last fifteen years have been marked by an increasing interest in learner autonomy (Dickinson 1987; Holec *et al* 1996). As Nunan (1995: 134) points out, however:

It is a mistake to assume that learners come into the language classroom with a natural ability to make choices about what and how to learn.

Vee first became aware of this some ten years ago when she started to work with a group of London teachers to explore how to take the initial steps away from a teacher-centred classroom. She gradually began to be aware of a range of problems (Grenfell & Harris 1994). Many of the pupils did not know how to use a dictionary. They were reduced to panic when faced with reading authentic material without the teacher's support, and some of them lacked the basic social skills to support each other in group work. It seemed that for autonomy to work, it was not enough to organise the classroom in such a way that a range of resources and activities were on offer. Pupils had to be taught the skills and strategies they needed to tackle things on their own. Only in that way could they be expected to make the most of the opportunities offered them.

A final argument for embarking on strategy instruction relates to motivation. There have recently been some exciting new developments in this area (e.g. Dörnyei 2001) but it remains a complex and controversial issue, where there are no instant, magic solutions. Strategy instruction (henceforth SI) is, however, in our view, one possible 'way in' and can make a significant contribution- not least for low attainers. There is a sort of myth in England and perhaps in Scotland too that successful language learners have some kind of magical powers or special gift. Perpetuating the myth serves a very useful purpose for our low attainers since as soon as they encounter a problem, they can feel justified in abandoning the task on the grounds that 'I can't possibly do this- I'm no good at languages'. Rubin (1990:282) explains how SI can help shift their attitude:

Often poorer learners don't have a clue as to how good learners arrive at their answers and feel that they can never perform as good learners do. By revealing the process, this myth can be exposed.

The value of exploring with pupils how they learn is evident in these pupils' responses to SI from a European project Vee co-ordinated (Harris *et al* 2001).

- *No one had showed me before how to do what there is to do; think of ways to do it- the best or the quickest way (Portuguese pupil).*
- *I used to get bored learning words. Using strategies makes it quicker, easier and more fun. I have also used the strategies for other subjects, like learning Maths formulas (English pupil).*

The last comment is particularly relevant in the context of recent government initiatives in England. The Government has produced detailed frameworks of guidance for the teaching of each school subject over the 11-14 year age range. These frameworks set out the skills and understandings to be taught to pupils over the three year period. Although the Scottish educational system is different, the frameworks may still be of interest, since they highlight the common ground between English and ML; not only in terms of grammar, which is the most obvious connection, but also in terms of learning strategies. Table 1 provides some examples:

Table 1: Links between English and ML

English Framework (DfES 2001)	Modern Languages Framework (DfES 2003)
Memorisation	
Identify words which pose a particular challenge and learn them by using mnemonics, multi-sensory re-inforcement and by memorising critical features	How to find and memorise the spelling, sound, meaning and main attributes of words
Reading	
Work out the meaning of unknown words using context, compound patterns etc	How to read and understand simple texts using cues in language, layout and context to aid understanding

The similarities across the frameworks may seem self-evident to us. What is less apparent, however, is whether English school pupils are automatically making the links between the strategies that they are taught in their English lessons and the ML tasks they are faced with, particularly given that, as is evident from the dates, in practice the implementation of the ML framework has barely begun. We decided to explore the question of whether pupils automatically transfer strategies from one language to the other in the pilot phase of our project. We interviewed 28 pupils in four schools, using a game to help prompt them to describe their strategies. The 'learners' voices' you will hear below helped us to unpack some of the complex factors underlying the differences between low and high attainers and to relate that to their strategy use.

Learners' voices

First there was a clear difference in the ability to transfer across languages independently without any help. Rebecca for example automatically knows that what is important in one language is important for another:

Sometimes I think of a sentence I want to say in French and then I think well in English that wouldn't be a very good sentence cos it's really really simple. So I think how could I say um 'I can't come to the cinema' and look up 'because' and then write that down.

Compare that to Adele, a low attainer, who, when asked about memorisation strategies like 'Look Cover Test Check', does not appear to be able to make the connections:

That's only useful for English.

You might argue that it is hardly surprising that pupils do not connect the two language learning experiences, as their knowledge of their mother tongue is infinitely superior to that of the foreign language. Indeed Clarke in a seminal article (1980) concluded that until a certain 'threshold' of linguistic competence is acquired, learners are so concerned with decoding the language, they do not have the mental space needed to operate strategies.

However, our study suggests that it is how pupils cope with this limited repertoire that makes the difference. High attainers appear to tackle problems with confidence, activating a combination of strategies. Here, for example, Tony picks out a key word and uses the context to make a sensible guess:

Same as if you don't know what the sentence means, but you know what one word means, then you can kind of guess what goes around it. It can only be one of a few things. Like if you say brother or I dunno, sister, then you know it's gotta be someone's asking you about your sister.

In contrast, Laura's only strategy is to try to understand each word and when she cannot, she abandons the struggle.

See if Miss said 'I'm going to write something on the board', we know every word but then if Miss said the same thing in French then we don't know what she means.

It appears that she feels beaten before she has even started.

This difference in attitude relates more broadly to what Wenden (1999) believes is a key factor in facilitating transfer; that is pupils' metacognitive knowledge. She categorises this knowledge into:

- *task* knowledge; how a task may serve the learner's language learning needs and how to go about doing the task;
- *strategic* knowledge; knowledge about what strategies are and when and how to use them;
- *person* knowledge; general knowledge about human factors such as age or aptitude that may facilitate or impede learning, as well as how these factors apply to the learner and their beliefs about their own effectiveness.

Of particular significance in relation to our earlier discussion of motivation is whether the learner has positive beliefs that their learning is within their control and a direct result of their efforts.

So Rebecca for example, in tackling a writing task, takes account of her feelings and works round them:

Yeah, I think of what I do know first cos if you make it too difficult then you get panicky and then find it really difficult.

Another high attainer, Rory, seems to have worked out for himself what is involved in the listening process. Vee has just asked him what he does when he does not understand a tape and he replies that he listens harder:

V.H: What does listen harder mean?

Rory: Try not to like listen and write at the same time. Just listen and remember.

V.H: Why do you think that's important?

Rory: Because it's it's harder to do two things at once.

V.H: How did you know to do that?

Rory: No-one told me but it's like uh like using your mobile phone when you are driving.

Billy's understanding of himself as a learner and of the learning process is in stark contrast to these two learners:

V.H: How do you get the new words into your head?

Billy: I've no idea.

It appeared from the rest of the interview with him that although he is a low attainer with a limited linguistic repertoire, what makes it so problematic for him is the combination of low self esteem and a complete lack of understanding of the learning process.

Our pilot study enabled us to recognise that attainment level is only one of a range of complex factors in determining pupils' performance. Hence we see the aims of SI as not just about teaching them the mechanics of operating a set of strategies to tackle a particular task but using that as a 'way in' on a deeper level, to stand back, make connections and understand themselves as learners and the whole process of language learning.

However convincing these arguments for SI seemed to us, in practice it has raised a host of issues which we will discuss fully in the next section. Since we have just been exploring pupils' perception of the transferability of strategies between English and Modern Languages, it may be worth explaining here that this was the first of the issues we faced. Our original intention had been to make the links between the languages explicit from the outset. However an additional factor that emerged from the interviews was pupils' strong resistance to any notion that they did not 'know' English. Like Laura they believed they understood every word and had no problems in expressing themselves in English. Because of this and because of our own lack of experience in strategy instruction, we decided that in the first stage of the project, we would focus on simply encouraging pupils to become familiar and comfortable with the concept of strategies through ML tasks. We will return to how we are now making the links to English, after we have described our first attempts at SI. We begin by outlining the general principles of SI that we set out to follow.

Principles of strategy instruction

We know from the research literature that if SI is to be effective, it needs to be systematically taught over a sustained period of time and directly linked to the ML tasks pupils typically face in the classroom. So 'one off' lessons as part of the Social and Health Education curriculum, for example, are unlikely to be successful. There is also a growing consensus in the research literature on the sequence of steps to be followed in SI (for a comparison of various researchers' sequences of steps, see Harris 2003). The sequence is outlined below along with some practical illustrations from the project. The materials can be found in **Appendix Set II** (Teaching Materials) and include examples from both schools.

1. Awareness-raising.

The sequence begins with awareness raising. The purpose of this step is to begin to encourage learners to reflect on the learning process. They are set a task 'cold' and then asked how they went about it, sharing the strategies they used in a class brainstorm. So, in our project, we gave them a text on 'Les Loisirs' and asked the pupils to find out eight facts about French teenagers' hobbies for homework. The next lesson we asked them which strategies they used to work out what the text meant and what they did when they came to words or phrases they did not understand. An initial checklist of strategies was drawn up on the board. Although most pupils came up with basic strategies such as cognates, one high attaining pupil surprised us by explaining that she read difficult bits over several times, saying in English the words she did know and saying the word '*something*' for the words she did not know (the 'substitution' strategy). Thus, for example, the sentence 'ils regardent la télé en moyenne trois heures quinze minutes chaque jour' became 'they look at telly *something something* 3 hours, 15 minutes *something* day'. This helped her work out the final complete meaning.

An important part of the awareness raising step is to explain the rationale for the intended SI. Low attainers in particular may need considerable persuasion of its value. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990) point out, although they are the students for whom SI may be most valuable, they may be the least willing to try out new strategies, feeling that they are 'no good at foreign languages' anyway. In order to address the problems of motivation noted earlier, it is worth convincing them that the difficulties they have experienced so far may be due to lack of strategies, rather than lack of ability.

2. Modelling

The class brainstorm will have already allowed learners to begin to share the strategies that work for them. However in the next step it is essential that the teacher models others that are less familiar and are more cognitively challenging. This is often accomplished by 'thinking aloud' the processes that s/he, as a successful learner, uses. For example with the Dutch poem s/he might begin by saying 'well now I am looking at the layout of the text. Umm it looks like some kind of poem'. 'Thinking aloud' has long been part and parcel of the Learning Strategies research literature as a way of 'letting pupils in on the secret'. It is now also advocated as one of the cross-curricular principles in the Key Stage 3 Strategy¹ as a vital way of making concepts and conventions explicit. We found through bitter experience however that it is not as easy as it sounds, when it comes to more complex strategies such as 'substitution'. It proved helpful to present the various steps involved on an OHP. **Appendix II-1** is part of an OHT we used to model how to work out the meaning of a sentence taken from a text about the school day. It may seem long winded but it helped us to order our thoughts and our pupils to follow them!

Finally, it is helpful in this step if pupils are given a checklist of strategies to refer to. In our STIR project, this took the form of a Progress Record in which they could also record their marks on the texts they were presented with over the year and hopefully see how the strategies were contributing to their increasing success.

3. Practice

In all learning it is not enough to be told to do something and shown how. Learning to drive a car or to swim is not simply a matter of following instructions carefully. It is generally considered 'good practice' in ML teaching that when we teach a new topic, we devise a wide range of activities to practise the unfamiliar language. Strategy instruction is no different and pupils will need a great deal of practice before they can automatically know which strategies to use for any task they face (Cohen 1998, Rubin 1990).

¹ Scottish equivalent: S1-S2

Within English teaching, Harrison (2002) argues that collaborative pair and group practice is a valuable scaffolding step in shifting from the teacher as 'expert' during the 'modelling' phase to the point at which learners are able to operate independently. Here are some reasons why it is also helpful in ML strategy instruction:

- Pupils may be more convinced by each other's positive opinion of the value of a certain strategy than the teacher's exhortations to use it;
- Pupils have to reflect on and make explicit the strategies they are using. The language they use to do this and the examples they give may often be more accessible than the teacher's attempt to describe a strategy;
- Pupils can learn from each other's learning styles. A pupil who skim reads the text and makes wild guesses may have much to learn from their friend's more methodical approach;
- Pupils begin to take more responsibility for their own progress and to be less reliant on constant support from the teacher.

To take just one example of basic pair work practice from the STIR project, pupils were given a text on the film star Vanessa Paradis. They had five minutes to work in pairs to use the pictures, title and layout to predict what they might find in the text. They then had a further ten minutes to read the text itself, spotting cognates and familiar words and trying to work out if their predictions were correct.

It is important to withdraw such 'practice' opportunities gradually and with less and less scaffolding in the form of explicit reminders to use the strategies. The aim is that pupils should reach a stage where they have successfully internalised the strategies and can draw on them automatically, without prompting from the teacher. The process is similar to driving a car. Initially we may need the instructor to give explicit directions for changing gear ('look in the mirror, reduce your speed, put your foot on the clutch') but in the end, the steps involved have to become an automatic response.

4. Evaluation

In the final step, teacher and pupils work together to establish which strategies have been assimilated and can be deployed effectively. Pupils begin to take responsibility for their own progress by reflecting on the strategies they have tried so far- which ones have worked? Which ones do they need more practice in? Do they now find reading quicker, easier, more enjoyable? This is a vital part of SI as it informs both the learner and the teacher of the progress that has been made and flags up areas that need additional practice and reinforcement. So after a group work activity about Christmas traditions in different countries, described in detail in the next section, pupils were asked to complete the worksheet in **Appendix II-2**, highlighting which strategies they had found helpful and which they needed more help with. After feedback to the teacher, the pupils entered the strategies that they intended to target on their STIR Progress record. We were able to use their invaluable feedback to inform our planning in the Spring Term.

From Principles to Practice: what we have learned.

As we set out to apply the sequence of steps outlined in the previous section many questions arose which needed to be addressed before we could progress. We discovered that there were few precedents in the research literature for teaching reading strategies to younger learners. Hence it was important to document in our regular 'field notes' what we were learning from the experience. Table 2 summarises the main issues to emerge in this initial stage.

Table 2: Issues in implementing SI

Tensions between:	
Authentic material	Short, contrived textbook texts
Full range of strategies	Limited combinations of strategies
Independent use	Supported practice

To ensure that pupils perceived an immediate relevance to the use of reading strategies, we had decided to introduce the reading strategies through the use of authentic material. Texts from teenage magazines were found; for example a review describing a computer game and one on a French film. Unlike contrived textbook texts, these materials offered opportunities to teach strategies such as 'predicting on the basis of clues from pictures, title and layout'. In order to highlight the importance of using a range of strategies in combination, over the course of four lessons, pupils were introduced to the majority of the strategies through the two texts and given the Progress Record. It became clear however that the combination of difficult authentic texts and a wide number of new strategies placed too heavy a burden on their mental processing capabilities and their enthusiasm began to wane. This was particularly the case with more complex and time-consuming strategies such as 'substitution' or 'using grammar clues' that they had not been exposed to in primary school.

It was decided to adopt an alternative approach during the next month. This entailed practising a cluster of several strategies through a short 'starter' activity, and then proceeding with the normal lesson. In the example in **Appendix II-3**, the possible cognates were already underlined. Pupils worked in pairs to recycle several reading strategies such as 'substitution' and 'use common sense and the rest of the words in the sentence' to spot the 'Faux Amis'. In Jennie's school, the text was simpler and the pupils first had to underline the cognates for themselves, which they found motivating as it was easy to complete.

Having practised small groups of strategies in isolation, a textbook text then recycled all the strategy clusters at the end of several weeks. Pupils were instructed to read each paragraph underlining all the words they did understand and identifying those they did not. They then had to work the meanings out, ticking on a grid the strategies they had used. Using a textbook text at this stage appeared to have a number of advantages. First it ensured that the text was approximately the appropriate level of difficulty. Second pupils appeared to be more comfortable with the use of the new strategies within familiar contexts, where they could immediately perceive their relevance to everyday ML classroom tasks. Finally it allowed us to make up ground lost in the scheme of work!

We now felt ready to take on the next step. Whilst pupils had been working in pairs for short periods of time, it was agreed that more extended group work was needed in order for them to move from supported practice in the use of strategies to deploying them independently. It was also hoped that they would be more confident in tackling authentic material. The first term ended therefore with a series of two lessons, where pupils had to research and present Christmas traditions from a range of different countries around the world. Each group was given a different text from a French teenagers' magazine from which they had to note the main details to present to their classmates: an example can be found in **Appendix II-4**. They were encouraged to produce a spider diagram to focus their reading and guide their presentation. We reminded them that they were already familiar with this form of research and presentation from their English lessons, and referred to the 'independent research, using a range of reading strategies' and the importance of picking out key information and making notes in relevant ways, noted in the KS3 English Framework (p.28). The use of their reading strategies was essential if they were to gain the maximum amount of information in the time available and the activity also required them to work co-operatively. Since it mirrored activities that they had done in Citizenship lessons, they were familiar with the group work code of conduct and the demarcation of roles.

We were delighted with the outcome. From their evaluations, described earlier, it appeared that the majority of pupils in both schools were motivated by the activity and they produced

some excellent posters. The texts were indeed challenging but they were willing to grapple with understanding them because there was a clear audience and purpose for their work, not least wishing to win the prize for the best presentation!

Mid-way through the project we had learned much which would inform the next stage:

- it is important to fully embed SI within the scheme of work;
- a 'little and often' approach can be more effective than whole SI lessons;
- a graded approach seems to be effective; introducing strategies through starters, recycling them through textbook texts and culminating in extended group work on authentic texts;
- texts must be cognitively challenging but accessible. They need to contain enough familiar language in order for strategy implementation to be achievable but, at the same time hard enough to provoke the use of strategies;
- we cannot assume that strategies are easy to model and need to unpack the mental processes involved.

As teachers, we were feeling more confident about how to teach strategies. We were ready to embark on making the links to English in a more consistent way. We had already devised a number of starter activities. One, based on the use of 'connectives', first encouraged them to tell us what they understood by the term and to provide some examples in English. They were then presented with a text and asked to use their common sense to spot 'faux amis' (such as 'car') and to identify its real meaning. Another, designed to help them identify 'grammar clues', was a 'spot the odd one out' game, enabling them to recycle basic concepts from English lessons such as singular and plural. To really take our project forward however, we needed to gain a much greater understanding of the English curriculum. Learning strategies certainly appeared in their Key Stage 3 Framework but in what contexts did they teach them, when and how?

Links to English

From our discussions with colleagues teaching English and from observing their lessons and examining their schemes of work, a number of ways forward have emerged. We are building on them in a range of ways from specific activities dependent on the particular English scheme of work in each school to more general principles to guide our SI. Thus pupils in one school have recently been exploring the roots of English words, including their Latin or Greek origins. We have followed this up in ML with the starter activity in **Appendix II-5**, linking it to the strategy of 'breaking the word up into bits that I might recognise'.

A more extended activity was to present pupils with a range of complex, key English words from different subjects in the curriculum, such as 'contour, bias, adjacent, nutrient'. They had to assign the words to the subject area and to try to identify the approximate meaning by remembering where they had seen or heard it before. The aim was not only to challenge pupils' perceptions that they understood everything in English, but also to encourage them to think about the context in which they first met a word and how that can help them.

On a more general level, we want to replicate the purposes for reading that are familiar to our English-teaching colleagues and that we had begun to explore with our Christmas texts. The prime objective is not to understand the text on a surface level but rather to gather and present new information, or to identify underlying feelings and attitudes or to analyse stylistic features. The text in **Appendix II-6** was adapted from the Key Stage 3 optional training video and used in the school with higher attaining pupils. A simpler version was produced for Jennie's school. Having worked in pairs to identify key facts about life in the trenches, pupils were asked to reflect on what they might be asked to do with a similar text in an English lesson. Again in pairs, they identified the author's feelings and underlined particularly powerful expressions. Both Jennie and Vee felt that this was one of the most successful lessons of the project. Our field notes may indicate both the reasons and the ways forward:

- *Class highly motivated by task and text. Subject matter engaged them*
- *They were almost more interested in telling us their response to the text and how the writer felt than in the facts.*

Our next challenge is to draw on all we have learned to introduce the pupils to listening strategies!

Conclusion

This article has sought to both outline the research background to language learning strategies and to chart the journey we have taken in translating the ideas into practice in two London schools. The process has been a fulfilling and rich experience and we have learned much through listening to what the pupils have to say, through reflecting together on our lessons and through discussions with our English colleagues. The pupils' increased enthusiasm and willingness to engage with the various project activities suggest that they too are beginning to benefit from the SI and as importantly to see the links to English and other curriculum areas. We very much look forward to sharing with SCILT colleagues at a future event their experiences of teaching pupils how to learn.

Acknowledgements: *The project is funded by the Society for Educational Studies under the auspices of the Denis Lawton award. We are also very grateful to the other member of the STIR team, Kate Scappaticci (St. Thomas More School), for all her ideas and materials that have helped moved the project forward.*

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Appendix Set I: Strategy Checklists

Introduction

Simple list of learner strategies are not easy to provide as there are many different ways of categorising them and those doing research into the specific strategies involved in a particular skill area go into greater detail than others.

Here, we provide just a very basic starting point. To make them of immediate relevance to the classroom, we decided to try to word them in 'user friendly terms' and to present them as checklists that pupils themselves could use. You may want to add others that you use yourself. You could also use the checklists to:

- tick the strategies that you have seen your pupils using;
- cross the strategies that they are not using but you would like them to;
- indicate the year group most appropriate for teaching that particular strategy.

We have listed them very roughly in the order of those which, in our experience, are easiest to teach:

- a) Memorisation strategies
- b) Reading strategies
- c) Listening strategies
- d) Writing strategies
- e) Checking written work strategies
- f) Speaking/ communication strategies.

You will notice that we have presented each set of strategies under the headings of '**before**...(reading)', '**while**.. (reading)', '**after**.. (reading)'. This is because what appears to be of key importance in SI is not just to teach pupils the specific 'cognitive' strategies they need to tackle a particular skill area but more generally to help them to develop the global, overarching 'meta-cognitive' strategies that successful, independent learners use to reflect on and take control of their learning. Rubin (2001) sees 'Learner Self Management' as a vital tool in developing pupils' independence since it enables them:

- to plan how they will tackle any task in whatever skill area;
- to monitor how well they are doing it;
- to evaluate how successfully they have done it.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Modern Languages (1996) also emphasises the importance of these higher level, general, metacognitive strategies, by grouping the cognitive strategies under the four main categories of:

- planning;
- execution;
- evaluation;
- repair.

Appendix I-1: Strategies for memorising vocabulary

I think of a word in my mother tongue that is like the word I am trying to learn	
I draw a picture of it	
I write the words out over and over again	
I use look-cover-test-check	
I look at the word and then close my eyes and try to see it in my head (photographic memory)	
I break long words up into little parts	
I make the words into a poem or a shape poem	
I put 'post-its' with the words on them all round my room	
I make cards with the words in the foreign language on one set and in my mother tongue/ or pictures on another. Then I play games with them	
I separate the gender of the articles from the words and then try to put them together again	
I say the first letter of the word, then my friend says the second then I say the third and so on	
I make up a word search or a cross word with the new words in it	
I make up a gap filling exercise with the new words in it	
I say the words out loud over and over again	
I make a tape of the new words and listen to it	
I put the words to a well-know tune	
I get my friend/ my parents to test me	
I teach the new words to my parents/ brother/ sister	

Appendix I-2: Reading Strategies

There is clearly considerable overlap between the strategies involved in the 'receptive' skills of reading and listening. For both skill areas, the order in which the strategies are listed indicates a broad continuum starting from those which might be associated with 'top-down' processing (global comprehension of the text as a whole) to those indicative of a 'bottom-up' approach (word-for-word translation).

Before reading

I work out what I am reading; eg if it's instructions, a letter, an advert or a brochure	
I try to get clues from any pictures and the title to help me guess what it will be about	
I try to predict all the words and information that I might find in the text	

While reading

I don't panic and switch off but I just tell myself it's OK and keep reading, even if it is hard	
I just try to get the main ideas first and then read it again for the details	
I skip over words that I do not understand	
I try to spot words that I do understand from when we learned them in class	
I look out for words that are like English words	
I look out for the names of people or places and for punctuation clues	
I think about all the possible things it could mean	
If I don't understand, I use my common sense to guess the meaning from the rest of the words in the sentence and what I have worked out so far	
I say the difficult bits out loud or in my own head	
I say in English what I have worked out so far in the sentence and use 'something' to help me guess the word I don't know; e.g. 'he hit his head on the <i>something</i> '.	
I break the word or sentence up into bits that I may recognise	
If I don't understand one bit, I go back to it and read it over several times slowly	
I try to spot what kind of a word it is- a noun, a verb etc. to see if that gives me some clues	

After reading

I try to remember everything that I have read and then fit it altogether so that it makes sense	
I check back to see if my first guesses still make sense	
I think about why some of the strategies I used did not work, and which could help me more next time	

Appendix I-3: Listening strategies

Before listening;

I check that I understand the task I have to do	
I look carefully at the title and any pictures to see if I can guess what it will be about	
I try to remember as many words as I can to do with this topic	
I think about what is likely to be said in this situation and predict the words I am likely to hear	

While listening

I work out if it is a conversation, an advert, a news bulletin etc.	
I pay attention to the tone of voice and any background noises for clues	
I use other clues like key words to identify the rough gist	
I use my common sense to make sensible guesses	
I try to see if any words are like words in English	
I don't panic when there is something I don't understand but I carry on listening	
I listen out for the names of people or places	
I try to hold the difficult sounds in my head and say them over and over again	
I try to break the stream of sounds down into individual words and write them down to see if they are like words I know	
I don't give up and just make wild guesses	
I listen out for grammar clues like tenses, pronouns	

After listening

I check back to see if my first guesses were right and made sense or I need to think again	
I think about why some of the strategies I used did not work, and which could help me more next time	

Appendix I-4: Writing Strategies

Before writing

I think about what the task requires and brainstorm some ideas that I want to say	
I gather more information by reading, talking to others, remembering relevant words or phrases that I have previously learned	
I list some key ideas	
I decide how to organise and communicate my ideas; if the task requires describing, sequencing, explaining or justifying	
I write a rough plan to show the order in which I will put my ideas	

While writing

I add ideas as I write	
If I do not know a word or phrase that I need, I look it up or think of an easier way of saying it	
I try to include as much detail as possible, for example using lots of adjectives when I am describing something or someone	
I use clear 'markers' like 'first, then' or 'on the one hand, on the other hand'	
I try to 'make it fancy' by using relative clauses for example	
I try to 'make it fancy' by trying out grammatical rules that I have learned	
I pay attention to accuracy	

After writing

I write a first draft, correct it using strategies for 'checking my written work' and then write a second draft	
I ask a friend/ the teacher to read it	
I write a final draft	
I think about why some of the strategies I used did not work, and which could help me more next time	

Appendix I-5: Strategies for checking written work

I read the text all the way through to see if it makes sense	
I read each word separately to see if the spelling 'looks right'	
I say each sentence to myself to see if it 'sounds right'	
I read the text over again, paying attention to the grammatical mistakes I usually make eg; adjectival agreement verb endings tenses	
I make sure that the style is appropriate and I use good 'linking' word connectives)	
I try to spot what I am still not sure of	
I look it up	
I leave it for a day and then come back to read it 'with fresh eyes'	
I give it to a friend to read	
I think about why some of the strategies I used did not work, and which could help me more next time	

Appendix I-6: Speaking Strategies

Practising speaking

I play with sounds. The Young Pathfinder (1998) 'First steps to reading and writing' has a host of phrases put to simple tunes and poems	
I look at the teacher or at native speakers talking on video and imitate the shape of their mouths	
I listen to the radio/ tape cassettes and repeat out loud useful expressions I hear	
I count / say hard phrases when I walk to school/ am sitting on the bus	
As I move through my day, I name what I see around me (eg. trees, people, cars, furniture, books)	
As I move through my day, I say out loud what I am doing: "Now I am drinking a cup of coffee, walking to the bus stop,doing my homework"	
I think about what I would like to say and look up any words I don't know in the dictionary	

Before speaking

I think about what I want to say	
I remind myself of how to greet people, to say 'thank you' etc.	
I remind myself of words and expressions that I already know and put them into sentences	
I look up words I don't know or ask the teacher or a friend	

While speaking

I try to keep it simple and avoid topics or ideas that may be particularly difficult	
I use familiar phrases that I am confident with to give myself time to think of how to say something I am less sure of	
I use 'hesitation' expressions like 'Well', 'you know' etc. to give myself time to think	
I listen out for words and expressions that I have just heard the teacher or my partner say and try to use them myself	

And if I do not know the word for something.....

I describe it eg what it looks like, what you can use it for, whether you wear, eat or drink it!	
I use opposites like 'not married' for 'single'	
I use a word that has roughly the same meaning like 'boat' instead of 'ship'	
I use mime or a gesture or a facial expression	
I make up a word by saying the English word but with the foreign accent	
I use an 'all purpose' word like 'thingie'	
I ask for help e.g. 'how do you say .../ what do you call...?'	
I show I need help e.g. by pausing, a puzzled expression etc.	

After speaking

I write down the words or grammar rules that I did not know and look them up	
I think about why some of the strategies I used did not work and what I could do next time	

Appendix Set II: Teaching Materials

Appendix II-1: Extract from OHT used to model 'substitution'

J'arrive	au	collège	à	7h50	et	je parle	avec
I arrive	at	school	at	7h50	and	I talk	<i>something</i>



Think of all the possibilities:

- I talk about?
- I talk to?
- I talk with?

Keep going! I talk about/to/ with. WHO?

Mon	copain	Gilles
My	<i>something</i>	Gilles
Et ma	copine	Katia
And my	<i>something</i>	Katia

So I talk something my something Gilles and my something Katia

- My teachers? No, as teacher is professeur in French
- My brother and sister? No, as brother is frère
- My friends? Possible

We could guess that copain and copine have the same meaning.



Recap: I arrive in school at 7h50 and I talk *about* my friend or I arrive in school at 7h50 and I talk *to/with* my friend?



Common sense: which is the most likely?

I arrive in school at 7h50 and talk *with* my friend Gilles and my friend Katia.

Appendix II-2: Evaluation Sheet

Names of group:
Write down one thing that surprised or interested your group about Christmas in the country you read about
Give 3 adjectives about how you felt about working in groups: 1. 2. 3.
Give 3 adjectives about how you felt about the reading materials : 1. 2. 3.
What we found the hardest/ still don't understand in the text is:
How well do you think your group did on understanding the text? Give yourselves a score out of 10.
How hard did you try to use the new strategies? Give yourselves a score out of 10
Which strategies did you find most helpful? Why?
Which strategies do you still find hard to use and would like more help with?

Appendix II-3: Starter Activity

Cognates..... ?

Salut!

Je m'appelle Patrick Viera. Je suis sportif mais gros, parce que j'aime manger. Je suis footballeur et je joue actuellement pour une équipe anglaise qui s'appelle Arsenal. J'ai de la chance!

J'habite une petite maison avec un grand jardin, un garage et une cave.

Normalement, pendant la semaine, je me lève à six heures, je me douche, puis je prends du pain et du thé pour mon petit déjeuner.

Je quitte la maison à sept heures car je fais de l'entraînement tous les jours au stade et je dois y arriver à sept heures et demie pile. Je mange à la cantine à Highbury - un sandwich, des chips, et du fruit (j'adore les raisins!)

Le weekend, je reste à la maison avec la famille, et le dimanche matin, j'adore faire la grasse matinée. Samedi soir, je regarde un film.

Mon film préféré est Bridget Jones Diary, parce que j'adore les histoires romantiques et amusantes.

Dans le futur, je voudrais être professeur de sport.

.....ou faux amis ?

Faux amis	Possible meaning. How did you arrive at that conclusion?
gros	Fat – he's unlikely to describe himself as gross! He also says he likes eating

Appendix II-4: Example of text on Christmas traditions

Philippines



Mon nom est Rowena. J'ai 14 ans et je vis au centre *Caméléon*, dans une île au sud de Manille. Cet établissement s'occupe de filles qui vivent dans les rues ou de jeunes victimes de violences. Les Philippines sont très croyants. 85 % de la population pratique la religion catholique. Noël est donc une grande fête pour nous. Du 16 au 24 décembre, nous allons tous les jours à la messe, à 5 heures du matin, afin de nous préparer à l'événement de la naissance de Jésus. Le 25 décembre est un jour férié dans le pays. Nous sommes très attachés aux traditions : le centre *Caméléon* est entièrement décoré. On achète un arbre en plastique, pour l'entrée, que l'on couvre de cloches et de boules rouges et vertes. Nous préparons aussi un bon repas avec du poulet, du poisson, du riz et un plat typiquement philippin, l'*Ube balaya*. Il est fait avec la racine d'une plante de couleur violette. Du 1^{er} au 25 décembre, entre 6 heures et 9 heures du soir, on va frapper aux portes des maisons. On chante pour qu'on nous donne un peu d'argent, qui sert à acheter des cadeaux pour les enfants des rues. On en donne aussi à l'église.

Mes cadeaux

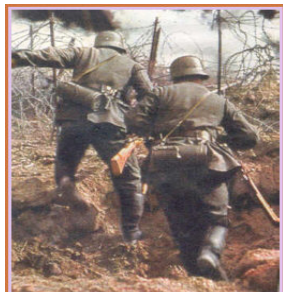
Nous n'avons pas beaucoup d'argent, aussi nous nous échangeons de petits cadeaux : des pinces à cheveux, des bijoux faits avec des perles, des bougies décoratives, des petites peluches, des dessins ou des cartes de Noël. Mais le plus beau des cadeaux, c'est l'amour. Et à Noël, on pense d'abord à être très attentifs aux autres !

Appendix II-5: Links to English -starter activity on roots of words

Roots

root	<i>English</i>	Examples in English	Examples in French
Corp	<i>body</i>	<u>corporation</u> <u>corpse</u>	le <u>corps</u> <u>corporel</u>
PORT	<i>CARRY</i>		
Reg	<i>rule</i>		
Dent	<i>Tooth</i>		
Man	<i>hand</i>		
Habi	<i>live</i>		
Cent	<i>hundred</i>		
Prim	<i>first</i>		
Ped	<i>foot</i>		
De	<i>from</i>		

Appendix II-6: Links to English- letter to explore feelings and style



Amiens

16 mai 1914

Ma chère Solange,

Je te remercie de ton colis qui est arrivé aujourd'hui; des oranges et de la marmalade. Quelle surprise!

Ici dans mon régiment, nous mangeons seulement de la soupe et du riz avec quelquefois du pain. C'est chaud mais ce n'est pas varié. Je souffre un peu de l'estomac.

Comme je déteste la guerre! Nous passons des jours et des jours dans les tranchées. Ma solitude est encore plus grande la nuit quand j'entends les soldats blessés qui crient et qui crient. Il y a des centaines de corps mutilés après la bataille et il n'y a pas assez de médecins pour les aider.

Aujourd'hui, avec ma lettre, je t'envoie aussi quelques francs. Ce n'est pas beaucoup mais nous allons être riche un jour- c'est une promesse!

Comment va mon petit Joseph? J'ai regardé mes deux photos ce matin. Comme il est beau! Il a déjà un an mais je suis un étranger pour lui.

Est-ce que tu peux m'envoyer encore des oranges et puis des livres aussi- des livres où tout finit bien et où la guerre et la solitude n'existent pas.

Je t'embrasse encore et encore

Ton Paul