

Language learning strategies

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



Over the last few decades, 'college of self-education' has assumed more importance than the 'college of education.' That is to say, a noticeable transformation has taken place, as for language learning. The emphasis is more on learners and learning than teachers and teaching. The system of language education has undergone metamorphic changes. The focus is on the learner. The learner-centered curriculum and the learner-centeredness as for language education are the concepts in practice now. Many papers/articles have appeared emphasizing the above shift. The use of language learning strategies (in second and foreign language (LLS) in second and foreign language (L2/FL) for learning and teaching have become part of the language syllabi.

Defining of Language Learning Strategies:

"Weinstein and Mayer (1986) defined learning strategies (LS) broadly as "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" which are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p. 315) Later Mayer (1988) more specifically defined LS as "behaviors of a learner that are intended to influence how the learner processes information" (p. 11).

Human beings have the innate tendency to process the language and learning which in fact means processing of the information. Learning skills are the inseparable part of the learning process, whatever be the content or context. Learning skills are put to use in all subjects—like Mathematics, History, Geography, Language etc. Learning environment vary, it can be informal as well as classroom setting.

As for L2/FL education—it has been defined by Tarone (1983) as “ an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language -- to incorporate these into one's inter language competence" (p. 67). Tarone, E. (1983). The earlier focus was on the linguistic or sociolinguistic competence. It has progressively changed and the current emphasis is on processes and the characteristics of LLS. One point incidentally. LLS are distinct from learning styles. Learning styles mainly concern to innate, inborn and chosen ways of noting, absorbing and processing the acquired information and skills. There exists, however, a distinct relationship between one's own style of learning the language and the language learning strategies adopted by one.

The ways or learning a language varies from person to person. The choicest way to learn a language can not be singled out. The best way to pick up the language comes from within. You have the intense desire to learn a particular language and therefore you are immersed in the related activities that help the cause. Read books, watch movies, interact with people who speak that language, study the related articles in the magazines. If you cultivate a friend circle in the language of your choice, you pick up the language quickly. You need not pay intense attention to the grammar at the initial stages. Join a tutored course and own a self-study package.

Tutored learning is the commonly accepted mode to learn and acquire skill in a language. The experienced teacher in a classroom, who has handled hundreds of students in the past, knows their initial problems and the related solutions can provide motivation for the language learners. Language learning need not be a serious and tense exercise. If you travel and tour the country

of the targeted language, your language related questions and problems get an automatic solution. Over the period, you find that you have picked up the language.

Research made to find the best method to teach a language is voluminous. The relevant answers to this problem came from the learners themselves. It was found that tested strategies play an effective role in the area of language learning. Of all the methods the ones classified by Oxford (1990) provided a system and stability to the whole process. Oxford viewed learning strategies as “ specific actions taken by the learner to make leaning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). The strategies are divided in to two categories:

Many factors influence the selection of strategies employed by the students learning a second language. The most important factor is motivation. A highly motivated student is different from the less motivated one. If one has a particular and strong reason for learning the language, one picks up the language fast. Sometimes, careerprospectuses are linked to the language. In such cases, one is expected to learn a language within the specified period. Females use such strategy in a greater degree than the male counterparts. Memorization is related to cultural background. Asian students showed higher degree of expertise in this area. Attitudes and beliefs play the dominant role. The negative attitudes do not help the cause. The positive attitudes have a profound effect. The type of task assists in determining the strategy employed to carry it out. As for the age, the older and more advanced students employ different strategies. Learning style is also one of

the important factors in the selection of the strategy. Tolerance of ambiguity is directly related to the selection of the strategy. (Language.....)

The number of English language learners is rising steadily. Special interventions for underachievers are therefore necessary. Different approaches are tried for teaching academics to students to whom English is a second language. It is no ordinary task to teach a student in a language in which he has no mastery. Lots of information is now available as for students hailing from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds. Firstly, the traditional peer-assisted Learning Strategies to enhance student efficiency in English are effective. Such a strategy has shown positive results on the reading achievement.

Another intervention is Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition program. This was beneficial for the Spanish-speaking students. In this intervention the focus is on writing, reading in both Spanish and English language activities. The students are divided into small co-operative learners groups. Another invention is Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs. The goal here is to enhance the comprehension ability and also English language proficiency. Importance is given to small-group discussions. The teachers act as facilitators for the group, while the group of students is engaged in telling stories, relate personal experiences which are helpful in understanding each other, keep topics and concepts, writing independently short notes as per the writing prompts.

Answer questions related to stories etc. The exercises have high potential effects on the Language learners and they contribute to fast development of the English language skills. They also help the communicationskills. “ The <https://assignbuster.com/language-learning-strategies/>

Vocabulary Improvement Program for English Language Learners and Their Classmates (VIP) is a vocabulary development curriculum for English language learners and native English speakers (grades 4-6). The 15-week program includes 30-45 minute whole class and small group activities, which aim to increase students' understanding of target vocabulary words included in a weekly reading assignment.”(What works...) Many more such interventions are employed and language learning strategies followed for proficiency in English language.

“ Within 'communicative' approaches to language teaching a key goal is for the learner to develop communicative competence in the target L2/FL, and LLS can help students in doing so.” The importance of communication strategies is an essential factor of strategic competence. Communication skill and language learning strategies differ in substance. The speakers make an intentional and conscious effort to communicate in a L2/FL. All strategies that L2/FL learners utilize in the language which they intend to learn are covered under LLS. LLS are very essential for learning the language because they are the proper tools for self-initiated active involvement, which is necessary for enhancing communicative skills.

Conclusion:

During the last few decades, many changes have occurred relating to teacher's professional learning and consequently they have influenced and affected the teaching methods/standards for the students. Computers have influenced the teaching and studying pattern much. One can see effective use of technology in all areas. The pattern of collaborative activity between the teachers and the students has also undergone perceptible changes and

such changes are for the better. They have helped to create drastic level of improvement in the communication, and speaking skills. The teachers understand the needs of the students better. The students understand the expectations of the teachers even better. In this materialistic world and fast moving technological advances, expertise in communication and spoken language is an important aspect for the career growth.

References Cited:

1. Weinstein, C., & Mayer, R. (1986). The teaching of learning strategies: In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3rd Edition (pp. 315-327). New York: Macmillan
2. Mayer, R. (1988). Learning strategies: An overview: In Weinstein, C., E. Goetz, & P. Alexander (Eds.), *Learning and Study Strategies: Issues in Assessment, Instruction, and Evaluation* (pp. 11-22). New York: AcademicPress.
3. Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
4. Language Learning Strategies: Article: An Update Oxford (1990a) synthesized existing research on how the following factors influence the choice of strategies used among students learning a second language. ...
5. [www. cal. org/resources/digest/oxford01. html](http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/oxford01.html) - 25k -Retrieved on June 16, 2007
6. Article: What Works Clearinghouse: English Language Learning Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies is an instructional program for use in ...

develop reading comprehension ability along with English language proficiency. ...

7. ies. ed. gov/ncee/projects/wwc/english_language. asp - 25k – Retrieved on June 16, 2007

8. Tarone, E. (1983). Some thoughts on the notion of 'communication strategy'. In C. Faerch & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Strategies in Inter language Communication* (pp. 61-74). London: Longman.