A complementary approach to lifelong learning strategies

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Abstract

This paper examines how the language learning strategies that learners prefer in learning professional language at tertiary level can be used for lifelong education. It is well known that when learning a language learners use various learning strategies, but not all learners are equally successful in their studies. This research is based on the analysis of data obtained from two different surveys of learners' preferred language learning strategies. Respondents spread over two levels of English proficiency and their learning strategies are compared. Self-evaluation and reflections on learning outcomes reveal how important or unimportant various learning strategies are and which might be relevant to lifelong learning. The study found that learners' preferred individual strategies can be an effective way to foster their motivation for self-development and, in the long run, lifelong learning.

Key words: lifelong learning strategies, self-evaluation, reflective practice.

Resumen

Un enfoque complementario a las estrategias de aprendizaje "para toda la vida"

En el presente artículo se estudia cómo pueden utilizarse en la docencia que se rige por el principio de "para toda la vida" las estrategias de aprendizaje preferidas por los alumnos para el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera aplicada a contextos profesionales que se desarrolla a nivel universitario. Se tiene buena constancia de que en el aprendizaje de lenguas los alumnos emplean distintas estrategias de aprendizaje, pero no todos los aprendices muestran rendimientos igualmente satisfactorios. La investigación que se describe en el presente trabajo parte del análisis y la comparación de datos obtenidos mediante dos cuestionarios relativos a las estrategias de aprendizaje preferidas por los aprendices, que se reparten en dos niveles de aptitud lingüística. La

autoevaluación y la reflexión sobre los resultados de aprendizaje demuestran la mayor o menor importancia de distingas estrategias de aprendizaje así como su pertinencia dentro del concepto de aprendizaje "para toda la vida". Asimismo, del estudio se desprende que las estrategias individuales preferidas por los aprendices pueden constituir una técnica eficaz para fomentar la motivación con vistas al auto-desarrollo y, a largo plazo, el aprendizaje "para toda la vida".

Palabras clave: estrategias de aprendizaje para toda la vida, autoevaluación, práctica reflexiva.

Introduction

The important part of education is learning how to learn. One of the objectives of a language course is to teach learners how to continue learning the language independently after the course has ended. The second valid point is the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own performance in a foreign language which is an important skill of critical thinking. The third valid point is the ability to use high technology for the benefit of effective learning. Training learners in using strategies of effective learning such as self-monitoring and self-assessing is invaluable in attaining teaching goals. Fostering learner strategies of effective learning is a factor for successful lifelong self-development.

To ensure effective language learning, language teachers must make professional decisions about methodology and techniques to be used. Decisions made during language instruction depend on various factors, among which the most important are the needs of the individual learner, the goals of the course, learner preferences and attitudes to the importance of various language skills.

This paper addresses the issues of learners' preferred strategies for language learning. Research implications might be beneficial for fostering sustainable lifelong learning. The major indicators of lifelong learning are the same as learning strategies and include learners' self-evaluation, learner reflections on one's achievements or failures, personal organizer, or portfolio, e-learning, strategy training, learner autonomy and creativity in all learning activities. Learners self-evaluation, reflections, application of electronic portfolio and training learners in developing awareness of their learning strategies have been used in this study.

This article consists of the background review, which includes lifelong

learning, learning strategies, and strategy training, followed by the description of respondents and research methods, the results, discussion, conclusions, and references.

Background

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a philosophy implying that it is never too late for learning and that learning is a continuous process to be achieved through the life span of an individual (European Commission, 2001a). As Räisänen and Fortanet-Gómez (2008: 6) point out, "life-long learning is fast becoming a household word in the European sphere of education". Lifelong learning encompasses learning for personal, civic and social purposes as well as for employment. It takes place in a variety of environments in and outside the formal education and training systems. Lifelong learning implies raising investment in people and knowledge; promoting the acquisition of basic skills, including digital literacy; and broadening opportunities for innovative, more flexible forms of learning. The aim is to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to high-quality learning opportunities, and to a variety of learning experiences. Institutions of higher education have a key role to play in making this vision a reality. The European Union Commission stresses the need for Member States to transform formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning (European Commission, 2006). In this sense:

> The recommendation to foster learning-to-learn skills so that learners may continue developing their linguistic competencies during (and after leaving) formal education is permanently put forward as an issue closely link to the lifelong-learning philosophy. (Bocanegra-Valle, 2008: 214)

Language learning is a lifelong activity, for which the European Commission identifies the following specific objectives (European Commission, 2001b): 1. learning of a mother tongue plus two other languages; 2. language learning in secondary education and training; 3. language learning in higher education; 4. language learning among adults; 5. encouragement for language learning by learners with special needs; 6. development of a wide range of languages. The action plan of language learning proposes teaching a subject through a foreign language, which would enable learners to use their

language skills directly. Language learning in higher education envisages promoting multilingualism. All learners should study abroad for at least one term and should gain an accepted language qualification as part of their degree course.

According to the European Commission, the main indicators of lifelong learning are learner autonomy, learners' reflections on learning, self-evaluation, the application of Information Communication Technology –i.e., e-learning, creativity and use of portfolio. More specifically, the *European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning* (European Commission, 2002) describes fifteen indicators classified into four areas:

1) the "skills, competencies, and attitudes area" contains literacy, numeracy, new skills for the learning society, learning-to-learn skills, active citizenship skills, and cultural and social skills;

2) the "access and participation area" contains access to lifelong learning and participation in lifelong learning;

3) the "resources for lifelong learning area" contains investment in lifelong learning, educators and learning, and ICT (information and communications technology) in learning; and

4) the "strategies and system development area" contains strategies for lifelong learning, coherence of supply, guidance and counselling, accreditation and certification, and quality assurance.

There is a variety of widely implemented methods that help people learn successfully such as accelerated learning techniques, assessment alternatives, cooperative learning, learning styles, multiple intelligences, application of technology, etc. The role of technology in lifelong learning has become particularly important.

Learning strategies

The notion of learning strategies was intuitively appealing to researchers and it was embraced with enthusiasm by language teachers, although "there is a lack of an unambiguous theoretical definition of the learning strategy construct, and most of the relevant literature in the L2 field pretends that with regard of learning strategies everything is more or less okay" (Dörnyei, 2005: 169). According to Dörnyei (2005), the definitions of learning strategies offered in the L2 literature are rather inconsistent and elusive.

The initial research generated two well-known taxonomies of language learning strategies: the first one by Oxford (1990), and the second one by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Oxford's taxonomy consisted of six strategies: cognitive, memory, metacognitive, compensation, affective, and social. Metacognition refers to thinking about cognition or reasoning about one's own thinking. Most definitions of metacognition include both knowledge and strategy components. Metacognition is often referred to as "thinking about thinking" and can be used to help learners "learn how to learn". Metacognition has been linked with intelligence and it has been shown that those with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful thinkers.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) carried out extensive research into learning strategies by means of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach which is based on findings in cognitive psychology and is concerned with how knowledge is acquired, stored, and retrieved. L2 learners use three main types of strategies: 1. metacognitive strategy, which involves planning and thinking about learning, its monitoring, and evaluating learning outcomes; 2. cognitive strategy, which involves conscious ways of tackling learning, i.e. note-taking, resourcing (using various resources like books, dictionaries, etc.), and elaboration – relating new information to old; 3. social strategy, which means learning by interacting with other people. Interestingly, in their research usage of metacognitive strategies accounted for 30% of the learners' choice, cognitive strategy was used by 53% of the learners, and social strategy equalled 17%. It should be noted that the type of strategy varies according to the task the learners are engaged in and learners' language level. Learning strategies can be identified by administering scientifically sound surveys to learners, and learners should be taught to use different strategies, so that acquired strategies can be transferred to new tasks and subjects.

According to Dörnyei (2005), compensation strategy refers to communication, which is related to language *use* rather than language *learning*. Nevertheless, Oxford's (1990) strategy system is highly compatible with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) system, if communication strategies are excluded, and social / affective strategies are separated. The resulting typology comprises the following four main components (Dörnyei, 2005): 1) cognitive strategies, involving the manipulation and transformation of the learning materials; 2) metacognitive strategies, involving higher order strategies aimed at analyzing, monitoring, evaluating and organizing one's

own learning process; 3) social strategies, involving interpersonal behaviors aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communication and practice interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers; 4) affective strategies, involving control of the emotional conditions and experiences.

According to Cook (1996), good language learners are: 1. those who find a learning style that suits them; 2. those that involve themselves in the language learning process; 3. those that develop an awareness of language as a system and as a communication; 4. those that pay constant attention to expanding language knowledge; 5. those that take into account the demands that L2 learning imposes.

In the recent years there has been considerable interest in the role of reflection in higher education. Research on language learning strategies investigates the feasibility of helping learners become more effective language learners by teaching them learning strategies (Chamot, 2004). The most valuable way to promote a change of attitude alongside the acquisition of skills is encourage the learners to reflect on what they are doing and why. The promotion of learner reflection remains one of the main benefits of alternative assessment (Coombi & Barlow, 2004). Ability to reflect, learning strategies and learners' attitudes are important aspects of learner autonomy that can lay the foundations for lifelong learning (Tomlinson (ed.), 1998).

Active learning in higher education presupposes the ability to think critically, analyze and solve problems, use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competently. Critical thinking skills are not likely to develop spontaneously and need to be improved and trained in English classes (Ustunluoglu, 2004). Language learners need to explore different learning strategies, experimenting and evaluating, and eventually choosing their own set of effective strategies.

The study of learner strategies indicates discrepancies between learner and teacher perceptions of language learning strategy use (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Learners rank social strategies as the most frequent, followed by metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, affective, and memory (the least frequent). Teachers' beliefs are different, i.e. memory strategies are the most frequent, followed by cognitive, social, metacognitive, compensation, and affective (the least frequent). Griffiths and Parr (2001) claim that it is possible that some of the discrepancies may be due to differing interpretations of the strategy groupings.

The possible implications of learning strategies for teaching are: language

learners need to explore different learning strategies, experimenting and evaluating, and eventually choosing their own set of effective strategies.

It should be emphasized that learning strategies have never been explicitly rejected by teachers. However the concept of learning strategies is considered to be unfruitful for research purposes and the notion of self-regulation is thought to be a more dynamic concept because it refers to multidimensional construct, including cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioral and environmental processes (Dörnyei, 2005). Learning strategy is only one component of self-regulation which consists of a long list: goal setting, strategic planning, monitoring, metacognition, time management, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, intrinsic interest, evaluation and self-reflection, feedback, etc. This complex construct of self-regulation still needs to be researched.

Strategy training

The notion of learning to learn in L2 studies has a history of over three decades. Strategy training is defined as the explicit teaching of how, when, and why learners should employ language learning strategies to enhance their efforts at reaching language program goals (Chen, 2007). Since the 1970s, researchers have addressed the need for strategy training in response to the lack of learners' awareness of the cognitive tools and strategies available to them. Evaluation of strategy training concerns the changes in learner behavior from the perspectives of task improvement, strategy maintenance, and strategy transfer. The impact of strategy training on the learner not only leads to the improvement of language proficiency, but also engages with the learners' internal changes in the learning process. The theoretical model (Chen, 2007) illustrates the relationship among the dimensions and categories of the changes in the participants' learning processes and emphasizes the need for balancing all the criteria that may contribute to successful learning. Strategy training frameworks aim to achieve the following goals (Dörnyei, 2005: 178):

> to raise learners' awareness about learning strategies; to encourage strategy use; to offer a number of relevant strategies for learners to choose from; to offer controlled practice in the use of strategies; to provide an analysis for students' to reflect on their strategy use.

It is claimed that the ultimate goal of strategy training is to empower learners by allowing them to take control of the language learning process (Cohen,

1998). However, some researchers caution teachers against investing too much effort into strategy training as this is not likely to be cost-effective, while proponents of strategy training claim that there is enough positive evidence to justify further work in this area (Dörnyei, 2005).

Most studies evaluating the effectiveness of strategy training for second language learners have quantitatively measured improvements in their test scores following the completion of strategy training. Chen (2007) argues that the evaluation methods must be supplemented by a qualitative analysis of the impact that strategy training has on the learning process; he contributes a theoretical model that illustrates the relationship among changes in participants learning processes and four dimensions for evaluation criteria, namely, the observable changes in learners' behavior, changes in their learning process, strategy changes in approach to study a foreign language, and general changes in attitudes towards language learning.

A number of models for teaching learning strategies agree on the importance of developing learners' metacognitive understanding of the value of learning strategies. In Cohen's (1998) model, teachers act as a diagnostician, language learner, learner trainer, coordinator and coach. In the model suggested by Grenfell and Harris (1999), teachers raise awareness, discuss value of strategies, give learners practice, set goals, choose appropriate strategies to attain goals, and, finally, teacher and learners evaluate success of action plan.

There are three current models for language learning strategy instruction: SSBI Model (Cohen, 1998), Grenfell and Harris' (1999) model, and CALLA Model (Chamot, 2005). All these identify learners' current learning strategies through activities such as completing questionnaires, engaging in discussions about familiar tasks, and reflecting on strategies used after performing a task. All the models suggest that the teacher should demonstrate the new strategy. Moreover, current models are based on developing learners' knowledge about their own thinking and strategic processes at the same time learners' are encouraged to adopt strategies that will improve their language learning and proficiency.

Learners are often unable to transfer learning strategies to new tasks; therefore, learners should be taught and trained to apply learning strategies and become aware of themselves as learners, which is essential to the development of autonomy and, in the end, to the use of lifelong learning strategies in the future. Transfer of strategies can increase significantly if

teachers help learners understand their own learning processes. The issue of transfer has not been sufficiently investigated. Differences were found between high attaining and low attaining learners: high achievers used more metacognitive strategies and were making transfers while low achievers failed to use strategies (Harris, 2003).

Aim, respondents and methods

The aim of the research is to identify what strategies of language learning can be beneficial to lifelong learning.

The respondents were the full-time learners who study either psychology or social work at tertiary level. There were 90 participants altogether. The respondents were predominantly females between 19 and 22 years old. Learners were spread over two English course levels: pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate according to their score on the Oxford Placement Test at the beginning of the course. The amount of time spent in foreign language environment was 4 hours a week for 3 semesters.

The most frequent and efficient method for identifying learners' learning strategies is through self-reported data like questionnaires, interviews or diaries. This research used a real classroom situation to study learners' language learning strategy use. Two sets of the Strategy Inventory were used. The first questionnaire was based on O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and McCoy (2006), who used a modified questionnaire which grouped language learning strategies (under metacognitive, cognitive and social-affective). The obtained data are presented below. However, probably due to some uncertainty over strategy grouping, our results differ from similar research into strategies of learners at tertiary level (Suchanova & Sliogerinė, 2006). For this reason, a different type of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990), which is based on learners' opinions, has been used. First, learners worked through the above mentioned questionnaire, then - the Strategy Inventory version by Oxford (1990) was applied. Finally, following the brainstorming stage[1] of language learning strategies, learners contributed their own ideas on the most important learning strategies. As a result, a new questionnaire was designed. It contains 16 items and appears to be similar in form and some of the content to that reported by Griffiths (2007), although the latter is twice as long (32 items).

Results and discussion

The basic instruments for the current study were the surveys on identifying learners' strategies in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The statements of the Strategy Inventory are presented in Table 1 and are taken after O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and McCoy (2006).

The questions of the first survey are reproduced in the Appendix. This is a self-scoring survey which consists of statements, to which learners responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The 12 items of the survey are divided into four groups: metacognitive strategies (relating to how learners manage their learning), cognitive strategies (relating to how learners think about their learning), social strategies (involving learners by communication with peers), and affective strategies (relating to learners' emotions). Since social and affective strategies are often interrelated they are often combined (McCoy, 2006).

Metacognitive strategies	Positive responses	Negative responses	Uncertain responses
Advanced organizer	78%	12%	10%
Selective attention	75%	10%	15%
Self-management	80%	15%	5%
Self-monitoring and evaluation	70%	10%	20%
Delayed production	70%	10%	20%
Average	75%	11%	14%
Cognitive strategies	**Positive responses**	**Negative responses**	**Uncertain responses**
Repetition	75%	10%	15%
Resourcing	80%	10%	10%
Translation	80%	10%	10%
Inference	75%	10%	15%
Average	78%	10%	12%
Social / affective strategies	**Positive responses**	**Negative responses**	**Uncertain responses**
Clarification	75%	10%	15%
Cooperation (pair work)	80%	10%	10%
Participation (group discussions)	75%	5%	20%
Assistance	82%	8%	10%
Average	78%	8%	14%

Table 1. The findings of the survey on the use of metacognitive, cognitive, and social / affective strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, and McCoy, 2006).

The results of the learners' positive, negative and uncertain responses (Table 1) show quite an unexpected outcome, i.e. there are no significant preferences in learning strategies. In other words, positive, negative, and

uncertain responses are almost the same within the error limits: social/affective strategies equal 78%, cognitive 78%, and metacognitive 75%. Contrary to our data, in the earlier paper by Griffiths and Parr (2001) learners ranked metacognitive strategies as the most frequent language learning strategies (6 on a scale from 6 to 1) while cognitive and affective strategies are less frequent (3 and 2, respectively). However, in a more recent article Griffiths (2007) claims that many strategy items in Oxford's typology can be included in more than one group and, thus, the data might be inconclusive. Moreover, some items such as consulting a dictionary were not included in the previous studies of various authors (Griffiths, 2007). For this reason, it is expedient to find out what strategies learners prefer to use in mastering their language skills.

As it has already been mentioned, we have conducted investigation into learners' preferred learning strategies by brainstorming the issue and generating a different type of survey. A newly designed questionnaire took into account learners' reflections on their learning strategies.

This Strategy Inventory consists of 16 items and is reproduced in Table 2. Learners were asked how often they used the strategy items, using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). This new Strategy Inventory was completed by 90 learners who were spread over two basic English for Specific Purposes levels: Pre-Intermediate (PI, 50 learners) and Upper-Intermediate (UI, 40 learners). The results in Table 2 include the Mean values (M) of learners' responses and the Standard Deviations (SD).

To determine a degree of freedom df, we subtracted 40 minus 1 (39), and 50 minus 1 (49), and added these two results together, i.e. $df = 39 + 49 = 88$. So there were 88 degrees of freedom for these two samples. When we checked the t-value in the theoretical statistics Table of Critical Values (Brown & Rodgers, 2002) for the t-test statistic, we had to check in the row which strategy shows 88 degrees of freedom to decide whether the difference between the means was significant or not. If the exact df was not shown in the Table of Critical Values, we took the closest value below it in order to be conservative. In our case it was 60, and in that row the critical value for t_c at the .01 level of significance (two-tailed) was 2.660 (or $t = 2.000$ at the .05 level of significance). If the calculated t-value is greater than the critical value t_c found in the Table of Critical Values at .01 or .05, it means that there is a significant difference between two groups. The right-hand side column of Table 2 displays the values of computed p which indicates

whether there is a significance difference between learners' responses. Such *p* values are shown in italics in Table 2. Therefore, in such cases it may be concluded that learners with higher value of Means are better at using a particular language learning strategy. However, the *p* values between 0.138 and 0.614 in Table 2 show that the Mean values for both groups can be interpreted as statistically close, i.e., there is no significant difference between groups in using these learning strategies.

No	Statement	PI level: 50 learners, Mean values (M)	PI level: Standard Deviations (SD)	UI level: 40 learners, Mean values (M)	UI level: Standard Deviations (SD)	Two-tailed significance level (*p*)
1	*Homework assignments*	3.62	0.75	3.92	0.76	*0.064*
2	Pair work in class	3.73	0.64	3.83	0.79	0.510
3	*Use of online/paper dictionary*	3.82	0.51	4.11	0.49	*0.008*
4	Listening practice in class	3.91	0.83	3.82	0.85	0.614
5	Revision of tenses	3.85	0.67	3.75	0.77	0.512
6	Learning ESP vocabulary	3.95	0.85	3.80	0.92	0.425
7	Doing linguistic computer tasks	3.27	0.80	3.04	0.85	0.191
8	Watching authentic TV films	3.23	0.92	3.51	0.83	0.138
9	Revision of ESP materials	3.11	0.80	3.36	0.75	0.134
10	*Talking to native English speakers*	3.24	0.75	3.67	0.76	*0.009*
11	*Listening to English podcasts*	3.85	0.62	4.12	0.78	*0.071*
12	*Writing entries to weblogs*	3.85	0.62	4.14	0.78	*0.053*
13	*Analyzing one's own mistakes*	3.63	0.75	3.95	0.76	*0.049*
14	Time spent on studying English	3.44	0.70	3.63	0.74	0.216
15	*Learning phrasal verbs*	3.82	0.50	4.12	0.48	*0.007*
16	*Translation from L1 to L2 and vice versa*	3.67	0.50	4.15	0.49	*0.005*

Table 2. Mean responses, Standard Deviations, and computed two-tailed significance levels *p*.
("PI" means Pre-Intermediate level, and "UI" stands for Upper-Intermediate level).

It is hardly expedient to rank these strategies into metacognitive, compensation, cognitive, affective, social, and memory groups, in the same way as many researchers have used before –basically because some of them overlap. The most important result is the types of strategies that learners find beneficial to mastering their language skills. Another important point is the comparison of strategy use at different levels of proficiency. As it can be seen, some strategies are more significant at either higher or lower level of proficiency. Learners' individual differences outline the virtues and benefits of particular strategy use. The preferential use of certain strategies implies that learners might rely on them in the future –when the need for language refinement emerges.

Individual interviews with learners reveal that learners believe in the importance of translation from L1 into L2 and vice versa, listening to authentic English and use of dictionary in order to keep learning language in the future, after the course has finished.

As a matter of interest it is worth mentioning that the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha, which is a coefficient of reliability or consistency of the data, has also been computed. The formula for the standardized Cronbach's Alpha is $\propto = (N \cdot r) / (1 + (N - 1) \cdot r$, here N is equal to the number of items and r-bar is the average inter-term correlation among the items. A reliability coefficient Alpha of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most Social Science research situations. In our case, N = 90 and two variables (two groups of different proficiency levels) the value Alpha is equal to .87 and shows high reliability of the presented data.

Learners' reflections

Initially, many learners found the request to reflect on their learning a novel experience. Moreover, some of them did not feel that self-evaluation is supportive to their learning. It should be emphasized that reflections are difficult for learners and may be even superficial because they include the ability to evaluate oneself critically. Nevertheless, impartial reflections usually lead to self-knowledge, which is fundamental to learner development, and are employed as a means of monitoring one's own learning.

Some researchers (Kuit, Reay & Freeman, 2001) claim that reflection works best in collaboration with others, which is true for the academic staff, but questionable for learners, who are very sensitive about losing face. Our

research into learners' reflections included an open-ended survey on their achievements in various class activities including tests and written work (Kavaliauskienė et.al., 2007). The quality of learners' reflections can be summarized as follows:

1) learners seem to find it easy to carry out reflections on what they did and how they did it, i.e., the difficulty or ease in their performance;

2) learners assess their own strengths and weaknesses realistically by exploring experiences and formulating ways for improvement;

3) learners are open about preferences, abilities, awareness of achievements, willingness to perfect knowledge and skills.

The effectiveness of reflective strategy depends on the reflective activities and the commitment of the individuals who carry them out. For teachers, learners' reflective responses are challenging because they stimulate staff to re-evaluate their teaching.

Conclusions and implications

Learners believe that in order to improve their language skills in the future, it is useful to employ such learning strategies as translation from L1 into L2 and vice versa, use of dictionary with the aim of learning an accurate meaning of the word and its usage, and habitual listening to authentic English. Learners' attitudes to various learning strategies essentially differ due to their individual differences.

Learning strategies constitute a useful tool for active learning, promote learner autonomy and prompt proficiency. Due to the benefits and virtues of learning strategies learners increase the effectiveness of learning and extend their knowledge of "know how to learn". Such knowledge lays down foundations to lifelong learning which is essential for every person in the 21st century.

The main implications of this study for teachers are to monitor learner's individual differences and achievements, encourage learners' reflective practice, and obtain feedback on the best learning strategies for a particular learner. The implementation of this unconventional approach to teaching a

unique person rather than a class of very similar people might enhance learning motivation and justify teacher's efforts for improving teaching quality.

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NOTES

[1] The idea of brainstorming in English classes has been known for years. It implies the discussion of a theme (topic) by learners who eventually generate new ideas, suggestions or notions. In our settings, the brainstorming stage of language learning strategies aimed at finding out what learning strategies, according to learner beliefs, might be or have been useful to each of them.

Appendix. Survey of learners' metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies –based on O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and McCoy (2006).

No	Specification	Strategies
		METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES
1	Advanced organizer	Review materials and prepare for classes
2	Selective attention	Focus on a specific language point at a time
3	Self- management	Arrange the best learning environment
4	Self-monitoring& evaluation	Correction and identification of one's errors
5	Delayed production	Learn by listening, reluctant to talk
		COGNITIVE STRATEGIES
6	Repetition	Imitation of other people's speech
7	Resourcing	Use of dictionary or reference books
8	Translation	Use of translation in learning
9	Inference	Guess the meaning from context
		SOCIAL /AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
10	Clarification	Ask for clarification of unknown words
11	Cooperation (pair work)	Active in pair work
12	Participation	Active in group discussions
13	Assistance	Help others and their help in learning