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UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

**Understanding Language Learning Strategies of English Language Learners
in the Community College System**

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
**Master of Education in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages,
Literacy and Culture**

by

Steven P. Kean

Thesis Committee

Viviana Alexandrowicz, Ph. D., Chair

Reyes Quezada, Ed.D.

2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
School of Leadership and Education Sciences

CANDIDATE'S NAME: Steven P. Kean

TITLE OF THESIS: Understanding Language Learning Strategies of
English Language Learners in the Community
College System

APPROVAL:

Viviana Alexandrowicz, Ph.D. Chair

Reyes Quezada, Ed.D. Member

DATE: May 10, 2018

**Institutional Review Board
Project Action Summary**

Mar 13, 2018 9:35 AM PDT

Steven Kean
School of Leadership & Education Science

Re: Expedited - Initial - IRB-2018-315, Understanding Language Learning Strategies of English Language Learners in the Community College System

Dear Steven Kean:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2018-315, Understanding Language Learning Strategies of English Language Learners in the Community College System.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings: None

Research Notes:

Internal Notes:

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Thomas R. Herrinton
Administrator, Institutional Review Board*

**Office of the Vice President and Provost
Hughes Administration Center, Room 214
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Phone (619) 260-4553 • Fax (619) 260-2210 • www.sandiego.edu**

Abstract

This study focused on English language teaching and learning through the lens of language-learning strategies, and how strategies-based instruction is implemented within the community college system. The intent of this study was to determine the extent to which language-learning strategies are taught to second-language learners in a community college district, the specific strategies that language-learners use, and whether improvements to strategies-based instruction in the community college system are needed. This research used a customized version of Rebecca Oxford's Strategies Inventory for Language Learners. It also queried instructors who teach English as a Second Language (ESL), and it analyzed ESL course curricula. The study found that, generally, language-learning strategies are not explicitly taught but implicitly learned, both inside and outside of the ESL classroom. The study also found that advanced level students who took the survey use seventy-one percent of the strategies measured, leaving as many as twenty-nine percent of the strategies little used or unused altogether. Finally, the study recommends that language-learning strategies be taught explicitly, in awareness-raising exercises, so that students learn not only to identify the specific strategies available for use, but also how to apply them using the material being learned.

Dedication

To my parents,

Marcia Ann Kean and Richard Earl Kean

and my wife,

Patricia Yolanda Kean

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Chapter One: Introduction

Jerome Bruner, in *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, was an early pioneer that the goal of teaching was to make the learner self-sufficient. It was the teacher's responsibility, he insisted, to teach his students how to learn, lest they become too reliant on his presence and knowledge. The objective of teaching was not to focus exclusively on the course content, but also on teaching the students how to process, learn and retain the information presented to them (Wenden, 1986). As a growing body of literature on student-centered learning began to emerge, language-learning strategies also started to gain interest in second-language teaching. Language teaching and learning, then, slowly moved away from teacher-led instruction—with all its attention on vocabulary, grammar rules and rote memorization—toward a student-centered process involving problem-solving tasks and communicative competence.

In *Learning Remembering and Understanding*, Ann Brown and her colleagues articulated a strategy for learner training that remains valid today: explicitness of purpose, content of training, and evaluation (Wenden, 1986). *Explicitness of purpose* recommends that learner training should not be conducted implicitly, or in the blind, but explicitly. If students are unaware of the process being taught, they cannot be expected to know how or when to apply the strategy to a learning task. *Content of learning* speaks to teaching the specific and general learning skills students are to use, such as strategies tied to learning a particular task, like remembering a word or decoding its meaning, or learning skills that are applied to a broader strategy, like planning and monitoring the methods to be used. *Evaluation* advocates measuring the learner training to ensure that it results in improvement, is sustainable, and can be transferred to other learning contexts (Wenden, 1986). Finally, a fourth strategy is the *integration* of learner training with language training, either broadly, as in introducing the concepts without practicing

the skills, or narrowly, such as applying a strategy to a specific learning task or set of tasks. The second alternative is more integrated, and therefore more effective, than the first, and is the preferred method of learning a language (Wendon, 1986).

The specific and general learning skills that form the basis of student-centered learning are what Rebecca Oxford (1990) later popularized in *Language-Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Specific and general learning skills evolved into direct and indirect learning strategies, and learner training grew into strategies-based instruction. These language-learning strategies and strategies-based instruction will be the foci of my thesis and research, and they will be discussed at length in the following pages. I have been a tutor in two English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classrooms and a graduate observer in three other ESL classrooms, totaling 150 hours of instruction ranging from beginning to advanced ESL levels, and explicit strategies-based instruction was absent from all five classes. In addition, the course materials and syllabi were silent about language-learning strategies.¹ Even more surprising, the teaching methodologies course that I attended at a prominent San Diego university did not teach language-learning strategies or strategies-based instruction throughout the course of instruction.

Given the totality of these circumstances, I undertook to research this phenomenon to determine if ESL students in a local, community college district in Southern California have been taught and/or are aware of language-learning strategies, and whether the students have implemented these strategies in their own language-learning experience.² This research will benefit not only my own professional development as a future ESL teacher, but it will also be useful to current ESL instructors by offering insight into the cognitive and socio-affective

¹ A syllabus outlines the subject as well as the topics to be covered during a course of study. It contains assignments and expectations, and it is given to students at the beginning of the term. Plural: syllabi.

² The community college district will remain unnamed; however, it is documented in the underlying research materials.

strategies that language learners use, and the role of the community college classroom in the teaching of these strategies to second-language learners of English.

Background and Context

Traditionally, language learning has been a teacher-centered approach to language instruction. Language teaching has embodied a variety of methods dating as far back as the late 1800s, when the Classical Method, with its focus on vocabulary and grammatical rules for the translation of texts (Brown, 2007, p.18), was the standard bearer for language teaching and learning. Since the early 20th century, as teachers and researchers learned more and more about language learning and acquisition, mostly through their failures than their successes, the approach to language teaching has evolved. Before the turn of the century, the Classical Method, with its heavy emphasis on vocabulary and grammar, yielded to the Series Method, which relied on the sequential presentation of language structures. The Series Method evolved into the Direct Method, wherein everyday language was taught through modeling and practice.

Over the course of the 20th century, each method gave way to another method, building on the previous models or abandoning the methods altogether for a new approach, then reaching back and borrowing again as new method was designed to replace the last. A steady progression of language teaching models evolved. The Classical Method returned as the Grammar Translation Method during the 1930s, which was replaced by the Army Specialized Training Program—or simply, the Army Method—at the onset of World War II. The Army Method eventually morphed into the Audiolingual Method during the middle of the century. Then, in the 1960s, the Audiolingual and Grammar Translation methods combined into Cognitive Code Learning, which proceeded from a knowledge of grammar and drilling practice, but it still failed to develop communicative competence in second language learners.

During the 1970s, language teaching began to turn toward affective methods of language learning. The “Designer Methods” attempted to reduce anxiety in the classroom by creating empathetic relationships in a supportive classroom environment. In addition, language teaching began to move away from teacher-centered instruction toward student-centered learning, starting with the Counseling-Learning model, where the teacher focused on the needs of the student in a counselor-client relationship. Counseling-Learning became known as Community Language Learning, which underwent several adaptations as the method continued to evolve. Still, the strategy proved ineffective because it was too nondirective, and it relied too much on inductive learning while completely ignoring deductive approaches. Nevertheless, the shift toward student-centered learning and learner autonomy gave way to several more iterations of language teaching models. Oddly, they returned to cognitive approaches that seemed to borrow again from the past. Sugestopedia relied on the subliminal consumption of language while students were in a relaxed state, and the Silent Way involved problem solving and learner discovery with little teacher direction. Although both methods were student-centered, they failed to give an appropriate level of guidance to clarify the concepts being learned. Both were nonstarters, even though the Silent Way took a step forward in terms of collaborative learning and student independence.

After a brief sojourn, affective methods were reintroduced to language instruction, wherein teachers attempted to lower student anxiety in order to simulate a stress-free environment that would promote learning. Nevertheless, it was another throwback to earlier approaches. Total Physical Response (TPR) seemed to borrow from the Series Method, where the students were directed to perform a series of physical activities that were connected to the target language. TPR was effective for developing beginning level learners, but it lost its appeal

when more complex language structures and spontaneity were required to achieve communicative competence. The next evolution, the Natural Approach, picked up where TPR left off, providing comprehensible input a little above the students' level of understanding, while waiting for the students' language to naturally emerge as they engaged in student-centered learning. Like the methods before it, the Natural Approach failed to produce long-term results. The delay of speech during the so-called silent period had its limitations; without oral expression, it was difficult to determine the students' rate of progress and the appropriate amount of comprehensible input needed for continued language development.³

Finally, during the 1980s and into the 1990s, what the previous methods didn't accomplish, the communicative approach to language teaching did. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) combined the benefits of inductive, deductive and socioaffective learning with the pragmatic features of language and students' motivation to communicate. The students were to become active participants in their own learning through learner autonomy and collaborative problem solving, or what has become widely known as student-centered learning. Consequently, CLT and its successor, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), began to focus more on the underlying meaning and uses of language without completely abandoning grammar instruction. These approaches balanced the importance of fluency with the need for accuracy by blending communicative practice with targeted grammar instruction. For the first time, language teaching considered the purpose to which language was put to use, and it approached language learning through the pupils' need to communicate outside of the classroom. For a list and description of the various language-teaching methods and their approaches to classroom learning, see Appendix 1.

³ Comprehensible input derives from Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis; that is, "language can be learned when the knowledge presented is within the vicinity of the language learner's current level of understanding" (Molina, 2013, p. 10).

Language-Learning Strategies and Strategies-Based Instruction

Despite all the innovations over the course of a century, language teachers still had not found a panacea for teaching a second language. The best language-learning techniques, however, may have been hidden deep inside the learner all along, and researchers were about to reveal these elusive secrets. By 1990, *language-learning strategies*—a series of techniques that can aid second-language learning—were an emerging field of study, and they initially received wide acclaim within the language-teaching community. One author later referred to them as the “beyond methods era” (Masouleh, 2012). Yet, while language-learning strategies were gaining attention, they had not achieved widespread notoriety, acceptance and use among language teachers.

As the latest frontier to language learning, learning-strategies training, or strategies-based instruction, seemed to lose appeal, perhaps because of a “‘theoretical muddle’ resulting in a great deal of ‘conceptual ambiguity’” (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003, in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p. 3). The difficulty lay in the multiple categorizations of strategies by numerous researchers, who have tried to classify the strategies into cohesive, theoretical groupings. Consequently, there has been little consensus in classifying strategies, resulting in contradictions between the various theorists (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014). For a summary of these language-learning models, see Appendix 2. Even Rebecca Oxford (1990), who developed the most comprehensive collection of six meta-strategies, later refined her groupings to just four categories in an effort to eliminate overlapping characteristics between the groups. Oxford’s groupings will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Despite the conflicting approaches to language-learning strategy, research has shown that successful language learners often employ learning strategies in appropriate contexts, while

less successful learners either are not aware of the strategies or they apply them in inappropriately (Lee, 2010). Other research shows that language learners who receive explicit strategy instruction improve in all areas of language proficiency—comprehension, speaking, reading and writing (Chamot, 2005). The intent of this paper is to explore whether or not language classrooms have moved forward and capitalized on teaching language-learning strategies, particularly in the community college system, as a growing population of immigrants attempt to mainstream into American society, where English is the gateway to academic success and economic security.

Guiding Theories

Based on the multiple perspectives of researchers, Griffiths and Oxford (2014) have constructed a theoretical framework that language learning is largely a cognitive process that is influenced by the social and affective factors unique to each individual. As a cognitive process, “Learning language... involves taking in information which is then processed and acted upon” (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p. 4). Learners are capable of generating rules (Chomsky’s language acquisition device, or universal grammar), learning from their errors, developing interlanguage (as they navigate from one language to the other),⁴ and making associations based on their background knowledge. They are also capable of metacognition, a higher form of cognition that expresses the ability to organize, plan and manage their learning processes, including monitoring, evaluating and correcting one’s language output (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014).

The theoretical framework behind language-learning strategies also embraces a behaviorist approach to learning. Learning strategy theory, for instance, includes behaviorist

⁴ Interlanguage is the “continuum between the native language and the target language.” It represents “a gradual process of trial and error to approximate the system used by native speakers” (Song, 2013, 778).

elements like the repetition of words and phrases that aid memory strategies. The behaviorist approach, however, is mostly prevalent during the early stages of language learning: As language learning progresses and language forms become more and more automatic, the learner uses behaviorism to a lesser degree. Similarly, as a language learner becomes more proficient, a social-cultural dimension emerges “in the form of interactive strategies” in which the learner processes and responds to information from the environment (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014). Finally, this social-cultural dimension is mitigated by a variety of affective factors, which either inhibit or encourage the language learner to socially interact with other people. The ability to manage and control one’s emotional energy, then, has a direct bearing on social interaction and language acquisition.

Language learning strategy theory has an “eclectic theoretical foundation” underpinned by the cognitive, social and affective principles of learning (Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p.4). This web of cognitive, social and affective theories “helps explain why language learning strategy theory has been... resistant to [a] simple ‘theoretical clarification’” (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003, in Griffiths and Oxford, 2014, p. 4). The language learning strategies themselves, which were popularized by Rebecca Oxford in the early 1990s, are also theoretically multifaceted and overlapping. Oxford (1990) herself notes that the boundaries between the strategies “are fuzzy, particularly since learners sometimes employ more than one strategy at a time” (Oxford, 2001, in Rose, 2011, p. 93). In 1990, Oxford identified two overarching competencies, direct and indirect strategies, which she further divided into three categories each, for a total of six meta-strategies:

[Please see the next page]

Direct Strategies

- Memory strategies
- Cognitive strategies
- Compensation strategies

Indirect Strategies

- Metacognitive strategies
- Affective strategies
- Social strategies

Oxford (1990)

An additional 19 subsets and 62 specific strategies are organized under each of the above six meta-strategies. Interestingly, these meta-strategies, subsets and specific strategies can be organized around cognitive and socioaffective functions. For a full list of Oxford's system of language-learning strategies, see Appendix 3.

...

The details of this study can be understood through the following progression. In the introduction, I have reviewed the history of language teaching methods from the late 1800s until the late twentieth century. I have also introduced language-learning strategies and their guiding theories, which sprang from the post-modern teaching methods. The literature review presents the modern thinking around language-learning strategies, and it also explores the reasons why adult language learners struggle academically to learn a second language. Discussion of the methodology follows the literature review, and it details how the research was designed and the sample was selected. After the methodology section, the findings are presented, followed by the study's themes, recommendations and conclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In “Language-learning strategies: An Overview for L2 Teachers,” Michael Lessard-Clouston (1997) gives an impassioned plea for teaching language-learning strategies in second language and foreign language classrooms. Learning *strategies* are specific techniques that an individual learner employs to aid in the language learning process—such as repeating what he or she has learned, to name only one—whereas learning *styles* are innate preferences for learning information in general, such as inductive or deductive reasoning, among others, (Oxford, 1993, & Reid, 1995, in Lessard, 1997). Lessard also points out that one’s preferred learning style is closely related to the specific learning strategies that one chooses to use (p. 2). He cites a number of prominent researchers and authors, and he narrows his focus to Oxford’s taxonomy of language-learning strategies, which transforms research into practice for use in the classroom. Oxford (1990) broadly outlines direct and indirect learning strategies, which she further breaks down into a half dozen categories: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Lessard (1997) advocates that these strategies be incorporated into language lessons and course curricula to help learners acquire the necessary skills to learn a second or foreign language, and he proposes three steps for implementing the strategies into classroom instruction: (1) Study the teaching context, (2) teach the learning strategies directly, and (3) reflect and encourage student reflection on the language-learning strategies. Finally, Lessard (1997) calls for “a comprehensive theory of [language-learning strategies] that is ... relevant to language teaching practice,” such as which strategies should be taught at different proficiency levels (p. 8).

H. Douglas Brown (2007), the author of several language teaching and learning books, outlines the history of language teaching and learning from the late 1800s to the end of the

twentieth century. He gives an overview of how language pedagogy has evolved over the past 100 years. An explanation of these approaches, which have played an important role in the development of modern language instruction, was discussed in Chapter One, and a list of these methods is also provided in Appendix 1. Brown tenders a detailed description of language learning. Learning *styles* are related to cognitive functions, such as left-brain or right-brain orientation, and socioaffective factors, such as introversion or extroversion, which influence one's personality. These learning styles help determine how people process and learn new information like languages and other cognitive tasks. Although learning styles are not the focus of this research—for a description and explanation, see Appendices 4 and 5—they perform an important function as the underlying bases for language learning *strategies*. Strategies, on the other hand, are the specific actions that a learner takes to solve a problem, such as a learning task, and they vary widely based on the individual differences among learners, much like the learning styles that affect cognitive function and personality (Brown, 2014). Learning strategies are the “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, or planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information” (Brown, 2007, p. 260). Several examples include paying attention to context and non-verbal cues, from which we can draw inferences, among more specific tactics, such as grammar analysis, requests for repetition, or asking for interpretation (Brown, 2007). Like Lessard (1997), Brown offers a how-to guide for strategies-based instruction, and he recommends four basic approaches: (1) Teach strategies that build language learning competence, (2) identify techniques to counter negative learning habits, (3) administer an inventory to develop awareness of language-learning strategies, and (4) exemplify “tricks of the trade” based on the teacher's own language-learning experience (2007, pp. 269-271).

Language-learning strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know, by Rebecca Oxford (1990), is considered the Bible of strategies-based instruction for the language teacher. In her text, the author consolidates what researchers have discovered about language-learning strategies, and she constructs a methodology to teach these tactics in the language classroom. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as “the operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information” (p. 8). She further defines learning strategies as the “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable... self-directed... effective, and... transferrable to new situations” (p. 8). The purpose of teaching language-learning strategies is to confer greater self-direction upon students for their own learning, thereby developing their ability to speak the target language. The goal, then, is for students to achieve communicative competence and, ultimately, learner independence, whereupon the hierarchical relationship between teacher and students is expected to transform from teacher-led instruction to student-centered learning. During this process, teachers assume a new role as their function shifts from “instructor, director, manager, judge, leader (and) controller” to “facilitator, helper, guide, consultant, advisor, (and) coordinator” (Oxford, 1990, p. 10). Since language-learning strategies are an inherently student-centered process, it becomes the teacher’s responsibility to explicitly teach these strategies in order to raise students’ conscious awareness and practical use of them, which in turn will help them become more independent and capable (Oxford, 1990).

Another book, *Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers’ Guide*, by Andrew Cohen and Susan Weaver (2013) has emerged in recent years. The authors suggest that students who lean toward one learning style or another tend toward certain language learning strategies.

Their book marries learning styles⁵ with learning strategies and offers a wide variety of inventories, lessons and activities for teachers to implement in the classroom. The exercises teach learners how to identify and use the full array of learning styles and language-learning strategies. This book is an excellent resource for modern language teachers, as it provides explanations and step-by-step instructions for implementing explicit, strategies-based instruction intended to raise student awareness of strategy use.

Strategies-Based Instruction and Academic Achievement

A variety of factors influence—or interfere with—English acquisition among second-language learners. Factors that affect students’ second-language learning include “age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude... learning styles, and cultural differences” (Lee, 2010, p. 142). Other factors include financial hardship, employment, family responsibility, educational background, and time and energy. Each of these factors, individually or a combination thereof, affect language learners’ academic, social and economic advancement (Becker, 2011).

Many newly arrived immigrants to the United States enroll in the community college system as a gateway to postsecondary education. Yet studies have shown a high attrition rate among adult language learners in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. In a study of a Central California community college, 1,479 Latino students enrolled in ESL courses, but only 115 of them, or seven percent, eventually transferred into mainstream college courses, and only ten of them ultimately transferred to a four-year university (Razfar and Simon, 2011). In another study, of a Southern California community college, a group of high-performing ESL students, who had declared job advancement or college placement as their primary goal, were enrolled in a two-semester, noncredit-to-credit ESL bridge program. These students hailed from a diverse set

⁵ Learning styles are “general characteristics of intellectual functioning (and personality type)” that distinguish individual learners; they are specific tendencies or preferences for processing information (Brown, 2014, p. 111). See Appendices 2 and 3 for more information.

of backgrounds, including China, Colombia, El Salvador, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Peru and Vietnam. Despite the added benefit of personalized support, only twenty-seven percent of the students successfully completed at least one credit-bearing course, while the remainder of the students dropped out (Becker, 2011).⁶ The authors of both studies observed that immigrants' ability to achieve success is closely tied to their ability to learn English in their new culture and educational milieu (Razfar and Simon, 2011, Becker, 2011).

While there are many factors that affect second-language acquisition, my research intends to focus only on the presence or absence of language-learning strategies in the community college system, where many immigrants get their start in ESL classes, and whether strategies-based instruction should be introduced or expanded in an effort to improve English language teaching and learning. Recent studies of language-learning strategies conducted in the United States could not be found; however, studies of English language learners outside of the U.S. were located which found the use of learning strategies instruction to be beneficial. One study was conducted in the African nation of Ghana during the 2008-2009 academic year, and the other study was performed in Turkey, a nation straddling Eastern Europe and Western Asia, in the 2014-2015 academic year. In Ghana, English is taught to primary school students as the official language for educational placement and career advancement, while in Turkey, it is taught to adult learners for vocational and professional purposes. Both studies examined the relationship between language-learning strategies and English language achievement.

Ghana is a small nation on the West Coast of Africa. It hosts a multi-lingual population of twenty-five million people who speak forty-five indigenous languages (Agor, 2014). English proficiency is required for academic advancement beyond the ninth grade, a terminal point that requires a passing grade in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to proceed to

⁶ The total number of students involved in this study was not disclosed.

high school or other secondary institutions, such as technical and trade schools. About fifty percent of the students fail to pass the BECE, which not only bars them from further education, but severely limits their employment opportunities since they lack the minimum requirements for entry into the workforce. According to the West African Examinations Council, most students who fail the exam do not possess the requisite proficiency in English (Agor, 2014). The Linguistics Department of the University of Ghana authored this study, “Language-Learner Strategy Instruction and English Achievement: Voices from Ghana,” which hypothesized that students who received instruction in language-learner strategies would perform better in English than those who did not receive the training.⁷ Consequently, fifty-eight students from the experimental group received the intervention, while fifty-seven who comprised the control group did not. Average, above average, and below average students were evenly distributed between the two groups, and the English lessons were taught by the same teacher. At the beginning of the school year, the two groups were independently tested to determine their existing set of language-learner strategies. They were assigned a writing task that was intended to predispose both groups of students to use certain strategies—language switch, decoding, regression and conferencing—which were later seen exhibited by both groups in their respective classrooms (Agor, 2014).

The experimental class was told that some students who easily receive an “A” in English had used learner strategies that helped them to listen, speak, read and write better, which piqued their attention and interest. The experimental group was subsequently exposed to the intervention, which consisted of explicit training in language-learner strategies. Throughout the first term, the students in the experimental group were given strategies-based instruction,

⁷ The author of this study used the term of language-*learner* strategies instead of the term language-*learning* strategies, which appears throughout this paper.

wherein the teacher directly taught and modeled the language-learner strategies to the class. The students practiced the strategies, conducted think-aloud discussions of why they used the strategies, and watched videotapes of the learner strategies being deployed. By the end of the first term, the students had learned to recognize and identify the various strategies they used for different tasks, which are identified in Table 1:

Table 1. Language Skills and Corresponding Learner Strategies ⁸

Language Skill	Learner Strategies
Listening	Guessing intelligently, clarification seeking, paraphrasing, confirmation
Speaking	Direct appeal, avoidance, fillers, monitoring audience's comprehension, paraphrasing
Reading	Monitoring, deriving meaning from context
Writing	Conferencing, grouping, explaining, summarizing, peer review, editing

Toward the end of the second term, the experimental and control groups were again given the same writing task they had been assigned during the pre-intervention stage. The control group used a total of seven strategies, including four that they had exhibited during the pre-intervention stage, all the while remaining at the same table throughout the entire two hours allotted for this exercise. The experimental group, however, used all seventeen of strategies represented in the above table, broke into groups, moved about the room, and reconvened to complete the exercise, all within an hour and a half. At the end of the second term, both the experimental and the control groups took the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Fifty-five of the students in the experimental group received a score of Grade One, the highest possible rating, in English, while two of its members obtained the second highest score of Grade

⁸ The author of this study notes that the use of a particular strategy for one task may also be used for completion of another task. For instance, paraphrasing may be used to facilitate speaking as well as a listening.

Two. Of the students in the control group, fourteen received a score of Grade One, twenty-nine obtained a score of Grade Two, thirteen scored Grade Three, and two rated at Grade Four. Table 2 outlines the tabulation of scores.

Table 2. Analysis of 2009 BECE English language results

BECE Exam Results	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Number of Candidates	Percentage of Candidates	Number of Candidates	Percentage of Candidates
Grade One	55	96.49	14	24.13
Grade Two	2	3.51	29	50.0
Grade Three	0	0.0	13	22.41
Grade Four	0	0.0	2	3.45
TOTAL	57	100	58	100

(Agor, 2014)

In the final analysis, ninety-six percent (96%) of the experimental group, which received explicit instruction in language-learner strategies, received a score of Grade One in English, while only twenty-four percent (24%) of the control group obtained an equivalent score of Grade One. Fifty percent (50%) of the control group scored Grade Two, and the remainder of their group scored Grade Three and below, while only three and a half percent (3.5%) of the experimental group scored no lower than Grade Two. According to the Headmistress of the school, the English results for the BECE were the best that the school had attained since its foundation in 1993. The author of this study concluded that “one of the key ingredients that separate successful language learners from less successful ones has to do with learners’ repertoire of strategies” (Agor, 2014, p. 184). Consequently, the study concluded that students who receive training in language-learner strategies will perform better in English than students who do not receive the training.

In another study on language-learning strategies, the authors reached a very similar conclusion, though it was expressed in terms of correlations and regression analysis. In “The

Effect of Language Learning Strategies on Academic Achievement,” the researchers studied a vocational college in the city of Izmir, Turkey, during the 2014-2015 academic year. Of a population of 733 students, 267 English-as-a-Foreign-Language students were selected randomly to participate in the study. Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learners was used to measure the language-learning strategies employed by the students, and the scores were then compared against the same students’ midterm exam results. The strategy inventory measures students’ use of the six overarching strategies identified by Oxford: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The researchers found a positive, meaningful relationship between memory strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, social strategies and academic achievement. Academic achievement and the other two strategies—cognitive and compensation strategies—were positive but not meaningful (Uslu, Sahin & Odemis, 2014). Overall, the researchers found a positive, meaningful relationship between strategy use and academic achievement. In a regressive analysis of the data, the students’ use of language-learning strategies predicted twenty percent (20%) of their achievement in a positive, significant manner, while eighty percent (80%) of their achievement was explained by other variables, although those variables were not identified (Uslu, Sahin & Odemis, 2014). Based on the results of this study, there was a positive and meaningful relationship between four of the language-learning strategies and academic achievement, while two of the strategies had a positive but not meaningful relationship. Consequently, the authors concluded that if instructors introduce and reinforce language-learning strategies, then learners may improve their performance, be aware of the learning process and goals, and be self controlled and independent individuals” (Uslu, Sahin & Odemis, 2014, p. 77).

Theories and Applications

In 1975, Joan Rubin laid the groundwork for understanding language-learning strategies. She identified seven broad strategies used by successful language learners:

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

(Cohen & Weaver, 2013, p. 3)

By 1990, Rebecca Oxford (1990) had expanded the list of language-learning strategies, classifying them into several categories and singling out specific strategies under each category. She defined the direct and indirect strategies that students use to learn a second language: direct strategies, involving “the direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case, a new language,” and indirect strategies, which “contribute indirectly but powerfully to [language] learning,” such as metacognitive, social and affective strategies (Oxford, 1990, pp. 11-12). She further classified direct and indirect strategies into six subgroups, or meta-strategies, and described them more specifically as follows:

Direct strategies: *Memory strategies*, such as grouping or using imagery, have a highly specific function: helping students store and retrieve new information.

Cognitive strategies, such as summarizing or reasoning deductively, enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means.

Compensation strategies, like guessing or using synonyms, allow learners to use the language despite their... gaps in knowledge.

(Oxford, 1990, p. 37)

Indirect strategies: *Metacognitive strategies* allow learners to control their own cognition—that is, to coordinate the learning process by... centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating. *Affective strategies* help to regulate emotions, motivations, and attitudes. *Social strategies* help students learn through interaction with others. All these strategies... support and manage language learning without... directly involving the target language.

(Oxford, 1990, p. 135)

Under each of the above meta-strategies, Oxford identified an additional 19 subsets and 62 specific strategies that language learners use to learn a wide array of vocabulary and language structures. For a complete list of Oxford's language-learning strategies, see Appendix 3.

Shortly after Oxford published her system of strategies, the University of Minnesota, the National Capitol Language Resource Center, and other language institutes began to offer training in Strategies-Based Instruction, or SBI. In their book, *Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction*, Cohen & Weaver (2013) asserted that the purpose of SBI is to raise students' awareness about the language learning process and the kinds of learning strategies that are available. They suggested that students are likely using some of these strategies already, whether consciously or subconsciously, but they can maximize their use by bringing them to the forefront of their awareness, and by adopting the use of other strategies that they may not already be using (Cohen & Weaver, 2013).

Notwithstanding the initial rollout of language-learning strategies and strategies-based training, Lessard (1997) questioned whether curriculum development and materials for implementing strategies had been adequately developed for language learning classrooms in colleges and universities. He argued that “language-learning strategies teaching” should be integrated into course instruction and continuously developed, and he recommended that the strategies be integrated into regular course materials. Many years later, Brown (2014) also suggested that “teaching learners how to learn” is increasingly important, and he invoked Anita Wenden as “among the first to assert,” as early as 1985, “that learner strategies are the key to learner autonomy” (p.124). Chamot (2005) also stressed, much like Wenden and Lessard before her, that “expertise in teaching language-learning strategies must be integrated in pre- and in-service preparation” of language teachers (p. 123), and that “[s]trategy instruction can contribute to development of learner mastery and autonomy” (p. 125).

According to Brown (2014), “Strategies training has appeared in three basic forms: (1) textbook-embedded instruction... (2) student manuals that promote autonomous self-help... and (3) strategies-based advice, hints and tips within a teacher’s... classroom procedures” (p. 132), while Cohen and Weaver (2013) note it is the responsibility of curriculum writers and teachers to integrate language-learning strategies into class materials, and to embed these strategies into classroom activities to provide students with contextualized practice. In fact, the University of Minnesota has twice published *Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers’ Guide* for widespread circulation and use, once in 2006 and again in 2013, to rival Oxford’s (1990) *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, which also includes activities for teaching language-learning strategies.

As the focus of language teaching and learning shifted from *teacher*-centered instruction to *student*-centered learning toward the end of the twentieth century (1980-1990), it also began to shift from *teaching methods* used by teachers (Appendix 1) toward *learning strategies* employed by students (Appendix 3). Yet, even as researchers agree that “students will benefit from [strategies-based instruction] if they understand the strategy, perceive it to be effective, and [its implementation is not] overly difficult” (Brown, 2014, p. 133), learning strategies do not tend to be explicitly included in ESL curricula and course of instruction.⁹ To this end, the intent of my research is to determine if language-learning strategies are being taught in the community college ESL classroom, what language learning strategies are being used, and whether there is a need for increased strategies-based teaching and learning in the community college context, where many adult learners turn to for English language instruction.

⁹ A curriculum embodies the academic content to be taught during a course of instruction. It outlines the knowledge, skills and competencies that students should learn by the end of the term. Plural: curricula.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In order to understand the extent to which language-learning strategies are understood and used by English language learners, I conducted a quantitative case study of students enrolled in an advanced ESL grammar, reading and writing course at a local community college. In addition to surveying ESL students, I conducted a quantitative survey of ESL instructors at the same community college in order to compare the students' responses to the teachers' knowledge and application of language learning strategies, or strategies-based instruction, in the ESL classroom. I also collected and examined the college's ESL curricula in order to determine if language-learning strategies are included in the course designs. The curricula included the course descriptions, course objectives, course content, student learning outcomes, methods of instruction, and methods of evaluating student performance.

Survey Design - Students

I used Rebecca Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a battery of fifty questions designed to determine whether English learners are aware of, understand and use language-learning strategies to aid their acquisition of English. See Appendix 6 for a full reproduction of the SILL. While taking this inventory, students are to read each of the fifty prompts and answer by checking (✓) one of five responses on a Likert-type scale. Each response is assigned a numerical value, from 1 through 5, as indicated below:

Table 3. Strategies Inventory for Language Learners, Five-Point Likert Scale

Never or almost never true of me	Usually not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost always true of me

1. Never or almost never true of me means the statement is very rarely true of you.
2. Usually not true of me means that the statement is true of you less than half the time.
3. Somewhat true of me means that the statement is true of you about half the time.
4. Usually true of me means that the statement is true of you more than half the time.
5. Always or almost always true of me means that the statement is almost always true of you.

Oxford's (1990) inventory is divided into six parts from A to F. Each part is designed to measure a different set of language-learning strategies, or meta-strategies. The fifty prompts are separated under each of the six categories in order to isolate the students' responses according to the meta-strategy being measured, which are defined as follows:

<u>Meta-Strategy</u>	<u>Description</u>
A. Memory strategies	Remembering more effectively
B. Cognitive strategies	Using all your mental processes
C. Compensation strategies	Compensating for missing knowledge
D. Metacognitive strategies	Organizing and evaluating your learning
E. Affective strategies	Managing your emotions
F. Social strategies	Learning from others

(Oxford, 1990)

Upon completion of the inventory, each student's score is totaled according to the numerical rating assigned to the Likert scale (from 1 to 5) and rounded to the nearest tenth. The sum is then divided by the total number of responses for each category, or meta-strategy, in order to reach an average rating for each of the meta-strategies. This compilation of data determines which language-learning strategies the students are using, which strategies they favor, and which strategies hold promise for improvement. The scoring process is demonstrated below:

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part D	Whole SILL
1. _____	10. _____	24. _____	30. _____	39. _____	45. _____	SUM A _____
2. _____	11. _____	25. _____	31. _____	40. _____	46. _____	SUM B _____
3. _____	12. _____	26. _____	32. _____	41. _____	47. _____	SUM C _____
4. _____	13. _____	27. _____	33. _____	42. _____	48. _____	SUM D _____
5. _____	14. _____	28. _____	34. _____	43. _____	49. _____	SUM E _____
6. _____	15. _____	29. _____	35. _____	44. _____	50. _____	SUM F _____
7. _____	16. _____		36. _____			
8. _____	17. _____		37. _____			
9. _____	18. _____		38. _____			
	19. _____					
	20. _____					
	21. _____					
	22. _____					
	23. _____					
SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 9 = _____	÷ 14 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 9 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 50 = _____
						(OVERALL AVERAGE)

For purposes of this research, Oxford's inventory was modified in order to simplify the response categories on the Likert scale from a total of five to only three. This was done in order to eliminate confusion between such terms as "seldom" and "sometimes" as well as "often" and "frequently" and the rather complicated definitions that accompany them, as well as the difficulty in differentiating among so many options. As a result, the scoring mechanism was reduced to a three-point Likert scale to facilitate student responses, as outlined in Table 4:

Table 4. Strategy Inventory for Language Learners, Three-Point Likert Scale

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

1. Almost never means very seldom or not at all.
3. Sometimes means about half the time.
5. Almost always means always or most of the time.

In addition, one point was assigned to “almost never,” three points were assigned to “sometimes,” and five points were assigned to “almost always” in order to approximate the original ratings assigned by Oxford (1990), such that the fields in the revised scale overlap and generally correspond to the original scoring criteria used by Oxford:

Table 5. Comparison of the Three-Point and Five-Point Likert Scales

Almost never		Sometimes		Almost always	
1		3		5	

Never or almost never true of me	Usually not true of me	Somewhat true of me	Usually true of me	Always or almost always true of me
1	2	3	4	5

Furthermore, some of the original questions on Oxford’s (1990) inventory were modified for much the same reason that the Likert scale was reduced to three fields: to provide clarity to the prompts, since many of them were ambiguous or too wordy. Therefore, some of the prompts were rephrased to make them succinct and clearer, while others were combined into a single prompt because they were closely related. For example, question one in Oxford’s (1990) survey was changed from “I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English” to “I relate what I already know to new words I learn in English.” Question 31 was changed from “I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better” to “I notice my English mistakes and try to learn from them.” Also, “I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word” (#3) and “I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used” (#4) were combined into a single prompt that simply stated, “I connect a new English word to a mental picture of it.”

Finally, “I try to talk like native English speakers” (#11) and “I practice the sounds of English” (#12) were collapsed into a single statement of “I practice the sounds and pronunciation of English.”¹⁰ A total of 28 prompts were reworded, four were combined into two prompts, three were eliminated altogether, and 17 remained unchanged. The intent was to foster greater understanding of the questions and elicit accurate responses from the survey takers. These decisions were taken after consultation with four non-native speakers of English, including my university professor, and changes were made during a four-step process of review and revision before the survey was finalized and administered. As a result of these changes—both to the Likert scale and overall number of questions asked—the scoring worksheet was reconfigured as illustrated below:

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part D	Whole SILL
1. _____	9. _____	20. _____	26. _____	34. _____	40. _____	SUM A _____
2. _____	10. _____	21. _____	27. _____	35. _____	41. _____	SUM B _____
3. _____	11. _____	22. _____	28. _____	36. _____	42. _____	SUM C _____
4. _____	12. _____	23. _____	29. _____	37. _____	43. _____	SUM D _____
5. _____	13. _____	24. _____	30. _____	38. _____	44. _____	SUM E _____
6. _____	14. _____	25. _____	31. _____	39. _____	45. _____	SUM F _____
7. _____	15. _____		32. _____			
8. _____	16. _____		33. _____			
	17. _____					
	18. _____					
	19. _____					
SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 8 = _____	÷ 11 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 8 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 45 = _____
						(OVERALL AVERAGE)

Once the final computation was made, the overall average showed how often each set of strategies was used for learning English. A high average indicated which strategies are used the most, and a low average indicated areas where the teacher and the student may want to focus

¹⁰ The cultural sensitivity of accents and accent reduction and the growing field of English as an International Language were factored into this decision.

more attention. For purposes of this study, the intent was to learn how much language-learning strategies were used, and whether the students and the learning environment, in this case a community college district, would benefit from strategies-based instruction. See Appendix 7 for the revised version of the strategies inventory and scoring worksheet.

In addition to the language-learning strategies inventory, the survey also collected demographic and background information from the students, which would assist in the descriptive analysis of the data. The additional information asked for the students' gender, age, country of origin, native language, when they arrived in the United States, when they first started to learn English, what ESL course they are enrolled in now, and how many ESL courses they have taken before. The students were also asked how they learned the language-learning strategies they selected during the survey, and they were given three choices from which to choose: by myself, in ESL classes, and both. In addition, they were asked about their educational goals and given a series of choices to choose from: personal development, vocational development, certificate program, associate degree, transfer degree and undecided. Finally, a space was provided for students to add any additional comments that they wished to add. Their names were not included on the survey so that their identities would remain anonymous.

Survey Design - Instructors

In order to query the ESL instructors and determine their knowledge and application of language learning strategies in the classroom, I designed a four-part questionnaire, which included definitions of language-learning strategies and learning strategies instruction. The rest of the form contained four questions with sub-categories in a fillable PDF format. Three teachers reviewed and contributed to the survey's design—including my university professor, the

ESL chair at the community college where this study was conducted, and an experienced ESL instructor at different community college—before it was finalized and administered. The questionnaire was delivered electronically via email. For the first three questions, the teachers were asked to check the box that corresponded to their answers, either yes or no. Additional, clarifying questions were also asked after the second and third questions, followed by responses that they could indicate by selecting another box with the corresponding answer. The fourth question was followed by a space for the teachers to add any additional comments. My intent was to make the questionnaire as concise and easy to complete as possible, understanding the busy schedule and limited time of the teaching staff.

The instructors' survey did not ask for their name or any demographic or background information. It simply asked, "Are you already familiar with language-learning strategies?" followed by a yes-or-no response. "Have you ever received training in language-learning strategies, and if so, how was the training obtained?" A yes-or-no response followed, along with four other possible choices: teacher preparation, institutionally sponsored training, personally financed training, and other. The third question, "Are language-learning strategies taught in your ESL classroom?" was also followed by a yes-or-no response, along with boxes that estimated the percent of class time that is devoted to language-learning strategies as well as a range of how many language-learning strategies are taught. An addendum was provided with a list of language-learning strategies, taken from Oxford's (1990) taxonomy. Finally, the fourth question allowed for open-ended comments. See Appendix 8 for a copy of the questionnaire, and refer to Appendix 3 for the list of language-learning strategies.

Sample Population and Selection

The entirety of this research study focused on a community college district where I was performing my practicum experience as a teacher-candidate in TESOL, Literacy and Culture.¹¹ There were three approaches to this research: a student survey, an instructor survey, and a survey of ESL curricula. This study was planned in advance and approved by the University of San Diego Institutional Review Board, in compliance with the National Institute of Health and the laws regulating research involving human subjects.

The student inventory was conducted in a single classroom of twenty-three students enrolled in an advanced ESL grammar, reading and writing course. It was administered over the course of three instructional days, taking about twenty minutes each day for a total of approximately 60 minutes. On the first day, I introduced myself and my affiliation with the University of San Diego. I explained to the students that I wished to administer a survey and my reasons for the survey. I explained what language-learning strategies are so that the students would be aware of the context of the survey before taking it, and I informed them about voluntary consent. I handed out the Informed Consent Form so that students could take it home with them, have an opportunity to thoroughly review it, and decide whether they wanted to participate in the survey or not. I told the students that if they decided to take the survey, to complete and sign page 2 of the Informed Consent Form and return it to me during the next class. All twenty-three students signed and returned the Informed Consent Form on the following class day, five days later, whereupon I administered the first half of the survey. The second half of the survey was administered two days later at the beginning of the next class. Twenty-two out of twenty-three students completed and returned the survey, with one student absent on the second day.

¹¹ TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

The instructor questionnaire was delivered via email to a total of thirty-eight ESL teachers at the same community college where the student surveys were administered. I had made arrangements beforehand, and the email was distributed department wide by the college's ESL Department Chair. The survey and an Informed Consent Form, both in fillable PDF format, were sent with the email as attachments. The body of the email included my name and background information and my reasons for conducting the survey. The email explained the voluntary nature of the survey and the Informed Consent Form. It invited the teachers to take the survey and return it to me via email, along with their electronic signature on the Informed Consent Form. A total of five teachers responded, including the department chair. After two weeks, I redistributed the email and the attachments to the thirty-three teachers who didn't respond, and I received one additional response, for a total of six surveys and Informed Consent Forms returned to me.

ESL Course Curricula – Collection and Examination

I requested and obtained eighteen course curricula from same community college where I administered the student and instructor surveys. The curricula were requested and received through the ESL Department Chair. These curricula are the totality of the ESL course offerings at this community college, as verified by a search of the campus's website. As stated previously in this Chapter, the curricula contained the course descriptions, course objectives, course content, student learning outcomes, methods of instruction, and methods of evaluating student performance. The purpose of examining the curricula was to determine if language-learning strategies are included in the course designs, and if so, the weight or importance they might be assigned in second language teaching and learning.

Limitations

Student Survey. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learners, created by Oxford in 1990, is an excellent, proven resource that has been in use for over twenty-five years. Its limitation, however, is that it is wordy and sometimes ambiguous and even redundant. This problem was resolved, however, by rewording twenty-eight of the survey's prompts, combining four others into two prompts, and eliminating three other prompts altogether to mitigate uncertainty among the students who would take the survey, reducing the survey from fifty to forty-five questions.

The Likert scale was another shortcoming, but it was not insurmountable. Oxford's (1990) original inventory contained a 5-point rating scale, which invited inaccuracy by the survey-taker due to the difficulty of differentiating between the values of the five scales. Consequently, the Likert scale was reduced to three fields instead of five, which increased the accuracy of the survey-taker's response on one hand but slightly diluted the results of the final analysis. The change from five to three fields created a trade-off between the two features: The result appeared to be a more accurate student response, but with fewer gradations between the individual scores under each part at the end of the inventory (that is, Parts A through F and the overall average).

Finally, the three-point Likert scale that was used for this survey has three fields: *almost never*, meaning very seldom or not at all; *sometimes*, meaning about half the time; and *almost always*, meaning most of the time or always. The three ratings are assigned the values of one, three and five, respectively. There is no scale for "never," neither in the original inventory nor in the revised one, meaning if the language learner *never* uses a particular strategy, his response

inflates the final result by assigning the value of one instead of zero, giving the strategy a higher rating than it deserves.

While an extra question was added to the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners—“How did you learn the above strategies?”—the question made no effort to distinguish how many of the learning strategies were learned in ESL class or how many were learned independently, outside of ESL instruction. It would have been helpful to determine if the students were consciously aware of and consciously applied the strategies *before* taking the survey, or if the survey itself raised their awareness of the strategies enough to retrospectively reflect upon them and then answer the question. In other words, it would have been beneficial to know how many of the students consciously applied the strategies and/or how much they subliminally—that is, without their conscious awareness—used the strategies, which would speak to the metacognitive process involved and perhaps reflect a different result (in terms of the overall score).

Instructor Survey. In the interest of limiting the length of the survey, and therefore the amount of time required for a teacher to complete it, the survey was kept to one page and the responses to the questions were in fillable PDF format—that is, a check box was provided to indicate a predetermined response. For example, teachers were asked how much class time was spent teaching language-learning strategies and how many strategies were taught, followed by a range of responses, as opposed to asking the teachers to quantify their response by writing in the amount of time or the number of strategies:

[Please see the next page]

Please estimate the amount of instruction given to language-learning strategies:

☐ 1%-5% ☐ 6%-10% ☐ 11%-20% ☐ 21%-30% ☐ More than 30%

How many language-learning strategies are taught? Please choose one:

☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50

In the first question above, the last response category (more than 30%) was later found to be too low as well as too open-ended, and therefore imprecise. In the second question above, the last response category was too limiting, as there were a total of sixty-two strategies, or individual devices, to choose from (see Appendix 3), but the survey limited the teacher's response to no more than fifty (41-50). Both of these response categories, unfortunately, limited the precision of the survey tool.

In addition, due to the wide range and disparity of the instructors' responses, from the low to the high categories (see Chapter Four), it would have been useful to know if the instructors were native English-speaking teachers, with or without a second language background and learning experience, or if they were non-native English-speaking teachers who had learned English as a second-language. The number of years they had been teaching would also have been helpful in interpreting the results of this survey in terms of the number of language-learning strategies that the teachers were aware of and taught in the ESL classroom.

Finally, only six teachers out of a total of thirty-eight ESL instructors, or just six percent of them, completed and submitted the survey, greatly diminishing the survey's potential contribution about faculty perceptions about language learning strategies taught in the ESL classroom.

...

This chapter covered the research methodology, including the design of the research, the sample population and selection, the collection method, and the limitations. The next chapter will examine the study's findings based upon the results of these methods.

Chapter Four: Findings

This research was conducted in San Diego County, State of California, at a local community college with a student population of 18,241.¹² The college offers eighteen courses in English as a Second Language, including credit- and non-credit-bearing courses. Twelve of the courses carry non-degree credit and are for the development of communicative and literacy skills in English; these courses also prepare students for enrollment in more rigorous academic ESL courses. Six of the courses meet Title 5 standards for associate degree credits, and three of them also qualify for transfer credit as elective courses to the California public university system.¹³

Demographics

A total of twenty-two students completed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners, which was adapted from Rebecca Oxford's (1990) monumental work in *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. This group of students was enrolled in a five-unit, transfer-credit, advanced ESL grammar, reading and writing course, the last course in a series of eighteen ESL courses offered by the community college. The students were a diverse group of immigrants in the United States, and they varied in age, gender, countries of origin and language backgrounds. According to the information the students provided in the survey, they came from twelve different countries and spoke ten different languages, as outlined in Table 6:

[Please see the next page]

¹² The size of the student body was taken from the campus website, last updated on March 24, 2017.

¹³ Title 5: The California law for community colleges as detailed in the California Code of Regulations (<http://www.ccccurriculum.net/compliance-2/title-5/>).

Table 6. Country of Origin and Native Language of the Students Surveyed

Country of Origin		Native Language	
Brazil	2	Arabic	6
China	2	Farsi	1
Iraq	4	Japanese	2
Japan	2	Mandarin	2
Jordan	1	Portuguese	2
Kuwait	1	Spanish	3
Mexico	3	Taiwanese	1
Pakistan	1	Turkish	1
Taiwan	1	Ukrainian	1
Turkey	1	Vietnamese	3
Ukraine	1	N/A	-
Vietnam	3	N/A	-

Many of the students had immigrated to the United States within the last several years, arriving between 2007 and 2017. Many of them also began learning English during the same time frame, from 2007 to 2016, although three of them began to learn English as long ago as 1986 and 2001. Another nine students reported the age or grade level that they began to learn English, but because they reported their age range and not their exact age, the margin of error was too large to try to estimate how long ago or precisely when they started to learn English. The years the students arrived in the United States and when they began to learn English are detailed in Table 7:

Table 7. Date the Students Arrived in the U.S. versus Date They Started to Learn English

Immigrated to the U.S.		Began to learn English	
N/A	-	1986	1
N/A	-	2001	2
2007	1	2007	2
2008	0	2008	1
2009	1	2009	0
2010	1	2010	1
2011	2	2011	2
2012	3	2012	1
2013	0	2013	1
2014	2	2014	0
2015	2	2015	1
2016	5	2016	1
2017	4	2017	0
Unknown/not reported	1	Unknown/undetermined	9

Five of the students had never taken an ESL class before this course, this was their first ESL course, and of these five, one was concurrently enrolled in two other ESL classes. The remaining seventeen students had taken anywhere from one to several previous ESL classes, as outlined below in Table 9:

Table 9. Number of Prior ESL Courses Taken by the Students Surveyed

Number of previous ESL classes	0	1	2	3	4	5	Unk.
Number of students reporting	5	2	8	3	1	2	1

The educational goals of the twenty-two students who completed this survey were varied and multiple. None of them were undecided about their reason(s) for attending community college ESL classes, as outlined here in Table 10:

Table 10. Future Goals of the Students Who Took the Strategy Inventory

Personal development	Vocational development	Certificate program	Associate degree	Transfer to a university	Undecided at this time
14	4	10	8	16	0

Language-Learning Strategies Inventory for Students

Finally, the most interesting and anticipated outcome of this survey identified the language-learning strategies the students have used to aid their acquisition of the English language. As stated previously, the intent of this research is to determine whether and to what extent language-learning strategies are taught in the community college system, what are the specific strategies used by ESL students, and what improvements, if any, can be made to increase the instruction of language learning strategies in ESL classrooms. Table 11 outlines the various meta-strategies the students use, the students' total strategy use, the average use of strategies for the entire class of students, and the class averages converted into percentages.

Table 11. Learning Strategies Inventory for Students, Scored Results

	MEMORY STRATEGIES	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	COMPENSATION STRATEGIES	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	SOCIAL STRATEGIES	OVERALL STRATEGY USAGE
1	2.25	3	2.67	4	3.67	3.67	3.21
2	3.5	3.73	3.67	3.5	3	3.67	3.51
3	2.5	3.27	2.33	3.75	3.67	4	3.25
4	3	4.27	3.33	4.5	2.33	4.67	3.68
5	3	2.27	1.33	3.5	3.67	2.67	2.74
6	3.25	3.45	3.33	3.75	3.33	4.33	3.57
7	4	4.27	4	4.5	4	5	4.30
8	3	3.27	4.33	4.25	4	4.33	3.86
9	3	3.54	2.67	4.5	3.67	4.67	3.68
10	4	3.72	4	4	4	3.67	3.90
11	3.75	4.45	4	5	3.33	5	4.26
12	2.75	3.77	2.33	3.75	2.67	5	3.38
13	3.5	3.91	4	4.75	3.67	4.67	4.08
14	2.5	4.27	3.33	4	1	2.33	2.91
15	3.75	4.45	3.67	4.25	3.33	5	4.08
16	3.5	4.09	4.33	4.5	3.67	4.17	4.04
17	4	3.73	4	3.75	2.33	2.67	3.41
18	2.5	3	3.67	2.75	2.67	2	2.77
19	3.5	3.9	3.33	4.5	3	3.67	3.65
20	3.23	2.82	2.33	3.75	2.67	3.67	3.08
21	2.87	3.54	3.33	4.5	3.33	4	3.60
22	3.5	3	3	4.5	3	3.33	3.39
TOT	70.85	79.72	72.98	90.25	70.01	86.19	78.33
AVE	3.22	3.62	3.32	4.10	3.18	3.92	3.56
%	64	72	66	82	64	78	71

The above ratings, or scores, are based on a total possible value of 5 points, as described previously in the methodology section (Chapter Three). The students were individually rated in each of the six categories, and their individual scores were then combined to achieve a class average, which was converted to a percentage, for each category. Consequently, from the highest to the lowest score, the students were strongest in metacognitive strategies and weakest in memory and affective strategies, which were tied for fifth place. Their social strategies rated second and their cognitive strategies rated third, while their compensation strategies rated fourth. Chart 1 shows the percentages for each of the six categories, plus the students' overall strategy usage.

[Please see the next page]

Chart 1. Learning Strategies Inventory for Students, Bar Graph

The strategies that the students used are sequenced in the following order, from highest to lowest:

1. Metacognitive strategies (82%)
2. Social strategies (78%)
3. Cognitive strategies (72%)
4. Compensation strategies (66%)
5. Memory strategies, affective strategies (64% each)

The above results tell us that the students scored highest in organizing and evaluating their learning, such as linking known elements and self-monitoring, and lowest in memory and affective strategies. Memory strategies include making associations with known elements and using mental imagery, while affective strategies express the ability to control one's emotions and take risks. Compensation strategies were the next lowest, outlining their ability to overcome limitations in speaking and writing. Social strategies were the second highest, wherein the students cooperate and empathize with others. Their cognitive strategies fell mid range in their repertoire of skills, reflecting their ability to study, practice, reason and analyze. See Appendix 3 for an expanded list of the strategies.

The overall class score was 3.56, which converted to seventy-one percent (71%). In other words, the students who took this survey use 71% of the language-learning strategies identified in the Strategies Inventory for Language Learners (Oxford, 1990). These results are not complete, however, without understanding *how* the students learned to use these language-learning strategies. At the end of the strategies inventory, the students were asked how they had learned the strategies that they identified. Nineteen of them responded that they had learned the strategies both by themselves and in ESL classes, and three of them reported that they had learned the strategies by themselves, as outlined below in Table 12:

Table 12. Language Learning Strategies, How Learned by the Students

How language-learning strategies were learned			
Number of students reporting	3	0	19
Method of learning LLS	By myself	ESL classes	Both

LLS = Language-learning strategies

Language-Learning Strategies Questionnaire for Instructors

It should be noted that demographic information was not collected from the instructors who participated in this study. Background information, however, about their knowledge and application of language-learning strategies *was* collected. As stated previously in the methodology section (Chapter Three), six teachers completed and returned the questionnaire. The teacher responses varied widely. All six teachers were familiar with and had received training in language-learning strategies: Six had received pre-service training in language-learning strategies, and five of them had also received additional, in-service training. Each teacher reported that anywhere from six to fifty strategies are taught in their ESL classrooms, and they estimated the amount of time dedicated to language-learning strategies (LSS) from a low of one percent to a high of over thirty percent of classroom instruction. Table 13 provides an overview of these results:

Table 13. Results of the Teacher Questionnaire

Survey Question	Teacher Response	
Familiar with LLS	Yes: 6	No: 0
Received training in LLS	Yes: 6	No: 0
Source of LLS training	Teacher preparation 6 Institutionally sponsored ... 5 Personally financed 3 Other 1	
LLS taught in the classroom	Yes: 6	No: 0
Number LLS taught in the classroom	6 – 10 1 11 – 20 1 21 – 30 2 31 – 40 1 41 – 50 1	
Estimated amount of instruction that teachers devote to LLS	1% - 5% 1 6% - 10% 0 11% - 20% 0 21% - 30% 1 More than 30% 4	

LLS = Language-learning strategies

Additional Findings Based on the Instructors' Questionnaires

In the comments section of the high-scoring questionnaire, referred to above, the teacher had written, "I would like to learn and explicitly teach more [language learning strategies]." Yet, the same teacher had reported that more than thirty percent of class time is given to teaching between forty-one to fifty strategies, the maximum values presented on the questionnaire.

Another teacher, whose survey fell between the low- and high-scoring responses, reported between twenty-one and thirty strategies taught during more than thirty percent of course instruction. In the comments section, this teacher provided some valuable insight: "Language learning strategies are imbedded in the structure of my lessons. I model effective strategies such as setting context, pairing words with pictures, using physical response, or having students repeat words or phrases as part of the scaffolded activities of my lessons. I then give students homework that supports the repetition of these strategies."

ESL Course Curricula

The inspection of the ESL curricula identified the purpose and intent of the ESL course offerings at this community college. The goal of English as a Second Language is to help students improve their English proficiency so that they can develop the communicative competence and literacy skills to navigate within the community, to succeed at work, to pursue vocational development, and/or to prepare them for more rigorous academic studies. To meet the needs of English learners, the ESL program offers seven levels of coursework that provide progressive instruction in listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and pronunciation. Orientation to American culture and intercultural communication are also integrated into the ESL course designs.

The curricula of all eighteen ESL course offerings were examined for any direct reference to language-learning strategies or strategies-based instruction. Three of the courses—the fourth, thirteenth and nineteenth courses in a series of eighteen offerings—made an explicit reference to language-learning strategies:

- Use a range of learning strategies to acquire and apply new knowledge of the language to increase skills in understanding and using spoken English [ESL 081]
- Emphasis is on developing the learning strategies, language functions and cultural awareness in academic and professional settings [ESL 103L]
- Learn effective strategies for reducing errors in grammar, punctuation, and usage [that] develop self-editing skills [ESL 119]

The first two of these courses (ESL 081 and ESL 103L) are communication classes that focus on listening and speaking, and the third one (ESL 119) is a reading and writing course. The above descriptions were found in the course objectives (ESL 081 and ESL 119) and catalog description (ESL 103L) sections of the curricula. The course content sections describe the following classroom tasks that are tied to language-learning strategies:

- Note-taking, intercultural communication, oral presentations (individually or as part of a group), and extemporaneous speeches [ESL 081]
- Pronunciation of vowels and consonants, asking for clarification, and expressing lack of understanding [ESL 103L]
- Practice with writing expository and persuasive prose, analysis of various rhetorical structures, discussion of words and their meanings [ESL 119]

The above skills represent a limited repertoire of the language-learning strategies that students can employ, and they utilize only four of the six meta-strategies identified by Oxford (1990):

- Memory: associating/elaborating, placing new words into a context
- Cognitive: taking notes, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
- Metacognitive: planning a language task, seeking practice opportunities; self-monitoring, self-evaluating

- Social: asking for clarification, cooperating with peers and proficient users of the language, developing cultural understanding

The remaining fifteen ESL curricula made no direct, explicit reference to language-learning strategies, although the course content sections sometimes made implicit references to strategies-type instruction. The following excerpts were culled from these seventeen curricula:

- Oral practice, repetition drills, small group work, role plays, cooperative work
- Predicting cultural or other contextual information to build schema, activate background knowledge
- Using picture, bilingual and basic dictionaries to increase vocabulary
- Oral presentations and discussions, role plays, extemporaneous speeches
- Letter-to-sound correspondences, pronunciation of vowels, discrimination between voiced and voiceless consonants
- Pitch, stress and intonation patterns of words and sentences
- Contextual analysis to determine the meaning of words, roots and affixes, guessing new words from context
- Identifying meanings according to context, roots and affixes
- Semantic mapping, cluster or outlining, recognizing inferences
- Strategies to remember vocabulary and use new words
- Expressing lack of understanding, asking for clarification
- Note-taking, writing reflections in personal journals
- Understanding cultural references, allusions and assumptions; persuading in culturally appropriate ways

Although the above practices and techniques are not direct means of teaching language-learning strategies, they qualify as individual strategies that can be implicitly learned during the course of instruction. In addition, it would be remiss not to include the methods of instruction as

outlined in many of the course curricula that also relate to language-learning strategies. They include communicative and collaborative learning as follow:

- Oral presentations
- Class discussions
- Small group work
- Group presentations

All of these practices and techniques fall under five of the six meta-strategies, with the notable exception of the affective strategies:

- Memory: grouping, placing new words into context, using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords, representing sounds in memory
- Cognitive: repeating, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, recognizing and using formulas and patterns, getting the idea quickly, taking notes
- Compensation: using linguistic and other clues
- Metacognitive: overviewing and linking with already known material, seeking practice opportunities
- Social: asking for clarification or verification, cooperating with peers, developing cultural understanding, becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

...

This chapter detailed the findings of the research. The Strategies Inventory for Language Learners identified the meta-strategies that the population of students has used to learn English as a second language. The questionnaire for instructors helped determine the extent to which language-learning strategies are taught in the classroom, and the amount of classroom instruction dedicated to strategies-based instruction. The examination of the ESL curricula gave insight into the type of strategies that are integrated into the course designs, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I explore the findings and practical implications of language-learning strategies in the community college classroom. This chapter also collates these findings into a pragmatic discussion about the implementation of strategies-based instruction. It is important to note, however, that this study focuses on a single classroom in a particular community college in Southern California. Nevertheless, while the findings may be location specific, they offer an opportunity to look beyond the localized context and consider how language-learning strategies have been integrated into adult second-language teaching and learning in other settings as well.

Themes

The intent of this research was to determine if language-learning strategies are being taught in the community college system, what specific strategies are used by adult ESL learners, and whether there is a need for increased instruction of language-learning strategies in community college classrooms. According to the results of the Strategies Inventory for Language Learners, the students who were surveyed for this study use approximately seventy-one percent (71%) of the overall strategies measured. The specific meta-strategies that the students were found to utilize are shown in Table 14:

Table 14. Meta-Strategies Used by Students Who Took the Survey

Meta-Strategy Used	Raw Score	Percentage
Memory strategies	3.22	64%
Cognitive strategies	3.62	72%
Compensation strategies	3.32	66%
Metacognitive strategies	4.10	82%
Affective strategies	3.18	64%
Social strategies	3.92	78%
Overall strategies used	3.56	71%

Another way to examine these results is to consider *how* the students learned to use the strategies. Of the twenty-two students surveyed, nineteen of them stated that they learned to use the strategies in both ESL classes *and* by themselves. The other three students reported that they learned to use the strategies alone—in other words, without any classroom instruction. Of these students, one had never taken an ESL class before, another had taken two previous classes, while the third had taken four previous ESL classes. The amount of time they had been learning English generally corresponded to when they first arrived in the United States: three years ago, seven years ago, and approximately 40 years ago, respectively.¹⁴ Of the other nineteen students, five had not taken a previous ESL class, and the rest had previously taken anywhere from one to five or more ESL courses. It could not be established from the data if their age, date of arrival in the U.S., and when they first began to learn English had a bearing on where or when they learned to use language-learning strategies. Table 15 summarizes the data:

Table 15. Prior ESL Classes versus When Arrived in U.S. and Began to Learn English

Student No.	Prior ESL classes	Age	Date arrived in U.S.	Date began learning English
1	Many	40-49	2014	1986
2	2	20-29	2016	Unknown
3	1	Under 20	2017	Age 12
4	2	20-29	2011	2011
5	5	Over 50	2011	2011
6	0	20-29	2014	2015
7	1	20-29	2016	Age 7
8	2	20-29	2016	2016
9	3	20-29	2012	2007
10	0	30-39	2016	2001
11	2	20-29	2015	Kinder
12	2	30-39	2015	2012
13	0	20-29	2007	2007
14	2	20-29	2010	2010
15	2	20-29	2017	Middle School
16	0	20-29	2017	2008
17	4	Over 50	Unknown	Elem. School

¹⁴ The third student reported to be over 50 years of age and had first started to learn English in elementary school, though the student did not know the year s/he arrived in the U.S.

18	3	Under 20	2017	Unknown
19	2	30-39	2016	2001
20	0	20-39	2012	5 th grade
21	3	20-29	2009	High School
22	5	30-39	2012	2013

In addition, it could not be determined what proportion of the learning strategies were learned inside the classroom as opposed to what the students had learned independently, except for the three who reported they had learned the strategies by themselves. When looking at the instructors' questionnaires, four of them had reported teaching from eleven to forty strategies in their classrooms (two had reported between twenty-one to thirty) while one reported teaching as few as six to ten strategies and another reported as many as forty-one to fifty. From the information provided between the students and the teachers, it is impossible to conclude how many strategies were learned inside the classroom and how many were learned independently, apart from classroom instruction.

Only three of the eighteen ESL curricula explicitly state learning strategies as a course objective. In addition, the course content of these three curricula support only ten strategy devices, which fall under four of the six overarching meta-strategies (see Chapter Three, pp. 42-43). The remaining fifteen curricula make no direct, explicit reference to language-learning strategies. Nevertheless, the course content sections make implicit references to strategies-type instruction (see Chapter Three, p. 45). Two of the instructors who returned the questionnaires shed some light on these teaching methods. Their written comments were previously reported in this paper, but they are worth repeating here. One of the teachers wrote:

Language learning strategies are imbedded in the structure of my lessons. I *model* effective strategies such as setting context, pairing words with pictures, using physical response, or having students repeat words or phrases as part of the scaffolded activities of my lessons. I then give students homework that supports the repetition of these strategies [emphasis added].

Another teacher candidly stated, “I would like to learn and *explicitly* teach more language learning strategies” [emphasis added]. These instructors’ statements support my previous finding: Fifteen of the ESL curricula make no direct, explicit reference to language-learning strategies, but only implicit references to strategies-type instruction. In other words, language-learning strategies are largely taught and learned *implicitly*, and not as a result of direct instruction. Finally, it is important to note that the learning strategies explicitly stated in three of the curricula—discussed in Chapter Three—support five of the six meta-strategies, but the curricula are completely silent about the affective strategies, the sixth meta-strategy, which is one of the lowest scoring groups based on the students’ surveys.¹⁵

The teachers reported thirty percent or more of classroom instruction is spent on learning strategies, while the students reported using seventy-one percent of the strategies measured. The teachers also reported up to fifty strategies were taught, but the majority of them reported forty or less. Unfortunately, the survey tools cannot determine how many of the strategies the students learned inside or outside of the ESL classroom. Nevertheless, we can examine how many community college ESL courses the students had taken in the past. Five of the students were enrolled in their first ESL class at the time of the survey, and ten others had taken only one or two ESL courses before. One third of the students, six of them, had taken anywhere from three to five ESL classes before, and one did not report. Still, there is not enough information to make a conclusive finding. Due to the lack of additional information, such as previous English classes taken in high school or their native countries, it is unknown when or where the students learned the language strategies that they reported using. Table 16 encapsulates this data:

¹⁵ Memory strategies are the other low scoring group, but as language learners become more proficient, they use fewer memory strategies as social strategies become more prominent.

Table 16. Number of ESL Classes Taken Compare to Number of Students Reporting

Number of previous ESL classes	0	1	2	3	4	5	Unk.
Number of students reporting	5	2	8	3	1	2	1

Research shows that successful language learners often use learning strategies in appropriate contexts, while less successful learners either are not aware of the strategies or they employ them in inappropriate contexts (Lee, 2010). Other research has shown that language learners who receive explicit strategy instruction improve in all areas of language proficiency (Chamot, 2005). It is likely that some students are already using learning strategies, either consciously or subconsciously; however, they can maximize their use of the strategies by raising their conscious awareness of them, or by adopting other strategies they may not already be using (Cohen & Weaver, 2013, p. 5). In the case of the twenty-two students who were surveyed for this study—all of whom were in an advanced ESL grammar, reading and writing course—it is instructive to look at the percentage of meta-strategies they were *not* using. Table 17 inverts the findings to discover where there is additional room for strategies use.

Table 17. Percentage of Language Learning Strategies Not Being Used by the Students Surveyed

Meta-Strategy	Inverted Raw Score	Reverse Percentage
Memory strategies	1.78	36%
Cognitive strategies	1.38	28%
Compensation strategies	1.68	34%
Metacognitive strategies	0.90	18%
Affective strategies	1.82	36%
Social strategies	1.08	22%
Overall strategies <i>not</i> being used	1.44	29%

By reworking the computation of the data, we can see that students can increase their overall use of strategies by as much as twenty-nine percent, and anywhere from twenty-two percent to thirty-six percent in the individual, overarching, meta-strategies.

Recommendations

The purpose of strategies-based instruction is to raise student awareness about the types of learning strategies they can use to increase their English language proficiency (Oxford, 1990). Since learning strategies are inherently a student-centered process, it is incumbent upon ESL instructors to explicitly teach these strategies (Oxford, 1990) so students can learn to use them rather than simply employ them as implicit teaching methods. Without explicit instruction, students' ability to develop and learn to use these strategies will be stalled if not greatly delayed. Take, for instance, the study in Ghana, where explicit strategies-based instruction resulted in significant gains in English proficiency, and also the study in Turkey, where learning strategies can predict academic success.

Explicit instruction of the language-learning strategies should be incorporated into lesson plans, course syllabi and curricula in order to raise students' conscious awareness of them.¹⁶ The teacher can scaffold the instruction over a period of days or weeks, depending on the specific devices that are appropriate for the students' language level. Oxford (1990) and Cohen and Weaver (2013) offer a variety of classroom exercises to teach and reinforce the specific learning strategies.

A comprehensive lesson plan or even a series of lessons can be woven into a teacher's regular course of instruction, or if the students are at an advanced level of language learning, into a single lesson targeting the specific needs of the students. Thereafter, the teacher should explicitly reinforce the strategies during regular classroom instruction before giving way to more implicit approaches. For advanced level students who have already learned some of the

¹⁶ For purposes of this paper, syllabi and curricula are exclusive terms. As explained elsewhere in this paper, a syllabus outlines the subject as well as the topics to be covered during a course of study, and it is intended for the student's information and use. A curriculum outlines the knowledge, skills and competencies that students should learn by the end of the term, and it is meant for the teacher's use to implement and guide the course of instruction.

strategies, either by themselves or through implicit (or explicit) instruction, it may be adequate to simply design a lesson plan that introduces the meta-strategies along with the sub-types and specific devices as a means of reinforcing and expanding upon the principles of successful language learning.

In addition, curriculum writers should write explicit strategies-based instruction into the course designs, focusing first on direct strategies, especially during beginning level ESL courses, and introducing indirect strategies at the intermediate and advanced levels, which are higher level cognitive and socio-affective processes. Since English language learners can enter the ESL program at any level, a progressive review of the strategies throughout the curricula should be designed to introduce and reinforce the strategies at every level of instruction. It is not necessary to design a separate course of instruction, with its own curriculum and student learning outcomes, since it is best to introduce the learning strategies alongside regular course content.

Finally, further research will be needed to test the results of the above recommendations and their implementation, with pre- and post-test measurements before and after the implementation of explicit, strategies-based instruction, and a long-term follow-up study to determine if the improved strategies instruction results in greater academic success and achievement.

Conclusion

There are a variety of reasons why second-language learners in the United States fail in their academic pursuits. Financial hardship, employment, family responsibility, educational background, and time and energy are among the some of the chief factors (Becker, 2001). Other reasons contribute as well, such as “age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude... learning styles and

cultural differences” (Lee, 2010, p. 142). All of these factors can be overcome but for one major hurdle: the English language.

My research has focused on English language teaching and learning through the lens of language-learning strategies, and how strategies-based instruction is implemented within the community college system, where many immigrants begin their journey to the American dream. The intent of this study was to determine the extent to which language learning strategies are taught to second-language learners in a community college district, the specific strategies that language-learners use, and whether improvements to strategies-based instruction in the community college system are needed.

My conclusion is that learning strategies are not directly taught but implicitly learned in the adult ESL classroom, that the language-learners studied in this research use little more than seventy percent of the strategies measured, and that improvements in strategies-based instruction can and should be made. Based on the results of this study alone—of twenty-two advanced ESL students in a community college classroom—improvements in the way that language-learning strategies are taught could result in as much as a twenty-nine percent increase in the overall use of the strategies by second-language learners.

In addition, drawing from research conducted in Ghana and in Turkey, as well as other literature that connects language-learning strategies and student success, explicit strategies-based instruction may lead to significant improvements in second-language teaching and learning. The intended outcome of strategies-based instruction is to raise students’ conscious awareness of language-learning strategies, to multiply and expand their use of the strategies, to facilitate and improve their learning of English, and to increase their prospects for academic success. Such an outcome would help move language learners from the periphery of American society, where they

are often stalled or side-lined by a lack of English proficiency, toward the mainstream, with greater opportunities of financial success, upward mobility and future achievement for themselves and their families.

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Appendix 1

Historical Review of Language Teaching Methods

Grammar Translation – Also called the Classical Method, the focus is on memorization of vocabulary and grammar for the purpose of reading and translating texts, with little if any intent for the target language to be used in communication. Taught in the mother language, grammar translation is more an exercise for intellectual growth than the production of language for practical purposes, such as the learning of Latin during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Series Method – A series of actions and connected sentences are introduced in the target language, wherein perceptions of actions (moving toward and opening a door, exiting a room) are transformed into conceptions of language and speech. There is no discussion of grammar rules or direct translation from one language to another. The idea is for students to observe and listen, which leads to meaningful understanding that will then evolve into spoken language. This process mimics the natural approach to learning first languages.

Direct Method – Second language learning is modeled after first language acquisition, much like the Series Method. Unlike the series method, however, vocabulary is taught directly through the introduction and manipulation of realia. Everyday sentences are also explicitly taught, while new language elements are progressively learned through teacher commands, questions and answers, modeling and practice. Grammar is learned inductively, with no direct translation involved. Spontaneous use of oral language is expected after repeated exposure.

Audiolingual Method – Language learning is focused on listening and repeating with no attention to grammar instruction or direct translation. Emphasis is on oral production as the teacher models pronunciation. Listening to and repeating aural prompts, pattern drills and conversation are practiced. Also known as the “Army Method”, the audiolingual method was popularized during WWII when the United States was thrust onto the world stage and the need for multiple languages arose.

Cognitive Code Learning – A combination of grammar translation and the audiolingual method (ALM), cognitive code learning retained the drilling practice of ALM while introducing grammar explanations. It combined the inductive and deductive learning methods associated with ALM and grammar translation. Communicative practice, however, was sacrificed in favor of analyzing the discrete elements of grammar.

Community Language Learning – Previously called the Counseling-Learning model. The teacher functions as a counselor-translator until the client-students become comfortable and begin to converse independently. The intent is to lower affective filters while preparing students to use the language. The teacher leads and directs a conversation in round-table discussions, gradually involving the students and encouraging their participation.

Suggestopedia – Learning is enabled in a relaxed, comfortable environment, induced by 60-beat-per-minute Baroque music, said to increase alpha brain waves while lowering blood pressure and reducing pulse rate. According to this method, a relaxed state of mind facilitates

the absorption and retention of material. The teacher introduces a variety of language through vocabulary, readings, dialogues, role-plays and drama.

Silent Way – Students “discover” language through practical exercises intended to develop independence, responsibility and, eventually, autonomy. Inductive processes are encouraged over rote learning. Classroom props introduce vocabulary, verbs and grammatical features, while the teacher points students toward learning objectives using prompts, very little verbal stimuli and minimal corrective feedback. Students work collaboratively in a problem-solving approach to self-learning.

Total Physical Response – TPR for short, this method combines right-brain functions involving physical activity with left-brain functions involving language processing. The teacher uses the imperative mood (commands) and interrogatives (questions) to stimulate psychomotor functioning, associating language with physical activity to facilitate learning. Intended to lower anxiety by not requiring language production during the early stages, students should eventually feel confident enough to replicate the process and produce language on their own.

Natural Approach – This method relies on comprehensible input at or slightly above the learner’s level of understanding.¹⁷ It borrows from TPR at the beginning stages of language development, then progresses to dialogue and group activity as language “naturally” emerges. Students develop listening skills during the “silent period” and begin to produce language when they are ready to do so. The focus is on meaning over form, with no direct analysis of grammar or errors. Language is presented in a “natural” sequence, starting with listening, then speaking, and proceeding to reading and writing. Extended discourse and fluency are the ultimate goals.

Functional Syllabus – Also called the Notional-Functional Syllabus, coursework is designed around specific notions or contexts—such as restaurants, travel, health, education, shopping, etc.—and language functions—including greetings, introductions, requests, questions, commands, apologizing and thanking, identifying and describing, and exchanging information. Grammar is simultaneously introduced in a sequenced, structured manner to aid the development of language skills. The Functional Syllabus is more focused on curricular structure than it is a true method.

Communicative Language Teaching – A combination of all the previous methods, CLT mixes grammar instruction with communicative practice to achieve fluency and accuracy. This method emphasizes language proficiency for practical use outside of the classroom, and it relies on authentic texts and contexts to accomplish this purpose. The teacher acts as a facilitator while the students collaborate in the learning process, marking a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. The pragmatic functions of language are supported by grammar knowledge, which eventually lead to communicative competence.

Task-Based Language Teaching – Closely related to communicative language teaching for pragmatic purposes. TBLT for short, this method requires learners to use language to attain an objective through role-plays and problem-solving tasks. A task-based curriculum specifies what a learner needs to do with the language, and it organizes a series of activities intended to achieve

¹⁷ Popularized by Krashen’s input hypothesis (“i + 1”) and Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD).

communicative competence. Tasks are intended to engage learners in genuine problem-solving activities in a student-centered classroom.

Content-Based Instruction – This method integrates language teaching with content learning. Language becomes the medium to convey information of interest and relevance to the learner, as in training for vocational or professional purposes. Content-based instruction is intended to increase intrinsic motivation and personal empowerment. Students rely on their own competence and autonomy to do something with their new language. Concepts and skills are taught alongside various disciplines in the secondary language. This method can also be extended to academic programs, such as literature, geography, math and science.

Sources: Brown, D.H. (2007). Strategies-based instruction. In *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd ed.) (pp. 18-56). White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Masouleh, N.S. (2012). From method to post method: A panacea! *English Language Teaching*, 5(4), pp. 65-72.

Savage, L.S., Bitterlin, G., & Price, P. (2010). An eclectic approach in teaching grammar. In *Grammar matters: Teaching grammar in adult ESL programs* (pp. 5-10). New York: Cambridge Press.

Appendix 2

Early Models of Language-Learning Strategies

Year	Theorist	Strategy Set
1975	Rubin	a. Direct b. Indirect
1985	O'Malley	a. Cognitive b. Metacognitive c. Social
1990	Oxford	a. Memory b. Cognitive c. Compensation d. Metacognitive e. Affective f. Social
2011	Pintrich and Garcia	a. Cognitive b. Metacognitive c. Resource management
1999	Purpura	a. Comprehension b. Storage c. Using
1999	Yang	a. Functional practice b. Cognitive-memory c. Metacognitive d. Formal-oral e. Social f. Compensation
2001	Schmidt and Watanabe	a. Functional practice b. Social c. Study d. Coping
2003	Cohen, Oxford, and Chi	a. Language strategies sorted according to skills
2011	Oxford	a. Cognitive b. Affective c. Sociocultural-interactive

Appendix 3

Language Learning Strategies

LANGUAGE-LEARNING STRATEGIES: OVERARCHING COMPETENCIES WITH SUBGROUPS AND DEVICES

A. Direct strategies

1. Memory strategies

- a. Creating mental linkages
 - ✓ Grouping
 - ✓ Associating/elaborating
 - ✓ Placing new words into a context
- b. Applying images and sounds
 - ✓ Using imagery
 - ✓ Semantic mapping
 - ✓ Using keywords
 - ✓ Representing sounds in memory
- c. Reviewing well
 - ✓ Structured reviewing [studying]
- d. Employing action
 - ✓ Using physical response or sensation
 - ✓ Using mechanical techniques

2. Cognitive strategies

- a. Practicing
 - ✓ Repeating
 - ✓ Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems
 - ✓ Recognizing and using formulas and patterns
 - ✓ Recombining (putting together known elements in new ways)
 - ✓ Practicing naturalistically
- b. Receiving and sending messages
 - ✓ Getting the idea quickly
 - ✓ Using resources for receiving and sending messages
- c. Analyzing and reasoning
 - ✓ Reasoning deductively
 - ✓ Analyzing expressions
 - ✓ Analyzing contrastively (across languages)

- ✓ Translating
 - ✓ Transferring
 - d. Creating structure for input and output
 - ✓ Taking notes
 - ✓ Summarizing
 - ✓ Highlighting
3. Compensation strategies
- a. Guessing intelligently
 - ✓ Using linguistic clues
 - ✓ Using other clues
 - b. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing
 - ✓ Switching to the mother tongue
 - ✓ Getting help
 - ✓ Using mime or gesture
 - ✓ Avoiding communication partially or totally
 - ✓ Selecting the topic
 - ✓ Adjusting or approximating the message
 - ✓ Coining words
 - ✓ Using a circumlocution or synonym

B. Indirect strategies

1. Metacognitive strategies

- a. Centering your learning
 - ✓ Overviewing and linking with already known material
 - ✓ Paying attention
 - ✓ Delaying speech production to focus on listening
- b. Arranging and planning your learning
 - ✓ Finding out about language learning
 - ✓ Organizing
 - ✓ Setting goals and objectives
 - ✓ Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)
 - ✓ Planning for a language task
 - ✓ Seeking practice opportunities
- c. Evaluating your learning
 - ✓ Self-monitoring
 - ✓ Self-evaluating

2. Affective strategies

- a. Lowering you anxiety
 - ✓ Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
 - ✓ Using music
 - ✓ Using laughter
- b. Encouraging yourself
 - ✓ Making positive statements
 - ✓ Taking risks wisely
 - ✓ Rewarding yourself
- c. Taking your emotional temperature
 - ✓ Listening to your body
 - ✓ Using a checklist
 - ✓ Writing a language learning diary
 - ✓ Discussing your feelings with someone else

3. Social strategies

- a. Asking questions
 - ✓ Asking for clarification or verification
 - ✓ Asking for correction
- b. Cooperating with others
 - ✓ Cooperating with peers
 - ✓ Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
- c. Empathizing with others
 - ✓ Developing cultural understanding
 - ✓ Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

Source: Oxford, R.L. (1990). Looking at language learning strategies. In *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know* (pp.16-21). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Appendix 4

Cognitive Function: Individual Learning Styles.

Learning styles are related either to personality or cognition. Learning styles “characterize the consistent and enduring traits, tendencies or preferences that may differentiate you from another person” (Brown, 2007, p. 260). “They are an individual’s natural, habitual and preferred ways of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills” (Kinsella, 1995, p. 171, as qtd. in Brown, 2007, p. 260). Following are several types of cognitive learning styles.

Right Brain Dominance. The right side of the brain is more spatial and conceptual in nature. It is more responsive to tactile, visual and auditory stimuli, and it prefers a holistic approach to processing information. The right side is high on emotional intelligence and artistic expression.

Left Brain Dominance. The left side of the brain is responsible for logic, analysis, mathematical computation and linear thinking; it is good at deduction and carrying out segmented operations, such as sequencing and organizing details and information.

Field Sensitivity. People who are field sensitive see the whole picture as opposed to the distinct parts, and they perform this way both visually and conceptually. They tend to synthesize information and make decisions quickly, without being distracted by the details. They are generally more sociable and more sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of other people, from whom they derive their self-identity. Their outgoing personality and social competence make them receptive to the communicative aspects of learning a second language.

Field Independence. People who are field independent distinguish the parts from the whole. They pay attention to details in both visual and conceptual contexts. They are analytical and take longer to reach conclusions, but they generally achieve good results. They tend to be more independent and self-confident. Their ability to study and analyze makes them good at certain aspects of second language learning, such as vocabulary and pronunciation.

Ambiguity Tolerance. People who can tolerate ambiguity are generally open-minded to new ideas and they can weather uncertainty. Because they can tolerate conflicting facts and information, they are good at learning a second language, which requires tolerance of ambiguous elements.

Ambiguity Intolerance. A person who is intolerant of ambiguity tends to be more close-minded and less receptive to new ideas. When in doubt, they reject contradictory material and hedge toward reality, keeping their compartmentalized systems of information in tact. Their intolerance of ambiguous elements make them poor candidates for second language learning.

Impulsivity. Impulsive people rely on their intuition. They are less patient and quick to reach conclusions. In tests, impulsive learners read faster, are good guessers and language learners, but they are not as accurate as reflective people.

Reflectivity. Reflective people are systemic thinkers. They tend to take their time to think things through before making decisions. In reading tests, reflective learners read more slowly but make fewer errors than impulsive people.

Auditory Style. Auditory learners like to listen and are more receptive to lectures, videotapes and audiotapes.

Visual Style. Visual learners prefer to read, and they like to study charts, graphs, pictures and drawings.

Kinesthetic Style. Kinesthetic learners prefer to watch demonstrations and perform hands-on physical activity.

Source: Brown, D.H. (2014). Individual Differences. In *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition* (6th ed.) (pp. 111-120). White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Appendix 5

Affective Function: Emotional Factors that Influence Learning

Contrasted to cognition, “The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior... The development of affective states... involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact” (Brown, 2014, p. 142). Emotional factors not only facilitate cognitive function, but they mediate learning when embedded in interpersonal transactions (Imai, 2010, p. 278, as ctd. In Brown, 2014, p. 143). Following is a list of affective factors that influence second language acquisition.

Self-esteem is responsible for how we perceive ourselves and our abilities. This perception is based upon the outcome of our efforts over time—whether we have been predominantly successful or unsuccessful—and how we perceive the results of our efforts. The higher our own estimation of our language ability, the greater our self-esteem and, therefore, the likelihood that we can acquire a second language. See also *inhibition*, below.

Self-efficacy is concerned with the learner’s ability to successfully perform a task; if he has a high sense of self-confidence, he is likely to devote the requisite effort to get the job done. If he falls short of his expectation, he is likely to fault himself for not expending enough effort. A person with a good sense of self-efficacy is a good candidate to learn a second language. See also *attribution*, next.

Attribution focuses on how we explain the causes of our successes and failures. Our internal self-talk attributes our successes and failures to external or internal factors (i.e., difficulty and luck vs. ability and effort, respectively). If a language learner has a positive attitude, and he frames his failures as temporary and surmountable, he has a good chance of learning another language. But the student who continually assigns a negative attribution to his shortcomings will likely not succeed.

Willingness to Communicate. People are predisposed toward or away from a willingness to communicate. A person who is willing to communicate with others seeks opportunities to do so, while a person who is less likely to communicate tends to shy away from others. People are influenced one way or the other based on cognitive and affective factors (e.g., motivation and personality vs. self-confidence and intergroup climate). Studies are inclusive as to whether a willingness to communicate facilitates second language learning, but researchers agree that a willingness to communicate may improve psycholinguistic fluency (not necessarily accuracy).

Inhibition is an internal self-defense mechanism that protects a person’s ego; that is, his self-identify. People who have *high self-esteem* can resist threats to their ego and rebound from failure. Therefore, a person with **low inhibition**—and high self-esteem—may be better suited to learn a second language. Conversely, people with *low self-esteem* erect a high wall of inhibition to protect their perceived weaknesses. A person with **high inhibition**, and low self esteem, is more sensitive to failure. Consequently, he may spend more energy on a fragile or broken ego than on learning a second language. See also *self-esteem*, above.

Risk taking is the ability to explore the target language, despite doubt and uncertainty about linguistic form and the underlying meaning. A risk taker garners the courage to practice communicatively in authentic environments outside the classroom. The person who takes risks experimenting with the language will be a more successful second language learner.

Anxiety can result from feelings of self-doubt and frustration. Anxiety can be debilitating and prevent the learner from taking risks (speaking), which can slow his progress, but it can also be facilitative by providing just enough tension to motivate the student to continue trying, despite the difficulty. He must control or overcome his affective filter in order to achieve success in his new language.

Empathy is the ability to understand another person's feelings. An empathetic person is aware of his own emotions and can easily identify with others. To connect with another person, "we must be able to transcend our own ego boundaries... so that we can send and receive messages clearly" (Brown, 2014, p. 153). Empathy, then, can be effective at lowering one's affective filter and making him more receptive to feedback in the target language.

Extroversion. Extroverts have "a deep-seated need to receive ego-enhancement... from other people.... and are energized by [social] interaction with others" (Brown, 2014, p. 154). It is not completely clear how extroversion may influence communicative competence.

Introversion. Introverts derive their sense of worth from within themselves. Like extroverts, introverts can be conversational, but they are more energized by contemplation and self-reflection than social networking. It is unclear how introversion may influence communicative competence.

Source: Brown, D.H. (2014). Strategies-based instruction. In *Principles of language learning and teaching: A course in second language acquisition* (6th ed.) (pp. 143-155). White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Appendix 6

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English

Directions: You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement. In the spaces provided, please check the response that tells how true or untrue the statement is:

1. **Never or almost never true of me** means the statement is very rarely true of you.
2. **Usually not true of me** means that the statement is true of you less than half the time.
3. **Somewhat true of me** means that the statement is true of you about half the time.
4. **Usually true of me** means that the statement is true of you more than half the time.
5. **Always or almost always true of me** means that the statement is almost always true of you.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Mark your answer on the separate worksheet. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. If you have any questions, please let me know immediately.

Part A – Memory Strategies

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
1. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
2. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
3. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
4. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
5. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
6. I physically act out new English words.
7. I review English lessons often.
8. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their locations on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B – Cognitive Strategies

9. I say or write new English words several times.
10. I try to talk like native English speakers.
11. I practice the sounds of English.
12. I use the English words I know in different ways.
13. I start conversations in English.
14. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
15. I read for pleasure in English.
16. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.

17. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly), then go back and read carefully.
18. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
19. I try to find patterns in English.
20. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
21. I try not to translate word-for-word.
22. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C – Compensation Strategies

23. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
24. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
25. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
26. I read English without looking up every new word.
27. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
28. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D – Metacognitive Strategies

29. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
30. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
31. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
32. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
33. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
34. I look for people I can talk to in English.
35. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
36. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
37. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E – Affective Strategies

38. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of English.
39. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
40. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
41. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
42. I write down my feelings in a language-learning diary.
43. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F – Social Strategies

44. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
45. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
46. I practice English with other students.
47. I ask for help from English speakers.
48. I ask questions in English.
49. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Worksheet for Answering and Scoring

1. Write your response to each item (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in each of the blanks.
2. Add up each column. Put the result on the line marked SUM.
3. Divide by the number under SUM to get the average for each column.
4. To figure the total average, add up all the SUMS for the different parts and divide by 50.

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F
1. _____	10. _____	24. _____	30. _____	39. _____	45. _____
2. _____	11. _____	25. _____	31. _____	40. _____	46. _____
3. _____	12. _____	26. _____	32. _____	41. _____	47. _____
4. _____	13. _____	27. _____	33. _____	42. _____	48. _____
5. _____	14. _____	28. _____	34. _____	43. _____	49. _____
6. _____	15. _____	29. _____	35. _____	44. _____	50. _____
7. _____	17. _____		36. _____		
8. _____	18. _____		37. _____		
9. _____	19. _____		38. _____		
	20. _____				
	21. _____				
	22. _____				
	23. _____				

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F	Total
SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 9 = _____	÷ 14 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 9 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 50 = _____

Source: Oxford, R.L. (1990). Looking at language learning strategies. In *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know* (pp. 293-298). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Appendix 7

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Section 1

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

Gender (check one): ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age (check one): ☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ Over 50

Country of Origin: _____

Native Language: _____

When did you arrive in the United States? _____

When did your first start to learn English? _____

What ESL courses are you enrolled in now? _____

How many ESL courses have you taken before this class? _____

Section 2

Directions: Please read the following statements about learning English. Then, check the response that tells how true or untrue the statement is.

Example: I use a dictionary to look up new words in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always
	✓	

1. **Almost never** means very seldom or not at all.
2. **Sometimes** means about half the time.
3. **Almost always** means always or most of the time.

Section 3

Answer how well the following statements describe you. Do not answer what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Part A

50. I use flashcards to remember new English words.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

51. I connect a new English word to a mental picture of it.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

52. I use rhymes to remember new English words.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

53. I physically act out new English words.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

54. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

55. I remember new English words or phrases by visualizing them where I saw them.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

56. I relate what I already know to new words I learn in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

57. I study English often.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Part B

58. I practice the sounds and pronunciation of English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

59. I repeat new English words several times after I learn them.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

60. I watch English language TV shows or movies.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

61. I start conversations in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

62. I use new English words in different ways.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

63. I connect new words in English to words in my own language.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

64. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into smaller parts.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

65. I read English for fun.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

66. I write notes, texts or emails in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

67. I try not to translate word-for-word.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

68. I look through an English text quickly. Then I read it more carefully.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Part C

69. I use gestures if I can't think of a word in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

70. I try to guess what the other person is going to say in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

71. If I do not know the right English word, I use a word from my own language.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

72. I read English without looking up every new word.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

73. If I can't think of an English word or phrase, then I use different words that mean the same thing.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

74. I make guesses when I do not understand something in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Part D

75. I pay attention when someone is speaking in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

76. I look for people I can talk to in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

77. I notice my English mistakes and try to learn from them.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

78. I try to speak English as much as possible.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

79. I look for opportunities to read in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

80. I think about my progress in learning English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

81. I plan my schedule so I will have time to study English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

82. I have clear goals for learning English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Part E

83. I get nervous when I use English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

84. I encourage myself to speak English when I am afraid of making a mistake.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

85. I try to relax when I feel nervous about English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

86. I reward myself when I do well in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

87. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

88. I write down my feelings in a language-learning diary.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Part F

89. I ask questions in English.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

90. I ask English speakers to correct me if I make a mistake.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

91. I practice English with other students.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

92. I ask English speakers for help when I do not understand something.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

93. If I don't understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

94. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Almost never	Sometimes	Almost always

Section 4

How did you learn the above strategies?

- ☐ By myself
- ☐ In ESL classes
- ☐ Both of the above

Please check each response that describes your educational goals:

- ☐ Personal development
- ☐ Complete an associate degree
- ☐ Vocational development
- ☐ Transfer to a university
- ☐ Complete a certificate program
- ☐ Undecided at this time

Do you have any other comments? _____

Worksheet for Scoring the Student Survey
(This section is for the researcher's use only)

1. Write the response to each item (1, 2, 3) in each of the blanks.
2. Add up each column. Put the result on the line marked SUM.
3. Divide by the number under SUM to get the average for each column.
4. To figure the total average, add up all the SUMS for the different parts and divide by 45.

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F
1. _____	9. _____	20. _____	26. _____	34. _____	40. _____
2. _____	10. _____	21. _____	27. _____	35. _____	41. _____
3. _____	11. _____	22. _____	28. _____	36. _____	42. _____
4. _____	12. _____	23. _____	29. _____	37. _____	43. _____
5. _____	13. _____	24. _____	30. _____	38. _____	44. _____
6. _____	14. _____	25. _____	31. _____	39. _____	45. _____
7. _____	15. _____		32. _____		
8. _____	16. _____		33. _____		
	17. _____				
	18. _____				
	19. _____				

Part A	Part B	Part C	Part D	Part E	Part F	Total
SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____	SUM _____
÷ 8 = _____	÷ 11 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 8 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 6 = _____	÷ 45 = _____

Worksheet for Answering and Scoring
(This section is for the researcher only)

Direct Strategies:

Part A – Memory Strategies: _____

Part B – Cognitive Strategies: _____

Part C – Compensation Strategies: _____

Indirect Strategies:

Part D – Metacognitive Strategies: _____

Part E – Affective Strategies: _____

Part F – Social Strategies: _____

Appendix 8

Teacher Survey: Language-Learning Strategies

Directions: Please read the following definitions, and then answer the questions.

Language-learning strategies: The methods employed by a learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of language; specific actions taken by a learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, self-directed and effective. For example, a learner associates a new word with a mental picture, repeats a new word several times, or asks a native speaker for clarification.

Learning strategies instruction: The overt teaching of language-learning strategies to ESL students. Supporting material includes: (1) textbook-embedded instruction, (2) student manuals that promote autonomous self-help, and (3) strategies-based advice, tips and techniques during a teacher's classroom procedures. Please see the list of language-learning strategies.

1. Are you already familiar with language-learning strategies? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Have you ever received training in language-learning strategies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how was the training obtained? Select each one that applies:

- ☐ Teacher preparation (graduate studies, professional certification, etc.)
- ☐ Institutionally sponsored training
- ☐ Personally financed training
- ☐ Other

3. Are language-learning strategies taught in your ESL classrooms? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - a. If yes, please estimate the amount of instruction given to language-learning strategies:
☐ 1%-5% ☐ 6%-10% ☐ 11%-20% ☐ 21%-30% ☐ More than 30%
 - b. If yes, how many language-learning strategies are taught? Please choose one:
☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50

Please see the list of language-learning strategies.

4. Do you have any other comments that you would like to add? If yes, please use the text box.

Thank you for taking this survey.