

THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF INTRODUCING NEW LEARNING STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract: This study explores a model of learning that proposes various learning strategies. Through this analysis, the paper aims to illuminate how to develop learning strategies in ELF classroom.

Key words: Spaced-studying, dual coding, tactile learning, reciprocal questioning, cognitive tools, communication, measurement.

Introduction: Nowadays, many strategic and reforms are being carried out in our country. At the same time, English is being the first worldwide language which is widely used in the world in international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment also, pedagogical field and others. In our country, every year, several areas of science are selected and developed with special attention. In the same way, foreign languages have been identified as such priority areas. Language learning strategies were first introduced into the second language literature in 1975 through research on "good language learners." At the time, it was believed that a better understanding of the strategies used by successful learners could help teachers and students learn how to teach and learn language more effectively. Early research was aimed at documenting the strategies of good language learners; in the 1980s, the emphasis shifted to classifying language learning strategies. Strategies were first classified according to whether they were direct or indirect, and then strategies were divided into cognitive, metacognitive and affective/social categories.

More recent studies have examined language learning strategies in more context-specific situations rather than in overarching categories, i.e., if learners are learning academic writing, for example, they may develop different strategies than if they are learning every day conversation. In strategy research, the terms cognitive and metacognitive strategies are commonly used, while those related to the learner's own emotional state and management of the social environment are examined under the generic term self-regulation.

First, although originally promoted as a means of supporting successful language learning, a synthesis of historical research on language learning strategies has yielded conflicting results regarding the relationship between strategies and language learning success. Indeed, much of the research that emerged in the 1990s included numerous conflicting studies based on the use of Sills as a research tool, only a few of which met rigorous research standards.

Literature review

Learning strategies refer to a range of strategies that can be implemented to improve learning. Examples include using memory cards, spaced repetition, practice tests, strategic highlighting, and reciprocal questioning.

Although there are numerous learning strategies available for students to try, none of them should be considered "the best." Each one can be applied to a given learning situation and some methods may work better for some students than others. In practice, students should use multiple learning strategies when studying a subject. Over time, students will discover which ones work best for them. Learning Strategy examples; [1].

Spaced Studying – many students try to learn all of the material the night before the exam. It is far better to study sections of the material over several weeks.

Dual Coding – instead of just reading text, it is better to input information through more than one modality. So, in addition to reading, also use visuals such as graphs to help understand information. Videos and listening to audio explanations of material are also extremely helpful.

Acronyms –Memorizing lists in the form of an acronym is a very effective way of taking a large amount of information and condensing into just one “chunk” of data. An example is ROYBGIV to remember the colors of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, blue, green, indigo, violet.

Tactile Learning – being able to touch and feel an object that is connected to a concept works very well for some students, especially younger ones.

Reciprocal Questioning – this involves students working in pairs; one acts as the teacher and asks the other student questions about the topic, reading assignment, or class lesson.

Strategic Pauses – teachers can help students consolidate information during lectures by pausing every 10-15 minutes and letting students reflect upon the material or go back through their notes.

Reading Buddies – this is a cooperative learning strategy good for younger learners where pairs of students read the same passage together. They can help each with pronunciation and understanding the definition of specific words.

Outlining – after taking notes during a lecture, it is a good idea to help organize your understanding by creating an outline of the material. This can help you see how concepts are related and may also point-out concepts that you missed.

Highlighting – using a highlighter to emphasize key points in a text is one of the oldest learning strategies ever created. The problem is that most students highlight way too much text. Two or three-word phrases and a few key terms in a paragraph are more than enough.

Practice Testing – taking a practice test or responding to the reading comprehension questions at the end of a chapter improves memory and helps students identify areas they need to study again.

Cognitive tools – Students use technology to help stimulate learning, such as by using computer games or computational software. See a full explanation on our cognitive tools article.

Think-pair-share – Students individually brainstorm a topic, then share their idea with a peer and discuss, then the pair share their ideas with the whole class.

Role playing – Students can role play a scenario in order to mock being ‘in the moment’ – for example, they could role play being the teacher, being a scientist, or being an engineer.

Gamification – Gamification refers to implementing game-based incentives into a learning scenario. For example, students can ‘level up’, use a token economy, or receive awards for reaching checkpoints.

Active learning – Active learning refers to the process of learning by doing – such as conducting tests, doing a project, or inquiry-based learning. This helps contextualize and consolidate knowledge (see also: advantages of active learning).

Brainstorming – Brainstorming can help a learner push through a blockage by generating ideas (in a process called divergent thinking) that could subsequently lead to lightbulb moments

Concept mapping – Concept mapping helps learners to identify connections between ideas, which adds context and deepens the learning experience.

Thinking aloud – Thinking aloud can help push through brain blocks because the act of speaking and writing is a cognitive sorting process.

As more organizations focus on return on investment, it has never been more important to create an effective development and learning strategy.

But what are the key pointers to developing a learning strategy where organizational, functional and an individual's learning goals are aligned for the good of the organization? What measures can you take to ensure successful implementation?

In this article, we'll look at the central tenets that underpin a successful learning strategy. While some consider a strategy as simply a statement of intent for the organization, we'll look at the learning activities that support a strategy as well as how to implement it.

Firstly, we'll examine the significance of putting a structure in place for your learning strategy – the importance of being goal-driven and differentiating between short-term and long-term goals, as well as the need to accurately determine what the learning needs are.

Secondly, we will assess the importance of developing a strategy from the learner viewpoint, where the learners are at the center of the strategy.

Finally, we will examine the key elements of a successfully implemented strategy, from the importance of focusing on outputs through to budgets, measurement mechanisms and the role of senior management.

The net result will be an effective strategy that, customized appropriately, will reinforce all learning and development.[2].

1) Structuring your strategy

A structure for your learning strategy is essential. The CIPD, for example, recommends that a learning strategy should consist of three parts:

An umbrella strategy which will not be changed very often

Learning initiatives that specifically support current business needs, goals, priorities and resource requirements

Options for how the overall learning process will be managed

At each stage, it is vital that the right questions are asked.

For example, when you are considering the long-term corporate goal for your umbrella strategy, ask yourself the following: What is my organization's mission and vision? How do we differentiate ourselves from the competition? Where do we hope to be in ten years' time and how can learning support this?

And what will these goals be? Typical corporate goals are linked to areas such as customer satisfaction, revenue growth, cost management and leadership development.

To make sure you are aligned with your current business needs (level 2 of the CIPD three-tier approach), other questions need to be addressed, such as what is the business currently trying to achieve? How critical is training to achieving this? What is the needs assessment of the organization?

Regarding how the learning process will be managed, you should ask more tactical questions, such as what tools will the organization need to support the process? How should we mix different training resources, such as e-learning, classroom learning, and coaching? How should this strategy be communicated?

At this level, these questions can change on an annual basis, depending on current business needs.

For example, a survey on training practices, conducted by Cegos found that many organizations focus on e-learning and blended learning as a means of making training more accountable, cost effective and less time consuming.

2) The importance of being goal-driven

One of the more frequent mistakes organizations make when developing a learning strategy is taking their eyes off the goals and letting different training methods drive their decision making.

Moving to an e-learning environment, for example, is not a goal in its own right. It is the natural result of trying to meet a specific goal. For example, in the area of cost management, e-learning will meet the goal of reducing expenses on classroom training courses.

3) Short-term versus long-term business goals

In the past, it was relatively easy to differentiate between long-term and short-term business goals – a first quarter sales target, for example, versus a 10-year corporate plan. However, the recent recession and ensuing business turmoil have made things difficult here.

As a result of what they have experienced in the last few years, many companies will never be the same again, having permanently changed attitudes towards risk, investment, costs and growth.

How can learning strategies reflect this? There is a need here for flexibility – even regarding the umbrella statement that the CIPD referenced in their three-part strategy.

While you do not want to see a different learning strategy or a different umbrella strategy on a month-by-month basis, some built-in flexibility should be allowed.

4) Assessing needs

Assessing learning needs is fundamental to any learning strategy. It is essentially the link between organizational performance and individual performance. If we have set these goals, where are the learning needs required to achieve them?

Develop employee competency profiles and pinpoint skills gaps that can identify the training needs. You might want to do some customer research to find out what their perception of skills gaps are, using tools such as focus groups and questionnaires. Line managers can also be an important source of information regarding levels of competence.

5) Legislative requirements

Keep in mind any current or future legislative requirements that may need to be incorporated into your strategy. E.g., for the Investors in people accreditation in the UK, your organization must meet specific learning requirements.

6) Put the learner at the center of the strategy

The key to developing any corporate learning strategy is to understand the relationships between corporate goals and the people who are accountable for the results. This is why the learner – your employees – should be at the core of any learning strategy you develop, and the driving force behind its success.[3].

Giving the learner control is vital because an engaged learner will lead to a successful learning strategy. Yet training and, in particular, e-learning has too often been technology-led rather than people-led,

resulting in unsupported learners being overwhelmed by both the technology and the lack of a clear training focus.

A central part of any learning strategy is, therefore, to put the learner in control of the process. He or she needs to know where they are now and where they need to be at the end of the learning path. This must all relate to the individual's position within the organization.

Closely aligned to this, your organization needs to create a compelling learner experience. Training, for example, should be stimulating, engage the senses and be rooted in real-life situations that participants can take back and implement in the workplace. The learner should be able to personalize the training, so they can control progress and learn at their own speed. Also, make sure professional skills are not forgotten. Businesses tend to spend up to five times more budget on health & safety, compliance and technical training than on professional skills development – such as leadership, management and negotiation skills – which is proven to have a direct impact on the bottom line.[4].

Above all, avoid box-ticking. Learning needs to be a practice which is embedded in people's day-to-day activities. Send a manager on a two-day course on management skills and they are not going to become a good manager overnight. Learning must be pragmatic, results and skills-focused and should address the learner's immediate workplace challenges.

7) The key to successful implementation

We have looked at the importance of developing a structure, defining goals, assessing learning needs and putting the learner at the center of the strategy. Yet all this would be useless if you don't put mechanisms in place to ensure successful implementation.

Firstly, a learning strategy must be actively supported by senior executives within the business. They should support the plan fully and agree to milestones, costs, dates and deliverables. Managers also need to let employees know about their support.

As well as senior managers, it is also important that line managers buy into the new learning strategy. Line managers these days take on responsibilities that were traditionally the domain of HR, such as recruiting new staff and developing them through coaching and training. They therefore have a crucial role to play at the interface of any learning strategy.

Communication is also key. Too many managers simply don't communicate about either the business or strategic learning goals. People must know how they will benefit and how the company's learning strategy will influence their personal development.

A learning strategy cannot be successful unless it is properly resourced. Your budget must be realistic enough to implement the learning strategy properly, and works best when paid for via a centrally-owned budget. If the budget is divisional, it could get squeezed from opposite directions, leading to the strategy implementation being fragmented.

With the current economic environment, you should also think about how to get the most for your money. There are several means of doing this while incorporating cost constraints into the learning strategy.

For example, learning specialists Knowledge pool estimate that you can cut as much as 30% of your learning costs with initiatives such as improving supplier management, a greater automation of administrative costs, and a refocusing of learning away from the classroom.

Importantly, do not look at crude cost-saving measures that could directly impact the success of your strategy. Nearly half of companies who invest in staff training[5] end up saving money in the long-term, according to a report by Cranfield School of Management and the Sector Skills Development Agency. The report states that companies which disregard training are more than 2.5 times more likely to fail.

So, although it might be tempting to start immediately cutting budgets, this is often a mistake.

And budget is not the only resource required for successful implementation. You also need to have the right processes in place, such as performance management systems and competency frameworks.

8) Measure! Measure! Measure!

Measurement of return on investment (ROI) is central to any learning strategy. It is vital at the outset to agree on ROI measures, to ensure that the impact of training on the growth of the individual and the organization can be tracked and evaluated.

However, measuring these factors is not easy. Here, it is important to understand what you are measuring – the effect your learning is having on an employee's contribution to business performance and achieving business goals.

It is also very important that your metrics are business and sector-focused. For example, if you are in retail, customer satisfaction is a key metric, whereas if you are working in the oil & gas industry – currently suffering increasing staff shortages – productivity across the oil & gas field's asset team is of central importance.

Establishing metrics that link learning to the bottom line should not be the sole responsibility of HR and L&D departments. Line managers, finance directors and senior management need to be included to ensure that the value of learning and training within an organization can be measured in terms of the effect on business goals and the bottom line.[6].

Develop your strategy

A learning strategy covers many areas of an individual's personal development, from training to one-to-one coaching, performance management systems and the ability to learn during their daily work schedule.

Conclusion: Learning strategies in the teaching process have long gone hand in hand and have contributed to effective learning methods and planning in the classroom. However, despite the latest developments applicable to language learning, such as websites, blogs, and online journals, learning strategies are still a source of fear and anxiety for many teachers around the world. There are many highly effective learning strategies that students can choose from. Some of them have been around since the earliest days of printable texts, while others are a bit more recent, having been created by cognitive science and education experts. The basic premise of most of these strategies is that learning that involves deep cognitive processing is more effective than passive learning. Thus, the more strategies that require active engagement with the material, the better. Mind maps, one-minute papers, and practice tests are just a few examples of ways to consolidate information and identify areas that require more study time. In addition, many countries have modernized their equipment and invested heavily in technology, demonstrating the positive effects of technology integration. In this study, we investigated a number of issues that the survey results indicated: the teaching methods used by teachers in English language teaching according to the basic academic skills of elementary school students, how teachers implement multimedia in English language learning, what problems teachers face when implementing learning strategies in English language learning, and students' reactions to the implementation of learning strategies. We investigated many of the issues raised in the survey results. Through interaction with learning strategies, students become increasingly familiar with academic vocabulary and language structures. Students benefit from the motivational benefits of being connected to the Internet. Students are eagerly awaiting the start of class to continue working on the Internet. Overall, students develop greater confidence in their ability to use English because they have to interact with the Internet through reading and writing.

The main purpose of using learning strategies in language teaching is to increase students' motivation and willingness to learn English. In the case of three students whose first language is not English, this is a practical way to engage students in language learning. To achieve this goal, language teachers need to create a favorable environment for English language learning based on the availability of information and materials. Use learning methods that are not overly dependent on the student's native language and that motivate the student to communicate in English. The English learning process should be more student-centered and less time-consuming. Language teachers need to maintain students' communicative competence through strategies.

In conclusion, the use of strategies can fully improve students' thinking and practical language skills. This guarantees and achieves effective results in English. However, there are several disadvantages to the use of strategies, and strategies can be used effectively in the English classroom. Overall, non-native English teachers can learn English more effectively if they choose the right learning strategies and develop special skills using the latest methods and techniques.

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