

Understanding Successful Learners

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Abstract

This paper addresses the subject of individual differences in language learning, a topic whose complexity needs continuing investigation. It reports on a study that was developed and used to examine use of strategies by successful Algerian learners of English inside and outside the classroom. The present study uses multiple data types, for example, interviews, questionnaires, and follow-up emails as a triangulation strategy to provide a rich and complex picture of the experiment. The results establish a range of learning strategies in three broad categories: metacognitive, cognitive and affective/socio-cultural.

Key Terms: Language learning strategies, successful learners, competence in English as a Foreign Language.

ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث موضوع الفروق الفردية في مجال تعلم اللغات، وهو موضوع معقد يتطلب بحثا مستمرا، حيث أنه دراسة تم تطويرها واستعمالها لتفحص الاستراتيجيات التي يستعملها المتعلمون الناجحون الجزائريون خارج فصل الدراسة وخارجه. توظف هذه الدراسة أنواعا متعددة من المعطيات كالمقابلة والاستبيان والمراسلات الإلكترونية في شكل استراتيجية مثلثة لتعطي صورة تعبر عن ثراء التجربة ومدى تعقيدها، حيث تنتهي النتائج إلى مجموعة من استراتيجيات التعلم يمكن تصنيفها في ثلاثة أنواع رئيسية: ما وراء عقلية وعقلية وثقافية اجتماعية عاطفية.

مفاتيح: استراتيجيات تعلم اللغة – المتعلمون الناجحون – الكفاءة في ممارسة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية

1. Introduction

A practical aim of this research is to identify in more detail the strategies which lead to more successful learning, so that these strategies can be introduced to less successful learners. It is generally accepted, however, that the specific strategies which best suit one learner will not necessarily be those that best suit another learner. An essential point to highlight is that what seems to characterize successful learners above all is the flexible use of learning strategies. Good language learners have a range of strategies at their disposal and select which strategies to use in accordance with both their long-term goals for learning the L2 (or the FL) and the particular task to hand.

Individual differences have been well established in SLA research as a relatively straightforward concept: they have usually been seen as background learner variables that modify and personalize the overall trajectory of the language acquisition processes; thus, in many ways, IDs have been typically thought of as the systematic part of the background “noise” in SLA. Particularly, four ID factors have received special attention in past second language (L2) research (Dörnyei, 2009): *motivation*, *language aptitude*, *learning styles*, and *learning strategies*. Broadly speaking, *motivation* was seen to concern the affective characteristics of the learner, referring to the direction and magnitude of learning behavior in terms of the learner’s choice, intensity, and duration of learning. *Language aptitude* determines the cognitive dimension, referring to the capacity and quality of learning. *Learning styles* refer to the manner of learning, and *learning strategies* are somewhere in between motivation and learning styles by referring to the learner’s pro-activeness in selecting specific made-to-measure learning routes. Thus, the composite of these variables has been seen to answer *why*, *how long*, *how hard*, *how well*, *how proactively*, and *in what way* the learner engages in the learning process.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Learning Strategies' Multiplicity

A conception of language learning is an essential component of a language theory. Empirical research has developed concepts about language learning and has tried to recognize possible relationships between learning outcomes, the learning process, learner characteristics, and the conditions for learning the social and linguistic context in which learning occurs. Language education research moved since the 1960s from method studies to learner-

centered work. Attempts have been made by a few investigators to find out how learners cope with the difficulties that are presented by language learning. Efforts were made to study the strategies and techniques of learners. Rubin (1975), the well-known sociolinguist, for example, produced inventories of learning strategies. On the basis of observation she came out with a provisional list of seven learning strategies. She defined strategies as *techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire second language knowledge*. She suggested that the good learner is

- (1) a willing and accurate guesser,
- (2) has a strong drive to communicate,
- (3) is often uninhibited about his weaknesses in the second language and ready to risk making mistakes,
- (4) is willing to attend to form,
- (5) practices,
- (6) monitors his speech and compares it to the native standard, and
- (7) attends to meaning in its social context. (Stern, 1983: 414)

Later Stern (1975) produced a list of ten strategies: planning, active, empathic, formal, experimental, semantic, practice, communication, monitoring, and internalization, strategies. These strategies were used in a research carried out by Naiman et al (1978) on some outstanding language learners in Canada. The study found out that

[G]ood language learners take advantage of potentially useful learning situations, and if necessary create them. They develop learning techniques and strategies appropriate to their individual needs. (Naiman et al: 25)

The so-called “good language learner” studies of the 1970s (notably Naiman et al., 1978 [1995]) laid the foundations for this research by investigating some of the qualities that characterize successful language learners. These learners are characterized above all by strategies for active involvement: for example, they repeat silently to themselves what the teacher or other students say; they think out their own answer to questions which the teacher puts to other students; they pay close attention to the meaning of the language they are practicing; and they seek opportunities to use the language outside class, for example by reading or seeking personal contacts.

One of the ways learners become actively involved in controlling their own learning is by using strategies. Learner strategies are the thoughts and behaviors that learners use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain information (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Or there are, according to Oxford (1990:235), *operations used by the learner to aid acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information*.

The taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) is quite similar to the one proposed by Oxford (1990). They distinguish three main classes of strategy:

- *Cognitive strategies* (that correspond to Oxford's 'cognitive' and 'memory' categories)
- *Metacognitive strategies* (that have a direct equivalent in Oxford's system), and
- *Social/affective strategies* (that correspond roughly to Oxford's 'social,' 'affective' and 'communication' categories).

The odd one out in O'Malley and Chamot's taxonomy is clearly the last group, 'social/affective strategies,' which includes diverse behaviors such as 'cooperation,' 'questioning and clarification,' and 'self-talk.' These strategies are not related to the cognitive theoretical basis outlined by the authors, and they admittedly represent a "broad grouping" (: 45), a miscellaneous category that appears to have been introduced simply to accommodate all the strategies that did not fit into the first two types but which could not be left out either. Indeed, Hsiao and Oxford's (2002) empirical analysis confirmed that the explanatory power of the O'Malley-Chamot model increased if the social/affective strategies were further differentiated into social and affective strategies.

Thus, the strategy systems proposed by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) are highly compatible, particularly if we make three changes on the basis of the arguments just described: (a) exclude communication strategies from the scope of learning strategies, (b) combine Oxford's memory and cognitive strategies, and (c) separate O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) social/affective strategies. The resulting typology comprises the following four main components:

1. *Cognitive strategies*, involving the manipulation or transformation of the learning materials/input (e.g., repetition, summarizing, using images).
2. *Metacognitive strategies*, involving higher-order strategies aimed at analyzing, monitoring, evaluating, planning, and organizing one's own learning process.
3. *Social strategies*, involving interpersonal behaviors aimed at increasing the amount of L2 communication and practice the learner undertakes (e.g., initiating interaction with native speakers, cooperating with peers).
4. *Affective strategies*, involving taking control of the emotional (affective) conditions and experiences that shape one's subjective involvement in learning.

There was an increasing body of research evidence that learning strategies played an important role in L2 attainment and their study offered a glimpse into the subtle mechanisms that constituted the complex process of learning. This was a particularly welcome development for many because the complex of learning had been long seen as a metaphorical 'black box:' we could describe what went in (input) and measure what came out (output) without having much of an understanding of what was going on inside.

Learning strategies offered the potential of becoming floodlights into this box. The practical significance of this recognition was also augmented

by the emerging view that learning strategies could be specifically taught to language learners.

Thus, strategy research flourished and several high-profile researchers invested time and energy in its pursuit over the years; as a result, this line of investigation became well represented at international conferences and in academic journals, and before long it reached a critical mass which, to a certain extent, 'justified itself.' Any doubts about the validity of the construct were easily shrugged off by saying that significant developments are often accompanied by a theoretical muddle that will eventually be cleared away by the subsequent restructuring of our existing knowledge. Peter Skehan's summary of the learning strategy research at the end of the 1980s (Skehan, 1989) illustrated this ambivalent but optimistic research climate well:

If, now, we review the whole of the learner-strategies research, we have to say that the area is at an embryonic stage. Conflicting results and methodologies proliferate. There are few hard findings.

Even the causal role and intervention potential of strategies could be disputed. ... Yet the area of research has considerable attractions. A lot of useful and suggestive research has now been reported. There are the beginnings of systematicity in the categorization schemes for strategies, so that new investigators need not gather information blindly. ... This suggests that we are ready for the first attempts at theorizing within the learner-strategies field. (: 98, in Dörnyei, 2009:170)

2.1 The Assessment of Learning Strategies

A number of instruments were developed during the 1980s that assessed the Self-Regulated Learner (SRL) as a metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral construct. For example, the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI; Weinstein, Schulte & Palmer, 1987) is an 80-item self-report inventory of students' strategies for enhancing their study practices. The LASSI involves 10 scales that assess skill, will, and self-regulation strategies—a classification system that corresponds with a metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral definition of self-regulation.

Scales classified as skill (or metacognition) include Concentration, Selecting Main Ideas, and Information Processing. Scales classified as will (or motivation) include Motivation, Attitude, and Anxiety. Scales classified as self-regulation (or behavior) include Time Management, Study Aids, Self-Testing, and Test Strategies. Students respond to items in each subscale using 5-point ratings that range from *not at all typical of me* to *very much typical of me*.

Another questionnaire measure of SRL that was widely used is the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith,

Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993). This 81-item questionnaire is composed of two major sections: Learning Strategies and Motivation. The Learning Strategies section is further divided into a Cognitive-Metacognitive section, which includes *rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, and metacognitive self-regulation*, and a Resource Management section, which includes such behaviors as *managing time and study environment, effort management, peer learning, and help seeking*. The Motivation section involves scales that involve valuing, expectancy, and affect. The Valuing scales include Intrinsic-Extrinsic Goal Orientation and Task Value. The Expectancy scales include Self-Efficacy and Control of Learning, and the Affect section includes Test Anxiety. The Motivation section, the Cognitive-Metacognitive section, and the Resource Management Strategy section correspond to the three elements in the definition of SRL: motivation, metacognition, and behavior. Students respond to questions on these scales using 7-point ratings that range from *not at all true of me* to *very true of me*.

A third instrument that was used to assess SRL as a metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral construct was the Self-Regulated Learning Interview Scale (SRLIS; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1988). During this structured interview, students are presented six problem contexts to which they are asked to respond, such as preparing for a test or writing an essay. The answers to these open-ended questions are transcribed and coded into 14 self-regulatory categories that focus on *motivation, metacognition, or behavior*. Included among the motivation categories are self-evaluation reactions and self-consequences. Included among the metacognitive categories are goal setting and planning, organizing and transforming, seeking information, and rehearsing and memorizing. Included among the behavioral categories is environmental structuring; keeping records and monitoring; reviewing texts, notes, and tests; and seeking assistance from peers, teachers, and parents. Students' answers to each learning context were recorded for their frequency, and students were also asked to rate their consistency in using a particular strategy using a 4-point scale that ranges from *seldom* to *most of the time*.

Each of these three instruments measured processes that can be classified as self-regulatory according to the three defining SRL criteria, but some of the names of these processes varied. For example, both the LASSI and the MSLQ listed anxiety as a component of motivation, whereas the SRLIS interview would have coded anxiety responses as a form of self-evaluation reactions. These variations in names are probably due to differences in the assessment instruments. The LASSI and the MSLQ were both retrospective reports, whereas the SRLIS involves prospective answers to hypothetical learning contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Presentation of the context of the research

With the implementation of the L.M.D. system in the English Department (Mentouri University Constantine) and the new programs, students are

steered towards different specialties after a two-year core curriculum: Language Sciences (LS), Applied Language Studies (ALS), and Language, Literature and Civilization (LLC). After this year of specialization, access to Master is then offered to students who rank among the best. To this end, lists of the top students are then posted.

The learners are fifteen successful¹ students (6 males and 9 females) from the English Department chosen among the top in the options available in Grade 3 of L.M.D (LS, ALS, and LLC). There were two stages to this research: first, learners were given a questionnaire asking them to answer some questions in order to find out whether they used strategies to their learning English and thus to identify those strategies, and the second stage involved interviews and emails exchanges in order to refine some questioning we had. The study took place in the department of English premises before, during, and after the summer holidays. Throughout the holidays' period, we communicated mainly through mails. After the holidays, the interviews took place, and again we made use of the internet to get deeper in some aspects which could not be handled during the meetings (which went off in a relatively comfortable and stress-free way).

3.2 Data collection and procedure

For reasons stated earlier, we chose to deal with the MSLQ questionnaire, currently the best known instrument in this area in educational psychology (Dornyei, 2001), which had the advantage of both fitting our research since we wanted learners to retrospectively report on their strategies and which included most questions we raised during our experience in teaching. The MSLQ is a self-report instrument designed to assess students' motivational orientations and their use of different learning strategies. However, we chose to narrow down the questionnaire to a limited number of questions in order to focus more on the learning strategy aspects than on the motivation ones (Warr, & Downing, 2000). Still motivation remains an important component (not to say, the most important, Dornyei, 2008) in foreign language learning, one of the *big two* individual factors (Ellis, 2004:536) (the other being language aptitude) and is devoted a part in the questionnaire.

Once the data were collected, we proceeded to their scoring: the students rate themselves on a five-point Lickert scale from "not at all" (0) to "extremely often" (4). Scales are constructed by taking the sum of the items that make up that scale; a table showing the students' means is provided.

4. Results

4.1. Mental Learning Strategies

4.1.1. Rehearsal

¹ *Good, successful, or effective* are generally understood to mean those learners who perform well on tests or examinations, or as it is the case here those who are rated as such by their teachers.

Scores varied between 5 and 17, where a low score meant that the learner does not make use of the strategy. So the lower, the better: only four scored between 5 and 10. Most students make use of this strategy for their learning.

4.1.2. Active reflection

The general result shows that learners are inclined to relate unknown to known material, to extrapolate what they learn in a subject to other subjects, and work out the key points of the material and those which are less important. Eight students had a score between 30 and 40, four between 20 and 27, and only one scored 18 points.

4.2. Behavioral learning strategies

4.2.1. Interpersonal help-seeking

Only six students sought help whenever necessary, their score varies between 11 and 20. The others' score does not reach 10 points, i.e. they tend to rely on themselves. Most positive answers concerned the help asked from the teachers more than from their peers, though two students answered that they rarely ask help, even from their teachers.

4.2.2. Written help-seeking

In contrast (with the previous question), students seem to seek written documents whenever they need some help or want to check some information. Most positive answers fall in this category.

4.2.3. Practical application

Though there exist few opportunities to undertake in practice new things in English (and/or related topics), most students tend to prefer to use this strategy than rely only on theoretical documents. Two students showed the absence of use of this strategy (they scored 6 and 9, respectively).

4.3. Self-regulatory strategies

4.3.1. Emotional control

Most showed a high emotional control over their studies but two students were anxious about how to improve their learning and were equally worried about making mistakes or getting wrong in the process of learning.

4.3.2. Motivational control

Only two students said they may lose interest in class. In general, they show a good concentration during lectures though they do not make efforts when the topic/subject does not interest them. Otherwise they tend to show a high motivation to learn English and its related topics.

4.3.3. Monitoring comprehension

The great majority tend to evaluate their own comprehension though in different ways: most through tests, whether for learning, revising, or understanding lectures.

The students' means for each category are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Student's Learning Strategies: Means

Strategy	Mean
Rehearsal	2
Active reflection	3
Interpersonal help-seeking	2
Written help-seeking	3
Practical application	3
Emotional control	3
Motivational control	2
Comprehension monitoring	3

5. Discussion

As a whole, the successful students showed to use an array of strategies. But the most salient result is that their use of strategies varies from one learner to another, though the findings show a tendency to use whatever strategy in order to achieve best. Most differences were found in the rehearsal strategy: many tend to learn their material to be ready for tests. Four students only avoid learning material in a rote-fashion, i.e. by going over it many times, or reading it, or copying it out. As a matter of fact, during the interviews, we found out that most of them rehearsed in groups (some of the interviewees revised together) by reading the material they were given or they had looked for, then they tended to synthesize their reading with what they found out during the exchanging of information.

In gathering an overall idea of the area and how it relates to their areas of study, the learners try to pull together the new material, and read around the topic area, rather than sticking to the items they were given. This last result makes us think to unsuccessful learners whom we have observed during many years, and who lack this important strategy: what they learn in an area is linked to others. Unsuccessful learners, too, lack the ability to transfer and think critically. Most students here show the ability to use the knowledge one has acquired in flexible and meaningful ways.

Most students showed that they were ready to ask for help whenever needed, though this help was more sought from lecturers than from their peers. Are they a little over proud, i.e. being in the top means that if they do not understand something, it necessarily means that the others can't have understood it? During the interviews, we came to highlight the question, and these students showed they were the ones who give help

whenever less successful mates needed it. They usually organize (especially during exam time) group tutoring.

But for written help-seeking, most of the learners tend to concur with saying that they do seek relevant documents either in libraries or on the internet, either because they want to get more, or because they want to "check alone the veracity of the lectures" (this is one of the students' answer). They do not hesitate to seek by themselves pertinent documents in order to better understand, fill in gaps, or get a full picture.

Most students are high at practical application, placing the information into a practical setting. In foreign language learning, few subjects require a practical application where learners can learn by use of trial and error. One explanation is that all the participants but one has a scientific background.

Most students showed a high emotional control and had a very positive attitude towards their studies; they had not fear as for making mistakes. Research on anxiety in learning has led to two different conclusions (Horwitz, 2001): either anxiety is seen as a positive component of academic achievement as it enhances learning and even some tension can motivate learners or, on the contrary, is considered a negative ingredient since it inhibits learning. Such ambiguity prompts us to cope tactfully with this component. The fact that these learners tend not to worry about making mistakes or getting things wrong means that anxiety is an important component of learning, and that most notably that it is rather a positive one, since we are dealing with the most successful learners. Anxiety, like motivation, is a learner factor that is amenable to pedagogic influence. However, it is probably far too simplistic to work on the assumption that less is better.

What we found from our students may shed some light on the argument that it is not known whether it is, in fact, high motivation that makes some people choose to study the language or the study of the language that creates motivation (Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Shohamy, 2001). Positive language learning experiences seem to trigger the development of intrinsic motivational processes in learners: "I cannot describe the lovely feeling that enfolds me when I speak English or I meet natives, I feel like I fly to heavens when I talk to myself in English". "I had a wonderful teacher who knew exactly how to attract us to her lecture and who knew how to motivate us". Another kind of internal drive reported by students appears to be prompted by teacher's encouragement, praise and enthusiasm. In general students assess their motivation as very high though they have an ambivalent estimation when it comes to relating motivation to the outside world. They are pessimistic as for their future careers in a country which faces scarcity of jobs, and most report the poor conditions of learning: overcrowded classes, non qualified teachers, etc.

The successful students seemed to be able to set particular objectives for themselves, such as enhancement of specific language skills or expansion of vocabulary. They appeared to have a clear idea of what learning materials should be used, what possible phases they might undergo, and how the learning activities should be carried out. Implicit in the successful students' evaluation is that they tended to locate responsibility inside themselves, as in: "you have to rely on yourself to seek opportunities to improve your language skills"; or "I know only one location in the university beside my classes: the library." Another component to be taken in consideration is the socio-cultural background: the students' answers state that it is relatively high (both parents are educated, work, and have children who achieved greatly at university); three students report they were majoring major in other disciplines (Management, Political Sciences, and Commerce); most come from scientific streams (only one followed a literary one)².

Although one may be tempted to state that obviously less successful learners make no use of these learning strategies a caution must also be noted though, because, as Skehan (1989) states, "there is always the possibility that the 'good' language learning strategies...are also used by bad language learners, but other reasons cause them to be unsuccessful" (: 76). Ehrman et al. (2003) also found that "less able learners often use strategies in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner" (: 315). In fact Vann and Abraham (1990) found evidence that suggests that both 'good' and 'unsuccessful' language learners can be active users of similar LLS, though it is important that they also discovered that their unsuccessful learners "apparently...lacked...what are often called metacognitive strategies...which would enable them to assess the task and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion" (: 192). It appears, then, that a number and range of LLS are important if L2/FL teachers are to assist students both in learning the L2/FL and in becoming good language learners. It would also be beneficial for teachers to find out about their own learning styles because, as Kinsella (1995) pointed out, although the maxim that teachers teach the way they were taught has some truth in it, it is probably more accurate to say that teachers teach the way they learned best. She argued that many teachers, either consciously or unconsciously, select methods that reflect their own preferred ways of approaching academic tasks. Dornyei (2008: 155) explains that the lack of an effective use of learning strategies relates to several mismatches between teachers and students' styles, and among them:

- Mismatch between the student's learning style and the teacher's teaching style, a conflict that has been dramatically termed a *style war* by Oxford et al. (1991).
- Mismatch between the student's learning style and his or her beliefs about learning, for example when an analysis-oriented learner

² Generally, in Algeria, most gifted students are oriented towards scientific streams. Less successful ones are resorted to choose literary fields.

believes that rote learning is the most effective learning method (whereas that method would suit a memory-oriented learner better).

6. Conclusion

Understanding the functioning of the learner in the language learning process is further complicated by the fact that humans are social beings, and in an inherently social process such as language acquisition/use, the learner cannot be meaningfully separated from the social environment within which he/she operates. The challenge, then, is to adopt a dynamic perspective that allows us to consider simultaneously the ongoing multiple influences between environmental and learner factors in all their componential complexity, as well as the emerging changes in both the learner *and* the environment as a result of this development. This latter aspect is critical because, as Ushioda (2009) pointed out, context is generally defined in individual difference research as an independent background variable, or a static backdrop, over which the learner has no control. Such a conceptualization, Ushioda argued, sustains the basic Cartesian dualism between the mental and the material worlds, between the inner life of the individual and the surrounding culture and society. A truly dynamic systems approach will need to bridge this gap between the inner mental world of the individual and the surrounding social environment: a great challenge the Algerian educational system has to face.

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APPENDIX ONE

Learning Strategies Questionnaire (LSQ)

Please identify for each of the following statements the number (from the list below) which applies best to you, and tick the appropriate answer.

0 = Not at all; 1 = Very Rarely; 2 = Quite Often; 3 = Very Often; 4 = Extremely Often.

Mental Learning Strategies

Rehearsal	0	1	2	3	4
a) I learnt things by going over them in my head until I felt I knew them					
b) I copied out material in order to help me learn it					
c) I read through material several times as a method of learning it.					
d) I repeated in my mind things I wanted to learn					
e) I skimmed through material several times in order to help me learn it					

Active Reflection	0	1	2	3	4
a) I thought around new material and its implication rather than merely concentrating on the facts we were given.					
b) I tried to develop an overall idea of how different bits of the material relate to each other.					
c) In order to understand something better, I thought about how it made sense in terms of what I already knew					
d) I obtained in my mind the main points of the material and how they fitted together					
e) I tried to understand how new information fitted into things I had learned before					
f) I worked out which were the key points of the material and which were less important					
g) I looked for connections between course material and what I already knew					
h) I grouped together those parts of the material that were connected to each other					
i) I tried to pull together new material and other material and other material, which I already understood					
j) In order to understand things better, I tried to work out how they fitted together					

Behavioral Learning Strategies

Interpersonal Help-seeking	0	1	2	3	4
a) I asked the instructor a question when I was uncertain about something					
b) I asked other course members for their ideas when I did not fully understand something					
c) I checked with other people when I was not sure about some material					
d) I got someone to help me when I needed assistance					
e) I asked another course member about something when I did not fully understand it					

Written Help-seeking	0	1	2	3	4
a) I tried to understand something better by locating and studying a relevant document					
b) I filled in gaps in my knowledge by getting hold of some written material					
c) I tried to find a written account of something to help me learn					
d) I checked something I did not understand by looking it up in a document					
e) I sought out relevant documents to help me learn					

Practical Application	0	1	2	3	4
a) Rather than spend time reading or asking someone's advice, I tried to understand something by working it out in practice					
b) I learned something by doing it rather than by studying a book or talking with someone					
c) I learned things by trying them out in practice					
d) I used 'trial and error' in a practical setting to help me understand something					
e) I carried out practical exercises to help myself learn					

Self-regulatory Strategies

Emotional Control	0	1	2	3	4
a) I told myself not to worry when things were difficult					
b) When I felt anxious about how things were going, I told myself that things would work out all right					
c) I tried not to worry about the possibility of doing worse than I wanted					
d) I tried to persuade myself not to worry about mistakes I made					
e) I tried not to worry about the possibility of getting things wrong					

Motivational Control	0	1	2	3	4
a) When I was feeling bored, I forced myself to pay attention					
b) When my mind began to wander during a learning session, I made a special effort to keep concentrating					
c) I increased my effort when the material did not really interest me					
d) I pushed myself even harder when I began to lose interest					
e) Whenever I lost interest in my work, I made a special effort to pay attention					

Comprehension Monitoring	0	1	2	3	4
a) I thought up questions to test how well I had learned something					
b) I asked myself questions about some material in order to test my understanding of it					
c) When I wanted to revise some material, I tried to test how well I already knew it					
d) In order to learn better, I set myself questions or tests					
e) I made a special effort to check how well I understood what was being taught					

APPENDIX TWO

Interview:

1. How did you feel about your English learning at your secondary school?
2. How do you feel about the English classes at university?
3. Do you have any English learning activities outside class?
4. How would you describe your present state of motivation for learning English?
5. Do you have a theory about English learning? (Something that helps you in learning English or whatever)
6. What will you tell a friend who has just entered into university and asks you for advice about English learning at university?