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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how language teachers can teach students how to learn using several approaches to learning strategies. The first section describes current English language teaching in Japan. The second section discusses the theoretical background of learning strategies, looking at cognitive learning models, which emphasize learner's mental processes, and social-cognitive models, which investigate the roles of interaction between individuals and group processes in learning. The third section illustrates the learning strategies in the metacognitive model of strategic learning, focusing on the planning process, monitoring process, problem solving process, evaluating process, and strategies for memorization. The fourth section highlights practical suggestions for classroom application, looking at the selection of learning strategies, instructional framework, learning styles, and choice of instructional language. The fifth section presents a lesson plan for a high school student's first day of school. The paper concludes that once teachers succeed in teaching students to appreciate the effectiveness of strategies, students will be able to use them as powerful tools whenever they need to learn something, and eventually, they will become lifetime learners. (Contains 15 references.) (SM)

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The Learning Strategies:

Helping Students Learn How to Learn

by

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February 20, 2002

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Introduction

What are teachers' roles? In her book, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, Oxford (1990) states, "Teachers traditionally expect to be viewed as authority figures, identified with roles like parent, instructor, director, manager, judge, leader, evaluator, controller, and even doctor, who must 'cure' the ignorance of the students." Many teachers try to maintain these authoritarian images because they think those images are necessary in order to keep their lessons under control. However, if teachers stick to these authoritarian images too much, their roles will, as Oxford (1990) says, "stifle communication in any classroom, especially the language classroom, because they force all communication to go to and through the teacher" (p.10).

In order to improve the situation above, Oxford (1990) suggests that language teachers should accept new roles as "facilitator, helper, guide, consultant, adviser, coordinator, idea person, diagnostician, and co-communicator" (p.10). If language teachers practice these roles in their lessons, they can create a safer atmosphere where students can concentrate on various communicative activities without worrying about making mistakes. Also, as the instructions of those teachers become more learner-centered, their students become more active, flexible and independent learners. Thus, the new roles of teachers mentioned above are one of the keys to create "good language learners."

Then, what are characteristics of good language learners? The good language learner, as identified by Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999) in *the Learning Strategies Handbook*, is one who has the following characteristics: (1) is an active learner, (2) monitors language production, (3) practices

communicating in the language, (4) uses prior linguistic knowledge, (5) uses various memorization techniques, and (6) asks questions for clarification (p.164). In other words, in order to become better learners, students need to know how to keep motivation high, how to monitor themselves as communicators, how to practice communication, how to use previously acquired knowledge, and how to ask questions. This is why teachers need to consider teaching "how to learn" better as well as what to learn.

Recently, teaching how to learn, in other words, teaching *learning strategies* has been widely recognized throughout education in general. Many educators now understand the importance of teaching learning strategies to their students so that they can become more independent and flexible learners. The definition of learning strategies, according to Oxford (1990), is "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations"(p.8). If language teachers apply this methodology effectively and act as facilitators, they can improve their lessons greatly.

However, when teachers try to apply this theory to their practice, they need to keep in mind that learning strategies can work only if their students trust the idea. Teachers especially need to believe that students can learn by themselves if they understand the usefulness of learning strategies and feel that they can succeed. It is also necessary for the students to believe that they have the power to become independent learners by using learning strategies. In addition, teachers and students need to create relationships in which they can trust and respect each other in order to succeed in the use of this methodology.

This paper will discuss how language teachers can teach how to learn using several approaches to learning strategies. First, I will explain the current situation of ELT (English Language Teaching) in Japan. In the second

chapter, the theoretical background of learning strategies will be discussed. In the third chapter, the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning will be explained. The fourth section will deal with classroom application with practical suggestions. Finally, in the chapter five, I would like to present an example of a lesson plan based on the idea of learning strategies.

I. Present ELT Situation in Japan

In 2001, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (*Monkasho*) published a curriculum guide that requires public high school English teachers to help students develop a practical ability to communicate in English with a deeper understanding of the language and culture with high motivation (p.2). Although *Monkasho* is requiring that communicative approaches be taken by English teachers, the educational environment of Japanese high schools is still unsuitable for students to develop communicative proficiency in English for several reasons. These include the typically large class size of 40 students, heavy dependence on traditional grammar-translation methods, college entrance examinations which heavily emphasize reading skills and analytical thinking, and very little opportunity for the students to use English as a communication tool outside the classroom.

On the other hand, demands for more communicative use of English are increasing. More and more Japanese people (including students) are beginning to realize the importance of learning English as a communication tool. *Eikaiwa* (English Conversation) schools are becoming one of the most popular educational industries in Japan. The number of young people studying in United States and England is increasing. Recently,

some Japanese companies have started to experiment with English as an official language to encourage their employees to use English as a communication tool. Thus, the necessity of teaching English more communicatively is increasing, and this is the reason learning strategies should be taught as valuable skills with which students can learn more independently in order to become more competent communicators of English.

II. Theoretical Background of Learning Strategies

According to Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999), there are two major theories supporting the use of learning strategies: cognitive learning models, "which focus on learners' mental processes," and social or social-cognitive models, "which investigate the roles of interaction between individuals and group processes in learning" (p.157).

A. Cognitive Learning Models

The idea of learning strategies is strongly supported by the cognitive model of learning, which indicates that learning is an active, dynamic process in which learners select information, organize it, relate it to what they already know, retain it, use it appropriately, and reflect on their learning efforts (Gagne, 1985). Cognitive theorists generally divide long-term memory into the two categories: declarative knowledge and procedual knowledge. Declarative knowledge consists of known information, such as facts, beliefs, and events, whereas procedual knowledge is knowledge of how to perform skills and processes, such as reading, writing, math computation, and conducting science experiments. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) suggest that students need to learn to use learning strategies as procedual knowledge through repeated practice with various learning

materials (p.58).

B. Social-cognitive Models

The social-cognitive models, according to Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999), focus on individuals and social nature of learning. Social-cognitive theory emphasizes the role of personal motivation. And the theory supports the use of learning strategies because they can help students build self-efficacy by creating successful experiences and by giving students the tools for future success. Social-cognitive researchers suggest that self-regulated learners have coordinated the use of several cognitive strategies, such as *predicting, visualizing,* and *summarizing*. Also, those self-regulated learners know when and how to use their metacognitive strategies, such as *planning, monitoring,* and *evaluating*. Another aspect of social-cognitive theory supports the critical roles of teachers' modeling how to use strategies and giving scaffolding guidance. As this theory suggests, teachers should coach their students by showing how to approach learning tasks as they become more and more independent learners (p. 159-160).

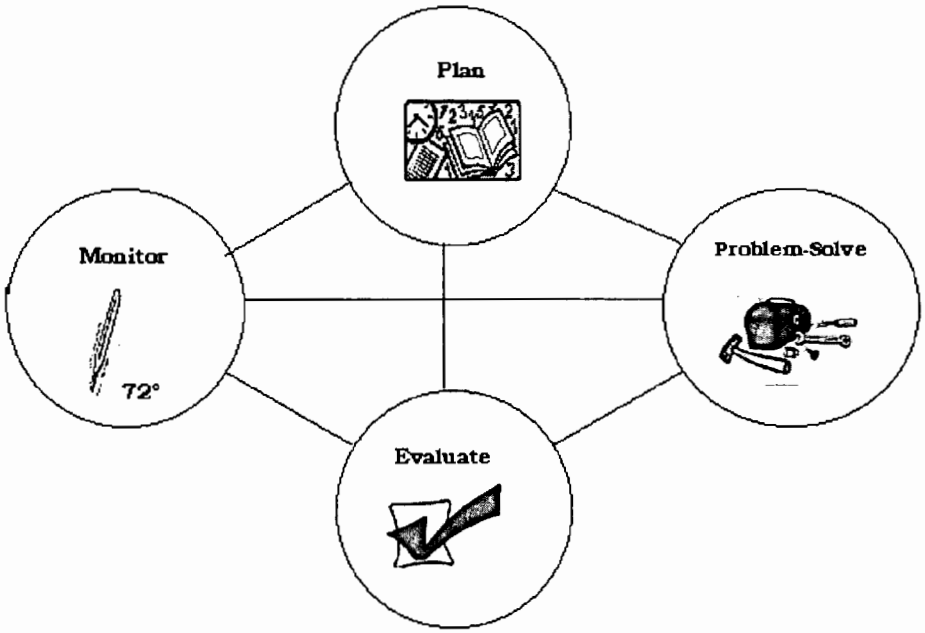
III. Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning

This chapter illustrates the learning strategies in the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning. They are principally drawn from *the Learning Strategies Handbook* by Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Jill Robbins (1999). The model consists of four metacognitive processes: planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating (see figure 1). Each of these four processes include a number of learning strategies (see figure 2), which students can use for all of the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking as well as for the

retention of vocabulary and content information. These four strategic processes are not always sequential but sometimes they are recursive.

Figure 1

Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning



(from *the Learning Strategies Handbook* by Anna Uhl Chamot, Sarah Barnhardt, Pamela El-Dinary and Jill Robbins)

For example, when learners begin to read a story in a textbook, they *plan* by setting their goals or predicting the content of the story from the title or the illustration. Also, they might activate their background knowledge about the topic of the story before they actually start to read the story. Then, in the *monitoring* process, they read the story checking whether the story makes sense to them. Sometimes, they need to go back to the planning stage when they feel they need to change their plans. After reading the first chapter of the story,

they *evaluate* themselves by asking if they have met their goals. If they feel they do not understand some part of the story, they need to go to the *problem-solving* process. They might use inferencing to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar part from the context. They might need to look into a dictionary or they might ask their teacher to help them understand the part.

Figure 2

Learning Strategies

Process	Strategies
Planning Process	Goal Setting Activating Background Knowledge Predicting
Monitoring Process	Asking If It Makes Sense Selective Attending Deducting / Inducting Taking Notes Using Imagery Acting Out Self-talking Cooperating
Problem-solving Process	Inferencing Substituting Asking Questions to Clarify Using Resources
Evaluating Process	Summarizing Checking Goals Evaluating Strategies

Memory Strategies	Imaging with a Key Word Grouping Transferring

A. Planning Process

The first process, planning, can be divided into the three learning strategies: setting goals, activating background knowledge, and predicting. With strategies, learners prepare before they begin the task instead of diving into the task without any ideas of what to expect in the task.

Goal setting involves understanding the task and deciding what learners should get out of the task. For example, if learners are going to interview an American woman about her impressions of Japan, their goal may be to understand her experience in Japan. Goal setting is useful because it gives learners direction, which helps them plan appropriately. This strategy can be used for all types of tasks.

Activating background knowledge helps learners accomplish the task by reminding them of what they know about the topic. For example, if learners are going to read Harry Potter, they may think about other fantasy stories they have already read and try to remember typical settings and plots in them. Using previously acquired knowledge helps learners get ready for the task by familiarizing them with it. This strategy can be used when learners have adequate knowledge about the topic of the task.

When learners use **predicting**, they predict what information they can expect to encounter. When they predict, they may use their background knowledge or knowledge they encounter during the task. For example, if learners want to buy ice cream, they think about what they will have to say to the clerk. Probably, they will need to prepare to ask about flavors, sizes, and prices in English. This strategy can be used when learners have enough knowledge about the topic to make prediction possible.

B. Monitoring Process

After planning comes the second process, monitoring, in which the following strategies can be applied: asking if it makes sense, selectively attending, deducting/inducting, taking notes, using imagery, acting out, self talking, and cooperating. When reading or listening, learners monitor their comprehension by asking themselves whether they understand the task. When writing or speaking, learners monitor by asking whether their language make sense.

When learners use **asking if it makes sense**, they ask themselves, "Does this make sense to me?" or "Am I making sense?" For example, when learners are reading a story, they ask themselves whether they understand the story. When learners are giving an oral presentation, they ask themselves whether they are being understood by their audience. This strategy helps learners keep track of how they are doing and to identify problems.

Selectively attending involves choosing to focus on a specific part of information, and this strategy helps learners perform the task. For example, if learners want to know tomorrow's weather from a TV weather forecast, they might choose to focus on finding the temperature, humidity or whether it will rain or not. This strategy helps learners identify the critical information because they can concentrate on it and avoid distraction.

In **deducting and inducting**, they apply rules about language concerning grammar, phonology, and morphology in order to comprehend unknown information. For example, when learners encounter an unfamiliar word in a story, they might look at the end of the word to identify that it is an adverb because it ends with *ly* as in secret*ly*. When learners use their knowledge of language rules, they can increase the accuracy of their

comprehension and production, which makes them more independent learners. This strategy can be used when learners have rules necessary to understand and produce language.

Taking notes involves writing down key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form. For example, when learners are listening to a long lecture about linguistics and have to hand in a summary, they might take notes by making a T list, in which they jot down the main idea and key words so that they can remember the talk later. This strategy is useful because learners can check notes at any time. Learners can use a T list (see figure 3), semantic web, or an outline to help remember and understand better. This strategy is useful when learners need to remember information or when they need to comprehend complex information.

Figure 3 T-List

Main Idea	Supporting Details
Characteristics of good learners	Active learners Monitor language Use background knowledge Practice communication Uses various strategies Asks questions

Using imagery is a strategy of creating a mental image which helps learners present or understand information. For example, when learners are going to describe their houses, visualizing their own houses helps them write what their houses look like. When learners read Harry Potter, they can imagine the characters in their minds so that they can understand the story much more easily. Creating a mental image is useful to check if the information makes sense. This strategy can also be useful for memorization.

Acting out involves using objects, role-playing, or pantomiming the situation to contextualize language.

For example, if learners are practicing expressions used to order food and drinks in a restaurant, they can act the roles of waiters/waitresses or customers. If they can use real menus, the situation will become more authentic and students can personalize the expressions and remember them more easily.

When learners use **self-talking**, they make positive statements such as "I can do it" in order to accomplish any challenging tasks. For example, if learners are trying to interview a native speaker of the target language, they might encourage themselves by saying, "This is an easy job for me. I know I can do it! So, I need to relax before I start to interview him." This strategy helps learners to reduce their stress with difficult tasks and helps them feel more comfortable taking risks. This strategy can be used for all types of challenging tasks.

Cooperating involves working with peers to do tasks or to exchange information with each other. For example, if learners are practicing presentations, their classmates can ask questions that the teacher might ask. When students are checking meanings of unfamiliar words in a story, they can cooperate to guess the meaning or look for the meaning in their dictionary. When students are cooperating with each other on their tasks, they can share their strengths, which helps them finish the task more efficiently.

C. Problem-solving Process

Another process, the problem-solving process, consists of strategies which can be used when learners encounter difficulty during their task. These strategies include inferencing, substituting, asking questions to clarify, and using resources. Some of these strategies come from inside the learners themselves, other ideas come from other people such as classmates or teachers.

By **inferencing,** learners can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases from the context or other

information such as the illustration or title. Here is an example of inferencing strategy, using a passage from the story, *Thank You Ma'm*, by Langston Hughes (1994): "It was eleven o'clock at night, dark, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to *snatch* her purse. The strap broke with the sudden single tug the boy gave it from behind." If the word "snatch" is unfamiliar to them, they still can guess that it is a verb because it has *to* in front of it, and it might mean to "steal" from the context. Learners don't always need to check their dictionaries to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. Instead, they can use information from other parts of a text or from their own knowledge.

Substituting involves using words or phrases that learners already know when they cannot remember a specific word or phrase. For example, when learners want to buy some detergent in a store but they cannot remember the word "detergent", they describe it by saying that it is liquid and they use it to wash clothes, and it is a kind of soap. This substituting helps learners keep communication going when they have forgotten a certain word or expression. This strategy is useful when they do not know how to say something or write something.

Asking questions to clarify means asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples. For example, if a teacher says an unfamiliar expression such as "It is raining *cats and dogs* this evening," learners can figure out the meaning by asking questions such as "Do you mean it is going to rain very hard?" instead of just asking "What do you mean by cats and dogs?" This strategy helps learners solve comprehension or communication problems whenever they have someone to help them.

Using resources involves using reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedia, CD-ROMs, and the Internet. For example, when learners are practicing a speech and do not know how to pronounce

"proficiency", they can hear the sound of the word from their CD-ROM dictionaries. This strategy is useful when learners do not know something crucial and they have nobody to help them.

D. Evaluating Process

Finally, evaluating strategies are used after completing part or all of a task. The evaluating strategies consist of summarizing, checking goals, and evaluating strategies. Learners use these strategies to assess whether they met their goals for the task. If they did not, they think why they did not meet those goals and what they can do differently next time.

When learners use **summarizing**, they create mental, oral, or written summaries of information. For example, if learners want to write a summary of a story, first they can choose keywords which are essential to the story, and then they can write a paragraph using these key words. This strategy helps learners decide how well they understood. It is useful whenever learners want to check their understanding.

Checking goals involves deciding whether learners have reached their goals for their task. For example, if learners wrote a thank you letter to a friend, they may reread it to check if the letter communicated the information they wanted to include. By asking themselves, "Did I meet my goals?" they can decide whether they have succeeded or they need to go back to do the task again.

In **evaluating their own strategies**, learners check how well they applied the strategies to the task, check how effective those strategies were, and think about how they could have used strategies better. For example, when learners used the inferencing strategy to understand an unfamiliar word in a story but found it did not make sense, they might decide inferencing is not appropriate for the task, change strategies and use a

dictionary to identify the meaning of the word. This strategy helps learners choose appropriate strategies effectively and it can be used for all kinds of tasks.

E. Strategies for Memorization

In addition to all the strategies in the four processes of planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluating, strategies for memorization are crucial for language acquisition. Remembering strategies include imagining with a keyword, grouping, and transferring. Learners can use these strategies to remember information for a long period of time.

Imagining with a keyword may follow three steps. Step 1: Think of a "keyword" that sounds like the new word, and imagine it as a picture. Step 2: Think of a picture that describes the meaning of the new word. Step 3: Link the two pictures together mentally. For example, when learners want to memorize *flour*, they can think of the key word, flower. Then, they can image flour in a package with an illustration of a flower. Another example is that when learners want to memorize a verb *tear*, they can think of a keyword which sounds just like a Japanese expression, *Te-Ah*! which is a kind of shout of encouragement. So, they can memorize the word by imagining a picture in which they *tear* a sheet of paper shouting *Te-Ah*! If they actually act it out with a real sheet of paper, they will never forget it.

Grouping involves creating categories by relating or classifying words according to attributes. For example, it is easier to remember parts of a car such as door, mirror, steering wheel, trunk, engine, windshield, and indicators at the same time with a mental picture of a car in learners' mind rather than to remember each of the words separately. This strategy can be used whenever learners are trying to remember a set of words related

in a meaningful group.

Transferring means using previously acquired knowledge about the language (prefixes, suffixes, roots, verbs, nouns, etc) to help remember new words. It also involves recognizing words in the target language that are similar to words in learners' native language. For example, learners can recognize the word "uncomfortable" by dividing it into three parts of "un", "comfort", and "able" so that they can identify the meaning and thus remember it more easily.

Actually, the learning strategies above are not used individually, but they are often used in combinations to a task. For instance, before learners take a listening test, they glance at questions of the test sheets and *predict* the content by *activating their background knowledge.* While they are listening to dialogues in the test, they use *selectively attending* to focus on the information crucial to the questions. They also *use imagery* to picture the situation of the dialogue in mind, which help them understand better. After listening, when they answer questions, they can remember the content easily because they still have an image in their mind.

IV. Practical Suggestions for Classroom Application

There are several things teachers need to consider before they start to teach learning strategies. Among these are: (1) selection of learning strategies to teach; (2) instructional framework to be used; (3) students' learning styles; and (4) the choice of the instructional language.

A. Selection of Learning Strategies

The selection of learning strategies should be done very carefully. If teachers succeed in choosing

appropriate learning strategies to teach, students may understand that these strategies are very useful, helpful and necessary, thus they will be motivated to learn more strategies. However, if teachers choose inappropriate strategies, students might think those strategies are useless, thus it will become very difficult for teachers to teach them learning strategies. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) suggest the following steps be taken in strategy selection. (1) Teachers should choose strategies by the nature of the instructional task. In other words, they should begin with the language and content goals, objectives, and tasks and then decide on strategies appropriate for the tasks. (2) Teachers should start with a small number of strategies. They should avoid teaching too many strategies at one time. (3) Teachers should use tasks of moderate difficulty. If the task is too difficult, students will lose a chance to experience success even if they use appropriate strategies. On the contrary, if the task is too easy, students may think learning strategies are useless. (4) Teachers should choose strategies with strong empirical support. It would be ideal if the strategies the teacher selects match the learning styles of students. (5) Teachers should use strategies that apply to different content domains. If students learn a strategy useful for reading comprehension in literature, social studies, and science, they will be more likely to adopt the strategy as a regular part of their repertoire.

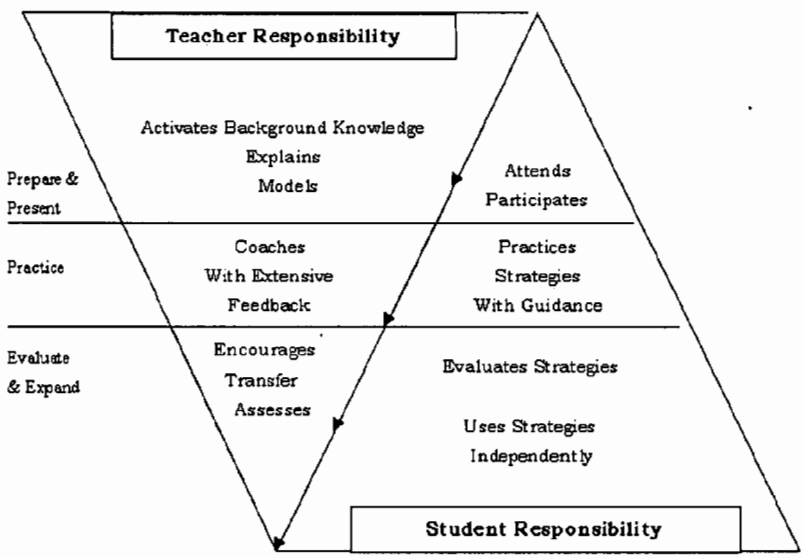
B. Instructional Framework

In order to teach the carefully selected strategies effectively, teachers need to find an appropriate curriculum structure to teach these strategies. The instructional framework recommended by Chamot and O'Malley (1994) has proved successful in teaching learning strategies. This framework consists of five phases: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion. In the preparation stage, students prepare for

strategies instruction by identifying their prior knowledge about the strategies. In the presentation stage, the teacher demonstrates the new learning strategy and explains how and when to use it. In the practice stage, students practice using the strategy with tasks. In the evaluation stage, students self-evaluate their use of the strategies and their effectiveness. In expansion stage, students extend the use of the strategy by applying it to new tasks. Figure 4 shows how strategy instruction starts out as more teacher-directed, and then gradually students take more responsibility.

Figure 4

Framework for Strategies Instruction



(from the *CALLA Handbook* by A. U. Chamot and J. M. O'Malley, 1994)

C. Learning Styles

It is important for Japanese teachers of English to understand their students' learning styles, or preferred ways of learning, when they start to use learning strategies. It is possible that some of the learning

strategies do not match Japanese classroom settings. So when Japanese teachers apply learning strategies to their students, they should consider the students' learning styles reflecting their individual as well as cultural preferences.

According to Call (1998), Japanese students have the following style preferences: (1) analytic rather than global; (2) reflective rather than impulsive (that is, they are not risk-taking); (3) left-brained rather than right-brained; (4) thinking-type rather than feeling-type (p.138). It is probably a good idea for the teachers to start teaching learning strategies which need analytical thinking, because they are more familiar to Japanese students, and then the teacher, as Call (1998) suggests, should encourage their students to gradually "expand their learning styles" (p.138) so that they can become more flexible learners.

Kolb's *Learning Style Inventory* (1999) and Oxford's *Style Analysis Survey* (1998) can be very effective tools to help students become aware of themselves as individual learners. As Eliason (1995) suggests, self-awareness as a learner may be "the key advantage that learning-styles information has to offer" (p. 27). By becoming more aware of themselves as learners, students can become more responsible learners, thus they can learn strategies more effectively.

When planning a lesson, teachers should keep a balance by teaching a variety of learning strategies appropriate for different learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) With this in mind, teachers should try to use visual aids such as graphic organizers, auditory aids such as music, and "movement" such as total physical response exercise, in order to stimulate students' senses so that they can learn more effectively. In her article, "The Triune Brain and Learning: Practical Insights for the Classroom", Dr. Emma Violand-Sanchez,

(1998) introduces successful examples of using physical movement to "wake up" learners' brains. For Japanese teachers of English, the popular Radio Exercise by NHK may be a useful way to teach English by using students' bodies.

D. Choice of Instructional Language

When Japanese high school teachers of English start to teach learning styles, they need to decide which language they are going to use, either English (L2) or Japanese (L1). Although teachers might be tempted to use only English in order to make lessons more communicative, they need to consider the complexity of the strategies and the capability of their students. Concerning the use of L1 in a foreign language classroom, as Homolova (2002) discusses, there are two major trends nowadays. The first one suggests that English has to be the only language spoken in a communicative lesson. This opinion is supported by the following arguments: (1) By listening to English, students can learn English. (2) When teachers use L2, students can be exposed to good example of the language use. (3) When teachers use L2, it creates a foreign language atmosphere, which helps learners adapt to the authentic situations outside the classroom. The second approach suggests that L1 should be used in certain situations such as checking comprehension, clarifying meaning, chatting, etc. This opinion is supported by the following arguments: (1) Teachers can sometimes save time by using L1 efficiently. (2) There are some learners who prefer to translate in order to understand. (3) Less capable students will have "an opportunity to show that they are intelligent by translating a word or a sentence, or by shouting out a solution in L1" (p.2).

The last two points are probably the most important factors for the Japanese high school teachers to keep

in mind when they teach learning strategies, because a lot of intelligent high school students tend to be analytical thinkers who prefer to use L1 as an effective tool to learn English. Probably it is best for the teachers to start to explain strategies in Japanese in early stages, and then gradually decrease the use of L1 depending on the students' mastery of the strategies.

V. Lesson Plan: Anotonio's First Day of School

1. Level of students: intermediate (3rd year Japanese high school students)
2. Learning strategies objectives: to teach predicting and inferencing
3. Materials needed for the lesson:
   (1) *Antonio's First Day of School* by Rudolfo Anaya; Reflections, Second Edition, by Heinle & Heinle, 1994
   (2) Worksheet
4. Procedure:

(1) Preparation: Goal setting: It is ideal for teachers to help students set their own goals and think how they can reach their goals all by themselves. For example, teachers can ask students what kind of goals they want to set before they read a new story. They might say, "I am a slow reader so I want to be able to read faster and get the main idea of the story". Then, teachers can ask them why they think they cannot read fast. They might answer, "When I read, I cannot neglect details. So every time I encounter an unknown word, I cannot help checking it in my dictionary. Then it takes a long time to read even a

short story." This is a very good chance for teachers to introduce ***predicting*** and ***inferencing***, because the students do need these strategies. Teachers can continue by saying, "Ok. Then, today's goal of the lesson is to get the main idea of the story quickly by using two learning strategies: predicting and inferencing".

(2) Presentation: predicting: Teachers should help students to make a plan before they actually start to read. In order to have students understand the importance of strategies, using an anecdote is useful. Teachers can start by saying, "It is very important to make a plan before you start to read a story. The better prepared you are, the easier and more fun your reading will be. Do you remember the story of Sachiko*? She used a predicting strategy before she started to climb Mt. Kumo. She asked herself what she might need to pack in her backpack so that she could reach her goal successfully. So, what can you predict about the story we are going to read today? What do you think will happen in the story? How can you know that?" Students might answer, "I think the title helps me predict the outline of the story. The title is 'Antonio's Day of School', so I guess the story is about a boy called Antonio, and about the day he went to school for the first time." Then, teachers can break students into groups of four and encourage them to predict more about the story and later they can share their predictions. In order to facilitate students' prediction, teachers can ask questions such as "Do you remember your first day to school? What do you remember about the day?" to activate students' background knowledge, and then, "How do you think Antonio is feeling? Is he nervous or excited? Why does he feel that way? If you think he is nervous, why is he nervous? Do you think he is going to school alone or with her mother?

Do you think his first day will be a happy day or a sad day? "

(3) Practicing: At this stage, students already have a goal for reading the story. Their goal is to read fast without using a dictionary using strategies. However, teachers should encourage students to set more specific goals. For example, teachers can ask how fast they want to read the story. Also, teachers can set questions based on the students' predictions, which will be their other goals. "Ok. So let's set our goals this way. You have 10 minutes to read the story. During the ten minutes, you are going to answer the following questions: How did Antonio feel before he went to school for the first time? Did he go to school with her mothers or by himself? Was his first day a happy day or a sad day? How do you know that?" Then, students start to read the story trying to find the answers to the questions above and stop after 10 minutes.

(4) Evaluation: inference: Students are going to check their answers in pairs and have them discuss how they can tell if their answers are right or wrong. This is a good opportunity to use inferencing. Teachers can help students by showing how to use the strategies. For example, for the question "Was his first day a happy day or sad day?" students can infer that it was a sad day from the line, "The pain and sadness seemed to spread to my soul." But also, students can infer that Antonio found hope by meeting two other boys. Before the end of the lesson, to have students self-evaluate, teachers may ask students how easy or how difficult it was to use the strategies. Students are going to think about how they can use the same strategies more effectively next time.

(5) Expansion: Teachers give another similar story as an assignment to read. They are going to use

predicting and inferencing to get the outline of the story in a limited time. They can use the worksheet (appendix), which they are going to discuss in the next lesson.

Conclusion

As we have seen above, teachers can teach learning strategies to help students learn effectively. Once teachers succeed in having students appreciate the effectiveness of strategies, students will be able to use them as powerful tools whenever they need to learn something. And eventually, they will become lifetime independent learners.

Although the idea of learning strategies is not very popular in Japanese educational situations, there is possibility of enormous demand for this concept. Recently, a lot of educators have been worrying about the sharp decline of motivation and capability of students. Beginning in April 2002, public schools are going to cancel classes on all Saturdays so that students will have more free time to relax, which is also contributing to the worries that Japanese students will study less and less. This, however, is exactly why learning strategies will be necessary because in order to use their spare time effectively, students need to be self-regulated learners who can learn by themselves.

When teachers actually start to teach learning strategies, there are two things they have to keep in mind. The first thing is that they need to start with what students already know. If teachers are going to start to teach high school students, they should start by asking what learning strategies the students have already used. And then, teachers need to encourage them to increase their repertoire of strategies so that they can be

more flexible learners. Thus, teachers should be able to use a variety of learning strategies so that they can model them to students. The second thing the teachers should keep in mind is that they always have to be conscious of students' learning processes. During a lesson, teachers need to monitor students who are monitoring themselves as learners. Teachers need to ask students why they got such and such answers, or how they reached these answers. Teachers need to pay more attention to mental process of students than product of learning.

Appendix

Using Predicting and Inferencing to Read a Story

Directions your assignment is to read another story using the two strategies, predicting and inferencing. The objective of this activity is to practice these strategies in order to read a story faster and more easily. When you read, try not to use your dictionary but try to use your background knowledge to help you read. Do not pay too much attention to details. Instead, try to get the main idea of the story by checking your prediction.

Title of the story: (**Chinese School** *)

① Predicting

What will happen in the story? What can you predict from the title? What can you predict from the first two lines* in the story? Write as many predictions as possible in the following space.

My prediction:

②Inferencing

When you have finished predicting, you are ready to read the story. Set your own goal. How long do you want to take to read the story? When you start to read, try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar parts from the context. Try to check if your prediction was correct or not. Try to use imagery, which is another strategy we used before. Try to imagine what characters in the picture look like, for example. Your goal is to grasp the outline of the story within ( ) minutes.

This is what I have found out about the story:

③Self-Evaluation

After you have finished reading, you need to self-evaluate. Did you meet your goal? If you did, how do you know that? If you didn't, what do you think was the problem?

Did you meet your goal? (Yes / No) Reason:

Did your predicting help you to read? (Yes / No) Reason:

Did your inferencing help you to read? (Yes / No) Reason:

**The Mountain Climber Story* (A.U. Chamot and J.M.O'Malley, 1993) is a very useful story to explain what learning strategies are, how to use them and why they are useful. In the story, a Japanese girl named Sachiko uses as many as twenty strategies in order to meet her goal of climbing Mt. Kumo.

**Chinese School* by Laurence Yep (1994) starts with the following two lines: "The worst thing of all was Chinese school. I still get nightmares about it sometimes."

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