

*Language Strategy Use Survey**

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The following is a survey of strategies that you may use frequently or perhaps not at all in your efforts to learn or enhance your language skills. These strategies are discussed and illustrated in the language portion of this Student Self-Access Manual.

See if you can identify the strategies you actually tend to use both in learning material for the first time (for example, sounds, words or phrases, and structures) and those strategies that you have not used or use only rarely. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. It is simply an opportunity for you to see what kind of a language learner and language user you are.

The statements in our Language Strategy Use Survey are organized into clusters that match the sections in the language strategy material found in the Student Self-Access Manual – in the order they appear. Read the description of the strategies in each category and for each strategy, mark in the left column in the space provided your use or non-use of each strategy:

- 1 I use this strategy and find it useful.
- 2 I have tried this strategy, but welcome learning more about it.
- 3 I have never tried this strategy.

You may wish to pay particular attention to those sections of the manual that deal with strategies that you would like to be more familiar with – you can find the pages covering specific strategies or groups of strategies in the table of contents.

* This survey – still in draft form – was developed by Andrew D. Cohen, Rebecca L. Oxford, and Julie C. Chi, 2001, with the assistance of colleagues in a Study Abroad project at the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota. The survey includes revised items from Rebecca Oxford’s *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (in R. L. Oxford. 1990. *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle), as well as strategies identified and described in A. D. Cohen’s *Language learning: Insights for learners, teachers, and researchers*. NY: Newbury House / HarperCollins, 1990, and those included in the Study Abroad Self-Access Manual (see above reference).

Listening Strategy Use

Strategies I use to increase my exposure to the new language:

- _____ 1. I regularly attend out-of-class events where the new language is spoken.

- _____ 2. I make an ongoing effort to listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows, or go see movies in the new language.
- _____ 3. If I am in a restaurant or store where the staff speak the target language, I usually ask questions in it so I can practice listening to native-speaker talk.
- _____ 4. If I encounter people in public having a conversation in the target language, I generally listen in to see if I can get the gist of what they are saying.

Strategies I use to become more familiar with the sounds in the new language:

- _____ 5. I keep practicing all the sounds in the new language until I am comfortable with them.
- _____ 6. I am constantly looking for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the new language with the sound of a familiar word.
- _____ 7. I do my best to imitate the way native speakers talk.
- _____ 8. I generally make an effort to remember unfamiliar sounds I hear, and ask a native speaker later.

Strategies I use for better understanding the new language in conversation:

Before I listen to the language:

- _____ 9. I sometimes decide to pay special attention to specific language aspects – for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.
- _____ 10. I often prepare myself by predicting what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
- _____ 11. I sometimes prepare for a guest lecture or special talk I will hear in the target language by reading up on it beforehand.

When I listen in the language:

- _____ 12. I usually listen for those key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.
- _____ 13. I listen for word and sentence stress to see what natives emphasize when they speak.
- _____ 14. I pay attention to where pauses tend to come and how long they last.
- _____ 15. I pay attention to the rise and fall of speech by native speakers – the music of it.
- _____ 16. I practice “skim listening” by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.
- _____ 17. I make every effort to understand what I have heard without translating it word-for-word into my native language.
- _____ 18. I generally pay attention to the context of what is being said.
- _____ 19. I listen for specific details to see whether I can understand them.

If I do not understand some or most of what someone says in the language:

- _____ 20. I may well ask the speaker to repeat if the message isn't clear to me.
- _____ 21. I ask the speaker to slow down if I think s / he is speaking too fast for me.
- _____ 22. I usually ask for clarification if I haven't understood it the first time around.
- _____ 23. I use the speaker's tone of voice as a clue to meaning.
- _____ 24. I make educated guesses and inferences about the topic based on what has already been said.
- _____ 25. I usually draw on my general background knowledge in an effort to get the main idea.
- _____ 26. I look to the speaker's gestures and general body language as clues to meaning.

Vocabulary Strategy Use

To memorize new words:

- _____ 27. I often pay attention to the structure of part of the word or all of it.
- _____ 28. I often analyze words to identify the meaning of a part or several parts of them.
- _____ 29. I group the words according to the part of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives).
- _____ 30. I tend to associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a familiar word.
- _____ 31. I sometimes use rhyming to remember new words.
- _____ 32. I often make a mental image of new words whose meaning can be depicted.
- _____ 33. I sometimes learn a new word by listing it along with other words related to it by topic.
- _____ 34. I almost always write the new word in a meaningful sentence.
- _____ 35. I may well practice new action verbs by acting them out.
- _____ 36. I have a system for using flash cards to learn new words.

In order to review vocabulary:

- _____ 37. I go over new words often at first to make sure I know them.
- _____ 38. I go back periodically to refresh my memory of words I learned earlier.

In order to recall vocabulary:

- _____ 39. I remind myself of a word meaning by first thinking of meaningful parts of the word (e.g., the prefix or the suffix).
- _____ 40. I will usually make an effort to remember the situation where I heard or saw the word, and if written, may even remember the page or sign it was written on.

_____ 41. I sometimes visualize the spelling of the new word in my mind.

As a way of making use of new vocabulary:

_____ 42. I use words just learned in order to see if they work for me.

_____ 43. I use familiar words in different combinations to make new sentences.

_____ 44. I make a real effort to use idiomatic expressions in the new language.

Speaking Strategy Use

In order to practice for speaking:

_____ 45. I may well say new expressions repeatedly to myself in order to practice them.

_____ 46. I am likely to practice new grammatical structures in different situations to check out my confidence level with the structures.

_____ 47. I ask myself how a native speaker might say something and I attempt to practice saying it that way.

In order to engage in conversations:

_____ 48. I regularly seek out people with whom I can speak the new language.

_____ 49. I initiate conversations in the new language as often as I can.

_____ 50. I frequently direct the conversation to topics for which I know vocabulary.

_____ 51. I tend to plan out in advance what I want to say.

_____ 52. I frequently ask questions as a way to be sure I am involved in conversation.

_____ 53. I anticipate what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.

_____ 54. I usually avoid topics I don't have language for.

_____ 55. I often look to others to correct my errors in speaking and welcome the feedback.

_____ 56. I frequently use expressions that call for both language and cultural knowledge, such as requesting, apologizing, or complaining in the target language.

_____ 57. If I don't know how to perform culturally-based language expressions such as apologizing, I sometimes ask natives what they do.

When I can't think of a word or expression:

_____ 58. I often ask the person I'm talking with to help me out.

- _____ 59. I will look for a different way to express the idea; for example, I use a synonym or describe the idea or object I want to talk about.
- _____ 60. I use words from my native language, but I add vowels or consonants so that they seem like words in the target language.
- _____ 61. On occasion I may make up new words if I do not know the right ones.
- _____ 62. Whenever necessary I use gestures as a way of conveying my meaning.
- _____ 63. I am likely to switch back to my own language momentarily if I know my conversation partner can understand what I am saying.

Reading Strategy Use

With regard to reading habits in the target language:

- _____ 64. I make it a point to read extensively in the target language.
- _____ 65. I often read for pleasure in the target language.
- _____ 66. I make a real effort to find reading material that is at or near my level.

As basic reading strategies:

- _____ 67. I often plan how I am going to read a text, monitor to see how my reading is going, and then check to see how much of it I understood.
- _____ 68. I first skim an academic text to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully.
- _____ 69. I will usually read a story or dialogue several times until I can understand it.
- _____ 70. I often look for how the text is organized and pay attention to headings and subheadings.
- _____ 71. It is common for me to make ongoing summaries either in my mind or in the margins of the text.
- _____ 72. I usually make predictions as to what will appear next.

When I encounter words and structures I do not understand:

- _____ 73. I usually guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the surrounding context.
- _____ 74. I generally use a dictionary so that I can get a detailed sense of what individual words mean.

Writing Strategy Use

As basic writing strategies:

- _____ 75. I usually practice writing the alphabet of the new language.

- _____ 76. I plan how I am going to write an academic essay, monitor to see how my writing is going, and then check to see how well I wrote what I wanted to.
- _____ 77. I often make an effort to write different kinds of texts in the target language (e.g., personal notes, messages, letters, and course papers).
- _____ 78. I frequently take class notes in the new language.

While I am writing an essay:

- _____ 79. When I cannot think of the correct expression to write, I usually find a different way to express the idea; for example, I use a synonym or describe the idea.
- _____ 80. I am likely to review what I have already written before continuing to write new material in an essay.
- _____ 81. It is common for me to use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help me find or verify words in the target language.
- _____ 82. I postpone editing my writing until I have gotten my ideas down.

Once I have written a draft essay:

- _____ 83. I often revise the essay once or twice to improve the language and content.
- _____ 84. I usually look for ways to get feedback from others, such as having a native writer put the text in his / her own words, and then I compare it to my original version.

Strategic Use of Translation

In order to enhance language learning and use:

- _____ 85. I often plan out what I want to say or write in my native language and then translate it into the target language.
- _____ 86. I tend to translate when reading in order to keep my train of thought and basically make the text more comprehensible to me.
- _____ 87. While I am listening to someone, I often translate parts of what they have said into my own language to help store the concepts in my mind.

To work directly in the target language as much as possible:

- _____ 88. I make every effort to put my native language out of my mind and think only in the target language.
- _____ 89. I do all I can to understand what I have heard or read without translating it word-for-word into my own language.

_____ 90. I am cautious about transferring words or concepts directly from my language to the target language.

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Now go back and review the items that you marked either “2” or “3” to see which strategies you would like to learn more about and perhaps include more fully in your language learning and language use activities. You are encouraged to access those pages of the Manual that deal with the strategies in which you indicated an interest.