

Language Learning Strategies

Using learning strategies means being proactive. Good L2 learners take charge of their learning and don't expect learning to happen by osmosis just by being in a classroom.

The strategies below will make your learning experience

- **more enjoyable**
- **more efficient**
- **more successful more quickly**

STRATEGIES:

- **Set specific goals** for yourself each week or month and work at focussing on them.
- **Organise your learning** in ways that are useful for you:
 - make lists;
 - colour code aspects of the language (e.g. gender);
 - learn how to make your way around the text book;
 - set aside regular study time;
 - vary the way you learn.
- **Use your mother tongue as a resource:** If aspects of the L1 and L2 are similar, concentrate on mastering those first. Where there are differences, use the contrast to help you recall the way the L2 works. These aspects will need more practice.
- **Learn formulaic language** and use it as often as possible. This gets you "feeling" as though you can speak the language and will help fill many awkward gaps in conversations. E.g. *Don't mention it; it's a lovely day today; how are you today? Thank you very much.*
- **Learn and use compensatory tricks** for when you don't understand or the language is moving too quickly for you. E.g. *I'm sorry, I don't understand; please speak more slowly; could you please repeat that?*
- **Learn certain words and phrases to help keep a conversation moving along.** E.g. *I suppose so; do you think so; oh well; that's true.*
- **Take some risks, don't be afraid to make mistakes** – learn to guess at meaning; learn to tolerate not understanding all the time (it doesn't mean you are not learning anything!); learn to negotiate uncertainty, e.g. *Do you mean...? Pardon? That's not clear.*
- **Be creative with the L2** – have a go at saying/writing something and then learn from the feedback.
- **Take every opportunity to use the L2 anywhere, anytime:** recite car number plates to practise numbers and the alphabet; on long car drives, you can say *"That is a...."*
- Use strategies that **exercise both sides of the brain** – the big picture and the details.
- **Practise the same "slice" of language in all four skills (listening, reading, speaking & writing)** to engage that "slice" in long term memory; otherwise it will stay in short term memory for only about 3 days.
- **Learn together with classmates** - not always alone