

UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALA DE HENARES

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE NICARAGUA
UNAN-LEON**

MASTER DEGREE IN ENGLISH TEACHING METHODOLOGY

**ENHANCING LEARNING STRATEGIES:
TWO INTERVENTION STUDIES**

TUTOR

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by

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Managua, July 2004

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are deeply grateful:

To the Almighty God who accompanied us in every moment of our studies

To our tutor and adviser Manuel Megias for his unconditional help and support in the accomplishment of this subject.

To Fernanco Cerezal not only for his encouragement but also for giving us the opportunity to join the selective group of participants of this master degree Program.

To our lovely professor Dominic Cogan, who initiated us in post graduate studies.

To Unan - León for its support, all the institutions that were involved in making possible this project particularly to the students who were participants of this research.

Finally, to our families for their unconditional support.

I am particularly grateful to one of my best English teacher, Dominic Cogan, for encouraging and supporting me to take this Master Degree.

I am also thankful to my colleagues specially to Msc Wilman Garcia, for his support on this project.

Finally my thanks go to Unan Managua authorities, particularly to the Dean Alejandro genet, and the vice- Dean Alina Gusto, for their support on this work

Daysi

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research is intended to analyze in a general way what strategies our students are using for their language learning. At the same time, it presents a study about the application and follow-up of some strategies in the classroom.

The main objective of this work is to show to which extent the use of strategies by learners in the classroom increases the effectiveness of learning a foreign language. It has been widely proved that when some students use their own strategies to learn, they are more successful than those who do not know how to use them.

Based on this context, we have designed a plan to apply some strategies to train students to use them in the classroom and outside it, to become better learners and more independent while using and learning the language. We have started the research with the belief that the use of strategies can facilitate a task and help us, teachers, to get better language learning results.

In our experience as teachers we have met students who seem unable to manage the learning of a language, and that makes us wonder why some people are unable or find it difficult to learn a language while others seem not to have such difficulties in doing the same thing. That is why we decided to train students in learning how to learn and becoming more independent and self-sufficient.

One of the biggest weaknesses of many language students is their dependence and reliance on the teacher. A student may be bright and eager; however it is often very easy for them to become over-dependent on the teacher. Many students feel content to have their learning controlled step by step by the teacher and feel threatened or stressed when faced with activities which challenge them and demand greater effort and initiative. However this is not a healthy situation for learners. If language learners wish to succeed, they must take a more active role throughout every step of their progress with their L2. It is very important for students to take control of their own learning so that they will be prepared to deal with the challenges that they will face communicating using L2 in real life. Learner independence means that learners can set goals and objectives, choose the most suitable

methods to achieve them, monitor their progress and evaluate the results. For students to become independent autonomous learners, they require a high degree of motivation, interest and confidence in their ability,

Students are probably unaware of many learning strategies that they use. For example, cognitive strategies such as translating or memorizing come naturally to students and they automatically use them without thinking. However, students are often more conscious of strategies like time management (metacognitive) and consulting with native speakers (social/affective). Learning strategies empower students, helping them to solve problems on their own and improving the way they learn. Therefore they are essential if students wish to continue improving in the future and become independent learners. Nobody can reach a high level of fluency if they rely on the teacher for everything. Students have to be able to think and work for themselves. In real-life situations, people are forced to think on the spot and will not be able to fall back on their teacher forever. This is where learning strategies come into play. People solve problems and become efficient learners and communicators through the use of these processes and strategies. I think one of the biggest faults in traditional teaching methods is that students are too often spoon-fed and are not obliged to think for themselves.

We, as students, remember that if we were told not to do something by our teachers, we did not do it. We became completely tied to what the teacher said. We were not independent at all, and we did not want to be independent. The necessity of research and more knowledge was felt when we had to face teaching. At that moment self-study showed up as means of giving us the tools we lack when we needed them, but it was not an easy task to do. It was something new for us and we were not familiar to it.

This is why the idea of getting ways to facilitate the process of learning came to our heads. And also to make students take a more active role in the learning process. As we grew up professionally we realized how important it is using methods and techniques to facilitate the learning process. It was when we had the opportunity to learn about the use and application of learning strategies that we immediately thought of using them in our classroom to make learning easier and more interesting.

Learning strategies play a vital role in this pursuit for learner autonomy. Learning strategies are good indicators of how learners approach tasks or problems they face during the process of learning

a new language. They give teachers an idea of how their students assess situations, plan, select appropriate skills so that they can understand, learn or remember new information. Developing metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies can help the learner build up learner independence inside and outside the classroom.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze the influence of the use of strategies in the teaching-learning process for a higher level of language proficiency in the first year of English Major at UNAN- Managua

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To identify what strategies the sample students use when learning English.
2. To determine the influence of learning strategies training to develop language proficiency in listening and speaking skills in the classroom of the first year.
3. To analyze the students' perceptions about the effectiveness of the learning strategies and their influence on the English learning process.
4. To contribute to the improvement of ELT at UCA and UNAN universities by providing data that could be used by English teaching Staff and students.

The research will be organized in the following way:

In the first chapter of the work strategies will be defined and taxonomy established in order to situate the reader within the context of the investigation. Then, some research on the same area will be described to illustrate to what extend this type of work has been developed during the last two decades. A classification of the type of studies carried out, paying special attention to listening and speaking strategies studies and their findings will also be commented. Finally a section will be devoted to whether strategies should be consciously undertaken or not on the part of students and teachers in the language classrooms.

The second part of the work will include the first interventionist study carried out with a group of first year students at the Language Institute of the Central American University in Managua (study A).

The third part will deal with a second interventionist study developed with a group of first year students of the English Major at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, UNAN Managua (study B)

The final part of the work will include some recommendations for the teaching practice taking into account the results and conclusions of either study.

It has been decided to present to separate studies for following reasons:

Firstly, there are two institutions involved, second the number and type of students is different in each group, thirdly, methodology, though quite similar, has focused on and underlined slightly different aspects; fourthly, results from one study can help support results on the other. The strategies used were almost the same, but some changes were made because of the context in which they were used and the students who used them.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Learning strategies definition

Generally speaking, strategies are techniques or procedures used to fulfill a specific task, for example when somebody cooks a meal, he or she needs to follow a procedure to achieve what he or she wants to do. Some people are successful while others are not. Being successful depends on how well and the variety of strategies used.

Strategies are mental processes that people develop to solve specific problems when they appear. They are a way of thinking. Research shows that the use of well-developed strategies makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful learners. These strategies, designed by the user or learned from others, are used to solve problems or make a task easier in different contexts of our life. Success or failure sometimes depends on whether strategies used to carry out a task are effective or not.

The etymology of the word strategy comes from the ancient Greek term *strategia*, which means general ship or the art of war. It has been related to military settings since this concept implies planning, competition, conscious action, toward achievement of an objective (Oxford 1990, 7) and has recently come to school, universities and colleges to help learners achieve their learning to work better. Learning strategies have been defined in many different ways. Here we provide only a few examples to illustrate these different viewpoints:

In the search to develop and refine effective practice in second language learning and teaching, attention has been focused in recent years not just on how best to teach and support learners, but also on how learners learn. When it comes to learning a second language the strategies learners use spontaneously to promote their language learning can make the difference between successful and unsuccessful language learning. Successful strategies are the “strategies employed by people known to be good at L2 learning” (Cook, 1991).

According to Wenden (1987),

... in the literature, strategies have been referred to as techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies, problem solving procedures. These multiple designations point to the elusive nature of the term.

How, then, to understand and define learner strategies?

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) exploit theories from cognitive psychology describing strategies as processes whereby knowledge taken in and stored in short- and long-term memory, is reorganized and automatised.). For Chamot (1987: 71) strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information.

Other applied linguists define learning strategies in different ways:

Learning strategies are the behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding' process. (Weinstein and Mayer 1986)

Learner strategies refers to language learning behaviors learners actually engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language ... what they know about the strategies they use ... what they know about aspects of their language learning other than the strategies they use. (Wenden 1987: 6)

Second language learner strategies encompass both second language learning and second language use strategies. Taken together they constitute the steps or actions consciously selected by learners either for the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both. (Cohen 1998:5)

Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier faster more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. (Oxford 1990: 8)

McDonough (1995:2-6) discusses the often overlapping uses of the terms strategies, skills, and processes, pointing out that “strategy” has at least four senses guiding principles, heuristic estimation, compensation mechanism, and plan for action. Furthermore, skills, process and strategy may be co-terminus with various kinds of cognitive mechanism, some of which are automatic and not available for conscious manipulation or inspection, and some of which are.

As seen above, a unique definition of learning strategies has been impossible to articulate. Similarly occurs with their taxonomy. Learning strategies have been categorized in different ways. We provide here four different ways to articulate them though other classification can also be found. We have decided not to include communication strategies as some theorists believe that the use of this type of plans does not help learners learn.

2.2 Learning strategies taxonomy

An early stimulus to the investigation of strategies for second language learning was the programmatic work of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) describing strategies which could discriminate between good and poor learner, and which could be recommended as good practice for learning.

Tarone (1977) drew an often quoted distinction between communication, learning, and production strategies, on the basis of the purpose of the strategic behaviour -repairing or forestalling communication breakdown, expanding language knowledge or exercising receptive or productive skills.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) group learning strategies into the following categories¹

¹ See annex 1 for a more detailed description of categories.

- metacognitive strategies: the strategies used to make decisions on the learning, to organise and manage it;
- cognitive strategies: strategies used directly to process the information being handled;
- social/affective strategies: strategies having to do with the learner and the learner's attitude to the target language, culture and speakers.

Perhaps one of the most transcendental contributions to learning strategies has been the work of Rebeca Oxford (1990) which formed the basis of the most comprehensive questionnaire, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), and divide strategies into two major groups: *direct* and *indirect*².

Direct strategies are the ones that directly involve the target language. They imply mental processing of the language and are subdivided in *memory*, *cognitive*, and *compensation* strategies. Within the first group, memory strategies have a specific function, helping students store and retrieve new information. Cognitive strategies enable learners to understand and produce new language by many different means. Compensation strategies allow learners to use the language despite their often large gaps in knowledge.

Indirect strategies are applicable in all language learning situations and are divided in *metacognitive*, *affective* and *social* strategies. These two groups are interrelated and support each other. Metacognitive strategies provide the learners a way to coordinate their own learning. They are very important for successful language learning because learners have to arrange, and plan their language learning in an efficient and effective way. According to Anna Uhl et al (1999), *metacognitive* strategies include four processes or steps in the language learning which are planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating. These processes are not sequential but maybe used as necessary depending on the demands on the task and the interaction between the task and the learning. Teachers and learners use some

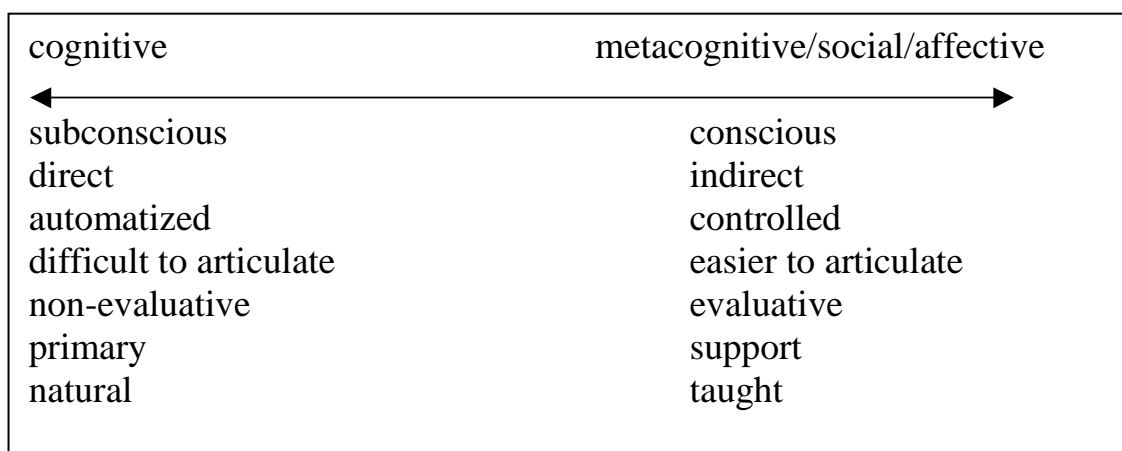
² See annex 2 for a more detailed description of categories.

of these processes in their every day classes without being conscious of what they are doing.

Affective strategies have to do with emotions, attitudes, motivation and values. Affective strategies include three main groups, *lowering your anxiety*, *encourage yourself* and *taking your emotional temperature*. The affective part of the language learning influences language learning success or failure. Successful language learners are often the ones who control their emotional attitudes about learning. On the other hand, negative feelings can stop or affect the learning process.

Finally, *social strategies* are also quite important in learning a language because language deals with communication in all levels. Rebeca Oxford has divided them in three groups: asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with other.

Ernesto Macaro in his book *Learning Strategies in Foreign and Second Language Classrooms* (2001) provides an excellent sequence of how to make university students aware of the type of learning strategies they and others use, and offers a classification based on the idea of a continuum. E. Macaro adopts this approach for two reasons. First, for him, there is considerable overlap between cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This overlap is usually brought about by the situation in which the strategy is taking place. Second, adopting the approach of only referring to them as cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective, deprives of alternative ways of representing these strategies. Macaro opts for a continuum of subconscious (or 'less conscious') and direct strategies at one end and conscious and indirect strategies at the other because a clear dividing line between what is conscious and what is subconscious is not easy to identify.



Strategies at one end tend to be deployed in direct relationship to the learning task, usually in immediate response to teaching instructions or to written or spoken text. Those at the other end tend to be deployed in preparation for, or subsequent to, a learning task or set of tasks, with the learner more in control of their learning. In this sense they are more consciously pro-active. Because they are more pro-active, they may well include some element of evaluation of the effectiveness of a number of more direct strategies being used. When asked, learners usually find these more indirect strategies easier to articulate than direct strategies.

Finally, in her book, *Teaching Learners How to Learn*, Vee Harris presents a learning strategies typology based on the four language macro skills. A first section of cognitive strategies related to listening, reading, speaking and writing and a second section of metacognitive strategies including monitoring, planning and study skills.

2. 3 Research on learning strategies in second language acquisition

Fortunately, studies on strategies have increased considerably over the last two decades. Chamot et al. (1999) identify the following research areas:

1. Studies of characteristics of the good language learner
2. Development and application of measures to strategies use
3. Studies of Strategies used during language tasks
4. Studies comparing more effective and less effective learners
5. Longitudinal studies of the development of strategies use
6. Intervention studies of Learning Strategies instruction
7. Vocabulary Strategies instruction studies
8. Learning strategies instruction studies
9. Reading strategies instruction studies
10. Speaking and writing strategies instruction studies
11. Content-based strategies instructions studies:

For Macaro (2001), instead, studies in learner strategies fall into two basic types. The first are *descriptive studies* and they try to define:

1. The features of a good language learner;
2. The total number of strategies that learners (or groups of learners) use;
3. Comparisons of strategies use between one group of learners and another group of learners

The second is a series of *intervention studies* which have attempted to discover whether it is possible to bring about change in strategy use in learners through, in most cases, a process of learner training by the teacher or by researchers. The underlying aim with this type of study is that change in strategy use will bring about improved language competences which is the main objective of our research.

Among the studies of good language learners Macaro describes with some details the work carried out by Naiman et al. (1996). In this study good language learners attributed their language learning success to an active approach to tasks, a treatment of language as a

system and as a means of communication, a management of the effective demands of language learning, and monitoring their performance.

A second study described by Macaro was carried out by O'Malley and Chamot (1990, see above). Although their prime concern was to arrive at a taxonomy, they too discovered that the most successful learners seemed to correlate with those who used metacognitive strategies. The metacognitive strategies identified by O'Malley and Chamot can be seen in annex 1. In addition, successful learners used social/affective strategies to reduce their anxiety in order to make themselves feel able to do the learning task.

The intervention studies Macaro includes have either measured a change in the use of strategies, measured a change in language competence or both. One of the studies mentioned belongs to Faerch and Kasper (1986). In this study -the training was for learners' interaction strategies- the findings were the following:

- Middle proficiency level learners made considerable progress in using interaction strategies.
- Low and high proficiency learners made less progress..
- The general attitude in the class towards errors and risk-taking had changed. More learners accepted the need to make an attempt even if they did not know the right word.

Perhaps one of the most successful studies of training interaction strategies, and one which use a control group mentioned by Macaro, was that of Dadour and Robbins (1996). After three months the control group had made significant improvements, especially in fluency, range of vocabulary and grammar. Interestingly, the effect of the training seemed to permeate all types of strategy use, not only interaction strategies.

In the following section we will analyse briefly a few examples of the literature concerning listening and speaking strategies as these have been the strategies considered more important and more difficult to acquire by the subjects of our investigation.

2.4 Research on teaching listening and speaking strategies

As stated in the introduction to our work, one of the main objectives of our research is attempting to improve our students' use of listening and speaking strategies. It is not only because we consider listening and speaking the most difficult skills to manipulate in real communication but also because our students have stated so through the answers to the questionnaire³. In this section we include studies concerning listening and speaking strategies of two types: those which have not shown clear results and other more optimistic studies which recommend including learning strategies "education" in the ELF classroom.

2.4.1 Research on listening strategies

Firstly, concerning listening comprehension, we will refer to O'Malley et al (1985). In their study, one of the tasks was to listen to and view a video and then answer comprehension questions. Students in the intervention group were trained to use *selective attention*, *take notes*, and *cooperate with a classmate* to review notes and listening. Results showed that strategy training had been helpful only for students who found the videos personally interesting.

Rubin et al. (1988) trained a group of high school Spanish students while listening and viewing another video. Results were compared to another group (control group) who did not have strategy instruction. The experiment didn't work as expected and, according to Chamot et al (1990), the main results of the experience was the necessity for the teachers to design their own learning strategy lessons and teach students to use strategies for tasks that cannot be accomplished otherwise.

Ross and Rost (1991) used a Japanese group of learners studying English. The result of the research (also viewing a video and answering questions) showed that less proficient

³ This questionnaire can be seen in annex 3.

students could successfully learn to use the same questioning strategies that were used by more proficient students to increase listening comprehension. Another study of this type (Tompson and Rubin, 1996) was carried out with students of Russian. One class was taught metacognitive and cognitive strategies and the other class was not. Students who were taught strategies showed a much better control of the comprehension post-test than the control group.

A final research within the Lingua project, reported by Macaro (2001), is carried out by Mary Haynes, one of the teachers involved project. After using the instructions as a listening comprehension exercise, she found that not only did the learners understand better what they had to do but they also began to interact with her more in order to ensure that they had understood.

2.4.2 Research on speaking strategies

Speaking strategies have also been largely researched and, according to FL students, it is also a difficult skill to master. The following are some studies carried out to improve students' speaking strategies performing different tasks. From quite controlled on the part of the speaker to freer practice speaking activities.

In the first study, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), the experimental group was taught *organizational planning* for their oral reports and techniques for *cooperating* with classmates to elicit feedback. It seems clear that the students in experimental groups were significantly more comprehensible and organized in their reports than students in the control group. Time devoted to organize their oral speech had been carefully divided and steps thoughtfully sequenced.

Chamot et al. (1999) report an experimental studio with college-level EFL Egyptian students (Dadour & Robins, 1996), which resulted in students' understanding the value of strategies instruction and their desire to learn more strategies for speaking. In contrast,

Cohen et al. (1990) suggests that some students were able to acquire effective learning strategies without instruction while other students required systematic instruction and practice with learning strategies in order to learn the use of them effectively.

Concerning interaction strategies (communication strategies⁴ and reception strategies) Faerch and Kasper (1986:189) reported that middle proficiency level learners made considerable progress in using interaction strategies, and that more learners accepted the need to make an attempt even if they did not know the right word.

2.5 Learning strategies and learner training

The concept of learner training is wide-ranging, but is essentially concerned with helping learners to develop greater awareness and expertise in the following three areas: *the language learners themselves*, including exploring learners attitudes, expectations and aims, increasing awareness of learning habits and style, identifying needs and wants; *the language itself* (language awareness) and *language learning* including the development of skills for evaluation learning and practice strategies, identifying preferred strategies, assessment performance and monitoring progress, organizing learning and learning materials and exploiting language resources (Sinclair & Ellis (1992: 212)

As language learning strategies are oriented toward the goal of communicative competence and they encourage its development, they should also encourage students to be more independent outside the classroom. Based on this assumption, Wenden (1991) provides exhaustive documentation on the desirability of autonomous learning and of practical steps for developing learner autonomy, mainly on the learners taking responsibility for their own learning and developing strategies for doing so.

⁴ As we have mentioned before, communication strategies are not dealt with within the framework of this research.

Johnstone (1993) in his study of Scottish primary school pupils learning modern languages notes that, whereas the class as a whole may identify fourteen to fifteen strategies, each individual pupil may only be using two or three. The question then arises as to whether the teacher should simply accept pupils' limitations as inevitable or whether to intervene and set about teaching them the strategies they are lacking.

Are learning strategies easy to teach or modify? As we have seen above, some applied linguistic theorists suggest that this can be done through strategy training, which is an essential part of language education and helps guide learners become more conscious of strategy use. Strategy training is most effective when students learn why and when specific strategies are important, how to use these strategies and how to transfer them to new situations. Language learning strategies are flexible, that is they are not always found in predictable sequence or precise patterns; that depends on the learning choice, combination and sequence of strategies. Effective learners in listening skill areas, for example, seem to use both a "top-down" and a "bottom-up" approach. In other words, they know how to identify the general gist of the text, to attack it at a global level, as well as how to perform word for word literal translation and analysis where necessary. Low attainers, on the other hand, seem to be limited to the "bottom-up" process. Not only is their range narrower but they also seem to use strategies less frequently and to have problems in knowing which strategies to use when.

The importance of making explicit how to learn is particularly relevant, given the current concern about the underachievement of many language learners. This is a highly complex area that goes well beyond the confines of the modern language classroom, and it is not within the scope of this research to discuss the issues. However, at the risk of stereotyping, if we try to identify some of the typical features that describe this particular group of underachieving language learners, we may come up with a list that includes problems like:

- poor organisational skills ;
- lack of forward planning;

- unwilling/unclear about how to revise;
- unwilling/unclear about how to memorise vocabulary set for learning homework;
- unwilling/unclear about how to check their work;
- tendency to make 'wild guesses' when reading rather than to think things through.

(adapted from V. Harris)

Learners have been described “unwilling/unclear” because it may not be as simple as a lack of motivation. For whatever reason, it may be that some boys lack a clear grasp of how to go about their learning and so enter a vicious circle whereby they feel that it is not even worth trying and therefore make even less progress. Graham and Rees (1995) suggest that:

If pupils are helped to perceive a link between the strategies employed and the resulting outcomes, however their sense of control over their own learning could be heightened and a powerful source of motivation harnessed.

Should language teachers develop specific skills, offering pupils insights into the learning process and how best they as individuals learn? Does this fact allow language learners to take a more equal role in their own education and to develop as confident, independent learners? Research has proved, to a certain extent, that strategy training can equip learners with tools that they will be able to use long after they leave school. Nunan, after concluding an action research study at the University of Hong Kong (1996) supports convincingly the idea that language classrooms should have a dual focus, not only teaching language content but also on developing learning processes as well.

There are many factors that affect the choice of strategy; for example degrees of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, sex, nationality, general learning style, personal traits, motivation, level and purpose for learning the language. Oxford (1990) for example, reports a study comparing learning strategies used by monolingual and multilingual adults. Multilinguals did not appear to be overall superior in learning ability, but were more flexible and had better ability to adjust their strategies to

task requirements. These variables constrain the amount of and variety of strategy use, and crucially the success of particular strategies in particular circumstances.

However, in our opinion, even at university level, learning these strategies continue to be an important element of the language learning process. Whatever the language or the level, the point is that we cannot assume that learners already have (or will acquire) strategies automatically. Language strategies are used because there is a problem to solve, an objective to meet or a goal to attain. Cognitive strategies are not easy to observe as many of them deal with mental process or cognitive functions (unconscious processes) whilst metacognitive strategies are easier to observe as they include conscious processes as planning, evaluating and arranging one's own language. The evidence is complex, but there seems to be clear suggestion from research that some strategies may be easier than others and hence acquired earlier. These are the strategies used by low attainers and tend to be at a fairly simple level. It appears that these learners fail to move on to develop the more complex strategies used by the more successful language learners.

2.6 Methods for investigating language learning and language use strategies

Researchers have developed a number of ways of obtaining information about strategic behaviour, and standards of research have developed as experience with different kinds of data and methods have been gained. Cohen (1987) discussed the shortcoming of a pure observational approach and develops the advantages of verbal report, distinguishing between introspection and retrospection. Verbal reporting methods, usually referred to as “protocol analysis” or “think aloud” have, however, gained considerably in power, sophistication and popularity as experience with his use has increased, and methods of countering their disadvantages have been developed. Ericsson and Simon (1987, 1993) presented careful arguments for this method and this kind of data to be considered valuable and valid, under strict data-gathering conditions, refusing earlier criticism within psychology raised by Nisbett and Wilson (1977). Poulisse et al.(1987) noted that retrospective verbal reporting methods nearly doubled the number of identifications of use

of compensatory strategies over the number identified by other means such as discourse analysis, taking account also of the instances where verbal reporting disconfirmed identifications. Cohen and Scott (1996:89-105) and Cohen (1998: Chapter three) analyse the procedures, advantages and disadvantages of six methods of doing research on strategies:

- Oral interviews and written questionnaires (for example, Carrel, 1989; Oxford, 1990)
- Observation (as in O'Malley et al. 1985)
- Verbal report (as in Anderson & Vandefgrift 1996; Block, 1986)
- Diaries and Dialogue journals (Oxford, 1996)
- Recollections studies (Poulisse et al., 1987)
- Computer tracking (Baily in Oxford, 1996).

None of these methods is without problems, and there is always a danger that method predetermines the kind of results obtained. Since language learning strategies are generally internal or mentalistic processes, certain research approaches may fail to provide adequate data on learner's strategy use. Thus, designing a study that assess strategy use with some accuracy is a challenge. In the body of research on language learning strategies, researchers have used numerous assessment methods to determine patterns of strategy use among learners.

For each assessment method, there are a number of issues that the individual doing the research must consider, whether they are trained researchers or teachers without much or any research training. First, not all assessment methods are suitable for studying every type of language learning strategy, and differences in assessment according to the language skill areas being studied are an added consideration. Furthermore, each method of assessment has a certain number of options which can be manipulated by the researcher depending on the aim of the study. The following and final section of this chapter is devoted to briefly describe the methods used in our own research, mentioning some advantages and disadvantages of each one.

2.7 Methods for investigating and teaching language strategies in the present research

The methods or instruments used in the present investigation are questionnaires, diaries and teacher's notes based on observation.

2.7.1 Diaries

Since diaries are learner-generated and usually unstructured, the entries may cover a wide range of themes and issues. For example, the entries may include learners' written verbal report of the cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies that they use daily in their language learning. In their diaries learners can describe what they usually do when they do not understand the teacher's instructions or could describe a specific incident in that day's class session during which they requested clarification of the teacher's instructions.

One of the main disadvantages of diaries is that the data obtained may not support or suggest any hypotheses regarding learning strategies. Another disadvantage is that, the typically small number of subjects in diary studies restricts the ability of researchers to generalize the findings to all language learners (Bailey, 1991, Nunan, 1992)

However, diaries can be useful research tools. The aim of most diary studies is not to produce rigorous quantitative results which can be generalised to language learners as a whole; instead, diaries have been used to find out what is significant to the learners, a very important area of concern now that much research is turning away from teaching to learners and learner variables (Bailey, 1991). Furthermore, much of the data that are collected in a diary may be inaccessible through other research techniques (Nunan, 1992). In addition, diary writing may be of benefit to the students themselves because regular writing can help them become more aware of their strategies. A final advantage of diaries is that they can be kept anywhere by anyone.

2.7.2 Observation (teacher's notes)

Concerning observation (teacher's notes), a major challenge in attempting to apply observational techniques is that many of the language use and language use strategies cannot be observed since they are mentalistic and not behavioristic. In planning an observational study, the researcher needs to consider the frequency and duration of observations, and how the observational data are collected, tabulated, and analyzed. The key drawback of the observational method is its inability to produce descriptions of internal or mentalistic strategies. An observational study may yield a description of a learner's use of strategies, but this description may reflect a largely incomplete view of the learner's actual strategy use.

Nevertheless, observational methods may also have benefits –when used to describe learning strategies that are observable. In such instances, the data obtained are likely to be uniform, assuming the researcher uses the same terms to describe the same phenomena. Second, external observational records may help to lend a more impartial, objective perspective to the research study, rather than having the study rely solely on data provided by learners. In fact, learners may sometimes alter strategy descriptions according to what they think are socially acceptable answers.

2.7.3 Questionnaires

Written questionnaires elicit learners' responses to a set of questions or probes. It requires the researcher to make choices regarding question format and research procedures. Questions can range from those that ask for yes-no responses or indications of frequency (e.g. "never", "seldom", "sometimes", "often", and "always") to less structured questions asking respondents to describe or discuss language learning strategy behaviour in detail. In structured questionnaires the researcher has a specific set of questions that are to be answered by the respondent in a set order. In this case the researcher has complete control over the questioning, and the respondent usually does not have an opportunity to elaborate on the answers. The data obtained from this type of questionnaire are uniformly organised

for all respondents and lend themselves to statistical analysis. An example of a structured language strategy questionnaire survey is Oxford' *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)*, Oxford, (1990), already mentioned in 2.3.

Written questionnaires are usually administered to large groups of learners and/or to groups at various sites. A major benefit of large-scale surveys is the potential for generating and testing hypothesis because of the large number of respondents. On the other hand, a given survey may not transfer well from one setting to another, either because there are significant differences in the way that the questionnaire is administered or because the respondents in the different sites differ in how they interpret the items. This could be especially true if the measure is translated and used in different cultures around the world (see Oxford, 1996).

One of the main problems with written questionnaires as a whole is that much of the data constitutes self-report or the learners' generalized statements about their strategy use. Once learners move away from instances of language learning or language use behaviour, they may also tend to become less accurate about their actual strategy use behaviour (Cohen, 1987). Learners may overestimate or underestimate the frequency of use of certain strategies. They may also be unaware of when they are using a given strategy, and even more importantly, how they are using it.

3. INTERVENTION STUDY A (UCA-MANAGUA)

3.0 Introduction: Why two intervention studies

Even though students learn English as a foreign Language in many different places in Nicaragua, the way they learn it and how it is taught depends mainly on the institution where they chose for this purpose. And the objectives they have for learning the language: to become a teacher, to travel, to understand movies, because it is the fashion, for jobs reasons, etc.

The universities involved in this research study differ in the kind of English teaching program they offer to students. While UNAN- Managua offers only an ELT program and ESP courses, UCA offers English courses for a wider range of purposes such as an ELT program, ESP courses and English as a foreign language courses. Thus, researchers decided to carry out two intervention studies in these two different contexts in order to present a more representative picture of the kind of learning strategies English students use since these two universities have the highest population of English students in Nicaragua. Researchers also thought that it would be important to study learning strategy use in these two contexts as they have different population of students who differ mainly in terms of socio-economic status, learning conditions and the kind of curriculum. We thought that, it was important to take into account this aspect for the purpose of comparing results gathered in these two contexts.

The Strategies used by the researchers in each experimental group were almost the same, but some changes were made because of the context in which they were used and the students who used them.

3.1 Methodological design

For this research, two groups of English students were required: the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group received the language learning strategy training; the control group which didn't receive any training was compared to the experimental one after the strategy training program.

Both, the experimental and control groups were attending first level English courses at the Language Institute of the Central American University in Managua. The researcher chose the experimental group among the ones she teaches regularly because she wanted to see how strategy worked with “false beginners” . The researcher taught the experimental group while the control group was taught by someone else in order to avoid influencing it.

3.1.1 Methodology

The methodology adopted in this language learning strategy program included the following aspects considered as relevant:

- Determination of the language learning needs and the time available
- Selection of strategies in order to fulfill students needs
- Level of motivation
- Preparation of material and strategies
- Implementation of training
- Evaluation of strategies

In order to quantify the learners' needs and the level of motivation, a pre-test in the form of a survey was administrated to the control and experimental groups, to determine which strategies students had already been using and the level of motivation they had. Then, the previously designed strategy program was implemented. The training program was aimed at implementing strategies use in the classroom. Some pre-designed scaffolding materials

were used to reinforce the strategies being practiced. Finally, a post-test survey was administered to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy training program.

3.1.2 Population and sample

Population

Students participating in this strategy training program were taking the English Free courses at the Language Institute of Central American University, (UCA). These students are interested in learning English; the classes are expensive for Nicaraguans and not everybody can afford them, so enrollment is low.

Classes range from 8 to 22 students. Classrooms are small and basic equipments such as language laboratory, cassettes, CDs and videos, are available to make learning more attractive and interesting.

In order to pass each course students have to obtain an average of 80% in a series of evaluation tests that assess proficiency and progress of the four language skills. There are no make-up tests. If a student fails, he or she has to take the course again. The courses last for six weeks.

First Level students at Central American University come from private and public high schools where they have the opportunity to study English, but contents vary considerably. In private high schools, the four language skills are taught and modern textbooks are employed, whilst in public schools, English is taught without all basic material. Students also come from other language institutes and schools; there are students who have traveled and have some knowledge of the English language but want to improve.

Sample

The students who participated in the language training program were first level English students at the language Institute of the Central American University in Managua. This course was run in the afternoon. Classes were taught four times a week, for 90 minutes. The language learning strategy program lasted six-week; that means 50 hours of class. No significant changes were made in the class syllabus.

The experimental group was made of 8 students: 5 teenagers and 3 young adults aged between 21 and 30. There were 5 women and 3 men in this group. The control group was made of 9 students: 6 women and 3 men aged between 18 and 35.

3.1.3 Data collection and instruments

The instruments used in the data collection process were a student questionnaire, student diaries and teacher notes. As mentioned previously in 2.7 these tools had proved to be effective as data collection instruments, in fact they were used to elicit information before, during and after the training program.

Student Questionnaire (see 2.7.3)

The questionnaire was intended to find out the level of motivation of students, the degrees of difficulties and importance attributed to the language skills and the role of teacher personality in language learning. The final part of this questionnaire was prepared in order to find out what strategies students had been using before the strategy training program. To get the final version of this questionnaire a first draft was made and piloted with a group of students.

This questionnaire was administrated as a pre and post-test survey in order to record information before the language training program and to verify if changes were made afterwards (see annex 3).

Scaffolding material

Scaffolding materials were used as supporting materials to reinforce strategy practice, i.e. questions to be answered, gaps to be filled or suggested activities to be done in or outside the class for recording the information about the strategy used. (See annex 4 for more examples). The example below tries to focus students' attention on specific information collected outside the classroom.

Example of a scaffolding page

Listening outside the class

Name: _____ Date: _____

What I listened to?

A video titled _____

A song by _____ titled _____

A TV program about _____

A conversation between _____ and _____

Other _____

Topic _____

What words or expressions did you learn?

Student diaries (see 2.7.1)

Student diaries were used by student to summarize classes, evaluate strategies used during the training program, to record their feelings and emotions and to monitor their learning: “Diaries or journals are forms of self-report which allow learners to record their thought,

feelings, achievements and programs as well as their impressions of teachers, fellow students and native speakers” (Oxford 1990: 198)

Teacher’s notes (see 2.7.2)

They were notes taken by the teacher about the development of the training program, students’ reactions to the strategy learning process implemented, and ideas on how to improve the training program.

Teacher’s observations were used to find out changes in students’ behavior while they were experimenting strategy use, to understand if changes were necessary, if practice was insufficient or if explanations were adequate for students to use the strategies in the class activities.

3.2 RESULT OF PRE-TEST SURVEY

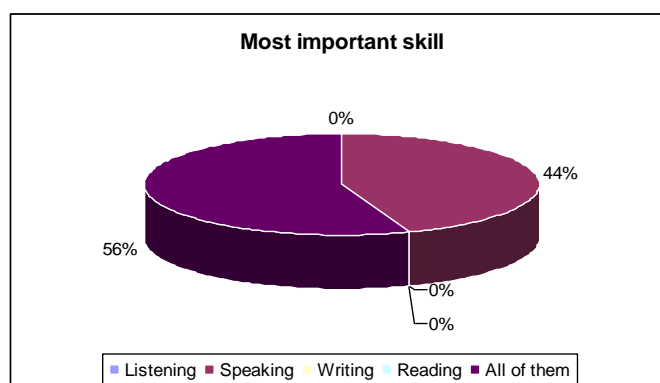
3.2.1 Experimental group

The first part of the questionnaire (see annex 3) was intended to find out how motivated students were; the second to provide information on which of the four skills they considered being more difficult. The third part gave information on which abilities or skills were considered the most relevant and the reasons for their choice. The fourth part of the questionnaire was dedicated to see how the teacher’s personality affects the learning process. The final part, as we said before, attempted to find out which strategies were more developed on the side of the students, and which ones they had given more attention during their previous language studies, without being aware of it. In this last part of the questionnaire they had to mention which were the most used strategies and the frequency of their usage in their learning process.

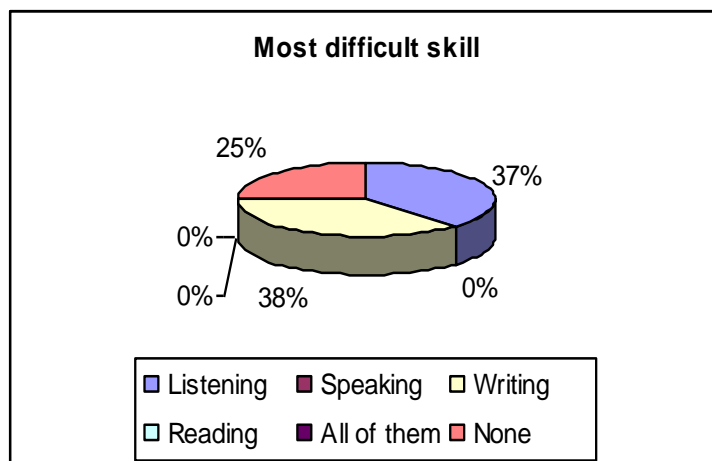
The first aspect to be considered in the questions was what kind of motivation they had. The result of the pre-test survey showed that 89% of the students studied English because they liked it, only 11% believed that it would be helpful for getting or improving job opportunities.

Since most of the students that took part of this training program were teenagers, they were not aware of the importance that learning English could have in getting a job, only part of the young adults realized that it would be helpful in facilitating job opportunities.

Concerning what students consider the most important skills, 44% of them thought that the most important one was speaking; according to them “speaking involved the other abilities”, “it is better to communicate with other people”, “it is important to communicate at work”. The remaining 56 % considered the four skills to be equally important. Students said: “I am interested in learning the four language skills”; “A language is not only spoken, but also listened”.



As for the most difficult skill to be learned, 37% of students considered listening to be the most difficult, but a similar percentage was obtained by writing (38%); the remaining 25% thought that none of the skills was difficult.



Listening implies several cognitive abilities; among them, students need to recognize the sounds produced but also to be familiar with the meaning of the words spoken to understand the message the speaker wants to convey. As students normally practice listening skills listening to their teacher, they get familiar with the language used in class by the teacher; on the other hand, they get confused when listening to native English speakers or recorded materials.

The teacher's personality was mentioned as important in the language learning process; 77% of students said that the way a teacher motivates their students is the most important quality of a teacher: "teacher inspires me to learn more and more every day"; "the teacher has to make the class attractive"; "teacher's attitude results in students' interest in learning". The idea that teacher is the one who makes students learn still prevails in most of the institutions in Nicaragua. Students expect the teacher to do what it is necessary for them to learn the language and sometimes, because they pay for attending the course, they expect "to learn" as a kind of reward.

When questioned orally by the teacher about the strategies they used, students mentioned:

- Repeating new words and associated with already known vocabulary. (45%)
- Practicing with someone else (21%)

- Reviewing (11%)
- No strategy use (22%)

Later on, when students were given a list of strategies they listed a variety of them, though it must be pointed out that there could be a difference between strategies reported using and actually using by students. Strategies that students said they used more often were *listening to music in English* (63%); the same percentage was obtained by *repeating new words or writing them many times*; another highly used strategy was *using a dictionary and reading books or magazines in English*. (See table 1 below with detailed percentage).

Table 1 Experimental group. Strategy use pre-test survey results			
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Always</i> %	<i>Sometimes</i> %	<i>Never</i> %
1. Using a dictionary	37.5	50	12.5
2. Reading books or magazines in English	12.5	62.5	25
3. Writing down unknown words in sentences	25	37.5	37.5
4. Reviewing English lessons frequently	25	75	0
5. Repeating or writing down new words several times	50	25	25
6. Summarizing lessons	12.5	50	37.5
7. Listening to music in English	62.5	37.5	0
8. Watching movies and TV programs in English	50	50	0
9. Watching videos oriented in class	0	37.5	62.5
10. Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people	12.5	75	12.5
11. Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people	12.5	75	12.5
12. Centering attention in listening exercises, and	75	25	0

avoiding any distraction			
13. Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it is general or specific and paying attention to it.	50	37.5	12.5
14. Working with classmates or in groups and helping each other	37.5	37.5	25
15. Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English	37.5	62.5	0
16. Predicting before listening activities	25	50	25
17. When you don't know how to say a word in a conversation, you:	0	12.5	87.5
a) don't say anything			
b) Use gestures	0	0	100
c) Use synonyms	0	12.5	87.5
d) Ask somebody how to say it	25	75	0
18. Listening to the news or other radio programs in English	0	50	50
19. Planning before an English speaking activity	62.5	37.5	0
20. Setting objectives in English learning	50	12.5	37.5
21. Inferring the meaning of words and ideas not explicitly stated	25	75	0
22. Writing an English language learning diary	0	0	100

3.3.2 Control group

According to the answers given to the questionnaire, the control group had similar characteristics: 55% said they were learning English because they liked it, 33% because of job's reasons and 12% because they wanted to travel. In the control group strategies reported as commonly used were watching videos and movies in English and working with a partner. Although this is a first level course, the amount of strategies used students

reported is considerable large as well as the frequency of their usage. For fully detailed information see tables and graphics in **annex n.5.2**.

3.4 Strategy Training

The strategy program was designed after having a clear picture of the strategies students already used. The main objective of the program was to train students to become more proficient in language learning. According to the pre-test survey results, listening was one of the most difficult ability and speaking one of the most important for students; for this reason, more emphasis was given to strategies used to improve listening and speaking, and to *memory*, *social*, *affective* and *compensation* strategies that support their development.

According to the groups' characteristics and the content of the syllabus, the following strategies were selected⁵:

⁵ This classification of learning strategies was taken from Rebecca Oxford

Table 2

Summary of the strategies applied in the strategy training program¹

<i>Group</i>	<i>Strategy Set</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
Memory	Creating mental linkages	Associating / elaborating Placing new words into a context
	Review	Reviewing well (structure reviewing)
Cognitive		Summarizing
Metacognitive	Centering your learning	Paying attention: selective and directive attention
	Arranging and planning your learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting goals and objectives • Planning for a language task (Using a dictionary) • Seeking practice opportunities
	Evaluating your learning	Self evaluating
Affective	Lowering your anxiety	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation Listening to songs in class
	Taking your emotional temperature	Writing a language learning diary

Social	Cooperating with others	Cooperating with peers
	Overcoming limitations in speaking	Getting help

In the following lines a brief description of the implementation of these strategies is given.

To practice **memory strategies** in this training program *associating/elaborating*, *placing new words into a context* and *reviewing well* strategies were used. In *associating/elaborating* students associated the vocabulary they needed to memorize for a specific activity to already known words to remember the new vocabulary. After this strategy was practiced once in the training students decided that it was much more difficult than the one they used before the training that was repeating or writing down words several times. For *placing new words into a context* a scaffolding page was given to students, words were placed according to the part of the speech the word was, and used in meaningful contexts. The new words were taken from the new vocabulary encountered in each class. (See some examples of scaffolding material in [annex n. 4](#)). The words chosen varied depending on individual's differences of the students. In the same category, *reviewing well*, some exercises were used by the teacher and done by students to review the content studied regularly, after every unit of class.

Among **cognitive strategies**, the one used in this training program was *summarizing*. Students were asked to write a summary of every English class. The summary included: topic of the lesson, grammar structure or function studied and examples students provided.

One of the **metacognitive** strategies used in this training program was *paying attention*; this strategy was used before listening activities, and a scaffolding page was prepared. It started by helping students taking their emotional temperature by asking about how they felt; then, there was a question to make students focus their attention on the listening activity, after that students were asked to predict about the listening exercise they were about to listen to. Questions continued to lead students to what they had to listen to for

understanding: overall meaning, certain items or a few details. Students also had to identify key words in the listening exercise. Paying attention strategies were used to guide students to concentrate and avoid any distractions. Also *listening to songs* was used to focus students' attention on specific information when listening.

Another metacognitive strategy used was *setting goals and objectives*. At the beginning of the language learning strategy program students mentioned their personal objectives for taking their English Language Course. Objectives were written on their notebooks to be checked eventually.

Planning for a language task was widely used before challenging speaking activities such as presentations, role-plays and scenarios. Interviews and asking questions required students planning on how to properly perform the speaking task. Planning involved describing the task, comparing what they already knew to accomplish the task and determining other elements necessary to undertake the task. Their learning dictionary was incorporated to allow students manage the vocabulary required for the speaking activities.

Students interviewed English speaking people to get information based on questions they had previously elaborated under the teacher supervision in *seeking practice opportunities*. *Listening to songs* was also used outside the classroom. Outside the class, aided by a scaffolding sheet, students listened to songs to measure how many words or expressions they were able to understand. Moreover, they reinforced dictionary use by looking up the meanings of the words or expressions heard. In addition, students tried to summarize the message the singer tried to convey.

In *self evaluation* students objectively assessed their learning, pointing out their weaknesses and strengths. For example they wrote: "I think I'm doing quite a good job, I do my homework although I don't hand it in on time, I practice, study but I'm a little lazy in using my dictionary. I prefer the teacher to write the meanings of words on the board..." Students

had some practice when evaluating their achievements, weaknesses and strong points in language learning.

Students used a special notebook for *writing a diary*. In the diary, they wrote a summary of lessons, which they considered quite useful: They wrote things like: “Today I learned some expressions such as: open my book, close my book. I also learned how to spell, colors, numbers...”; “Today we learned about how to make questions and answer them. The teacher gave us the idea and we made the questions...”

Furthermore, activities were commented and evaluated in the diary. Also, the evaluation of the language learning strategies was commented. For instance, when asked about memory strategies, and more exactly, mental association they said: “I used numbers and associated with some words similar to the number and it worked...”; “To memorize the spelling of ordinal numbers I used this strategy which helped me because they were being related to words similar in pronunciation and spelling...” (See annex n° 6 for more examples)

Among **affective strategies**, the ones implemented were *relaxation strategies*, which were used to lower the amount of stress students felt in the class. They also practiced *deep breathing* to avoid anxiety. These strategies were used before challenging speaking and listening tasks.

Feelings and emotions about the lessons and class environment were also expressed: “From today’s class nothing was difficult for me. I liked the methodology because we read, practiced and played games that helped us to develop ourselves. I suggest that you provide us with a complete list of vocabulary.”

Among the social strategies used, *working with peers* and *getting help* were implemented. In *working with peers* strategies, class activities required peer and group work every day.

Students had the responsibility to do their job consciously. To develop *getting help strategies* students were given a list of questions to be used when they needed some information from their classmates and teacher. For example, “How do you say...?”, “May I borrow your dictionary”, etc... The list was enlarged as context became more complex.

These strategies were repeatedly used in and outside class. All of them were explicitly explained in Spanish. Students practiced them for about 15-20 minutes; listening strategies took more time because the students needed to understand the scaffolding page. Moreover, they had to answer some questions before the listening activities and do the exercises required. Listening strategies were practiced about 2-3 times a week, but listening exercises in a class period were about 3. Peer work and asking for help strategies were practiced in class with a frequency of 3-5 times in an average class.

Seeking practice opportunities, placing words into a context and writing a diary were strategies also used outside the classroom. Seeking practice opportunities strategies were observed by the teacher only once, because she ran into an interview after class accidentally. Placing words into a context was done as homework.

3.4 Results of post-test survey

3.5.1 Experimental group

After the training program all students said that they thought their level of proficiency had improved considerably. Furthermore, students also mentioned that they had enjoyed many of the activities that had taken place in and outside the classroom during the training program. The ones they considered their favorites were games, role-plays, presentations, in and outside interviews because all of them involved class participation. Moreover, all of them also believed that doing homework helped them learn more vocabulary and thought that after the training it was much easier to communicate in English.

Concerning listening comprehension, 62.5% of them mentioned that when working in pairs their partners understood almost everything. When considering understanding a listening exercise, they said they understood considerably more than at the beginning of the course: 50% said they understood very much, 37.5% understood quite a lot, and 12.5% only a little.

In their opinion, using the dictionary, asking questions and their own interest in learning had helped them highly improve their proficiency. When answering about how they felt before presentation, 75% of them said that they felt more confident and relaxed; 62.5% of them said that they thought the skills they had developed further during the course were listening and speaking; 25% mentioned speaking and reading; 12.5% speaking.

Additionally, students showed some variation in the frequency of strategy use: according to the post-test survey, the one that showed a greater increase was *centering attention* in listening exercises; all of them said they always practiced it (see table 3 for more details). The second strategy that showed a considerably increase was *summarizing*: 87% of the students said they always did summaries after every lesson, whilst only 12.5 % said that they sometimes summarized the English lessons.

The strategies that followed were: *using a dictionary*, *reviewing* English lessons frequently, and *using relaxation* strategies. These strategies obtained 62.5 % each in the always column, using a dictionary scored 25% in the sometimes column and 12.5% in the never column. *Reviewing lessons* frequently got 37.5 % in the sometimes column, and the same score was obtained by *relaxation strategies*. Compared to the pre-test survey, this means that after the training program, students reviewed their lessons more frequently than they used to do before; they were also aware that some classroom situations had made them feel stressed, and that looking up words in a dictionary was an effective technique.

Listening to music in English outside the class showed a slight decrease (13%), this may be due to the fact that they devoted more time to this strategy inside the class. *Watching TV programs* in English remained exactly the same, because students were presented with the

opportunity to choose among listening to songs, videos and conversations and they chose the one they preferred.

Another strategy that increased was *peer working*; 50% of the students said they always practiced it, and 50% said they sometimes did it. This might be due to peer and group work which was regularly practiced in class activities. Exactly the same amount was obtained by *setting goals and objectives*; students got some practice in setting goals and objectives by doing this regularly during the training. Each student decided how to do this, for example, “my objectives today are, to practice the use of like”, “to memorize new words”

Writing words into a context showed some increase in the always and sometimes choice: 37.5 % said they always did it and 67.5 % said they did it sometimes. *Inferring* got exactly the same percentage which means also an increase in its use.

By implementing strategy use in the classroom, students had the opportunity to find out which strategies were more useful for them in a specific learning situation. Moreover, they were able to choose the ones they liked the most or facilitated their learning, devoting more time to practice them. In table 3 below, it can be observed that some strategies that were not part of the training program also showed a considerably increase. For example, 75 % of students said they always practiced *writing and repeating words*, and 25% said now they sometimes practiced it.

To sum up, the use and implementation of these strategies resulted in students’ change of attitude in the following aspects:

- Interaction among students improved.
- Students were more able to monitor their learning.
- They were able to evaluate their own progress.
- Controlling their emotions and fears resulted in a better performance.
- Asking for help was done when required.
- Reviewing extended not only to listening and speaking but also to reading and writing.

Table 3 Experimental group. Comparisons of strategy use in pre and post- test						
<i>Strategy</i>	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. Using a dictionary	38	62.5	50	25	12.5	12.5
2. Reading books or magazines in English	13	50	62.5	50	25	25
3. Writing down unknown words in sentences	25	37.5	37.5	62.5	37.5	0
4. Reviewing English lessons frequently	25	62.5	75	37.5	0	0
5. Repeating or writing down new words several times	50	75	25	25	25	0
6. Summarizing lessons	13	87.5	50	12.5	37.5	0
7. Listening to music in English	63	50	37.5	50	0	0
8. Watching movies and TV programs in English	50	50	50	50	0	0
9. Watching videos oriented in class	0	0	37.5	25	62.5	62.5
10. Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people	13	12.5	75	37.5	12.5	12.5
11. Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people	13	25	75	75	12.5	0
12. Centering attention in listening exercises, and avoiding any distraction	75	100	25	0	0	0
13. Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it's general or specific and paying attention to it.	50	37.5	37.5	50	12.5	12.5
14. Working with y classmates or in groups and helping each other	38	50	37.5	50	25	0
15. Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English	38	62.5	62.5	37.5	0	0
16. Predicting before listening activities	25	12.5	50	87.5	25	0
17. When you don't know how to say a word in a conversation you:	0	0	12.5	0	87.5	100

a) don't say anything						
b) Use gestures	0	0	0	0	100	100
c) Use synonyms	0	12.5	12.5	0	87.5	87.5
d) Ask somebody how to say it	25	37.5	75	62.5	0	0
18. Listening to the news or other radio programs in English	0	0	50	62.5	50	37.5
19. Planning before an English speaking activity	63	50	37.5	37.5	0	12.5
20. Setting objectives in learning English	50	50	12.5	50	37.5	0
21. Inferring what an activity is about by looking at the pictures or at an idea presented	25	37.5	75	62.5	0	0

This information can be seen graphically in annex n. 5.1

3.5.2 Control Group

As we said before, the control and experimental groups showed similar characteristics when they took their pre-test survey. Both of them said they used a variety of strategies. But after the training program, the two groups showed some marked differences. Just by studying these percentages of the post-test survey result in the control group (For a more detailed statistic description of this see annex 5.2-5.3) it was clearly seen that there were different opinions, feelings and understanding about the class processes and situations in the same classroom. Some students felt very relaxed while others could not get rid of their stress, and when considering the elements that helped them to learn more, the teacher was mentioned. Also everyone had his or her own opinion about sharing learning responsibilities, for instance, for these students it is the teacher who makes students learn. In addition, responsibility is not equally shared by the participants of the learning process. Students blame “time factor” for not doing their work.

In the control group, some students developed their own strategies as a result of every day class, they looked for ways to solve their learning problems and some were unable to do so; for that reason, they did not improve in the strategy use. They did what they could to learn

the language. Some succeeded in this process; some thought that the learning process was taking place at a very fast speed and were unable to keep up with it. Learning was a kind of competition where the strongest succeeded, but there were no opportunities for the weak ones. Students who succeeded in learning the language felt motivated while the ones that did not do so had a feeling of confusion and failure. Everything around them was too fast for them to be assimilated.

On the other hand, in the experimental group learning was a homogeneous process for all the students. Learning did not present very serious problems, because they asked for extra explanation when it was considered to be necessary. Furthermore, they were more motivated and willing to do in and outside class assignments. Students were involved in the class process as a unified group. They were not trying to beat one another, on the contrary, they helped one another to share information and collaborate with their classmates. Moreover, they believed that they could learn from their classmates, the teacher was not the only source for learning. Being the best student in class was not so important because the entire class could share the same honor. Asking for help was one of the tools they manipulated as required. The teacher did not have to assume what was understood and what was not, they were beginning to learn to be responsible for their own learning.

3.6 CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of language learning strategies in this course allowed students to get to know some strategies that were not in their repertoire before. Furthermore, these strategies in a way or another facilitated their learning and provided students with tools to become more independent. Moreover, some changes were observed in student's attitude toward learning the English language which resulted in improving their performance; their motivation rose considerable, they had the opportunity to approach a task in different ways that resulted in improving their proficiency.

Group and pair work became a rewarding experience where students learned from each other. The interaction among students themselves and teacher-students became more effective. With strategy use, we believe, students will not need to be told what to do to solve language problems, they will be able to analyze, make their own decisions, monitor themselves and perform. Learning became a rewarding experience for students because it provided more appealing elements which were incorporated to the learning process to make it more attractive. Controlling their emotions and fears resulted in a better learning atmosphere which allowed students to ask for help whenever they considered it was necessary. Moreover, motivation increased considerably which led students to have a more positive attitude to class work. Besides, learning became a more conscious process which permitted students to evaluate their own performance.

Although students did not like some of the strategies that were part of their training they had the opportunity to try, analyze and test their usefulness and continue using the ones they had before the training, the ones implemented in the training or create their own ones.

This strategy training program benefited not only students, but also the teacher who learned from the program because it was a enriching process which gave her the opportunity to improve professionally.

4. INTERVENTION STUDY B (UNAN-MANAGUA)

4.0 Introduction

This case study has consisted in implementing a strategy program aimed at improving students' strategy use. The strategy program was based on the result of a questionnaire administered to students before the program and finalized at finding out actual students' strategy use. This questionnaire contains (pre-test) some general questions and a choice of strategies use (see annex 10). The same questionnaire about strategy use was given again after the implementation of the training program in order to measure changes. It also included some questions to evaluate the strategy training in general (see annex 11). With the data obtained some conclusions and recommendations have been elaborated and these will appear at the end of this work.

4.1 Methodological Design

This study is the kind of action research, which usually requires two matching groups representative of the total population. One of the groups is the experimental group and the other is the control group. The chosen groups to be the experimental and the control one are the first year students taking the English Major at UNAN–Managua. Most students in these groups seem to be interested in learning English; others come to this major because they could not fulfill the requirements needed for the major they were interested in. The strategy-training program was administered to the experimental group during 8 weeks and the reason to apply this program in the first year was because most of these students come from public secondary schools where English is not considered an 'essential' subject for the students' academic instruction and not all language skills are developed. Therefore, their level of proficiency in English is considerably low, except for very few who have had the opportunity to take an English course on their own. The first year groups are usually large, they range from 30 to 40 students in a classroom.

4.1.1 Constructing the strategy training program

As we said before, the strategy program has been constructed upon the results of a questionnaire handed out to know the students' level of motivation to study English at the university, their opinion about the importance and difficulties of the four skills, the influence of the teacher's attitude on learning a language, and the type of learning strategies they had used to learn English.

Based on the information gathered about the questions mentioned above; a strategy training program was designed to be applied in the classroom. The training program incorporated some strategies which were intended to fulfill the students' needs to develop listening and speaking mainly. Some scaffolding material was also designed to check how much work students were doing until they got into the habit of practicing the given strategies. Scaffolding material in this study consisted of a series of learning activities designed to provide learners some kind of support to perform more independently in the classroom. They involved some kind of control of the language needed to carry out the different activities as well as the kind of strategies incorporated in every lesson.

This scaffolding material was gradually less controlled to facilitate learners' independence. At the end of the strategy training the same questionnaire about strategies given at the beginning was administered to check the effectiveness of the strategy program.

To verify the validity of the questionnaire to be applied before and after the strategy training to the experimental and control group, it was first piloted with another group of English students who had been studying for a semester at the university (pilot group). Moreover, the strategy training was also applied to this group. The purpose of doing this was to check the validity of the questions and also to try out the implementation of some strategies training in the classroom before carrying out the actual strategy training for this research study.

4.1.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study was composed of all the first year students of the English Major at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, UNAN Managua, Ruben Dario Campus, with a total amount of 180 students, in three different shifts (morning, afternoon and Saturday) with two groups in each shift. Their ages range from 17 to 20. They can be considered false beginners as they have some previous knowledge of English learnt at secondary school. The control group was selected according to similar characteristics to the experimental group.

The selected research sample which contains the necessary characteristics of the population for this study was the first level group A, from the morning shift. These students attend classes three times a week, for a total of 10 hours per week.

4.1.3 Instruments and data collection procedure

The instruments used to gather the information were a student questionnaire, a student diary and teacher self- evaluation notes.

Student questionnaire

It was decided to use a questionnaire as the main instrument to get data for this research because researchers have often used it for broad areas in strategy use. On the one hand, the questionnaire allows the researcher to include both less-structured and more-structured questions (see 2.7.3), and on the hand it is usually administered to large groups, as it is the case of this study. The questionnaire used in this work contains a combination of questions, some of them are less structures-part I- and others are more- structured -part II (see annex

10 and 11 for pre and post test). The purpose of this combination was to get broad answers in some of the general questions, and to facilitate the data analysis about the use of strategies.

This questionnaire was administered to students before and after the strategy training, and it was used as a pre-test and a post-test. Based on this information, a language learning strategy training program was designed to fulfill the students' needs.

The post-test was applied at the end of strategy training program in order to get information about the influence and effectiveness of the use of strategies during the program and the students' opinions about that kind of training.

Students Diaries

Diaries were also used to gather information since they are unstructured and allow the researcher to know what learner do to learn on their own, what is significant to them, their feelings, achievements and problems. (see 2.7.1). Therefore, this study used diaries with different purposes: as a strategy itself, to record summaries of each lesson taught during the strategy training. Learners also had to write about things they found easy or difficult to learn, as well as commentaries and opinions regarding the strategies used. The diaries were checked by the teacher every week so that she could take note of the students' commentaries, tasks and progress.

Teacher self-evaluation notes

These consisted on recordings or accounts of the events or situations related to the objectives of the strategy training program. These also included the teacher's reflections and assessment of those moments or situations in each lesson in which students worked using certain learning strategies and did activities related to the objectives of the strategy training program . These teachers' notes helped the researcher get feedback to improve the strategy training as well as to analyze the effectiveness of strategy use and students' perceptions about them.

3.2 Analysis of the pre-test results

In order to consider the students' needs, a pre-test was administered which was divided into five major areas. This pre-test attempted to find out:

1. How motivated students were to learn the language;
2. Which of the four language skills they considered more difficult;
3. Which of the four language skills they considered more important;
4. The influence of the teacher's attitude on the learning process;
5. Which strategies students had used inside and outside the classroom for language learning purposes.

All these categories are important for this study because we, as teachers, deal with different learners, who learn, think and feel differently. Consequently, to know their level of motivation to study English at the university with the intention of being English teachers has helped us to focus the training program. We also consider important for the research the second area -the level of importance students give the four skills, as it would be different whether they give the same importance to all the skills or consider some of them more important than the others. The purpose of the third area -the skills students find more difficult to learn- is to identify which skills they consider to be more difficult to develop when learning a language. This information would help us emphasize the skills that need to be reinforced during the training program. The fourth category, referred to the teacher's attitude, is also a significant component to consider when designing a strategy training program because the way the teacher makes learning more effective and more enjoyable can be a positive or negative influence on the learning process. Finally, the last area is related to the use of learning strategies which is the main objective of this research.

The results of the pre-test regarding the level of motivation reflected that 93% of the students were motivated to learn English, however, only 36% of them wanted to be English teachers. The remaining said they studied English because they were interested in the language, because of their jobs or because they did not have another option. This means that the majority of learners described in this context are interested in learning the language (see Table 1 below).

Table 1		
Level of motivation to study English		
	F	%
Interested in the language	14	50%
For travel	0	-
For the job	2	7%
To be an English teacher	10	36%
Because I had no options	2	7%

Table 2 (see below) shows the level of importance that the four skills have for these students. 53% of students consider that the four language skills are very important. However, for some students not all the skills are equally important. For instance, despite the fact that some of them considered the four skills very important, 71% of them reported *listening and speaking* as very important as well. *Writing* was given 25% in the category of “very important” and *reading* was very important only for 7%. Among the reasons they gave to explain their choices were: “listening and speaking are essential to communicate with others”, “we have to understand to keep a conversation going on”. “All of them are very important because the language has to be learnt completely”, “If we are going to be English teachers, we have to master all the abilities for this language”. The reasons for considering writing and reading under the category “important” were, among others: “reading is easy and we can learn through it”, and “writing helps to consolidate the other skills”.

Table 2						
Level of importance of the four skills for students						
	Very important	%	Important	%	Not so important	%
Listening & speaking	20	71%	8	29%	‘-	
Writing	7	25%	18	64%	3	11%
Reading	2	7%	15	54%	11	
All of them	15	53%	13			

With regard to the skills more difficult to learn, (see Table 3 below) *listening and speaking* again obtained the highest percentages, (43% and 29% respectively). However, a considerable percentage (21%) said that writing is the most difficult skill and only for 7% of them reading is the most difficult. The majority (71%) coincides that the most important abilities to learn English are listening and speaking, but at the same time they consider these skills to be the most difficult to acquire.

Table 3		
Skill more difficult to learn		
	F	%
Listening	12	43%
Speaking	8	29%
Reading	2	7%
Writing	6	21%
All of them	0	0%

It can be inferred that students' perception regarding listening and speaking skills seems to be logical since they did not have much training in these two skills in the secondary school

program, and therefore, they find them difficult to develop. Another possible explanation for these results is the fact that students are studying English in an EFL context where there are limited learning opportunities to get involved in spoken interaction.

In the fourth question, with regard to the influence of the teacher's attitude on learning a language, students reported that teacher's encouragement, confidence, dynamics and creativity influence learning greatly. It shows that the majority considers the teacher's attitude as an important component in the learning process (see Table 4).

Table 4						
Influence of teacher's attitude in language learning						
	Great	%	A little	%	None	
Encouraging	22	79%	6	21%		
Confidence	20	71%	8	29%		
Dynamic	24	86%	4	14%		
Creative	18	64%	10	36%		
Strict	12	43%	7	25%	9	32%

Teachers' attitude to the teaching-learning process is another important issue for these students. They consider that some aspects of the teacher's personality make the learning process more efficient and enjoyable. The statistics show that encouragement, dynamics, creativity and confidence are characteristics that learners consider an important part of a successful language learning program.

The last area (related to the strategies students thought they had been using) showed that students have a limited repertoire of strategy use. The strategies most commonly used by some students were: "*using a dictionary*" (36%), "*reading books and magazines*" (29%), "*listening to music in English*" (43%), and "*looking for a synonym when they do not know the right word*" (43%). The remaining percentage said that they "sometimes" or "never" practice these strategies (see table 5 below).

Table 5 Strategies used by the students before the strategy training.

	Always	sometimes	never
	%	%	%
I write a language learning diary	0	0	100
I use a dictionary*	36	18	46
I read books or magazines *	29	18	53
Use new English words in a sentence	7	11	82
I review English lessons often	7	11	82
I say or write new English words several times *	11	11	78
I make summaries of information of new language material	0	0	100
I listen to music in English	43	25	32
I listen to news or another program from the radio in English *	14	11	75
I watch TV programs and films in English	18	11	71
I watch videos in class	0	0	0
I look for opportunities to talk to people in English	11	28	61
I seek opportunities to talk with native speakers *	7	11	82
I clearly identify the purpose of a listening task: general or specific and direct my attention on this	18	32	50
I concentrate on the listening tasks and avoid any distractions	21	50	29
I evaluate my own progress in the new language	14	21	65
I predict what I will listen to	14	11	75
I cooperate with my partner to help each other	21	14	54
I breath deeply and try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	14	25	61
When I cannot think of a word during a conversation:			
a. I avoid talking	21	43	36
b. I use gestures	0	11	89
c. I look for a synonym	43	29	29
d. I ask for help	18	29	46

The results of the control group are very similar to the experimental group results. According to the data obtained, the strategies students used more frequently were: *using a dictionary, reading books or magazines, listening to music in English, watching TV programs, review English lessons often and getting help* when they do not know something. As it can be observed both groups were using almost the same strategies, except that in the control group some students *review English lessons and get help* when they did not know a word more frequently than the experimental group. These results of the control group reflect only the findings regarding the use of strategies because the researchers were mainly interested in gathering information about learning strategies used by this group. Another reason was because these data were necessary to compare the effectiveness of the strategy training applied to the experimental group.

It is very interesting to observe that some strategies were given a very low rate by students, strategies which, in our view, are very important for language learning purposes as they involve more interaction among students and between students and other speakers. Examples of these strategies are: ‘I look for opportunities to talk to people in English’, ‘I seek for opportunities to talk to native speakers’, ‘I evaluate my own progress’. It can be observed that the two groups reflect almost the same use of strategies which could be inferred as lack of opportunities to practice in a real context or that these strategies have not properly been included in the language learning program at secondary school.

As these strategies are almost non-existent in the students’ performance, these results could be also interpreted as reflecting little (or lack of) culture of interacting and using the target language in every day communication, and therefore, those strategies are almost non-existent in the students’ performance.

It is difficult for the researcher to determine whether this low rating level indicates lack of awareness of the existence of the learning strategies, whether students have tried them and have found them not very effective or if students simply have never tried them in their

learning experience. When analyzing low and high rating of strategy use reported by the students, it is important to take into account that some of the strategies presented to them in the pre-test may be more commonly used in ESL context than EFL ones. For instance, “I seek for opportunities to talk to native speakers” was reported with a low rating because students do not have access to native speakers in their EFL context. It could be possible that learners were aware of its importance and usefulness for their learning, but they simply reported as not using it because the context conditions do not allow them to apply it. On the other hand, students reported “I use a dictionary” with a high rate because that is part of the teaching paradigm that most language learners get involved in.

3. 3 Description of the strategy training program

3.3.1 Objectives

The main purpose of designing strategy training program in the classroom was to help students use some learning strategies which not only could facilitate them to learn a language more effectively, but also to deal with other situations in every day life. Besides this, the program was intended to determine to what extend strategies training increases the student’s level of language proficiency with a particular reference to listening and speaking abilities.

3.3.2 Methodology

After reading some author’s classification of strategies, we found Rebecca Oxford’s classification the most comprehensible and detailed. Therefore, the methodology adopted for this research followed some of the steps of the model for strategy training that Rebecca Oxford describes in her book ‘Language Learning Strategies’ (1990). However, it must be said that such steps were modified according to the characteristics of the context. We explained in section 2 that, according to our opinion, this specialist offers clear criteria to measure students’ strategy use and provides practical information on how strategies can be

taught. Her questionnaire has helped us obtain valuable information for the purpose of this research.

After the assessment of the students on the use of learning strategies through the pre-test, the design of the intervention study followed these five steps:

1. Selection of the strategies to be applied according to the students' needs and characteristics.
2. Integration of strategies training in tasks, objectives and materials used in the course of Integrated English I.
3. Preparation of materials and activities taking into account the students' motivation, interests and ages.
4. Implementation of the training program.
5. Evaluation the strategy training program.

After having a clear picture of the students' situation, the strategy training programme was designed. In it we incorporated strategies that can be mainly applied to listening and speaking because, according to the pre-test, these are the strategies students found most difficult to develop. For example, most of them believed that a listening activity is always going to be a difficult task.

Although the purpose of the strategy training program was to enhance students' management of listening and speaking, the plan was designed to use a variety of strategies, which supports the use of these two abilities. For example, summarizing, placing new words into a context, writing a language learning diary and some affective strategies, are strategies which do not help directly to develop listening and speaking, but are useful to acquire vocabulary and to reinforce the new language learnt. According to research findings in the field of learning strategies, they work better in combination that is why the training program included some memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. The strategies were selected according to the objectives of each unit of the language program for the first level. The strategies chosen are summarized in the following table:

Table 6**Summary of the strategies applied in the strategy training**

<i>Group</i>	<i>Strategy Set</i>	<i>Strategy</i>
Memory	Creating mental linkages	Placing new words into a context
Cognitive	Creating structure for input and output	Summarizing
Metacognitive	Centering your learning	Paying attention: selective and directive attention
	Arranging and planning your learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the purpose of a language task • Seeking practice opportunities
Affective	Lowering your anxiety	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation
	Taking your emotional temperature	Writing a language learning diary
Social	Cooperating with others	Cooperating with peers
Compensation	Overcoming limitations in speaking	Getting help
	Evaluating your learning	Self-evaluation

To begin the learning strategy training program, students were asked to bring a special notebook which would be used as *a diary*. In their diaries learners were instructed to record the application of some strategies and their feelings about the use of those after each lesson. The vocabulary strategy '*placing new words into a context*' was included as a permanent strategy because vocabulary is essential to speak and understand what is being said. With this strategy students had to use the new vocabulary learnt from any tasks in a meaningful context. *Summarizing* was another strategy students used in their diaries. They had to make a summary of the main aspects of each session. In their diaries learners also wrote about their difficulties and achievements, feelings and suggestions for the strategy use in class.

The diaries were received and checked by the teacher once a week. The teacher got relevant information from students' opinions and wrote some comments about the students' tasks. Although students were not told exactly the names of the strategies they were using, they reflected their thoughts and opinions about the activities they did in class, which involved the use of specific learning strategies.

In the case of listening, for example, the more practiced strategies were: *predicting, identifying the purpose of a language task and paying attention* which includes *selective and directed attention*. For each listening task students were asked to *predict* what they expected to listen according to the topic. Then they *identified the purpose of the listening task*, if it was for general or specific information, so the teacher encouraged students to concentrate on listening and to focus their attention on what they were asked to do.

For practicing listening and speaking the strategies used were *seeking practice opportunities, watching TV programs and films* outside the classroom, videos in the class and laboratory practice. Among the activities learner did there were interviews in and outside the classroom (the questions for the interviews were prepared by themselves and checked by the teacher afterwards), watching TV programs, listening tasks from the text-

book tape at home, watching some videos in class and discussing about them, etc. After performing these tasks, students had to give oral and written reports. For each class session there were pairs and group activities in which learners had to interact, cooperate and ask for help from their peers. Before each listening and speaking activity the teacher asked the students to make relaxation exercises in the form of warm-ups.

There was a variety of activities inside and outside the classroom to give students opportunities to practice the strategies implemented in this strategy program. (See appendix?). A post-test was administered at the end of the training program to evaluate how effective and useful the use of strategies had been. (See appendix 1)

3. 4 Analysis of the post-test results

Statistical analysis of the post-test indicated that there were significant differences in the use of some of the strategies incorporated in the strategy training (see table 7 below). From the variety of learning strategies included in the program the ones which reached the highest percentage in the category of ‘always’ were:

- listen to music in English (50%)
- identifying the purpose of a listening task (43%,)
- concentrating on the listening task (71%)
- cooperating with peers (61%)
- using relaxation, deep breathing or meditation (54%)
- predicting (60%)
- writing a language leaning diary (70%)
- asking for help (50%)

This means that the use of these strategies had increased considerably during the strategy training program which can also be interpreted as an increase in the level of students' awareness of these strategies.

On the other hand, the category of 'sometimes' reflects that the strategies more used were:

- placing new words into a context (36%)
- reviewing lessons often (57%)
- making summaries (46%)
- listening to music (43%)
- watching TV programs and film in English (54%)
- watching videos in class (64%)
- look for opportunities to talk to people in English (61%)
- identifying the purpose of a listening task (54%)
- ask for help (43%)
- writing a language learning diary (30%)
- evaluate my own progress on learning (39%).

It can be noticed that about 39% of the strategies applied were always used by the 50% of the learners who followed the strategy training. The remaining percentage of strategies were mostly used "sometimes", and just a few students "never" used them.

These results can be interpreted as the effect of students' awareness of using strategies to become good learners. On the other hand, the students who "sometimes" used the strategies seemed to be the ones who did not attend classes every day or did not do the assignments at home as they were required.

The findings about learning strategy use show that the strategies which were new for students, like ‘writing a diary’, ‘writing summaries’ and ‘placing new words into a context’ had significant use during the strategy training and students became familiar with them. It must be mentioned that at the beginning some students were reluctant to write a diary and make summaries; according to their opinions, “using these strategies had no sense”, “diaries were just to write about personal facts”, but in the end 95% of them handed out the diary with the tasks they had to do: summaries of the lessons, placing new words into a context, writing their comments or suggestions about the use of strategies, and things they found easy or difficult.

This increased could be interpreted as an achievement of the objectives of the strategy training which is to develop students’ awareness of the use of learning strategies. However, the submission of the diaries experienced a decrease specifically at the end of the strategy training, because just 70% of students handed out the diaries with the completed tasks, while the remaining 20% did it but with some uncompleted tasks and 10% did not handed them out at all. So, it was decided to give them a reward (some marks at the end of semester for those who submitted and had the complete diaries) in order to maintain the students’ interest in writing the diaries. Although it was not 100% successful, it did function to increase the students’ enthusiasm.

This shows that teachers can enhance students’ awareness and use of learning strategies through inclusion of these in the lesson plans. It could be argued that low level use of learning strategies on the part of students may be related to a lack of inclusion of what Richards and Lockhart (1996) refers to as “strategies activities” in the structure of a language lesson. The fact that the students increased the frequency and types of learning strategies used, supports the claim that some researchers make about the possibility of teaching learning strategies or, from the learning perspective, that learners can learn to use them.

My view based on my experience as a teacher is that it is possible to teach students to learn to use the strategies on their own. It is, of course, a long process which requires teachers' awareness of his/her role and commitment to the students. Although it does not mean that all the learners could become autonomous learners, but at least, the most motivated ones may benefit from it.

However, it must be said that although some strategies were under the teacher's influence, they did not have the same success as the strategies mentioned above. Such strategies are *placing new words into a context*, *making summaries* and *watching TV programs and film*'. The first two strategies were revised by the teacher every week when she checked the students' diaries, and the third one was sometimes assigned as homework. It means that just a low percentage (30%) used these strategies consciously without the teacher's control whilst about 50% used them 'sometimes', just when teacher reminded them of writing their diaries and the importance of doing it.

This is significant in terms of learner autonomy as it shows that students may need some kind of controlled practice (scaffolding activities) and teacher's guidance in order to develop autonomy and progressively internalize the use of strategies.

It was also found that strategies students used less were the ones which were marked under the "sometimes" heading, such as *watching videos*, or *seeking for practice opportunities*. The use of these strategies was controlled by the teacher, but they had to write a report after these tasks. There were other strategies that, although not practiced during the strategy program, were recommended to be practiced by students themselves. These strategies were *listening to news* or other programs in English on the radio and *seeking opportunities to talk to native speakers*.

With regard to the strategies suggested in the pre-test and which were not included in the strategy training, it was found that some of them continued to be rated under the category of 'always' by the same number of students (36%), but the percentage increased in the category of "sometimes". For example, *using a dictionary* changed from 18% to 57%. This can be explained by the fact that they had to use a dictionary at home to get the new words and place them into a context. Similar results were found with *saying or writing new English words several times*. Even though there was no control or follow up in the use of these strategies, learners were interested in using them to learn vocabulary since the rate in the use of these strategies increased in the post- test, too (see table 7 below).

Table 7 Strategies used by the students after the strategy training.

	Always %	Sometimes %	Never %
Writing a language learning diary.	70	25	5
I use a dictionary	36	57	7
I read books or magazines	18	57	25
Use new English words in a sentence	43	36	21
I review English lessons often	29	57	14
I say or write new English words several times	21	61	18
I make summaries of information of new language material	29	46	25
I listen to music in English	50	43	7
I listen to news or another program from the radio in English	18	36	57
I watch TV programs and films in English	32	54	14
I watch videos in class	36	64	0
I look for opportunities to talk to people in English	25	61	14
I seek opportunities to talk with native speakers	7	43	50
I clearly identify the purpose of a listening task: general or specific and direct my attention on this	43	54	3
I concentrate on the listening tasks and avoid any distractions	71	29	0
I evaluate my own progress in the new language	32	39	29
I predict what I will listen to	60	30	10
I cooperate with my partner to help each other	61	39	0
I breath deeply and try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	54	29	17
When I cannot think of a word during a conversation:			
e. I avoid talking	11	11	54
f. I use gestures	7	18	75
g. I look for a synonym	18	14	68
h. I ask for help	50	43	7

In relation to the students' perception about the effectiveness of learning strategies, they said that their level of English had improved in some way. Students' opinions, statistical results about the evaluation of the training program, and students' grades reflect that these students have had some progress in learning the language compared to the level they had at the beginning of the course (see appendix). Through the diaries they said that all the activities carried out in and outside the classroom had been useful to increase their level of listening comprehension and fluency in speaking. In our view, they are now able to understand more than 50% of the listening tasks from the tape than before. Even though this skill still continues to be the most difficult for them, strategies *like identifying the listening purpose and concentrating on the listening task* have helped them improve their comprehension, vocabulary and pronunciation.

The grades they obtained in the first mid –term exam confirm the improvement of listening comprehension. (See appendix.). For the listening test, they were given the test suggested in the textbook of the regular course, this was done to follow the objectives of the course and to evaluate them according to the level they had reached. (See appendix ..) The results were satisfactory because 70% of the students scored higher than 70% in comprehension, while the rest obtained scores between 50% and 70%.

Students also realized that watching videos in class and watching films or another TV program at home (as homework) was not so 'difficult' as they thought. They said that the pictures (images) helped them to understand the contents and that they were getting used to concentrating on listening and writing the new words or expressions they heard.

As far as speaking strategies are concerned, learners said that the different tasks carried out to develop speaking had been useful. Some of their statements to support their opinions were: 'the different activities have helped me to learn expressions and vocabulary for specific situations; 'I like to learn language to use in 'real situation'; "the interviews outside

the classroom and oral presentation have helped me overcome my shyness'; 'I feel more motivated to learn'; 'I always discover new ways to learn English', etc. (See [appendix some copies from the students' diaries](#)).

These results reveal that the most accepted strategies were seeking for practice opportunities to talk to people in English, listening exercises from the tape, listening to songs, peer and group work, watching videos in class, laboratory work and the less appreciated tasks were interviewing people outside the classroom, watching or listening to a program in English at home.

Students said that they had difficulties to do the latter tasks because they did not have cable TV at home, they could not get access to radio programs, the self-access of English Department does not function all the time, etc. However, they were willingly to do the listening tasks at home using the students' cassette which contains recordings of the different lessons and was recorded for them by the teacher. The interview outside the classroom was also difficult for them because they were afraid of making mistakes and they got embarrassed of talking to unknown people or students from other courses. This is reasonable because they have just began to study at the university and they come from schools where they were not used to doing these tasks, so they needed to develop some confidence and to learn to take risks.

Diaries revealed other interesting findings. For example, they said they enjoyed 'competence games', 'role plays' and 'memory games' very much. Almost all of them said that these activities helped them to be active and to learn vocabulary.

From our point of view, based on every day's observation and the results of the first-mid term exam, we could say that these learners made a significant progress in learning English. Apart from the statistics, an evidence of their progress, after the training program they were able to understand much more the teachers's instructions and more than 50% of an exercise

from the tape. Similar progress has taken place in speaking, after the program, they could communicate in a better way or at least they tried to say what they wanted in English, even though they were aware of their mistakes.

It can be said that the most important benefit of the strategy training has been the students' awareness of the existence of a variety of strategies for listening and speaking they can use to be successful language learners. It seems that some of them are beginning the "in-taking" process to use the strategies on their own without the teacher's control. These observations are based on students' reflections about the use of the different strategies during the strategy training, but will still continue being used during the semester.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the analysis of the information gathered by the different data collection techniques used in this research study.

1. The results reflect that even though the time for the implementation of the strategy training was relatively short, it had significant impact some of the strategies incorporated in the program. This impact is reflected in both the increase of the number of learning strategies used by students and the increase of use frequency.
2. The main achievement of the strategy training implemented with students is the development of the level of awareness of the existence of a variety of language learning strategies mainly for listening and speaking
3. The changes in the frequency of use of strategy categories, indicate that the strategy training is an effective approach to get students to develop awareness of learning strategies as well as to promote a more positive attitude towards language learning. The strategy training also enables students to take more responsibilities for their learning in the short, medium and long-term perspectives.
4. The increase in number of strategies and percentages in strategy use reflected in the results of the post-test show that students were able to incorporate some strategies into their repertoire as a result of their active role in trying to become more independent learners.
5. There are implications that can be derived from these results concerning teachers that indicate that strategy training is a powerful tool for teaching students how to learn or incorporate certain learning strategies into their repertoire.

6. Students' attitudes were positive and willingness to try things. There was a general acceptance of the different task and activities in the classroom.
7. The results indicated that the use of learning strategies by students can increase the students' level of language proficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

By observing the good result strategy use had with the students, the idea comes why not keep on using them in every language class. we would recommend teachers to use well-organize strategies included in the course syllabus to improve students' proficiency, and teachers to try to have access to literature about strategy use and implementation in order to try them in their classes.

Also, that language institutions have a flexible syllabus to give teachers kind freedom to include strategy training in the program.

Moreover, the creation and reinforcement of teacher teamwork to plan and implement the use of strategies in the classroom to provide students with learning to learn tools to have an idea on how to learn a language.

In addition, we, as teachers would like to continue the use of strategies as part of everyday work.

Furthermore, assigning students outside work that reinforces and supports students' independence and some kind of research doing tasks.

Nowadays, the latest edition of language textbooks begin the incorporation an application of strategies, we would like to recommend the use and implementation of textbooks which include strategy use.

A follow up program to reinforce students' strategy use would be necessary in order to get students competence and proficiency which is our ultimate goal as language teachers.

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ANNEX 1

O' Malley and Chamot (1990:119-120) attempted a longitudinal study of learning strategies used by a group of students for different language tasks. They included both effective and ineffective language learners and students at different levels of language study. They used think-aloud sessions with tasks such as: filling in the blank with appropriate vocabulary items, listening to a dialogue, monologue or narrative; speaking in a descriptive or role playing activity, reading for comprehension, etc.

Metacognitive strategies

Planning	Previewing the organizing concept or principle of an anticipated learning task (advanced organization); proposing strategies for handling an upcoming task; generating a plan for the parts, sequence, main ideas or language functions to be used in handling a task.
Directed attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors; maintaining attention during tasks execution.
Selective attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details to assist in performance of a task, attending to specific aspects of language input during task execution.
Self-management	Understanding the conditions that help one successfully accomplish language tasks and arranging for the presence of those conditions; controlling one's language performance to maximise use of what is already known.
Advance preparation	Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
Self-monitoring	Checking, verifying, or correcting one's comprehension performance in the course of language task.
Delayed production	Consciously deciding to postpone speaking to learn initially through listening comprehension.

Self-evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy; checking one's language repertoire, strategy use, or ability to perform the task at hand .
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Cognitive strategies

<i>Cognitive</i>	
Repetition	Imitating a language model. Including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
Resourcing	Using available reference sources of information about the target language, including dictionaries, textbooks or prior work.
Grouping	Ordering, classifying or labelling material used in language task based on common attributes; recalling information based on grouping previously done.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.
Repetition	Imitating a language model. Including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
Resourcing	Using available reference sources of information about the target language, including dictionaries, textbooks or prior work.
Grouping	Ordering, classifying or labelling material used in language task based on common attributes; recalling information based on grouping previously done.
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language.
Note-taking	Writing down the key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical form to assist performance of language task.
Deduction/ Induction	Consciously applying learned or self-developed rules to produce or understand the target language.
Substitution	Selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases to accomplish a language task.

Elaboration	<p>Relating new information to prior knowledge; relating different parts of new information to each other; making meaningful personal associations to information presented, in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Personal elaborations: making judgements about or reacting personally to the material presented. World elaboration: Using knowledge gained from experience in the world. Academic elaboration: Using knowledge gained in academic situations. Between parts elaboration: Using a combination of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical solutions to a task. Question elaboration: using a combination of questions and world knowledge to brainstorm logical solutions to a task. Self-evaluative elaboration: Judging self in relation to materials. Creative elaboration: making up a story line, or adopting a clever perspective. Imagery: Using mental or actual pictures or visuals to represent information; coded as a separate category, but viewed as a form of elaboration. E.g., students can think about environmental problems in their own community
Summarizing	Making a mental, oral, or written summary of language information presented in a text.
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings or usage of unfamiliar language items associated with a language task, to predict outcomes, or to fill in missing information.

Social and affective strategies

Questioning for clarification	Asking for explanations, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the material; asking for clarification or verification about the task; posing questions to the self.
Cooperation	Working together with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance.
Self-task	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do a learning task.
Self-reinforcement	providing personal motivation by arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been successfully completed.

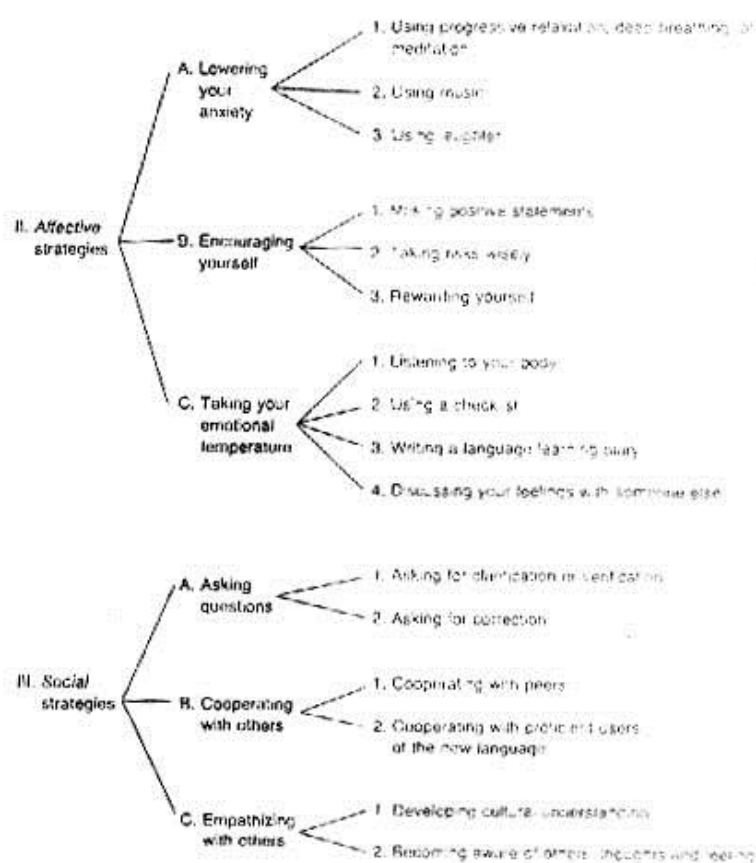
ANNEX 2

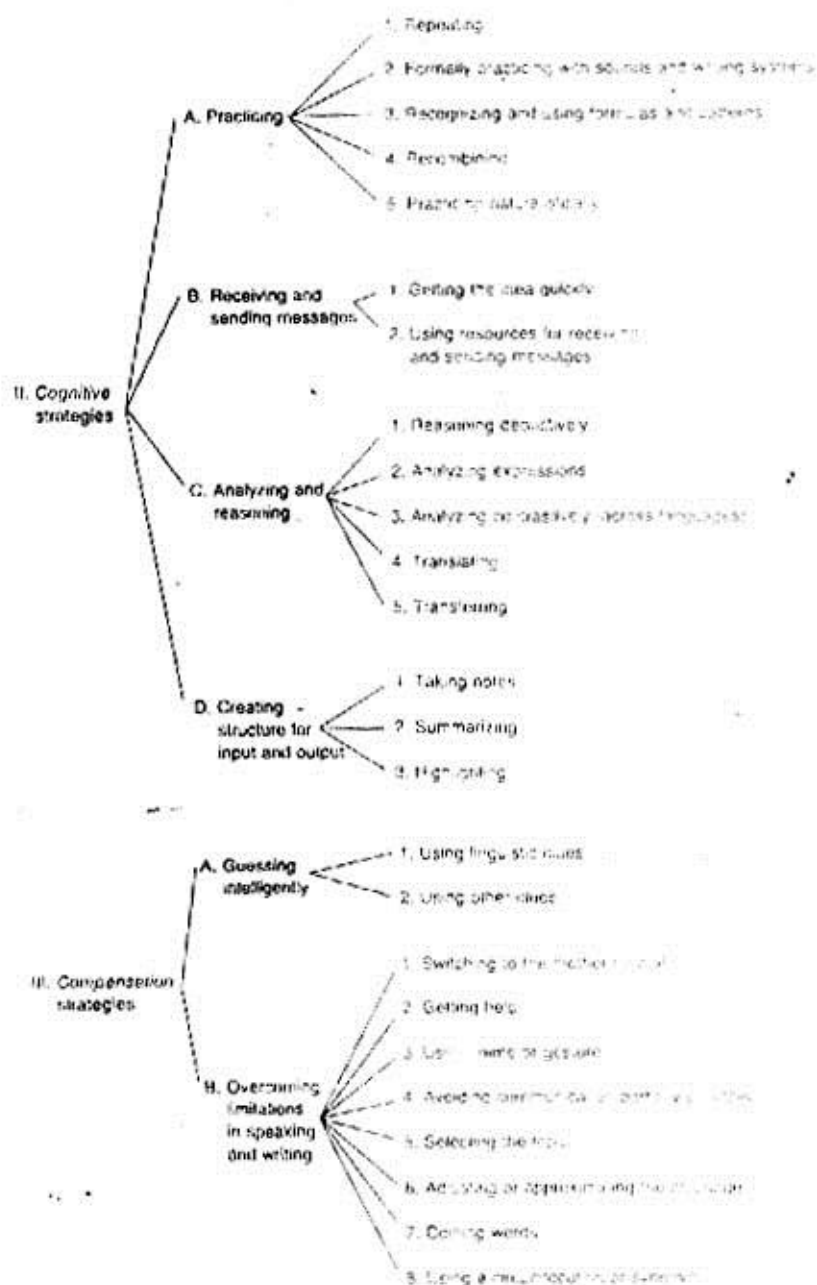


Figure 1.4 Diagram of the Strategy System Showing All the Strategies (Source: Original.)



Figure 1.4 (Continued)





ANNEX 3

INTERVENTION STUDY A - UCA

PRE AND POST TEST SURVEY

3.1 Pre test survey

1. Por qué está aprendiendo ingles?

Me gusta _____ Por el trabajo _____ Está de moda _____ voy a viajar

2. cual de las habilidades considera más iportante?

Habla _____ Escucha _____ escritura _____ Lectura _____

3. cual de las habilidades considera más difcil?

Habla _____ Escucha _____ escritura _____ Lectura _____

4. en su experiencia como estudiante de inglés cuál habilidad ha sido más desarrollada?

Habla _____ Escucha _____ escritura _____ Lectura _____

5. Considera que la actitud del profesor influye en su buen aprendizaje del idioma inglés?

Si _____ No _____ por qué?

6. Cree que la metodología empleada por el profesor aumenta su deseo de aprender el idioma inglés?

Si _____ No _____ por qué?

Marque con una x en la casilla que corresponde a la frecuencia con que usted esta usando las siguientes estrategias dentro y fuera del aula de clase.

	SIEMPRE	A VECES	NUNCA
1. Uso diccionario			
2. Leo libros o revistas en Inglés			
3. Escribo las nuevas palabras en oraciones			
4. Repaso las lecciones de Ingles con frecuencia			
5. Repito o escribo las palabras nuevas varias veces			
6. Hago resúmenes de las nuevas lecciones			
7. Escucho música en Ingles			
8. Veo programas , películas en Ingles			
9. Veo videos orientados en clase			
10. Busco oportunidades para conversar con otras personas que hablan ingles			
11. Busco oportunidades para hablar con hablantes nativos de Ingles			
12. Centro mi atención en los ejercicios de listening y evito cualquier distracción			
13. Identifico claramente el proposito de un ejercicio de listening , si es general o especifico y dirijo mi atención sobre esto			
14. Trabajo con mi compañero inmediato o en grupo y nos ayudamos el uno al otro			
15. Trato de relajarme si siento temor o nervios cuando tengo que decir algo en ingles, contestar o preguntar			
16. Predigo lo que va a pasar en una actividad			
17. Cuando no se como se dice una palabra que necesito en una conversación: a. me quedo callado b. uso gestos o mimicas			

c. busco un sinònimo			
d. le pregunto a otro como se dice			
18. Escucho noticias u otros programas del radio en ingles			
19. Planeo lo que voy a decir en inglés antyes de hablar			
20.Se planea objetivos en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés			
21. Deduzco de lo que se trata una actividad por las fotos o alguna idea que en la actividad se presenta			
22.escribo un diario de clase			

Post test survey

El siguiente test es para determinar el progreso del aprendizaje de Ingles en el transcurso de estas semanas de clase.

Name: _____ Age _____

1. ¿Cree usted que su nivel de Ingles ha progresado en el transcurso de estas semanas de clase?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

2. ¿Ha disfrutado las actividades realizadas en clase?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

3. ¿Cree que las diferentes actividades realizadas dentro y fuera del aula de clase le han ayudado a aprender mas vocabulario?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

4. ¿Se le hace un poco mas facil comunicarse en Ingles ahora que al inicio del curso, aunque no sepa todas las palabras que quiere decir?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

¿Que actividades le han ayudado a este fin?

5. ¿Cuando trabaja en pareja, su compañero (a) comprende todo lo que usted le dice?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

6. ¿Comprende ahora mas un ejercicio de comprensión de escucha del cassette que al inicio?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

7. ¿Que le ha ayudado o impedido el avance de su comprensión?

8. ¿Que porcentaje considera usted que ahora comprende de una conversación , entrevista, etc. del cassette con acento nativo?

100% _____ 75% _____ 50 _____ 25% _____

9. ¿Se siente mas relajado ahora para las exposiciones orales individuales o en grupo que al inicio del curso?

Mucho _____ No mucho _____ Un poco _____ No _____

10. ¿Cual habilidad cree usted que se ha desarrollado mas, se ha practicado mas en el transcurso de los periodos de clase?

Listening _____ Speaking _____ Reading _____ Writing _____

Marque con una x en la casilla que corresponde a la frecuencia con que usted esta usando las siguientes estrategias dentro y fuera del aula de clase.

	SIEMPRE	A VECES	NUNCA
1. Uso diccionario			
2. Leo libros o revistas en Inglés			
3. Escribo las nuevas palabras en oraciones			
4. Repaso las lecciones de Ingles con frecuencia			
5. Repito o escribo las palabras nuevas varias veces			
6. Hago resúmenes de las nuevas lecciones			
7. Escucho música en Ingles			
8. Veo programas , películas en Ingles			
9. Veo videos orientados en clase			
10. Busco oportunidades para conversar con otras personas que hablan ingles			
11. Busco oportunidades para hablar con hablantes nativos de Ingles			
12. Centro mi atención en los ejercicios de listening y evito cualquier distracción			
13. Identifico claramente el proposito de un ejercicio de listening , si es general o especifico y dirijo mi atención sobre esto			
14. Trabajo con mi compañero inmediato o en grupo y nos ayudamos el uno al otro			
15. Trato de relajarme si siento temor o nervios cuando tengo que decir algo en ingles, contestar o preguntar			
16. Predigo lo que va a pasar en una actividad			
17. Cuando no se como se dice una palabra que necesito en una conversación: e. me quedo callado			

f. uso gestos o mimicas			
g. busco un sinònimo			
h. le pregunto a otro como se dice			
18. Escucho noticias u otros programas del radio en ingles			
19. Planeo lo que voy a decir en inglés antyes de hablar			
20.Se planea objetivos en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés			
21. Deduzco de lo que se trata una actividad por las fotos o alguna idea que en la actividad se presenta			
22.escribo un diario de clase			

Annex 4. Scaffoldings

4.1 Scaffolding for getting help

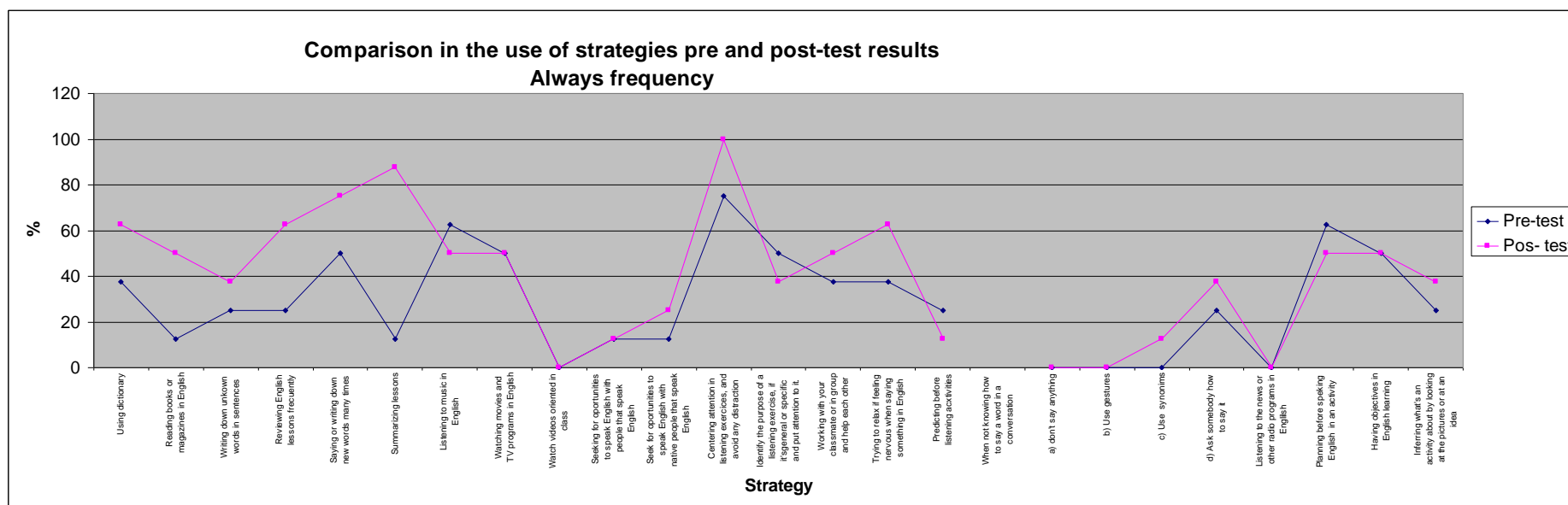
Asking for help phrases

- ◆ I don't understand, Could you explain that again?
- ◆ Could you repeat that please?
- ◆ Could you speak more slowly?
- ◆ What's that in English?
- ◆ How do you say ... in English?
- ◆ Can I borrow your dictionary (eraser)?
- ◆ How do you spell...?
- ◆ Can you write that please?
- ◆ Excuse me, how do you say this word?
- ◆ May I go out for a moment?
- ◆ Sorry I am late

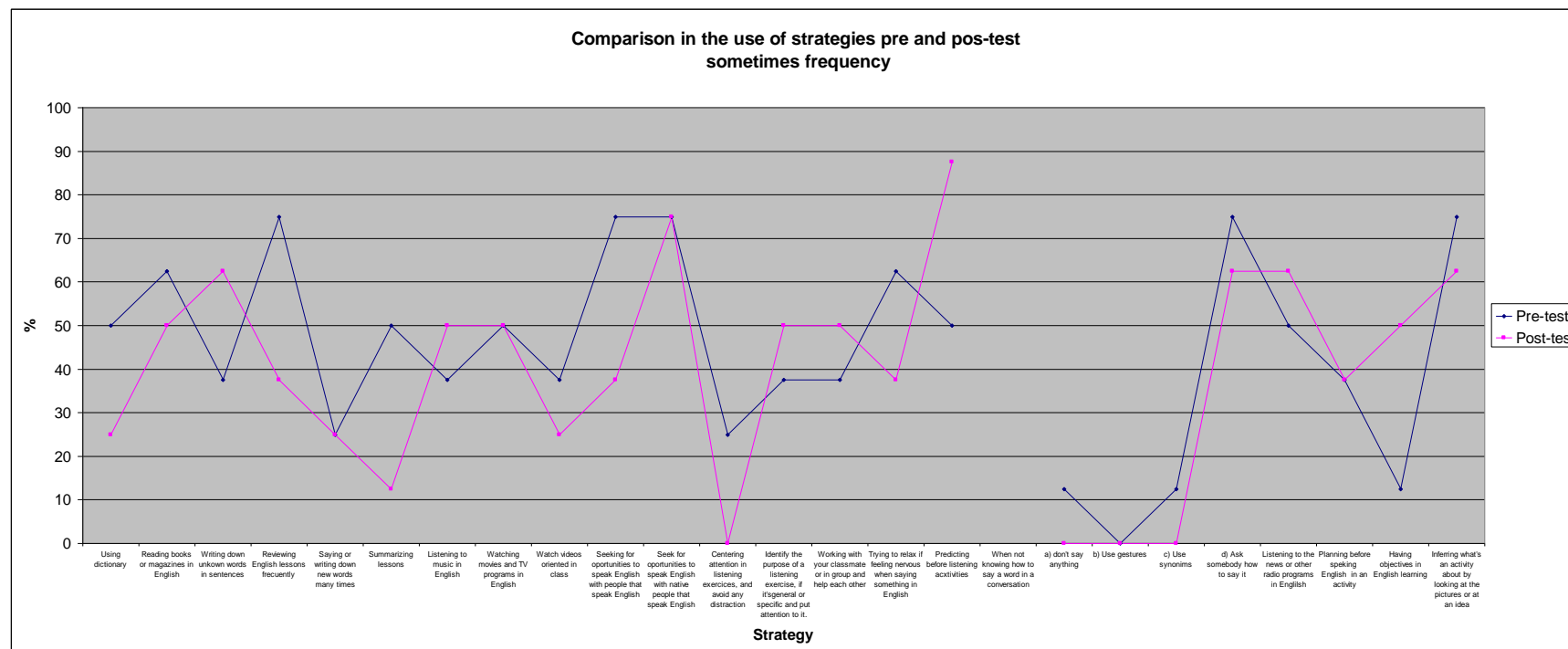
Annex 5. Tables and graphics

5.1 Graphics of experimental group

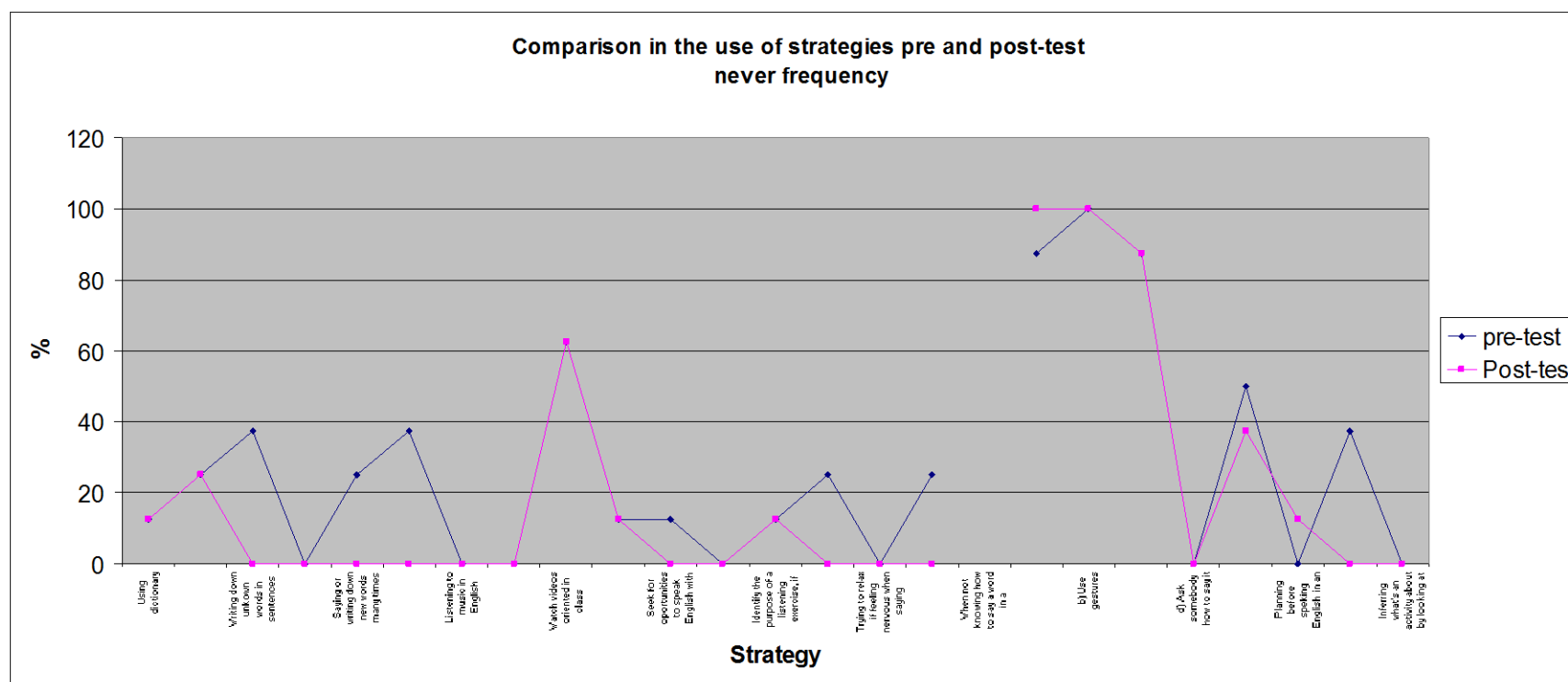
5.1.1 Experimental group Graphic 1



5.1.2 Experimental group Graphic 2



5.1.3 Experimental group Graphic 3



5.2.1 Table - Strategies used by control group pre-test survey results

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Always</i> s%	<i>Sometime</i> s%	<i>Never</i> %
Using a dictionary	22	56	22
Reading books or magazines in English	22	66	12
Writing down unknown words in sentences	33	55	12
Reviewing English lessons frequently	44	56	0
Repeating or writing down new words several times	22	44	34
Summarizing lessons	12	44	44
Listening to music in English	55	33	12
Watching movies and TV programs in English	66	22	12
Watching videos oriented in class	0	78	12
Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people	44	23	33
Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people	22	33	45
Centering attention in listening exercises, and avoiding any distraction	55	12	33
Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it's general or specific and paying attention to it.	55	33	12
Working with y classmates or in groups and helping each other	66	34	0
Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English	55	44	0
Predicting before listening activities	12	44	44
When you don't know how to say a word in a conversation, you:	12	12	76
a) don't say anything			
b) Use gestures	12	12	76
c) Use synonyms	0	12	88
d) Ask somebody how to say it	33	22	45
Listening to the news or other radio programs in English	12	33	55

Planning before an English speaking activity	56	44	0
Setting objectives in English learning	44	33	23
Inferring what an activity is about by looking at the pictures or at an idea presented	12	76	12
Writing a class diary	0	0	100

5.2.2. Table Comparison in strategy use pre and post survey (Control group)

Strategy	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. Using a dictionary	22	22	56	66	22	12
2. Reading books or magazines in English	0	0	0	0	100	100
3. Writing down unknown words in sentences	33	33	55	44	12	23
4. Reviewing English lessons frequently	44	44	56	44	0	12
5. Repeating or writing down new words several times	22	22	44	66	34	12
6. Summarizing lessons	12	12	44	55	44	34
7. Listening to music in English	55	56	33	44	12	0
8. Watching movies and TV programs in English	66	56	22	44	12	0
9. Watching videos oriented in class	0	22	78	56	12	22
10. Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people	44	33	23	44	33	23
11. Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people	22	22	33	44	45	34
12. Centering attention in listening exercises, and avoiding any distraction	55	33	12	44	33	23
13. Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it's general or specific and paying attention to it.	55	56	33	44	12	0
14. Working with classmates or in groups and helping each other	66	88	34	12	0	0
15. Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English	55	56	44	44	0	0
16. Predicting before listening activities	12	12	44	44	44	44
17. When you don't know how to say a word in a	12	12	12	12	76	88

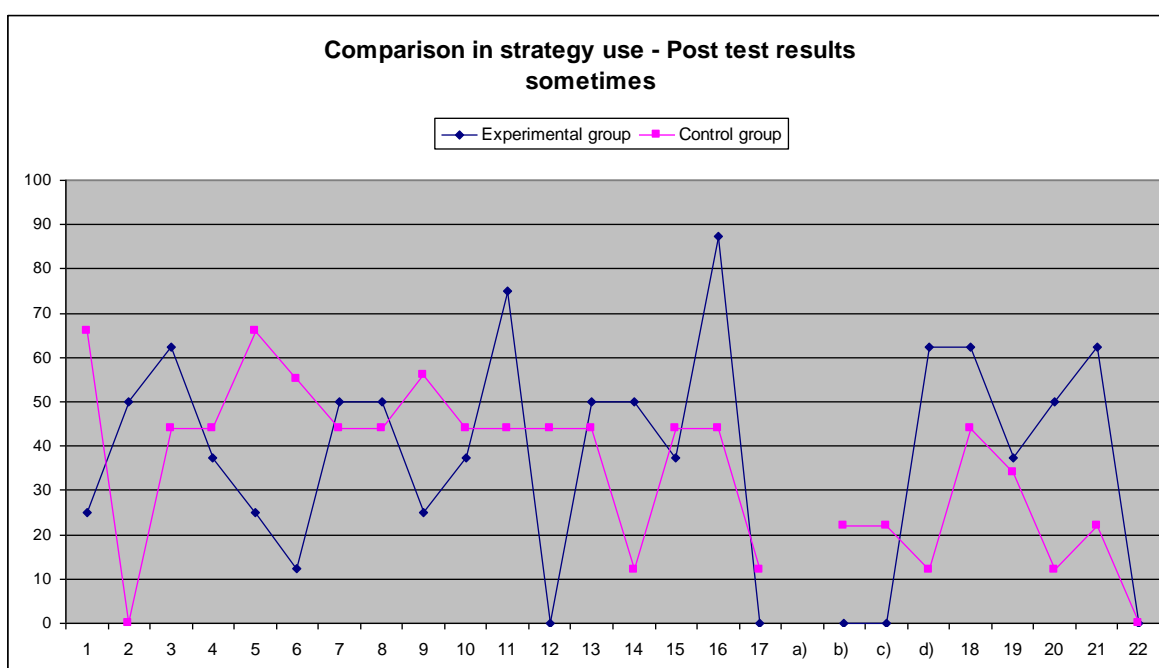
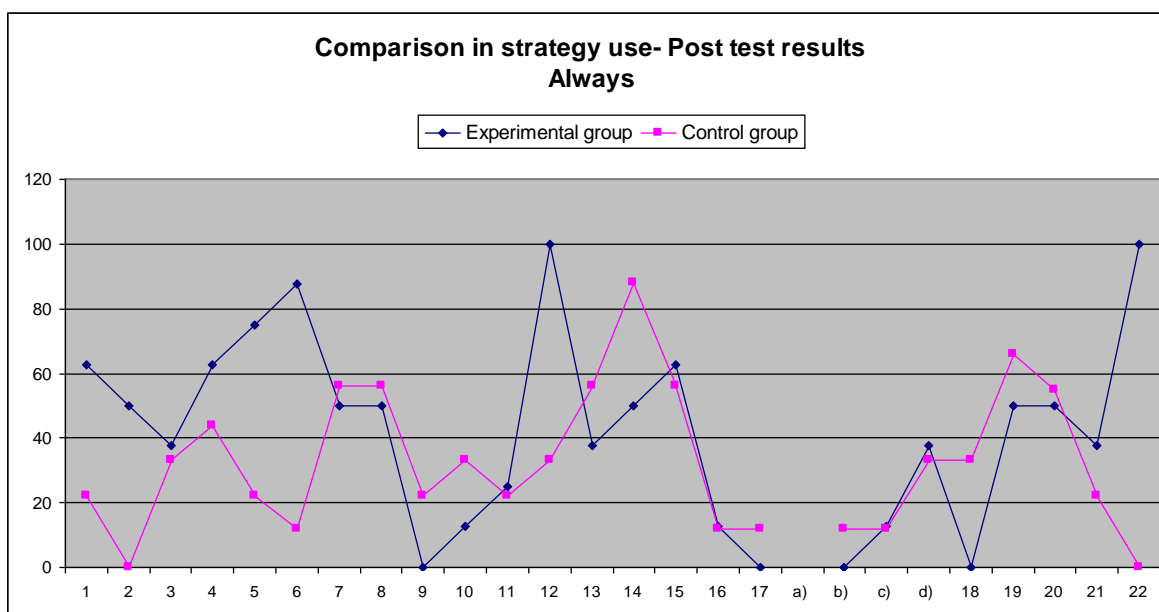
conversation you:						
a) don't say anything						
b) Use gestures	12	12	12	22	76	77
c) Use synonyms	0	12	12	22	88	77
d) Ask somebody how to say it	33	33	22	12	45	56
18. Listening to the news or other radio programs in English	12	33	33	44	55	23
19. Planning before an English speaking activity	56	66	44	34	0	0
20. Setting objectives in learning English	44	55	33	12	23	33
21. Inferring what an activity is about by looking at the pictures or at an idea presented	12	22	76	22	12	56
22. Writing a class diary	0	0	0	0	100	100

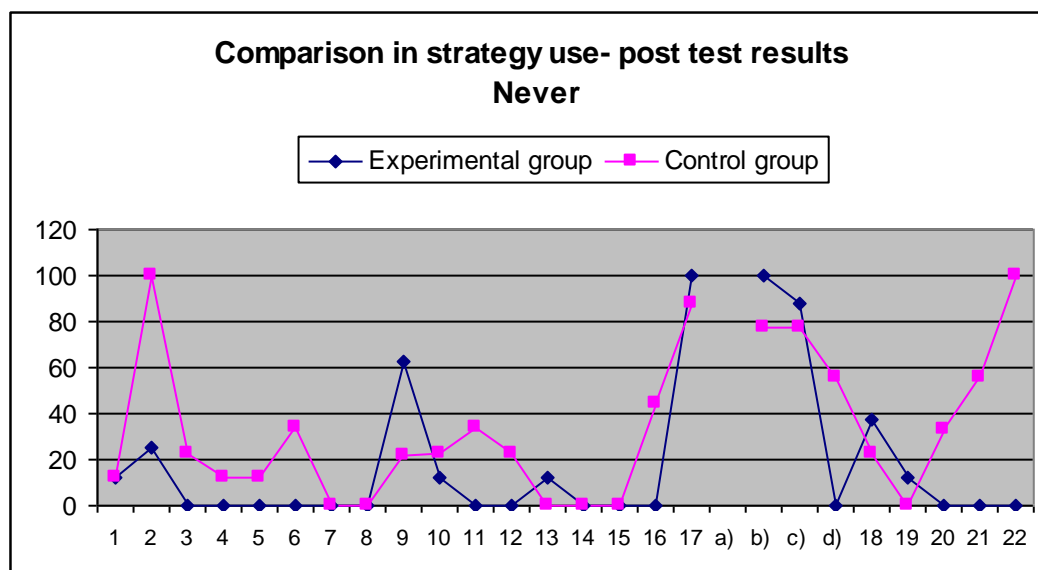
5.2.3 Comparison post tests survey of experimental and control groups

Strategy	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	Exp. G	Cont. G.	Exp. G	Cont. G.	Exp. G	Cont. G.
1. Using a dictionary	62.5	22	25	66	12.5	12
2. Reading books or magazines in English	50	0	50	0	25	100
3. Writing down unknown words in sentences	37.5	33	62.5	44	0	23
4. Reviewing English lessons frequently	62.5	44	37.5	44	0	12
5. Repeating or writing down new words several times	75	22	25	66	0	12
6. Summarizing lessons	87.5	12	12.5	55	0	34
7. Listening to music in English	50	56	50	44	0	0
8. Watching movies and TV programs in English	50	56	50	44	0	0
9. Watching videos oriented in class	0	22	25	56	62.5	22
10. Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people	12.5	33	37.5	44	12.5	23
11. Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people	25	22	75	44	0	34
12. Centering attention in listening exercises, and avoiding any distraction	100	33	0	44	0	23
13. Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it's general or specific and paying attention to it.	37.5	56	50	44	12.5	0
14. Working with y classmates or in groups and helping each other	50	88	50	12	0	0
15. Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English	62.5	56	37.5	44	0	0
16. Predicting before listening activities	12.5	12	87.5	44	0	44
17. When you don't know how to say a word in a conversation you:						
a) don't say anything	0	12	0	12	100	88
b) Use gestures	0	12	0	22	100	77
c) Use synonyms	12.5	12	0	22	87.5	77
d) Ask somebody how to say it	37.5	33	62.5	12	0	56
18. Listening to the news or other radio programs in English	0	33	62.5	44	37.5	23
19. Planning before an English speaking activity	50	66	37.5	34	12.5	0
20. Setting objectives in learning English	50	55	50	12	0	33
21. Inferring what an activity is about by looking at the pictures or at an idea presented	37.5	22	62.5	22	0	56
22. Writing a class diary	100	0	0	0	0	100

5.3 Graphics

5.3.1 Comparison Experimental and control group (post tests survey results)

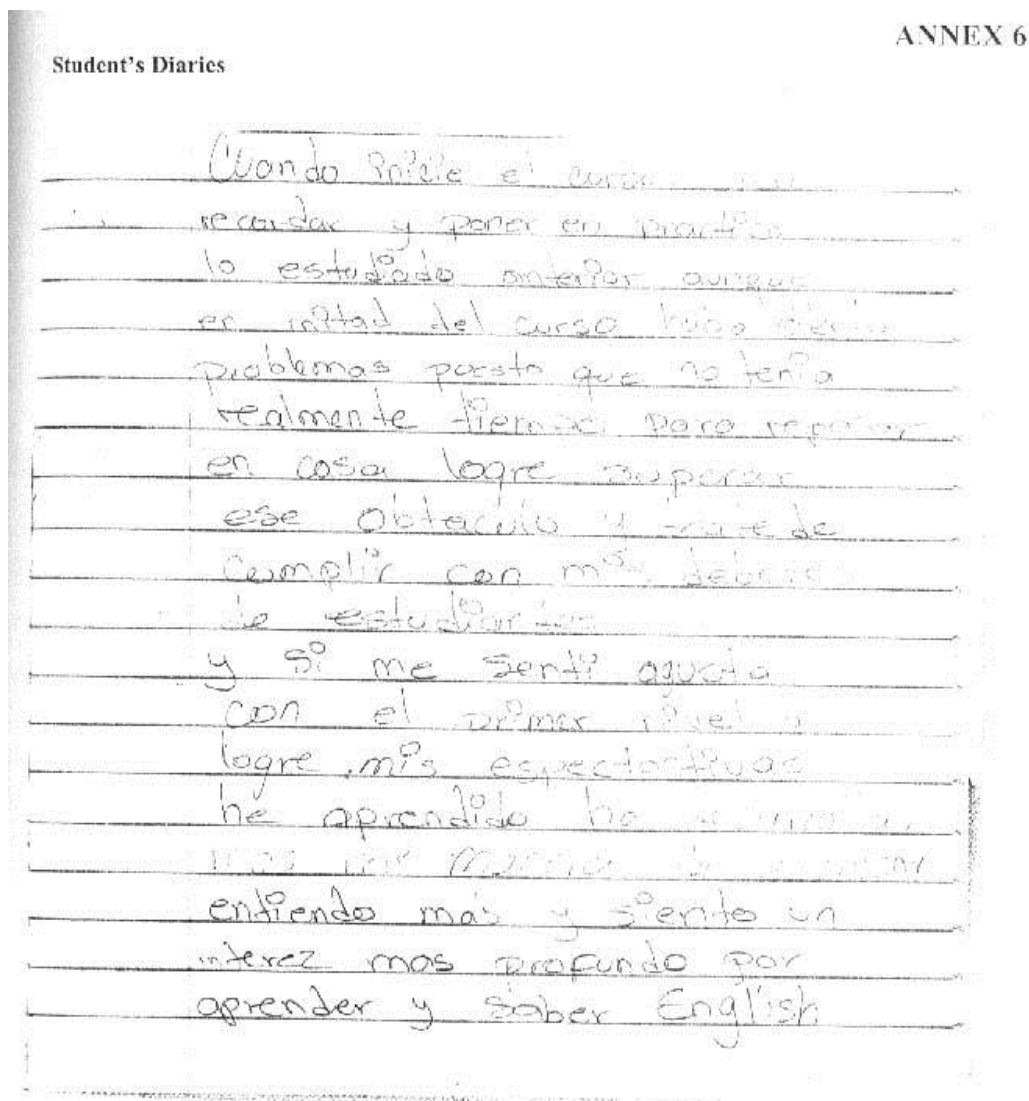




Strategy

1. Using a dictionary
2. Reading books or magazines in English
3. Writing down unknown words in sentences
4. Reviewing English lessons frequently
5. Repeating or writing down new words several times
6. Summarizing lessons
7. Listening to music in English
8. Watching movies and TV programs in English
9. Watching videos oriented in class
10. Seeking practice opportunities with English speaking people
11. Seeking practice opportunities with native English speaking people
12. Centering attention in listening exercises, and avoiding any distraction
13. Identifying the purpose of a listening exercise, if it's general or specific and paying attention to it.
14. Working with y classmates or in groups and helping each other
15. Trying to relax if feeling nervous when saying something in English
16. Predicting before listening activities
17. When you don't know how to say a word in a conversation you:
 - a) don't say anything
 - b) Use gestures
 - c) Use synonyms
 - d) Ask somebody how to say it
18. Listening to the news or other radio programs in English
19. Planning before an English speaking activity
20. Setting objectives in learning English
21. Inferring what an activity is about by looking at the pictures or at an idea presented

Annex 6. Students' Diaries



Evaluación

Hasta ahora siento que he aprendido bastante como presentarme, darle la bienvenida a otras personas, preguntar cosas personales como de su familia sus gustos.

También mucho vocabulario nuevo. aunque siento que tengo que estudiar mas y practicar los números sobre todo y el uso de have y has and do, does.

Tengo que mejorar en practicar los ejercicios y aprender el nuevo vocabulario y expresiones.

Pienso que hemos tenido buenas estrategias como pensar antes en palabras claves y luego contestar los ejercicios, también hablar con otras personas que hablan Inglés.

Lo que no he hecho es buscar palabras parecidas que me hagan recordar nuevas palabras en Inglés. me parece que es mas difícil aprender dos palabras o luego me confundo que letra llevaria la palabra por estar pensando en una parecida. Bueno también a veces me retraso en escribir los diarios y tengo que mejorar en eso.

el día de hoy la profesora
vuelve a explicar la hora.

En esta explicación ya
está bien como es la hora,
pero a una velocidad.

Lo que más me gusta
es haber los reloj en el
cuaderno y preguntarle la
hora a los alumnos.

También explico cuando
se usa el (do) y el (does)
eso me ayuda a entender
mejor.

También repetimos la pronunciación
de las monedas y billetes de E.E.U.U.

ANNEX 7

PRE-TEST.

PART I

Estimado alumno:

Le solicito su cooperación para contestar este cuestionario sobre algunos aspectos relacionados con el aprendizaje del idioma, especialmente en el uso de estrategias.

NAME _____ AGE _____

1.- ¿Por qué estás aprendiendo inglés?

Por el trabajo _____ voy a viajar _____ fue donde me ubicaron _____ quiero ser profesor de Inglés _____

2.- Marque con una X el nivel de importancia que tienen para usted las 4 habilidades en el aprendizaje de Inglés. Justifique su respuesta.

	Muy importante	No tan importante
Habla y escucha		
Escritura		
Lectura		
Todas		

Por qué _____

3.- ¿Cual de las habilidades del idioma te parece mas difícil de aprender?

Lectura _____ escritura _____ habla _____ escucha _____ todas _____

Por qué _____

4.- ¿Que influencia tiene para usted la actitud del profesor para el buen aprendizaje del idioma Inglés?

	BASTANTE	POCA	NINGUNA
Motiva			
Da confianza			
Dinámico			
Creativo			

PART 2.

5. Marque con una x en la casilla que corresponde a la frecuencia con que usted está usando las siguientes estrategias dentro y fuera del aula

		SIEMPRE	A VECES	NUNCA
1	Escribir un diario de las clase			
2	Uso diccionario			
3	Leo libros o revistas			
4	Escribo las nuevas palabras en oraciones			
5	Repaso las lecciones de Ingles con frecuencia			
6	Repito o escribo las palabras nuevas varias veces			
7	Hago resúmenes de las nuevas lecciones			
8	Escucho música en Ingles			
9	Escucho noticias u otros programas del radio en ingles			
10	Veó programas , películas en Ingles			
11	Veó videos orientados en clase			
12	Busco oportunidades para conversar con otras personas que hablan ingles			
13	Busco oportunidades para hablar con personas nativos de Ingles			
14	Centro mi atención en los ejercicios de listening y evito cualquier distracción			
15	Identifico claramente el propósito de un ejercicio de listening, si es general o específico y dirijo mi atención sobre esto			
16	Predigo lo que voy a escuchar			
17	Evalúo o reflexiono sobre mi progreso			
18	Trabajo con mi compañero inmediato o en grupo y nos ayudamos el uno al otro			
19	Trato de relajarme si siento temor o nervios cuando tengo que decir algo en ingles, contestar o preguntar			
20	Cuando no se como se dice una palabra que necesito en una conversación: a. me quedo callado b. uso gestos o mímicas c. busco un sinónimo d. le pregunto a otro como se dice			

Gracias por su colaboración.

ANNEX 8

POST-TEST

Marque con una x en la casilla que corresponde a la frecuencia con que usted está usando las siguientes estrategias dentro y fuera del aula

	SIEMPRE	A VECES	NUNCA
1. Escribir un diario de la clase			
2. Uso diccionario			
3. Leo libros o revistas			
4. Escribo las nuevas palabras en oraciones			
5. Repaso las lecciones de Inglés con frecuencia			
6. Repito o escribo las palabras nuevas varias veces			
7. Hago resúmenes de las nuevas lecciones			
8. Escucho música en Inglés			
9. Escucho noticias u otros programas del radio en inglés			
10. Veo programas , películas en Inglés			
11. Veo videos orientados en clase			
12. Busco oportunidades para conversar con otras personas que hablan inglés			
13. Busco oportunidades para hablar con personas nativos de Inglés			
14. Centro mi atención en los ejercicios de listening y evito cualquier distracción			
15. Identifico claramente el propósito de un ejercicio de listening , si es general o específico y dirijo mi atención sobre esto			
16. Predigo lo que voy a escuchar			
17. Evalúo o reflexiono sobre mi progreso			
18. Trabajo con mi compañero inmediato o en grupo y nos ayudamos el uno al otro			
19. Trato de relajarme si siento temor o nervios cuando tengo que decir algo en inglés, contestar o preguntar			
20. Cuando no se como se dice una palabra que necesito en una conversación: c. me quedo callado f. uso gestos o mímicas g. busco un sinónimo h. le pregunto a otro como se dice			

1. ¿Que utilidad han tenido para usted el uso de las estrategias antes mencionadas en el aprendizaje de Ingles durante el curso?
2. ¿Cree usted que su nivel de Ingles ha progresado en el transcurso de estas semanas de clase?
bastante _____ un poco _____ nada _____
3. Ha disfrutado las actividades realizadas en clase?
Bastante _____ un poco _____ nada _____
Cuales? _____
4. Cree que las diferentes actividades realizadas dentro y fuera del aula de clase le han ayudado a aprender mas vocabulario?
bastante _____ un poco _____ nada _____
5. Se le hace un poco mas fácil comunicarse en ingles ahora que al inicio del curso aunque no sepa todas las palabras de lo que quiere decir?
bastante _____ un poco _____ nada _____
6. Cuando trabaja en pareja, su compañero (a) comprende todo lo que usted le dice?
bastante _____ un poco _____ nada _____
7. ¿Comprende ahora mas un ejercicio de comprensión de escucha del casete que al inicio?
bastante _____ un poco _____ no _____
8. ¿Que le ha ayudado o impedido en el avance de su comprensión?

9. ¿Que porcentaje considera usted que ahora comprende de una conversación, entrevista, etc., del casete con acento nativo?
100% _____ 75% _____ 50% _____ 25% _____
10. ¿Se siente mas relajado ahora para las exposiciones orales individuales o en grupo que al inicio del semestre?
Bastante _____ poco _____ nada _____
Por que? _____
11. ¿Cual habilidad cree usted que se ha desarrollado o practicado más en el transcurso de los periodos de clase?
Listening _____ speaking _____ reading _____ writing _____ --

21 th April 2004	April 23 th 20
<p>4 Vimos el uso del</p> <p>4 <u>Does</u> y como usarlo</p> <p>oraciones negativas</p> <p>afirmativas. El Do</p> <p>utiliza en I, you, we, they.</p> <p>1 Does en it, she, it.</p> <p>no introducir el do</p> <p>preguntas.</p> <p>como responderlas en</p> <p>utilizando el mismo.</p> <p>o que es algo que no</p> <p>esta solo a mi</p> <p>a algunos de mis</p> <p>padres tambien y es</p> <p>como y cuando usar</p> <p>Do, y el Does.</p>	<p>Escuchamos el cassette.</p> <p>en la cinta especificaba,</p> <p>una muchacha como era</p> <p>su apartamento. decia</p> <p>que era muy pequeño.</p> <p>Las otras 3 grabaciones</p> <p>decian que el apartamento</p> <p>era muy grande, que era</p> <p>muy lindo, que era de</p> <p>dos pisos. etc.</p> <p>con esta clase no tuve</p> <p>problemas porque era</p> <p>escuchar la cinta y gracias</p> <p>a Dios estaba muy clara.</p>

news word.

Not, at all — de nada

straight on — seguido

Thank you anyway — gracias de todas formas

upstairs — sobre las escaleras.

21 of april

El día de hoy estudiamos

Simple present tense.

(Do, Does)

Do solo se utiliza con I, you, we and They y does con He, she and It.

Do is an auxiliary, y se utiliza para preguntar o dar respuestas negativas y afirmativas; además se puede usar con el have.

el día de hoy completamos el folleto de practice (Grammar Focus)

14th
April 2004.

Unit 5
Where?

Hoy comenzamos la unidad 5,
miramos el uso del **there is** and
there are

Aprender a describir la casa, junto
con las cosas que hay en ella.

Diferenciamos las cosas, por ej:
There is a sofa in the living room.

Hicimos como practica describir
nuestra casa.

Practicamos el listening haciendo
de ~~nuestro~~ dos descripciones una casa
y un apartamento. y las cosas que
habian en ellos

Miramos el presente simple

Affirmative	I live	Negative	I do not live (don't)
	you live		you don't live
	he/she/it lives		he/she/it doesn't live
	you live		you don't
	we live		we don't
	they live		they don't

14 STORE DETECTIVES

You and your partner are detectives in a busy department store in London. You have just seen two people shop-lifting on the closed-circuit T.V. Describe them so that your partner can catch them. Then listen to your partner's description of two more shop-lifters.



A similar game could be played using the students' own family photos.

Ask the students to bring in one photo of each member of their families.

They should sit in groups of three or four and put all the photos face down in a pile in the middle of the group. They should then shuffle the pile thoroughly and lay the photos out face up in a row.

Each student should then describe their family, and the others should decide which photos belong to that family.

15

Wallflowers

Type of activity

pair work
information gap

Function practised

describing people's clothes

Exponent

Who is the ... girl/boy?

Who is the girl/boy with the ...?

Which one?

The one.

The one with ...

Lexical areas

clothes, adjectives describing physical appearance

Essential vocabulary

mustache, glasses, beard, blond, dark, straight, curly, long, short, hair, dress, jeans, blouse, skirt, shirt, trousers, shoes, suit, boots, jacket, T-shirt, pullover

How to use the game

Copy enough pictures for all the students in the class. Divide the class into pairs and give out copies of the pictures A and B to each pair.

They should not look at each other's pictures.

Tell the students that they are at a party with a friend.

They know the names of some of the people at the party, but not others.

The object of the game is to find the names of all the people at the party. To do this, they must describe the people they don't know to their partner, and ask who they are.

16

Looking for a hotel

Type of activity

whole class
simulation

Function practised

reserving hotel accommodation

Exponent

Have you got/Can I have a single/double room with shower?
both for one/two/three nights?

How much is a single/double room?

Lexical areas

hotel accommodation

Essential vocabulary

single, double, twin-bedded room, shower, bath, numbers, prices

How to use the game

The game may be played with any number of students. Four students will be hotel receptionists and the rest will be tourists looking for hotel rooms, although if you have a large class (20 or over) it would be better to have two receptionists at each desk to deal with queues. Copy one hotel list for each receptionist and one tourist card for each tourist.

Clear the desks and chairs from the middle of the room and situate four hotel reception desks in different corners of the room. The receptionists should sit behind these.

Give each receptionist a different hotel room list and give out the tourist cards to the remaining students.

The object of the game is to find the cheapest possible hotel room for the night. To do this, students will have to visit each hotel in turn to enquire about availability and prices of rooms. They should then return to the hotel of their choice to make a firm booking.

There is always the possibility that the room of their choice may have been taken while they were making up their minds. They will then have to make a second choice.

If you want to increase the element of competition in the game with a small class, cross out some of the rooms on the hotel lists as if they were already taken.

17

Getting there on time

Type of activity

whole class
simulation

Function practised

asking for travel information

Exponent

Is there a train/bus/piece of train ... in the morning?

afternoon/evening?

What time/When does it leave/arrive?

Lexical areas

times, 24-hour clock, places

Essential vocabulary

airport, stop, bus station, train station, hospital, football match, theatre, meeting, sports centre, bus stop, meet, visit, catch, arrive, leave, see, take, on, finish, fly, start, finish, walk, must, need, days of the week, times (24-hour clock)

How to use the game

Clear desks and chairs from the centre of the class.

Divide the class into two groups.

Divide one half into three groups and the other into groups of three and four.

Set up three desks in different areas of the room to represent bus station, railway station and airport.

11



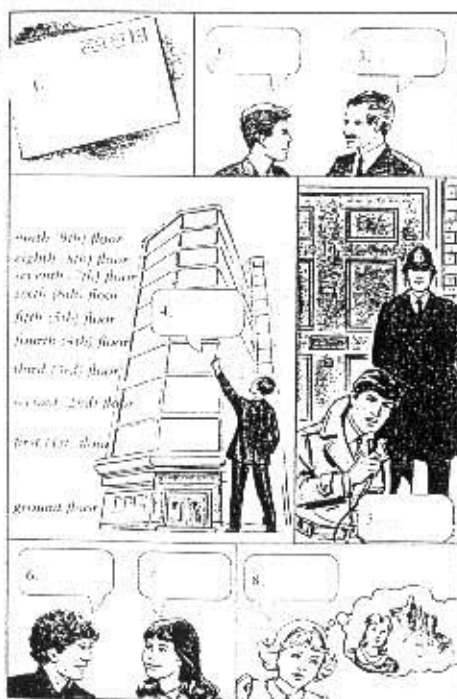
5B Where do you work?

Where people live and work; Simple Present tense; at, in and on; phone numbers; first, second, ...

1 Look at the pictures. Put the words in the right places.

The Prime Minister lives at 10 Downing Street.
My sister works in Edinburgh.
'Where do you live, Mary?' 'In Aston Street.'
'What's your address?' '39 Morrison Avenue.'
We live in a small flat on the fourth floor.

Mrs L. Williams
17 Harcourt Road
Coventry
West Midlands CV2 4BJ



2 At, in or on?

- I live _____ 37 Valley Road.
- 'Where do you work?' '_____ New York.'
- My office is _____ the fourteenth floor.
- Jack lives _____ a big old house in Washington.
- 'Where do you live?' '_____ 116 New Street.'

3 Listening for information. Copy the table. Then listen to the conversations, and write the correct letters after the names. (There are only three phone numbers.)

NAME	LIVES	PHONE NUMBER
John		X
Peter Matthews		
Alice's mother		
Mr Billows		
Mrs Webber	G	
Mrs Simon		

- A at 16 Norris Road, Bedford V 314 6928
B in a small flat in North London W 41632
C in Birmingham X 314 68 99
D at 116 Market Street Y 41785
E in New York Z 41758
F on the fourth floor.
G at 60 Hamilton Road, Gloucester.

4 You all work in the same building; it has got eight floors. Your teacher will tell you your jobs and phone numbers and what floor you work on. Find out who works where; ask for phone numbers.
Example:

'What do you do?' 'What's your phone number?'
'I'm an engineer.' '633 4945.'
'And where do you work?' 'Thanks.'
'I work on the fourth floor.'

Now look at the example and complete the sentences.

An engineer works (or Two engineers work) on the fourth floor, and his/her/their phone number is 633 4945.

- _____ work(s) on the ground floor, and phone number is _____
- _____ work(s) on the first floor, and _____
- _____ work(s) on the _____, and _____
- _____ on the _____, and _____
- _____ and _____
- _____
- _____

I live	we live
you live	you live
he/she/it lives	they live

Learn: work, live, at, big, small, flat, street, road, floor, ground floor, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, phone number.

UNIT 1

Getting to Know Someone

Before listening

Talking points

1) Look at this photo of a boy and girl meeting for the first time on a beach in Portugal. What do you think they might talk to one another about? Talk to the rest of the class. Agree on at least six points and write them below.

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____



Listening tasks

3) The letter on the right is from the girl on the tape to an English friend of hers. It contains ten blanks. Before you listen again, read the letter and with a partner fill in as many of the blanks as you can. Then listen to the tape again to check your answers and fill in the other blanks.

Apartment 334
Miraflores
Praia do Castelo
Algarve
Portugal
27th July

Dear Julie,

This is just a quick note to tell you a little about my holidays. I'm staying in the Algarve and it's really beautiful. I've already been here for _____ weeks and am staying a _____ or all. The weather's great, the windsurfing is fantastic and I've met all sorts of interesting people. Today, for instance, I met this boy from _____. How different his life is from mine! He just finished _____ and decided to go off round the _____. If he needs _____ for his holiday he just works where he is. Lucky him! Anyway, he arrived in _____ a couple of weeks ago, after going to the United States. Guess what! He only goes to places where the _____ is good. Just like me! I've invited him to _____ so he can tell us more about his _____. I'm very interested in finding out more about where he's been and about life in Australia. Enough for now, more news later. Don't study too hard, and I hope you and your family are well. See you soon.

Love,
Carla

Memory check

4) What else do you remember about the boy and the girl? Make notes, then discuss them with a partner.

Language points

Asking questions to get to know someone

5) What questions do you ask if you want to find out the following information about people? Fill in the blanks below.

- a) name What's your name?
 b) nationality _____
 c) occupation _____
 d) marital status _____
 e) home town _____
 f) interests _____

Compare your answers with a partner.

Extension activities

Oral work

Getting to know someone

6) What would you like to know about the other students in your class? In groups of four, decide on questions and write them on the questionnaire below. Then go round the class and ask the questions to at least three people. Make notes of their answers on the questionnaire.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS			
	Name	Name	Name	Name
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Written work

7) Imagine you are on holiday and writing the letter on the right to a friend. Complete it with information about your holiday.

Dear _____,
 I'm writing to tell you about my holiday. I'm
 playing _____ and I've
 been here for _____ so far. It's
 the weather _____
 Every day I _____ and in the
 evening _____
 I have met lots of people. One of them _____
 I hope you are well. Write to me soon
 Love,

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY TRAINING

QUESTIONS	A LOT OF		A LITTLE		NONE	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do you think your level of English has progressed during these weeks?	12	43%	16	57%		
Have you enjoyed the activities in the classroom?	15	54%	13	46%		
Have the different activities in and outside the classroom helped you to learn more vocabulary?	16	57%	12	43%		
Is it easier for you to communicate now than at the beginning of the course, (although you do not know all the words you need ?	10	36	16	57%	2	7
Do you understand more a listening exercise from the tape now?	14	50%	12	43%	2	7%
Do you feel more relaxed now before the oral presentations?	12	43%	16	57%		
How much benefit have the strategies used in and outside the classroom had in your learning during these course	15	53%	10	36	3	11

What percentage of a listening exercise from the tape do you understand now?

	F	%
100%	0	0
75%	10	36
50%	14	50
25%	4	14

What skills do you consider has been more practiced in the classroom?

	F	%
Listening	9	32%
Speaking	13	46
Reading	2	7
Writing	4	14

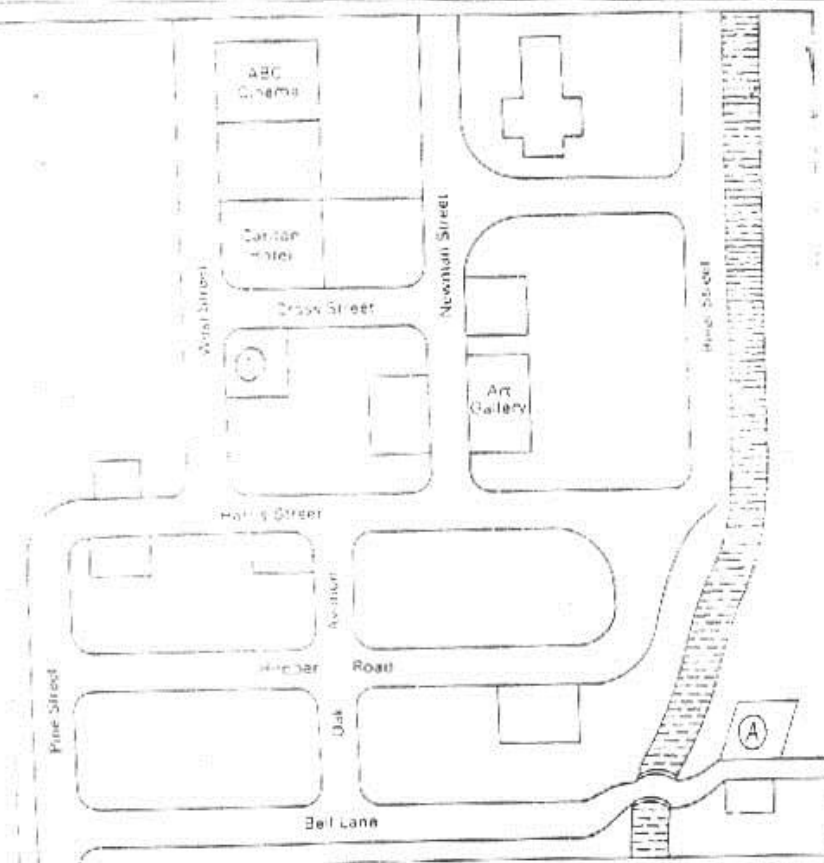
ANNEX 12

N°	Canal	Nombre del Estudiante
1	u9	Acosta Mariela Eulitt
2	u9	Artola Ledesma Lechea
3	u9	Benech H. Rafael Lucelina
4	u9	Bermudez Diaz Luden Abianud
5	u9	Braun Bultmann Resano del C
6	u9	Calina Montoya Silvio
7	u9	Calero Calero Alfonso
8	u9	Calero Lopez Carlina
9	u9	Campes Briones Mariagraci
10	u9	Castillo Osorio Silvio J.
11	u9	Castro Castella Tanya Mariana
12	u9	Delgado Martinez Dora del C
13	u9	Espinoza Lopez Luis Alberto
14	u9	Garcia Alvarado Gloria Cecilia
15	u9	Garcia Castro Jesusa Reyna
16	u9	Garcia Martinez Sonora JS.
17	u9	Garcia Mendoza Brenda JA
18	u9	Garcia Velazquez Rudy daniel
19	u9	Garcia Zuniga Ana pro
20	u9	Gastines Llanos Lina
21	u9	Gastines Martinez Patricia
22	u9	Labas Lopez Eduin H
23	u9	Lachner Sierra Bruna
24	u9	Marinello Roberto Mariano
25	u9	Morales Llanos Patricia
26	u9	Morales Gonzalez Nancy Ann
27	u9	Morales Tellez Samantha B
28	u9	Morales Tellez Patricia
29	u9	Morales Tellez Patricia
30	u9	Morales Tellez Patricia
31	u9	Morales Tellez Patricia

N°	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
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31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31

1.- Listen and fill in the blanks.

Name	Age	Nationality	Married?	JOB	ADDRESS
Mr Lewis		American		Engineer	Brent Close
Anne Marie Moffat					The cleve
Anna			NO		17 church st.
Mr lake		Don't know		(chld)	Rosehill



ANNEX 14

Preguntas
1. Las actividades que me han gustado más es escuchar canciones, hacer resúmenes por que siento que aprendo más y me gusta la música y las exposiciones por que me gusta hablar.
2. Haciendo resúmenes por que al ir escribiendo se van fijando algunas palabras y luego la repaso de los temas que vi.

3. Me han gustado menos las últimas dos actividades con unos papeletos que llamamos que buscar o encontrar lo que tenía el mismo concepto. no me gusta porque mis compañeros no hablan en español o solo miran el papel que tengo.
4. han sido más útiles los listén, escribir en el diario, las exposiciones porque me voy gustando a aprender y me gusta la Proactividad.

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④ Cuales le han gustado más? ¿Por qué?

Me ha gustado escuchar música y cantar, visitar el laboratorio, ver videos, hacer diálogos, etc. Por que es muy interesante.

⑤ Con cuales ha aprendido más?

¿Por qué? he aprendido más con los nuevos vocabularios, las canciones y con la practica que hacemos en pareja? porque nos ayuda en la mejora y el aprendizaje de la lengua.

⑥ ¿Cuales le han gustado menos? ¿Por qué?

Me ha gustado menos algunos testigos porque algunos son muy difíciles de entender.

⑦ ¿Cuales han sido más útiles? por qué?

han sido mas utiles para mi los nuevos vocabularios y los diálogos porque mejoran mi habla y hacen que me comunique mejor.

1- las actividades que usted
 hace son muy interesantes
 eso de darnos vocabulario
 es muy bueno. Siento
 que aprendo palabras
 nuevas, al conversar
 para mí ha tenido
 bastante éxito ya que
 nos quita la pena de
 hablar con otras personas
 y exponer también, ya me he
 acostumbrado a estar adelante
 y concentrarme en lo que estoy
 diciendo, en el inglés es muy
 importante estar atento, usted
 sabe como instruirnos, aunque
 a veces no estamos poniendo
 atención. Usted nos repite
 Pero esto yo sé que es para
 nosotros bien. Me gusta mucho
 la forma de enseñar.

2- Por las actividades que he
 aprendido muy bien como
 exposición, conversar con otros,
 escuchar, y escribir vocabulario.
 Me gusta mucho que quita