WORKSHOP
Integrating Training in Learning Strategies with Regular Language Instruction

Abstract (75 words)

The learner's active role and personal involvement in the learning process are fundamental. Learners must take responsibility for their own learning, developing autonomy and skills in learning how-to-learn. How can we devise and successfully put into practice a programme that focuses not only on the development of language skills, but also on the development of skills in learning how-to-learn?

I invite you to discover, by engaging in hands-on activities, the wonders such a programme can make on our students.

500 word Summary

Over the last few decades, in almost every sphere of education, a gradual but significant shift has taken place resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater stress on learners and learning. We have come to realize that the learner's active role and personal involvement in the learning process are fundamental. Especially important is the view that learners must take responsibility for their own learning, developing autonomy and skills in learning how-to-learn.

However, making students “take charge of their own learning process” is no easy job. It requires, of course, a sound knowledge of the conditions that make it possible; but also a very special attitude on the part of the teacher towards the learner and the learning process.

Taking this into consideration, the aim of the workshop is:
- to raise the participants’ awareness of the need to engage the learners in their learning process, and encourage teachers to adopt an attitude towards empowering the learners.

- to provide the participants with the information and tools necessary to implement a programme in which training in learning strategies is integrated with regular language instruction so that students develop not only language skills, but also skills in learning how-to-learn.

Taking as a starting point research into first and second language acquisition, participants will be invited to reflect on the nature of language learning and consider its practical implications, particularly as regards classroom management, teacher and learner roles and classroom activities. Getting closer to the workshop’s main concern, participants will learn about the results of learning strategy research in second language acquisition. We will be dealing with the definition and classification of learning strategies, and we will consider different approaches to instruction in learning strategies. Although I will explain certain basic concepts, the “expository mode” will be kept to a minimum and at all times participants will be encouraged to participate in a relaxed atmosphere, so that they are not just “told about” but experience “first hand” the environment and conditions that foster learning.

This theoretical framework will constitute the foundation for the practical part of the workshop, in which participants will learn how to integrate training in learning strategies with regular language instruction by adopting a “direct” approach, rather than an “indirect” or “implicit” one. We will be working with learning strategies particularly useful for the development of reading and listening comprehension, speaking and writing, as well as for vocabulary learning. The different steps in the training process will be carefully explained and participants will engage in hands-on activities that will be of direct
relevance to the classroom situation. In fact, I will pay special attention to the usefulness of each of the activities included in the workshop.

All the material is very interesting. In my case, adding this strong learning strategy component to my classes was extremely rewarding and a fascinating experience, which I am most willing to share with other teachers.

Cecilia Lainz

Bibliography
- Rubin, Joan (March, 1975) What the “Good Language Learner” can Teach Us, TESOL Quarterly Volume 9 – No 1, pages 41 – 51.
Biographical Note

My name is Cecilia Lainz and I am 36 years old. Last year I finished my "Adscripción a Método II" at the I.E.S. en Lenguas Vivas - Juan Ramón Fernández. I wrote my final paper about learning strategies, a subject I have studied in great depth and which has come to fascinate me. At present I am working at Escuela Argentina Modelo, teaching English to 4th and 5th year students at secondary level. In my classes all my efforts are orientated towards empowering the students and I am having very rewarding results. I would really like to share my experience with other teachers.