THE 12 Cs FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS:
USING STRATEGIES TO CONNECT LEARNERS WITH KNOWLEDGE

Educators now recognize and value the importance of fostering independent learning. This is equally true for English language learners (ELLs). Because their individual experience with English is considerably less, ELLs need consistent and varied feedback. Along with feedback, however, developing greater independence in learning is an equally important and necessary goal for ELLs.

In effect, independence in learning is a metacognitive process involving strategies for self-coordinating learning. Strategies enable learners to connect their knowledge and understanding of content through review, monitoring, practice, and negotiation of meaning in calculated, organized ways. Strategies blend learning styles, or individual learning characteristics, to increase learner potential for academic success.

This Bulletin focuses on Rebecca Oxford's categorization of direct and indirect strategies. **Direct strategies** are for managing language and are divided into **memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies**. Memory strategies help store and retrieve information; cognitive strategies expand the variety of ways learners can understand and produce language; and compensation strategies create possibilities for using language despite gaps of knowledge.

**Indirect strategies** are for managing learning in general and are divided into **metacognitive, affective, and social strategies**. Metacognitive strategies allow learners to monitor and plan how they learn; affective strategies regulate emotional, motivational, and attitudinal aspects of learning; and social strategies promote interactive learning.

**SOME DIRECT STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LANGUAGE**

**Memory Strategies.** Grouping, or categorizing language material into meaningful units, can make information easier to remember. Word types such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.; topics such as sports, geography, family, etc.; functions such as how to cook, driving a car, etc.; and purposes such as apologizing, inviting, disagreeing, etc., are ways learners can categorize, and, therefore, remember language.

**Visualization** helps learners to remember by creating images about content, either mentally or through drawings.

**Structured review**ing, in spaced intervals from short periods of time (e.g., every ten or 20 minutes) to longer periods of time (one day, two days, every week, etc.) helps retain information.

**Cognitive Strategies.** Rehearse**ing**, or saying
something repeatedly such as sounds, words, phrases or patterns of language, can help learners embed language. Analyzing contrastively, words and patterns in English with those in one's first language helps learners to understand new language.

Notetaking, summarizing, and highlighting help to create organization through which learners structure and recognize content language.

Compensation Strategies. Asking for help is a strategy which learners can use to overcome limitations in oral skills, reading, or writing. Altering the message, by omitting pieces of information or making ideas simpler, is a temporary way learners can communicate ideas as they attempt to use language.

Circumlocution is the ability to convey ideas, when specific words are not known (e.g., "what you use to cut the grass with").

SOME INDIRECT STRATEGIES FOR ORGANIZING LEARNING

Metacognitive Strategies. Overviewing is a means of focusing on key information and associating it with what is known. This strategy involves understanding why the information is being taught, learning the relevant vocabulary, and making associations.

Organizing involves understanding and using appropriate conditions related to maximizing learning, such as organizing one's schedule and physical setting and using appropriate notebooks or other study aids.

Self-evaluating is a means of periodically checking personal growth in learning to determine how much progress is being made.

Affective Strategies. Making positive statements, orally or in written form, increases self-confidence and helps the learner understand what s/he already knows.

Pushing oneself to take risks, tempered with good judgment, enables the learner to expand the boundaries of applying knowledge.

Using a checklist with questions about feelings, attitudes, and motivation helps the learner discover personal information about learning tasks.

Social Strategies. Asking for clarification or verification is a strategy which enables learners to elicit paraphrasing or repetition to gain more understanding.

Cooperating with peers enables learners to improve their learning through interaction with one or more learners.

Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings helps learners develop empathy, thereby increasing trust with each other; as a result, the potential for learners to communicate successfully with each other in the process of learning is increased.

CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE WITH LEARNING THROUGH STRATEGIES

Use of learning strategies should be a long-term process with all students in any classroom learning context. Strategies need to be taught and used consistently.

The following is a suggested procedure for incorporating strategies in teaching:

1. Consider the learners' needs. Age, content, and academic progress are some of the criteria for selecting which strategies to use and how to use them.

2. Teach a strategy directly but integrate it with a task. Although modeling is helpful, strategies need to be explicitly discussed to be understood. Provide reinforcement of the strategy by demonstrating how it can be applied to a given task.

3. Show how any given strategy can be transferred from one task to another. This can be accomplished through a discussion about how a given strategy can be applied to other tasks.

4. Evaluate the use of a strategy by eliciting self-evaluation from the learner. A brief reflection on how well the strategy worked, how it could be used better, or what substitute strategy could work more effectively, enables the learner to have a greater understanding of a particular strategy for independent learning.

ELLs will greatly benefit by learning through strategy training, as it fosters intrinsic motivation through independent learning, thus increasing the potential for academic success.

SOURCE: