The effect of cognitive learning strategy instruction: An EFL classroom study

Introduction

The purpose of the study reported here was twofold. First, to test the generalisability of research in cognitive strategy instruction to the field of second language acquisition (SLA), and second, to integrate learner and task variables in order to examine transfer of learning strategies in the second language (SL) context. Up to this time, most previous transfer research in strategy use and problem-solving has reported on either the importance of learner variables in instruction and transfer or the conditions of applicability within a task that effect transfer. In this study both learner variables and task conditions were investigated for their effect on notetaking strategy instruction and transfer as it affects comprehension of textual materials in the EFL context.

Previous research has suggested that strategy transfer is affected by three variables: first, instruction; second, the task; and third, the learner. First, instruction involves the amount of practice, especially practice that varies in content and difficulty (Brown, 1994; Salomon & Perkins, 1989), the amount of guided feedback (Crisafi & Brown, 1983), the amount of instruction necessary for learning (Salomon & Perkins, 1989) and whether or not the learner is able to successfully apply a strategy. Instruction also includes the priming of conditional knowledge through the use of hints or explicit direction to use a particular strategy. In addition, a successful strategy training program must include instruction aimed at developing the learners' awareness of strategy use in conjunction with cognitive learning strategy use. (Bassok & Holyoak, 1989; Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993).

Second, transfer is enhanced by task similarity. The probability of transfer from one task to another is increased on a new task when the new task is similar to a previous task (Ross, 1987), and the learner understands the conditions under which the strategy applies (Pressley, Levin, & Ghatala, 1984).

Third, learner variables include variables such as the degree of control learners have over a strategy (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). This again involves the extent of initial learning of the strategy (Ellis, 1965), whether or not learners consciously evaluate strategy effectiveness (Clifford, 1984), and whether or not learners attribute their success to effort or to use of the strategy (Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993). It also includes whether or not learners can screen out distracting thoughts when trying to analyse a new problem (Kuhl, 1985) and the degree of relevant declarative they knowledge possess (Bjork & Jacobs, 1985). Finally, as an extension of the previous point, in order for the learners to transfer strategies, they must recognise the new task as an appropriate context for strategy implementation (Bransford, Sherwood, Vye, & Rieser, 1986; Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993).

Resulting from a review of the literature, the general questions addressed by this study on strategy instruction and transfer are twofold. First, do the general findings on strategy learning and transfer apply in the SL learning classroom? And second, to what extent is transfer an interaction of task and learner variables? In order to address these questions a notetaking strategy instruction program based on reading materials will be implemented.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

1) Learners who receive notetaking strategy instruction will perform more successfully on the posttest and transfer tests than those who do not.
2) Among learners who receive strategy instruction those who use the notetaking strategy will perform more successfully on the posttest and transfer tests than those who do not.

3) Similar content on the posttest and transfer tests will lead to greater transfer of the notetaking strategy by strategy users.

4) There is a relationship between notetaking strategy mastery as indicated by the number of main ideas correctly identified on the posttest and posttest performance.

The study

Participants

Participants included 338 out of 2000 first-year learners enrolled in a core English course at a Japanese institute of technology. The average age of the learners was 19 years and 74 women and 264 men participated. The learners were Japanese and had an average of 6 years English language learning as a part of their secondary school education (years 7-12). The English level of the learners was basic and their ability to communicate in English minimal. The learners were randomly assigned to 10 classes and then the classes were randomly assigned into two groups, 6 classes totaling 203 learners to the control group and 4 classes totaling 135 learners to the treatment group.

Materials

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to survey the learners on certain metacognitive aspects of the study, such as whether they actively choose to use a particular strategy and whether they believed it to be useful. The questionnaire was administered twice during the study. The first time was immediately after the pretest and the second time was immediately after the posttest. The questionnaire consisted of 10 positive statements designed to elicit from the learners information in three general areas: vocabulary work, as it may have been used to clarify the contents; notetaking and marking the text, particularly focused on the strategy instruction; the learner's awareness of studying and test performance, that is, how the learner approached their study and their perception of the value of their strategy. The questionnaire the learners completed was in Japanese. The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into Japanese and then translated back into English by an independent translator to check for discrepancies between the original English version and the Japanese translation.

Instructional materials

The materials used for notetaking strategy instruction were developed by the researcher. These consisted of teacher materials and learner worksheets in two areas. The first area focused on what is notetaking and why take notes, and the second area focused on the technique for taking notes the learners were to be instructed in. The curriculum materials on identifying main idea, identifying supporting detail, and transitions were part of the regular syllabus for the course. All learners completed these materials as part of the set syllabus.

Reading Passages

The reading passages used for testing were carefully selected. The reading passages contained approximately the same number of words and same number of main ideas. The
pretest passage was 338-words in length, the posttest passage was 330-words in length, transfer test A contained 334-words, and transfer test B, 310-words. All the reading passages contained four main ideas. Inter-rater consensus, that is, agreement amongst the evaluators on the criteria required for the reading passages was addressed by the use of three independent raters. Two of the raters were first language English (L1) speakers and the third rater was Japanese L1. These reading passages were then used in the study to collect information on the learning strategies used by learners in studying them.

Comprehension questions

A set of 10 comprehension questions were developed to assess the learners' ability to understand the content for each of the reading passages. Understanding the content of the text was essential in order for the learners to be able to proceed one step further in recognising levels of information, for example, main ideas, supporting ideas, examples and explanations. The comprehension questions were rated for appropriateness and relative difficulty by two independent raters. Of the raters, one rater was English L1 and the other rater was Japanese L1. The questions used a three choice model for the response, True/False/Doesn't Say.

**Design**

The study was of a mixed design. There was one between factor (instruction) and a within subject factor based on the order in which participants received Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B. There was a repeated measure with three trial factors: posttest, Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B. All classes took the pretest, the posttest, and the transfer tests and completed the same class work, except for the notetaking strategy training program which only the treatment group received. All instruction and testing were in English. During the discussion periods, however, both English and Japanese were permitted, and the questionnaire which the learners completed after the pretest and again after the posttest, was in Japanese. The study took place over a nine-week period out of a ten-week term. The pretest and posttest data were collected at two points seven weeks apart. The transfer test data were collected ten to twelve days after the posttest. During the intervening three class periods between the posttest and first transfer test, learners studied listening and speaking tasks, with no reference to the strategy training program.

Instruction took place during the regularly scheduled English periods. Each period was 75 minutes of which the study occupied 45 minutes of each session. During the 45 minutes of study oriented time, the learners continued from the set syllabus on reading skills plus other materials introduced for the study. In the 30 minutes of non-study time in each session, the learners followed the same curriculum which focused on listening and conversation.

All participants in the study were taught a sequence of lessons in which they learned about basic reading skills including recognising main ideas, finding supporting ideas and recognising transition words. The instructional period for these three topics took place over the same period of time for all participants and with the same materials.

However, learners in the strategy-training group received instruction in the three reading skills of recognising main ideas, finding supporting ideas, and transition words, plus the treatment which was a specific notetaking strategy. The notetaking strategy instruction dealt with why notetaking helps us to remember, the difference between useful and less useful notes, and recognising when it would be appropriate to take notes. In addition to receiving
this instruction, the treatment group learners practiced notetaking on a variety of readings and then practiced using the information for specific tasks such as discussion questions.

Congruent with the treatment group, the control group was taught the sequence of lessons in which they learned about recognising main ideas, finding supporting ideas, and transitions and spent the same amount of class time as the treatment group interacting with the reading materials. However, the control group did not receive the treatment instruction on notetaking or the benefits of it. In order to keep the time frame of the control group in line with that of the treatment group, after the initial pretest, rather than move straight into main idea recognition, the control group completed listening and conversation tasks for three periods while the treatment group received three lessons of specific notetaking strategy training.

Variables

Variance in performance and transfer was analysed as a function of: 1) pretest performance, 2) strategy instruction, 3) strategy use, 4) task similarity, and 5) learner's awareness of the strategy.

First, a pretest in which the learners were asked to complete a reading comprehension test based on a homework reading passage prior to commencement of the strategy instruction program was conducted. The purpose of testing prior to the introduction of treatment materials was to establish a baseline for all learners and to ascertain their notetaking styles.

Second, strategy instruction was determined by which of the groups the learners were in. The notetaking strategy instruction group received explicit instruction and practice with the notetaking strategy. The control group did not receive any practice or instruction or feedback on the notetaking strategy.

Third, strategy use was determined by categorising the learners' study notes in one of two groups, notetaking strategy use as per instruction and non-use.

Fourth, task similarity was defined by the content of Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B. There were two types of transfer tests. One transfer test was of the same content area as the posttest and the other transfer test was unrelated in content. The transfer tasks were identified as Task A (similar content to the posttest) and Task B (dissimilar content to the posttest). Successful use of the notetaking strategy was measured by the percentage of main ideas identified, as was evident in the learners' notes for each of the post training tests (posttest, Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B).

Fifth, a qualitative measure was also used to obtain insights into the learners' awareness of the treatment and the benefits of it. The questionnaire assessed how the learners studied the assigned readings. It dealt with information such as, the extent to which the learners consciously evaluated strategy effectiveness, whether they attributed their success to effort or to use of the strategy, whether they were able to screen out distracting thoughts when trying to study the materials, and the extent to which relevant declarative knowledge was advantageous. The questionnaire also asked learners to describe how they organised the information during the study period, for example, organising the information into a notetaking format.

Counterbalancing

In order to monitor differences due to the order of completion of the two transfer tasks, Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B were completed by all learners, however, the order in
which they were completed was varied by classes. Classes in both conditions were randomly assigned to complete either Transfer Test A or Transfer Test B first.

Scoring

In order to measure differences between the treatment and control groups on the pretest, posttest, Transfer Test A, and Transfer Test B, performance on each of the reading comprehension tests was determined by how many of the ten questions the learner could correctly answer.

For the treatment group, in order to score notetaking strategy use, all materials used by the learners in studying each of the reading passages were collected for the pretest, posttest, Transfer Test A, and Transfer Test B, and rated according to use of the notetaking strategy. Notetaking strategy use for the pretest, posttest, transfer Test A, and Transfer Test B was rated on a dichotomous scale of use or no use. Use indicated that the learner had attempted to apply the notetaking strategy as taught during the training period and no use indicated that there was no evidence of the notetaking strategy in the learner's study papers. The criteria used for notetaking strategy use was that the learner's study notes showed evidence of the notetaking strategy in which they had been instructed. This evidence was recognisable by the format of the notetaking strategy in which learners were required to divide their page with a one-third of a page margin to the left.

After notetaking strategy use had been established, the notes of those learners who had attempted to use the notetaking strategy were then rated for the number of main ideas identified. The main ideas for each of the reading passages had already been identified at the time when the reading selections were made. Two independent readers rated the study materials to establish interrater consensus for both evidence of notetaking strategy use and number of main ideas identified. There was no disagreement between readers over notetaking strategy use as the format was distinctive. However, there was the need for the raters to discuss some of the main ideas as they were presented in the learners' notes. The uncertainty of the raters over the main ideas was caused by the learners' rephrasing the main idea to the point where the meaning became obscured. A main idea was considered acceptable if the raters agreed, after discussion, that even though the information was obscure, the idea was intact.

In order to score the questionnaire responses, a response of "No" to a statement was scored as "1" and a response of "Yes" to a statement was scored a "2".

Data analysis

Firstly, the Fully factorial (M)ANOVA function of SYSTAT was used. This is a least squares program which minimises problems associated with unequal group sizes. Next, as each learner in this study was measured under each of the three test conditions (posttest, Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B), repeated measures analyses were used in analysing the data. Thirdly, to establish a baseline for testing, differences between the control and treatment groups pretest scores were examined through a one-way ANOVA. In order to check for teacher effects in the delivery of instruction, a one-way ANOVA using a teacher variable with the posttest scores was conducted with both the treatment and control conditions.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a notetaking strategy training program which was conducted in a school setting using school-type tasks with SL learners. As anticipated, the
results were consistent with the general findings of learning strategy research and transfer. The results also offer evidence for a tangible relationship between learning strategy use and success in L2 classroom learning. Like previous research, significantly greater overall use of learning strategies among more successful learners was found. At the same time, these findings revealed more complex patterns of use and transfer than have appeared in earlier studies, and have given a clearer picture of the relationship between learning strategy use, transfer and successful language learning.

**Pretest scores**

At the beginning of the study all learners completed the pretest. The purpose in this was to establish a baseline from which gains on the posttest could be measured. Results indicated that there was no significant difference \( F[1, 335] < 0.01, p = .95 \) in learners' performance on the pretest across the control and treatment conditions, \( (M = 6.08, SD = 1.37, \text{ and } M = 6.08, SD = 1.07, \text{ respectively}) \).

**Teacher effect**

Within the design of the study precautions were taken to ensure that the results were not due to variations in teacher or to the order in which the tests were completed. A close look at the relationship between condition, class, and pretest and posttest performance indicated there was no significant difference between the control group for Teacher A and the control group for Teacher B on the posttest. However, a significant improvement was noted at the posttest between the performance of the treatment groups when compared to the control groups for Teacher A and Teacher B, \( F(1, 316) = 6.72, p = 0.01, (\text{increase of 1.75 and 1.11, respectively}) \).

The difference in performance between the teachers' treatment groups on the posttest is not considered an impediment to the study. The key finding here is that the treatment groups for both teachers outperformed their respective control groups and the control group as a whole, thus verifying the positive effect of the strategy notetaking instruction.

**Strategy instruction and test performance**

These findings support hypothesis 1 which maintained that learners who received notetaking strategy instruction would perform more successfully on the posttest and the objective format transfer tests than those who did not. Not only was the significant interaction, \( F(1, 303) = 142.45, p = .01 \), important because it indicated that the strategy instruction program had been successful and therefore a point from which transfer could be measured was established, but also for two other reasons. Firstly, it confirmed key instructional practices from the literature on strategy instruction in a SL context. And secondly, it indicated that learners in the treatment group successfully transferred the notetaking strategy to other tasks. The treatment group performed significantly better on the posttest, Transfer Test A and Transfer Test B, \( (M = 8.38, SD = 1.07, M = 8.34, SD = 1.31, \text{ and } M = 7.78, SD = 1.69, \text{ respectively}) \), compared to the control group \( (M = 7.03, SD = 1.35, M = 6.70, SD = 1.83, \text{ and } M = 6.59, SD = 1.58, \text{ respectively}) \).

Knowing the difficulties attached to strategy instruction (e.g., Bassok & Holyoak, 1989; Crisafi & Brown, 1983; Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993) the significant effect of the instruction program has confirmed the positive contribution of factors which were incorporated into the strategy instruction program. These factors included the learners' awareness of strategy use and conducting the instruction program over an adequate period of time to allow for learning to take place. The literature on strategy training strongly indicates that a successful instruction program must include explicit instruction on the
learners’ awareness of strategy use such as the positive contribution use makes to the learners’ study. In addition, strategy instruction should also provide opportunities for the learners to reflect on the success of their strategies (e.g., Clifford, 1984; Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993). Furthermore, the significant effect of the instruction program confirmed that strategy instruction must be conducted over a substantial enough period of time to allow for learning (Salomon & Perkins, 1989).

Other factors may also have contributed to the positive effect of the strategy instruction program in this study. For example, the notetaking strategy was immediately relevant and useful to the class work which the learners were completing (e.g., Pressley et al., 1984), for example, comprehension of the class and homework reading materials. The learners’ understanding of notetaking as a useful strategy was developed through presenting notetaking as a way of contributing to the comprehension process. The development of conceptual knowledge in this way is considered in the research literature to increase the likelihood of use (e.g., Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993). Congruent with suggestions in the literature, strategy instruction was further supported by variety in the content of the reading materials on which the learners practiced notetaking (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). In addition, the readings were selected at a level of complexity comparable to learners’ ability. That is, the readings were not so easy as to not require strategy use, but not so difficult that the learners were unable to understand the content if they worked at it.

These findings on condition, strategy use, and test performance can be summarised as follows: although learners within the treatment group performed more successfully than learners in the control group, learners within the treatment group who applied the strategy performed best. This also lends support to the second hypothesis investigated in this study.

Strategy use and test performance

In addressing hypotheses 2, 3 and 4, only the treatment group was used to measure transfer of the strategy and the effects of strategy mastery on the post training tests.

Hypothesis 2 stated that among learners who received strategy instruction those who used the notetaking strategy would perform more successfully on the posttest and transfer tests than those who did not. Within the treatment group, learners who used the strategy performed significantly better than those who did not, \( F(11, 122) = 5.47, p = 0.02 \).

The distinction between hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 1 is important. This study would claim that not only is exposure to strategy instruction important, but learners who apply the strategy will perform more successfully. That this was found to be the case was not unexpected as the strategy instruction program made a deliberate effort to embrace factors that research had shown facilitate strategy transfer. As strategy learning and subsequent transfer are closely interwove, these factors are similar to the ones identified as factors which support successful strategy training programs. These include factors such as developing the learners’ awareness of strategy use and encouraging strategy evaluation.

The following are specific examples which have been identified as major contributors to transfer and which were incorporated into this study. First, clearly the training program included practice in strategy evaluation. Strategy evaluation has been noted as necessary to strategy transfer and a successful strategy program includes utility information as part of strategy instruction (e.g., Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993). One form of evaluation used in the training program was in the teaching on notetaking strategy use. The strategy training materials required learners think about the purpose and value of notetaking, and in the discussions that followed each set of comprehension questions the learners were asked to discuss the strategies that they had used in studying the reading. Another form of evaluation...
was between use and non-use of the notetaking strategy. The program started by having all learners complete the pretest which indicated that none of the learners used a notetaking strategy when studying the reading. When comparing their pretest performance with their own progress during the training program, it became apparent to the learners that the notetaking strategy was effective in promoting comprehension and higher test scores. This type of self evaluation continued throughout the training program and was one of the topics in the peer discussions.

A second factor that was included in the instruction program was information on notetaking as a strategy. This information was the content of the three introductory sessions of notetaking strategy instruction which the treatment group received. The presentation of information on notetaking as a strategy was aimed at developing the learners’ awareness and understanding of the strategy (e.g., Gagne et al., 1993). This was done by presenting information about what notetaking is, its purpose, and an example of an effective notetaking format and effective organisation within the format.

A third factor was the learners' ability to attribute success to use of the strategy and not to effort alone. Peer discussions were conducted during the study during which the learners were encouraged to reflect on and discuss their own performance across reading tasks.

**Strategy use and task similarity**

In addressing hypothesis 3, that is, similar content on the posttest and transfer tests would lead to greater transfer of the notetaking strategy by strategy users, the data indicated that this is not the case. Of the learners who used the notetaking strategy on the posttest \((n = 87)\), 71 of these applied the notetaking strategy to the similar task, Transfer Test A. In comparison, 77 learners who used the notetaking strategy on the posttest also used it on the dissimilar task, Transfer Test B.

**Mastery of strategy and score**

Hypothesis 4 stated that there was a relationship between notetaking strategy mastery as indicated by the number of main ideas correctly identified on the posttest and posttest performance. Hypothesis 4 was supported by the results of this study. There was a significant increase in the learners’ score on the posttest corresponding to the number of main ideas they correctly identified in their notes for that reading. Within the treatment group, the number of main ideas correctly identified on the posttest reading by learners had a significant effect on posttest scores, \(F(4, 122) = 6.58, p = 0.01\). The relationship is as follows, the more main ideas correctly identified by the learner then the higher the learner’s score. These findings are supported by the notetaking literature which claims that prose-learning strategies such as notetaking contribute to learning in two ways. Firstly, they enhance the learner's understanding and, secondly, they enhance the text's memorability by organising it into manageable units (Pressley, Levin, & Ghatala, 1984).

**Questionnaires**

The information from the questionnaire contributed to our understanding of the awareness of strategy use by the learners. The questionnaire contained a range of items that provided a portrait of how learners evaluated themselves in the three general areas of 1) vocabulary work, as it relates to understanding, 2) notetaking and marking the text, as it relates to the strategy instruction, and 3) changes within each group and between the groups from the pretest to the posttest.
On the pretest, both the treatment and control groups indicated that vocabulary work was the most popular method for studying the reading passage. This difference between the treatment and control conditions in posttest behaviour was evident also in the learners' study notes. In the study notes there is a shift in the treatment groups' notes away from vocabulary identification and towards notetaking as a strategy.

**Limitations for the study**

While the limitations within the study presented no problem in this context they should be considered when generalising the findings to other contexts. Limitations could include the homogeneous population, the low English level of the learners, and the inconsistency between some of the questionnaire responses and the learners' study notes.

While one of the most powerful aspects of this study was that it was conducted in the classroom within the confines of the existing curriculum, this also resulted in limitations as to what could be incorporated into the study. While the instruction program was successful, it was tailored to fit the term restrictions. For example, the time between the posttest and the transfer tests, of four class sessions was shorter than desired.

Other factors related to logistics of the study such as the choice of strategy for instruction, the way in which performance on the tests was measured, and how strategy use was measured should also be considered as limitations. For example, a specific notetaking strategy was chosen as the variable for instruction, objective criterial comprehension tests were used to measure performance, and a dichotomous variable was used to measure use of the notetaking strategy. The choice of a notetaking strategy for this study was a conscious effort to complement the content of the existing syllabus for the learners. The particular notetaking format was developed because it best suited the needs of these low level language learners and was not too complex to teach. The use of objective criterial comprehension tests was seen as the best choice of testing method in the classroom context. This context required a method of testing that was manageable within the time limit of the class and that was manageable for the teachers to score and return to the learners by the next class meeting. Also, the low level of the learners demanded a testing method that would not tax them with new vocabulary at the time of the test and yet would indicate the learners comprehension of the text.

**Implications for instruction**

The findings of this study suggest a number of implications for the classroom. First, the study has shown that incorporating strategy instruction into the curriculum is possible without requiring extensive revision. The notetaking strategy instruction was incorporated into the curriculum and while it required an additional three class periods, it did not disrupt the course syllabus or content.

Second, in this study those learners who received skill instruction within the notetaking framework performed more successfully than those who learned skills as isolated units. This highlights the need to teach skills, such as identifying main ideas, supporting ideas, and transition words, within a framework. A framework, such as the notetaking one used in this study, offers the learners opportunity to generalise and apply skills. The framework also gives a sense of cohesion and connectedness to the skills. That is, they are important elements of the notetaking process. Also, it is important that strategies, such as notetaking and skills associated with it, are seen by learners as relevant and useful in accomplishing course work.
Third, there are implications for instruction in the use of judicious instructional strategies in teaching. Research has shown that some of the difficulties in strategy training programs may be avoidable through the use of appropriate instructional strategies (e.g., Bassok & Holyoak, 1989; Gagne, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993). For example, it is important that a strategy training program allow for varied practice on materials (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). Varied practice includes the range of materials the learners are exposed to as well as the contexts for use. In this study, learners were given reading passages with different content in an attempt to expose them to a range of different content materials. Also, the reading materials used in class for practice were of varied length for the same reason, that is, that the learners understand that variation in the length and content of the readings does not need to inhibit strategy use. By addressing these two aspects of varied practice, the learners' can begin to develop a better understanding of appropriate occasions for strategy use and build toward more flexible use of the strategy (Bransford et al., 1986).

Another implication for instruction concerns the level of instructional materials used during the training program (Brown, 1994). For example, in this study, careful consideration was given to the choice of reading materials appropriate to the learners for both class practice and testing. The concern with the low—level learners in this study was that the materials would be too challenging and therefore they would not be able to practice notetaking. Furthermore, the use of "specific strategy knowledge" (Pressley, Levin, & Ghatala, 1984) about the strategy needs to be activated. Because of the critical role of the learners' understanding of strategy use, this is a key feature to successful strategy instruction. One way to address the issue of specific strategy knowledge is to focus on teaching the strategy in a problem-solving or interactive context.

A further implication for instruction is the benefit awareness of one's own use of strategies has on strategy transfer. This understanding can be promoted by self-evaluation processes and this can be easily incorporated into strategy training programs with positive results. Successful strategy transfer depends in the large part on the learner's conscious evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness. It appears from the research that possession of such beliefs by learners motivates use of the strategies to which the beliefs are attached (Cliford, 1984). Therefore, a successful strategy training program should spend time developing the learner's value for the strategy by building in mechanisms for strategy attribution, e.g., comparisons between own effort and strategy use. In this study, this was done by requiring the learners to keep all their readings, study notes on the readings, and tests in a folder. The folder was then used periodically by the learners to review their own individual progress. This was a time for self-evaluation in which learners could reflect and consider gains attributable to notetaking strategy use.

Conclusion

While L2 learners possess a variety of learning strategies they apply in studying prose, there is clearly room for improvement. By articulating the learning strategies used by successful L2 learners, we gain insight into the juxtaposition between what is a language specific need as opposed to a learning specific problem. In this study significant relationships between learning strategy use, task performance and subsequent transfer have been observed. These relationships serve to remind us that the L2 learning process is complex, and that a number of variables are involved, including but not limited to L2 proficiency.

Incorporating learning strategy instruction into L2 classroom teaching has a benefit of promoting a way of thinking, a way of approaching a learning task or similar problematic situations for our learners. Learners are coming into the L2 classroom with developing language skills and often, low level study or learning skills as well. Before they can become
successful learners, the dilemma of how to approach the learning process in the L2 context should be addressed. In response to the needs of students as learners, teaching learning strategies in the L2 classroom can provide them with further opportunities for success by encouraging learners to apply the learning strategies they have and also to develop new ones. The findings presented here serve as a reminder that SL classroom learning is a complex process, related to a number of variables including but not limited to language learning strategy use.

References


