Language Learning Strategies

(Adapted from Brown, 2001)

Research in language learning strategies has sought to understand what successful language learners do to contribute to their progress. The following is not an exhaustive list, but is intended to provide an overview of the types of behaviors of some language learners. Language learning strategies can be the focus of a language objective in a content lesson, and teachers can directly teach students a variety of strategies for becoming more efficient language learners.

Successful language learners:
- Take charge of their learning.
- Organize information about language.
- Are creative and experiment with grammar and words.
- Find opportunities to use language.
- Are tolerant of uncertainty and continue to listen even if they do not understand every word.
- Use memory strategies to help them remember.
- Use information about their own errors in a productive way.
- Use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language.
- Use contextual clues.
- Learn to make educated guesses.
- Learn chunks of language and formalized routines.
- Learn tricks to keep conversations going.
- Learn tricks to fill in gaps in their own conversational abilities.
- Learn different styles of speech and writing.

For a more extensive discussion of language learning strategies, see the following resources:

