

# The Importance of Learning Strategies in ELT

Sandra J. Briggs

TESOL Past President 2008-2009

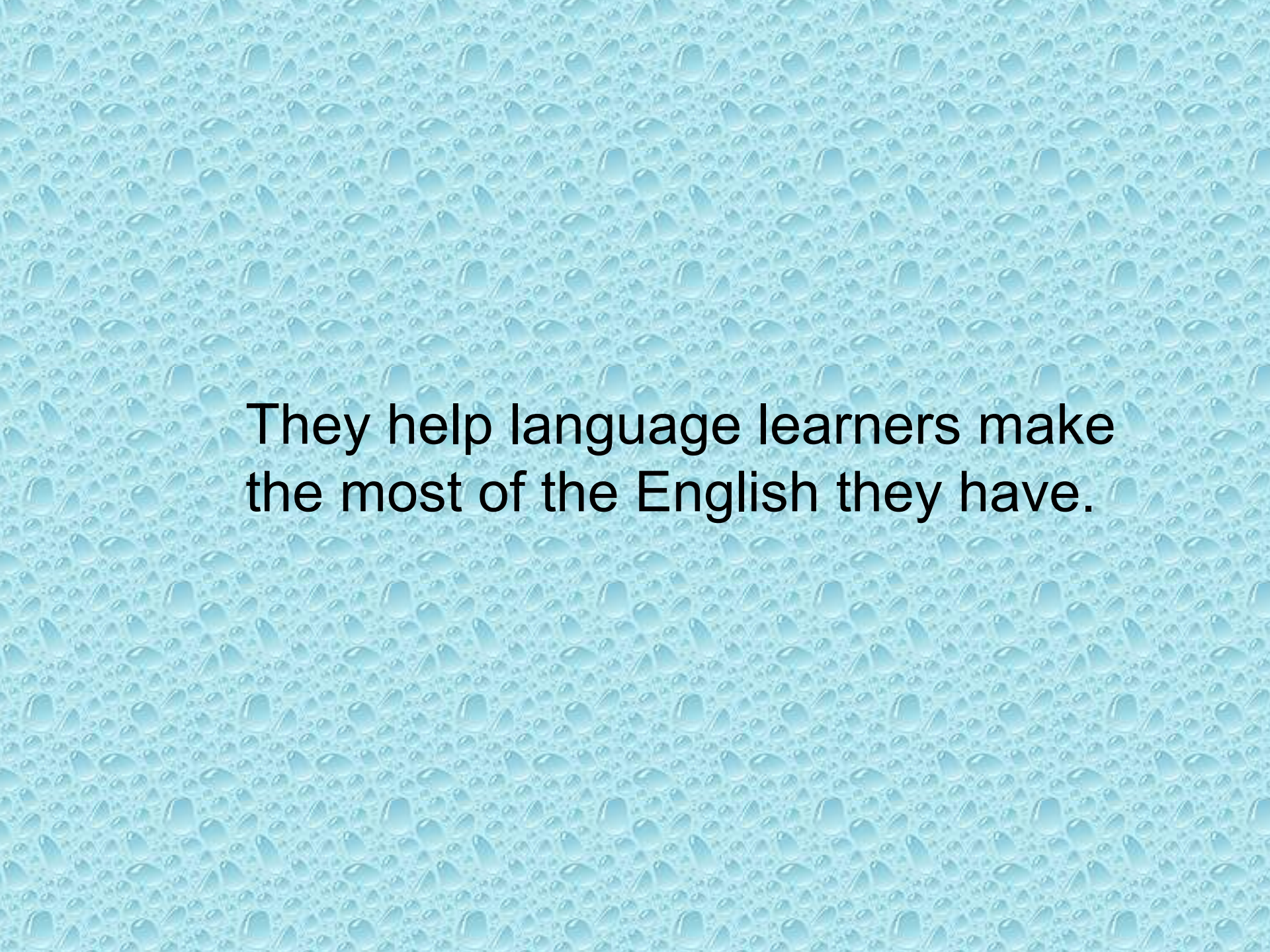
[sjbtbf@earthlink.net](mailto:sjbtbf@earthlink.net)

The background of the image is a dense, repeating pattern of small, realistic water droplets. Each droplet is rendered with soft shading and highlights, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. The droplets are scattered across a light blue, slightly textured surface, creating a fresh and clean aesthetic. The overall color palette is monochromatic, consisting of various shades of light blue and white.

Learning strategies are powerful.



They help language learners  
become independent learners.



They help language learners make  
the most of the English they have.

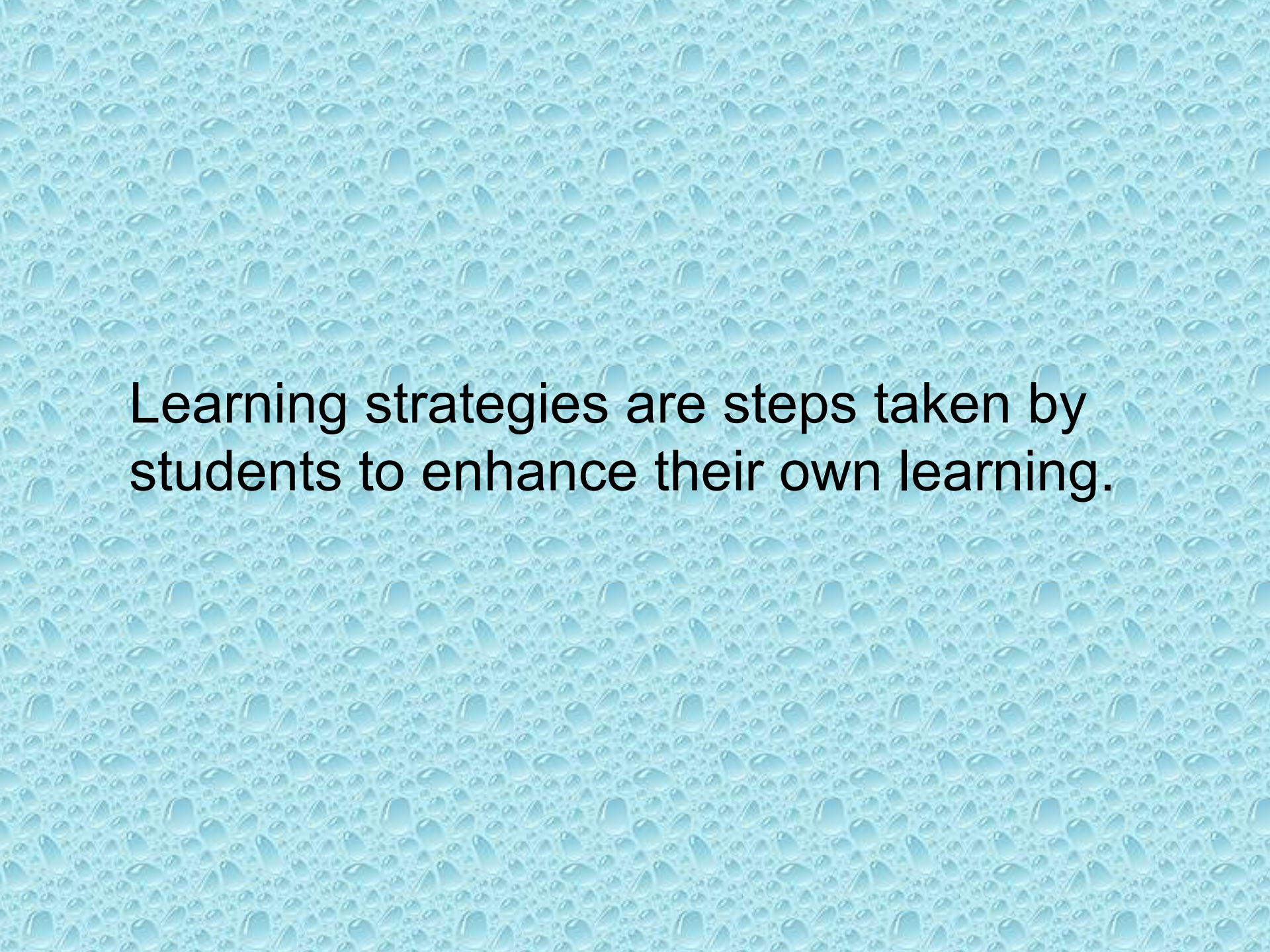
# I. Introduction

## II. Goals of This Talk

- Understanding learning strategies better
- Understanding better how to use them yourselves
- Understanding how to train your students to use them

### III. Definition

Oxford, Rebecca. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle



Learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning.



Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence.

Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

# IV. Two Learning Strategy Examples

# Jun Liu Example Learning Strategies

- Memorize.
- Take risks.
- Learn from your mistakes.

# National English Speaking Competition Example Learning Strategies

- Memorize.
- What could be others?

# V. Categories

- Direct Strategies
- Indirect Strategies
  - Metacognitive Strategies
  - Social/Affective Strategies

# Direct Strategies

These are memory, cognitive, compensation, and study skills. The learner uses these directly on the language.

# Direct Strategies

## Examples

- Have a key example.
- Take notes.
- Draw a picture.
- Summarize.
- Memorize.



# Metacognitive Strategies

You are using metacognitive strategies when you think about language and organize your learning.

# Metacognitive Strategies

## Examples

- Set up goals and objectives.
- Evaluate how you are doing.

# Social/Affective Strategies

When you use social/affective strategies, you are thinking about how you feel about your language learning and you are working with other people to learn.

# Affective Strategies

## Examples

- Listen to your body.
- Encourage yourself.

# Social Strategies

## Examples

- Ask questions of other people.
- Cooperate with others on a task.

# Social/Affective Strategies

## Example

Discuss your feelings with another person.

# VI. My Experience with Learning Strategies

# Finding Out About Learning Strategies

Rubin, Joan & Thompson, Irene. (1982). *How to Be a More Successful Language Learner*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle



# Rubin Strategies

- Find your own way.
- Make your own opportunities.
- Learn to live with uncertainty.
- Make errors work.

Oxford, Rebecca. (1990).  
*Language Learning  
Strategies: What Every  
Teacher Should Know.*  
Boston: Heinle & Heinle

O'Malley, J. Michael and  
Chamot, Anna Uhl. (1990).  
*Learning Strategies in Second  
Language Acquisition*. New  
York: Cambridge University  
Press.

# Using Language Strategies in My Classes

- Experiment.
- Emphasize that it is a process.
- Pick one strategy.
- Research it.
- Teach and practice it.
- Allow students to decide if it is right for them.

# Lessons from Research Done in My Classroom

- All students use some strategies.
- Beginning students need learning strategies as much, if not more, than more advanced students.
- Teachers can teach learning strategies and learners can learn them.

# Writing *Grammar: Strategies and Practice*

- Making my own strategy list
- Writing learning strategy lessons

*Grammar: Strategies and Practice:  
Beginning Unit 1 Page 7*

**Strategies: Using Learning Strategies**

1. Learning strategies help you learn faster.
2. This book tells you about different learning strategies. You will practice the learning strategies. They will help you understand the grammar in the book.

3. For example, paying attention is a learning strategy. In this unit, you use the verb **to be** in sentences, **yes/no** questions, and information questions. Pay attention to the word order to help you understand.

Sentence:

Subject + verb + rest of sentence + .

**Yes/No** question:

Verb + subject + rest of sentence + ?



Information question:

Question word + verb + subject + rest of sentence + ?

## **Exercise 9: Practicing a New Strategy**

Find some sentences, **yes/no** questions, and information questions in this unit. Run your finger under the words in each sentence and name the word order.

**Practice for us that is not in the book:**

**Sentence:** Mr. Jones works with children.

**Yes/no question:** Are you a science teacher?

**Information question:** What is your name?

*Grammar: Strategies and Practice:*  
*Advanced Unit 11 Page 85*

**Strategies: Using Telegraphic Writing**

1. In telegraphic writing, you omit all words that the reader can put back in automatically. Repeated words and phrases, articles, parts of verbs, and polite extras can usually be omitted. The words in light type in this passage can be omitted to leave telegraphic writing.

***Please send \$150 to me immediately. I am stranded in a small town with a broken-down car.***

*2. When are you brainstorming and trying to get your ideas down on paper, it is helpful to use words, phrases, and telegraphic writing rather than full sentences.*

*3. There are other reasons to omit unnecessary words. You may want to take notes, and you can take them faster if you don't have to write out everything*

4. Telegraphic writing will help you recognize the most important part of any message and will help you record it in the least space and in the least amount of time.

### **Exercise 11: Practicing a New Strategy**

Go back to an explanation of a grammar point in this book. Take notes on the explanation in telegraphic writing. Then set your notes aside for a day or two. Read them again to see if they make

sense to you. Then give them to a partner to see if he or she can put back in the words that you took out.

# VII. How Learning Strategies Help Teachers

- Planning lessons
- Using learning strategies for yourselves

# VIII. Learning Strategies Everywhere

Once you start looking for learning strategies, they are everywhere.



# IX. Conclusion

Remember?

- Learning strategies are powerful.
- They help language learners become independent learners.
- They help language learners make the most of the English they have.

# IX. Conclusion

I hope that you leave

- understanding learning strategies better
- understanding better how to use them yourselves
- Understanding how to train your students to use them

# IX. Conclusions

I also hope that you see

- how learning strategies can make your students more self-reliant
- that your students can truly be in charge of their own learning