REVISTA DESEMPENHO

PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA

ISSN: 1677-9797

LEARNER TRAINING FOR LEARNER AUTONOMYIN THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

Rosângela Guimarães Seba[1]

Instituto Federal do Espírito Santo (IFES)

Abstract: This paper discusses ways in which trainingand awareness raising of learning strategies may help students achieve a certain degree of autonomy in their foreign language learning process, more specifically in reading in English. First,some key concepts of Learner Training and Autonomy are introduced, followed by a description of the author's own experience in teaching a group of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students in Vitória. Concluding, this paper comments on the process of integrating learner training to the teaching of reading skills in English, stressing its relevance and effectiveness.

Keywords: Learner Training; Autonomy; Reading; English for Academic Purposes.

Resumo: Este artigo discute as maneiras como o treinamento e a conscientização das estratégias de aprendizagem podem auxiliar os alunos a alcançar certo grau de autonomia no processo de aprendizagem de língua estrangeira, mais especificamente, na leitura em inglês. Primeiramente, alguns conceitos básicos sobre formação do aluno e autonomia são apresentados, seguidos da descrição de uma experiência vivenciada pela autora deste artigo como professora de Inglês para Fins Acadêmicos para um grupo de universitários em Vitória. Concluindo, o artigo apresenta considerações acerca da integração do treinamento em estratégias de aprendizagem ao ensino da leitura em inglês, enfatizando sua relevância e eficácia.

Palavras-chave: Formação do aprendiz; Autonomia; Leitura; Inglês para Fins Acadêmicos.

Introduction:

Helping students to become aware that a large part of their learning depends on themselves is a basic issue in modern education. This certainly represents, however, a great

[1] RosângelaGuimarães Seba is a Professor of English at the Federal Institute of Espirito Santo (IFES) in Vitoria, ES, Brazil. She has a Doctorate degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics form Federal Universities in Brazil and a Post-Graduation certificate in TESOL from the University of Edinburgh. She's been working as an ESP/EAP teacher in Brazil for more than 20 years. Her research interests are learning strategies, reading for academic purposes, transfer of learning.

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

challenge for the majority of students and especially for many language teachers who must accept their role not as the promoter of academic and intellectual growth only, but mainly as the ones who must encourage students to believe in their potentialities to learn the target language by providing them with the tools to become independent.

Obviously, learning how to become an autonomous language learner is not an easy task (OXFORD, 1990) and requires careful preparation (ELLIS & SINCLAIR, 1989; DICKINSON, 1987). Similarly, as teachers, we need to learn how to contribute effectively to our students' growth from our new role.

Although "few teachers will disagree with the importance of helping language learners become more autonomous as learners"(WENDEN, 1991,p.11), there seems to be conflicting opinions on what autonomy is and how it should be approached. It's seen variously as "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action (LITTLE, 1991, p.4); "complete responsibility for one's learning, carried out without the involvement of a teacher or pedagogical materials" (DICKINSON, 1987, p.11); "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (HOLEC,1981, p.3). Nevertheless, there is a broad agreement that autonomy is a complex process that includes recognition of one's own needs, the self-assignment of learning goals, the choice and use of appropriate learning strategies, and critical evaluation of one's own learning progress.

Dickinson (*op.cit.*) notes that there are various terms which are usually related to autonomy: *self-instruction, self-access learning, independent learning, self-direction, semi-autonomy,* for example. In this paper, the terms *autonomy* and *independent learning* are used synonymously.

By clearly understanding what autonomy is and by recognizing its value, learners may decide on the degree of autonomy they want to achieve. For Little (1991, p.5), however, autonomy is rarely, if ever, realized in its "ideal" state. Dickinson (1992, p.14-15) also agrees that there are various levels of autonomy, but not all learners wish to aim at a higher level. "For the majority of learners", he explains, "an active involvement with the target language may be sufficient." By comparing the natural contexts of learning "which allow for the

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

exercise of independence and the contrived contexts of instruction which enforce constraints", Widdowson (1991, p. 189) suggests that only partial authority is possible to be developed in the classroom: "the learner really only exercises autonomy within the limits set by the teacher authority. The learner is never really independent; it's the kind of dependency which changes". Stevick (1980, p.17) points out that teacher control and learner initiative are not in opposite directions. In his opinion, there must be a way "which will allow the teacher to keep nearly 100 per cent of the 'control' while at the same time the learner is exercising 100 per cent of the 'initiative'". "In exercising control",Stevick continues, "the teacher is giving some kind of order, or structure, to the learning space of the student. In encouraging him to take 'initiative', she's allowing him to work and to grow within that space" (p.20). The author reminds us, language teachers, that's our responsibility is to provide students with the right amount of learning space. Therefore, we must recognize that our role in promoting autonomy is central to its success.

Having become clear that it is the responsibility of every language teacher to help students become more independent in how they think, act and learn, the question then is: *How do we make our language student into an autonomous learner*? i.e., into someone who has the desire to be independent, a free and creative individual, competent to meet and deal with life problems; who has the ability of organizing his own learning, selecting and finding his own sources, using appropriate learning strategies, and specially someone who can think critically and make his own decisions about learning?

Dickinson (1992) points out that becoming an autonomous learner does not happen automatically. It's something that is achieved gradually, with practice. Therefore, there is a need to support learners as they move towards autonomy. Without suitable guidance, students will not be able to become aware of the possibilities. It's interesting to note that this view seems strongly influenced by Vygotskyan psychology which sees this scaffolding process, and the affinity and interaction between the teacher and learners as essential to learner's development. This process of helping learners to acquire and develop skills, confidence and the knowledge of appropriate techniques or strategies necessary for autonomy has generally

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

been referred to as *learner training* or *strategy training.* Even though, *learner training* is a term which has been widely used, I agree with Chamot and Rubin (1994, p. 771) when they state that *training* is an inappropriate word, because it implies "some kind of lockstep procedure that does not allow for individual differences", and suggest "*education*, *instruction* or *development* in its place. In this paper, however, the term *learner training* is used as a general cover term.

According to Williams & Burden (1997, p. 147), learner training in second and foreign language teaching, "is concerned with ways of teaching learners explicitly the techniques of learning a language, and an awareness of how and when to use strategies to enable them to become self-directed". Ellis and Sinclair (1989, p.10) describes the main purpose of a learner training course as being "to start the learners on their own journeys towards self-knowledge and self-reliance". Dickinson (1992, p.18) observes two, not unrelated aspects of this process: in order to maximize their potential and contribute to their autonomy, language learners need both psychological and methodological preparation.

Psychological Preparation for Autonomy

This involves the discovery of ways to produce a general motivation to learn how to learn. Stimulating learners to use their potentialities for maximum self-realization is the most important task of the language teacher – we are the key to motivation in the classroom. In addition to being the kind of person with whom the student can identify, our beliefs and attitudes can influence his/her behavior. All learners come to class with their own particular beliefs about the language teacher, the process of language learning and about themselves as learners. Because they influence students' actual approach to learning (WENDEN& RUBIN, 1987; ELLIS, 1995; WILLIAMS & BURDEN, 1997), by investigating these beliefs, the teacher can better understand the decisions students make in their learning, and therefore, provide more effective training, taking account of individual learner differences.

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

The conflict between teachers' beliefs about language learning and those of the students may be one of the main causes of unsuccessful learning. Therefore, in order to help learners become more independent, it's vital that both the teacher and students share a common view of the value of autonomy. Thus, when preparing learners for autonomy, the first step is to convince them of its importance and to help them understand and accept their new role in the process. The purpose then is to help "learners gradually replace the belief that they are 'consumers' of language courses with the belief that they can be 'producers' of their own learning program and that this is their right" (HOLEC, 1987). In order to alter the relatively passive learning style of some students, Dickinson (1987) suggests that they experience daily, in very simple activities, the feeling of being in control of their learning. This concept, known as *locus of control*, as Williams and Burden (*op. cit.* p.101) explain is "one of the most significant factors in determining people's motivation to act in various ways and in retaining their interest and involvement". Because they are active, persistent and more motivated to learn, students with a high internal locus of control are more likely to succeed than those who feel their actions are controlled by other people (WILLIAMS & BURDEN, 1997).

Although perceiving and accepting the value of autonomy seems to be a very simple matter, it is certainly very complex. It might mean for some students a radical change in attitude. And, obviously, it is not easy, especially for adults. Ellis (*op. cit.* p.478-9) reports some studies which show that the difficulty in changing beliefs and attitudes stems from the fact that they are closely related to the student's personality and shaped by his/her past experiences. For the insecure learner, for example, learning a foreign language is threatening, and, consequently, tends to be resisted. Language learning is also an emotional experience which involves both cognitive and affective aspects of the learner. If students are involved in learning experiences which they consider pleasant and successful, they will be willing to use them more frequently. Thus, the second most important factor in the psychological preparation of learners for autonomy is to provide them with a non-threatening learning environment, so that they can exercise their independence confidently. Adult students are

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

certainly conditioned by their previous educational experiences which may have, not always, been positive. Consequently, they feel apprehensive, anxious and afraid of making mistakes, and being criticized. Such anxiety, which may cause learners to occupy a permanent position of inferiority before a critical audience, affects their motivation to learn and their attitudes in the classroom. In these moments of difficulty for learners, teachers should play psychologists, helping them lower their affective filter (KRASHEN& TERREL, 1992), making them feel good about themselves, self-confident, capable of progressing. As a result, they will interact freely and more easily. Learners must also be encouraged to consider their mistakes and errors as part of the learning process, and risk-taking as an important step toward independence. Group and pair work are types of activities which should be very much used in the EAP classroom in order to make students feel more comfortable in the learning process.

Concluding, having recognized the value of autonomy and understood their actual role in the learning process, students need opportunities to practice working more independently and to make informed choices about their learning. Therefore, although "psychological preparation is a goal in its right, it's realized through methodological preparation (DICKINSON, 1992, p.18).

Methodological Preparation for Autonomy

Methodological preparation,as Dickinson (1992, p.18) points out, "is a matter of teaching learners techniques [or strategies] which facilitate more active and independent involvement in language learning".

Language learning strategies, according to Oxford (1990), are "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". She identifies six types of learning strategies which she divides into three main classes:

1. Direct strategies: as the name implies, these are the ones which "directly involve the target language" (p.37):

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

- Cognitive strategies – involve conscious ways of tackling learning: they enable learners to understand and produce new language. Ex: practicing, repeating, taking notes, translating, among others.
- Memory strategies: help learners to store and retrieve information. Ex: grouping, associating, semantic mapping, etc.
- Compensation strategies – "help learners to overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills' (p.90) Ex: switching to mother tongue, using mine or gesture, getting help, etc.

2. Indirect Strategies:
   - Metacognitive strategies – allow learners to control their own learning through centering, arranging, planning and evaluating.
   - Affective strategies – help students learn how to control their emotions, attitudes, values and motivation. Ex: lowering anxiety, encouraging yourself, discussing your feelings with someone else.
   - Social strategies – help learners interact with other people. Ex: cooperating with others, asking questions, asking for correction.

All types of strategies are relevant both inside and outside the language classroom. It is important to note that the same strategy does not work equally well for everyone. As different students prefer certain strategies for particular tasks, training should consider learner individual differences and especially learning styles. It is likely that different kinds of learners might benefit from different modes of instruction.

Oxford (1990) identifies a number of factors related to the choice of language learning strategies. Some of these may include: age, sex, personality traits, affective variables, learning style, the level of language learning, cultural background, for example. Ellis (1995, p.544) contends that learner's ability to use a wide range of strategies depends on the type and nature of the task students are engaged in.

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

There have been a number of studies concerned with investigating and analyzing the nature of learning strategies, and which ones "good language learners" use, so that these strategies can be taught to less successful students in order to improve their learning. "Good language learners", according to Holec (1987, p.147), are those who "are capable of assuming the role of manager of their own learning. They know how to make all the decisions involved. In other words, they know how to learn". Dickinson (1992, p.20) emphasizes that both good and poor learners use cognitive strategies. What makes the main difference between these learners is the use of metacognitive strategies. Williams and Burden (1997, p.148) also emphasize the importance of metacognitive awareness for effective learning, but they point out that "the final aim is not to be constantly thinking about learning (…) Effective learners need to be able to employ strategies unconsciously, and then be able to call their metacognitive awareness into play as and when necessary, when faced with a difficulty". O'Malley *et.al.*(1985 cited in SKEHAN, 1989, p.87) point out that "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments and future directions". Cognitive and metacognitive strategies complement one another in language learning. Thus, I understand that learner training should aim at helping students to develop the ability to integrate both learning strategies.

The need for learner training is justified by Ellis (1995, p. 550). He presents a study conducted by Chamot*et.al.*(1988) which provides evidence that although those who are used to learning will undoubtedly have developed strategies for self-instruction, unlike the "effective" student, they do not use a great range of strategies and usually seem to be unable to choose the appropriate strategy for a task. Hence, as we should not expect our students to know how to manage their own learning, we must consider ways of conducting learner training. The point is that some language teachers may need to be trained in how to teach strategies. Bibliography on this topic is vast; universities, private language institutions and teachers' associations throughout the country have constantly been offering training, seminars and workshops for teachers. However, I believe that one of the best ways for teachers to

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

understand the process of language learning is becoming a foreign language learner themselves and experiencing the process.

According to Ellis and Sinclair (1989), it's possible to organize learner-training courses systematically, on the assumption that this will produce students who are more aware of the learning process and of the various strategies available for language learning. An important aspect to consider, though, is that"learning strategy instruction is not a magical formula to improve learner performance" (CHAMOT& RUBIN, 1994). After several years of research, results have indicated that learner training can benefit students, but many variables affect strategy choice.Considering all these aspects, I believe that learner training is essential because it not only provides students with the tools to learn a foreign language and to evaluate their own success more effectively, but it also, and especially, prepares learners for real life outside the classroom.

The Course: Developing reading skills through strategy training

This 140hour- reading program was developed to meet the needs of twelve Computer Science graduates from the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), in Vitória, who needed to improve their English in order to pursue advanced degrees in their specialties abroad. Through a needs analysis questionnaire, it became evident that these students needed practice in arriving at a profound and detailed understanding of the highly specialized literature they would encounter as post-graduate academics. Thus, considering that students' sole need was for instruction in reading, and that their linguistic proficiency was adequate for such specialized instruction, all emphasis was placed on teaching reading skills and strategies, modelling the reading assignments as closely as possible on the authentic tasks students would be likely to perform in real life outside the classroom. It aimed to promote independence by presenting learners with a variety of strategies, from which they tried out and evaluated a selection appropriate to their needs. Due to participants' characteristics, this

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course with a focus on reading comprehension was taught in English from the start, and students were encouraged to use English all times in class.

Methodology:The program was based on the principles of the English for Academic Purposes Approach, which highly stimulates collaborative learning, and views reading as an active process in which readers bring to the text their knowledge of the world in order to make sense of what they read.In the course, emphasis was especially given to the development and use of metacognitive strategies, because it enables behavior to be changed.

The methodology used aimed to stimulate learners to become aware of and reflect on their reading process and on the strategies they chose to use. They were asked to report on their thought processes either as they worked through a task or after they had completed it. Self-assessment was encouraged and also trained in class. Students were stimulated to observe and report their own problems and difficulties during the reading process, as well as the learning opportunities available to them, their own learning goals and their perceptions of these goals. This helped to encourage and develop classroom discussions about reading and learning processes, in addition to providing good opportunity for classroom interaction. Cooperative work, problem-solving, discovery and task-based were the most commonly used practices in class. Grading was not a requirement – focus was on training, not on testing.

Throughout the course, besides the strategies suggested by Oxford (1990), emphasis was also given to communication strategies so that learners could practice using the target language in meaningful situations.

Participants:Students involved in the program may be considered “mature learners”. The term “mature” is used here not only in its biological, but also in its cognitive sense, as “intellectually equipped”. The group consisted of 12 Brazilian students whose level of general English proficiency ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate.

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

Materials: With the help of the graduates and technical instructors from the Computer Science Department, authentic materials from English technical manuals, magazines, journals, books and the internet were selected and used as the basis for classroom instruction in reading strategies, note-taking and summarizing activities. Students were also stimulated to choose articles closely related to their research interests for reading practice on their own. In order to develop autonomy, participants were highly encouraged to visit and use the university library and the Language Learning Center which offers a great variety of materials for self-study and a range of equipment – videos, computers with internet access, television.

Class Development:

Part 1: Psychological Preparation for Learner Training and Autonomy

Introduction:

- Discovering myself and others
- All about the course
- Becoming aware of the reading process

This first unit, besides being a warm-up, aimed to raise students' awareness and to enhance their motivation to learn how to become independent readers and learners in English. By means of a questionnaire and group discussions, they reflected on themselves as language learners, and on the various factors that might have affected their learning, besides having the opportunity to become better acquainted with each other. They also received information about the course, the EAP methodology and discussed their role in the learning process. Finally, by means of a diagram (Fig.1), students became aware of their attitudes towards reading, and were encouraged to discusssome of the reading strategies they used before taking the course (Fig.2). It was also emphasized that by learning new strategies, they would be able to choose the most significant and relevant ones to their reading purposes. Doubts were clarified, especially to reduce anxiety.

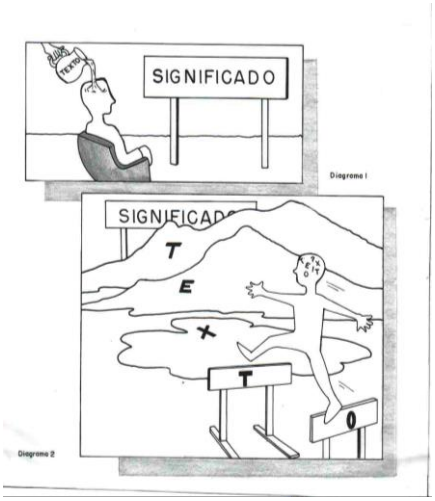
REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

Activity type used: Questionnaire, group work, think aloud, discussions.

Examples:

Activity: *Becoming Aware of the Reading Process*

Group work: look at the diagrams below and discuss how Reading is viewed in each one. Talk about the reader's roles, advantages and disadvantages of each attitude.



(Fig.1)Adapted from Nuttal, 1996

HOW DO YOU READ?

Read the following statements and tick any of them that applies to you:

1. What do you usually read in English?

I only read the kind of books/articles/texts I read in my own language ( )
I read anything that interests me ( )
I only read for academic and/or professional purposes ( )
I would like to read more books, but I find reading a whole book very difficult ( )
I always read articles from the internet ( )

2. What strategies do you use when you read in English?

I look up every word I don't understandin the dictionary as I go along ( )
I note down or underline the words which prevent me from understanding detailed ideas in the text ( )
I never use a dictionary. I understand enough to get the general idea ( )
I read word by word, trying to translate the sentences into Portuguese for better comprehension ( )
I often read the whole text to get the general idea, and then I reread it for details. ( )
I read the conclusion first, and then I read the whole text ( ).
I read the title first and observe the pictures. If I think the text will probably interest me, then I read it thoroughly (…..)

3. In small groups now, compare the strategies you have chosen and discuss them. Which strategies are the most useful in order to become a fluent reader in English? Do you use any different strategy when reading in English?

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

Fig. 2 (Adapted from Porter-Ladousse, 1993, p.9)

Part 2: Methodological Preparation

Objectives:

- To present and explain reading strategies with a rationale for using them;
- to provide opportunities for students to practice the strategies learned and
- to evaluate their success in using them;
- to develop transferring strategies to new tasks and situations.

Learning Strategies:

In addition to the strategy classification (Oxford, 1990) mentioned before in this paper, specific reading strategies were approached with the purpose of:

A) Observing coherence in discourse:

- Reading for general and for main points comprehension:

a) Skimming
b) Scanning
c) Background knowledge
d) Visual resources
e) Prediction
f) Inferences
g) Contextual guessing

- Reading for detail:

a) Understanding discourse
b) Acquiring new vocabulary
c) Getting acquainted with the dictionary
d) Taking notes

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

e) Writing summaries

- Improving reading speed
- Assessing the text – understanding the writer's intention.
-

B) Observing cohesion in discourse:

a) Cohesive devices as "signposts" in reading
b) Verb tense and aspect
c) Elements of reference
d) Discourse markers
e) Ellipsis and substitution
f) Lexical items (repetition, synonyms and collocations)
g) Organizing messages (given-new information)
h) Paragraph organization

Procedure:

A) Understanding coherence in discourse: As Oxford (1990, p. 207-208) suggests, in this section, I decided to conduct a "complete informed training" and to follow the sequence she presents. In her words,

> First, students try a [reading] task *without* any training in the target strategy, and they comment on the strategies they spontaneously used to do the task. Second, you explain and demonstrate the new strategy. As you do so, build on what the learners said they were doing in the first step and show they might either improve use of their current strategies or employ entirely new strategy. Third, learners apply the new strategy to the same language task as before, or a similar one. Depending on the nature of the strategy, it's possible to get pairs of learners to work together to practice the strategy with one student using the strategy and the other prompting; then they change roles.

Finally, learners were invited to comment on their experiences, thus developing self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies. As a follow-up, students were encouraged to

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

practice the strategies learned on similar academic tasks and assignments through discussions on metacognitive and motivational aspects of strategy use.

B) Understanding cohesion in discourse: in this section, I encouraged my students to try out discovery learning and problem-solving activities. The teaching of grammar was contextualizes and text-based. The process was student-centered. It involved participants actively in grammar by making them analysts and problem-solvers, as they, by means of collaborative work, discovered rules and generalizations, discussed and shared ideas and found solutions to their own problems. This allowed them to activate their previous knowledge, to employ cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies, to build up their confidence, and to change their views and attitudes towards grammar.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that teaching learners how to become more independent through strategy training has brought a new dimension to our reading courses at the university. Because this approach to learning helped my students believe in themselves, in their innate potentialities to learn a foreign language, and provided them with the tools to go on learning by themselves, they became more confident and motivated. Furthermore, they could finally realize that reading is a synonym not for translation, but for real comprehension.

An informal evaluation was conducted by asking students to comment freely about the course. Their comments were favorable, although the experience was new to them. They considered the classes challenging, interesting and extremely useful. Because grading was not a requirement, students felt more relaxed and greatly enjoyed the tasks. In their opinion, reading authentic English texts became a pleasure, and working collaboratively in class

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LÍNGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

allowed them to feel more comfortable sharing personal ideas and values. Participants also recognized the value of being trained in how to work in groups. Practical training in monolingual dictionary use was considered a useful tool towards autonomy.

I agree that the success of the course depended in large part on the students' and my own commitment, but I also believe that it was due to the enthusiasm in adopting a methodology which:

- Integrated learner training with authentic reading tasks;
- Broadened students' understanding of language learning;
- Encouraged development of cognitive and metacognitive strategies;
- Provided opportunities for the development of social/affective strategies;
- Encouraged self-monitoring and self-assessment;
- Stimulated language awareness;
- Focused on strategies which are useful for most learners, and transferable to various language tasks;
- Improved learners' attitudes
- Allowed students to exercise their freedom of choice in an informed manner;
- Encouraged students to try out discovery learning.

Strategy training is surely time and energy consuming. Nevertheless, if, by the end of the course, students finally experience a sense of autonomy, and realize that "the first objective of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future [and that] learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily" (BRUNER, 1977, p.17), the whole process will have been worthwhile.

References

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

BRUNER, Jerome. **The Process of Education.** Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997

CHAMOT, Anna, & RUBIN, Joan. Comments on Janie Rees-Miller's A Critical Appraisal of Learner Training (1994) In: **TESOL and the Learner Research File**. Edinburgh: Moray House Institute of Education, 2002.

_____., KUPPER, Lisa & IMPINK-HERNANDEZ, Maria.A study of learning strategies in foreign language instruction: findings of the longitudinal study (1988).ELLISIn: ELLIS, R. **The study of Second Language Acquisition.** Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

DICKINSON, Leslie. Learner Autonomy 2: Learner Training for Language Learning (1992) In: **TESOL and the Learner Research File.** Edinburgh: Moray House Institute of Education, 2002.

ELLIS, Gail & SINCLAIR, Barbara.**Learning to Learn English** (teacher's book). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

ELLIS, Rod.**The study of second language acquisition.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

HOLEC, Henry. **Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning.**Oxford: Pergamon, 1981.

_____. The learner as manager: managing learning or managing to learn? In: WENDEN, A.& RUBIN, J. (eds).**Learner Strategies in Language Learning.** Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice Hall, 1987.

KRASHEN, Stephen, D. & TERREL, Tracy,D. **The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom.** California: Alemany Press, 1992.

LITTLE, David.**Learner Autonomy 1: Definitions, Issues and Problems.** Dublin: Authentik, 1991.

NUTTAL, Christine.**Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language.** Oxford: Heinemann, 1996.

O'MALLEY, CHAMOT, Anna, STEWNER-MANZANARES, Gloria, KUPPER, Lisa & RUSSO, Rocco.(1985). Learning Strategy Applications wit students of English as a Second Language. In. SKEHAN, P. **Individual Differences in Second Language Learning,**London: Arnold,1989.
OXFORD, Rebecca. **Language Learning Strategies.**Massachussetts: Heinle&Heinle, 1990.

REVISTA DESEMPENHO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS GRADUAÇÃO EM LINGUÍSTICA APLICADA
ISSN: 1677-9797

_____. **Self-Instruction in Language Learning.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

PORTER-LADOUSSE, Gillian. **Language Issues.** Essex: Longman, 1993.

SKEHAN, Peter. **Individual Differences in Second Language Learning.**London: Arnold,1989.

STEVICK, Earl, W. **Teaching languages: a way and ways.**Massachustetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc. 1980.

WENDEN, Anita.**Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy.**Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, 1991.

_____.& RUBIN, Joan. (eds).**Learner Strategies in Language Learning.**Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1987.

WILLIAMS, Marion & BURDEN, Robert, L.**Psychology for Language Teachers.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

WIDDOWSON, Henry, G. **Aspects of Language Teaching.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.