

# 基于学习风格和学习策略 的外语教学 教师指南

*Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction:  
A Teachers' Guide*

Andrew D. Cohen (美)

Susan J. Weaver (美)

外语教学与研究出版社

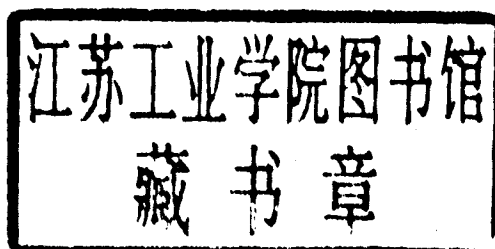
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## 序

《基于学习风格和学习策略的外语教学：教师指南》一书是1997年版《基于学习策略的外语教学》的修订版。1997年版本已用作多期暑期培训班的教材，接受培训的外语教师教授的语言达15种之多。最近一期研修班在我国南京举办，参加的学员多达260名，来自我国25个省市自治区的120所高校。本书作者之一美国明尼苏达大学ESL系研究生院的主任Andrew D. Cohen教授不远万里来到中国，担任该研修班的主讲教师，连续5天尽心尽力为学员授课，受到学员的普遍好评，也为中国的外语学习策略师资培训开创了先河。

与旧版本相比，新版本从内容到结构都进行了较大改动，内容更加丰富新颖，结构更加清晰明了。全书增加了学习风格和动机的测评，并将学习任务、学习风格、学习策略与动机融为一体讨论四者之间的相互作用。全书分为9章。第1章介绍什么是基于学习风格和学习策略的外语教学；第2、3、4章介绍如何测评学习风格和学习策略；第5章描述如何测量与激发学习动机；第6章说明语言与文化的关系；第7章讲解如何设计基于学习风格和学习策略的外语课堂教学；第8章介绍设计基于学习风格和学习策略的外语教学教师研修班的方法；第9章讨论如何从事基于学习风格和学习策略的外语教学研究。每章以简明扼要的理论阐述开头，其后围绕主题设计了一系列的课堂活动。本书的特点是：语言浅显易懂，理论阐述深入浅出，活动内容丰富多彩，操作程序简洁明了。相信本书的出版一定能够推进我国的外语教学改革。

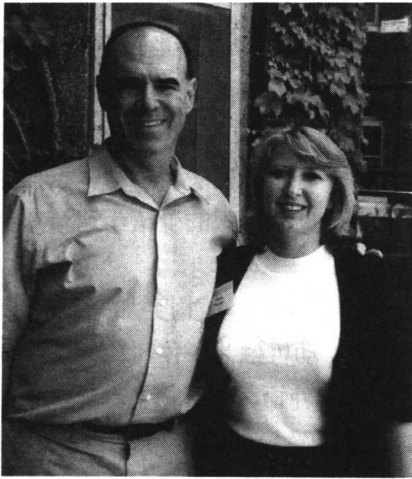
需要强调的是，在引进和消化新思想、新理念的同时，我们要充分考虑我国的实际情况，通过不断探索与实践，构建适合中国国情的本土化外语教学模式。

文秋芳

2006年3月24日

北京外国语大学中国外语教育研究中心

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Authors Cohen & Weaver

We would like to acknowledge all of the language learners, teachers, and researchers who have come before us, providing the foundations for a strategies-based approach to teaching languages. Their efforts and insights have allowed us to see how increased learner autonomy and learner-focused teaching can improve the processes of teaching and learning languages.

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As for the rewritten version, special thanks go to Martha Nyikos for her contributions and to Rebecca Oxford for her insightful work and training in the styles literature. Thanks also to Kathleen Cleberg for her major editorial role and thanks also to Noriko Ishihara for some helpful edits. On the production side we received timely and valuable assistance from colleagues in the Office of International Programs at the University of Minnesota: Aaron Shekey created an attractive new cover and helped on all the details of desktop publishing while Jennifer Schulz provided guidance on the final editing/production phases of the project. Finally, we would like to thank Karin Larson and her colleagues at CARLA who have believed in our styles and strategies work over the many years and have made the workplace a true learning and teaching community. Without Karin's solid support, this revised version would not have come to fruition.



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## Using This Teachers' Guide on Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction

This publication is the complete revision of *Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teacher-Training Manual* (1997) and includes feedback from users of that guide. *Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers' Guide* is meant for second and foreign language instructors (both referred to here as L2 teachers). It has been field-tested with instructors of a broad range of languages in a summer institute on styles- and strategies-based instruction sponsored by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota.

Each chapter begins with background material on topics related to styles- and strategies-based instruction (SSBI) in the language classroom, which is enhanced by hands-on activities that show teachers ways to conduct SSBI with their own students. The activities employ varied instructional methods: presentations, paired and small-group discussions, interactive strategy practice exercises, reflective writings, in-class readings, and opportunities for designing strategies-based activities and curricula from the instructors' own teaching materials. To maximize their practicality, the activities may be copied, adapted, and distributed for classroom use. The term *participant* used in the activities sometimes refers to the teachers (along with administrators and researchers) to give them information on their own styles and strategies and provide an experiential sense of the activity, and sometimes to students who do the activity under their teacher's supervision. The guide provides numerous opportunities for teachers to try out and evaluate a series of strategies that they can then use with their own language learners. In addition, professionals working in teacher development, administrators, and researchers will benefit from two new sections about designing SSBI workshops and research projects.

Ultimately the goal of this guide is to help L2 teachers gain a better sense of the individual needs of their students. We hope it will provide language instructors with ideas about how to include strategy instructions for their students in everyday class activities, how to positively reinforce the effective use of strategies, and how to encourage their students to find ways to take more responsibility for language learning.





## Chapter 1

### What Is Styles- and Strategies-Based Language Instruction?

*Styles- and strategies-based instruction* (SSBI) is a learner-focused approach to language teaching that explicitly highlights within everyday classroom language instruction the role of the learners' styles (i.e., preferred approaches to learning) and strategies (i.e., processes for learning and using language) in performing instructional activities (see Oxford, 2001; Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002). The underlying premise of the styles- and strategies-based approach is that students should be given the opportunity to understand not only *what* they can learn in the language classroom but, more importantly, *how* they can learn the language they are studying.

Traditionally, it was assumed that if L2 teachers did their jobs well, students would learn and retain the language. It has become clear, however, that this is not the case—that learners actually appear not to be doing their job of L2 learning. It may appear that they are unwilling or unmotivated to take responsibility for their own language learning. The reality may simply be that they do not know how to approach the “talk” of language learning. If this is the case, it may not matter how well their teachers are teaching; these learners still will not be learning as effectively as they could. With this realization, the development of SSBI began.

### The Evolution of Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction

#### 1960s—Psychology of Learning

In the 1960s there emerged a focus on the learner and on learning to learn. Educators drew from cognitive theory, based on the information processing model with two kinds of knowledge: declarative knowledge, which dealt with the facts; and procedural knowledge, which focused on the procedures for using declarative knowledge (Anderson, 1976). The cognitive theory approach was a departure from the behaviorist stimulus-response approach to learning that had spawned the audio-lingual method of having learners practice patterns over and over until they learned them. The tendency was now directed toward a more reasoned, controlled learning of rules and accepting that some rules were learned or “acquired” automatically.

#### 1970s—Good Language Learner

The 1970s saw the advent of a rather prescriptive approach to language learner strategies, with the emphasis on what the good language learner can teach us (Rubin, 1975). Joan Rubin identified the following strategies used by good language learners:

- Making an effort to communicate and to learn through communication;
- Finding strategies for overcoming inhibitions in target language interaction;
- Making reasoned guesses when not sure;
- Paying attention to meaning;
- Monitoring their speech and that of others;
- Attending to form (i.e., grammar);
- Practicing the language whenever possible.

Decades later, these strategies are still among the most significant for language learners the world over.

### **1980s—Classifications of Strategies and Descriptions of Learners**

The 1980s was marked by efforts to classify strategies. Language educators like O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), and others created classification schemes that labeled strategies according to whether they had a primarily "metacognitive," "cognitive," "social," "affective," or other function, drawing primarily on the rich L1 literature about reading strategies.

### **1990s—Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI)**

In the 1990s there was a shift from simply describing and classifying strategies to experimenting with different kinds of interventions in the classroom. The interest was now on whether learners could enhance their language learning by either using new strategies or by using familiar ones more effectively. An example of such an intervention was the University of Minnesota experiment with intermediate learners of French and Norwegian (Cohen, Weaver, & Li, 1998). It was also during this decade that summer institutes in strategies-based instruction were started at the University of Minnesota. Chamot and colleagues initiated strategy institutes for language teachers through the National Capital Language Resource Center in Washington, D.C.

### **2000s—SSBI**

This decade has seen styles- and strategies-based instruction become one entity. Some language educators (like Oxford, 2001) have long maintained that language learner strategies need to be viewed through the perspective of the style preferences of the learners. As strategy classification systems have been sorted out and categories become more finely tuned, there is a growing interest in how certain learning style preferences may prompt the use of certain language strategies. Likewise, the end of the last decade and the beginning of this one have produced a keen interest in defining, categorizing, and promoting language learning tasks (see Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003). This focus on tasks has in turn prompted concern for how learners with given style preferences may react to a particular language task and the strategies that may be used in order to complete the given task. Any thoughts of a one-size-fits-all approach have been replaced by a more custom-fitted one, depending on the given learner.

### **Self-Directed Learning**

As language teaching has become more learner-focused and interactive, there has also been an emphasis on helping students take more responsibility for meeting their own language learning needs (Brown, 2002; Chamot, 2001; Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; McDonough, 1999; Oxford, 1990, 2001; Rubin & Thompson, 1994). Students are asked to self-direct the language learning process and become less dependent on the classroom teacher. SSBI helps learners to become more aware of different learning strategies, to understand how to organize and use strategies systematically and effectively (given their learning style preferences), and to learn when and how to transfer the strategies to new language learning.

SSBI has a series of components that develop the students' relationship with learning strategy:

#### **1) Strategy Preparation**

There is no sense in assuming that students are a blank slate when it comes to strategy use. They most likely have developed some strategies, but may not use them systematically or well. The goal here is to find out how much students know consciously about strategies and if they are able to use them.

2) Strategy Awareness-Raising

SSBI tasks explicitly raise the students' general awareness about: a) what the learning process may consist of, b) their learning style preferences or general approaches to learning, c) the kinds of strategies that they already use, as well as those suggested by the teacher or classmates, d) the amount of responsibility that they take on for their learning, or e) approaches that can be used to evaluate the students' strategy use.

3) Strategy Instruction

Students are explicitly taught how, when, and why certain strategies (whether alone, in sequence, or in clusters) can be used to facilitate language learning. Teachers describe, model, and give examples of strategies.

4) Strategy Practice

Knowing about a given strategy is not enough. Learners must have the opportunity to try them out. These activities reinforce strategies that have already been discussed and allow students time to practice the strategies at the same time they are learning the course content. These activities should include explicit references to the strategies. Students either:

- a) Before: plan the strategies that they will use for an activity,
- b) During: have their attention called to the use of particular strategies while they are being used, or
- c) After: "debrief" their use of strategies (and their relative effectiveness) once the activity has ended.

5) Personalization of Strategies

Learners evaluate how they are using the strategies and look at ways they can use them in other contexts.

In SSBI, it is the curriculum writers' and the teachers' role to see that strategies are integrated into everyday class materials and are both explicitly and implicitly embedded into the language tasks to provide contextualized strategy practice. Teachers may:

- 1) Start with the established course materials and then insert strategies,
- 2) Start with a set of strategies and design activities around them, or
- 3) Insert strategies spontaneously into the lessons when appropriate.



## Chapter 2

### Learning Style Preferences

Why do some students have trouble understanding directions in the second language while other students get them easily? Why do some students do well in large groups, while others are at their best when they can work alone or with a single partner? What can you do to help each student when there can be such a variety of learners in your classroom? This chapter offers ways to handle the diversity of your students' learning style preferences.

#### What Are Learning Style Preferences?

Learning style preferences refer to the way you like to learn. They are put into action by specific learning strategies (Ehrman, 1996, p. 49). Learning style has been referred to as "... the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others" (Dunn & Griggs, 1988, p. 3). According to Oxford and Anderson (1995), learning styles have six interrelated aspects:

- 1) The *cognitive* aspect includes preferred or habitual patterns of mental functioning (usually referred to as cognitive styles).
- 2) The *executive* aspect is the extent to which learners look for order, organization, and closure in managing the learning processes.
- 3) The *affective* aspect consists of the attitudes, beliefs, and values that influence what learners focus on most.
- 4) The *social* aspect relates to the preferred degree of involvement with other people while learning.
- 5) The *physiological* element involves what are at least partly anatomically based sensory and perceptual tendencies of the learners.
- 6) The *behavioral* aspect concerns the learners' tendency to actively seek situations compatible with their own learning preferences.

There are no positive or negative traits, only preferences, and even strong preferences can change. Students tend to learn better when the classroom instructor nurtures their learning style. If you can present language material in a variety of ways, the language styles of all of your students are more likely to be nurtured. For example, you could teach the present and past perfect tenses in your target language by having your students listen to a tape and then draw a chart in their notebook of a timeline that describes when to use each form of the perfect aspect. In this way, you teach to both the auditory and visual learners.

#### The Value of Learning Styles

Research suggests that the greater the number of styles students can use, the more successful they will be at learning language. Research also shows that we all have learning style preferences and thus may tend to favor our preferred approaches in our learning. You can help students by getting them to think about learning in strategic terms and to expand or stretch their learning approaches. You can also accommodate to style differences by providing opportunities during class for your students to learn in different ways. You may already do this, but the idea is to vary the tasks so as not to continually favor one style preference over another.

Consider the perceptual style dimensions:

- Visual—relying more on the sense of sight, and learning best through visual means (either through text-based resources such as handouts, lists, flashcards, and other verbal sources; or through spatial information, such as charts, diagrams, pictures, and videos);
- Auditory—preferring listening and speaking activities (e.g., discussions, debates, audiotapes, role-plays, and lectures); and
- Hands-on—benefiting from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around. For those who remember words best by seeing them spelled out, you may want to write new words on the board or in a handout (when it doesn't detract from the activity).

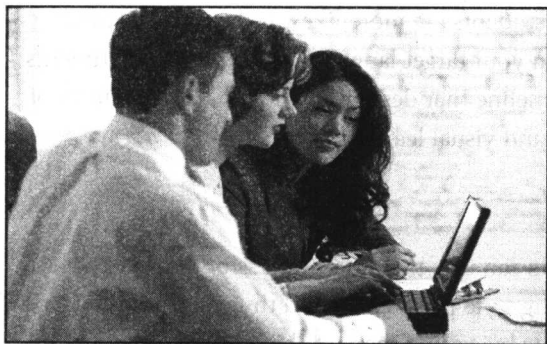
So, when it comes to learning new vocabulary, students who learn visually may benefit from writing the new words in their notebook or from seeing a still picture or video of the object or action that involves the new vocabulary in some way. Learners with an auditory preference may want to hear the words pronounced clearly several times or to hear themselves pronouncing them. For hands-on learners, it may help to perform the action to which the new words refer.

Vocabulary tasks that accommodate other style dimensions might include:

- A task where learners need to provide the gist of a story (which favors a global preference) using key words that include the use of new vocabulary, as well as a task requiring a focus on details including some new words that describe those details;
- A deductive task where rules about how new verbs are conjugated are given at the outset, as well as an inductive task where learners need to induce the rules about how the new verbs are conjugated;
- A small-group task favoring extroverted learners who enjoy trying out the new vocabulary in the group, as well as a task that learners perform on their own or as an entire class, where the more introverted learners are not necessarily called upon to pronounce the new words or to use them in sentences.

## Assessing Learning Styles

Learning styles have been categorized from a variety of different perspectives and there are many types of



You can assess learning styles by observing your students in the classroom.

assessments. Standardized tools have been developed to look at learning styles in terms of the senses people favor, their cognitive styles, and personality types (Reid, 1995). Keep in mind that instruments categorize learners and some students might think they are being labeled. It is important to remind them that we are capable of using different styles in language. Remind them that these instruments report preferences for learning, not absolutes—that we often alter our learning styles according to the circumstances, and that we can try new and different styles.

As a teacher, you might assess your students' learning styles more informally. You might gather information by:

- Observing the approaches your learners took with classroom tasks;
- Asking your students about their preferred methods for approaching tasks;
- Having your students keep journals about their preferred approaches;
- Having your students report to you about how they are dealing with a current language task.

## The Learning Style Survey

We have included our own *Learning Style Survey* (constructed by co-author Cohen, with Rebecca Oxford and Julie Chi) in this chapter (p. 15). It was developed with an interest in those style dimensions that seem to have the most relevance to language learning. The format of the survey and a number of the dimensions and items are drawn from Oxford's *Style Analysis Survey* (1995). Other dimensions and some of the wording of items are based on the work of Ehrman and Leaver (Ehrman & Leaver, 1997, 2003; the E & L Questionnaire, 2001). In the appendix to this chapter, there is also a young people's version of this instrument, the *Learner Style Survey for Young Learners* (Cohen & Oxford, 2001), which has been used with children at the upper-elementary-school level in grades 5–6.

The premise for the survey is that all language learners have a preference for how to learn. While they may have a general sense of their preferences already, this survey can help them deepen their understanding of those preferences by comparing and contrasting 11 different learning styles. Being aware of our own predispositions to learning helps us to understand and organize them better. It also helps you as a teacher understand your approach to teaching, given that you are likely to teach to your own preferences. Having your students take this survey will help them begin to understand their own approaches to learning and can give you information about how they learn best.

We recommend that you and your students take the *Learning Style Survey*. The survey should be used to coach your students to use their preferred styles to their advantage and to “stretch their styles” by making use of strategies that they may have resisted in the past. For example, if students discover or remind themselves that they are visual learners, they may wish (perhaps with your guidance) to create their own visuals. In addition, they may wish to team with auditory learners at the same time that they tap into their own undeveloped auditory skills.

Consider the issues of style stretching for yourself. For example, if you are a visual learner, think of a lecture you may have attended where the lecturer did not include any visuals at all. In that situation, did you find yourself using other ways to support your visual learning style, such as by taking careful notes or by conjuring up your own images? Or did you rely more heavily on other strategies? Did you partner with someone else who was an auditory learner and was more adept at lectures? Did you “illustrate” your written notes to help you learn the material? No doubt you can think of other examples in which the teaching situation did not cater to your own learning preferences and where you needed other ways for coping with the situation. You are likely to have students in your classrooms with learning styles not fully “in sync” with your teaching styles. Consider how you can help these students, either by catering a bit more to their style preferences or by assisting them in stretching their style preferences.



## Types of Learning Styles

The three tables (Table 1: Sensory/Perceptual; Table 2: Psychological/Personality Type; and Table 3: Cognitive) that precede the survey on pages 15–21 give an overview of the characteristics of each learning style and ways to facilitate learning for each type. As a “Read and Anticipate (Guess)” activity, review these tables and think about where your students may fall, noting in the left column the percentage of your students showing a preference. Don’t be overwhelmed by the details. You may know your students well or you may need to make quick guesses—the goal is simply to gain an overall sense of where your students might fall. Then, using the information from the hints and support column as a starting point, think about what you can do to help these learners gain the most from their culture- and language-learning experiences.

**Activity 2: Style Matching Exercise** (p. 23) serves two purposes. One is for teachers to check their own understanding of learning style preference descriptions. The second purpose is to have the students do the matching activity to improve their understanding of the different styles.

Now, as a “Reflection” activity, go back to your results on the *Learning Style Survey*. Consider the impact your own learning preferences have on your teaching.

- What are your predominant learning preferences?
- In what ways do you feel these preferences influence your teaching?
- Which style preferences receive the least amount of attention in your classroom?
- What are some simple ways you can adapt your teaching and the classroom to reach a more diverse audience?

## Working with Learning Styles

Students who discover that they favor a certain learning style may want to compensate by taking on learning styles that don’t come as naturally for them. The following are some practical suggestions for dealing with learning style preferences in the classroom.

### 1. Have Your Students Consider the Importance of Learning Styles

You could lead a discussion about the role of learning styles. The following could be points that you bring to the discussion or that the students themselves raise:

- Awareness of our learning style preferences allows us to understand and organize our learning. Since some aspects of learning are usually out of our control (textbook, tasks, teacher, and topic), we can improve our chances of learning by knowing how we can work most comfortably, quickly, and easily.
- Being in control of our learning styles makes us more flexible learners, since the more ways we can learn comfortably, the better.
- Knowing how we learn best can make us more efficient, since the less amount of time needed to learn, the better.
- Awareness of our style preferences can make us more effective learners, since the more easily we can learn, the better.

## 2. Be Aware That There May Be Style Conflicts Between You and the Students

You have probably had times when your teaching style and the learning style of some students didn't match. Research shows that such conflicts can impact learning. Some conflict situations that have emerged from research (Oxford & Lavine, 1992) include:

- The teacher was more analytic, reflective, and auditory while the learner was more global, impulsive, and visual.
- The teacher was more open-oriented, while the learner was more closure-oriented.
- The teacher was more concrete-sequential, while the learner was more random-intuitive.
- The teacher was more concrete-sequential, visual, and reflective, while the learner was more random-intuitive, auditory, and impulsive.
- The teacher was more extroverted and hands-on, while the learner was more introverted and visual.

To avoid, or at least resolve, such conflicts, Oxford and Lavine suggest (as we have) that students' and instructors' styles be surveyed at the beginning of the course and that this information be used to understand the style dynamics for that particular class.

## 3. Use Student Information for the Learning Style Survey

When you have information about your students' and your own learning style preferences, you can make the most of your students' style preferences and help them find ways to stretch themselves to benefit most from your teaching styles. Put students in the learning driver's seat by asking them how you can help make an otherwise packaged course become *their* course. If students do not have any initial ideas or the reaction seems awkward, take the lead by offering suggestions. For example, ask if there are students who are interested in:

- Forming a study group outside of class to prepare for exams;
- Getting together outside of class to talk about study abroad destinations or plans;
- Practicing conversation among themselves or finding native speakers outside of class;
- Attending or learning more about relevant cultural events;
- Watching films relevant to the target language and culture(s).

After you help them generate ideas, circulate a sign-up sheet and ask at least one student in each category to be a facilitator. Thereafter, you can simply feed information to the facilitator(s) on things you see that might be of interest to that subgroup. This helps students take ownership over their learning according to their preferred styles and interests without having to depend on you for everything.

You might alter your teaching style somewhat to accommodate your students' learning styles. Small adaptations may be enough to help your students. For example, rather than giving only an oral homework announcement, which may favor the auditory learners, also write it on the corner of the board in a list form for visual and closure-oriented students. A concrete-sequential student may wish to have the instructions laid out in numerical fashion while the abstract-intuitive learner wouldn't necessarily care or might even be distracted by this level of detail! In other words, the more methods you can use to encompass the differing learning style preferences, the better.