Case Study, Part 1. Connecting language learning strategies to language use:
Evidence of improved learning

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This paper investigates whether metacognitive reflection, in the form of strategy journals, did or did not lead to improvements in focus and depth of language learning strategies (LLS), motivation, and the extent to which participants persevere using LLS. Based on the number of journal entries students completed, results (Riley and Harsch, 2003) point to general trends that show greater and clearer differences between learners who completed 7 or more entries and those who completed 3 or fewer entries, suggesting a possibility that guided reflection helps learners to make connections between language needs and LLS. This paper examines and compares the journal entries of three subjects who had 7 or more entries and three who had 3 or fewer entries. Additionally, the pedagogical value of introducing learners to guided reflection will be discussed in terms of learners’ development and teachers’ professional practice.

Introduction and rationale for the study
Many research studies claim the importance of strategy training, and many others look at learners’ reported frequency of use of LLS, but there is a dearth of studies that measure students’ ability to apply strategies to different situations in successful, logical and effective ways. One possible way of helping learners become more aware of LLS, and to connect strategies to their own actual learning or use, is to use guided journals. In this study we looked at the various effects of using strategy journals from the perspectives of the following research questions.

Research questions:
1. Does metacognitive reflection (in the form of strategy journals) lead to an improvement in:
   a) focus and depth of strategy use?
   b) motivation and perseverance?
2. What evidence is there that use of guided journals results in greater awareness of the connections between strategies and situations that might warrant their use?

Subjects: All subjects were Japanese learners of English, with at least 6 years of prior English study, and all were in the mid-beginner to low-intermediate range of ability.
   1. ESL (treatment) - 28 Japanese learners attending two language programs in Hawaii
   2. EFL (treatment) - 28 Japanese learners attending a university in Japan
   3. EFL (control) - 26 Japanese learners attending a university in Japan

Instruments Used:
1. Strategy Inventory Survey (SIS) -- modified version of Oxford’s Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (Oxford, 1990) which examines not only the degree to which learners think they use LLS, but also the degree to which they consider LLS to be useful.
2. Strategy Journal – guided journal with questions to focus learners’ reflection on LLS and their experiences learning and using the target language, to help them make connections between LLS and target-language needs. (See Appendix A)

All groups took a pre-treatment SIS. The two treatment groups were asked to complete 10 strategy journals. The journals were collected and returned the following class session with feedback from the researchers. After the treatment, all groups took the Strategy Inventory Survey again. For the journal
analyses all non-Japanese subjects were eliminated, as well as those who wrote fewer than 7 entries, leaving 15 subjects in each environment.

Results & Discussion:

Possible Effect of Strategy Journals.
It is possible to look at some general trends based on number of journal entries students completed. The researchers were unable to ensure that all treatment learners did the requested number of journal entries (10 entries). At one extreme, a few students did more than ten, and at the other extreme, a few students completed three or fewer entries. As a result, we do not have conclusive statistically reliable data about changes in Use and perceived Usefulness of LLS for the treatment and control group. However, Tables 1A and 1B look at Use and Usefulness for treatment-group learners who completed 7 or more entries or three or fewer entries, as well as the control group.

Table 1A: Changes in Reported Use on SIS for treatment group
(students with 7 or more journal entries, 3 or fewer journal entries, and control group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>No. w/ gains</th>
<th>% w/ gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 or more entries</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>+0.21</td>
<td>-0.18 to +0.64</td>
<td>17/24</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or fewer entries</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>-1.14 to +0.22</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (0 entries*)</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>+0.09</td>
<td>-0.09 to +0.12</td>
<td>14/26</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1B: Changes in Reported Usefulness on SIS for treatment group
(students with 7 or more journal entries, 3 or fewer journal entries, and control group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>No. w/ gains</th>
<th>% w/ gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 or more entries</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>+0.13</td>
<td>-0.56 to +0.24</td>
<td>17/24</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or fewer entries</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.73 to +0.24</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (0 entries*)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>+0.05</td>
<td>-0.08 to +0.12</td>
<td>12/26</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The control group has 0 entries because, as a control group, they did not have any exposure whatsoever to guided journals.

While these results cannot be generalized, they do show greater and clearer differences between learners who completed 7 or more entries and those who completed 3 or fewer entries, suggesting a possibility that guided reflection helps learners to make connections between language needs and LLS. Therefore we decided next to examine and compare the journal entries of specific subjects. We chose 3 EFL and 3 ESL students who had 7 or more entries and selected EFL and ESL students who had 3 or fewer entries.

Classification of data
It is useful to compare here with Qxford (1990) who used different categories of strategy classification, including affective (e.g. anxiety reduction), social (e.g. asking questions, cooperating with native speakers), memory-related –(e.g. grouping, imagery), general cognitive (e.g. reasoning, analyzing, practicing) and compensatory (e.g. guessing, using gesture). Whereas Oxford’s classification focuses on what strategies are being used, we wanted to look at individual learners to find out how they were incorporating strategies into their learning, and for what purposes.

Metacognitive Reflection
Levels of metacognitive processing involve, for example, paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating progress, and monitoring errors.
Categories to help identify evidence of metacognitive reflection were coded as 'M' for motivation; 'R' for reflection; 'B' for breadth of LLS use; and 'D' for depth and focus of LLS use. For the latter we looked for examples of combining strategies in ways that showed deeper involvement by the learner at more levels of metacognitive processing. For example, when a student doesn't just say "I watch the TV news" but says "I record and watch the TV news in English without captions first and see how much I can catch, then I try again with captions, and later I read about the same news story in a Japanese newspaper to compare what I understood about the story.

EFL and ESL journals: Students with seven or more entries
The following 3 sets of journal entries are examples chosen from students who wrote seven or more entries. We include an evaluative discussion for each student.

**Student K2 (EFL, 10 entries)** [Pre/Post Use: +0.13; Pre/Post Usefulness: -0.12]

**K2-01**
1. When I saw some foreign films, I tried to understand the story by listening English.
2. While eating in a restaurant, I tried to listen foreign people sitting near us speaking English.

**K2-02**
1. I try to understand meanings of English when listening the Western music “I NEEDTO BE IN LOVE” by CARPENTERS. And I check the words of the song. I listen to foreign people speaking English when riding a bus.
2. In other class, one student pronounced a word “laugh” in a sentence, but perhaps other student couldn’t understand the meaning of the word “laugh” and, he looked strange. So I said “Laugh means this” and laughed with my face. And he said “I understand the meaning of “laugh”.

**K2-03**
1. When I was listening to other students speaking English in other class, I tried to know new words that I haven’t known. And I looked up the words in my dictionary guessing spelling of the unfamiliar words.
2. I am working part-time at a restaurant in a fish market. The restaurant is very popular, so many customers were waiting outside to enter it that day. And I had to ask the people who were outside their order. There were some foreigners there. This place is in Japan, so I took their order in Japanese. But, the foreign people couldn’t speak Japanese, and they spoke to me in English. But they spoke English too fast, so I couldn’t understand. So, I said “Pardon, please.” and I tried to listen the most important word in a conversation. And I could understand that they asked me “How long they have to wait.” I answered “About 30 minutes” showing my watch. They said “We’re too hungry. So, We’ll go around and come back.” I was happy to talk with foreign people but I was sad because they didn’t come back.

**K2-04**
1. I tried to understand news at NHK by listening English. Of course with watching the screen, I tried to know the news.
2. When I was watching a foreign film, I tried to understand what the actor says in English. But it was too difficult to hear English exactly, so turning off the film, I looked up the word which I
could hear in my dictionary. Next, I remembered the English sentence with the word in the dictionary.

K2-05
(1) In other English class, I listen to people speaking English in an American film without Japanese subtitles.
(2) In other English class, we studied how to stress on a sentence. I tried to read a sentence before an American teacher, but perhaps my emphasis on the sentence was wrong, so the teacher said “No.” The teacher read the sentence again. I read it again, but it wasn’t also right. So, the teacher read it slowly again. I tried to read it again listening the teacher’s emphasis on the sentence exactly. Finally I read it well. But I think that stress on a sentence when speaking English is difficult.

K2-06
(1) I tried to understand what students from overseas are talking around me.
(2) In other class, we students had to exchange views on a topic, I knew that I couldn’t make myself understood than listening others’ opinion. Because, I forget English words and can’t make a sentence. So I spoke only words. I think it is good to make myself understood by only words. But, now I have great difficulty in building my vocabulary. So, I tried to master new words by listening other students are speaking.

K2-07
(1) We described “3 most important qualities in my husband”(or wife) in other English class last month. Last week, I read other’s reports and I could know infamiliar words and expression in that.
(2) In other English class, the American teacher said us (students) “Japanese are very shy compared with American. And if you raise you hands two or three times, you tend to be satisfied, but it is not right, I love mistakes. So, speak more.” Hearing the teacher, I thought that I try to raise as my hand as possible, but perhaps I am afraid of making mistakes, so I am sometimes shy. But I though that I want to have a positive attitude while English class.

K2-08
(1) When other students were speaking English in other English class, I tried to learn how to other expression that means the same thing.
(2) Last week, in this class, we students explained a movie. In my group, a student talked a movie. The students didn’t know words so much, so couldn’t make a sentence well. But because of every words that he said, we could guess the movie.

K2-09
(1) When I practiced reading sentences, I tried to read them thinking sentence stress.
(2) I had a test about syllable in other English class. I had to think like “emphasis” has three syllables by myself. But I don’t know syllabication well, so, I got bad points in the test. Please tell me syllabication.

K2-10
(1) I bought A News Week in Japanese and read it. My friend had A News Week written in English, so I borrowed it and read it comparing mine.

Discussion re: K2
This student is already using a lot of LLS and additionally seems to be very metacognitive/reflective. There are hints that s/he is very motivated about learning and finding ways to use English. Specific examples in the journal data appear to reflect progression and focus over the 10 entries. There are 4 instances of conscious “eavesdropping” on both native and non-native speakers of English while eating in a restaurant, when riding on a bus, listening to students in another class, and listening to nearby students from overseas. There are 3 instances of “guessing” (guessing unfamiliar words from Newsweek magazine). Later, this student compares her Japanese Newsweek with another student’s English version of the same magazine. We think this develops from guessing to a more in-depth examination of language.
-- guessing spelling, and guessing the movie.

Salient examples of interest include entry K2 02 (2) where s/he assists another student by combining strategies to explain “laugh” as well as using body language. Entry K2 03(2) provides an example of how this student used an opportunity outside the EFL classroom. S/he made the most of an opportunity not always easy to find in an EFL environment; in this case, working in part-time job. Entry K2 04 (2), shows 2 examples of perseverance where the student looked up difficult words heard in a foreign film, then remembered the dictionary context. Entry K2 08 (2) provides evidence of noticing others, persevering by talking in groups, and guessing from vocabulary use as well as 2 examples of reacting to teacher feedback. In entry K2 05 (2), s/he has conscious interaction with a teacher in the classroom after the student reacted to incorrect stress and emphasis in a sentence but then kept practicing till it was done well. In entry K2 07 (2) the student reacts to a request from the teacher to raise her hand more and not be shy. She acted on this feedback. Entry K2 09 (2) is a clear example of requesting information; in this case, about syllabification ‘syllibication’.

Student N105 (ESL, 11 entries) [Pre/Post Use: +0.62; Pre/Post Usefulness: +0.18]

N105-01
(1) I have tried to concentrate what the teacher said in class.
(2) I read an article about accident in Times Square on last Friday. I didn’t get well. Next day, I got FAX from my friend in NY. She noted the accident, then I understood what the situation was.
    I tried to listen to the conversation in the bus on the way to UH

N105-02
(1) I made a careless mistake on Saturday. I have been checking for the proper sentence which expresses my regret. That is “I should have known”
(2) I noticed my neighbor’s newborn baby always cried nervously last early summer. The baby’s way of crying has been changing day by day. Today I met the baby. He was a cute boy. He held a towel. I asked his mother if that was a security blanket. “Security blanket” is a word which I learned in March.

N105-03
(1) I try to read newspaper twice or third times a week, and I watch TV news in English and Japanese. I don’t have much time to summarize.
(2) I usually ask about live crickets to Pet Land, but there are always out of stock. This time I asked them what day they usually got them. I could make sure the day when I got them.

N105-04
(1) I have read newspaper. I can’t read entire articles, but I try to pick up a few interesting articles every day.
(2) I talked about our grandparents with interchanger on Monday. I hesitated to ask whether they alive or not. Today Danielle showed us her parents’ old photos which were taken in Paris. I was impressed with sepia color photos. I said “Are they still alive?” naturally. Did I use wrong sentence or was it impolite one?

N105-05
(1) It was easy to get the context using English-Japanese dictionary. I tried to use English-English dictionary, and tried to express the meaning briefly.
(2) “precisely” was new word for me. I often listened this word in TV. When I went to camera shop to see the telescope, a retailer use this word explaining telescope. I got how to use this word.

N105-06
(1) I have been reading and watching about the United States’ annexation of Hawaii for a week. I can understand the articles which I have already known on Hawaii’s history, but others are too much for me. I try to keep on reading and watching.
(2) I have been interesting to learn new words. I’m afraid I don’t have a experience to write
down here this time. I’m looking forward to have a experience the rest of week.

N105-07
(1) I tried to read the book I bought last week, “Diana,” without using dictionary.
(2) I had an opportunity to spend a lot of time with a native English speaker last week. I learned some new expression such as “to cry crocodile tears”, “She gave the teacher an apple”, and “It’s so touching” (I said “I’m impressed” but I learned “It’s so touching” was more proper in the situation which I was moved to see my friend’s hula dancing.) I understood the meanings.

N105-08
(1) I have been reading “Diana” without dictionary. I can understand the story, but it seems I still miss something important in the story.
(2) It’s hard for me to give opinions and give detailed information. I am still puzzled by these situations.

N105-09
(1) John suggested that I listened to NPR. I listened to the news, it was harder than TV news to understand. If I’ll keep on listening every day, maybe it will get easier to understand.
(2) I talked with an American about Japanese gardens. I explained about the Shishiodoshi (bamboo water faucet), it’s sound scares the deer away. He already knew about it, but it was interesting conversation.

N105-10
(1) I watched two videos using closed caption TV at LAB. I have already known their story. I got situations for each scene yesterday and I found they didn’t speak difficult sentences.
(2) I am able to read newspaper, books, but even a short sentences, I can’t talk or use proper expression. yesterday I said, for example, “It doesn’t matter? My pet didn’t eat crickets for a few days.”

N105-11
(1) I have taped NPR morning news and I listened it at least two times every day. I also reviewed it with newspaper articles. (I checked it on the internet once)
(2) I talked with my husband whether my character is aggressive or passive. He used “in between”. I thought it is useful word with another situation.

Discussion re: N105
This student appears to be very motivated, and very reflective, particularly metacognitively. She/he pays attention to other students and the strategies they use, asks questions to the researcher, and tries to figure out solutions to difficulties he encounters in using English. S/he also reports on a wide variety of strategy use and tries out a variety of new ideas for listening to tapes. There is some repetition of strategies, a certain amount of depth, and a wide variety of experiences using English, often leading to questions about vocabulary or pragmatics.

Salient examples include evidence of using feedback from researcher (from Entry 1 to Entry 3) as well as reports of trying out some suggestions made by the teacher. N105-1(2) is an example of eavesdropping on a bus similar to that of an EFL student. In entries N105 3 (1), 4 (1), 6 (1), 9 (1), the student makes in-depth use of a variety of news sources, by both reading and listening – using TV, newspapers, articles, and NPR news, including cross-checking one source against another (N105 11 (1)). This student also tries to pick up new vocabulary and phrases everywhere, and creates opportunities to use vocabulary s/he has learned. Examples include 02-“security blanket”, 05-“precisely”, 07 (2) – “cry crocodile tears” and “It’s so touching”, and 11 (2) – “aggressive passive”. N105-10(1) shows very good examples of depth of strategies. For example, watching videos with closed captions, plus choosing videos where s/he already knew the story, then checking what s/he heard against the script. Entry N105-11-1 reports taping NPR news and listening multiple times, plus reviewing what s/he hears against newspaper articles and internet articles.
Student N313 (ESL, 8 entries) [Pre/Post Use: -0.06; Pre/Post Usefulness: +0.10]

N313-01
(1) *I wrote down words I heard first time in my vocabulary notebook
   *I had lunch with non-Japanese friends
(2) When I was talking to a native speaker and I met a new vocabulary, I asked to say it again. He said one more time, but I couldn’t get it. Finally, I asked him to tell me how he spells it. And I came to know it wasn’t a “new” vocabulary. I knew it. Listening is really hard for me.

N313-02
(1) Shadow conversation.
   I try to speak what I think in English in my heart. I sometimes speak it out in my car or somewhere when I am alone.
(2) I made a mistake to make records of a meeting. When I knew I mistook, I was rally upset because I’d already told someone what I wrote down as a decision of the meeting. I think I should not hesitate to make sure or ask about something unsure.

N313-03
(1) When I heard words I don’t know in a conversation with native speaker or in class, I usually don’t ask its meaning. However I tried to ask teacher because I found other students also didn’t recognize teacher speaking. But such an act sometimes bother my teachers.
(2) When I make a speech and I have a script, I can speak with confidence. However, if not, I tend to speak in low volume and not to open my mouth wide, and my counterpart of conversation cannot understand me. So recently I try to open my mouth and speak loudly. But I’m sometimes still shy.

N313-04
(1) I listened a tape of listening class several times before class at home. I’ve heard listening to same material over and over again is effective to improve listening skill. I sit true?
(2) I tend to think about grammar too much when I speak English. So, I sometimes try speaking without thinking so much. However, in such case, I often fail to speak in correct order. For example, I say object first, earlier than subject or verb. Like following: “To Ala Moana beach I went yesterday.”

N313-05
(1) I usually watch “KGMB 9 News” at night. I try to catch what announcers say, but it isn’t easy. I always don’t use caption because, if I use it, I will read it more than listen to.
(2) My friends watches TV as long as he can to improve his listening skill. He always uses caption. He says that if I use caption it will get easier to understand and I can learn vocabulary. I don’t know which is the better strategy.

N313-06
(1) *When I read something, I sometimes read it out. I think it’s effective as pronunciation practice. And it’s also a good practice to get meaning by not translating into Japanese.
(2) My acquaintance had to give a speech at one meeting. He cannot speak English at almost all. At first, he was upset. But he ask someone to translate his manuscript into English and to record it in a tape. Then he listening to the tape and practice every day. He made a speech successfully today. I was moved very much.

N313-07
(1) I listened to a tape which is used for listening class. And I wrote down the tape’s content exactly. After I finished one paragraph, I checked it by script. I heard this is a good listening practice.
(2) My friend who studied on mainland advised me that taking a regular class of college is better to improve my English than studying at a language school. Some people said same thing.

N313-08
(1) I asked my bilingual friend about a detail translation. I always wonder how I can express
something as equal as I speak in Japanese
(2) I have heard that I should write in English directly, not translating. I was asked to write a small article in English. But writing in English directly seemed difficult. So I wrote it in Japanese first. But I tried to make Japanese sentences easy to translate into English so it was easier to translate it.

Discussion re: N313
This student shows a variety of good examples. Specifically, N313-02-2 is a good example of his thinking about a solution to a difficulty. N313-03-2 is a good example of how he reflected on his use of English in spoken situations. N313-04-1 and N313-05-2 are good examples of his asking the researcher’s opinion or advice. N313-05-2 and N313-06-2 are good examples of how he paid attention to the successful strategies of others.

EFL journals: Students with three entries or less
The following 3 EFL journals are examples chosen from students who wrote three or fewer entries. We include an evaluative discussion for each student.

Student K18 (EFL, 3 entries) [Pre/Post Use: -0.06; Pre/Post Usefulness: +0.06]
K18-01
(1) I just did my English homework.
I looked up dictionary and translate English into Japanese.

K18-02
(1) I made an effort to memorize new words. I used cards and put down words on it.
I memorised about twenty words for an hour. But I think I will forget them by next week.

K18-03
(1) I started to study for Toefl in March. Listening is difficult for me.

Discussion re K18:
This student seems to be either pessimistic about English, or lacking confidence, or perhaps lacking motivation, or a combination of all these.

Student K21 (EFL, 3 entries) [Pre/Post Use: +0.06; Pre/Post Usefulness: -0.14]
K21-01
(1) *I tried to speak English as fast as possible, though I made some mistakes.
*I spoke to my English teacher after class and talked with him.
(2) *In English C class, I could able to follow my teacher mostly, but I can’t understand some words. Then I could ask my teacher to tell me the wearing of these word.

K21-02
(1) *I tried to speak as long sentences as possible.
*I called my English teacher.
*I tried to ask my teacher to tell me as many word’s meaning that I don’t know as possible using some expressions for what I only mean.
(2) I wasn’t be able to translate what I meant into English. Then I have to use Japanese-English dictionary and ask my teacher to check my English. So I need Japanese-English dictionary.

Discussion re: K21
There is a bit of evidence of metacognitive reflection, and possibly some motivation when it comes to pursuing English study. For example, calling the teacher, and thinking about pronunciation as being important.
**Student K27 (EFL, 3 entries)** [Pre/Post Use: +0.04; Pre/Post Usefulness: -0.30]

**K27-01**

(1) I try to listen to my teachers speaking English while I am in class. (Their native language are English.)

**K27-02**

(1) I made a decision to try to speak English only in the class.

(2) I have a difficulty to hear English teachers exactly. But I will not give up.

**K27-03**

(1) When I come accross words I don’t know, I consult a dictionary.

(2) I made a mistake because I didn’t hear the teacher correctly.

**Comments re: K27**

There is some evidence of perseverance, decision-making, not giving up, and some reflection in connection to listening to the teacher as well as self-assessment of his/her own errors.

**Summary re: K18, K21, K27**

These entries all hint at some motivation, but no real depth. For all three cases, it is difficult to generalize anything specific except to conjecture that the small number of entries plus little depth within entries is possibly due to: lack of motivation, lack of interest, lack of time or lack of understanding. Additionally, keeping journals may not match students’ preferences for learning.

However, there are a few instances of effort. For example, K18 (entry 02) attempts to memorize new words. K21 engages in reasonably prolonged interaction with the teacher and each of his 3 entries demonstrate an effort to communicate with the teacher and receive feedback. Despite showing a little perseverance, K21’s entries don’t reflect much depth. In terms of pre/post scores, K18 shows little variance and both K21 and K27 showed a slight raise in use and a reasonably big drop in usefulness.

**Pedagogical implications:**

Our pedagogical intention was to increase learners' awareness of LLS and we believe guided journals are one way to do this. Additionally we felt it would be useful to compare ESL/EFL environments to see if resources outside the classroom (or other factors) make a difference as reflected in journal entries.)
Values of guided journals
Throughout this study, the researchers became aware of the value of using guided journals, both for teachers and for (at least some) students.

1. This process can help give teachers a really good look at their students in terms of:
   - the kinds of English-use opportunities students are seeking, and the depth/breadth of use they make of those opportunities
   - the struggles and strengths that a class of students seems to have, and the strategies different students use in response to situations where struggles or strengths arise
   - the kinds of strategies each student is using, or aware of
   - the extent to which each student learns from (or is open to learning from) others -- this can be learning from what other classmates are doing, or learning from what the teacher suggests, etc.
   - helping learners reach one level higher than they currently are in terms of the depth to which they use and/or fine-tune a strategy
   - levels and types of motivation and perseverance that individual students appear to possess
   - interplay of "learner of English" role vs. "user of English" role, and how to tie the two together through metacognition
   - sharing strategies from everyone, such as a Student Newsletter, may help increase students’ awareness of the range and variety of LLS available to use

2. Using guided journals helps learners in terms of:
   - opportunities to add to their awareness of strategies in general, and to add new strategies to their personal repertoires
   - opportunities to engage in, and become more aware of, self-regulation of learning and use of the target language
   - self-regulating their own learning reinforces learner control over their own learning, which can lead to greater engagement
   - teacher feedback (with additional opportunities to reflect and receive further feedback on times when they incorporate this feedback)
   - highlighting connections between the classroom and environment, e.g. using the environment.
3. Guided journals are valuable tools as connectors between the classroom and the environment.

4. Value for teachers of:
   - combining ‘action research’ and reflective practice for personal pedagogical improvement
   - awareness of a wider variety of strategies to introduce to students (learned from the students' journals themselves)

5. Curricular insights:
   - EFL environment - a focus on providing learners with opportunities to use the target language both in and outside the classroom
   - ESL environment – a focus on using class time to analyse and discuss what went on in learners’ outside-the-classroom opportunities

Constraints:
In examining the role of guided journals to facilitate metacognitive reflection, and the extent to which they led to improvement in strategy use and student motivation, the researchers came across a few constraints. First, we were unable to ensure that all treatment learners did the required number of journal entries, so further research with a larger n-size is called for. Additionally, changes in pre/post scores are not necessarily proof of a "causal" relationship. It could be that those with three or fewer entries just didn't have (or lost) motivation about LLS (or about English in general), and that loss of motivation led to pre/post changes in scores, and similarly with those who completed 10+ entries, as being generally more motivated and thus, more likely to be more positive in terms of pre/posts change in entries.

Conclusion
What our case study data suggests is that the “right learner” can make very effective use of metacognitive reflection on their repertoires of strategies and how they use them. However, there are a lot of things that our study with strategy journals doesn't tell us. For example, whether there is any correlation between strategy use and proficiency gains, whether it's true for everyone or just those whose learning styles particularly favor LLS, or whether there's a correlation between strategy use and increased motivation or perseverance.

References


(Note: for additional references, see our other papers)
APPENDIX A

Name_________________________________________ Date ______________

STRATEGY JOURNAL

1. (a) During this past week, what strategies did you use? Write them in the box.

(b) Put a * next to ones that you feel are very useful

2. Write about your experience learning or using English this week (either in class or outside). Here are some questions to help you. You don't have to answer all the questions -- just choose one or two. Write in the box below (continue on the back of this paper if you want to write more).

   Write about a difficult experience learning or using English that you had this week. What strategies could you use to improve in this area?

   Write about a successful experience learning or using English that you had this week. What strategies did you use that helped you succeed? If you did it again, would you do it differently?

   Did any of your classmates use strategies for learning or using English that you would like to try? What strategies did they use?