Introduction
This continuation of the case study (Riley & Harsch, 2010) examines the effects of journal use combined with researcher feedback. We comment on the pedagogical value of providing feedback to learners and discuss how providing written feedback to learners as part of their guided reflection can promote an increase in language learning strategy use and have beneficial implications for learners’ potential development as self-regulated learners.

Research question
What evidence is there that use of guided journals, where learners receive instructor feedback via the journals, results in greater awareness of LLS and greater awareness of connections between strategies and situations that might warrant their use?

Procedure
Using the same selected case study ESL learners from those presented in Riley & Harsch, 2010, we present examples of how one researcher gave individual feedback to each learner on each journal entry resulting in greater awareness of language strategy use.

Results & Discussion
(S = Student’s entry, R=Researcher’s response, in italics)

Over time, many students began using the journal as a forum for asking questions to the researchers, about strategies, or about what to do in certain situations. This entry typifies this.

S: 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?

R: It’s probably better to be indirect. You could ask something like, “Where do they live now?” or “Do they live in Paris?” and then she will tell you where they live, or if they are no longer alive. It’s difficult to know these things, though, so I’m glad you asked.

The following entry exemplifies ones in which the learner reported an event, and the researchers responded with feedback aimed at raising learners’ awareness of additional strategies they might want to try.

S: “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.

R: Good! It's interesting how often we suddenly hear or read words when we finally notice them. Have you tried using “precisely” yet for your own purposes?
The next entry shows how the researchers offered alternative strategies to those the learners reported.

S: I'm still reading a book. It is for children, but not easy for me. So I looked up words in dictionary.

R: Children's books are not easy -- they often have difficult grammar and vocabulary. But if there are some pictures in the book, or if you already know the story, it can help you to guess the meaning, which is a great strategy.

The next entry shows how the researchers offered additional strategies to those the learners reported, that is, to offer the learner a way to expand their current strategy into a combination of strategies that involves more depth.

S: I got dictionary of synonyms and antonyms. I try to find the word I don't know with it. It is easier to understand than using English-English dictionary.

R: This is a fantastic idea! Sometimes (when you have time, that is), it's good to double-check some of the words in a dictionary, so you can learn the differences in nuance that the synonyms and antonyms have.

Occasionally, a motivated learner would write about how he or she actually followed the feedback. First is this learner's third entry. Here she mentions that she sometimes reads a newspaper and sometimes watches TV news. The researcher suggested that she combine these -- using both media for the same news stories.

S: 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.

R: Why don’t you combine these? Watch the TV news, and listen to (or record) a few stories, then look specifically for those stories in the next day’s newspaper.

Next is the same student's eleventh entry. We can see that she has incorporated the researcher's earlier suggestions, and has even taken the idea a step further by using the Internet! While this is not typical of every student, it certainly shows what can happen as a result of the interaction between the teacher/researcher and learners. This was the only instance we were able to find among ESL learners where the evidence is "explicit" in a subsequent journal entry, but of course, it’s possible that others may have incorporated our feedback but did not feel a need to report it. It's also possible that there were other, less obviously evident ways that the feedback influenced learners, such as depth of strategy use in the sense of combining a number of strategies.

S: 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)

R: Great! I can’t believe how many good strategies you use!
Feedback to individual students
Positive feedback from teachers and researchers for all learners, not just these case study examples, included acceptance of strategies used, encouragement, praise, constructive comments, and suggestions, all of which we feel helped motivate learners to further explore, combine and use a wider range of strategies and adding depth and breadth to those already used.

Feedback to all students
A newsletter was compiled using examples collated from a cross section of all journal entries. Selections were based on those LLS teachers and researchers considered useful in both EFL and ESL environments, or those worthy of sharing with all learners in a specific environment, so subjects could be aware of LLS that other students used. The newsletter was printed and distributed to all participants. The final newsletter comprised approximately eight pages and feedback from teachers was that many learners reported they really appreciated it. Figure 1 presents samples from the 8-page newsletter.

Figure 1. Student Newsletter

Useful Strategies from Everyone

I wrote down words that I can’t memorize and I put the papers which I wrote the words on walls in my house so I can see the words every day.

I try to eavesdrop everywhere, and try to understand native speakers’ conversations.

I wrote words listening to my favorite English song. Then I could sing the song in English.

Last term I tried to pay attention another students who could speak English better than me during class time. The student what they said is very helpful to use English what I want to say.

When I go to shopping, I try to understand what is it to buy. Like Nutrition, where made in and what made by.

Conversation through the phone is one of my weakest point. I gave my neighbor a call to conquer that, even though I could meet him at the kitchen. (I live in a dormitory)

When I think about something, I try to think them in English. For example, in Sunday morning, “What should I spend day time today? At first I have to do my laundry and next I’ll go shopping . . .” etc.

I try to remember name of things surround me, like pillow, desk, sandals, etc.
When I found new words in textbook, I looked up their derivative and synonyms in the dictionary.

I went to a ski slope. I took a ski chair lift with a foreigner. (←American) I talked with him in English. … I could recognize his easy words, but couldn’t recognize difficult words

I hit upon a good idea about learning English. Now, I’m reading the English book, “If tomorrow comes.” I also bought the book which written in Japanese. I will read these two books (written in English and in Japanese) at the same time. I think this is good strategy reading English.

In another English class, I tried to understand a short story in English without translating it into Japanese.

I read English passages aloud repeatedly, to learn new words by heart.

Benefits of providing feedback
Teacher/researcher constructive written feedback via guided journals can be an effective pedagogical tool and can help reinforce strategy use – i.e., where suggestions are acted upon on or at least attempted or acknowledged in some way. The benefits each student gains is dependent on the extent to which they are open to learning and reflecting on teachers’ suggestions. These are additional opportunities for learners to reflect and receive further feedback on times when they incorporate this feedback. It is possible for learners who attend to the feedback to reach one level higher than they currently are in terms of the depth to which they use and/or fine-tune a strategy. The overall benefits of such one-on-one communication add support to identifying one way that students can receive tangible pedagogical support for diverse learning styles as they continue exploring useful ways to learn English.

Additionally, sharing strategies from everyone, such as a Student Newsletter in the form of feedback, may help increase students’ awareness of the extensive range and variety of LLS available to use.

Constraint
If the journal had an additional question asking learners to report on whether they had tried using previous journals' feedback from the researchers, and if so, the result of trying them out, it would have made it much easier to identify the effect of feedback.

Conclusion
One concern about LLS research is that we can’t assume that exposure to, or the use of LLS will automatically lead to success in learning or using a language. This is particularly true if learners do not make metacognitive connections between their language use and their choice of strategies. However, one way of facilitating these metacognitive connections is through feedback and suggestions. By looking more deeply at a selected case study, in terms of teacher/researcher feedback in order to help promote LLS awareness and use, we feel it may uncover useful information for classroom teachers. The case study shown in this paper exemplifies this potential
and identifies some obvious benefits for learners’ development and also for teachers’ professional practice.

Reference