CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from all the research procedures used to answer the three research questions posed in Chapter 1 of this study.

There were altogether five sets of data. The first set of data comprised lesson transcripts and field-notes related to the three training sessions discussed in Chapter 4. These were used to obtain information as to how strategy training was implemented in the ESL classroom. The second set of data consisted of pre and post scores obtained by students in the administration of the SILL questionnaire. These SILL scores helped to indicate whether there was an increase in the frequency use of language learning strategies among the students as a result of strategy training. The third set of data comprised the six students' written documents (the learning journals and the learning contracts). Analysis of these two written documents showed whether strategy training had an effect on developing learner autonomy among ESL students with regards to planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating their own learning process. The fourth set of data consisted of responses to interviews with the teacher and the six students. The final set of data comprised the 42 students' responses to the Feedback Form, which was administered at the end of the 15-week training programme. Both these sets of data presented how the students and the teacher viewed strategy training.

All the above mentioned data were analyzed to answer the following research questions:

1. Did strategy-training have an effect on developing learner autonomy among ESL students in terms of managing their own learning through:

    a. planning - the ability to determine and formulate learning objectives and to propose a plan of action to handle future learning tasks?

    b. organizing - the ability to decide on time, learning tasks, learning materials and learning strategies to be used in order to successfully accomplish learning tasks?

    c. monitoring - the ability to check, verify and correct oneself in the performance of language tasks?

    d. evaluating - the ability to evaluate or check the outcome of one's own performance of language tasks?

2. Did strategy-training increase the use of language learning strategies among the ESL students?

3. How did the students and the teacher view strategy training?

The following sections present the findings of the study.

Research Question 1: Did Strategy Training have an Effect on Developing Learner

Autonomy Among ESL Learners in Terms of Planning, Organizing,

Monitoring and Evaluating the Learning Process?

The first research question raised in this study sought to investigate whether strategy training had an effect on developing learner autonomy among ESL learners in terms of managing the learning process which refers to students' ability to plan, organize, monitor and evaluate their own learning process.

To answer this question, data was obtained from the following four sources: 42 students' responses from the Feedback Form, six students' (case studies) written documents (learning journals and learning contracts), six students' (case studies) responses to semi-structured interviews and Karen's responses to three open-ended interviews.

First, the 42 students' responses obtained from the Feedback Form (Appendix 7) were analyzed to obtain weighted mean scores. Since the students responded using a 4-point Likert scale of 1 to 4, the mean score of 2.5, in this study was regarded as the mid-point. Therefore, a weighted mean score of 2.5 and above indicated that the students were successful in the mentioned aspect of learning whereas a weighted mean score of 2.5 and below meant that the students were unsuccessful for that particular aspect of learning.

This was followed by an analysis of six students' written documents (learning journals and learning contracts) and their responses to structured interviews. These

findings were triangulated with responses gained from interview sessions carried out with the teacher.

The six students chosen as the focus for case studies were identified as Students A1, A2, A3, B1, B2 and B3. As mentioned in Chapter III, page 129-130, Students A1, A2 and A3 recorded the highest difference in the increased frequency use of language learning strategies. This was indicated by the difference in the scores obtained from the SILL questionnaire, which was administered before and after the 15-week Strategy Training Programme. On the other hand, Students B1, B2 and B3 were the only three students in this study who displayed a decrease in the frequency use of learning strategies between the pre and post SILL scores.

Students' Ability at Planning

It was found that strategy training did have a positive effect on students' planning abilities. A majority of the students reported that strategy training helped them improve their planning abilities. This included their success in determining and formulating learning objectives and in advance organizational planning (the ability to propose a suitable plan of action to handle upcoming/future learning tasks).

Evidence of students' success in planning was reflected in the 42 students' responses obtained from the Feedback Form. The findings are presented in Table 14 on page 215. The findings indicated that the students were successful in both aspects of the planning process, i.e., to determine and formulate their learning objectives and to propose a plan of action to handle upcoming / future learning tasks (advance organizational planning).

215

Table 14

Students' Perceptions of their Ability in Planning

Ratings	Least Successful (1)	Fairly Successful (2)	Successful (3)	Most Successful (4)	
No. & percentage of students / Items	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	Mean Score
Item 4 Determining and formulating the objectives of your own learning	3 (7.1%)	13 (30.9%)	20 (47.6%)	5 (11.9%)	2.6
Item 5 Deciding and proposing strategies and planning for an upcoming task	1 (2.4%)	11 (26.2%)	26 (61.9%)	4 (9.5%)	2.9
Overall mean score for planning					2.8

The findings also indicated that students displayed more confidence in advance organizational planning (mean score 2.9) when compared to determining and formulating objectives (mean score 2.6). Results in Table 14 indicate that 25 students (59.5 %) perceived they were successful in determining and formulating learning objectives whereas 31 students (71.4 %) felt they were successful in handling upcoming learning tasks. The overall mean score of 2.8 indicated that the programme did have a positive effect in developing students' planning abilities.

An investigation into the six students' written documents indicated that although all the six students' planning abilities improved under the training programme, the rate and stage of improvement varied from one individual to another. While Students A1, A2, A3, B2 and B3 showed continuous improvement throughout the programme,

Student B1 only showed signs of improvement towards the last phase of the training programme. Furthermore, students who indicated an early awareness and application for advance organizational planning were able to achieve greater success in determining and formulating learning objectives.

Investigation into students' learning journals indicated that all the students entered the training programme with limited planning abilities. This was evident in their inability to determine and formulate clear and focussed learning objectives for lessons carried out under the training programme. An example of their initial limited planning ability can be seen in their formulation of learning objectives for Lesson 2A (see Table 15).

The teacher's objectives for Lesson 2A were as follows:

1. To read and understand short texts on environmental issues such as global warming and deforestation.

2. To improve vocabulary skills using strategies of listing and association."

This shows that the teacher had two main objectives - one for improving reading comprehension and one for improving vocabulary. The six students' learning objectives for Lesson 2A are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Extracts from Learning Journals Indicating Students' Planning Ability

Student	Beginning Phase of Training (Weeks 1-5)	Middle Phase of Training (Weeks 6 - 10)	Final Phase of Training (Weeks 11 -15)
A1	Journal Entry 2A To learn the right strategies in language learning to improve ourselves.	Journal Entry 7A To read about special sports events. To improve vocabulary using the thesaurus to learn opposites and similar meanings of words.	Journal Entry 11B To read and understand a story, to predict and to make conclusions for the ending. To observe the writer's method used in writing a good story and to write an outline plan for our own story.
A2	Journal Entry 2A To read and understand passages on environment. To widen my vocabulary.	Journal Entry 7A To read, understand and follow sequence of events when describing the SEA Games. To use synonyms and antonyms to widen my vocabulary.	Journal Entry 11A To read and answer comprehension questions based on a story. To write a summary of the story read. To use homonyms to widen my vocabulary.
A3	Journal Entry 2A To learn how to get more words in a shorter span of time according to relevant topics.	Journal Entry 6B To identify topic sentences and supporting sentences from a given passage. To learn the steps in writing a good summary. To summarize passages.	Journal Entry 11B To read a story and predict and draw conclusions to its ending. Answering questions by showing proof to support your answers. To identify good writing styles and plan an outline for a story.
B1	Journal Entry 2A To read and answer comprehension questions.	Journal Entry 6B To learn how to write a summary.	Journal 11B To read, understand and guess the ending of a story using predicting skills.
B2	Journal Entry 2A To read and understand the topic. To improve vocabulary.	Journal Entry 7A To read and understand passage on famous events like SEA Games. To improve vocabulary.	Journal Entry 11B To read and predict the ending of a short story. To learn the qualities of a good short story and plan out own story.
B3	Journal Entry 2A To read and understand passages. To learn more words by using connections.	Journal Entry 6B To search for key words, topic sentences and supporting sentences for summary writing. To write short summaries.	Journal Entry 11A To read and understand a story on moral values and summarize it. To widen vocabulary through homonyms.

A look at the students' learning objectives (Table 15) reveals that only Students A2, B2 and B3 were aware of the main objectives of Lesson 2A. Students A1, A3 and B1, however, chose to focus only on one of the two objectives. For example, Student A3, was successful in identifying only the vocabulary aspect of the lesson while Student B1 chose to concentrate on the reading comprehension component.

Meanwhile, Student A1's objective of "to learn the right strategies in language learning to improve ourselves" for Lesson 2A may be interpreted as an inaccurate or unfocussed objective. In fact, her objective for Lesson 2A seems to be one of the objectives of the Strategy Training Programme. Though Students A2, B1, B2 and B3 managed to identify the reading comprehension aspect, none of them was successful in formulating a clear, well-defined and focussed objective for it. For example, Student B2's objective to "read and understand the topic" is rather broadly stated. Besides that, the whole group (except Student A2) was unable to identify the topic concerned, which was on environmental issues.

Moreover, all the students were also unable to articulate the specific vocabulary strategies involved in the vocabulary component, which were 'listing' and 'making associations.' The only one who came close to identifying this strategy was Student B3. Her use of the word 'connections' here most probably referred to the strategy of 'making associations.'

This limited planning ability evident at the beginning of week 2, however, saw some changes when they submitted their first learning contract during weeks 4 and 5 of the training programme. Students' learning objectives for learning contract 1 can be seen in Table 16.

Table 16

Extracts from Learning Contracts Indicating Students' Planning Ability

Student	Beginning Phase of Training (Weeks 1-5)	Middle Phase of Training (Weeks 6 - 10)	Final Phase of Training (Weeks 11 -15)
A1	Learning Contract 1-Week 4 To read with understanding, enjoyment and to search meanings of unfamiliar words. To encourage reading habit.	Learning Contract 2 - Week 6 To read, understand and write a book report. To widen my vocabulary power while enjoying it.	Learning Contract 5 - Week 14 To read and understand two articles on 'Consumerism' and write a talk on it.
A2	Learning Contract 1 - Week 4 Read and understand information in a book on environmental issues. Use a dictionary to locate meanings of words and learn to use them in different contexts.	Learning Contract 3 -Week 9 To read, understand and summarize an article on an interesting place of travel. To find meanings of unknown words using a dictionary to widen my vocabulary.	Learning Contract 5 - Week 11 To read, understand and summarize a passage on moral values. To improve my vocabulary through resourcing using the dictionary and the thesaurus.
A3	Learning Contract 1 - Week 5 To read and understand a story.	Learning Contract 2 - Week 10 To read and understand a passage by answering comprehension questions based on passage. To use a dictionary to locate meanings of new words.	Learning Contract 3 - Week 12 Read and understand a passage on moral values. Answer questions based on the passage. To write a summary of the passage.
B1	Learning Contract 1 - Week 5 To widen my vocabulary.	Learning Contract 2 - Week 10 To improve my grammar and vocabulary.	Learning Contract 3 - Week 13 To read and understand a story on moral values and do a comprehension exercise. To find meanings of difficult words using a dictionary.
B2	Learning Contract 1 - Week 5 Read and understand information in a story.	Learning Contract 3- Week 10 To improve composition skills by reading descriptions of places and jotting down interesting words and phrases.	Learning Contract 4 - Week 13 To read and understand a passage on health. To answer comprehension questions and write a summary.
B3	Learning Contract 1 - Week 4 To read and understand a story and pick out descriptive words which can be used for essays and also to widen my vocabulary.	Learning contract 2 - Week 8 To read and understand an extract from a book on tourism. To search for new words to improve vocabulary using a thesaurus.	Learning Contract 3 - Week 13 To read and understand short stories as well as to locate the moral values behind the stories. To find meanings of difficult words using a dictionary.

Under Learning Contract 1, students were required to carry out extensive reading on their own. Extracts of the students' first learning contracts exhibited in Table 16 reveal students' limited abilities in determining and formulating their own learning objectives. For example, the learning objectives of Students A3 and B2 who aimed "to read and understand a story" may be perceived as rather general. Meanwhile, Student A1's objectives such as "to read for understanding, enjoyment" and "to encourage the reading habit" may be interpreted as rather broad and ambiguous learning aims planned for a short span of time (in this case, she planned to complete the task within two weeks).

Both Student A2 and Student B3, however, showed some improvement in their planning abilities when they submitted their learning contracts in week 4. Both of them displayed their success in determining the general and specific objectives of their own learning. For example, Student A2 had two objectives - one for reading and one for vocabulary. Though she was not very focussed in formulating her reading objective she achieved more success in articulating her vocabulary objective which was to "use a dictionary to locate meanings of words and learn to use them in different contexts." Similarly, Student B3's formulation of her vocabulary objective, to "pick out descriptive words" for use in essays, showed an improvement in her planning abilities.

It was also around the beginning phase of the training programme (week 2) that Students A2, A3 and B3's learning journals displayed signs of advance organizational planning. In fact, all these three students showed an early awareness and application for advance organizational planning. For example, in her journal entry 2A Student A1

wrote "I must read more to improve my vocabulary" and Student A3 in her journal entry
1A said:

> I like the idea of making flash cards using different colours so that it
> would be easier for us to recall the new words learnt. I think I'll use
> that idea beginning today. I hope I succeed in improving my vocabulary.

Student A3's awareness and application of using flash cards to learn new words
can be seen as an example of advance organizational planning to improve her
vocabulary skills. Such awareness for future learning activities was not only seen in the
beginning phase of the programme, but was something that continued to be an integral
part of all these three students' learning journals.

In fact by week 8, both awareness and application for advance organizational
planning was a noticeable feature of Student A2's journal entries. Proof of this was seen
in the following extract of her journal entry 8A:

> Today I did the reading comprehension exercise that was given to us.
> Before starting my work I thought of and read all the guidelines for
> effective reading comprehension that were given to us. In fact, I found
> them very useful and I realised that all the strategies actually helped to
> do a good piece of work. I also finished my task faster. I think it was
> worth the time I spent on it

The above extract reveals that before Student A2 started on her learning task,
she had proposed a plan of action as to how she would accomplish it. Her plan included
reading and understanding the guidelines for effective reading comprehension. This
advance organizational planning ability helped her in the successful accomplishment of
the task.

It was also around this time (week 7) that Student A2 revealed her success in
determining and formulating both the general and specific objectives of Lesson 7B

(Table 15). Furthermore, her learning objectives for Learning Contract 3, which she submitted in week 9 (Table 16) displayed her ability and success in formulating clear and focussed learning objectives. Her objectives to "read, understand and summarize an article" and "to find meanings of unknown words using a dictionary" can be seen as focussed and explicit learning objectives.

Similar success was also seen in the planning abilities of Students A3 and B3 during week 7. Their learning objectives for Lesson 7B (Table 15) when matched with the objectives provided by the teacher indicated that they were able to successfully articulate both the main and specific objectives of the lesson. They were also successful in formulating focussed learning objectives for the second learning contract (Table 16).

Meanwhile, both Students A1 and B2 displayed signs of advance organizational planning during week 9. Student A1's awareness and application for advanced organizational planning was seen in journal entry 9B when she made the following recording:

> I realise that to score in my writing, I must be able to use good
> descriptive phrases. Therefore, I have jotted down some descriptive
> phrases about the beautiful spots in Portugal. I hope I can use them
> when I write my composition (a letter to a friend describing a
> beautiful place I visited) which I am supposed to hand in next week.

The above journal extract, shows Student A1's success in using the strategy of listing and copying of descriptive phrases for handling her upcoming task: to write a letter to a friend describing a place of interest. Such awareness and application probably gave her the confidence in successfully determining and formulating learning objectives by week 11 (Table 15). By week 14 when she submitted her fifth learning

contract, her learning objectives, "to read and understand two articles on 'Consumerism' and write a talk on it" may be interpreted as better learning objectives compared to her earlier attempts.

Unlike Student A1 who displayed both awareness and application for advance planning in week 9, Student B2 displayed signs of awareness but not application in journal entry 9B:

> I think to know how to make our own questions is good. So, the next time I read something, I will ask myself questions. Teacher says it will help me test my understanding of the passages that I have to read for my reading comprehension test in Paper I.

This awareness of advanced planning (to keep in mind the strategy of formulating questions to handle her future reading comprehension tasks) in week 9 brought about a corresponding improvement for student B2 in formulating her learning objectives. For example, by week 7 even though she was able to identify the main objectives for lesson 7A - "to read and understand passage on famous events like SEA Games", she failed to list down the specific objectives for the vocabulary component (Table 15). However, in her third learning contract in week 10 (Table 16), her learning objective "to improve composition skills by reading descriptions of places and jotting down interesting words and phrases" bears testimony to a more focussed and well-presented objective.

Evidence of application for advanced planning was seen in Student B2's journal entry 14B. In this entry, she wrote that to do well in her summary she first read her notes on summary writing - that is, how to identify key words, topic sentences and supporting details. This helped her refresh her memory and then use all the strategies she had learnt. She felt that planning helped her successfully accomplish her task. This

evidence of application of advance organizational planning saw a corresponding improvement in her planning abilities in week 11. The formulation of clear learning objectives for Lesson 11B, that is to read and predict the ending of a short story (Table 15), and her success in planning was evident in her fourth learning contract (Table 16). Here, her learning objectives were "to read and understand a passage on health" and "to answer comprehension questions and write a summary." Both are proof of well-written explicit learning objectives.

In contrast to all these students (A1, A2, A3, B2 and B3), Student B1's journal entries hardly showed any evidence of advance organizational planning. Her entries were more descriptive rather than reflective. During the interview session, she explained the rationale for not planning her work. She said:

> I do try to plan at times but I don't think I do that quite often. I usually start something straight away. Sometimes I am successful so I think I don't really believe in planning because I think I am not a good planner I just do things as they come.

The above statement by Student B1 indicated that she did not believe in planning leading to a lack of conscious effort to plan her learning tasks. She displayed poor planning abilities during the first two phases of the training programme (weeks 1-10). For example, even by week 10 when she submitted her second learning contract (Table 16) she was writing general objectives such as "to improve my grammar and vocabulary." She, however, displayed some signs of improvement in week 11B when she was successful in determining the main and one specific objective of Lesson 11B (Table 16) which was "to read, understand and guess the end of a story using predicting skills." Her improvement in planning was again evident when she submitted her third

learning contract in week 13. Her objectives, "to read and understand a story on moral values and do a comprehension exercise" and "to find meanings of difficult words using a dictionary" (Table 16) are focussed and clear learning objectives.

During the interview sessions, all students except Student B1 acknowledged that the Strategy Training Programme had helped them improve their planning abilities. When asked to comment on planning, Student A3 said that at the beginning of the programme she:

> didn't have an idea of what I was doing but after some time into the programme I could write down the objectives, so it was sort of good. I also felt good when I was able to plan my own work.

Student A3 stressed that by the end of the programme she was most successful in planning her own work. Students A1, A2 and B3 felt they were successful by the middle phase of the training programme whereas Student B2 perceived that she was only fairly successful in planning as there were times when she still found it difficult to determine and formulate her learning objectives. Student B1 admitted that she was still unable to actually determine and formulate the objectives of a lesson and was of the opinion that she still needed help and guidance to further improve her planning abilities.

The success achieved by the students (4 out of 6) in planning their own learning was also affirmed by the teacher during Interview III with the researcher. She pointed out that students showed a marked improvement in their planning abilities under the Strategy Training Programme. She felt that the students were more confident and were able to write better learning objectives by the end of the training programme. She attributed this success to the use of learning contracts through which students learnt

how to plan better. However, there were still some students who faced difficulty in writing objectives as she had come across some students who often wrote "long-winded and unfocussed objectives in their learning contracts." She hoped to spend more time in helping these students to plan and formulate better learning objectives.

In conclusion, it can said that the data obtained from the students' written documents, structured interviews and the Feedback Form reveal that the strategy training did have a positive effect on the students' planning abilities. By learning how to plan their own learning process they probably got the confidence needed to take responsibility for their own learning.

Students' Ability at Organizing Learning

Findings obtained from the Feedback Form administered at the end of the 15-week training programme indicated that strategy training resulted in promoting students' confidence in organizing their own learning process. The results of the 42 students' responses are provided in Table 17.

The overall mean score of 3.2 shown in Table 17 indicates that the students in this study were successful in organizing their learning. The findings also reveal that the students were successful in all aspects of organizing the learning process. Students' responses exhibit that they felt most confident in their ability to decide and locate suitable learning materials to accomplish their learning task (mean score- 3.3) and in their ability to pace their own learning (3.2). Furthermore, students' responses show that strategy training was effective in helping them determine suitable strategies to

accomplish their learning tasks (mean score 3.1) and determine suitable learning tasks to achieve their learning objectives (mean score 3.0).

Table 17

Students' Perceptions of their Ability in Organizing Learning

Items / Aspects of organizing the learning process	Mean Score
Item 6 Determining learning tasks to achieve learning objectives	3.0
Item 7 Deciding how long you should spend on a learning task	3.2
Item 8 Determining suitable strategies to accomplish a learning task	3.1
Item 9 Deciding and locating suitable materials to accomplish a learning task	3.3
Overall weighted mean score for organizing the learning process	3.2

The investigation of the six students' written documents and structured interviews corroborated the above findings presented in Table 17. All the six students acknowledged the fact that strategy training improved their ability to organize their own learning. Like planning, the rate of success and improvement in organizing their learning process varied from one individual to another. For example, though all six students entered the programme with limited abilities in organizing their learning process, Students A1, A2, A3 and B2 were able to achieve faster success compared to Students B1 and B3. Furthermore, students mastered different aspects of organization

at different times. For example, Student B3 achieved success in locating suitable learning materials by week 4 and strategy use by week 6. She experienced success in determining suitable learning tasks to achieve her learning aims in week 9. However, it was only in week 13 of the training programme that Student B3 was successful at pacing her learning.

Students' Ability at Determining Learning Tasks

Investigation into the six students' written documents revealed that all of them entered the training programme with rather limited organizational abilities. This was evident in their inability to determine suitable learning tasks to fulfill their learning objectives during the preparation of their first learning contract (Table 18) which required students to propose a suitable task on extensive reading.

A look at the students' learning objectives for the first learning contract presented in Table 18 indicates that most of them had two main objectives: to improve their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Although most of them had the objective "to read and understand" as one of their main objectives, none of them were able to propose a tangible or suitable task to check their understanding of the materials read.

Three students (Students A1, A2 and B3), however, showed some success in determining suitable tasks for the vocabulary component. Student A1 looked for the meanings of difficult words and made sentences while Students A2 and B3 learnt five new words and constructed sentences with the new words learnt.

Table 18

Extracts from Learning Contracts Indicating Ability to Determine Learning Tasks

Stu-dent	Beginning Phase of Training (Weeks 1-5)	Middle Phase of Training (Weeks 6 - 10)	Final Phase of Training (Weeks 11 -15)
A1	Learning Contract 1- week 4 1. To read stories for enjoyment while understanding it. 2. Learn new words and from the story and jotting them down in the vocabulary book. 3. Look for the meanings of these words and construct different sentences.	Learning Contract 2 - Week 6 1. To scan for unfamiliar words and search their meanings using a dictionary. 2. To jot down new and unique phrases for future essays. 3. To write a short account on the story for a Book Report	Learning Contract 5 - Week 14 1. To learn new words from articles and find their meanings using a dictionary. 2. To read and understand articles on Consumerism and then use information in the articles to write an essay (a talk) on "Consumerism."
A2	Learning Contract 1-week 4 1. To read and comprehend a book on how to save the environment. 2. To learn 5 new words and construct sentences with them	Learning Contract 2- Week 6 1. To answer 60 objectives questions based on reading passages 2. To learn 5 new words in Reader's Digest and construct sentences with them	Learning Contract 4 - Week 11 1. To read, understand and answer comprehension questions based on story read. 2. To summarise the story 3. To learn 5 new words used in the story by making sentences 4. To find similar meanings of the 5 new words using a thesaurus
A3	Learning Contract 1- Week 5 1. To read and understand stories	Learning Contract 2 - Week 8 1. To read and understand a passage and answer comprehension questions 2. To find meanings of new words using a dictionary	Learning Contract 4 - Week 12 1. To read and understand a passage on "Bravery Award for Student" and complete a comprehension activity 2. To write a summary of the passage
B1	Learning Contract 1- Week 5 1. To read a fiction book to improve my word power	Learning Contract 2 - Week 10 1. To read and understand a passage on descriptions of places 2. To identify 5 new words and locate their meanings from the dictionary	Learning Contract 3 - Week 14 1. To answer comprehension questions based on a story. 2. To locate meanings of 5 difficult words found in the story.
St. B2	Learning Contract 1- Week 5 1. To read a story to improve my English	Learning Contract 3- Week 10 1. To read tourist brochures and write a composition by the title, "Places to visit in China." 2. To find meanings of difficult words by use of dictionary. 3. To improve writing skills by jotting down interesting words and phrases from brochures.	Learning Contract 4 - Week 14 1. To read a passage and do a comprehension exercise. 2. To write a summary of the passage on health.
B3	Learning Contract 1- Week 4 1. To read and understand a story. 2. To learn 5 descriptive words and phrases and to use them in sentences.	Learning Contract 2- Week 9 1. To read and answer questions based on a description of a famous place. 2. To locate the meanings of 5 new words and find their synonyms using a thesaurus.	Learning Contract 3 - Week 13 1. To read a short story and give the moral value 2. To answer questions on the story 3. To list down new words and find their meanings using a dictionary.

These students including Students A3 and B2 showed improvement during the middle phase of the training programme (Weeks 6-10). Evidence of this was seen in their success in determining suitable learning tasks to check their reading comprehension. For example, Student A1 read a story and wrote a book report while Student B2 read brochures to get information for writing a composition. Meanwhile, Students A2, A3 and B3 answered comprehension questions based on their reading materials. All these five students were also successful in determining suitable tasks for their vocabulary component.

In contrast to these students, Student B1 failed to propose a suitable task to check her understanding of her reading materials during the middle phase of the training programme. She, however, overcame this shortcoming towards the end of the training programme when she submitted her third learning contract in week 14. To check her understanding of a story she proposed to answer comprehension questions.

Analysis of the students' learning contracts revealed that Students A1, A2, A3, B2 and B3 continued to reveal greater confidence in determining suitable learning tasks as they advanced into the final phase of the training programme. By the end of the training programme, all six students were successful in determining suitable learning tasks to achieve their learning aims. Furthermore, the learning tasks proposed by students indicated that at the beginning phase of the training programme, students seemed rather satisfied with proposing simple tasks such as answering reading comprehension questions. Nevertheless, these students showed a willingness to take on more challenging and ambitious learning tasks such as writing book reports, speeches

231

(Student A1) and summaries (Students A2, A3, B2) as the training programme progressed.

Students' Ability at Determining the Learning Pace

Another aspect of organization that students lacked at the beginning of the programme was in pacing their own learning. This was evident in their inability to keep to their target dates of completing learning tasks proposed for their first learning contract.

In Learning Contract 1, students were required to perform an extensive reading task. They were given three weeks to complete their chosen learning task and were required to submit their work by the end of June 1999. A look at the six students' first learning contracts (Appendix 15) revealed that with the exception of Student A2, all the others failed to keep to their own assigned target dates for completion.

Student A2 prepared her learning contract during week 1 (13 June) and hoped to complete it by week 3 (28 June). She managed to complete it earlier on 27 June. This is an indication of her success in the realistic pacing of her learning. Further proof of her success in this area was seen in her ability to set and keep to her realistic and manageable target dates for all her six learning contracts.

On the other hand, all the five other students failed to keep to the target dates that they had proposed for themselves. Both students A1 and B3 started working on their learning contracts during week 2 (15 June). They planned to complete their task within a week, but failed to keep to their proposed dates of completion. This could

232

probably be due to the fact that they had set a rather unrealistic time period (one week) to complete a task like extensive reading. Both, however, managed to achieve success after spending an additional week on the task.

Students A3, B1 and B2 all set aside a more realistic time period (three weeks) for the task on extensive reading. Both Students A3 and B1 hoped to accomplish their task by 30th June but failed to keep to their target dates of completion. Similarly, Student B2 only managed to complete her task five days later (3rd July).

The above examination indicates that by week 5 of the programme, most of the students possessed rather limited abilities in pacing their learning. While some set unrealistic dates for completing learning tasks others were not disciplined enough to keep to target dates that they had set for themselves.

These students' capability to pace their learning, however, saw a change during the middle phase of the training programme (weeks 6-10) when they submitted their second learning contract. For example, in week 6, Student A1 submitted her second learning contract, stating that she planned her learning task (to read a story and write a book report) on 5th July and hoped to complete it within two weeks (17th July). The realistic planning (about 2 weeks) helped her achieve success by the 15th July. Similar success in pacing their learning was also experienced by Students A3 and B2 when they submitted their second learning contract. Student A3 was able to achieve success in this area by week 8 of the programme whereas Student B2 experienced success by week 9.

On the other hand, Student B1 accomplished her learning task for Learning Contract 2 a day later (4th August) than her scheduled date of 3rd August. She was however, more successful in her third learning contract, which she submitted in week

14. Student B3 recorded a similar experience. She too was not very successful in her second learning contract but, nevertheless, displayed success when she submitted her third learning contract in week 13.

By the end of the programme, all six students indicated that they were successful in setting and keeping to target dates of completion that they had set for themselves. Though some students like Student A2 entered the programme with successful abilities to pace their learning, there were others like Students A1, A3 and B2 who improved during the middle phase of the programme. Others like Students B1 and B3, however, experienced success towards the end of the training programme. Nevertheless, all of them were effective in managing their time and this aided them in pacing their own learning process.

Students' Ability at Determining Learning Materials

One aspect of organization of the learning process that students indicated initial success was in their ability to locate and select suitable learning materials to accomplish a learning task.

For Learning Contract 1, students were required to locate suitable reading materials for a project on extensive reading (minimum 100 pages). An analysis of students' learning contracts indicated that all six students were successful in locating suitable learning materials. For example, Student A1 read stories from the book "The Ghouls" whilst Student A3 read short stories from the book, "Twentieth Century Short Stories" by Barnes and Egford. Meanwhile, Students B1, B2 and B3 chose other books

of fiction. Student A2 was the only student who chose to read a non-fiction book. She read a book entitled, "How to be Green" by John Buttons - a book on how to save the environment. All the students' choices were an indication that the students had no trouble locating appropriate materials for extensive reading (Appendix 15).

The students displayed similar success in their second compulsory learning contract that required them to locate suitable materials for the topic, 'Descriptions of scenes and famous places.' For instance, Student A1 chose to read a description of Trobriand Islands from the "National Geographic" magazine, while Students A2 and B2 located their material from magazines and travel brochures. All these may be interpreted as apt sources of information to cover the topic concerned. Meanwhile, both Students A3 and B1 chose to select the relevant information from Upper Secondary (SPM) English Language revision guidebooks. Though this may be regarded as easy resource to locate, they can still be said to have managed to locate appropriate material to cover the topic required.

The third compulsory learning contract carried out during the final phase of the training programme, required students to carry out activities on the topic, 'Stories on Moral Values.' Here again, all six students displayed their confidence and success in locating stories on moral values. For example, Student B2 read Guy de Maupaussant's famous short story entitled, "The Necklace" and Student B3 read "The Lumber Room", a short story by Saki. As usual Student A3, again chose to get her material from a revision book and Student B1 located her material (extract from "Robinson Crusoe") from her Four Four English Language Textbook.

Though all six students indicated their success in locating suitable materials to cover the content and topic required, Students A1, A2, B2 and B3 can be said to be more successful when compared to Students A3 and B1. Both Student A1 and A2 were more successful than the rest because they were able to select materials from a variety of sources. They obtained their materials not only from books, but also from newspapers and magazines such as the "Reader's Digest" and the "National Geographic." Both were also aware of the use of Internet to resource materials and proof that they often surfed the Net for information was seen in their journal entries 13B. For example, Student A1 in her journal entry 13B wrote: "this lesson on health issues is very informative. I must read more on contagious diseases like tuberculosis, which is said to be making a comeback (maybe I'll surf the Net)." Meanwhile, Student A2 recorded the following in her journal entry 13B:

> I also have to write something on anorexia nervosa. I borrowed
> a book on eating disorders from the library but I don't think I have the
> time to read it all. I think I'll go to my favourite source of information -
> the Web- there, information is much faster to obtain!

The above two journal extracts exhibit both Students A1 and A2's awareness of where and how to locate suitable learning materials to fulfil their learning needs.

On the other hand, though Students B2 and B3 were successful in locating appropriate materials for their three compulsory learning contracts, they were not very effective in selecting from a variety of sources. Student B2 chose materials only from revision books for all the other pieces of work that she did on her own. For example, when working on Learning Contract 4, she read a passage on health from an English Language revision book. The same also applied to Students B1 and A3. Student B1's

written documents indicated that for the other pieces of self-study work that she did during weeks 8 and 15 of the programme she used learning materials from two different English Language revision books. In contrast to her, Student A3, located all her materials from the same revision book for all her work except for Learning Contract 1 where she was required to do extensive reading.

Students' Ability at Determining Learning Strategies

The final aspect of organization that this study looked into was students' ability to understand, propose and use strategies to successfully accomplish a learning task. Since students were undergoing a strategy training programme, they were introduced to a number of strategies in every lesson. All the students' learning journals indicated that students paid close attention to strategy use as a majority of them were able to record the strategies introduced in each lesson.

A study of the journal entries revealed that Students A1, A2, A3 and B3 showed an early awareness for the use of strategies and techniques to be used to accomplish a particular learning task. These students' journal entries also indicated that besides being aware of the learning strategies they were also able to articulate how these strategies would help them in their learning. For example, in journal entry 2A, Student A1 revealed her ability to not only name and identify the strategy of "resourcing" but was also able to articulate how the strategy of "resourcing" through the use of the dictionary and the thesaurus, would prove to be beneficial. She said that it would " really help me to widen my vocabulary."

Student A2 described strategies used as early as in journal entry 1A. Here, she mentioned that through the strategy, "resourcing using the dictionary", she learnt that "a word in the dictionary is described in a general term before being described in specific details." She added that she would use that "technique when asked to give the meaning of a certain word."

This awareness of the use of strategies to accomplish learning tasks was also displayed by Students A3 and B3 in their journal entries 1B. Both discussed strategies for improving vocabulary such as listing and association. While Student A3 expressed her preference for listing, Student B3 articulated her preference for the strategy 'association', when she said, "I liked the strategy of association best. I think if I use it with mind-mapping it will really help me focus."

While initial journal entries only revealed awareness and consciousness of how strategies could be used to accomplish learning tasks, there was little evidence to indicate their application. The first signs of the students' ability to apply strategies to accomplish learning tasks were seen in both Students A1 and A2's journal entries 4A. In the extract of journal entry 4A given below, Student A2 displays her ability to use the strategy of classification:

> My group has decided to work on my idea, that is, classifying the
> seven classes of food. We have decided to first give the names of the 7
> classes. For example, one main class of food is carbohydrates which we
> will then sub-divide into sugars and starch. Then below this like a flow-chart
> we intend to give example of foods that contain starch and sugar . . .

The above extract reveals that by week 4 Student A2 was able to determine and use appropriate strategies to accomplish a learning task. Further evidence was provided in her journal entry 7B when she wrote the following:

Today I listed down interesting phrases that I read from the Reader's Digest
. . . I used the strategy of 'directed attention' to find out what I wanted . . .
I scored quite high marks. . I think it was because I am now using strategies
I learnt in class. I now make intelligent guess using clues and I think this
helps when doing exam questions I also used the strategy of underlining,
note-making and questioning to help me do better.

Likewise Student A1 also revealed her ability to use suitable strategies in journal entry 4A. In this entry, she pointed out how the strategies of classification and grouping of information would help students in comparing, understanding and remembering important facts more effectively. More interestingly she displayed her ability to relate and transfer strategies learnt during English periods to other subjects that she was learning in school when she said, "I use it (classifying and grouping information) in my studies for understanding complex facts such as in the Biology subject." In this entry she also indicated her ability and success to use the strategy of classification to group musical instruments. She indicated her success when she reported the following:

I have decided to divide the musical instruments into percussion,
woodwind, brass and string sections. Each of this division is then
divided into smaller groups such as string instruments which consists of
violins, cellos and double bass whereas woodwind instruments are
aboe, flute, piccola, bassoon and etc..

The above extract which shows Student A1's success at applying strategies is an indication that by week 4 both Students A1 and A2 were already successful in their ability to propose and use appropriate strategies to accomplish their learning tasks.

Similar success in strategy use was also achieved by Students B3 and A3. Student A3 displayed the first signs of her success in applying strategies in journal entry 5A. She said that to write her essay she first read the guidelines provided by the teacher, then "with the information I planned my essay using all the strategies that

teacher taught us. I used the strategy of using a mind-map to plan and I did two drafts."

Later in journal entry 10B she stated that she used strategies such as "underlining and making notes" to get the main points for summary writing. She also claimed that she was able to use the strategy of self-monitoring to ensure she "got all the points" and "there were no errors" in her summary.

Though Student B3 showed an early awareness of strategy use in her learning journal there was little evidence to indicate application. The first signs of application of strategies by Student B3 were seen in journal entry 6B when she talked about strategies for summary writing. In this entry she was able to articulate her success when she said, "I used all the strategies that teacher had taught us for summary writing like identifying topic sentences and the use of key words. I was quite happy that the strategies actually worked." Later in entry 10B when she did her own work she again expressed her success in using appropriate strategies, "To write my summary, I think I used strategies like note-taking, sequencing, mind-mapping and planning."

By the middle phase of the training programme (weeks 6-10), while Students A1, A2, A3 and B3 had already achieved some success in determining and proposing suitable strategies to handle learning tasks, Students B1 and B2's journal entries showed little evidence of strategy use. This could most probably be due to the fact that both wrote descriptive journal entries compared to their peers who wrote reflective entries. These two students merely recorded strategies that were introduced in each lesson. For example, in journal entry 1B, Student B1 wrote: "We learnt a few learning strategies like listing, grouping and word-association. . . We were again given several worksheets to do." It is a descriptive entry but it also shows that Student B1 paid close attention in

class as she was able to identify all the three vocabulary building strategies that were being introduced in the lesson. While the other students were able to vocalise their awareness as to when and how these strategies could be used, both Students B1 and B2 chose to merely record what happened in class. Hence, there was little evidence to indicate their ability to determine and propose strategies for use in accomplishing a learning task.

Both (Students B1 and B3), however, showed signs of strategy use in week 10B when they made the following recordings. In journal entry 10 B, Student B2 wrote:

> From the visitor's guide I use the strategy of using the dictionary
> to find out meanings of 5 new words. Then I used thesaurus to get new
> words that mean the same meanings with this 5 words. I also used strategy
> of using 'wh' questions to help me understand the passage. For the writing
> of short description I use note-taking and summarizing strategies.

The above extract shows that by week 10, Student B2 was actually beginning to articulate her confidence in the application of strategies that she was using to complete her learning tasks. She had used strategies such as resourcing, self-questioning, note-taking and summarization. Similar evidence was also provided by Student B1 in her journal entry 10B when she talked about her learning task that she performed. She reported that she read the article on 'Taj Mahal' taken from a revision book. After reading she used the strategy of copying and directed attention to "write down some descriptive words and phrases used." Then she did a summary of the passage. Here, she articulated that she used "strategies like underlining and making short notes to write a summary." Both Students B1 and B2's journal entries 10B provide evidence that towards the end of the middle phase of the training programme they were

beginning to display signs of success in their ability to propose and determine suitable strategies to accomplish a learning task.

The final phase of the training phase saw advancement in strategy use among all students. Students A1, A2, A3 and B3 continued to progress. This was evident in all their journal entries 11B as it required them to list down the strategies they used in accomplishing the learning task - predicting a story. The use of strategies was well articulated by Student A1 who said :

> While enjoying the story we were making use of the strategy of predicting, as we were trying to guess the end of each part. While predicting, we were also inferencing the points and facts from the story which includes logical reasoning. After predicting we had to elaborate on what we had predicted. All these I think are examples of self-management strategies which all us as students have to figure out and think for ourselves the right answer to a question asked.

Meanwhile, Student B3 said that she used strategies such as "predicting, guessing and inferencing" to write a logical story. She added that she also had to use "self-talk and logical reasoning and elaboration." For week 15, students were encouraged to carry out their own learning and it required them to record the strategies they used to accomplish their learning tasks.

By the end of the programme, success was seen among all students including Students B1 and B2. For instance, Student B1 in week 15, reported that she read an article on the Y2K problem and the strategies she used to accomplish her task were "inferencing - to read in between the lines, note-making, self-talk - when making questions and self-evaluation when I marked my own work." Meanwhile, Student A3 who read an article on loafing from a revision book noted that the strategies she used

were "planning, self-talk, guessing, self-monitoring to check if my answers were right, self-evaluation, inferencing and I think directed attention." All these bear testimony that by the end of the programme, all the six students were already successful in determining and proposing strategies to successfully accomplish their learning tasks.

Summary of Students' Ability at Organizing Learning

The above findings indicate that the students initially came into the programme with rather limited organizational abilities but by the end of the programme, all students were successful in all the various aspects of organization of their learning process. While some students achieved success early in the programme, others experienced improvement towards the end of the programme.

For example, both Students A1 and A2 were able to achieve success in all aspects of organization by week 6. Student A3 experienced success by week 8 whereas Student B2 saw success by week 10. In contrast to this, both Students B1 and B3 achieved success towards the end of the programme. Student B3 achieved success by week 13 and Student B1 experienced success by week 14. The ability of all six students to achieve success in organizing their learning was probably due to the benefits they reaped from the Strategy Training Programme.

This claim was further affirmed by the students during the interview sessions. All six students claimed that strategy training helped them improve their organizational abilities. During the interview, students were asked to rate how successful they were in each aspect of organizing their learning after the 15-week Strategy Training

Programme. The students' perceptions corroborated the findings obtained from the Feedback Form (Table 17) and investigation of the students' written documents. All three findings indicated that students were successful in organizing their learning process. Responses from structured interviews also indicated that students perceived they were most successful in locating learning materials followed by their success in their ability to pace their own learning process, proposing suitable strategies and finally determining learning tasks to fulfill their learning objectives.

All six students reported that they were most confident in locating suitable learning materials and acknowledged that they had no trouble locating learning materials. Student B3 added that being a school librarian she had easy access to the school library whereas Student A2 informed that her parents had a well-equipped library for the children at home so she never felt lost for learning materials. Student A1 confessed to being a 'Net Junkie' and claimed she could get "loads of information from the Net."

When asked if they felt it was the teacher's responsibility to bring suitable materials for all classroom lessons, Student A3, said that if teachers always did that, then, students would become mere followers. She reiterated, "if students were always spoon-fed with materials, you (students) just gonna follow and follow her and by the time you get out of school - it's gonna be really difficult." Student B1 admitted that though she could locate learning materials, she sometimes found it difficult to find suitable material. She was of the opinion that it was still the teacher's duty to bring supplementary materials to class because "not all students can find good materials - especially the weak students."

All six students also expressed that they had no trouble setting and keeping to target dates. Student A1 noted that "with the learning contract I have become more conscious as to what I should do and when I should finish something, so I make it a point to finish it by the due date." Student A2 expressed great confidence in her ability to keep to target dates and claimed that the learning contract had made her more disciplined in her learning. She added that if she had written down a certain date and when the date drew close she would feel "kind of guilty" so she would quickly attend to the task. Student B2 declared that she was successful in keeping to target dates because she felt that "writing down due dates is like making a promise, so we must keep to our promises." Student B3 admitted that she was not always successful because sometimes she had "too much homework and tuition classes to attend."

All students except Student B1 perceived that they were successful in using appropriate learning strategies to accomplish their learning tasks. The students acknowledged that the Strategy Training Programme had exposed them to a lot of learning strategies. Student A2 stressed that LLS helped her improve her language learning. Therefore, she felt there was no need for the teacher to always tell students 'how' to learn. Students A3 and B3 felt that learning strategies helped them complete tasks faster and they were "able to work more systematically." Student A1 also confessed that she had learnt a lot about 'learning-how-to learn' but added that she would have benefited much more if emphasis was given to improving her vocabulary in order to enhance her writing skills. Student B2 noted that though it was not always necessary for the teacher to tell students 'when' and 'what' to learn, she felt a teacher was still necessary in guiding students in 'how' to learn. In her opinion, she still needed the

teacher "to teach her more strategies as 15 weeks of strategy training were insufficient." Student B1 disclosed that she was only fairly successful in proposing learning strategies to complete a language task because she still needed help from the teacher as "she is the only person who can show students the correct way to do something - like how to pick up points for a summary." Student B1, however, admitted that the programme had on the whole improved her organizational abilities but stressed that she still needed help to achieve further improvement.

Though students were successful in determining suitable learning tasks, the six students were asked if they would still like their teacher to tell them 'what' to learn. Students A1, A2, A3, B2 and B3 felt it was unnecessary as most of them felt that they were successful in determining their own learning tasks. Both Students A1 and B3, however, felt that a teacher was necessary at the beginning of a new topic so that she could roughly guide her students as to how to proceed. Student B1 claimed that she was only fairly effective in deciding on language tasks and felt she still needed a teacher to help her as to 'what' and 'how' something should be learnt.

The findings obtained from the six students' written documents and interviews indicated that by the end of the programme, Students A1, A2 and A3 showed success and confidence in all aspects of the organization of the learning process and were perhaps capable of taking charge of their own learning. Meanwhile, Students B2 and B3 can be regarded as students who are on their way to becoming autonomous learners. In contrast to these students, Student B1 though showing improvement still lacks the confidence to take charge or responsibility for her own learning. On the whole, it can

be said that strategy training did have a positive effect in helping students to organize the learning process necessary for the development of learner autonomy.

The effectiveness of strategy training in helping students to organize their own learning was further affirmed by the teacher, Karen, during Interview III. She felt that the students improved their organizational abilities mainly because the learning contract was designed in such a way that it helped students to look into the various aspects of organization when planning their own learning. When asked with which aspect she felt they still needed help, she pointed out that some students still needed help in proposing suitable learning tasks and perhaps locating suitable and more challenging learning materials. She noted that there were some students who usually took the easy way out by getting materials from only revision books.

Students' Ability at Monitoring Learning

The findings obtained from the Feedback Form that was administered at the end of the training programme indicated that strategy training was effective in helping students to monitor their learning. The students' perception of their success in monitoring is presented in Table 19.

The findings in Table 19 suggests that more than half (28) of the total 42 students felt they were successful in monitoring their learning while performing a learning task. In contrast to this, only three (7.1 %) felt they were least successful whilst 11 (26 %) claimed that they were only fairly successful in monitoring their

learning. The overall mean score of 2.8 indicates that students were successful in monitoring their learning.

Table 19

Students' Perceptions of their Ability in Monitoring Learning

Ratings	Least Successful (1)	Fairly Successful (2)	Successful (3)	Most Successful (4)	
No. & percentage of students _____ Item	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	Mean Score
Item 10 Monitoring your work by checking and correcting while performing a task	3 (7.1%)	11 (26.2%)	21 (50 %)	7 (16.7%)	2.8

This finding was further corroborated by students' written documents and interviews. Investigation into students' learning journals indicated that strategy training did have a positive effect in helping students to monitor their learning. The rate of progress and success among the six students, however, varied from one individual to another. For instance, Students A1 and A3 displayed early evidence of monitoring. Others like Students A2 and B2 showed signs of progress during the middle phase of the training programme while Students B1 and B3 experienced success in monitoring towards the end of the training programme.

The students' initial limited monitoring capabilities were evident in their learning journals. In fact, out of the six students, only Students A1 and A3 displayed an early awareness and application for monitoring the learning process.

Student A1 exhibited early awareness and application for monitoring right from the beginning of week 2. One obvious feature in her journal entries was her constant checking and correcting of her written journal entries. She corrected spelling, grammatical and even punctuation errors when she wrote her journal entries. For example, in journal entry 2B she made the following corrections:

> . . . I had a terrible stomach upset caused by eating ~~unhygenie~~ unhygienic food. This diverted me ~~to~~ from paying attention to the teacher. Nevertheless, I tried very ~~had~~ hard to grasp the main points and what we ~~is~~ are discussing today. . . . . This lesson ~~have~~ has definitely ~~benefit~~ benefited me by teaching me another two more extra strategies in language learning. Too bad, I had to dwell ~~with~~ on my ~~stomacache~~ stomachache.

In the above extract it can be seen that she made several corrections. For example, she corrected her spelling for the words, 'unhygienic' and 'stomachache.' She also made punctuation and grammatical corrections. She changed 'benefit' to 'benefited', the verb 'have' to 'has' and the verb 'is' to 'are.'

Further evidence of Student A1's awareness and application for monitoring was displayed in journal entry 5B when she said, "one strategy I used a lot is 'directed attention' to make sure that I stay focussed on the task. This also helped me to check what I did was correct." Later in journal entry 9B, she reported that upon completing her essay she read her "work twice to look for grammatical and spelling errors." She added that after identifying the errors she managed to correct her mistakes. Hence,

Student A1 can be said to a student who entered the programme with rather good monitoring abilities.

Student A3 first revealed her awareness and application for monitoring in journal entry 5A when she noted that upon completing her essay she "read it through once to check for mistakes." Later in journal entry 6B, she wrote:

> when I had finished my first draft I counted my points - I had 22 points. Then I wrote my final summary and later checked again to see I had all the points and there were no grammar and punctuation mistakes.

This awareness of reading the summary once again and checking one's work for errors is an indication that by week 6, Student A3 was already making a conscious effort to monitor her learning.

On the other hand, Students A2, B1, B2 and B3 made little effort to check and correct the errors that they made while writing their journals. Some signs of monitoring were, however, observed in both Students A2 and B2's journal entries 5A. Student A2 reported that one way she could check for content when writing summary was to count and ensure she had 20 summary points. She elaborated on this awareness for monitoring when she said, "more importantly we must always check our work - as errors can cost us precious marks in exams." Likewise, Student B2 wrote that she learnt "how to check our own points for summary" and how this process would help her perform better in summary writing. Both these instances showed Students A2 and B2's growing awareness for monitoring their own learning.

This awareness of monitoring learning during the initial training phase gradually moved to the application of monitoring their learning during the middle phase of the

training programme (weeks 6-10). Student A2 in her journal entry 7B noted that when she completed an exercise on reading comprehension she checked her "answers with the passage many times" to make sure her answers were correct. Another interesting feature seen in Student A2's journal entries beginning in week 8 were the corrections she made while recording her journal entries. Like Student A1, she too was seen making corrections to her journal entries. For instance, in journal entry 8I, when working on her monthly homework she made the following corrections in her journal entry:

> I finished ~~up~~ the reading comprehension secti~~u~~on (Unit 1) on
> "~~t~~The Shutter and the ~~t~~Trigger" today (and to think that I had
> always ~~taught~~ **thought** that the title was 'the Shooter and the Tiger'
> - that's how careless I can be at times!!)

The above extract indicates her ability to check and correct herself. For example, in the extract above she made **spelling and punctuation corrections.** She deleted the letter 'u' from the word 'section' in order to get the correct spelling and added a capital 'T' for the words 'The' and 'Trigger.' All these corrections are an indication that by the middle of the training programme, **Student A2** was perhaps getting more conscious of monitoring her learning.

Similarly, Student B2 who displayed signs of awareness for monitoring in week 5 progressed to displaying her ability to monitor her learning by week 7. In journal entry 7A, she wrote that upon completing her essay she read it twice to look for grammatical and spelling mistakes. She added that she used a dictionary to check for spelling errors and where possible did the necessary corrections. The act of reading and checking her work twice and using a dictionary to check for errors is a clear indication

that Student B2 by week 7 was perhaps making a conscious effort to monitor her own learning.

Students B1 and B3 who showed no evidence of monitoring during the beginning phase of the training programme, nevertheless, made some progress during weeks 6 to 10. While Student B3 showed awareness for monitoring, Student B1 indicated her success at monitoring. In journal entry 6A, Student B3 noted that that in order to focus on reading comprehension tasks "we must read the passage at least twice- first to find out what the passage is about and second reading to get the main and supporting ideas." This entry can be interpreted as an indication of her awareness as to how she can check her understanding of a reading comprehension task.

Meanwhile, Student B1 was able to record more success. In journal entry 10B she wrote that when she was working on a reading comprehension task she used the "strategy of using 'wh' questions" to help her check her understanding of the passage. This ability to use strategies to check one's performance is an example of her success in monitoring her learning. Hence, by the end of the middle phase, all the students were already displaying signs for monitoring their learning process.

The final phase of the training programme, however, saw the students displaying more instances in the application of their monitoring abilities. For instance, Student A3 in her journal entry 15A, reported that when she made sentences with the new words she checked her work for "grammatical errors and to make sure they made sense of the new words" that she had learnt. Student A2 in journal entry 13A wrote that upon completing her summary writing task, she read the passage twice to ensure she did "not miss out any important points." She added that she also checked her work for "careless

mistakes like spelling English words with Malay spelling" which she felt she sometimes did. Both these instances indicate that the students made a conscious effort to check and correct themselves when performing a learning task.

Furthermore, Student B2 in journal entry 15A stressed that upon completing a reading comprehension task she made it a point to check her answers twice, "one time with the passage to make sure the answer is correct" and the second time to ensure that her answer is grammatically correct. Her emphasis on grammatical accuracy was probably due to the fact that she was aware of her limitation in this aspect and therefore she made a conscious effort to monitor this aspect of her learning.

Both Students B1 and B3 showed better monitoring abilities during the final training phase. For example, Student B3 when working on a reading comprehension task for week 11B reported that the "questions were quite difficult" so she had to "read the passage at least three times." Reading the passage three times is an example of comprehension monitoring - that is she was checking and verifying her comprehension of the passage. Later, when she answered the questions she said, "I made sure I referred to the passage to get the right answer, as some of them were quite tricky questions." To cross check one's answers with information provided in the text can be interpreted as another example of her ability to monitor her learning.

Similar success at monitoring was also revealed by Student B1. In her journal entry 15A, she recorded her success in correcting some careless mistakes she had made. For example, instead of the word 'normal' she wrote 'normat.' Students B1's ability to check, verify and correct herself in this instance is an example of her success at monitoring her learning.

The above examination of the learning journals revealed that by the end of the programme, all six students displayed their progress and success at monitoring their learning. It also pointed out that whilst only Student A1 revealed early signs of monitoring the learning process, Students A2, A3 and B2 were able to achieve success in monitoring their learning by the middle phase of the training programme. Furthermore, Students B1 and B3 who first showed signs of monitoring during the middle phase managed to experience progress in monitoring by the end of the programme. This gradual improvement and awareness in monitoring the learning process could most probably be due to the students' exposure to the Strategy Training Programme.

During the interview sessions, all six students affirmed that strategy training helped them monitor their learning. When asked to rate their success at monitoring, Students A1, A2, A3 and B3 felt they were successful whilst Students B1 and B2 felt they were only fairly successful.

Student A3 felt she was most successful in monitoring her learning and emphasized that strategy training helped her to consciously be aware of what she was doing. She stressed that while working she always made a point to check her work "part by part to ensure there are no mistakes." She admitted that most of the time she was able to identify her own errors but at times when she was unsuccessful she would get help from her friends or sisters. She also claimed that she made it a point to "try to understand" her mistakes.

Student A1 acknowledged that strategy training equipped her with learning strategies such as self-monitoring that helped her to correct her own mistakes. She

stressed that after completing a task she would read her "work a few times for spelling or grammatical errors." For instance, when she completed a vocabulary exercise she usually checked her "answers from the dictionary." If there were errors she would try to correct them herself but if she experienced problems she would ask her mother or her teacher.

Similarly, Student A2 too felt she had achieved success in monitoring her learning under the training programme. She claimed that the training programme made her more conscious of checking her work. She said:

> now usually after writing a few sentences, I would read through again to make
> sure I didn't make any mistakes. If there are mistakes, I can correct them. I
> also practise the strategies learnt from this programme to help me check myself.

Like Students A1 and A2, Student B3 too felt that the training programme helped her achieve success in monitoring her learning. She claimed that strategy training made her more aware of checking her work and because of that she was successful "most of the time." When faced with difficulties she would ask her best friend to help her out.

Both Students B1 and B2 felt they were only fairly successful in monitoring their learning. They acknowledged that the programme did help them and there were times they could identify their errors but they were unable to correct and check their own work due to their limited language proficiency.

The positive effect of strategy training on students' monitoring abilities was also confirmed by the teacher. She pointed out that the students' performance in their everyday English Language work indicated that they had showed some "marked improvement." She added that the students were by the end of the training programme,

"writing better compositions" and making "less careless mistakes in their writing tasks." She stressed that her students also gave her better work probably because they were now using more self-monitoring strategies and perhaps paying more or conscious attention to learning the English Language. She stressed that because of this most of the students obtained better marks in recent English Language monthly tests.

Students' Ability at Evaluating Learning

Generally, students perceived strategy training as not being very effective in developing their confidence in self-assessing their own performance. By the end of the 15-week Strategy Training Programme slightly more than half the students (57.2 %) felt they were unable to judge and check the overall performance of their own learning. Evidence of this was reflected in the 42 students' responses obtained from the administration of the Feedback Form (Table 20).

Table 20

Students' Perceptions of their Ability to Evaluate Learning

Ratings	Least Successful (1)	Fairly Successful (2)	Successful (3)	Most Successful (4)	
No. & percentage of students / Item	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	Mean Score
Item 11 Grading yourself upon completing a language learning task	4 (9.5%)	20 (47.7%)	14 (33.3%)	4 (9.5%)	2.3

The overall mean score of 2.3 presented in Table 20 above indicates that students were unsuccessful in grading or self-assessing their own performance. A total of 14 students felt they were successful in evaluating their learning, whereas only 4 students felt most confident of self-evaluating their own learning. In contrast to this, 24 students (57.2 %) felt they lacked the confidence to grade their own learning.

However, findings obtained from students' written documents and interviews with the teacher indicated otherwise. In fact students' learning contracts revealed that though students entered the training programme with rather limited abilities in self-evaluation, there was marked improvement in their ability to self-assess their own performance by the end of the programme. As usual the rate of progress and improvement varied from one individual to another.

Evidence of students' lack of confidence and limited ability to self-evaluate their own learning was evident during the first phase of the training programme (weeks 1-5). For example, in Lesson 5B, students were required to grade written compositions based on a given marking scheme. All the students except Students A2 and A3 indicated that they did not like the idea of grading their own work (Appendix 14).

In journal entry 5B, Student A1 noted that she did not like marking her own work or her friend's work. Both Students B2 and B3 admitted that they did not mark their own work as they felt they were incompetent. Student B1 voiced her displeasure at having to grade her own essay saying, "I think students should not be asked to grade their own work as they are just students and they cannot spot their own mistakes."

Meanwhile, Student A3 made the following recording in her journal entry 5B:

> I learned how to evaluate myself. . . At the beginning I thought it was
> a lot of fun BUT as I went on marking I had a terrible headache! I
> just can't understand how the teachers can actually mark hundreds of
> essays. I really respect the teachers for being able to go through it!

The above extract shows that even though she started the process of self-evaluation on a positive note, thinking of it as a "fun" activity, she realised that self-assessment was actually tiring and most probably "confusing" as it resulted in her experiencing a headache.

Similarly, Student A2 who looked forward to peer-evaluation was left feeling disillusioned by the reality of having to evaluate. In journal entry 5B she wrote:

> I thought it would be fun reading other people's work but it turned out
> disastrous and complicating as the composition was filled with bombastic
> and irrelevant words just to make it grand. Therefore it was quite hard to
> comprehend. But overall it had enough facts.

The above extract, however, shows Student A2's ability to evaluate the written piece despite the experience of evaluation turning out to be "disastrous and complicating." In fact, she was able to conclude that the piece of writing had "bombastic" and "irrelevant words" which made it difficult to comprehend but on the whole she felt that the essay had sufficient facts. All these deductions and conclusions are perhaps an indication that she was already on the path of evaluating the learning process.

Students' limited capabilities in self-evaluation during the beginning phase of the training programme were also evident when they submitted their first learning contracts during weeks 4 and 5. An analysis of their first learning contracts (Appendix 15) revealed that with the exception of Student A2 the rest of the students made no

conscious effort to assess their performance of the learning task. Student A2 *in assessing her performance* indicated that she understood the book she read and was "able to construct sentences" with *the new words that she learnt.*

On the other hand, Students A1, A3, B1, B2 and B3 made no attempt to evaluate *their performance. Instead they attempted to provide feedback upon completion of their* learning task. For example, Student A1 talked about her limited vocabulary while Student A3 commented that the stories she read were interesting and hoped to read all the stories in the book. Meanwhile, Student B1 commented that she failed to complete her reading task and Student B2 gave her opinion that "reading is a good way to improve our English." Such feedback perhaps suggest that students were either uncomfortable with the idea of self-evaluation or did not have the ability to self-assess their own performance.

Nevertheless, signs of progress in self-evaluation were displayed by some *students during the middle phase of the training programme (weeks 6-10). They moved* from providing general comments regarding their performance to giving themselves grades and marks. For example, Student A2 in Learning Contract 3 noted that she did "okay" and gave herself a high credit '3' for her summary writing. Besides evaluating her performance, she was also able to articulate the usefulness of the task in helping her increase her general knowledge. Likewise, Students A3 and B1 in Learning Contract 2, managed to give themselves a grade for their performance in the reading comprehension task.

Meanwhile, Students A1, B2 and B3 still kept away from self-evaluating their own learning tasks. For instance, Student B2 got her friend to mark her essay while

Student B3 got her mother's help in evaluating her reading comprehension exercise. Student A1 first showed signs of her ability to self-evaluate when she submitted her third learning contract in week 10. Here, she was not only successful in grading her performance in summary writing (6/10) but was also able to articulate her limitations. She rated her summary writing as "fair and moderate."

In the final phase of training (weeks 11-15), some signs of improvement were exhibited by both Students B1 and B3. Student B1 in Learning Contract 3, which she submitted in week 12, showed that she managed to not only give a score for her performance in reading comprehension (15/20) but was also successful in locating her weakness which was the vocabulary section. She went one step further by suggesting steps she would take to overcome this weakness - which were to "read more and do more vocabulary work." Similarly, Student B3 showed her success in grading her work in Learning Contract 3. She noted that though she only managed to score 15/20 she was happy as the comprehension questions "were quite difficult and tricky."

Student A1 in Learning Contract 5 displayed her success in giving a grade to her essay. Though she was successful in assessing her performance she indicated that she was still not comfortable in evaluating her work when she said, " I still have to learn much more on evaluating my work." This lack of confidence was also pointed out in her journal entry 15A when she did her own work. Upon completing her work, she wrote:

> I do not like to mark my own work because I do not know for sure
> whether my sentences are rightly constructed. Maybe I still have to get
> my tuition teacher to look at them.

These students' progress and improvement in self-evaluation was also observed in their journal entries written during the final phase. In week 15, students were required to carry out self-study lessons on their own. For example, in journal entry 15A, Student A3 commented that she "did not have any difficulties marking the comprehension section because an answer key was provided" and she checked the vocabulary exercise "using a dictionary." She added, "I think it's good to mark our own work because while marking I also learnt from my mistakes." Student B3 also shared a similar view, when she marked her own work in week 15. In journal entry 15B she reported that "by marking I now have a clearer view of the mistakes I made so very often."

Though investigation of the students' learning contracts and learning journals indicated that the students did experience an improvement in self-assessing their own performance, their responses to structured interviews, however, indicated that only Students A2 and A3 were confident enough to admit that they had been successful in self-evaluation. All the remaining four felt that they were only fairly successful.

Nevertheless, all six students acknowledged that strategy training did help them improve their ability to self-assess their performance. Students A2, A3 and B3 said that under the Strategy Training Programme they managed their learning using learning contracts which required them to self-assess their own performance. Both Students A1 and B2 felt that classroom activities such as peer-evaluation helped them improve their self-assessment abilities.

Further evidence of their success in self-evaluation was provided when all six students admitted that the grades they gave themselves were rather similar to grades that

the teacher or their friends gave them. They, however, admitted that their teachers and friends gave them better grades.

Though all students admitted that they could judge and evaluate their own work, most of them felt they still lacked the confidence to grade their own work. Only Students A2 and A3 felt comfortable grading their own work. Student A3 said that she preferred to grade her own work as she "would be able to identify the mistakes immediately" instead of having "to wait for a long time for teacher's feedback." Both, however, felt they would still like a second opinion. Student A2 admitted that she was "sometimes bias" (sic.) and gave herself "high marks" when in actual fact she "did not do that well."

Student A1 acknowledged that it was important to grade her own work but nevertheless she liked others to grade her so that she "could receive different comments and views" and these would help her work on her "weak points." Student B2 claimed that she lacked the confidence to self-assess her own work due to her limited English Language proficiency.

All students except Students B1 and B3 confirmed that they had their own methods of testing or self-assessing themselves when learning. Students A1 and A3 said that they usually did exercises from revision and other guidebooks to test themselves. Student B2 tested herself by making short notes and doing past-year questions whereas Student A2 normally asked herself questions while studying to make sure she understood what she was studying. Both Students B1 and B3 preferred the teacher to give them tests on a regular basis. Student B3 felt that regular tests made her

study and this way she would improve. On the other hand, Students A2 and A3 felt they did not like regular tests as "tests can be quite stressful."

Findings obtained from interviews carried out with the teacher, Karen indicated that she was of the opinion that the Strategy Training Programme had helped improve the students' self-assessment abilities. Karen said that she was aware of the fact that her students were not comfortable with the idea of self-evaluation because whenever she got them to carry out self-assessment activities she heard "a lot of moans and groans." She, however, stressed that such activities most probably helped them improve their own self-assessment abilities. She added that this was so because the grades that they gave themselves were very similar to the grades that she would give them. Karen pointed out that the students actually performed well in peer-evaluation probably because they felt responsible. She remarked that being very "intelligent girls they did not want to look like doing a bad job" (sic).

Looking back into how effective strategy training was in helping students to evaluate their learning, a rather mixed reaction was obtained. Students' written documents and responses from the teacher's interview indicated that the students' ability to self-assess their own learning improved over the 15-week training programme. Nonetheless, students' responses to interviews and data obtained from the 42 Feedback Forms revealed that students still did not possess the confidence needed to evaluate their own learning. In this respect, it may be concluded that the Strategy Training Programme did improve students' self-assessing abilities but did not give them the confidence needed to do so.

Students' Overall Ability at Managing Learning

The investigation of the students' written documents indicated that by the end of the 15-week Strategy Training Programme, all six students were successful in managing their learning process. The rate of progress and improvement, however, varied from one individual to another. Similarly, the rate of success of each component of the learning process also varied from one student to another. The approximate time during which each of the six students attained success in the four aspects of the learning process is exhibited in Table 21.

Table 21

Approximate Time When Students Achieved Success in Managing Learning

	Planning	Organizing	Monitoring	Self-Evaluating
Student A1	Week 11	Week 6	Week 2	Week 9
Student A2	Week 7	Week 6	Week 8	Week 4
Student A3	Week 7	Week 8	Week 5	Week 8
Student B1	Week 11	Week 14	Week 10	Week 10
Student B2	Week 11	Week 10	Week 7	Week 13
Student B3	Week 7	Week 13	Week 11	Week 10

Findings in Table 21 show that though Student A1 was successful in monitoring the learning process by week 2, she experienced success in organizing her learning in week 6. It was only in week 9 that she was able to self-evaluate her learning and in week 11 she attained success in planning. Hence, it was in the final phase of the training programme (week 11) that she was successful in managing her own learning.

Both Students A2 and A3 were successful in managing their learning by the middle phase of the training programme, in week 8. The rest of the students (Students A1, B1, B2 and B3) experienced success in the final phase of the training programme (weeks 11-15). Therefore, all six students were successful in managing their learning process by the end of the 15-week training programme.

Responses obtained from structured interviews with the students indicated that strategy training helped them to plan, organize and monitor their own learning. It, however, fell short in giving students the confidence needed in evaluating their own learning. Similar findings were also obtained from the administration of the Feedback Form on the total population. Interview sessions with the teacher, however, reiterated students' perception of their inability to self-assess their own performance. The teacher added that though students did not feel confident in their evaluative abilities she felt that their ability to grade and evaluate had actually improved under the Strategy Training Programme.

To investigate further into students' ability to manage their own learning, Item 12 in the Feedback Form required students to rate how successful they felt the Strategy Training Programme was in helping them to learn independently. The findings presented in Table 22 indicated that strategy training did help them to manage their own

learning. The mean score of 3.0 reflects that the students were successful in working independently while studying under the training programme. The findings also reveal that three students (17.1 %) felt they were still unsuccessful in managing their own learning. Another five students (11.9 %) perceived they were only fairly successful in learning on their own. This group, most probably have the ability but lacked the confidence to working independently. A large majority, that is, 34 students (81 %) felt they were successful in managing their own learning. These students can be interpreted as students who have the confidence and ability to take charge of their own learning.

Table 22

Students' Perceptions of their Ability to Manage Learning

Ratings	Least Successful (1)	Fairly Successful (2)	Successful (3)	Most Successful (4)	
No. & percentage of students Item	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	Mean Score
Item 12 Managing your own learning independently and working towards achieving learner autonomy	3 (7.1%)	5 (11.9%)	25 (59.6%)	9 (21.4%)	3.0

In conclusion, it can be said that the students' written documents and interviews attest to the fact that strategy training probably did have a positive effect in developing learner autonomy among the ESL students in terms of helping them to manage their own learning. Evidence of this was provided by the fact that approximately 81 per cent of the sample population of this study perceived that at the end of the 15-week training programme they were successful in managing their own learning.

Research Question 2: Did Strategy Training Increase the Use of

Language Learning Strategies among ESL Students?

This section presents the findings obtained from the SILL questionnaire that was administered on the 42 students before and after the 15-week Strategy Training Programme. Both the pre and post strategy training mean SILL scores were used to investigate whether strategy training increased the frequency of use of language learning strategies (LLS) among students.

The t-tests indicate that overall, there was a significant increase in the use of LLS among the students in this study (Table 23).

Table 23

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre and Post SILL Scores

Category & No. of Items	Pre Mean	Pre Std. Dev.	Post Mean	Post Std. Dev.	t-value
A - Memory Strategies (9 items)	2.7	.434	3.0	.480	-4.773*
B - Cognitive Strategies (14 items)	3.1	.376	3.7	.494	-8.904 *
C - Compensation Strategies (6 items)	3.0	.558	3.7	.611	-6.809 *
D - Metacognitive Strategies (9 items)	3.2	.483	3.8	.488	-7.841*
E - Affective Strategies (6 items)	2.6	.799	3.1	.803	-4.003*
F - Social Strategies (6 items)	3.5	.619	3.6	.670	-.570
Overall Performance (50 items)	**3.1**	**.323**	**3.5**	**.418**	-7.696 *

*Note : * $p < 0.001$*

According to the SILL index provided by Oxford (1990), a mean score of 1.0 to 1.5 indicates a low frequency use of LLS whereas a mean score of between 2.5 and 3.4 indicates a medium frequency use of LLS. Meanwhile, a high frequency use of LLS is indicated by a mean SILL score of 3.5 to 5.0.

The results presented in Table 23 show that there was a significant increase in the use of LLS as the pre strategy training score increased from 3.1 (medium frequency use of LLS) to 3.5 (high frequency use of LLS) at the post strategy training stage. Findings also reveal that the students experienced a significant increase in the use of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and affective learning strategies. Although there was an increase in the use of social strategies, the difference between the pre and post strategy training mean SILL scores was, however, not statistically significant.

The findings presented in Table 23 indicate that prior to strategy training, the students displayed an average use for all the categories of LLS, except for social strategies, which recorded a mean score of 3.5 (high frequency use). Prior to strategy training, social strategies were the most preferred group of strategies. This was followed by cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies. The least frequently used strategies prior to the training programme were memory and affective strategies.

The post strategy training SILL scores revealed that metacognitive strategies were the most commonly used category of strategies after the 15 weeks of training. This group of strategies helps in the successful managing of one's learning process and includes strategies such as paying attention, planning for language tasks, organizing

learning, self-evaluating one's progress and monitoring errors. Findings also indicated that this category of strategies saw a significant increase from 3.2 to 3.8, that is an increase of 0.6.

Post strategy training SILL scores indicated that the second most favoured category of strategies were cognitive and compensation strategies. Students' compensation strategies increased significantly from 3.0 to 3.7 - an increase of 0.7. Cognitive strategies, which are said to be reflective of deep processing include strategies such as note-taking, summarizing and having the ability to analyze and reason deductively. The frequency of the students' use of these strategies increased from a mean score of 3.1 (medium frequency use) to 3.7 (high frequency use), an increase of 0.6.

Though t-tests in Table 23 prove that both memory and affective strategies saw a significant increase they continued to be the least preferred strategies among the learners. Memory strategies, which include strategies such as grouping, imagery and structured reviewing, saw an increase in frequency use from 2.7 to 3.0 (medium frequency use), an increase of 0.3. Similarly, affective strategies that refer to emotions, attitudes, motivations and values that influence language learning increased from 2.6 to 3.1 (medium frequency use) an increase of 0.5.

Social strategies saw a marginal rise from a mean score of 3.6 to 3.7, an increase, which was statistically insignificant. Social strategies, however, remained a popular choice of strategies for students in this study. The increase was minimal probably because the students reportedly entered the programme equipped with a high frequency use of these strategies.

Further investigation into the six categories indicated that students experienced an increase in the frequency use of both direct (memory, cognitive and compensation) and indirect (metacognitive, affective and social) strategies (Table 24).

Table 24

Pre and Post SILL Mean Scores of Direct and Indirect Strategies

DIRECT STRATEGIES	Pre SILL Score	Post SILL Score	INDIRECT STRATEGIES	Pre SILL Score	Post SILL Score
Memory Strategies	2.7	3.0	Metacognitive Strategies	3.2	3.8
Cognitive Strategies	3.1	3.7	Affective Strategies	2.6	3.1
Compensation Strategies	3.0	3.7	Social Strategies	3.5	3.6
Overall Mean Score	**2.9**	**3.5**	**Overall Mean Score**	**3.1**	**3.5**

The results presented in Table 24 above indicate that prior to strategy training the mean score for the group of direct strategies, which aid students in the direct learning of the target language, was 2.9 (medium frequency use). After the 15-week provision of strategy training, this score increased to 3.5 (high frequency use) an increase of 0.6. Similarly, the students' frequency use of the group of indirect strategies, which help students in managing the learning process (that is, in planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating), also, saw an increase. It rose from 3.1 (medium frequency use) to 3.5 (high frequency use), an increase of 0.4. This finding suggested that the increase in the frequency use of learning strategies facilitated both the product (content) and the process of managing learning.

To conclude, the pre and post strategy training SILL mean scores for all the six categories of LLS indicated that there was an increase in the frequency use of LLS among the students. T-tests scores revealed that there was a significant increase in the use of LLS for all the categories except social strategies.

Research Question 3: How did the Students and the Teacher View Strategy Training?

The following section reports the teacher's and the 42 students' perceptions of the effects of the 15-week Strategy Training Programme. Data for this section were gathered from the Feedback Form, which was administered on the 42 students at the end of strategy training and through three interviews conducted with the teacher, Karen.

Students' Perceptions of Language Learning Strategies

Students' responses indicated that all the 42 students felt that the knowledge of language learning strategies (LLS) had made them better learners. They acknowledged that LLS enhanced their language learning. A large majority claimed that LLS helped them study more effectively to achieve better grades. Some pointed out that learning using strategies made learning easier, faster and more organized. For example, Student 4 said, "Strategies have helped me improve faster and I can use them for all my study subjects. I am also less disorganised now." There were others who added that the knowledge of learning strategies made them aware of a variety of strategies that could

be used to accomplish learning tasks. Evidence of this was provided by Student 32 who made the following comment, "I realize different strategies are meant for different tasks and I also learnt which strategies best suit me." Student 33 felt that strategies "sharpened all the language skills." Student 30 remarked:

> Strategies have helped me locate and concentrate on my own
> weakness. I think by using strategies I have improved on my
> weakness. By knowing and using strategies I can score better
> marks and I know the criteria to get better marks for exams.

The fact the LLS helped students to become better learners was further evidenced in the following journal entry made by Student 15 upon receiving her English monthly test paper:

> Anyway, I got my English test paper back. I was so surprised when I looked
> at my marks for Paper 1, especially the reading comprehension part. The marks
> I got were the highest I have ever got from all the others English tests. Though
> I did not do very well in Paper 2 (because I still not good in grammar and
> poor vocabulary) I know I should do twice as many exercises now to improve.
> Overall this exam showed my improvement and after this LHTL programme
> I think language is not tough work for me anymore (sic).

The efficacy of LLS was further corroborated by Karen during Interview III. She highlighted the marked improvement that she witnessed in her students' performance in their English Language exams. She pointed out that the students' average English Language score for the mid-term English Language paper carried out two weeks prior to the start of the training programme was 62 per cent. The average mark, however, saw a rise to 75 per cent for the final year English Language test that was conducted about three weeks after the 15 weeks of strategy training.

A look at the final year examination scores indicated that the number of students who scored distinctions (100-75 %) increased from 8 (19 per cent) to 13 (31 per cent). The number of students scoring credits (74-60 %) increased from 20 (48 per cent) to 21 (50 %). Meanwhile the number of students scoring a pass (59-50%) decreased from 10 (24%) to 7 (17 %). Meanwhile, the failure rate dropped from 4 students (9%) to only one (2%). Karen attributed the students' marked improvement to the Strategy Training Programme saying that the training programme most probably made the students more aware of using LLS and this could be one of the reasons why they improved their language competency.

During Interview II, Karen pointed out that an interesting feature she noticed among the students, was their success in transferring strategies learnt during English Language lessons to other academic subjects. She reported that since she also teaches the same class Moral Education she was pleasantly surprised when she saw a group of students applying a strategy (making associations using semantic mind-mapping) that she had taught for her English Language lesson making its way into her Moral Education class.

Item 19 of the Feedback Form examined whether students were able to transfer their knowledge of strategies to other academic subjects. A large majority - that is 39 (92.9 per cent) of the 42 students felt they were successful in applying strategies learnt during English Language lessons to other subjects. A tally count further indicated that 32 students claimed that they applied LLS for the study of the national Malay language (*Bahasa Malaysia*). This high tally count was most probably because they found it easier to transfer their knowledge of English Language strategies to another study of

language. The next most favoured subject was History with a tally count of 21. This was followed by Biology, Chemistry, and Physics with a tally count of 18, 17 and 11 respectively. Four students claimed they used these strategies for Moral Education whereas another three claimed they used similar strategies for the study of Mathematics.

Students' Awareness for Learner Autonomy

Generally it was found that strategy training helped to foster the development of learner autonomy among students. This was evident in the students' willingness and commitment to take responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, the students were more aware of their role as students and the teacher's role in the teaching and learning process.

Students' responses indicated that 40 (95 %) out of the 42 students felt that they were most responsible for their own learning. They revealed that the second most responsible person for their learning was the teacher followed by their parents. Two other students, however, felt that their teacher was most responsible for their learning, while they themselves were the second most responsible person. All 42 students reported that their friends were the least responsible for their learning. This finding suggested that the students in this study, were very much aware of their role in taking ownership for their learning.

This responsibility for their own learning was further emphasized when all 42 students responded that when faced with a problem they would first try to solve it on their own. If they were unsuccessful in their attempt to solve it themselves, they would

refer to their friends, teachers and finally their parents. This indicated that the students not only felt responsible for their own learning but they were willing to take charge of their learning.

In order to take charge of their learning, students must show their commitment and responsibility towards learning. Items 1, 2 and 3 of the Feedback Form required students to rate how successful strategy training was in helping them take responsibility for their own learning. Students rated their success using a 4-point Likert scale (where 1 = least successful and 4 = most successful). In this study, since the scale used was 1 to 4, a mean score of 2.5 and above was considered as being successful whereas a mean of below 2.5 was deemed as being unsuccessful. The findings are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Students' Ratings of their Responsibility Towards Learning

Ratings	Least Successful (1)	Fairly Successful (2)	Successful (3)	Most Successful (4)	
No. & percentage of students / Items	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	No. of students (%)	Weighted Mean Score
Item 1 Attending English Language lessons and classes	-	4 (9.5%)	21 (50%)	17 (40.5%)	3.3
Item 2 Completing English Language homework	-	5 (11.9%)	30 (71.4%)	7 (16.7%)	3.0
Item 3 Doing additional English Language work on your own	3 (7.1%)	14 (33.3%)	22 (52.5%)	3 (7.1%)	2.6
Overall weighted mean					3.0

The results in Table 25 show that the students perceived strategy training to be beneficial in helping them take responsibility for their learning. The overall mean score of 3.0 is indicative that strategy training was successful in helping students become more aware of their commitment and responsibility towards their own learning.

Findings also reveal that 38 students (90.5 per cent) perceived that they were successful in attending English Language classes. The mean score of 3.3 indicates that the students most probably felt responsible for learning and therefore made it a point to attend all English Language classes and lessons. This commitment was further substantiated by Karen in Interview II with the researcher. She reported that as many of the students in this class were either prefects or held positions of responsibility in school clubs and societies, they often skipped English Language lessons in order to run errands for their clubs or societies. She noted that somewhere around the fourth week of the training programme, most of the students showed that they did not like missing English Language lessons and many made it a point to be in class on time.

A similar commitment was also observed when it came to doing their English Language homework. The mean score of 3.0 (Table 25) exhibits that the students were successful in completing work assigned to them. Though 11.9 per cent felt they were only fairly successful, a large majority, that is, 37 students (88.1 per cent) declared that they had been successful in completing their homework.

Likewise, the mean score of 2.6 in Table 25 indicates that the students perceived that strategy training was successful in encouraging them to do additional work on their own. This was also a point stressed by Karen during Interview III. She pointed out that prior to the training programme, hardly any student took the initiative of doing

additional work for English Language. In fact, most of the students in this study concentrated on their Mathematics and other academic subjects like Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Karen emphasized that under strategy training, the students were more committed to studying English and were successful in doing additional work. Proof of this was seen in the fact that most of the students managed to complete more than the required three compulsory learning contracts that they were supposed to do. According to Karen, the students managed to complete an average of 5 learning contracts for the duration of the 15-week training period. This may be interpreted as the students' success in doing additional English Language study on their own.

During Interview III, Karen added that she felt strategy training was "rather successful" in fostering the development of learner autonomy. She stressed that the many activities held during the ice-breaking sessions perhaps did help raise students awareness for taking responsibility for their own learning. She added that these activities helped students to "change their mindset from teacher dependence to independence." She emphasized that the ice-breaking sessions made students "relook and reflect upon their roles as students and how they could help themselves to take charge of their own learning."

For students to be truly responsible for their own learning, they must also be aware of their role as a student. Item 15 in the Feedback Form required students to rank, according to importance, the responsibilities of a student. The rankings provided by the students were analyzed using non-parametric statistics whereby a weightage means was calculated. Given on the next page in Table 26 are the students' perceptions of the role of a student.

Table 26

Students' Perceptions of the Role of a Student in the Learning Process

Ranking	Role of Students in the Learning Process	Mean Score
1	To plan and organize their own learning	34.5
2	To monitor and assess their own learning	27.5
3	To negotiate with the teacher as to what, when and how to learn	22.8
4	To complete all homework given by the teacher	20.7

Note: 1 = Most important, 4 = Least Important

The findings in Table 26 indicate that a majority of the students perceived planning and organizing their learning as the most important role. They felt that monitoring and assessing their learning was the second most important role. On the other hand, the students ranked negotiating with the teacher about their learning as fairly important and completing all assigned work as least important. The above ranking clearly indicated that the students were very much aware of taking an active and participatory role in their own learning process. Their decision to place the task of completing homework as least important in contrast to managing their own learning bears testimony to the fact that these students were very aware of taking responsibility for their own learning

Similarly, Item 16 in the Feedback Form required students to rank, according to importance, what in their opinion was the role of the teacher. Table 27 shows the students' perceptions of the role of a teacher in the teaching and learning process.

Table 27.

Students' Perceptions of the Role of a Teacher in the Learning Process

Ranking	Role of Teacher	Mean Score
1	To help and guide students when they need help	30.4
2	To provide learner training to students	28.0
3	To negotiate with students as to what, when and how to learn	22.8
4	To evaluate and grade all students' work	18.2
5	To determine what, when and how students should study	16.6

Note: 1 = Most important, 5 = Least Important

The students' rankings shown in Table 27 indicate that they were aware of the role of the teacher in their learning process. They felt that the main role of the teacher was to help and guide them in their learning. Moreover, they felt that providing training to learners was the second most important role of the teacher. This indicates that the students did not want the teacher to be a figure of authority. Evidence of this was provided by the fact that they ranked the didactic role of the teacher (that is, determining what, when and how students should learn) as least important. Their rankings also indicate that they did not perceive the role of a teacher as a tester and examiner to be very important. In their opinion, the teacher should first be a guide and facilitator who could help and provide them learner training. They also saw the

teacher's role as a consultant and partner with whom they could negotiate as to what, when and how they should learn as rather important.

Use of Learning Journals

Data from the Feedback Form indicated that 31 (73.8 %) out of the 42 students responded positively towards the keeping of the learning journal whereas the remainder 11 students (26.2 %) felt that keeping a learning journal was not useful.

A majority of the students who favoured the use of the learning journal asserted that it helped them keep track of what they had learnt for future reference. Student 13 commented that journal writing was a "good way to make us aware of learning strategies and we will remember it better by writing it down." Student 34 added that keeping a journal helped her to "refer to the previous lessons and compare what I had learnt and done then and now and this way it will help me improve." There were some who felt that writing a learning journal helped them improve their language learning as it made them more aware of classroom lessons and helped them to self-assess their understanding of classroom lessons and strategies. For instance, Student 25 stated that with journal writing students could test themselves as to how much they had learnt from the lesson. On the other hand, Students 15, 20 and 27 felt journal writing helped them improve their writing skills. Student 27 has this to say:

> In my opinion, I think by keeping a journal, at least we wrote something or made an entry in English. I think this helped me indirectly improve my writing skill and I think it also helped me monitor my own progress in writing

A handful of students claimed that keeping a learning journal helped them in the management of the learning process. Student 1 declared that a learning journal "helps me organize and plan my work. I can also monitor my progress while doing a certain task as I can always refer to my learning journal." In addition to this, both Students 6 and 17, indicated that journal writing aided them in monitoring their progress as they would know what they had learnt. In contrast to this, Student 30 reported that a learning journal helped her evaluate what she had learnt.

Finally, students like Student 24 and Student 16 felt that journal writing allowed them to express the affective side of learning. Student 16 disclosed that writing a journal, "allows (her) to express (her) feelings without feeling discomfort and it allows (her) to refresh (her) memory." Student 24 claimed that keeping a journal allowed her to express her "personal feelings about the lessons" and what she thought of them.

The eleven students who expressed that a learning journal was not useful were also articulate in giving their opinions. Their negative feelings were expressed with the use of words such as "boring", "a big hassle", "exhausting", "time-consuming" and "burdening." Student 28, felt that it was perhaps "better to carry out an English Language activity than wasting time writing journals." A similar sentiment was also shared by Student 36 who felt that doing an exercise on vocabulary would be more beneficial to her than writing a journal. Two students stated that they were just lazy to write journals as they "served no purpose." On top of that, they felt they never did refer to them at all. Student 9, however, remarked that "it's partly my own fault as I did not put much effort into journal writing. I guess it's just not my way of learning."

Use of Learning Contracts

Compared to the learning journals a more positive response was obtained with regards to the use of the learning contract. More than three quarters of the class, that is 34 students (81 per cent) declared that they found the learning contract useful. This is probably because learning contracts encourage students to work freely according to their own pace, time and preferred learning styles. Moreover, learning can be focussed to meet one's required needs.

A large majority of the students who responded positively felt that learning contracts made them more responsible and disciplined in their own learning. They claimed that a learning contract made them aware of their 'promise' they had made to themselves and they felt compelled to do the work that they had planned to do. For example, Student 9 commented, "The learning contract reminds me of work I have to do and keep to the deadline. I think it made me a more disciplined student." Student 25 had this to say :

> The learning contract made me feel more responsible for my own
> learning and since the contract made me give myself certain dates to
> finish my work, I made sure I worked to complete my work on the
> target date that I have given myself.

Another group of students claimed that the learning contract helped them to manage their learning more effectively. Students 2, 13, 20 and 35 felt that the learning contract helped them to plan better and therefore, their learning was 'systematic' and organized. Meanwhile, Students 26, 34 and 17 reflected that the learning contract made them "think carefully of the learning objectives" before they started doing their work so

that they will remain "focussed" on what they had planned to learn. Student 38 emphasized that the learning contract helped her to monitor her learning progress whereas Students 33 and 29 claimed it helped them grade their own work. Student 32 stressed that the learning contract taught her "to be more systematic in planning" her own learning. Four students claimed that the learning contract gave them a chance to tailor their learning according to their own personal needs. These students felt that with the learning they could focus or concentrate on their weakness and improve on their own limitations and shortcomings. For instance, Student 23 reported that "by using a contract, I can work on my weakness and do exercises to improve myself." Furthermore, Student 40 claimed that the learning contract helped her "concentrate on vocabulary and by doing extra vocabulary exercises" she managed to improve her vocabulary. Student 20 spoke of the affective side of learning, when she said that the learning contract helped her to understand what she had to do to improve herself. She added that it gave her a chance "express (her) feelings over the work (she) had done."

Eight students admitted that they saw no benefit in using learning contracts. Three students claimed that they found it "too restrictive" whereas one felt it was a "mere waste of time." Students 22 and 27 felt that they saw no need for a learning contract as they were already quite disciplined and hence, they did not "need to write a learning contract in order to do something." Two students claimed that they still had difficulty in writing the learning objectives and therefore found the writing of a learning contract 'a difficult process' as it often "took a long time to complete one."

The efficacy of learning contracts was further acknowledged by Karen in Interview I and Interview III. Karen collaborated the finding that the learning contracts

proved to be slightly more acceptable and beneficial than the learning journals to this group of students. She pointed out that the learning contracts helped her students to effectively manage their learning process. Karen added that by using learning contracts she was able to foster the development of learner autonomy among her students. She felt that "by using learning contracts, the students were required to plan, organize and evaluate their own learning" and this "encouraged the students to take charge of their own learning." Karen admitted that a 'small group of students' rejected using the learning contract. She felt that this was probably because they were either just 'plain lazy" or "felt it was time-consuming." She however, emphasized that this group did do additional work on their work to show her but "they were just not comfortable working with learning contracts."

At this point, perhaps it is apt to note that researchers (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993; & Reid,1987) in studies of individual differences acknowledge that no two people learn alike because every learner is a unique learner having his or her own preferred style of learning. Hence, what works for one student may not necessarily work for other students. Bearing this is mind, it is quite understandable why the learning journal and the learning contract did not prove to be beneficial to some students.

Overall Perception of Strategy Training

A large majority of the students, that is 40 (95.2 %) out of the total 42 students claimed that they had changed their method of learning English under the 15-week Strategy Training Programme.

Investigating into the reasons for this change, a large majority claimed that under strategy training they had been exposed to language learning strategies. Besides that, for the first time in their study of the English language they felt they were consciously aware of the learning process - that is, they explicitly knew the strategies and the objectives of each lesson. They also stressed that they had greatly improved after studying using LLS. For example, Student 17 reported, "I am consciously using strategies to learn more effectively and learning English this year is better because there are more interesting activities." To this, Student 24 added, "I have changed to using learning strategies and I feel this will make me more responsible for my own learning." Meanwhile, Student 2 emphasized that for once in her lifetime as a student she was "actually 'learning' English" because before this "I never did 'learn' English." Student 37 echoed a similar sentiment when she stated the following:

> Last year, I hardly 'studied' English, but this year I discovered that
> language learning strategies can actually help me improve my performance
> in learning English Language and other subjects. I really like this
> method because I find it works for me.

Only two students, that is, Students 38 and 5 indicated that they were still studying English the same way as they did last year. The former claimed that she had already been using most of these strategies the previous year so she saw no need to change her learning style. Student 5, however, felt that the method of learning that she used the previous year had proven to be successful for her. "I see no reason why I should change it. I shall stick to my own studying method," she exclaimed.

All 42 students unanimously agreed that they were glad that they participated in the training programme. A large majority of them claimed that the programme exposed

them to LLS, which helped them to become better learners. They acknowledged that the programme improved their grades in English Language. This sentiment was well articulated by Student 31, who said, "This programme taught me many strategies of learning which helped me to learn better and it improved my grades in English Language tests."

Furthermore, a number of students pointed out that they were glad they participated in the programme because the study of English Language was "different", "interesting" and "informative." Student 11 claimed that strategy training "took out the monotony of English lessons for this year." This group felt that for once they were "actually learning something during English." More importantly, they asserted that they learnt 'how to learn.' Student 33 put it aptly when she remarked, "Under this programme I had the opportunity to learn how to learn and I think what is more important, I learnt how to study smart."

Five students pointed out that they were glad they participated in this programme because it gave them a chance to talk about their learning problems. Student 16, reported that the counselling sessions helped her discuss her weaknesses. She said, "I liked the counselling because the teacher gave me ideas as to how I could do better in my English."

The above benefits were put in a nutshell by Student 23. She commented, "This programme is an eye-opener towards learning different types of strategies that will help me become more aware of my progress in learning so that I can become a life-long learner."

The students' perceptions of the training programme were supported by Karen in Interview III. She felt that on the whole, the students responded positively towards strategy training. She pointed out that in the beginning some students were a bit skeptical and resistant due to the different mode of instruction. She acknowledged that by the end of the programme a majority of the students were "very thankful" that they got a chance to participate in the training programme. This could be attributed to the fact that the students became aware of the benefits that they could reap from the training programme.

Asked what these benefits were, she said that the programme explicitly introduced students to a wide variety of strategies that helped them improve their performance in language learning. She claimed that the students' test scores showed a marked improvement from the average score of 62 per cent to 75 per cent. She added that she was particularly impressed with the students' advancement in their writing skills. She pointed out that the students gave her "much better work" especially in the guided writing and summary writing aspect of the writing paper.

She pointed out that in summary writing more than three-quarters of the class had no problems in locating the main points for the summary writing. In guided writing, since the main content points were provided, almost all her students were able to obtain full marks for the content component as they were able to elaborate effectively on each point given and were able to contribute two to three other points of their own. Karen also felt that her students' performance in free compositions had also improved. She noted that they now planned their work before writing this perhaps helped them write better and more cohesive essays. She highlighted the fact that most of them gave her

better work and there were less grammatical and careless mistakes in their work. She pointed out that some of her students also showed improvement in their vocabulary as they were writing using more effective words. Karen, however, disclosed that some of her students' writing still lacked cohesion and she needed to spend some time on it.

Karen stressed that the programme "actually made the students more aware of 'how to learn' and this helped them to take responsibility for their learning." She added that making students more aware of their learning has helped them to become more responsible, committed and more disciplined. She said that this was evident as more students not only felt comfortable but they were confident enough to approach her and talk about their learning.

On a personal note, Karen felt that strategy training was the answer to many teaching problems. In her opinion, teachers nowadays are burdened with so much work and if teachers could help their students to grasp this 'learning-how-to-learn' concept and learn to implement it systematically and effectively much of the teachers' burden will be lightened. She stressed that in the beginning a lot of groundwork and preparation have to be carried out to ensure the training programme is effectively implemented.

She pointed out that she has actually started using strategy training for another English Language class of hers and she was beginning "to see some signs of success there, too." As to her future plans she hoped that she would be given more exposure to new teaching techniques so that she could be more effective in guiding all her English Language students towards achieving learner autonomy.

When asked as to how successful she was in fostering the development of learner autonomy in her language classroom, Karen has this to say:

Well, I won't say that I was 100 per cent successful. I had to work within a number of constraints . . . I think I have been rather successful. I have managed to make most of my students aware and involved in taking responsibility for their own learning. If you ask me where my students stand - on a scale of 1 to 10, I would say that a majority of the students are on the scale of 7 . . . I feel 15 weeks is not sufficient to really make students autonomous learners. Learner autonomy is a slow and gradual progress. I think the students have generally found strategy training beneficial as a number of them have thanked me for the experience.

Problems in Implementing Strategy Training

According to Karen, one problem she faced in implementing strategy training was getting the students' initial co-operation. She said, "like all things new there were many teething problems and at the beginning some of the students were rather skeptical of strategy training." She acknowledged that there were "mixed reactions" from the students. Some were positive whilst some "wet blankets" tried to dampen the spirits of others. Therefore, she felt she had to do a lot of listening and talking to her students in order to convince them on its effectiveness. She stressed, "once the students saw the benefits of using strategies they were more receptive."

Karen pointed out that in implementing strategy training for the development of learner autonomy she was expected to provide her students with choices. She felt she was rather unsuccessful in this area as she had to work within a number of constraints. She said that she realized that being school students they had no choice as to 'what', 'why' and 'when' to learn. She acknowledged that one main constraint was that she had to "limit the topics." She pointed out that she had to confine herself to the stipulated syllabus. Another constraint she faced was "limited time" and since the school time-

table had a scheduled time for the learning of English, she was unable to "give students the freedom to work according to their own pace or time" on certain activities. The time limitation also resulted in students having to write their learning journals outside the stipulated English Language period. This meant extra homework for them.

Furthermore, she felt that due to the lack of time and circumstances beyond her control she did not have sufficient time to provide effective counselling to all the 42 students. She claimed that on the average she was only able to meet each student "two to three times" during the 15-week duration of the training programme. She felt that the consultation time set aside for students outside after school hours turned out to be unsuccessful. These students were often occupied with either society meetings or tuition classes after school hours. Some of these students had transport problems and they were not willing to stay back for couselling sessions. Hence, very few opted to see the teacher after school. On the other hand, the option of seeking counselling during the 20-minute interval break turned out to be a popular choice. Here again due to the short break the teacher was usually unable to see all the students who had made appointments. Finally, the teacher was left with providing counselling during the students' free period or at times during the fifth single English Language period. In other instances she was "forced to steal time in between periods." On top of that she felt it was "difficult to provide effective couselling for such a big group." Perhaps if she had a smaller group, she would have been more successful in providing effective couselling. Karen, however, emphasized that despite the few couselling sessions, she knew all her students "very well and was aware of all their personal shortcomings" as she kept a record of each student.

Another problem she faced was the increase in workload especially at the beginning of the programme. She pointed out that at the beginning her students were "most certainly not ready for any independent learning because the Malaysian school culture does not encourage students to work on their own." She felt that the students in her class were very dependent on the teacher during the initial training period as traditionally Malaysian students saw the teacher as one who teaches and evaluates their work. Hence, she admitted it was "rather stressful" having to prepare a variety of materials and activities for the ice-breaking sessions in order to get students "to change their mindset and get ready for the programme." She added that she had "some trouble" locating a variety of materials for each lesson to suit the varied proficiency level of her students in order to provide students the choice of selecting their learning materials.

Having students to carry out their own learning, and getting them to keep a learning journal and prepare learning contracts also meant that the teacher now had extra monitoring to carry out. She stressed that at the beginning there were students who often forgot to bring their journals and then there were others who wrote "too simple and skimpy" entries. Hence, she had to use indirect means such as by walking around the class to ensure all of them kept, brought and wrote their entries at the end of each English Language lesson. Karen admitted that keeping a close tab on students' responsibility towards learning journals and learning contracts was a "bit stressful and over-whelming at times, especially at the beginning of the programme." This indirectly increased her workload. She however, admitted that once the students got more disciplined and "perhaps got the hang of what they were required to do" her "workload somewhat felt lighter."