

**TEACHING LEARNING
STRATEGIES IN THE
HISTORY CLASSROOM**

**Anna Uhl Chamot
The George
Washington University**

**WHAT ARE LEARNING
STRATEGIES?**

- Thoughts and actions that assist learning tasks.
- Ways to understand, remember, and recall information.
- Ways to practice skills efficiently.

**WHY TEACH LEARNING
STRATEGIES IN THE HISTORY
CLASS?**

- Increase students' comprehension of texts, presentations, and vocabulary.
- Help students organize concepts and vocabulary.
- Help students recall information and vocabulary.
- Increase students' motivation and achievement.

ACTIVITY 2: YOUR STUDENTS' LEARNING STRATEGIES

*Directions: Do you know what learning strategies your students are already using independently to understand, remember, and use history information and skills? What have you observed? What have your students told you about the ways that they like to learn? Your group will be assigned one of the following history learning tasks. Brainstorm the learning strategies that your students are already using for this type of history task. List the strategies. **Remember, identify what students are doing independently, not what you are teaching them to do!***

Learning Strategies Questionnaire	
<p>1. Learning new vocabulary What special techniques do your students have for learning the meanings and uses of new words in U.S. history?</p>	<p>5. Viewing and interpreting How do your students go about understanding and interpreting history information presented through documentary and commercial films and videos?</p>
<p>2. Listening for information What do your students do to help them understand history information presented orally?</p>	<p>6. Writing What techniques do your students use for developing and writing history reports?</p>
<p>3. Following Directions Do your students have strategies for following your directions and for carrying out a procedure requiring a sequence of steps, such as observing a historical artifact or analyzing photographic images?</p>	<p>7. Understanding Graphic Information What strategies do your students use to get meaning from charts, maps, graphs, tables, and time lines in history?</p>
<p>4. Reading for comprehension What strategies do your students use to understand the main ideas, events, or points of a history text or original document?</p>	<p>8. Oral reporting Do your students have special techniques for preparing and presenting an oral report such as a book report or a research project?</p>

LEARNING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARDS

	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
1	Tell What You Know	-Think about and use prior knowledge to assist in completing a task. -Recall and build on what has already learned been learned about the topic.
2	Make Predictions	-Make logical guesses about what will happen. -Anticipate information to come. -Use text headings to predict content. -Predict choices and consequences
3	Make Inferences	-Use context to make logical guesses about meanings of new words or phrases. -Read or listen between the lines to understand implied meaning.
4	Use Selective Attention	-Listen or read (scan) for specific information. -Focus on key words, phrases, or ideas. -Find main ideas and details.
5	Use Resources	-Use reference materials and the Internet. -Question experts. -Use a model.
6	Summarize	-Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.
7	Group/Classify	-Relate or classify words or concepts according to attributes.
8	Use/Create Graphic Organizers	-Use or create a visual representation (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, and charts) of important relationships between ideas.
9	Take Notes	-Write down important words and ideas.
10	Cooperate	-Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.
11	Use Imagery	- Use or create an image to understand and/or represent information.

Source: Chamot, A. U. & Steeves, K. A. (2004). *Land, people, nation: A history of the United States, Books 1 and 2*. White Plains, NY: Pearson Educational Publishing.

**TIPS ON TEACHING
LEARNING STRATEGIES**

- Build on students' current learning strategies.
- Demonstrate how to use the learning strategy by modeling.
- Give the strategy a name.
- Provide ample practice opportunities.

PREPARATION

- Have class discussions about strategies.
- Interview students about their strategies.
- Have students keep learning strategy journals.

PRESENTATION

- Show and model the strategy.
- Name the strategy and explain it.
- Tell when and how to use the strategy.
- Ask students to describe how they have used the strategy.
- Use visuals and realia!

PRACTICE

- Choose a challenging task.
- Name the strategy to practice - or
- Remind students to use strategy - or
- Ask students to identify strategy used for a task.
- Encourage students to use strategy independently.
- Call attention to spontaneous use of strategies.

SELF-EVALUATION

- Students discuss how they used the strategy.
- Students keep learning strategy logs.
- Students identify and defend preferred strategies.
- Students reflect on themselves as strategic thinkers.

EXPANSION

- Find new ways to use the strategy.
- Survey strategies used by others.
- Teach a learning strategy to a friend or sibling.
- Collect tips on using strategies.

Activity 3: Use Two Learning Strategies

*Directions: Work in pairs. You will be tested on your understanding, analysis, and comparison of these two 1765 texts: **Representative government: a British view** and **Representative government: an American view**. Choose and use 2 learning strategies (see your list of learning strategies) to help you understand, analyze, compare, and remember this information. Describe the strategies you are using in the spaces below the texts.*

**Representative
government:
a British view**

The Fact is, that the Inhabitants of the Colonies are represented in Parliament: they do not indeed chuse the Members of that Assembly; neither are Nine Tenths of the People of Britain Electors; for the Right of Election is annexed to certain Species of Property, to peculiar Franchises, and to Inhabitaney in some particular Places; but these Descriptions comprehend only a very small Part of the Land, the Property, and the People of this Island...

The Colonies are in exactly the same Situation: All British Subjects are really in the same; none are actually, all are virtually represented in Parliament; for every Member of Parliament sits in the House, not as Representative of his own Constituents, but as one of that august Assembly by which all the Commons of Great Britain are represented. Their Rights and their Interests, however his own Borough may be affected by general Dispositions, ought to be the great Objects of his Attention, and the only Rules for his Conduct; and to sacrifice these to a partial Advantage in favour of the Place where he was chosen, would be a Departure from his Duty; if it were otherwise, Old Sarum would enjoy Privileges essential to Liberty, which are denied to Birmingham and to Manchester; but as it is, they and the Colonies and all British Subjects whatever, have an equal Share in the general Representation of the Commons of Great Britain, and are bound by the Consent of the Majority of that House, whether their own particular Representatives consented to or opposed the Measures there taken, or whether they had or had not particular Representatives there.

From Thomas Whately, *The Regulations Lately Made...*, 1765.

To infer, my lord, that the British members [of Parliament] actually represent the colonies, who are not permitted to do the least act towards their appointment, because Britain is unequally represented, although every man in the kingdom, who hath certain legal qualifications can vote for some one to represent him, is such a piece of sophistry that I had half a mind to pass by the cobweb without blowing it to pieces. Is there no difference between a country's having a privilege to choose 558 members to represent them in parliament, though in unequal proportions to the several districts, which cannot be avoided, and not having liberty to choose any? To turn the tables,—if the Americans only had leave to send members to parliament, could such sophistry ever persuade the people of Britain that they were represented and had a share in the national councils?... Suppose none of the 558 members were chosen by the people, but enjoyed the right of sitting in parliament by hereditary descent; could the common people be said to share in the national councils? How trifling then is the supposition, that we in America virtually have such share in the national councils, by those members whom we never chose? If we are not their constituents, they are not our representatives.... It is really a piece of mockery to tell us that a country, detached from Britain, by an ocean of immense breadth, and which is so extensive and populous, should be represented by the British members, or that we can have any interest in the house of commons.

**Representative
government:
an American view**

From the Providence Gazette, May 11, 1765.