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Successful second language learner

Susan A. Talbot

The University of Montana

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THE SUCCESSFUL SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER

By
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B.A. Radcliffe, 1952

Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
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1980

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ABSTRACT

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The Successful Second Language Learner

Director: O. W. Rolfe

This thesis studies successful second language learners and how they achieve their results. It focuses on the learner rather than the teacher, and especially on the learner's own assessment of his or her learning processes. The study begins with a review of recent literature pertaining to the role of cognitive styles, motivation or attitudes, and learning strategies in second language learning. The second part of the thesis is the evaluation of questionnaires and interviews which have been given to a selected group of successful students of French. The main thrust of the questions is the self-assessment of the learners and their strategies. From their answers have come some similarities and trends which indicate helpful techniques for teachers and other language learners.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I  INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II SUMMARY OF RECENT LITERATURE: WHAT THE LEARNER BRINGS TO LEARNING.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Cognitive Styles.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Evaluating Cognitive Styles</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Motivation.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Learning Strategies.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Method and Procedure.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Results of Questionnaire.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Results of Interview.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV SUMMARY</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V  APPENDIXES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Letters of Introduction</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Format of Oral Interview</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Questionnaire.</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Profiles of Subjects Studied.</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI BIBLIOGRAPHY.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Despite the claims of some English teachers most native-born Americans speak their own language fluently. That is to say, they speak English at least as well as they have heard it spoken while they were growing up. A child raised in a black ghetto may speak Black English which is quite different from the English spoken by a white child in an affluent neighboring suburb, however, either child will probably speak his or her language fluently by the age of five or six. Each of these children has learned a "native" language with no difficulty before entering school.

There is a great difference, however, in the success that students have in learning a second language. At every formal instructional level there seem to be good learners and poor learners. It is an oversimplification to say that this is a result of good teachers and poor teachers. Some students seem to pick up a second language fairly easily even when the teacher and text are far from ideal. Others cannot seem to grasp even the basics although the teacher and material are excellent.
Only recently has the nature of language learning processes been made the object of scientific inquiry. The majority of the books published so far on language learning are really books on language teaching. However, in the past few years this emphasis has changed. "Most recent second language education research has dealt with the language learner rather than the language teacher." ¹

The resultant studies have tried to discover what makes a "successful" language learner successful. Tests have been devised which attempt to predict success or failure for a potential student. Research has been done to try to isolate those attributes of personality and cognitive style which contribute to successful language learning. Studies have been made of the learning strategies and techniques of successful learners. The final goal of this new focus on learners would be, of course, to use this knowledge to help language learners at all levels of achievement become more successful.

Alice Omaggio has written, "Research on the good language learner is still in the preliminary stages." ²


In a review of this research she mentions as a resource, "Insights from experienced learners."\(^3\) It was this aspect of a study which most interested me. It seemed to me that successful language learners at the secondary and university levels would be an excellent, first-hand source of information.

I have, therefore reviewed current literature on language learning, and my thesis will begin with a summary of this material. This includes theoretical arguments and empirical investigations about the influence of personality and cognitive styles on successful language learning as well as learning strategies used by "good" students. Based upon this information I have developed a questionnaire and a format for personal interviews which were given to a group of Missoula high school and university students.

The results of these questionnaires and interviews will comprise the body of my thesis. In conclusion, I will show how this information could be useful in teaching less-successful language learners.

\(^3\)Omaggio, p. 2.
CHAPTER II

WHAT THE LEARNER BRINGS TO LEARNING:
SUMMARY OF RECENT LITERATURE

When a teacher faces a class of French students for the first time, he would like to believe they are all starting with the same talents and same lack of handicaps. As a realist, he knows this is not possible. The students may be very young, as in the FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools) programs, or older adults beginning a second language for the first time. The students may be male or female. Occasionally there will be students who are classified as "slow learners." More often there will be students who are highly intelligent and impatient with the pace of the average class. These three variables of age, sex, and intelligence present challenges to the classroom teacher and their significance has been the subject of much pedagogical research.

A variation of the intelligence factor which pertains especially to foreign language learning is language aptitude. Language aptitude testing tries to evaluate skills in areas such as: auditory ability, rote memorization ability, phonetic decoding (the ability to store and recall auditory information), grammatical
sensitivity (the ability to handle word forms and arrangements), and inductive learning ability (the ability to infer forms and patterns from given forms). The best known tests for language aptitude, Carroll-Sapon\(^1\) and Pimsleur,\(^2\) while not considered infallible, are nevertheless helpful predictors of success.

Recent researchers have turned to studying three areas of language learning which they feel have strong impact on predicting second language success: cognitive styles, motivation, and learning strategies. Some of the most interesting literature in the field is found in these areas. Since these studies are most pertinent to my field of interest, I am concentrating in this thesis on these three factors.

**A. Cognitive Styles**

"Cognitive style" is a term that was not used until the 1950s. It became clear to researchers in psychology that, "...there were clear differences among individuals in their modes of perception. Although it was tempting to try to tie these to differences in intelligence...these researchers became convinced that they were dealing with a


separate phenomenon that was quite independent of intelligence and other abilities." The term, cognitive style, is also called learning style or conceptual style but, by any name, it is the way an individual characteristically approaches the material to be learned. This can affect any information the learner is processing, including, of course, a second language.

There are almost as many types of cognitive styles described by researchers as there are researchers in the field. Some of them, however, seem to have more application to the study of computer programming or history than to the study of language. In the past ten years, tests have been devised which would help the language teacher analyze the individual learning styles of students. These tests focus on those cognitive styles which seem most relevant to language learning. Each test places the learner along a kind of scale, whose extremes are briefly explained here:

1. Impulsivity versus reflectivity. The impulsive learner offers the first answer that occurs to him, even if it is incorrect, and is usually a faster reader, though not usually as successful a reader. "Future research might indicate a tendency for those with impulsive

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personalities to go through a number of rapid transitions of semi-grammatical stages of interlanguage." They seem comfortable making a number of errors, as long as they feel they are making progress. The reflective students make fewer errors, pondering various answers before deciding. They learn more effectively from inductive reasoning. They stay longer at a particular stage but make a bigger leap from stage to stage in learning. The test most commonly used to evaluate these styles is the Matching Familiar Figures Procedure. It is easy to see how either too much impulsivity or too much reflectivity might impede a student's progress. Alice Omaggio characterizes these two extremes as a source of learner problems.

2. Broad versus narrow categorizing. A broad categorizer puts an example in a broad category, minimizing the risk of excluding something which does not belong. He over generalizes—as in saying, he "drunked" or he "goed." The narrow categorizer minimizes the risk of

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5 Matching Familiar Figures Procedure
This test contains a standard stimulus and six variants. One of the variants is identical to the standard. The length of time until the student chooses the first hypothesis and the correctness of his choice constitute the variables in ascertaining reflectiveness.
including members which do not belong to a group. He is often lost in detail and finds it hard to form concepts; however, he is more often willing to risk being wrong. A popular test for assessing breadth of categorization is Pettigrew's paper and pencil questionnaire.

3. **Low versus high tolerance of ambiguity.** The student who has a low tolerance of ambiguity finds it difficult to accept exceptions to rules and seeming contradictions. The open-minded student accepts these contradictions without distress. The teacher who wishes to help the dogmatic or intolerant student "should present as clear an explanation of the language as possible with a minimum of conflicting evidence." 7

4. **Field independence versus field dependence.** Field dependent individuals lack focusing skills, are very easily distracted by details and find it difficult to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant. They are,  

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6 Pettigrew's Pencil and Paper Questionnaire  
In this test "items specify the average value for a specific category (e.g., annual rainfall, width of windows, length of whales), and the subject is requested to select the most extreme members of a category (such as the largest and the smallest) from the multiple choice alternatives listed. As the limiting boundaries of the category set by the subject diverge from the average value provided, breadth of categorization evidently increases." Nathan Kogan, "Educational Implications of Cognitive Styles," *Psychology & Educational Practice*, ed. Gerald S. Lesser (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1971), p. 256.

7 Brown, p. 239.
however, strong in social skills and are at least equal in verbal intelligence to field independent individuals. The field independent person is analytical and can pick out the essential material from an embedding context. He tends to, "enter technical fields where the ability to solve problems by analyzing and then restructuring material is important."\(^8\) Some of the better known tests to assess these cognitive styles are the Body Adjustment Test, the Rod and Frame Test and the Embedded Figures Test.\(^9\)

5. **Skeletonizing versus embroidering.** H. Douglas Brown has described two other types of cognitive styles in terms which are probably not acknowledged by psychologists but which are very vivid: the skeletonizers and the embroiderers. There are individuals who, when trying to remember cognitive material, store away only the bare bones, so as not to be distracted by extraneous material. The embroiderer, on the other hand, will store

\(^8\) Abraham, p. 7.

\(^9\) Tests for Field Independence and Field Dependence.

The Body Adjustment Test judges a subject's ability to tilt a chair to true vertical in a tilting room. The Rod and Frame Test shows the subject a luminous rod within a luminous frame in a dark room which he must adjust to a true vertical. The Embedded Figures Test comprises a set of complex geometric patterns in which simple figures are embedded. The subject must locate the simple figures in as short a time as possible.
away extra material as a mnemonic device. It seems clear that neither of these styles is necessarily preferable.

6. Perceptive versus Receptive and systematic versus intuitive information processing. James McKenney of the Harvard Business School looks at the way students process information in another way. In the gathering of information, "perceptive" individuals focus on relationships between items and look for either deviation from or conformity to the expectation they formed from concepts. "Receptive" individuals, however, focus on the stimulus itself and look at detail rather than relationships. In evaluating information there are "systematic" individuals who look at problem solving in terms of a method which, if followed, will give an answer. The other end of the pole is the "intuitive" thinker who solves problems by a trial and error method and may be sensitive to cues which he cannot even explain. Research is showing that most people are not locked into these styles but may switch methods to accommodate the task at hand. Thus, a language student may use a systematic approach one time and an intuitive another.

Other dimensions of cognitive style which may have a relationship to language learning are: 7. tolerance for incongruity, 8. risk-taking versus cautiousness, 9. an ability to perform simple repetitive tasks, 10. sensory
modality preferences (does the student prefer visual, auditory or kinesthetic experience in learning?), and
11. convergent thinking (pointed toward logical conclusions and the strict limitations of a task) versus divergent thinking (pointed toward variety and quantity of relevant output).

The emotional, temperamental, or empathetic factor is also important for learning languages. "We must acknowledge that while optimal cognitive factors may be operating in the solution of a given task (in language learning) the learner can fail because of an affective block." Some of these variables are: extroversion or introversion, self-concept, anxiety, and empathy. The impact of these variables on learning styles is incontestable. In fact, Anthony Papalia implies that teachers may ignore these differences at their peril in an article in the Language Association Bulletin, "Avoid Malpractice: An Individual Differences Inventory."

B. Evaluating Cognitive Styles

Alongside the attempt to characterize learning styles, there is the effort to develop tests for evaluating them. Helen I. Lepke of Kent State University has

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10 Brown, pp. 231-232.
described five such tests. They are dissimilar in scope and emphasis, but they incorporate many of the cognitive styles or other variables in learning which have already been discussed. She points out that learning styles are extremely complex mechanisms.

If individualized instruction were ever to be raised to the level of a truly personalized level...objective measuring devices had to be developed which (identify) the student's hidden learning center, that elusive source which ultimately controls all processes of learning and understanding.\textsuperscript{11}

The five tests are briefly described here:

1. One of the best known tests is Harry Reinert's ELSIE, Edmonds Learning Style Identification Exercise. In this test Reinert looks at the way a learner adopts and internalizes a word. Does he visualize the concrete object? Does he visualize the written word? Does he respond to the sound of the word? Is it best reinforced in a kinesthetic way, by some physical activity?\textsuperscript{12}

2. Joseph Hill introduced "cognitive style mapping." His Cognitive Style Interest Inventory is very


\textsuperscript{12}Lepke, p. 658.
broadly based. He tries to map as many areas as possible: basic cognitive preferences, body language, motor skills, empathy, cultural determinants, socialization, selfknowledge and others.  

3. Anthony Papalia has developed two inventories: the Learning Modalities Inventory and the Individual Differences Inventory. The first is directed to the student and elicits his own assessment of his cognitive style. The second turns to the teacher and his evaluation of a student's cognitive preferences. Together both should arrive at a comprehensive individual profile.  

4. David E. Hunt uses the Paragraph Completion Model to assess the conceptual maturity of a student. In this study learners may range from Stage 0 which is egocentric, dominated by emotions, prone to escape a complex situation, to the mature learner of Stage 3 who is self-reliant, self-defined and able to objectively assess alternatives. The lower stages need a far more structured classroom situation.  

5. The Learning Style Inventory developed by Rita Dunn, Kenneth Dunn, and Gary Price looks at four

\[\text{(References)}\]

\[Lepke, p. 660.\]

\[Ibid., p. 662.\]

\[Ibid., p. 663.\]
basic stimuli: environment, emotions, sociological factors, and physical factors. The effect of these stimuli helps to determine individual learning patterns.\textsuperscript{16}

These five testing instruments, which were described in Lepke's article, are diversified in nature and approach. They all try, however, to provide information about differing characteristics of thinking. Each of these researchers must feel that "when a student learns in ways that are natural to him, the outcomes usually are increased academic achievement, improved self-esteem, and... learner independence."\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{C. Motivation}

It would be difficult to contradict the theory that motivation plays a large part in all learning, not only language learning. Many teachers have discovered, to their regret, that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. In my own personal experience this has been substantiated many times. One young French woman I knew had lived in the United States for two years. She had an extensive vocabulary, made no grammar mistakes and spoke an easy and idiomatic English. However, she had a

\textsuperscript{16}Lepke, p. 665.

very marked French accent. I finally offered to help her with phonetics and pronunciation. "But, English isn't a pretty sound," she replied.

The classroom is a less urgent situation than the street and there isn't much teachers can do about that. "However, the good language learner seems to have a high motivation to communicate no matter where he is."18 Gardner and Lambert have pointed out that "Researchers have mentioned that motivation and interest probably play important roles in second language acquisition, but, perhaps because of difficulties in measuring them, these aspects have not been given systematic attention."19 Their study divided motivation into two types. If the purpose of learning was to be useful (jobs, college entrance, peer approval, etc.), they called it utilitarian. If the goal of language learning was to meet more and different people, learn more about the language group—in fact, to become part of the new language community—they called it integrative. Their studies show that integrative

18 Joan Rubin, "What the 'Good Language Learner' Can Teach Us," TESOL Quarterly 9, No. 1 (March 1975):41.

was usually better motivation. Graeme Kennedy writes, "We are successful as second language learners to the extent that we feel that what we are doing will enable us to communicate with a group we would like to join."  

Gardner also stresses the part played by parents, teachers and peers in influencing attitudinal and motivational characteristics of students. Whether active or passive, there is no doubt that there is an influence. Alfred N. Smith points out that, "liking a foreign language is learned. No student is born liking or disliking it." Negative attitudes are usually based on one of four causes: 1) prejudicial factors ("French is for sissies; I want to study chemistry.") 2) a teacher, peer or parent who has failed in a second language imparts a negative attitude; 3) a teacher or parent who has had a positive experience pushes it too hard; 4) the student is sure he or she is stupid. When it is the fourth cause, teachers should realize that "the low-motivated, poor achiever's


social needs are more basic than his need to know. He must have security and social acceptance before he can begin to worry about the task of learning."  

Whatever its cause, there are tests which try to measure motivation. Two of the best known tests for predicting success in second language acquisition, Carroll-Sapon (1965)\textsuperscript{23} and Pimsleur (1966),\textsuperscript{24} include a section on motivation.

Boredom or anxiety as causes for negative attitude may not show up on testing but are easily spotted in the classroom by the alert teacher. The teacher should learn to offset low motivation as soon as possible. "After all, the learner always has the last word when it comes to learning."  

D. Learning Strategies

When we summarize everything that a student brings to language learning, i.e., innate capacity, cognitive styles and motivation, we still don't know how a student utilizes all these diverse factors. Teachers are often

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22}Smith, p. 85.
  \item \textsuperscript{23}J. B. Carroll and S. M. Sapon
  \item \textsuperscript{24}P. Pimsleur
\end{itemize}
unaware of this. "As I have begun to observe classes, what fascinates me is how often the teacher plows ahead with the lesson seemingly with little awareness of what is going on in each student, and often without directing the attention of poorer students to how the successful student arrives at his answer." 26 Carol Hosenfeld points out that "Classroom teachers as well as researchers need to know what students are doing as they complete foreign language tasks." 27 However, she stresses that the new student role emphasizes how important it is for the student to know what he or she is doing— it is not enough for the teacher to know. Tests may predict success but they don't tell a learner what to do with his aptitude or lack of it. "Commonly the poorer students may notice that the better student always has the right answer but he never discovers why, never finds out what little tricks lead the better student to the right answer." 28 Some of these "little tricks" used to be called study habits. Bernadette Gadzilla and associates made a detailed study of the interrelationship of study habits and academic

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26 Rubin, p. 44.


28 Rubin, p. 42.
achievement and confirmed what educators have assumed for years, "that effective study habits are associated with academic success."\textsuperscript{29}

Whether they are called study habits or "little tricks" or the currently popular "learning strategies," researchers are now stressing how personal and individual they are. H. H. Stern points out that "eventually it is the pupil who has to organize the language for himself, to develop his own internal structure and thus to make the language he learns his own."\textsuperscript{30} Other researchers confirm this opinion. Jacobovits states that "...the learner makes his own contribution to the learning situation and these learner strategies are to a greater or lesser extent independent of the teacher's activities."\textsuperscript{31} Carroll comments that "It is almost impossible to control the techniques

\textsuperscript{29}Bernadette Gadzella and associates, "Interrelationships of Study Habits and Attitudes, Locus Control, Motivation Achievement Tendencies and Academic Achievement," ERIC Document 143928 (Commerce: East Texas State University, April 29, 1976):11.


that the student will adopt to acquire a given skill."\(^{32}\) Rivers claims that, "... students will learn according to their personal strategies in the ultimate secret of their personalities even when they appear to be doing as we direct."\(^{33}\)

Researchers are beginning to isolate these strategies, even though they sometimes involve cognitive processes which neither the learner nor the observer can specify. In 1975 Joan Rubin made up a list which she called "general" but which gives an idea of what they are looking at:\(^{34}\)

1. The good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser. She points out that we do this in our first language, using non-verbal clues, outside knowledge, word association and so forth, to comprehend all that the speaker doesn't say or we don't hear. Adults are more efficient guessers than children. Good second language learners also use all the clues which a setting offers them.


\(^{34}\)Rubin, pp. 45-48.
2. The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate or to learn from communication. He will use circumlocution or paraphrasing or gestures or cognates to get his ideas across.

3. The good learner is not often inhibited. In order to get his idea across he is willing to appear foolish. He is willing to make mistakes and live with vagueness.

4. The good language learner is prepared to attend to form. He is constantly looking for patterns in the language. "It has often been observed that a person learns his second or third foreign language more easily than his first just because he has had practice in attending to the formal features of a language."\(^{35}\)

5. The good language learner practices. He takes advantage of every opportunity to listen to and speak the language.

6. He monitors his own and the speech of others. He can learn from his own mistakes.

7. He attends to meaning. He knows that it is not enough to pay attention to the grammar or the surface form. The context of the speech, the relationship of the speakers, and the mood may all have an impact on meaning.

\(^{35}\)Rubin, p. 47.
which the good language learner will look for.

In 1978 Alice Omaggio composed her own list. While there is some overlap, she mentions some additional strategies.

1. Good language learners have insight into their own language learning styles and adopt a personal style that fits their needs and preferences.

2. They take an active approach to the learning task. They will seek out opportunities to communicate. This is, of course, closely connected with Numbers two and five from Rubin's list.

3. Good language learners are willing to take risks and to appear as linguistic "toddlers." They will use many means to communicate even if they appear foolish. This is associated with Numbers two and three from Rubin.

4. The good language learners are good guessers. (Rubin's Number one.)

5. The good language learners attend to form as well as content, and monitor their own speech and that of others (Rubin's Numbers four and six).

6. They attempt to develop the target language into a separate reference system and think in it as soon as

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36 Alice C. Omaggio, p. 2.
possible. They learn from errors and recognize the system when it doesn't fit so as to have a workable evolving system.

7. They have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language. They identify to some extent with the native speaker.

In 1978 a report from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Naiman et al, used Rubin's list as an important basis for their study of the good language learner. However, this group also made up their own list which emerged from their research:

1. The learner must be active in his approach to learning and practice (Rubin's Number five and Omaggio's Number two).

2. The learner must come to grips with the language as a system (Omaggio's Number six).

3. The learner must use the language in real communication (Omaggio's Number two, Rubin's Numbers two and six).

4. The learner must monitor his interlanguage (Rubin's Number six).

5. The learner must come to terms with the

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affective demands of language learning (Omaggio's Number seven).

Some of these strategies may appear to be more attitudes or cognitive styles than strategies; however, when closely examined, each one reveals a technique or a strategy for learning a second language.

It is significant that Joan Rubin's article in TESOL Quarterly entitled "What the Good Language Learner Can Teach US" and H. H. Stern's unpublished paper "What Can We Learn from the Good Language Learner?" both address the same provocative question. The answer to this problem may be one key to language teaching success. "Several research studies have demonstrated that: 1) students can identify their own learning styles, 2) when exposed to a teaching style consonant with the ways they believe they learn, students score higher on tests and factual knowledge, have better attitudes, and are more efficient than those taught in a manner that is dissonant with their learning style, and 3) it is advantageous to teach and test students in their preferred modalities."38

The idea of exploring learning techniques by questioning the students themselves is encouraged in the available literature. In 1974 and 1975 a group of Canadian researchers, headed by N. Naiman, undertook a study of language learners in the province of Ontario. The results were published in 1978 in a book entitled *The Good Language Learner*. In their introduction, they explained that they began their study by focusing on learning techniques because, "...although there is obviously more to language learning than learners consciously recognize, their insights were considered a useful starting point for identifying the conscious strategies and techniques they employ."¹ Also in 1975 Joan Rubin stated that "good learners may have considerable insight to contribute to their learning difficulties and to their preferences for instructional methods."²

²Rubin, p. 49.
With this in mind I selected a group of high school and university students in Missoula who are successful French students. They were chosen from lists submitted by their teachers, who attested to their skill in French. From this group, twelve high school students and nine university students finally completed all the work necessary for the study.

A. Method and Procedure

The two French teachers at Hellgate High School submitted a list of twelve students (ten girls and two boys) who were doing well in French. Because these interviews were held in the spring, the students had nearly completed that year of French. There were five fourth-year students, four third-year students and three second-year students.

A professor teaching French 302 at the University chose ten successful students from his class, all women. Of these, nine completed the work for the study.

All of the subjects were first approached by letter (see Appendix A). This was followed up by a telephone call. At this time I repeated my assurance of anonymity—and said that if they did not choose to participate in the study, their teachers would never know about it. I have respected that anonymity to the extent that I have no idea who answered which questionnaire.
However, I would like at this time to express my thanks for their gracious cooperation to any of those subjects who might in the future read this thesis.

Appointments were set up for oral interviews (see Appendix B). I thought that the oral interview should precede the questionnaire for several reasons. First, I wished to put the subjects at their ease, to explain at greater length what I was trying to do, and to get them to talk as informally as possible. I wanted the interviews to be minimally directed to avoid putting words in their mouths. The questionnaires would follow and be much more precise. Most of the interviews lasted thirty to forty-five minutes. They were taped so that they could be more easily transcribed later.

At the conclusion of the interview, the subject was given the questionnaire (see Appendix C) and asked to return it by mail.

To preserve anonymity I gave each student a letter or a number instead of a name (high school students, one through twelve; university students, A through I). I referred to them by this designation when interviewing on tape, and I put the designation at the top of their questionnaires. This was particularly important for the high school students because all but one were former students of mine. I did not wish to be influenced in any
### Section A

**School Level:**

- High School: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- University: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 1, 3, 2

**French Level:**

- High School: 2 yrs. 3 yrs. 4 yrs. 3 5 4
- University: 1 yr. 3 yrs. 4 yrs. 5 yrs. 1 2 4 2

**Number of Teachers:**

- High School: 1, 2, 3, 2 3 6
- University: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 1 1 1 3 2 1

**Outside Experiences:**

- High School - Speaking French 3
  - Travel 2
- University - Travel 1
  - French-Canadian Family 1
  - Lived in France 2
  - French Speaking Relatives 1
  - French Club 2

**Other Languages**

- High School - Spanish 3
  - Latin 1
  - Latin and German 1
  - Spanish, German and Latin 1
- University - Spanish 2
  - Latin 1
  - Latin and German 1
  - Spanish and Latin 1
  - German and Spanish 1
  - Russian 2
way while evaluating the questionnaires—by thinking, for example, "I don't think Jane really means that, so I won't take it into account."

**B. Results of Questionnaires**

When all the interviews were finished and all the questionnaires had been returned I began the work of tabulation. My statistical tabulation of the questionnaires is found on the page facing each question as I discuss it in the following pages. The material gleaned from the oral interviews is summarized in Chapter III, C. I then wrote a resume of each interviewee which constitutes Appendix D.

The summary is based on the very tentative conclusions drawn from this small sampling. I feel that there are some trends evidenced in this group which could be useful to other students and to teachers.

Section A of the questionnaire is largely statistical material. The name (i.e., Subject A, B, C; Subject 1, 2, 3, etc.) is for my convenience in correlating with the taped interview. It may be interesting to some readers to know the age, school level, and level of French of a given student as well as what other languages have been studied and what other experiences in French outside school these subjects have had.
Section B

Question One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>or</th>
<th>Working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.S. U.</td>
<td></td>
<td>H.S. U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>5 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>9 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>10 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>5 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In three cases, high school students rated themselves as being between the two categories, one each for understanding, speaking and writing.
Section B is concerned with the student's own evaluation of his skills in French as well as other fields. It was not possible to administer proficiency tests in French or in other fields to test the accuracy of the self-evaluation. In addition I did not feel it was necessary to do so since all these subjects were recommended by their teachers as successful language students. Self ratings can be fairly accurate measurements of language competence according to a Montreal study of bilingual sixth graders. They are "found to be powerful predictors of the criterion measures." I therefore based questions one and two upon a modified chart used by Naiman, et al, in the Good Language Learner study.

This self-evaluation chart (see Appendix C, page 113) asked the subjects to assess their skills as either an elementary proficiency or a working knowledge of French in each of the four skills of understanding, speaking, reading and writing. In order to help the subjects make an accurate evaluation, notice in the Appendix that each category has a short description (i.e., "I make many errors


4Naiman, p. 6.
Question Two

Subject 3: elementary knowledge in speaking and understanding Spanish; working knowledge of the other two skills.

Subject 8: working knowledge of German in writing skills; elementary proficiency in the other three skills.

Subject D: working knowledge of all four skills in Spanish.

Question Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Number</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9-10 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question Four

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9-10 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
but would be understood by French people who are used to hearing foreigners."). It is not surprising that more university students than high school students claim a working knowledge in some or all skills, but the division is not clearcut. It is encouraging that a number of high school students feel they have a reasonably good knowledge of French.

The second question did not turn out to be very significant for this study. Of those students who have studied or are studying a second foreign language, only the three described on the facing page claimed more than an elementary proficiency in that language. We are not dealing with a large group of multilingual students.

Questions three and four are based on the common expressions: to have a "gift for language" and to have an "ear for language." These laymen's terms referring generally to language aptitude were used because students are familiar with them, and, indeed, in their more precise definitions have general validity.

The subjects were asked to rate themselves on a scale of one to ten with one representing little natural gift. The lowest rating by a high school student was four and by a university student, three, of their "gift for language." Well over half of both groups considered this skill in the upper third of the scale, in other words, a
### Question Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Number</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A's</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A's &amp; B's</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A's &amp; B's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B's</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
better than average language aptitude. However, some of the A students saw themselves as only three or four on the scale.

The audio-lingual aspect of language aptitude or the "ear for language" was a slightly different situation. The high school students did not see themselves as very gifted in this area. Half of them grouped themselves in the six or below range. The college students were a little more confident.

Remembering that rote memorization ability was mentioned as a component of language aptitude by both Rubin and Smith, I asked the subjects to evaluate themselves on this ability in Question five. One university student apparently has great difficulty memorizing but he rates himself with a working knowledge of French and gets As and Bs. This was the only area of the three questions where four high school students and three college students called themselves tens. These three preceding self-evaluations of innate skills seem to show that these successful second language students see themselves as fairly well equipped with language aptitude.

Question six asked for the grades received by these subjects in French. Since they had been recommended by their teachers, it was assumed they were all A and B students, as indeed they were. However, this was a lead-in
Question Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Eight*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Foreign Language 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Science 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Humanities 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>French 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Philosophy 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Microbiology 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Government 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>English 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Nine*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Foreign Language 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Science 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>All A's 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Humanities 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Alike</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>History 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Many students wrote down more than one choice.
question to Question seven, "Do you feel this is an accurate assessment of your ability and achievement?" I felt it was important to know if the students felt they were indeed successful students. Nine out of twelve high school students and eight out of nine university students thought the high grades they receive in French are deserved. The single "no" from a high school student is an A student, and the other two high school students who didn't mark yes or no both indicated their grades were too high. The single "no" from a university student represents the statement, "Not really; I still don't feel confident about my ability to construct good sentences." The large majority, therefore, of these subjects are not only successful, but they know it.

Question eight is a question which could also be placed in the next part of the questionnaire because it deals with motivation. In asking which field of study most interested the student, I was looking for trends. Do scientists have a particular interest in languages, for example? It is interesting to see that while languages, whether French, English or foreign languages in general, and humanities courses are well represented, science and math are also represented. Question nine, which asks in what field they get their best grades, does not show as high a percentage of math and science. Even from this
Question Ten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good Ear</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumentalist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Instrumentalist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
small sampling, however, I think it would be fair to say that good language students are not necessarily interested in only the non-scientific fields, and a few get their best grades in the sciences.

One final question dealing with innate capacity touched on the subject of musical ability. It is often hypothesized that people with musical ability will also have a good "ear" for foreign language. There have been some rather inconclusive studies done on the subject. In 1974 a study was made of missionaries who have learned Japanese. Musical ability was one of the factors used to predict learning outcome. It had been hypothesized that musical ability or training might indicate aural acuity. The report indicated that the hypothesis was not supported in the study results.\(^5\) In this group of students Question ten revealed a higher than average interest in music. More than half of each group play a musical instrument and indicate at least a fair ear for music.

The first ten questions discussed above are essentially introductory in nature: their purpose was to ascertain basic statistical material, to evaluate academic success in foreign language, and to establish the existence

Section C

Question Eleven*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilled a requirement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends were studying it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents encouraged it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adviser encouraged it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always wanted to study French</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students checked more than one category in some cases.
of some innate skills. The questionnaire now turns to an area which is one of the most important variables in language success: motivation. Because every researcher I read considered motivation one of the most important variables in second language success, I felt that this should be a principle area of investigation. Section C, questions eleven through seventeen, deals with the attitudes found in this group of students.

Question eleven asks why the student began the study of French. A large number of high school students had always wanted to study French. In addition, one of them had wanted to study German and took French instead for scheduling reasons (and said, "I'm glad now."). Fewer of the college students said that they had always wanted to study French, although two more had related reasons ("I always wanted to study a foreign language," and "I enjoyed Latin"). Parental pressure existed and was not surprising at the high school level, but seemed unusual at the college level. One college student indicated an older sister's influence. They may all have been referring to the pressure exerted when they began French in high school. One in each of the two groups indicated an interest in travel as a motivating factor. In addition to one student saying that it fulfilled a requirement for high school, another indicated it helps with college entrance requirements.
Question Twelve

Hate the idea  
Scared  
Bored  
Don't mind  
Like the idea  
The idea excites me  

H.S. U.

6  5
6  4

Question Thirteen

Travel to the country & immerse self  
Travel and take language course there  
Buy a course and study on my own  
Private language lessons  
High school or college course  
Other

2  2
5  3
1
1
3  3
Finally, one college student has a French-Canadian background and another began the study of French because "it had a cute teacher."

This group of students also had a very positive attitude toward starting another language. No student indicated distaste, fear of the idea, or even boredom. About half of each group liked the idea and half were actually excited by the idea of studying another foreign language.

Another way of looking at motivation is to determine how students feel about different methods of studying foreign languages. These subjects had been encouraged to use the category "other" whenever they didn't feel the choices were adequate. Question thirteen was one where this choice was most used and when one of the other choices was marked, there was often a little explanatory phrase. They all seemed to know specifically how they would like to study a language. Only one in each group favored studying it in the conventional high school or college course, although one high school and three college students would do that if they could then travel to the country. Another high school student wanted the option, "study, travel, study." Another high school student wanted to travel and then buy a course, such as Berlitz.

When asked a reason for their choice, the subjects
Question Fourteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helps with English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps with other languages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College entrance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to teach French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure of speaking it</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal achievement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better paying jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Service job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand a foreign culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better international relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
often wrote a rather long justification. In general they fit into one of three categories. Several mentioned how much easier and faster it is to learn in the foreign country—"it takes too long to learn out of the book. One must use it to learn." Others talked about the cultural advantages and how that enhances learning, "The people of a country tell you more about a language than the language itself." Still another group realized the advantages of learning in the country but were aware of hazards. "Being surrounded by the language and people would be tremendous motivation (as well as fun and excitement) but I would be too scared to totally immerse myself in the language, at least at first." (This student had chosen the option, "Travel to the country and take a language course there.") I feel that the wealth of detail supplied in answers to Question thirteen is an indication of high motivation. These students not only know that they want to study a foreign language, they also have definite ideas of how they want to study it.

Question fourteen asks what the student thinks will be the most valuable result of having studied French. For this question there were no choices to check, but rather a space for free answers. The answers were varied and positive. However, it is interesting to note how few were integrative rather than utilitarian in nature.
Question Fifteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mistake and waste of time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven't expressed much opinion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very pleased</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Sixteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I doubt it and I don't care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I doubt it &amp; I'm disappointed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope to visit one</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to visit one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am determined to visit</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It seems to me that only the last two choices could be called integrative.

Question fifteen relates to the attitude of parents toward the student's study of French. It has been pointed out by Alfred N. Smith and others that parents can play a large part in motivating students (see page 16). None of these subjects indicated parental disapproval. About half the high school parents seemed indifferent and the rest enthusiastic. With college it was a higher percentage of really enthusiastic parents. It would be interesting to know if the indifferent college parents were merely too far away to express interest. It would also be interesting to know if the indifferent high school parents are equally uncommunicative about all the subjects studied by those students.

The next question seems directly linked to motivation. A desire to visit France or a French speaking country shows some interest in the language, since travel in those countries is so enhanced by being able to speak the language. Question sixteen gives the students a chance to indicate feelings ranging from real indifference to great determination. I expected to find some of the high school students at least saying that they might not be able to visit France. Economic and social reasons often make foreign travel seem much less possible to high
Question Seventeen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential for success</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful, but aptitude more important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
schoolers. Even they, however, all indicated at least a hope of travel. The college students are all determined to visit France. In my opinion, the University of Montana's Burgundy program contributes to making France seem within every student's reach.

The last question on motivation assesses the student's own view of the importance of motivation as a factor in language success. The only student who felt other factors, like aptitude, are more important is a student without much self-confidence (see Student H, Appendix D). The others feel it is very important with a large majority feeling it is essential.

In summarizing the questions in this section, I would say that the answers reveal a highly motivated group of students who feel their motivation is a big factor in success.

Sections D and E of the questionnaire deal with cognitive styles, temperamental or emotional traits, and learning techniques. Section D asks largely about feelings, attitudes, and learning style preferences. Section E deals more with techniques and study habits. Some of the cognitive styles I approached in different ways on different questions. Tolerance of ambiguity or incongruity is examined in Questions twenty-one and twenty-three, for example.
Section D

Question Eighteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends - most important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends - important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends - but I need to be alone</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some cognitive styles are so newly defined that they do not yet lend themselves to research of this kind. Others require lengthy and expensive tests to validate. Those that I have chosen to investigate with this group of students are the ones which have turned up with greatest frequency in current literature as significant factors in language learning.

Question eighteen refers to introversion versus extroversion. The relationship of extroversion to the ease with which a student will try to communicate in a foreign language is obvious. The shy student may not be willing to practice the audio-lingual skills. He may, on the other hand, be doing very good work in the visual area—reading and writing. The responses to Question eighteen indicate, on the surface, a rather high percentage of students who are somewhat introverted. Only one student, a high schooler, indicated real shyness. Three high school students indicated great extroversion—that their friends were one of the most important parts of their lives or at least a very important one, and indicated no need to be alone. The great importance of peers in the life of adolescents may explain these choices. (The three are two sixteen year olds and a seventeen year old.) The majority of the high school students and all the college students indicated the need to be alone sometimes. That


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very confident</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident in most areas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only average</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most subjects difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
is certainly not a textbook definition of introversion, but it does indicate that successful students do not need to be full-time extroverts.

Naiman and his colleagues looked at introversion versus extroversion in their study of the good language learner. They found that some students who scored high on an extroversion scale were not in fact extroverts in the classroom. They instead asked students about their "classroom personality"--their fear of being laughed at, their fear of volunteering or of speaking out. They found that this was a better predictor of success than extroversion or introversion per se.

Self-confidence, then, is an important part of a successful student's make-up. Douglas Brown referred to self-concept or self-confidence as one of the important temperamental variables in predicting success. Question nineteen asked about general academic self-confidence, rather than just confidence in French. The emphasis in the questions was as much on attitude about ability to succeed as on actual ability. Over half of each group was "confident of being able to achieve almost anything if I work hard enough." The other students thought themselves to be strong in some areas, and not anxious about the others. Only one student checked the category, "only average academically."
Question Twenty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy volunteering even if I'm wrong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy it but am embarrassed if wrong</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only volunteer if I'm sure I'm right</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely volunteer</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteering in class is a behavior which can demonstrate all sorts of attitudes—extroversion, self-confidence, freedom from anxiety, lack of inhibition. Since all of these are positive characteristics mentioned by researchers, it seemed important to ask the subjects how they felt about volunteering. In Naiman's study large groups of observers counted the number of times each student in a class volunteered and whether it was done with assurance or hesitancy. They recognized that volunteering demonstrates a willingness to take risks—one characteristic of the good language learner. Question twenty at least partially validated that hypothesis. One college student checked none of the categories, writing, "I rarely volunteer because I'm not a talkative person." Two others indicated real inhibition. But the others either enjoyed volunteering with embarrassment if wrong, or really enjoyed volunteering even when wrong. I have noticed, as a recent high school teacher and college student, that high school students seem much less inhibited about volunteering in class than the majority of college students. Perhaps this self-consciousness grows with age and is another argument for the promotion of early foreign language training.

Tolerance of ambiguity or tolerance of incongruity seem peculiarly related to language, particularly in the
Question Twenty-One

I would enjoy French more if it were not for the exceptions.  
I find the exceptions fun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Twenty-Two

Visual learner  
Audio-lingual learner  
Combination

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual learner</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-lingual learner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
beginning of second language learning. Choice a. in
Question twenty-one would demonstrate an intolerance of
ambiguity. The fact that there are exceptions to the rules
and everything doesn't fit into neat patterns can be very
frustrating to the intolerant, dogmatic student. This
question may not have been phrased in a sufficiently
strong manner. Perhaps, "I find the exceptions to the rules
very frustrating" would have been a more distinctive way
to establish intolerance of ambiguity.

The choice b. in Question twenty-one demonstrates
not only a tolerance of ambiguity, but also another
characteristic of the good language learner: an interest
in attending to form as well as content. Twice as many
high school students checked this choice in preference to
the other, and slightly over half the college students.

In order to make a break between two questions
which deal with tolerance of ambiguity, I next asked a
question (twenty-two) about another type of cognitive
style—the visual learner versus the audio-lingual learner.
At the high school level many more students saw themselves
learning more easily by reading and writing than hearing
and speaking. This is quite interesting because the
approach at their high school is audio-lingual, at least
by textbook (the ALM series textbooks). The exactly
even distribution of choice among the college students
Question Twenty-Three

It frustrates me not to get every word 4 2
I am content with the gist 7 5
Other 1 2
may demonstrate a reaction to a more truly audio-lingual program offered at the University—or merely a different style among those students.

I did not offer a combination choice but two high school students and five college students chose to insert that option with some sort of comment like, "It depends upon the material," or "I use both, at different times." If large numbers of students in our culture, which does not have a strong oral tradition, really do prefer and respond to a visual learning style, teachers are going to have to recognize that fact. A totally audio-lingual approach may alienate many beginners and be one of the causes for large numbers of drop-outs.

Question twenty-three is another way of looking at tolerance of ambiguity. If a student is content to get the general sense of what he hears or reads, he is probably open-minded. He will also be a good guesser, able to infer the whole from the part he hears. He is also attending to meaning, understanding the message without necessarily grasping the entire structure. More than half of each group was content to get the gist of the material. Three students qualified their choices with statements like, "up to a point." One student remarked, "I am not

---

6 H. Douglas Brown, p. 239.
Question Twenty-Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do better when I don't translate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do better when I translate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Twenty-Five

- a. I do my best studying in a quiet place. 10 6
- b. I do my best studying with noise or music. 3 3
- c. I do my best studying alone. 10 8
- d. I do my best studying with friends. 1 2
- e. I can learn best in an active class situation. 1 5
- f. I need to work things out alone. 4 4
- g. I need positive reinforcement to succeed. 4 4
- h. I don't need outside approval. 6 2
content, but not frustrated—I merely have an incentive to learn."

There is always very great temptation for a beginner to translate everything heard or read into English, mentally, and then back to French before replying or writing. Alice Omaggio says that these students are not developing French into a separate reference system. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education calls this thinking in the target language, "coming to grips with the language as a system." About sixty-five percent of the high school students and seventy-five percent of the college students prefer not to translate. I imagine they are all aware that this is the preferred method because one student wrote, "I translate but I wish I didn't."

The final question in Section D is a potpourri of preferences in learning styles. It gave the students a chance to express themselves about a variety of preferences. They did not need to make an a. or b. choice; they could check as many or as few as they wished. The result is a series of numbers which will not add up to 100 percent.

The a. and b. choice in Question twenty-five indicates that a quiet place is preferred, but some students indicated that it depended on what kind of work was involved. C. and d. choices also indicated a preference for studying alone, but several comments showed that for
Section E

Question Twenty-Six

I guess wildly.
I guess if I have a clue.
I give up.
oral work you needed to study with a friend. One of my few disappointments in the questionnaire answers was the low response to the e.-f. combination among the high school students. They may not have understood what I was asking or may not have had strong preferences. There is, of course, no right answer. It is important to be an active learner and classroom participation is part of that. However, analyzing material by oneself is an active procedure and may be part of Rubin's advice to constantly look for patterns. Choices g. and h. refer again to self-confidence—how much positive reinforcement they need to be successful in a course. It is interesting how much more self-confident the high school students are as a group.

Questions twenty-six through thirty-six, and forty through forty-eight, deal largely with techniques and strategies used by students. The introduction to Section E specifically explains that I am looking for "methods you have used to learn a foreign language." Cognitive styles and temperamental traits enter in as well, but only peripherally. Again, I encouraged the students to elaborate whenever they wished.

Question twenty-six deals directly with one of the strategies most recommended by Rubin, Omaggio, and others—i.e., being a good guesser. The phrasing may have been too simplistic or obvious because 100 percent of both
Question Twenty-Seven

Do you enjoy guessing? 7 7
Are you uncomfortable unless sure? 5 2

H.S. U.

Question Twenty-Eight

I try to speak French with other students. 10 6
It seems a waste of time. 1 3
Sometimes I do. 1

H.S. U.
groups chose the preferred answer of the three. While guessing is good, wild guessing is obviously unwise. It smacks of impulsivity—a negative cognitive style, at least when it is extreme. Teachers are all familiar with the wild guesser, who is merely stabbing in the dark. The other extreme, giving up unless quite sure, indicates a fear of taking risks, anxiety and inhibition. I hope that this group was honest with themselves and with me.

In an attempt to look at the same strategy in another light, I asked the subjects how they feel about guessing. Question twenty-seven didn't ask whether they guessed when unsure, but rather how comfortable they were when doing so. Here, a larger number indicated some distress at guesses that were not reasonably certain.

Rubin describes good language learners as those who have a strong desire to communicate and practice whenever possible. Omaggio says they take an active approach to the language, seeking out opportunities to communicate in the target language. The Ontario Institute says that good learners must be active in their approach to learning, must practice, and must use the language in real communication. The students in this study, particularly the high school students, seem very willing to try to speak French outside of class exercises. This group of college students may be a bit more inhibited.
Question Twenty-One

How much time do you spend preparing an assignment?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60-120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-90 minutes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30-180 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Not much&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120-140 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It varies&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Answers that were given as "an hour" or "two hours"
I changed to minutes for convenience in reading.

Question Thirty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do an assignment all at once.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do it in several sessions.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Thirty-One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral assignment with another student.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to do it alone.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, both groups answering Question twenty-eight had a high percentage who try to really use French in communicating.

The next three questions cover specific study habits of students. Question twenty-nine asks approximately how much time a student spends preparing an assignment. High school classes meet five times a week for about forty minutes. They are expected to spend some time every day on French, but that amount is not usually specified. The university class from which the college students were chosen meets three times a week for fifty minutes. College students are expected to do two hours of work for every hour of class. It is easy to see that the amount of time spent varies tremendously for each group.

Some proponents of systematic study habits recommend studying in several shorter periods of time. They contend that 180 unbroken minutes, for example, is not an efficient way to study. In one of the oral interviews, a subject said that he would "go bananas" if he didn't break it up into shorter sessions. However, when asked this question (thirty), a majority answered that they prefer to do an assignment all at one time.

Question thirty-one asks if it is helpful to prepare an oral assignment with another student. Remember that in Question twenty-five, only three out of both groups...
**Question Thirty-Two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use French outside of class.</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find it helpful.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not use French outside of class.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
said that they prefer to study with friends. This question
gave the subjects a chance to be more specific. I assumed
that an oral assignment would elicit quite a different
response. However, even here, only a slight majority
prefers to work with another student. A few of the comments
on the negative votes may explain reasons—but also seemed
a bit self-serving. "It is helpful if that student agrees
to contribute his fair share, otherwise a lot of free-
loading and copying can take place;" "I know I can prepare
one by myself;" "Only if the other student is willing to
correct you;" "I know I can do one by myself." One of the
positive voters said, "Definitely. Someone else will
always pick up things you might miss and you'll often
catch their mistakes."

When students' methods of approaching language
learning are more in the area of study habits than learning
strategies, in other words, time spent, concentration,
good study conditions, and so on, the same rules for
success apply as for other fields. This group of
successful students seems to be doing many of the "right"
things (see Question twenty-five) and spending a reasonable
amount of time studying, but may be missing some helpful
study techniques.

Another way of looking at active use of a language
is to inquire (in Question thirty-two) if the student
has an opportunity to use French outside the classroom. It is obvious that university students will have some opportunities that are not open to high school students (native teaching assistants, a more active French club, etc.). It is also clear that some people just have more opportunities, like French-speaking relatives or friends. However, Joan Rubin points out that the three most important variables in good language learning are learning strategies, motivation and opportunity. "The good language learner makes the most of these (opportunities) in class and outside."^ Most of these subjects not only make use of available opportunities, but agree unanimously that they are helpful.

Two of the most important aspects of second language learning are the acquisition of new vocabulary and assimilation of new structures of grammar. Question thirty-three is concerned with some of the techniques which students use to acquire new vocabulary. They were given seven options from which they could choose many or few, so the numbers do not total 100 percent. The first two options refer to visual or audio-lingual methods of studying vocabulary. In most cases these correlated with the subject's definition of his learning preference.

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^Rubin, p. 44.
Question Thirty-Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I say words aloud.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write them down.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I remember them in isolation.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I remember them in phrases.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer English definitions.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer French definitions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone gives me a practice test.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I self test.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, one audio-lingual learner says he learns vocabulary by writing it down (perhaps for written quizzes). Five of the visual learners, one audio-lingual learner and four of the subjects who learn by both methods used both methods to acquire vocabulary. Since this is obviously a preferred method of study, it is interesting that more of these successful students don't use it. In fact, two students checked neither option. One wonders if they learn vocabulary by osmosis.

The recommended way to learn a word is in a phrase or a sentence. Several students mentioned in the oral interview that adding an adjective like *vert/verte* helped to reinforce the correct gender. This may be a strategy not yet appreciated by high school students since four of them feel they learn words best in isolation, as does one college student. A strong majority of the college students seem to have learned the helpfulness of that technique.

Another strategy in learning vocabulary is to increase it by using a dictionary or glossary with definitions in French. In a sense this is developing the target language into a separate reference system. In early years of French this is sometimes difficult because one's vocabulary is so limited. In making suggestions about textbooks during oral interviews, several students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Thirty-Four</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I memorize grammar rules.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do practice exercises.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I let the rules soak in.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I analyze rules to understand.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compare to an English rule.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't compare.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer a teacher's explanation.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to figure it out myself.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
expressed frustration with a glossary which was not right in the chapter. Some realized that continually looking up words was a crutch, but they wanted it made as easy as possible so as not to lose a train of thought. Only two of the whole group, both college students, have come to prefer a dictionary with French definitions. Perhaps this is an ideal with which not even successful students are comfortable.

Finally I asked how many students had someone give them a practice test on vocabulary, and a few did. I did not include a question about self-testing, but one student added that he does self-tests on vocabulary.

In learning grammar the strategies are a little different from studying vocabulary. Again, in Question thirty-four, the students were given a number of options and asked to check any they used. Memorizing rules was very popular in the old grammar-translation method. A more active method of learning by usage is now favored. Some students still seem to feel comfortable with memorizing rules. Those who use practice exercises are perhaps doing them on their own in addition to those done in class and given as assignments.

The next pair of options in Question thirty-four refers to a specific attitude toward learning a grammar rule. Some students make a conscious effort to analyze
why a certain rule exists, to look for a pattern or a relationship and to classify it within the language system. A majority of the subjects questioned here seemed to prefer this method. In that respect they are following the characteristics of good language learners: constantly looking for patterns, attending to form as well as content and coming to grips with the language as a system. They might also be called field-independent learners since these are more systematic and analytical by nature. However, McKenney, in his descriptions of styles of learning, sees the systematic versus the intuitive thinker as merely two poles on a scale, neither of which is necessarily preferable. Those subjects who prefer to just let the rules soak in may understand and use them without being able to verbalize why they have.

Comparing a rule in French grammar to one in English can be a method of increasing understanding or retention. Some teachers will say, "You know how participles look in English; here is how you recognize them in French." Sometimes they will point out that the French rule is just the opposite in English. For students who are studying another foreign language, particularly a Romance language, this can be very helpful. On the other hand, so many students really don't know English grammar that this can often confuse them. It is interesting to
**Question Thirty-Five**

| I monitor others' performance. | 12 | 8 |
| Listening to others confuses me. | 0 | 0 |
| Other. | 1 |

**Question Thirty-Six**

| I monitor myself. | 10 | 8 |
| I do not monitor myself. | 0 | 0 |
| Sometimes I do. | 2 | 1 |
note how few students actually answered that question, especially among the high schoolers. Perhaps it has never occurred to them to make the comparison. It is also interesting to note that several students, when answering the oral question, "What are some of the most important things you learned from French?" answered that their comprehension of English grammar was greatly improved.

Finally, students were asked whether they retained more grammar when it was presented and explained by the teacher or when they figured it out themselves. The second edition of the ALM textbooks stressed the usefulness of presenting new concepts without an explanation, leaving the explanation to the last. The authors felt that students retained more when they drew their own conclusions from examples that were presented. This group of high school students, who have used that ALM series for two or more years, clearly prefer a teacher's explanation to working it out for themselves. The college students prefer, by a slight majority, the inductive method.

The next two questions (thirty-five and thirty-six) touch on one of the most important characteristics of a good learner as seen by Rubin, Omaggio, and the Ontario Institute for Education: monitoring his own speech and that of others, seeking correction from informants, and being aware of his own interlanguage. It could also be
Question Thirty-Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding appeals most.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking appeals most.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading appeals most.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing appeals most.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All are equally important.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and reading.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and speaking.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding, speaking and reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Thirty-Eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French helps with other language.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other language helps with French.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither helps with the other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see many similarities.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see few similarities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French is easier.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other language is easier.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Thirty-Nine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Languages</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Forty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Techniques are different.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques are the same.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
described as taking an active approach to language. Teachers are all too familiar with the passive attitude of the poor learner when he is not actually speaking. In many subjects, the good learner will react when he hears an error in another's answer, but this is particularly important in language learning where pronunciation and intonation are as important as the factual answer. It is heartening to learn that almost all these students liked to monitor their own speaking as well as that of their fellow students. The only student who does not monitor the speech of others says that, "It doesn't confuse me; I just don't do it."

As a little break in methods and strategies questions, the students were now asked what aspect of French was most appealing to them. As a good example of using the freedom that had been offered to answer the questions in any way they wished, only four students in each group chose just one option. Among the four who chose all four options, each wrote a comment implying that each of the options was equally important. Two of the high school students made no choice. Apparently the ability to write French well is the least important skill to these students.

Questions thirty-eight, thirty-nine, and forty were looking for a tie-in between French and other foreign languages. The first of these three questions focused
on correlations between French and another language studied. Because some of each group are not studying another foreign language, there was a smaller participation on this question. Among those who answered there was a very positive correlation. None of the group felt that neither language helped with the other. None of the group saw few similarities in the languages (and some of these students are studying non-Romance languages). When asked if French were easier or harder than the other language, few students seemed to notice enough difference to answer. One said, "Each is easier in some aspects."

One way of looking at the relationship between French and other subjects was to ask what percentage of time a student spends on various courses. Tabulation of the questions revealed such a multitude of courses studied that I decided to tabulate only French and other foreign languages. On the high school level most students take five or six academic courses. The amount of time spent on French varies greatly, as does the amount spent on other languages. Without an official tabulation, it was interesting to note in passing that the math and science courses often took a large percentage of their study time. With college students, one can see a much more even distribution of time. The student who did not mark any percentages wrote, "Since my schedule changes every quarter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Forty-One</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have had a pen pal.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has helped my French.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has not.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
it is harder to determine a percentage of time (spent for each course). In general, I...spend more time studying French. . .More importantly I spend time studying French every evening while I may not study my other subjects on a regular basis."

Question forty reveals that most students don't find their methods of studying French very different from the way they study other courses. But those students who did see a difference had some interesting comments: "I use a computer to study verb forms and genders."
"Foreign languages are very systematic and orderly to study. Other classes have more variables." "French must be learned orally." "(In French) you memorize a lot more facts." "In other courses you don't pronounce words aloud."

The good language learner has a strong desire to communicate, say the researchers, and takes every possible opportunity to do so. In Question forty-one the students were asked if they had ever had a French pen pal. This is an opportunity which is more common at the high school level than the college level, and many high school teachers do not make it available to their students. In this group of subjects more college students seem to have had pen pals than the present high school students. Perhaps it was more popular a few years ago. The second half of
Question Forty-Two

I have imaginary dialogues. 8 9
I do not. 4

Question Forty-Three

I use mnemonic devices. 7 3
I do not. 5 6
the question asks if this was helpful to their written French. The answer was rather mixed but the comments were revealing. Those who said it had been helpful stressed the colloquialisms to which they are exposed in the letters. Those who felt it had not been helpful pointed out that the French students all want to learn English so they write in English. Another college student said, "No, I was very young then."

Another way to practice whenever possible and take an active approach to the learning task is to have imaginary dialogues in French in one's mind. Question forty-two asked if these good language students ever used that learning strategy. There was a unanimous "yes" among the college students. Two-thirds of the high school students also used this technique. Perhaps their more limited vocabularies make it somewhat more difficult at that level.

Teachers of beginning French often use little mnemonic devices to help their students with some of the more difficult points of the language. One of the most common is the MRS VANDERTRAMP acronym for the verbs which use être as the auxiliary in the passé composé. Some students use that mnemonic device or others taught to them and some students invent their own. Several teachers have confided that they believe a memory trick is much
Question Forty-Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I prefer immediate correction.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to complete the sentence.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Forty-Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correction makes me lose confidence.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I welcome correction.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
more effective when one has invented it himself. Question forty-three reveals that high school students are more apt to use a mnemonic device than college students, and even they don't all use them. Their effectiveness may be limited to first years of learning a second language because one college student added to his "no" comment, "not anymore."

Omaggio's characteristic for a good language learner which she calls, "developing the target language into a separate reference system" includes the sub-topic of learning from errors. The correction of errors is one of the most crucial parts of a teacher's work. The Ontario study which resulted in the book, The Good Language Learner, spent an important part of the observation time watching how teachers handled corrections. They were interested to know if teachers corrected good students differently from poor students, or asked good students to correct other students, or provided good students with more or fewer clues when correcting them. Since this study is looking at corrections from a student's point of view, Questions forty-four and forty-five asked the subjects how they felt about corrections.

If a student makes a mistake in mid-sentence, there are two ways of correcting this. One is to immediately correct the error; the other is to allow the
Question Forty-Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>U.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes think in French.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rarely think in French.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sometimes&quot; emphasized.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
student to complete the phrase or thought. How disturbing is it to be interrupted in mid-sentence? Question forty-four shows that all but two students in each group would prefer to finish out the sentence.

How then do students feel about correction in general? According to the researchers, good language learners should not be inhibited and should seek correction from informants. And in reality, the majority of both groups seem to welcome correction. However, the human ego is a fragile thing. Two students indicated that it depends on how the correction is done. One student said, "I welcome it if it is done tactfully." Question forty-five makes it clear that even some good language learners find it a little hard to be corrected. Perhaps the most honest student admitted that he welcomed correction but it made him lose confidence. The language learning variable of anxiety is undoubtedly a factor which must be taken into account.

With Question forty-six I returned to the characteristic which was looked at in Question twenty-four (Do you do better when you translate into English in your mind?). Another way of stating this is, "Do you 'think' in French?" Sometimes a student may have to translate a question into English before being able to answer in French. That same student may feel that he sometimes thinks in French,
Question Forty-Seven

I have developed learning strategies.  11  8
I have not.  1  1
without translating into English. This question was an opportunity for the subjects to make that distinction. Four of the twelve high school students had indicated they do better when translating into English in their minds. However, when asked if they sometimes think in French without benefit of mental translation, only one indicated that he rarely did this and two said they sometimes did. Among the college students two had indicated they did better when they translated. When asked if they "think" in French, only one said, "sometimes;" the remainder all do so at least some of the time. These good language learners are developing the target language into a separate reference system and try to think in it as soon as possible.

In summing up all the questions in Section E, Question forty-seven asked the most important question about learning strategies: "Do you think you have been able to work out some learning techniques that have made French easier for you?" In my opinion, this question would or would not validate my hypothesis that the good learners do have strategies of which they are conscious. The almost unanimous affirmative vote of both groups was very gratifying.

The next two questions were an opportunity for the students to elaborate on two aspects of learning about
which they had been questioned in the oral interview. It seemed possible that in the time elapsing between the interview and answering the questionnaire, some thoughts would have occurred to the subjects that they wished to add. In addition, the more directed nature of questions in the questionnaire might have provoked a new way of thinking about learning techniques.

Question forty-eight asked if there were any specific learning strategies the subject would like to share with a beginning student. Because this was the opening question in the oral interviews, I will be discussing the answers given in the summary of those interviews. The suggestions made by each student are also incorporated in the resumes of the students found in Appendix D. However, the questionnaires included some suggestions which were not brought up in the oral interview. The most interesting point in these answers is the fact that the same suggestions turned up again and again. The tabulation of these "repeaters" sounds almost like Rubin or Omaggio's list of good language learner characteristics:

Five students said, in one way or another, to use the language as often as possible;

Seven students stressed never getting behind and studying the language daily;

Seven students stressed oral or written repetition
and active memorizing;

Three students looked at some aspect of using the language as a separate reference system, i.e., "Don't translate," "Forget English;"

Three students spoke of the motivational side of learning. One of these students expressed this more clearly than most of the researchers: "And don't complain about the things that are different from English. That is the special thing about a foreign language—it represents a different kind of people who think differently. Just accept it and learn it."

Question forty-nine was a rephrasing of two questions in the oral interview: "The system for learning French that you are currently using is pretty much dictated by your textbook and your teacher. Is there any part of this system that seems a waste of time for you?" Again many of the same suggestions and complaints are seen that come up in the oral interviews. There are also a few criticisms which seem to be peculiar only to one student, "The emphasis on literature does not fit my goals."

There were four main areas where the same complaint was repeated by many students. Among the high school students several said that the pace was much too slow. Several students in both groups felt that there was not enough speaking or class participation. Many students found the
oral drills in the textbooks either dull or too simple. Finally, some students found that the texts used outdated phrases or slang and useless vocabulary.

The last question in the questionnaire asked if the student would take French if he or she were starting all over again. It was not surprising but it was heartwarming, that among these good learners, 100 percent of both groups said "yes."

C. Results of Interviews

The oral interviews preceded the answering of the questionnaires by the students. This was partly a question of convenience, making it possible to get the questionnaires to the student easily. It was also intended to avoid influencing the student by the very specific questions of the questionnaire. In The New Student Role, Carol Hosenfeld suggests an interview technique sometimes called, "thinking aloud." She advises using indirect questions so that the subject provides information in his own words. The interviewer should emphasize that the correct answer is not as important as looking at the mental steps taken to get at the answer. The interviewer should allow a student to digress; "by pursuing a student-initiated topic a teacher may...gain insight into the idiosyncratic
features of a student's strategy."

The setting of the interviews was usually an empty classroom, but I tried to make the atmosphere as informal as possible. After explaining the subject of the thesis I began by saying that their anonymity would be strictly protected; that, when I began tabulating results, I would be unaware of which student represented Subject A, etc. I explained that any insight they had on their own learning strategies and motivation might be helpful to other students.

My first question, "If you had a sister or brother about to begin high school, would you recommend that he or she study French?" was only intended as a lead-in to the second question. The first question was answered affirmatively by all twenty-one students. At that point they were asked, "What advice would you give to this sister or brother about how to study French? What techniques have been useful to you that might help them?"

The responses to the second question were varied and interesting. Everyone had something to say. Some students had very specific advice. The single piece of

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advice that was most frequently given was, "Don't get behind." Ten of the twenty-one students mentioned that specifically. Two others stressed the importance of studying every day, which is another way of saying the same thing.

The oral interviews indicated that this group of students is well aware of the necessity of seeking opportunities to communicate and practice whenever possible. Seven students recommended speaking at every possible opportunity. Three others suggested working in pairs or small groups, which often accomplishes the desired result of communication. One student said that the hearing part of communication is important, "keep your ears perked all the time."

The good language learner is supposed to develop the target language into a separate reference system. Five students said something like one student's advice to "let go of your English." Another suggested the visual image rather than the translated word. Another said that definitions should all be in French. Instead of memorizing isolated words, four students suggested learning the words in their French context.

Many of the students felt that the clue to success was a strong vocabulary foundation and they suggested several ways to learn and retain vocabulary. Three students
advised writing everything down. One student puts words and forms on cards which he carries around and tapes to the bathroom mirror. Two students really like flashcards. Not all students rely on visual methods, however. Three students learn vocabulary by repeating words out loud. One student feels that mnemonic devices are helpful for learning gender. Another student says that it is essential to keep your vocabulary fresh by using it a lot.

The three researchers, Rubin, Omaggio and Naiman, all felt that taking an active approach to language learning was a characteristic of a good learner. One of the surveyed students said the student must do outside things on his own as often as possible, i.e., movies, plays, reading. Another said he takes advantage of any outside activity which involves French.

Many of the subjects stressed that learning a language involves work. Two of them said one must really study and that it takes time to do it well. They emphasized study techniques which could be helpful. One said, "Plan your time." Another said, "Break up your study time to avoid boredom." Still another said, "Get a good notebook, use it, and be able to find the material you need." Self-testing is helpful to two students. "Ask questions," was another's advice.

Finally, many of these students realized that
attitude is very important. "Look on it as fun," said one student. "Think of it as a game," suggests another. Two students say, "Don't give up--it's fun." Two ways of making it fun that students use are playing language games and reading fairy tales in French. One student summed up the whole question of attitude by saying, "It all works out if you keep an open mind."

The third question asked in the interviews was prefaced by the statement that different people have different ways of learning that seem to work for them. Then I said, "If you were writing a textbook that was to be a textbook for you alone, rather than for the general student population, what would you put in it? In other words, what things in a textbook are helpful to your way of learning?" The purpose of this question was not to elicit a critique of textbooks, but to see if students knew what kind of methods of teaching language best fitted their own cognitive styles and preferred learning techniques.

The criticism which turned up in the interviews in some ways revealed the importance of motivation for success in language learning. Six of the students wanted more cultural material because it makes the learning more relevant and interesting. Two students wanted familiar stories, like fairy tales, used because they said you have a feeling of competence when reading them. Two students
wanted literature of any kind presented as early as possible, for interest and cultural content.

Nine students stressed the importance of vocabulary, lots of it, in textbooks. Several said that it should be practical or colloquial so that it can be used. One student likes a beginning vocabulary using classroom objects, for visual impact. It seems that these students all want material available to them which they can actively use. It is interesting to note that three students wanted new vocabulary presented with the English definitions. They felt that looking in the back of the book "is a waste of time."

The students seem to know the kind of exercises they do not like. As one student said, "Repetition may be helpful but it is boring." Another feels that the completion exercise is useless, that it can be done without thinking or learning. Another student said that questions should be asked which force students to use complete sentence answers. One student feels that his textbooks have not included enough writing models. Another said that workbooks are usually "busy work."

Only one student specified a request for lots of grammar, "You need that foundation." However, three others asked for lots of short grammar review. Two students would like phonetic transcriptions of words in
the glossary. Finally one student made a strong plea for individualized instruction rather than a textbook for the whole class.

The fourth question asked in the interviews was patterned on the third question, but referred to teachers and teaching methods rather than textbooks. Again, the intended emphasis was not to be a critique of teachers but rather an attempt to discover the kind of teaching best suited to a student's learning preferences. The responses of the students interviewed were largely positive rather than negative. They were aware of some things which they did not like, i.e., long lectures by the teacher (one student), too much repetitive drill (two students), and tapes (two students, although one of these admitted they can be useful).

In general, the students had definite ideas about what they wanted the teacher to do, instead of criticism. Three students wanted cultural material emphasized. One of these students said this should include native speakers visiting the classroom in order to convey that "living people really speak this." Speaking skills are very important to these students and they see the classroom as a good chance to practice those skills. Seven of the students asked for as much speaking practice as possible. Two students would like required reading aloud; one would
like singing in class. One student said that memorizing
dialogs was a good learning technique. One student said
that he wants to learn to communicate, that perfection in
speaking French is not his goal.

As interested as many students were in speaking
skills, others hoped that the teachers would not forget
the other skills. One student hoped that his teachers
would emphasize all skills equally, while another student
recommended writing and producing plays as a way to achieve
this goal. Another student said he has to see and hear
material simultaneously in order to retain it. Two students
made a specific request for lots of written work, including
compositions. A student, who had not appreciated the
emphasis on reading skills, spoke of his regret when the
class began working on *Le Petit Prince*. "Now," he says,
"I really think it was very worthwhile."

The importance of motivation is clearly understood
by these students. Two students feel the need to be
motivated by pressure: they ask for frequent, unannounced
quizes to keep them on their toes. Five students want to
be motivated by fun. Two of these asked for games and
puzzles in class. One wanted an informal atmosphere. One
said, "Promote excitement" and another simply said,
"Make it fun." Keeping good students motivated is a big
problem in beginning classes, according to another student.
Final advice to teachers from these good learners is "Be patient," "Be organized" and "Keep a good pace."

The fifth question in the interview asked about learning patterns. "Has it gotten harder or easier as you go along? Have you 'plateaued?' Have there been ups and downs in the ease of learning French over the years?" Several students seemed unwilling or unable to answer this question. They either felt that they couldn't remember or couldn't put into words the pattern of ease or difficulty in acquiring a second language.

Other students had interesting insights into the history of their learning French. Five students felt that their progress had been uniformly easy, but with difficult periods. Two students found that it was very hard at first and is now much easier. One of these students commented, "Of course, I was younger then." Two other students described a similar pattern but more as if it were a steady progression in learning. Each of these described it as "the more I learn, the more it fits into place." One student said that the first year was very easy, the second much harder and now he has reached a plateau. Another student also said that the first year was easy, but said he doesn't feel he is making much progress now. Another way of describing these plateaus was the student who ascribed them to the waxing and waning
of his enthusiasm. The hardest periods are always in the fall, said one student, "when you are rusty." Still another student said that each year is harder than the preceding one, "but that's only natural, isn't it?"

The final question asked in the oral interview was, "What aspect of studying French has given you the most pleasure and what is your first goal in studying the language?" Several students had more than one answer for these questions, and although there was a variety of answers, they fell into rather general groups. Only one student found that reading French well was both a goal and a satisfaction. Two students felt that cultural considerations, knowing the people and the culture, had been the most satisfying aspect. The language, per se, was the foremost goal and source of satisfaction for the largest number of students. The tie-in to cultural interests is obvious for five of the students since their goal was to be able to communicate with French speaking people. Four others were simply delighted to be able to speak another language. Another student's goal was to be fluent in French, while still another found satisfaction in the beauty of the language.

The fourth area of pleasure in the study of French might be called personal satisfaction. For one student it was a delight in how different it is from all his other
classes. For another it was the pleasure in a broadened perspective. Three other students merely called it, in one way or another, a source of personal satisfaction.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

After analyzing this research it is possible to see that there is both variety and unanimity among the answers given by these students to the interview and the questionnaire. On which questions, or in which areas, was there unanimous or almost unanimous agreement? Among both groups everyone monitors the speech and answers of other students, and almost everyone monitors his own speech. This is a characteristic of a good language learner on all three lists cited earlier. In both groups everyone admits guessing when he doesn't understand a whole phrase or sentence. Over half of each group say that they enjoy guessing. Both Rubin and Omaggio characterize the good learner as a good guesser. The active approach to a language, or having a strong desire to communicate, is another characteristic of the good language learner, according to these researchers. Eleven out of twelve high school students and six out of the nine college students try to speak French with other students. Eight of the twelve high school students and all the college students practice imaginary conversations in their minds,
as a way of using the language actively.

In two other areas there was strong unanimity among the student answers. The first area was motivation. On all the questions which referred to taking French if they were starting over again or recommending it to others or expressing a long-time desire to study French, the students were overwhelmingly positive. One of the students wrote on the questionnaire, "You memorize because you have to—you learn because you want to." Although not specifically stated on the three lists as a necessary characteristic of the good learner, it is presupposed that these researchers value the importance of motivation in language learning success.

The other area is that of developing language strategies. Eleven of the twelve high school students and eight of the nine college students said that they have been able to work out some learning techniques that have made French easier. This, however, was the point at which variety in answers became evident. The many questions which dealt specifically with learning techniques showed a great variety of answers. Alice Omaggio's first description of the successful language learners is that they:
have insight into their own language learning styles and preferences as well as the nature of the task itself. They adopt a personal style or positive learning strategy that fits their needs and preferences. They can adapt to various methodologies and materials and know how to find, sort, analyze, synthesize, classify and retrieve linguistic data.¹

The surveyed group of students seem aware of their own learning styles and preferences and, while in some areas (like monitoring and guessing) they almost all use the same techniques, they approach many tasks in different ways. Some students prepare an assignment all at one time; others prefer to break it up. Some like to learn a grammar rule by figuring it out for themselves; almost as many retain more grammar when the teacher explains it. A few students see themselves as audio-lingual learners and learn vocabulary by saying words aloud. Other students feel they are visual learners and must write down words in order to retain them. Still another group see themselves as having to learn both ways and use both techniques. A study of the answers to Questions twenty through forty-seven reveals many other examples of diversity in learning methods. A single strategy may not be enough when a student faces a complex task. Carol Hosenfeld reports that, "a learner may possess an entire

¹Omaggio, p. 2.
repertory of strategies that come into play whenever a task represents a true problem-solving situation."²

The important conclusion demonstrated by this group of successful students is that it is not important, per se, which learning strategies they use. It is essential, however, to have strategies. One student wrote, "Learning, for me, is a gimmick anyway." Almost all the group has "gimmicks" that they are aware of, that they may have devised, that fit their needs and preferences, and in which they have confidence.

The teacher looking at a beginning French class for the first time may, therefore, make the following assumptions:

1. The inherent capacities whether they be intelligence, a self-confident emotional make-up, learning aptitude, or cognitive skills, will undoubtedly vary.

2. The motivation, unless there are no outside pressures to take the class, will also vary.

3. The learning strategies used by the students will assuredly vary.

What can the teacher do with this knowledge? It is helpful to be aware of the inherent skill differences and to adapt one's teaching to these needs. It is also

²Hosenfeld, p. 162.
important to remember that anyone of normal intelligence can learn a second language at some level of competence. The teacher must do everything possible to stimulate motivation, for this is a variable which is essential for success. Finally, the teacher can encourage the students to be aware of their learning strategies.

These learning strategies will fall into two categories. The first category includes some of those techniques which were mentioned on all three lists for the good language learner and were also practiced by the students in this study:

1. Be willing to guess, using as much outside knowledge, non-verbal clues, and context of the speech as possible. Try to be uninhibited and relaxed.

2. Listen to your own speech and that of others. Learn from mistakes.

3. Use every possible opportunity to communicate. Try to avoid translating. Instead, think in the language you are learning as soon as possible.

4. Cultivate a positive attitude toward the language and the people who speak it.

5. Learning a foreign language is not impossible, but it is work. Don't get behind.
All students can profit from these techniques, for they transcend individual differences.

The second category involves the students' individual and differing learning strategies. Teachers can be aware, through reading and testing, of some of the variables in cognitive styles. Without adapting to every student whim, they can arrange the learning conditions and influences for the benefit of all students. Teachers who have ignored the self-reliant and independent student in favor of the one who needs a highly structured classroom situation, and vice versa, have often been responsible for loss of student interest.

Students should also be encouraged to have insight into their own language learning styles. The teacher who is aware of the difference between the visual learner and the audio-lingual learner, for example, can help a student see better ways to use this preference.

Research on the application of cognitive strategies is still in the preliminary stages. Some answers may come from alert classroom teachers, others from self-analytical students. If a student is asked to think about specific learning tasks and activities, he may be able to contribute to a positive learning environment. By taking an active part in deciding how to learn some particular material, the student's attitude as well as
his learning skills may improve. In time, he may develop a personal learning style that fits his needs and preferences. In this way, the poor language learner may benefit from some of the characteristics of the successful language learner.
APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

The following two letters were sent to students who had been recommended as possible subjects for this study. The first letter was sent to twelve French students at Hellgate High School in Missoula, Montana. The second letter was sent to ten students at the University of Montana in Missoula.
Dear

As you may have heard, I am working on my Master's degree in French at the University.

As part of my degree requirements I am planning to write a thesis which will be entitled, "The Successful Second Language Learner." It has seemed to me that there is lots of material on how to teach foreign languages, but not enough on how students actually learn. A good way to find that out might be to turn to the students themselves and ask, "What are your study techniques?" or "What little tricks have you figured out that help you to learn certain material?" Hopefully this could be of use to other students and to teachers of foreign languages.

The help I would need from you would include two parts--a brief interview of no more than a half an hour and filling out a questionnaire, both at a convenient time for you. Although I hope your teachers will someday read the completed thesis, I would like to assure you that your answers will be completely confidential. I hope that you would find it interesting and useful to participate in this project.

I will call you within a week to find out if you are willing and able to be a member of this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Talbot
Dear

Dr. Rolfe has given me your name as someone who might be willing to help me in a project for my Master's degree.

As part of my degree requirements I am planning to write a thesis which will be entitled, "The Successful Second Language Learner." It has seemed to me that there is lots of material on how to teach foreign languages, but not enough on how students actually learn. A good way to find that out might be to turn to the students themselves and ask, "What are your study techniques?" or "What little tricks have you figured out that help you to learn certain material?" Hopefully this could be of use to other students and to teachers of foreign languages.

The help I would need from you would include two parts--a brief interview of no more than a half an hour and filling out a questionnaire, both at a convenient time for you. Although I hope your teachers will someday read the completed thesis, I would like to assure you that your answers will be completely confidential. I hope that you would find it interesting and useful to participate in this project.

I will call you within a week to find out if you are willing and able to be a member of this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Talbot
APPENDIX B

FORMAT OF ORAL INTERVIEW

Question 1. "If you had a younger sister or brother who was about to begin high school or college, would you recommend that he or she study French?"

Question 2. "If this brother or sister did begin to study French, what recommendations would you make about how to study it successfully? What techniques have you learned that made it easier for you?"

Question 3. "If you were writing a textbook in French, what would you include that would be useful for someone of your temperament or learning preferences? What things in the textbooks you have used have been helpful or not helpful to you?"

Question 4. "If you were teaching a whole class of people like you, what teaching techniques and class activities would you use? What have teachers that you have had done that has been helpful to your method of learning?"

Question 5. "When you look back over your learning experience in French, can you see any pattern in the ease or difficulty about certain periods of learning? For example, was it easy at first, then, harder, or the reverse?"

Question 6. "What aspect of learning French has been the most satisfactory to you and brought you the greatest pleasure?"
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following pages are the questionnaire which was given to each student at the conclusion of the interview. They were also given a stamped envelope, addressed to me, and asked to return the questionnaire as soon as possible.
A.

Name __________________________ Age ______
School Level (circle one): 9 10 11 12; College 1 2 3 4; Graduate Student.
Present level of French _________. (For college students) How many years of French did you study in high school, if any? ________
How many different French teachers have you had? ______
Have you had experiences with French outside of formal schooling (i.e., travel, camp, French-speaking relatives, etc.)? If so, what?
Are you currently studying another foreign language, or have you in the past? ______ If so, what is it, and what level have you reached? ____________________________

B.
1. How do you rate yourself in French? Check after the appropriate letter.

   Elementary Proficiency                   Working Knowledge

Understanding
I can understand simple or I can understand most casual statements and questions conversations on familiar on topics that are familiar topics. I can get the to me and only at a slower gist of plays, films, radio, rate than normal speech.
etc.

   a. ___

Speaking
I can imitate most of the or I can get my ideas across sounds of French with fair even though I may have to accuracy. I can express talk around a subject, and simple needs (order a meal, I am fairly accurate about for instance). I make daily events, family, many errors but would be school, hobbie, etc.
understood by French people who are used to hearing foreigners.

   c. ___
   d. ___
Reading
I can read a simple text or I can read news stories, aloud correctly. I can read simple directions, magazine articles, modern fiction, etc. with occasional use of a dictionary. menus, easy stories, etc.
e. ___

Writing
I can copy simple sentences or I can write a simple "free with ease and I can compose composition," such as a simple sentences like the personal letter.
ones in an elementary French book.
g. ___
h. ___

2. If you have studied another foreign language, please rate yourself the same way in that language.
Name of language _______________
Understanding a. ___ or b. ___
Speaking c. ___ or d. ___
Reading e. ___ or f. ___
Writing g. ___ or h. ___

3. The expression "to have a gift for languages" usually means that the study of foreign languages is relatively easy for a person. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing little natural gift and 10 representing ease in language learning, please rate your own "gift for languages." ____

4. Another expression is "to have a good ear for languages." This usually represents skill in the spoken and understanding parts of a language. In the same way (1 to 10), please rate your "ear for languages." ____

5. Do you find it hard or easy to memorize. Please rate this on a 1 to 10 scale (hard to memorize = 1). ____

6. In general, what grades have you had in French? ____

7. Do you feel this is an accurate assessment of your ability and achievement? _____________________________

8. In what field of study are you most interested? (English, foreign languages, history, art, math, science, etc.) ____________________________
9. In what field do you get the best grades? ________

10. Do you think you have a good ear for music? ________
    Do you sing in a group or as a soloist for an audience? ________
    Do you play a musical instrument? _____________________________

C.

11. Why did you begin the study of French?
    a. It fulfilled a requirement.
    b. My friends were studying it.
    c. My parents encouraged it.
    d. My adviser encouraged it.
    e. I've always wanted to study French.
    f. Other. (Please specify) _____________________________
    g. A combination of the above. Please specify.

12. If you had the time and opportunity to start another language right now, what would you say? Please check one.
    a. I hate the thought of it.
    b. It scares me.
    c. It bores me.
    d. I don't mind the idea.
    e. I like the idea.
    f. The idea excites me.

13. If you did start a language, how would you like to go about learning it? What would you like to do first if time and money were no object?
    a. Travel to the country and simply immerse myself in the language.
    b. Travel to the country and take a language course there.
    c. Buy a course and study it on my own.
    d. Go to a teacher or language school for private lessons.
    e. Study it in high school or university.
    f. Other. (Specify) _____________________________
    Can you give a reason for your choice? _____________________________

14. What do you think will be the most valuable result of having studied French?
15. What is your parents' attitude toward your studying French?

___ a. They think it is a mistake and a waste of time.
___ b. They haven't expressed much opinion on the matter.
___ c. They are very pleased.

16. Choose the most appropriate phrase for you.

___ a. I doubt if I'll ever visit a French-speaking country and I don't really care.
___ b. I doubt if I'll ever visit a French-speaking country and it's a disappointment to me.
___ c. I hope to visit one some day.
___ d. I plan to visit one some day.
___ e. I am determined to visit one some day.

17. Please check the statement which best describes your feelings. "I think that a positive attitude toward the foreign language one is studying is:

___ a. essential for success in learning the language.
___ b. very helpful.
___ c. helpful, but other factors (like aptitude) are more important.
___ d. not at all important.

D.

18. Please check the statement which best describes you.

___ a. My friends are one of the most important parts of my life.
___ b. My friends are important to me.
___ c. My friends are important but I need to be alone sometimes.
___ d. I am rather shy and am most comfortable alone.

19. Please check the statement which you think best describes you.

___ a. I am confident of being able to achieve almost anything if I work hard enough.
___ b. I am a strong student in some areas, and I don't worry too much about the others.
___ c. I am only average academically, with no really strong areas.
___ d. I find most subjects rather difficult.
15. What is your parents' attitude toward your studying French?

___ a. They think it is a mistake and a waste of time.
___ b. They haven't expressed much opinion on the matter.
___ c. They are very pleased.

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19. Please check the statement which you think best describes you.

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___ b. I am a strong student in some areas, and I don't worry too much about the others.
___ c. I am only average academically, with no really strong areas.
___ d. I find most subjects rather difficult.
20. Please check the statement which you think best describes you.

___ a. I enjoy volunteering in class even when it turns out that my answer is wrong.
___ b. I enjoy volunteering in class, but I am a little uncomfortable when my answer is wrong.
___ c. I only volunteer when I am sure I have the right answer.
___ d. I rarely volunteer because I hate making a fool of myself.

21. Which of these statements best describes you?

___ a. I would enjoy French more if there were not so many exceptions to the rules.
___ b. Part of the fun in learning French is trying to make sense out of the rules and their exceptions.

22. Which of these statements best describes you?

___ a. I learn most easily by hearing something and saying it aloud.
___ b. I learn most easily by reading and writing down the material to be learned.

23. Which of these statements best describes you?

___ a. It frustrates me when I don't understand every word I hear or read.
___ b. I am content if I can understand the general gist of the material.

24. Which of these statements best describes you?

___ a. I do better when I translate into English in my mind.
___ b. I do better when I don't translate into English in my mind.

25. Please check any of the following which apply to you (more than one, if necessary).

___ a. I do my best studying in a quiet place.
___ b. I do my best studying when there is noise or music around me.
___ c. I do my best studying alone.
___ d. I do my best studying with friends.
e. I can learn best in an active classroom situation.

f. I need to work things out alone to really retain them.

g. I need a lot of positive reaction (i.e., praise from a teacher or a good grade) to be successful in a course.

h. I don't need outside approval if I know I'm doing well.

The next section of the questionnaire deals with methods you have used to learn a foreign language. If the question doesn't really cover what you want to say, or if you wish to add material to an answer you have already checked, please turn the paper over, number the question, and elaborate.

26. When you are listening to French and don't understand the whole phrase or sentence, do you

a. guess wildly and hope to be right.

b. guess, if you can pick out a familiar word or two.

c. give up, unless you can understand most of the words.

27. Do you enjoy guessing and working out reasonable answers? Or, are you uncomfortable unless the answer seems pretty sure?

28. Do you try to speak French with other students? Or, do all those "missing words" make it seem a waste of time?

29. Approximately how much time do you spend preparing a lesson or an assignment?

30. Do you do it all at one time? Or, do you do it in several smaller sessions, perhaps alternating with other work?

31. Is it helpful to prepare an oral assignment with another student?

32. Do you have any opportunity to use French outside of class (French movies, French Canadian broadcasts, speaking with visiting natives, etc.)?
33. When you are trying to learn new vocabulary, do you use any of the steps below? Check one or more if they are appropriate.

___ a. I say them aloud many times.
___ b. I write them down.
___ c. I remember them best in isolation.
___ d. I remember them best in a phrase or sentence.
___ e. When trying to find their meaning, I prefer a dictionary with the definitions in English.
___ f. When trying to find their meaning, I prefer a dictionary with the definitions in French.
___ g. I find a friend or relative to give me a practice test on new vocabulary.

34. When learning grammar, do you have special techniques? Check one or more if they are appropriate.

___ a. I memorize the rules.
___ b. I do the practice exercises.
___ c. I seem to understand the rules best when I just let them soak in.
___ d. I seem to understand them best when I analyze the whys and wherefores of the rules.
___ e. It helps me to understand a rule if I compare it to an English rule.
___ f. It confuses me if I compare it to an English rule.
___ g. I retain more grammar when the teacher presents or explains it.
___ h. I retain more when I figure it out for myself.

35. When other students are answering a question or speaking, do you try to evaluate their performance, i.e., listen for mistakes? __________ Or, does that confuse you? ________________________________

36. Are you able to hear yourself when you speak and sometimes catch your own errors? ____________________________

37. What aspect of French is most appealing to you?

___ a. Being able to understand it.
___ b. Being able to speak it well.
___ c. Being able to read French easily.
___ d. Being able to write French well.
38. If you are studying another foreign language, please check the statements that apply to you.

   ___ a. Studying French helps me with the other language.
   ___ b. Studying the other language helps me with French.
   ___ c. Neither seems to help me with the other.
   ___ d. I see many similarities in the languages.
   ___ e. I see few similarities in the languages.
   ___ f. French is easier for me than the other language.
   ___ g. French is harder for me than the other language.

39. Please list your courses and the approximate percents of study time you devote to each.

   ____________________%  ____________________%
   ____________________%  ____________________%
   ____________________%  ____________________%
   ____________________%  ____________________%

40. Are your techniques for studying a foreign language very different from the way in which you study other courses? ______ If so, please explain briefly.

41. Have you ever had a French pen pal? ______
    If so, has this helped with your written French? ______

42. Have you ever had imaginary French dialogues in your mind? _________________________________

43. Do you make up or use nonsense rhymes or other memory tricks (like MRS VANDERTRAMP for the être verbs in the passé composé) to help you remember material? _________________________________

44. When you make a mistake, would you prefer to be corrected right away, in mid-sentence perhaps? ______
    Or would you prefer to finish out the phrase or thought? _________________________________

45. Does correction make you lose confidence? ______
    Or do you welcome it? _________________________________

46. Do you, at least some of the time, "think in French"—that is, speak or understand without translating into English? _________________________________
47. Do you think you have been able to work out some learning techniques that have made French easier for you? ______________________________________________________

48. If so, do you have some that you would like to pass on to a beginning student? Briefly describe.

49. The system for learning French that you are currently using is pretty much dictated by your textbook and your teacher. Is there any part of this system that seems a waste of time for you?

50. Knowing what you know now, would you take French if you were starting all over again?
APPENDIX D

PROFILES OF SUBJECTS STUDIED

Following are profiles of each student who took part in this study. They constitute a combination of the answers to the questionnaires as well as the interviews. They are not an attempt to tell everything about each student, but rather to focus on the significant material. They follow roughly the outline of the questionnaire, followed by the interview.

The students numbered one through twelve are the high school students; those lettered A through I are the university students.

When tabulating the questionnaires, I did not know the sex of the respondents. I chose to continue that aspect of anonymity when writing the profiles, by using the impersonal "he" throughout, although, in fact, many of the students are women.
Subject One is a fourth year French student in high school, who has never studied another foreign language. He rates himself as capable of a working knowledge in writing skills with elementary knowledge of the other skills. He doesn't feel he has a "gift for languages" (4) or an "ear for language" (6) but is a good memorizer (10). He receives A's but doesn't feel this is an accurate assessment of his work; he didn't comment on this. He considers himself musical and plays an instrument.

He has high motivation. His parents wanted him to study French and he has always wanted to study it. He is determined to visit France. He sees good motivation as essential for success in a foreign language. He says, "It's made me curious, more willing to travel, more willing to accept and understand foreign culture."

He is a little introverted with only moderate self-confidence. He scratched out "a little" when checking the sentence, "I enjoy volunteering but am a little uncomfortable when my answer is wrong." He is a visual learner who is content to get the gist of the material and doesn't translate into English. He seems to enjoy analysis and says, "The rules are there, as are the exceptions. I don't necessarily enjoy them, but I have to work with them. I think this is as important as understanding the rule itself."

His study techniques seem well organized. He enjoys guessing. He finds it helpful to study with another student ("someone will always pick up something you might miss and you'll often catch their mistakes"). As a visual learner, he writes down vocabulary words to learn them and learns them in context. In learning grammar he does practice exercises and likes to analyze the rules, but he feels he learns it better when the teacher presents it. He listens to other students and to himself to evaluate mistakes. He likes to make up mnemonic learning devices and imaginary dialogs. He sometimes thinks in French; "that is an incredibly nice feeling." He uses acronyms for a spelling aid as well as phonetic rules. He tries to get practical experience in speaking as often as possible. He says that correction intimidates him "but I realize I need it."

These are all on a scale of one to ten with one, low and ten, high.
When advising a beginning student he suggests using a visual image rather than the English word to learn vocabulary. To learn the spelling he says that writing it down many times will compensate for the problems of phonetic differences between French and English. When bored he says it can be fun to try translating signs you see or songs into French. He suggests that beginners must not go into French with a closed mind or become easily frustrated and above all they must "let go of your English."

In planning a textbook he would make the vocabulary as practical and useful as possible. As soon as possible the technical material should be supplemented with literature, in order to "put French into a cultural context."

To teachers he suggests that they not get stuck in the textbook, but bring in outside and modern material in order to convey that "living people really speak this." He says to remind them that "learning French can be fun."

He found his first year quite easy. Then, as construction of sentences arrived, it became more difficult. He found learning new material at a rapid rate very hard and he fought it. By the middle of the third year he plateaued and has found it relatively easy since then.

Most of all he has enjoyed learning about the French people and their entire culture.

Subject Two is a third year high school student in French who has never studied another foreign language. He rates his skills as elementary in understanding but has a working knowledge in speaking and reading. He thinks his gift for languages (7) and his ear for language (6) are medium and he finds it fairly hard to memorize (5). He has always had A's and considers this an accurate assessment.

His motivation is high. Although his parents haven't expressed much opinion on his studying it, he has always wanted to study French, is determined to visit France and would be excited to learn another language. He feels that high motivation is essential for success.
He is somewhat introverted and doesn't see himself as a strong student in all areas. He enjoys volunteering but is a little uncomfortable if wrong. However, he doesn't need outside approval to succeed in a subject. He finds the exceptions to rules very tiresome. He learns by hearing rather than seeing. He does not translate into English.

This subject enjoys guessing and working with other students to learn material. Although he learns by hearing, he writes down vocabulary words to learn them and remembers them best in context. In learning grammar he likes to let it soak in and compares rules to comparable English rules. He finds it helpful to evaluate himself and others while speaking. He uses and invents memory "tricks" and imaginary dialogs, and thinks in French sometimes. He welcomes correction.

In advising a beginning French student he said only that he is sure he will wish in the future that he had had more real speaking experience when studying French.

In writing a textbook he would include lots of vocabulary words. He would use very familiar stories, like fairy tales, that are well-known in English. He would use questions about stories that force you to form complete sentences. Exercises tell you what to do, particularly the completion kind, and you don't really know why you are doing it.

In teaching, the subject would use lots of games and puzzles, lots of slides and cultural material. He hates taped exercises and questions, but admits that they are useful in learning to understand what French people say.

It has been fairly uniformly easy for him to learn French--for which he is grateful. He hopes to be able to travel and would love to be able to communicate when he gets to France.

Subject Three is studying fourth year French in high school as well as second year German and third year Spanish and Latin--an unusual state of affairs in a Missoula high school. He rates his knowledge of French
as a working knowledge in all four areas. He rates himself high (9) in gift for languages and fairly high (7) in an ear for languages and high (10) in ability to memorize. He has A's in French and considers this an accurate assessment of his ability. He does not consider himself musical.

He obviously has high motivation: he has always wanted to study French, his parents are pleased that he is studying it and he's determined to visit France some day. The idea of studying another language excites him. He believes that high motivation is essential for success in a foreign language. When asked what would be the most valuable result of having studied French, he answered, "It is a great challenge and when I've mastered the language I will be very pleased with myself. I intend to spend a great deal of time abroad some day, for pleasure as well as perhaps a career in French or in the Peace Corps. It is also a beautiful language and interesting to study."

Subject Three is a bit introverted and doesn't consider himself an exceptionally strong student in all areas. He enjoys volunteering but is uncomfortable if the answer is wrong. He enjoys analyzing rules and their exceptions. He feels he learns equally well in audio and visual ways—and that this is important. He is frustrated when he doesn't understand every word but he does not translate in his mind. He prefers to study alone and in a quiet place and feels he learns better when he works things out for himself.

He does guess but doesn't enjoy it. He feels it is very helpful to prepare oral lessons with others because "sometimes working with someone else helps me to be more aware of my mistakes, especially when I hear the mistakes he makes." In learning vocabulary he writes the words down. In learning grammar he memorizes the rules, does practice exercises, enjoys analyzing the whys of the rules and comparing them to English rules. He evaluates his own and others' oral work. He feels his other foreign language classes help him with French and vice versa. He often thinks in French and has imaginary dialogs. He says he does not make up memory tricks to remember material but that he has worked out some learning techniques which have been helpful.

His advice to beginning students is extensive and specific. Write things down and save the notes. Look back at old vocabulary lists. Study in a way that you can
retain as much as possible. Do your own outside reading right from the beginning. Apply what you learn whenever you can. Do things with it on your own—read books, see films, write things in French. Speak it as much as possible. "In one class we speak it all the time and it now seems natural. My brother takes the class too, and we speak the language together at home." Think in it all the time. Above all, "Don't complain about the things that are different from English. That is the special thing about a foreign language—it represents a different kind of people who think differently. Just accept it and learn it."

In critiquing textbooks, he resents those things which are insulting to your intelligence and likes the "stories" which are interesting and relevant. In critiquing teaching, he stresses speaking the foreign language as much as possible.

His learning of French has always been fairly easy for him but he has noticed that at some periods of time he has seemed to be learning many new things—then long periods go by when no progress seems to occur.

The reason he has taken French is "if I keep doing this, some day I'll speak it fluently. I'd do anything to achieve that."

Subject Four is studying second year French in high school and has never studied another foreign language. He rates his proficiency as elementary in all four areas. He did not rate his gift for languages, but says he has a fair ear (7) and memorizes easily (8). He gets A's in French and says this is an accurate assessment "as far as the class was concerned, but I could've done more in the time taken." He's musical and plays an instrument.

His motivation is high. His parents are pleased; he is determined to visit France and the idea of taking another language excites him. He feels that high motivation is essential for success in a foreign language. He would enjoy going abroad, after studying some basic grammar because "immersing myself would make it easier to let go of my English."
This is an extroverted student who enjoys volunteering in class even when it turns out the answer is wrong. He thinks it's fun trying to make sense out of rules and exceptions. He is a visual learner who is content to get the gist of material. He likes to study music. He needs a positive reaction to do well. He translates in his mind but knows he shouldn't.

He enjoys guessing. He likes to speak French with others and prepare oral lessons with others. In learning vocabulary he says the words, writes them down, learns them in phrases and then tests them out with a friend. In learning grammar he memorizes rules, practices exercises and analyzes the rules. However, he retains the rules best when the teacher explains them. He evaluates the oral work of himself and others. He makes up imaginary dialogs, uses memory tricks and often thinks in French.

His advice to a beginning student is to study every night—don't get behind. It helps to associate the vocabulary with something else. Really get the grammar foundation well learned. Practice speaking as much as possible. Above all, look on it as fun.

In critiquing textbooks, he stated that they should be sure to emphasize both grammar ("you need that foundation") and communication. Teachers should especially "promote excitement."

This subject found French hard the first year, "maybe just because I was young," but much easier now.

"If I were never going to travel I would like to learn to read French well (I love to read), but if I can ever travel I'd love to be able to speak it well."

Subject Five is in second year high school French and had a year of Latin. He rates his understanding of French as a working knowledge and his writing skills as nearly that but speaking and reading as only elementary. He feels he has a good gift for languages (8-9) and a good ear (7-8) and he finds it easy to memorize (9). He gets A's in French and feels this is an accurate assessment "although I haven't been challenged." He is not musical.
His motivation may be a bit lower than some of the other students because his reason for taking French, in addition to having wanted to study it, was college entrance requirements. He likes the idea of taking another language (instead of being excited by the idea). The most valuable result of having studied French will be "being able to get into a college of my choice." His parents haven't expressed much opinion on his studying French, and he plans to visit France, rather than being determined to do so. He feels that good motivation is very helpful, but not essential for success in language learning.

This subject is very extroverted and very self-confident. He enjoys volunteering even when the answer turns out wrong. He would enjoy French more if there were not so many exceptions to the rules. He is a visually oriented learner who does better when he translates into English. Despite his self-confidence, he needs positive reaction to do well in a course.

In his study habits he feels free to guess but prefers to be sure of the answer. He likes to speak French with classmates but prepares oral lessons alone because, "I get more done by myself." In learning vocabulary he writes down the words, learns them best in isolation and finds a friend to give him a practice test.

In learning grammar he does the practice exercise and seems to understand the rules best by osmosis rather than analysis. He retains more grammar when the teacher explains it. He evaluates his own and others' oral work. He found that his Latin helped him with French and he sees many similarities in the languages. He likes to use memory tricks and sometimes "thinks" in French. He has worked out "a few" learning techniques of his own.

His advice to beginning students is familiar—don't get behind. Learn the vocabulary the first time, with little memory tricks for gender. Get a good notebook where you can find things. Speak as much as possible. And again, since it is cumulative knowledge, learn it well to begin with, go over it and never get behind.

He would like to see a textbook which has more of the vocabulary used in class (crayon, papier, porte, etc.). Because he is visually oriented, it helps to see those words that the teacher uses frequently. He would like to see short review sections on previously presented material.
In classes he says that too much repetition can pass beyond helpfulness to boredom and a "turn-off." He finds that frequent, unexpected quizzes keep him on his toes.

He found beginning Latin very difficult because he didn't know English grammar. However, the Latin helped with his French and it is now very easy. "I don't study except for tests."

He finds the thrill of French is being able to say something in another language--"It's a challenge to say even simple things."

Subject Six is a second year high school French student who has never studied another language. He feels he has a working knowledge of understanding and writing but only an elementary proficiency in speaking and reading. He feels he has a good gift for languages (7) but only a fair "ear" (4), while he memorizes easily. His grades are A's and B's which he feels are an accurate assessment. He is fairly musical.

His motivation is primarily to be able to travel in France and speak the language. He only "likes" the idea of studying another language. His parents are pleased that he is studying French. He also feels that traveling will be very helpful in learning the language--total immersion rather than "just 45 minutes a day."

He is a little introverted but very self-confident about his ability. He enjoys analyzing rules and exceptions. He is a visual learner. He says, "I am content now if I can understand the general idea of a sentence but I strive to be able to understand every word." He does better when he translates into English in his mind. He does not need outside approval if he knows he's doing well.

In studying he is very comfortable guessing and speaks French frequently with other students. He prepares oral lessons with other students. In learning vocabulary he writes down words and learns them best in isolation--then has a friend give him a practice test. In learning grammar he memorizes rules, does the practice exercises
and seems to understand it best when he analyzes it. He evaluates his own and others' oral work. He uses memory tricks, welcomes correction, thinks in French and has worked out some learning techniques for himself.

His advice to beginners is the familiar--don't get behind. Spend lots of time between French-English correlations. Go to all French activities in the community. "Really study--an hour a week is not enough."

He wishes that there were more cultural material in the textbooks--"it helps me to relate to the language." He would like vocabulary definitions with the new material at the start of a chapter.

He likes to have teachers speak as much French as possible, directing lots of questions to the students and getting around to each student as often as possible.

He feels that "it is hard when you are this old to learn a language," but he has had a steady progression in his learning pattern. When there were hard periods it was usually caused by exterior problems. "The more I learn, the more it fits into place."

He feels that the learning of a foreign language is essential for communicating with other people.

Subject Seven is a third year high school student who had a little FLES Spanish in the fourth grade. He rates his knowledge of French at elementary proficiency and says he has only a mediocre gift for language (5) and ear for language (6). He finds it fairly easy to memorize (8). He gets B's in French and says this is an accurate assessment of his work. He has only a fair ear for music.

His motivation is high--he has always wanted to study French--but some of the motivation seems to be based on college entrance hopes. His parents are very pleased that he is studying French but he only "hopes" to visit France someday. He likes the idea of studying another language and he considers high motivation helpful but not essential for success.
He is a bit introverted and sees himself as a strong student in some areas. He enjoys volunteering but is uncomfortable if the answer is wrong. The exceptions to the rules frustrate him. He is a visual learner who is content to get the gist of the material. He needs a lot of positive reinforcement and he translates into English in his mind. All in all, he is not a very confident student.

When learning, he does some guessing but doesn't feel too confident about it. He only occasionally speaks French with other students and rarely prepares oral assignments with another student. When studying vocabulary he both writes down and says the words--and he remembers them best in isolation. When learning grammar he memorizes the rules and does the practice exercises. He finds it confusing to compare it with an English rule and retains more when the teacher explains the grammar point. He doesn't use memory tricks or imaginary French dialogs in his mind. He loses confidence when corrected "...if it's done in a critical way." He rarely "thinks in French" and has not found any learning technique on his own. He says, "I really have no great desire to learn the actual mechanics of the French language."

In advising beginners he stresses that it takes a lot of time. Written work is hard for this student and he says, "Be sure to keep it separate from English." Learning vocabulary and gender is essential for success. But he says, "Stick with it; it's gratifying; don't give up."

In a critique of the textbook he says that the exercises are so repetitive that they become boring and "I tune them out." He feels that the material is not always well organized--he needs more review of grammar. More cultural material would help to put the language into perspective.

When discussing teaching he says he hates to have the teacher give long lectures. He would rather do written work--or better yet, lots of speaking. He is not concerned with perfection--simply being able to express himself.

He found the first two years rather easy--now he feels he isn't making much progress. However, he says that studying French has been a source of personal satisfaction to him.
Subject Eight is a fourth year French student in high school. He also studied one year of Latin and one year of German. He rates his speaking and reading of French as only elementary but feels he has a working knowledge of understanding and writing. His writing ability in German is a working knowledge with the other skills as only elementary. He feels he has a gift for languages (8) and a good ear (9) while also memorizing easily (9). He has received A's in French and feels that this is an accurate assessment of his ability, "...when my work is compared to other classmates but not when my capability is taken into account." He is musical.

His motivation is very high—he has always wanted to study French and has strong parental support. The idea of studying another language excites him and he is determined to visit France some day. He says, "I think I've learned much about the French language that has helped me in knowing the structure and grammar of English. I'm a much more aware person now and understand what the French life style is about." He feels that high motivation is essential for success in learning the language.

This subject needs to be alone sometimes and is confident of success if he works hard enough. However, he also is a little uncomfortable when he makes errors. He enjoys analyzing the language. He is a visual learner who is frustrated when he doesn't understand every word. On the other hand, he doesn't translate into English in his mind. He does not need outside reinforcement. He studies best alone but with noise or music.

In learning habits this student will guess but loses confidence if the answer is wrong. He speaks French with other students and prepares oral lessons with them, "only if the other student is willing to correct you." In learning vocabulary he both says words aloud and writes them down—then has a friend give him a practice test. He remembers words best in isolation. In learning grammar he does the practice exercises, comparing the rules to English, letting the rules just soak in and he prefers a teacher's presentation to working it out himself. He evaluates his own and others' speaking performances. He sees great correlation and help in other languages studied but finds French the hardest of his foreign languages. He has imaginary dialogs, uses memory tricks and thinks in French. He has been able to work out helpful learning techniques for himself.
His advice to beginners is very specific: 1) never fall behind; 2) write out vocabulary lists and be sure to learn them all; 3) read aloud to yourself in French; 4) ask questions if you don't understand something; 5) speak as much as possible; 6) never give up.

He would like to see textbooks with very clear grammar explanations. He says he knows it's hard but dialogs should be interesting, if possible--with cultural material in them. He would like to have teachers require lots of reading aloud--from prepared texts, with correction of pronunciation--and lots of written work, compositions and drills.

He feels French has been fairly easy for him to learn although his progress has gone in spurts. He finds the most rewarding part of his studies is the ability to communicate with foreigners in their language.

Subject Nine is a fourth year high school student studying French who has also studied three years of Spanish. He rates his knowledge of all four skills in both languages as only elementary. He feels he has a good gift for language (9), a pretty good ear (7), and memorizes easily (10). He gets A's in French and feels this is a fair assessment. He is not very musical.

His motivation is high (he has always wanted to study French) and the idea of studying another language excites him. His parents are neutral about his study, however, and he only "hopes" to visit France. He does feel high motivation is essential for success in language.

Of his temperament he says, "Friends are important but more important to me is participating in activities and working on my own in order to reach highly set goals." He is a very confident learner and volunteer who likes analyzing the rules of French. He is an audial learner who is frustrated when he doesn't understand every word. He does better when he translates into English in his mind. He does not need outside reinforcement.

He will guess but is a bit uncomfortable doing so, "I like the appearance of a clear answer." He does not like to prepare oral assignments with other students.
When learning vocabulary, although an audial learner, he writes down the words to learn them. To learn grammar he does practice exercises, prefers a teacher's presentation and seems to learn it best if it just soaks in. He evaluates his own and others' oral work. He finds high correlation and help in his study of Spanish. He does not use memory tricks or say imaginary dialogs in his mind. He does not feel he has developed learning techniques except for correlating similarities with Spanish.

His advice to beginners is to always keep up with your work and to work on the language daily, even if there isn't an assignment. He thinks that starting two languages simultaneously would not be confusing. "Don't be afraid to try it."

He would like to see more reading in textbooks to strengthen vocabulary. He'd like to see vocabulary definitions near the beginning of a chapter. He hopes that teachers would have all the skills emphasized in class—not just one.

In learning French he has never had a great challenge—and only the reading in fourth year with lots of new vocabulary has been fairly hard.

He has liked the "special" aspect of learning a foreign language—it is different from other courses.

Subject Ten is a third year high school student who has not studied another language. He feels he has a working knowledge of writing skills but only elementary proficiency of the other skills. He says he has only an average gift for language (7) and ear for language (5-6) and finds it reasonably hard to memorize (6). His grades are B's and A's, which he feels is an accurate assessment. He is musical. His motivation is above average, although not as high as some. He had wanted to study German and couldn't get into the course—but is now glad he has studied French. His parents are very pleased and he hopes to visit France. He does feel high motivation is essential for success.
He is somewhat introverted, a little uncomfortable when corrected but confident of achievement if he works hard enough. He finds French rules and exceptions frustrating as is not being able to understand every word he hears. He describes himself as learning best by reading and writing down material to be learned, but in his advice to beginners he says that he often learns by pacing up and down, saying things out loud. He does better when he doesn't translate into English in his mind.

Except for oral work he is a solitary studier who enjoys guessing. He tries to find opportunities to speak French. When learning vocabulary he writes down the words as well as saying them aloud. When studying grammar he has the best success when he analyzes the rules and figures them out for himself. He enjoys evaluating his own oral work and that of other students. He makes up imaginary French dialogs but he does not use memory tricks. The learning technique he has worked out for himself that helps him most is "repeating rules and vocabulary definitions out loud." This student has used one study technique which is unique among all the interviewees--programming for himself, on a computer, material which he has to review, i.e., verb forms, vocabulary lists, etc.

He recommends this to other beginners as a way of self-testing. He also recommends saying material out loud. He insists on the familiar warning, "Stay up on things; don't fall behind."

He liked his textbook which was the ALM series. He would like to see the vocabulary lists with the definition next to the words for easier studying--"then you don't waste time looking each one up."

He thinks teachers should insist on French being spoken all the time in class. He also admitted his reluctance to begin reading "Le Petit Prince" in third year French. He felt the time should be spent learning vocabulary and structure. He now sees how wrong he was and how much he learned from that endeavor.

Finally he feels a great satisfaction in being able to speak French and hopes to become fluent.
Student Eleven is a third year high school student who has not studied any foreign language except French. His understanding of French he rates as a working knowledge with the other skills as elementary proficiency. He doesn't feel he has a good ear for language (3) or a great gift for language (6) nor does he memorize easily (7). However, he gets A's in French and feels this is an accurate assessment of his work. He does not think himself musical.

He began the study of French because his parents encouraged it, although they don't express much opinion about it now. The idea of studying another language excites him. He thinks that the most valuable result of having studied French will be "a better understanding of the working of English." He feels that strong motivation is essential for learning French.

This subject is the only one among the high school group who describes himself as shy and most comfortable alone. He is also a little uncomfortable when he gives a wrong answer. On the other hand he is very confident of his ability; he enjoys analyzing rules and is content to understand the general gist of the material. When asked if he learns best visually or by hearing and saying, he wrote, "I learn best by a combination of the two, and learn only by a combination."

He does his best work when he doesn't translate, when he studies alone, when he works things out by himself, and he doesn't need outside approval. He enjoys guessing but says, "Reasoning is better than guessing but still isn't as good as knowing the answer." He finds it helpful to work with others on oral assignments if they do their "fair share."

In learning vocabulary he uses almost all the techniques: reading, writing, learning them in phrases, testing by friends and self-tests. In learning grammar he memorizes rules, does practice exercises, analyzes the rules and tries to figure them out himself after a good introductory presentation. He evaluates his own oral work and that of others. He does use memory tricks but he does not make up imaginary dialogs.

His advice to beginners was very specific: "Work every night. Don't get behind. Don't wait until the last minute to study for tests. Use the language and rules as much as possible. Keep the vocabulary fresh."
His critique of his textbook spoke of too simple drills, not enough writing models and not enough use of material which has been presented in previous chapters. He did like the compact grammar presentations, with summaries in "blue boxes."

His only concern about teaching techniques was the problem of keeping the good students motivated. "If they stop being challenged, you lose them."

When asked about his learning pattern he said that "Since learning a foreign language is a building process, it's always hardest when you come back in the fall and are rusty."

Like many others, his greatest pleasure in studying French was the pleasure of communicating in another language.

Subject Twelve is a third year high school student who studied one year of Spanish in seventh grade and remembers very little of it. His experience in French has been very positive. He rates his ability as a working knowledge in all four areas. He feels he has an ear (9) and a gift (8 or 9) for languages, finds it easy to memorize (10) and feels that his A's and B's are a good assessment of his ability. He plays a musical instrument. His motivation is high. He has always wanted to study French; he is determined to visit France and he likes the idea of starting another language. He feels that high motivation is essential for success.

Subject Twelve sees himself as needing to be alone occasionally but very confident of his ability, enjoys volunteering and making sense out of rules and their exceptions. He sees himself as a visual learner. He is content if he gets the gist of the material but he doesn't enjoy guessing, "I like to know my answers are right." He likes to work things out alone to retain them and doesn't need outside approval. However, for oral work he likes to work with other students.

In learning vocabulary, he writes down words and learns them in phrases. In learning grammar he does the practice exercises and analyzes the reasons. It confuses
him to compare a French rule to an English rule. He monitors himself and others.

He likes to practice French with others and has enjoyed having a French pen pal. Although he does not use mnemonic devices and tricks, he feels that he has been able to work out some learning techniques that have made French easier for him. He would take French again if starting all over.

When giving advice to beginning students, he stressed not getting behind, as well as the value of doing some work every day "even when it seems so easy you don't have to bother." He advises speaking as much as possible and trying not to translate in the mind. He says that students should make sure they understand the material before starting an assignment.

In evaluating textbooks, he would like a phonetic transcription of dictionary entries in the book. "Repetition may be helpful but it gets boring." He likes "natural" conversational material. One of his favorite parts of French study is cultural material, particularly if it is about the young.

In evaluating teaching techniques he again states that too much repetition causes students to "turn off." He liked the early work with mirrors for accurate pronunciation.

He feels that each year has been harder than the previous one, "but that's only natural, isn't it?"
Subject A is a university senior who is studying French at the 300-400 level and had studied one year of high school French. He rates himself as having a working knowledge in all four skills in French. He feels that he has a good gift for languages (9), a good ear (8) and memorizes easily. He gets A's in French and thinks that this is an accurate assessment. He is musical. His motivation is good--his parents are pleased that he is studying French. He has visited France and is determined to visit it again. He likes the idea of studying another language and would do so by taking a university course ("I think the basics are best learned by studying a grammar book") and then traveling to the country. He feels that high motivation is essential for success in learning a foreign language.

He may be personally a bit shy but is confident of his academic skills and enjoys the challenge of difficult grammar rules and understanding conversation. When asked how he learns, audially or visually, he says, "I learn best through both these methods--neither is satisfactory alone." He likes to study with noise or music around and learns best in a classroom situation. He needs positive reinforcement to be successful. He does not translate into English in his mind.

In his study habits he speaks French as often as possible with others. He enjoys guessing. When learning vocabulary he both says the words and writes them down, remembering them best in isolation. When learning grammar he memorizes the rules, does the practice exercises and analyzes the rules. He prefers a teacher's explanation of grammar to working it out himself, then, "I reread the grammar explanations in the text to reinforce the concepts." He evaluates the oral work of other students as well as his own. When asked how much time he spends on various subjects he says, "In general I...spend more time studying French than...my other subjects. More importantly, I spend time studying French every evening." He does not use memory tricks but he does have imaginary dialogs and "thinks in French." He feels that he has worked out some helpful learning techniques for himself.

In advising beginning students he recommends studying every night and, when possible, practice it with someone else.

As a teacher he would enrich his class with as much cultural material as possible, since that makes a
language more relevant. He needs to see and hear material at the same time, in order to retain it.

He feels that while the language is the most important part of his French studies he enjoys hearing about the culture because "a language that you couldn't use--there wouldn't be any use studying it."

Subject B is a junior in the university, studying French at the 300 level. He had previously had four years of high school French. He has never studied another foreign language. He rates his speaking and reading abilities as elementary, with a working knowledge of understanding and writing. He only rates his gift and ear for language as fair (7 and 6) but memorizes easily. He is not musical. His motivation is high--he has always wanted to study French and is determined to visit France--and feels this is essential for foreign language learning success.

He is fairly shy and only volunteers when he is sure of having the right answer. However, he is confident of his academic skills and enjoys making sense out of rules and exceptions. He is an audial learner and is content if he can get the gist of material. He gets A's and B's--a fair estimation in his opinion.

He does his best studying alone and learns best when he works material out by himself. He enjoys guessing and occasionally speaks French with students outside of class. He finds it helpful to prepare oral assignments with other students.

When learning vocabulary he remembers words best in a phrase or sentence. When learning grammar he retains more if he figures it out for himself and lets the rules just "soak in" rather than analyzing them. He likes to evaluate his own oral work and that of others. He particularly enjoys making up imaginary dialogs and he uses memory tricks to remember material but he doesn't feel he has particularly worked out learning techniques for himself.

His advice to beginners is to keep up and not fall behind. It is important to learn the basics--but
learn them in context rather than memorization.

He found the early textbooks he used rather childish—perhaps necessarily so—especially the dialogs. In his last two years of high school French they abandoned the text and used individualized instruction packets. He really liked this method of study.

He likes a class which is relaxed and informal without a lot of drilling. He would also like to see more speaking and writing in high school classes—like a daily journal, for instance.

When asked about his learning pattern over the years he says that he often "plateaus" because his enthusiasm waxes and wanes. However, he has always been glad to have learned to communicate in another language—"so few people can; it gives me a feeling of superiority!"

Subject C is a college freshman who has studied four years of high school French. He evaluates his French at a working knowledge in all areas except understanding. He evaluates his gift for languages as only 7 and his ear as 6. His B grades he feels are an accurate assessment. He finds it easy to memorize (8) and is not particularly musical.

His motivation is high. He has always wanted to study foreign languages. He says that if he began another language he would only study it for a year then visit the country because "it takes too long to learn out of the book." He is determined to visit France some day. He feels a positive attitude is very helpful in learning a language.

He sees himself as rather quiet, not volunteering much, and a visual learner. He finds that exceptions to the rules and not understanding everything very frustrating. He needs to translate into English in his mind and works things out best alone to retain them. He needs positive reinforcement to succeed and doesn't like to guess. "I'd rather feel certain about an answer. It makes me feel like I'm accomplishing something." This lack of confidence is also seen in his reluctance to speak French with other students, "I'm not confident enough in myself."
This subject checked none of the steps mentioned for learning vocabulary but several for learning grammar. He does the practice exercises and does not try to compare a rule to one in English. He also prefers a teacher's presentation of grammar rules. He does not monitor other students—and sometimes not his own. He "thinks in French" sometimes. He does not use mnemonic devices, but says he has worked out some learning strategies for himself. Although not talking much himself, he complains that there isn't much class participation in French class.

When making suggestions to beginners this subject talked about flashcards and "lots of repetition" as being helpful for memorization. He also liked the idea of working in small groups. He felt that textbooks should give beginners lots of useful, everyday vocabulary so that they have material they can use in conversation. He said that his teacher had lots of patience and never got mad—and that this encouraged him to work. He felt that his first two years were hard, especially the second year of high school French. "Now it's fairly easy." The most satisfying part of studying French is the idea of being bilingual.

Subject D is a college freshman who has studied four years of high school French and is currently studying second year Spanish and first year German. He assesses his knowledge of French and Spanish as a working knowledge in all four areas. He feels he has both an "ear" (9.5) and a "gift" (9.5) for language as well as finding it easy to memorize (8). He gets A's and B's and feels that is an accurate assessment of his ability. He is a singer and plays an instrument.

His motivation is high—he has always wanted to study French and the idea of studying another language excites him. He's determined to visit France. He feels a positive motivation is essential for success in language study.

He is a very confident student who enjoys volunteering and doesn't need outside approval. He is very specific about how he learns best, "by hearing something, writing it down and then reading it aloud." He is frustrated by the exceptions to rules but not frustrated at not
understanding every word he hears, "It gives me added incentive to learn more."

He does his best studying alone—even oral work—but he gets someone to give him practice tests and he tries to speak French with other students. He enjoys guessing. When learning vocabulary, he writes down words and learns them in context. He prefers to figure out grammar rules himself and analyze the reasons—even comparing them to English rules. He enjoys monitoring his own speech and that of other students. He feels the other languages he studies help him with French and vice versa.

He has enjoyed a pen pal, uses imaginary dialogs and finds talking with friends a help. He uses mnemonic devices and has worked out some learning strategies for himself.

He has many suggestions for beginners. Think of it as a game and do it in pairs. Plan your study time. Group the way you learn things—using associations. Make up self quizzes. Break up study time to avoid boredom.

In evaluating textbooks he would like to see more colloquial phrases which are fun to learn. He would like to see avoir and être presented early, because they are so useful. He would like to see phonetics but feels they are often badly presented. With them as with other things, too many exceptions can confuse the beginner and should only be indicated in a footnote.

In evaluating teaching, this student stresses being interesting above all. He approves of pop-quizes as a way of keeping on your toes. He likes encounter games. Finally he thinks that motivation is essential, "you memorize because you have to; you learn because you want to."

Subject E is a college freshman who has taken two years of Spanish and Latin as well as five years of high school French. He rates his knowledge of French as a working knowledge with elementary proficiency in the other two languages. He rates his "ear" (9) and "gift" (9 or 10) for languages as high, finds it easy to memorize and gets A's and B's in French. He feels this
is a fair grade. He plays the piano.

He was born in French Canada and spoke French as a child but had lost most of it. He has always wanted to study French and would be excited at the thought of studying another language. His high motivation is the kind called integrative for he says it would "help me to understand myself and other people of the world"— and "the people of a country tell you more about a language than the language itself." He feels high motivation is essential for success in learning the language.

Subject E is a confident student who enjoys volunteering and is content to get the general gist of material. He finds the exceptions to rules annoying. He finds himself learning auditorily and visually. He does his best work when he does not translate into English. He learns best in an active classroom situation and needs positive reinforcement to be successful in a course.

He enjoys guessing and enjoys speaking French with other students as well as using French outside of class. When learning vocabulary he says the words aloud— and prefers to remember them in isolation unless they are idioms. He learns grammar best by figuring it out alone and analyzing reasons behind a rule. He prefers not to compare it to an English rule. He monitors his own speech as well as that of others. He feels strong similarities between French and the other languages he has studied and that they are mutually helpful.

He sometimes "thinks" in French and has imaginary dialogs in his mind. He enjoyed having a pen pal. He does not use the little mnemonic devices but he has developed some learning techniques for himself.

In advising beginning students he stressed trying to forget English. He suggests that in memorizing, words should be integrated into phrases as soon as possible. They should not be learned in a list but should be defined in French if possible.

In evaluating textbooks he would like to see lots of cultural material because "language is the smallest part of a culture." In evaluating teachers he spoke of a teacher whom he admired and who had excellent classroom technique. This teacher "became" Spanish in class, used a lot of variety in teaching. He had many
ways of encouraging students to speak—which this subject feels are the most important. "Use as little English as possible when teaching."

Subject F is a college senior who had studied five years of high school French and is studying beginning Spanish. He feels he has a working knowledge of French and elementary proficiency in Spanish. He does not feel he has a "gift" (3) or much of an "ear" (6) for languages. He finds it difficult to memorize. He gets A's and B's in French but doesn't feel that is an accurate assessment of his ability, "I still don't feel confident about my ability to construct good sentences." He is musical and plays an instrument.

His motivation for taking French seems somewhat mixed. He likes the idea of starting another language and he is determined to visit France, but he indicates parental and counseling pressure as the reason he began French. He feels high motivation is essential for success in learning French.

He does not seem to be a very confident student. He "worries about the...areas" in which he is not strong. He is uneasy about volunteering if he is unsure. He states that "understanding the rules is hard enough, let alone the exceptions." However, he isn't afraid to guess and he prefers not to translate in his mind. He is content to understand the general gist of the material.

Subject F seems to have a good grasp of his own learning techniques. For example, he says he learns grammar rules visually but needs to hear or say aloud the phonetic material (a logic no other student pointed out!). He prefers to memorize and do grammar work alone but likes the classroom work and studying with friends for oral material.

In learning new vocabulary he both writes words down and says them aloud. In learning grammar he does practice exercises. He retains more grammar when the teacher explains it.
He likes to monitor his own oral work and that of others. He enjoys French Club and speaking to other students. He has imaginary French dialogs in his mind and often "thinks in French." He has not used little memory tricks but he has worked out learning strategies which he finds helpful.

His suggestions for beginners are very precise. Use flashcards, practice every day and don't "spend too much time translating from French to English to understand meaning." He likes to make up games to remember grammar points. He feels it is helpful to know English grammar before beginning a foreign language.

He likes to see textbooks that have very practical vocabulary, that help one to communicate. He does not like to see linguistic theory in a basic text. In teaching he likes to see lots of individual participation. He finds parrotting rather boring but useful. He also enjoys extra projects for variety as well as a chance to increase vocabulary or speak more.

His reason for enjoying French is the beauty of the spoken language.

Subject G is a college junior who has studied four years of high school French, is studying German and Latin and has lived in France for 15 months. He has a working knowledge of French and elementary proficiency in German. He feels that he has a good "ear" (9) and a "gift" (9) for languages and finds it very easy to memorize (10). He gets A's and feels this is an accurate assessment. He is musical and plays the violin.

He is highly motivated to study French and would be excited to study another language. He is determined to revisit France and hopes to work in the Foreign Service.

He is a very confident student who enjoys volunteering and finds the ambiguities in French fun. He sees himself learning equally well visually and auditorily. He is content to understand the gist at first, but gets frustrated if that continues too long. He prefers not to translate into English for meaning. He does not need outside approval to be successful.
He enjoys guessing but feels uncomfortable if the other person gets frustrated with him. He doesn't enjoy speaking with other students because "they have bad accents."

When learning vocabulary he says words aloud, writes them down, remembers them in phrases and gets a friend to give practice quizzes. Unlike most other students, he prefers a dictionary with French definitions. In learning grammar he uses all the techniques described except profiting from the teacher's explanation of a rule.

He likes to monitor his own oral work and that of other students. He sees great rapport and usefulness with the other languages he studies. He uses all the mnemonic tricks possible and has worked out his own strategies. He reads a great deal and analyzes the grammar.

His advice to beginners is to begin by memorizing the basics. It will be invaluable later. He has put cards on the bathroom mirror and carried cards around with him. When learning vocabulary, associate words learned with a text or in a phrase. He enjoyed a text based on fairy tales, where the grammar and vocabulary were based on familiar stories.

He found reading aloud and singing in class were good learning techniques. A good teacher has to be very well organized and move along quickly to avoid boredom.

This subject loves to read and finds that many translations of works in his other fields of interest are inadequate. Knowing the original language is very helpful. He also likes to travel and communicate in the native language.

He concluded his questionnaire by saying that learning French "has broadened my perspective in such a dramatic manner that I am a changed person because of it."

Subject H is a college sophomore who has studied three years of high school French and is now in first year college Russian. He rates his understanding and
reading knowledge of French as elementary with a working
knowledge of speaking and writing. He does not feel his
"gift" and "ear" for language are more than average (5)
and (7). He also feels he memorizes with difficulty (5).
His grades are B's and he feels this is an accurate
assessment. He plays a musical instrument.

His motivation is high though not extraordinary.
He took French because it was the best foreign language
offered in his school. He only "likes the idea" of
studying another language. He is, however, determined to
visit France.

He is not a very confident student. He is the
only student, high school or college, who indicated that
he was "only average academically," and was only one of
two who volunteers only when sure he has the right answer.
He thinks motivation is "helpful, but other factors, like
aptitude, are more important." He does better when he
translates into English. He is frustrated when he
doesn't understand every word.

He sees himself as a visual learner. He enjoys
making sense out of rules and exceptions. He learns best
in an active classroom discussion. He enjoys guessing.
He prepares oral assignments with other students but
doesn't speak French with them "as often as I should."

In learning vocabulary he says new words aloud,
writes them down and remembers them best in phrases. Then
he has friends give him practice tests. In learning
grammar he memorizes rules, does practice exercises,
analyzes the reasons and prefers to have the teacher
present it. He monitors his own work and that of others.
He finds Russian helps him with French and vice versa.

He sometimes thinks in French and has imaginary
dialogs. Although he doesn't use mnemonic tricks to
help himself "anymore," he has worked out some learning
techniques that are helpful.

His suggestions for beginners are headed by the
advice to "go in with an open mind." He thinks memorization
is important in the beginning. He would like to see very
up-to-date texts used with lots of colloquial and idiomatic
conversations—even slang. He also feels good cultural
material is valuable.
He feels that teachers should use all sorts of word games, poems, nursery rhymes and fairy tales in class. Supplementing these with oral presentations by students will help develop the audio-lingual skills. He even thinks that memorized dialogs, though not always popular, are helpful.

He concluded his interview with an interesting comment, "When you have learned material and begin to apply it, it gets easier." The most telling remark from this not-very-confident student concluded his questionnaire, "Of all the subjects I've studied, languages have given me the most satisfaction."

Subject I is a college junior who has studied three years of high school French and one year of college Russian. He assesses his level of French as working knowledge in all four areas. He thinks he has a "gift" (8) and an "ear" (9) for languages and finds it easy to memorize (8). He gets B's in French and thinks this is an accurate assessment "most of the time." He plays the piano.

His motivation is high. He has always wanted to study French and would be excited to study another language. He is determined to visit France. He thinks high motivation is very helpful for language success.

He is a pretty confident student who is not strong in all areas. He is a little uncomfortable when he gives a wrong answer. He needs positive reinforcement. However, he is content if he can understand the general gist and he enjoys trying to make sense out of rules and exceptions. He does not translate into English. He learns best auditorily.

He needs to work things out alone to really understand them. He is not comfortable guessing. He tries to speak French with other students and prepare oral assignments with them. He enjoys using French outside of class.

In learning vocabulary he writes down words, says them aloud, remembers them in phrases and gets a friend to test him. He learns grammar by memorizing
rules, doing practice exercises, and analyzes the reasoning behind rules. He does not like to compare a rule to an English rule and he retains more when he figures out a rule for himself. He enjoys monitoring the work of other students and monitors his own, "all the time." He finds Russian helpful with his French and vice versa.

He likes to think in French and make up imaginary dialogs. He does not use mnemonic devices but he has developed useful learning techniques.

His advice to beginners is to "listen very intently to French speakers--keep your ears perked all the time." He finds that too many texts revolve around grammar rather than oral work. His greatest interest is speaking the language. He feels that workbook exercises are too often busy work. He would hope that a French teacher would use projects like having students write and produce plays that work on all facets of learning. He finds most language tapes too mechanical and boring.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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