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Learning Styles,
Strategies and Success

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Debbie Grossmann
20th September 2014

Inspiration

- ETAS Professional Development day 2009
- Module 2 of the TEFL Masters on second language acquisition.
- A student who appeared to do all the right things but who still failed to improve.

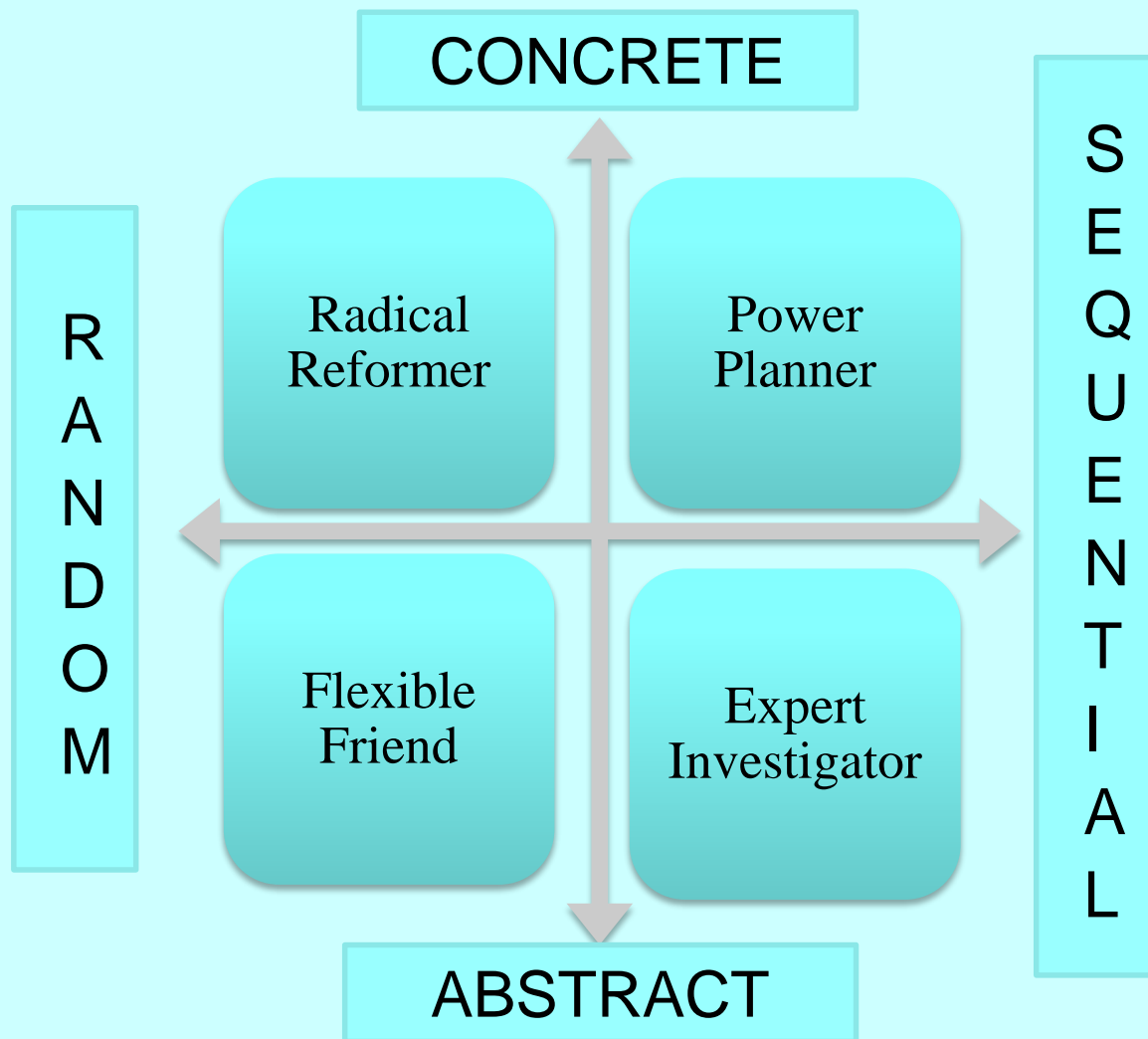
Research Questions

- Do successful/unsuccessful learners use similar strategies?
- Do students with the same cognitive style use the same strategies? Can patterns between the two variables be identified?
- If patterns exist, do the patterns differ between successful and unsuccessful learners?
- Do successful or unsuccessful learners use strategies that play to the strengths and counteract the weaknesses of their cognitive style?

Methodology

- A measure of success
- A measure of cognitive styles
- A measure of strategies
- Quantitative or qualitative

Mind Organisation Index (MOI)



Strategy Inventory for Language Learners (SILL)

Memory strategies

- help students store and retrieve information
- include arranging things in order, making associations, reviewing

Cognitive strategies

- used for forming and revising internal mental models
- involve manipulation or transformation of the target language by learner

Compensation strategies

- allow learners to use language despite gaps in knowledge
- make up for inadequate grammar or vocabulary

Metacognitive strategies

- allow learners to take control of their cognition
- involve planning, arranging, focusing and evaluating their learning

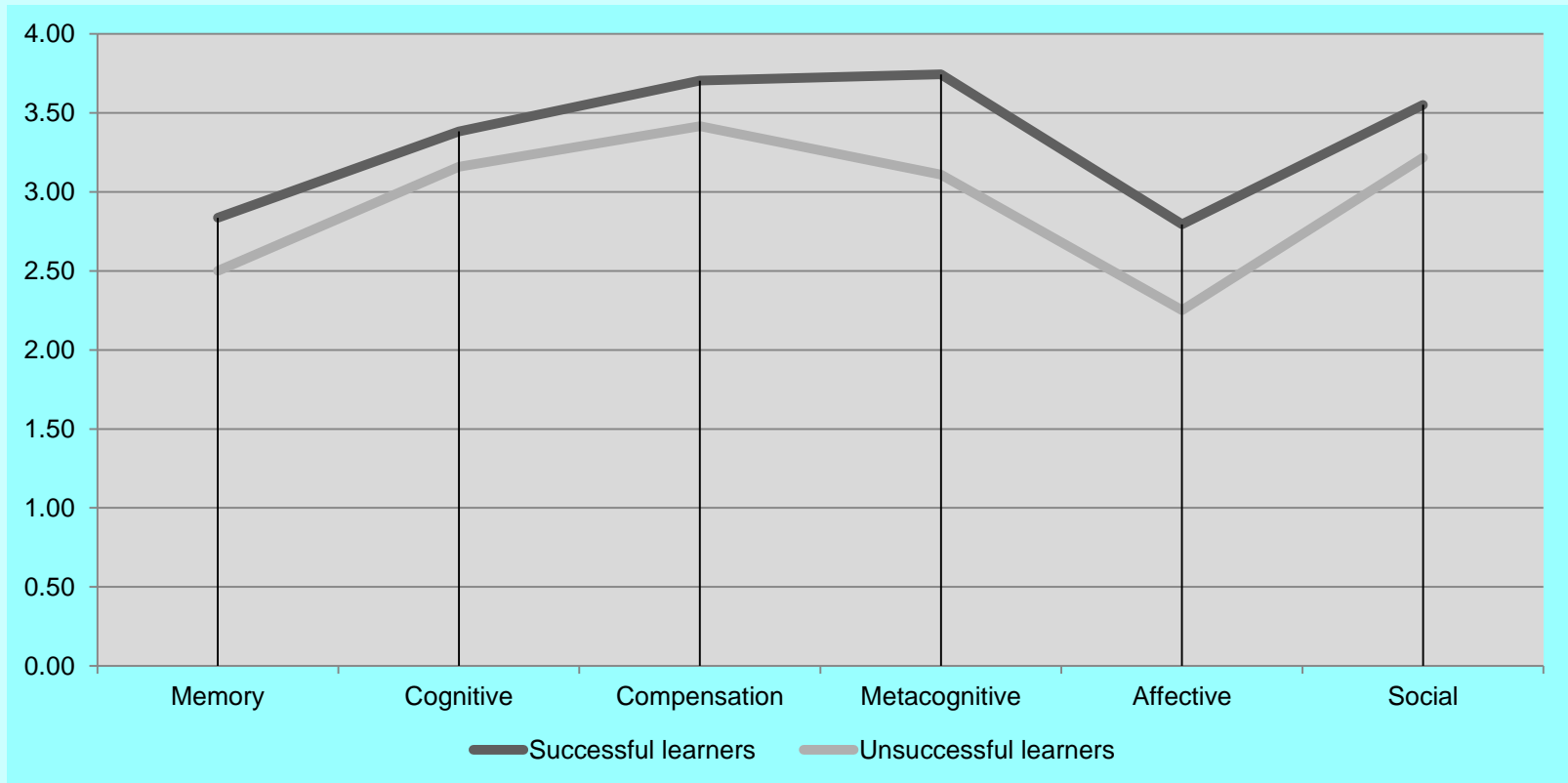
Affective strategies

- enable learners to control feelings, motivation and emotions
- include lowering anxiety, encouraging oneself and taking risks

Social strategies

- help students learn through interaction with others
- include asking questions and cooperating and empathising with others

Results: All style types

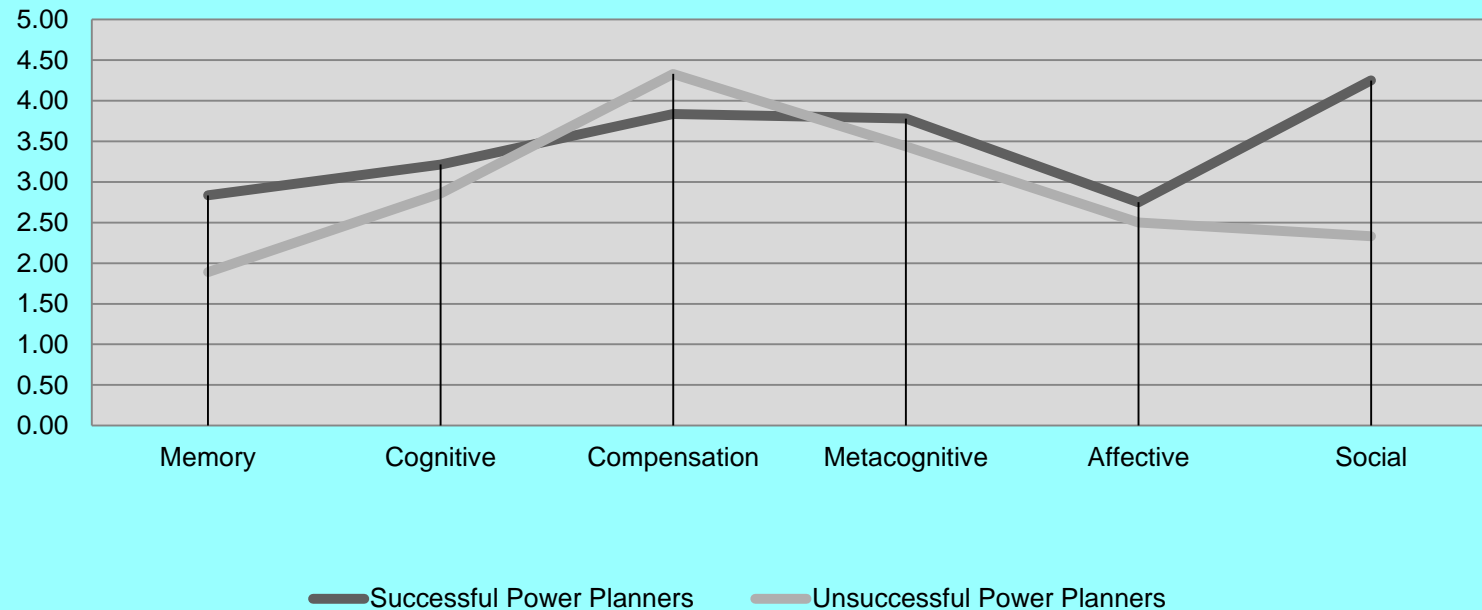


Results: All style types

- On analysis of the individual SILL questions my data confirmed the view of scholars such as Chamot & Rubin (1994) success was more about quality rather than quantity.
- Setting clear goals appeared to be significant for success in my classroom.

Results: Power Planners

Power Planners



Results: Power Planners

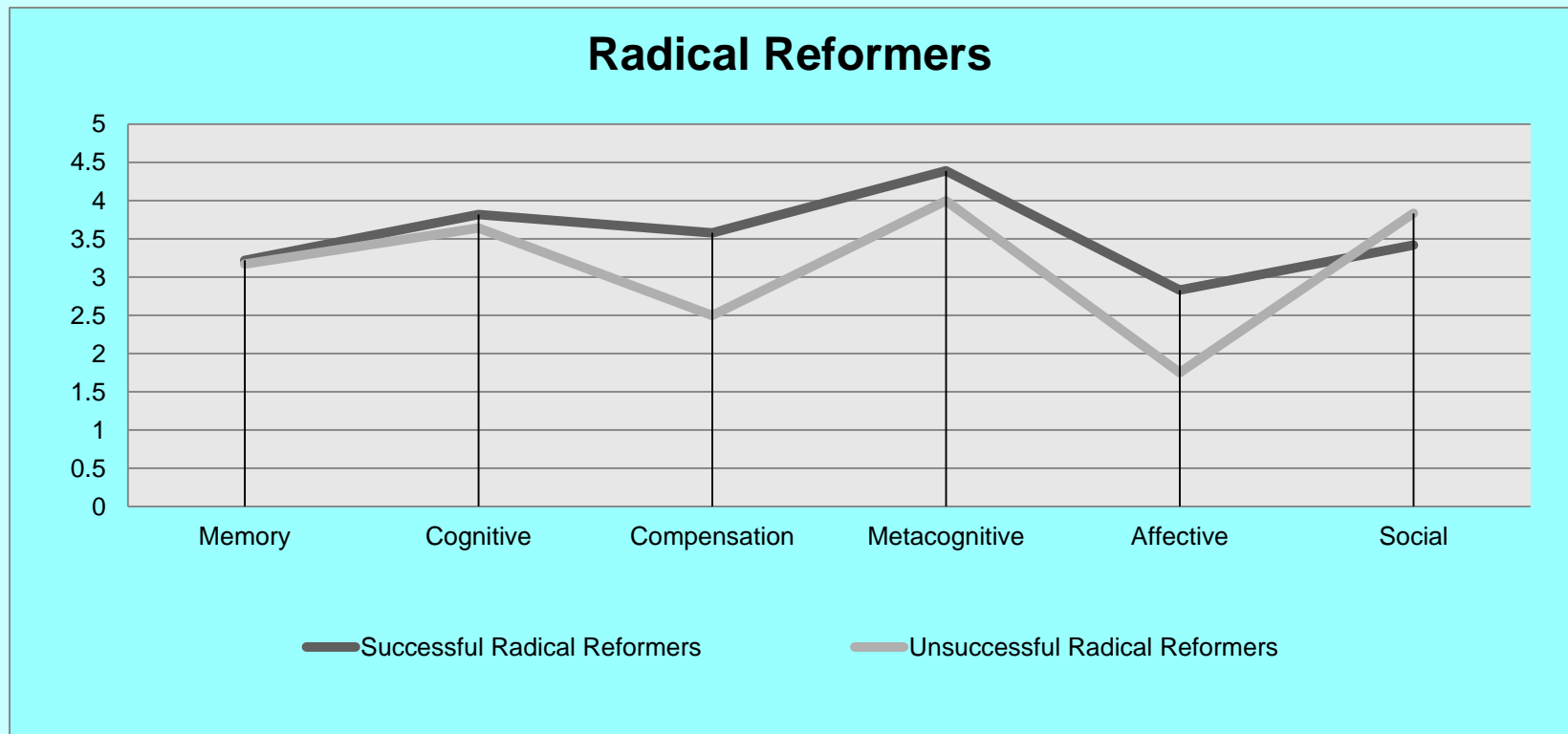
Strengths

- ❑ learn step-by-step
- ❑ detail person
- ❑ organised, likes routines
- ❑ precise and accurate
- ❑ good organisers

Weaknesses

- ❑ inflexibility
- ❑ get stressed when have too many things to do
- ❑ perfectionist
- ❑ prefer to work alone rather than in a team

Results: Radical Reformers



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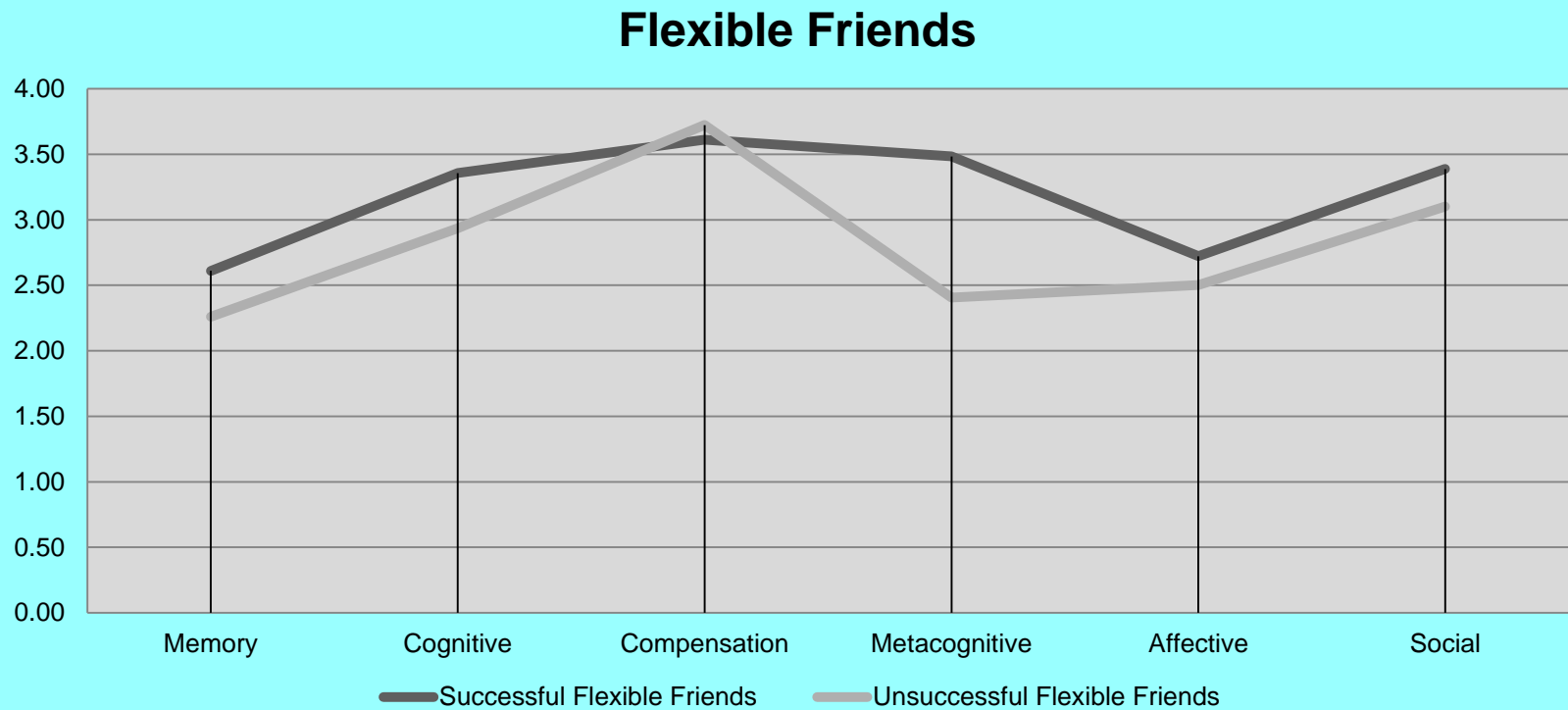
Strengths

- intuitive
- solve problems creatively
- risk- taker
- use real world experiences to learn
- good leaders

Weaknesses

- disorganised
- dislike detail, so can leave work unfinished
- need choices
- dislike rules
- dislike restrictions

Results: Flexible Friends



Results: Flexible Friends

Strengths

- ❑ people person
- ❑ flexible
- ❑ creative and imaginative
- ❑ making decisions with heart
- ❑ moral builder in a group

Weaknesses

- ❑ need to work with other people to learn
- ❑ need to make learning personal
- ❑ difficulties getting organised
- ❑ easily distracted from task by creative ideas

Implications

- I see my role as a teacher as someone who helps students develop language learning autonomy.
- As a result of my research I started to encourage students to set themselves goals in their learning tailoring the goals to the learner's style.

Implications

- I try to encourage students to get to know themselves by using the Mind Organisation Index. Once they know more about the type of learner they are, I give advice on how they can support their strengths and counteract their weaknesses using strategies.