HOW TO BECOME A (MORE) SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNER

Ene Peterson, Virumaa College of TUT
AIM

This session will focus on:
how to help students identify their skills and resources,
make learning intensely pleasurable and motivating
enough for the learner to put up with its hardships
What is Expected from a University Student

- Independence
- Self-motivation
- Openness to working with others
- Ability to work out things for themselves
- Ability to set goals
- Ability to organise their time
- Identifying their skills
The Good Language Learner

- Personality Characteristics
- Learning Styles
- Learning Strategies
Possibility of Becoming A (More) Successful Language Learner
Where to Start

Needs analysis: students' experience and expectations (Appendix 1)
Problems

- Multilevel language groups
- Lack of skills of independent work
- Lack of study skills
- Low self-esteem/high self-esteem
Action Plan

- The aim of the course, the introduction of course requirements

- Expected outcome (to write an essay by the end of the month) (Appendix 2)

- Outlining the process for gaining the aim (Appendix 3)
Preparation for Writing

1. **Brainstorming:** Ways of learning a language (individual- group-whole class)

2. **Reading texts, discussions.**
   2.1. Learner-training worksheet 1: Being an Active Learner. (Cutting Edge Intermediate Resource bank)
   2.2. Ten Ways How to Improve Your Memory. (New Cutting Edge, 2006)
   2.3. Mistakes that Work (Total English, 2006)
   2.4. How do you Like to Learn Languages? (English for Academic Purposes, 2006)
3. Discussions based on listening tasks

3.1. Are you a Good Language Learner? (Soundings, 1999)

3.2. Randall's ESL Listening Lab

Learning Languages
http://www.esl-lab.com/learn/learnrd1.htm

Web Conferencing: New Ways to Learn and Teach English
http://www.esl-lab.com/tips/webconferencing.htm
4. Web quests

Web quest 1: Returning to Learning (Appendix 4)

Step 1. Find out about your **skills**
http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/helpwithyourcareer/skills/

Step 2. Find information about **returning to learning**
http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/readytolearn/

Step 3. Thinker quiz
http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/readytolearn/thinker_quiz/

Step 4. Skillswise
http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/
Web quest 2: Learning Styles  (Appendix 5)
   Step 1. Determine your learning style
   Step 2. Multiple Intelligences
   Step 3. Diagnostic Test
   Step 4. Study Strategies Homepage

Web quest 3: Memory
   (New Cutting Edge: Intermediate web quest module 2)
http://www.pearsonlongman.com/newcuttingedge/intermediate/webquests.html

What I got to know about memory techniques
   (Appendix 6)
4. Debate: Are Geniuses Born or Made?

4.1. Reading (true-false statements, summarizing)
   Is there a Gene for Genius?

4.2. **Jigsaw reading** (Appendix 7)
   Student A: How Geniuses Work
   Student B: Genius and the Brain
   Student C: Genius and Intelligence
   Students D: Creativity and Genius
4.3. Boy Aged 9 to Study Maths at University, 25th August, 2007

Breaking News English

4.4. An extract from a radio programme “A portrait of Edith Stern”

(The Cambridge CAE Course p. 146)
WRITING

- Organizing: putting information in an outline
- Writing the first draft
- Editing the first draft
- Peer-evaluation (Appendix 8)
- Self-evaluation (Appendix 9)
- Writing the second draft
- Consulting with the teacher (face-to-face, E-mail)
- Proofreading
- Writing the final draft
POST-WRITING

- Evaluating the final product
You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives.

Clay P. Bedford

Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study. Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life.

Henry L. Doherty

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

Chinese proverb
What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.  

**Aristotle**

*The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.*  

**Socrates**

You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself."  

**Galileo Galilei**

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.  

**Alvin Toffler**
Conclusion

- There is no stereotype of the “good language learner”. Instead there are many possible combinations of traits/characteristics that will enable a learner to be successful.
- It is important
  - to make students understand that the best resource is their SELF (their experience, abilities, attitudes)
- to help students to evaluate their current profile of strengths and weaknesses, to relate academic skills to life and employment skills, and to set priorities for skills development.
Recommended Resources
(Appendix 10)

Textbooks


Online reference tools

Dictionaries and thesauruses http://dictionary.reference.com/
Encyclopedias http://www.encyclopedia.com/
Visual Dictionary Online http://visual.merriam-webster.com
Language Translation Software http://www.lingvosoft.com/

Randalls` ESL Listening Lab http://www.esl-lab.com/

Splendid Speaking Skills for Advanced Learners http://www.splendid-speaking.com/teachers/overview.html
Reading and Listening

BBC Learning English  http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/
Language Assistant  http://www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistant/
Teacher Training Videos  http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/

Further Reading
Stella Cottrell.  The Study Skills Handbook. Palgrave Study Guides