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*"I'm always doing things  
that I can't do, that's how I  
get to do them."*

Pablo Picasso

*"I feel like Pablo when it  
comes to learning  
Spanish."*

Sue Eagle  
Student MATC

*"...Knowledge of the  
world's languages and  
cultures is more vital than  
ever. In order to compete  
in the global community,  
we must be able to  
communicate effectively  
and to appreciate,  
understand, and be able to  
work in the framework of  
other cultures."*

Paul Simon  
U.S. Senator

*"The real voyage of  
discovery consists not in  
seeing new landscapes,  
but in having new eyes."*

Marcel Proust  
1871-1922

Learning a language is an **"active"** process that requires constant practice and intense study; it is also about learning to communicate effectively with others.

### **Tips for Foreign Language Learning:**

1. Have a positive attitude. Don't let errors and imperfections get you down; they are an important part of the learning process.
2. Study frequently: As with sports or musical instruments, it is better to study your foreign language for a short while every day rather than cramming all at once. If you learn something quickly, you tend to forget it just as quickly. If you learn over time, your retention improves.
3. Prepare for class each day. This will cut down on your overall study time. It will also improve your class participation and make you feel less stressed and more positive about your learning.
4. Ask the instructor to slow down, and if this doesn't work, ask him/her to repeat what you have missed.
5. Ask questions even if you are totally lost. Most instructors allow for time to ask questions. There may be times when you feel so lost that you can't formulate a question. That's ok. One option is to just report this fact to the instructor. The instructor can often guide you to a clear question.
6. Consider articulating first what you do understand when talking with instructor. This gives positive feedback to the instructor and provides a context for your questions.
7. Write yourself notes in the foreign language you are studying. You can write shopping lists, to-do lists, etc.
8. Speak to anyone who speaks the language you are studying. Participate actively in class. Extra practice is always an advantage to the learner.
9. Focus on what speech act, or language function, is being emphasized. The words "speech act" or "function" refer to what you can do with the language. For example, ordering a drink in a café is a function. Ask yourself, "Can I do that at this point?"

### **The In-Class Oxygenator**

*When you become sleepy in class, the problem might be lack of oxygen. You can run through the following process in 30 seconds.*

1. *Straighten your spine. Put both feet on the floor, uncross your arms and legs, sit up straight, and hold your head up straight.*
2. *Take a deep breath and while you are holding it, tense the muscles of your body. Start with the muscles in your feet, then your legs, thighs, stomach, chest, shoulders, neck, jaw, forehead, arms, and hands. Hold these muscles tense for the count of five and then relax and exhale.*
3. *Breathe deeply three times. Inhale slowly and deeply, breathing into your belly as well as your chest. Pause momentarily at the top of the breath and then exhale completely. When you have exhaled as much air as you can, force out more air by contracting the muscles of your stomach.*
4. *Repeat. You've then activated all of your muscles and filled your body with oxygen. You are ready to return to the task at hand.*
5. *With a little practice you can make this exercise subtle. Your instructor and classmates won't even know you're doing it.*

### **Tips for learning vocabulary**

10. Visualize: See a picture in your mind's eye.
11. Associations: Think of a word in English that may be related to the one you are trying to learn (i.e. "Dormitory" to learn the word "dormir").
12. Organize the vocabulary to be learned.
  - a. Learn the words in related groups, not in isolation. Make categories such as classroom objects, foods, buildings, or compliments and insults, etc.
  - b. Group words by use (parts of speech) such as by nouns, pronouns,
  - c. adjectives, adverbs, verbs, prepositions, and conjunctions.
  - d. Invent a meaningful sentence or acronym to group words that are actually unrelated. (This is called a mnemonic device.)
13. Use dramatics, body language, pantomime. Act out the words, because you tend to remember what you have experienced.
14. Learn "easy" words first, then concentrate your efforts and most of your time on the items you find more difficult to remember.
15. Make flashcards. Put a picture on one side and the word on the other. Drill.
  - a. Use brand names that mean something to you: if you have a Trek bike, write Trek on one side and the foreign language equivalent on the other.
  - b. Write names of people who remind you of certain words: if you think Tom Cruise is handsome, write "Tom Cruise" one side and the foreign language adjective on the other.
16. Experiment to identify and maximize your best learning styles.
  - a. Visual: Many people remember things better if they have seen them. Read and reread aloud the vocabulary. Look at the spelling carefully. Close your eyes and visualize the words, or write them from memory, until you can do it easily. Draw pictures to illustrate words. Memorize in front of a mirror, use appropriate gestures.

## The Natural Approach

- a. *Meaningful and comprehensible input is essential to language acquisition.*
- b. *Comprehension precedes production.*
- c. *Speech emerges gradually.*
- d. *Some errors in grammar are to be expected in student speech, as a natural part of the acquisition process.*
- e. *Students acquire language only in a low-anxiety environment.*
- f. *Group work fosters communication and creates community.*
- g. *Grammar study is a useful part of classroom language acquisition, but not the primary goal of the course.*
- h. *Acquisition involves a continuum.*

Based on Tracy D. Terrell's *Natural Approach* and Stephen D. Krashen's *Monitor Model*.

- b. **Tactile:** Write new words and their meanings from memory until you can write them easily. At first, copy from a written source, then try to write from memory. Act out words. Touch the object while saying the word.
  - c. **Audio:** Repeat the words aloud, and then spell them aloud, until you can say them easily. (When possible, use the alphabet and sounds of the target language to do so.) Record the new vocabulary items, with their meanings, on tape three or four times. Listen to your tape. Test your memory by repeating new words from memory. Use the word in sentences and say it aloud to review. Some people find that rhythmically clapping for each syllable while reciting aloud is a help to their memory.
17. Use your vocabulary as often as possible. Answer in the foreign language in class. Teach your family some words. Try to find a foreign language radio station or CDs or tapes to listen to, television channel to watch, magazine or book to read, native speaker with whom to speak.
  18. Idle time is also study time. Try to spend otherwise nonproductive time studying your foreign language. For example, when learning numbers, say your friend's phone numbers in the language you are studying before dialing them, read license plates off from cars, read numbers on houses, say room numbers before entering the room. Or, if you are studying descriptive adjectives, describe people to yourself as you walk to class. These spontaneous study sessions are a good way to learn quickly and painlessly while retaining a great deal.
  19. Review until your vocabulary is in your permanent memory. Newly memorized vocabulary should be reviewed ten minutes after initial learning, sixty minutes after that, and again twenty-four hours later. You should then review about every two days until recall is automatic.

*“Every language is a temple in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined.”*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

*“A Man who does not know foreign languages is ignorant of his own.”*

Goethe

*“Slovenly language corrodes the mind.”*

James Truslow Adams

*“Language, as well as the faculty of speech, was the immediate gift of God.”*

Noah Webster

*“Language is the dress of thought.”*

Samuel Johnson

*“English-only” is a curable sickness.*

JRW

20. In taking notes, consider leaving large empty spaces in order to fill in the spaces later with information you may have missed. Use a symbol that signals you’ve missed something so you can remember to go back to it. In speaking after class with the instructor or your fellow classmates, you may be able to fill in most of those blank spaces.

### **Tips for learning verbs**

21. Memorize verb forms and review them often.
22. Try keeping a verb notebook where you can make note of irregular verb forms and study them daily.
23. Practice conjugating verbs out loud, so you get used to how they sound.
24. Practice forming different verb tenses with note cards. Make 3 stacks of note cards: 1) different verbs in their infinitive form; 2) pronouns such as the subject pronouns, etc.; 3) different verb tenses such as the future, preterit, imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive, etc. Then shuffle up each stack of cards and choose a card from each stack, orally saying the verb form (or you can write it down). As you learn more verbs and verb tenses you can make your stacks grow, thus you will be learning. This is an excellent way to practice the irregular verbs.
25. Practice verbs in context by creating sentences that use the different forms. Also remember to practice forming questions.
26. Make a habit of using your verb notebook to conjugate new verbs; practice writing short compositions using a variety of verb forms.

### **Tips for learning grammar**

27. Sometimes not understanding something in the grammar lessons of the chapter is caused by not really knowing how it looks and sounds in English—use the available resources to learn two languages at once: your own and the one you are studying in class!
28. Practice, practice, practice...
29. Practice using each grammar point in context. Write sample sentences, and then go back to make sure they are correct.
30. Do extra exercises out of the textbook and workbooks. See me if you want corrections made.

*"Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born - the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things.."*

Aldous Huxley

*"The quality of our thoughts is bordered on all sides by our facility with language."*

J. Michael Straczynski

*"Arguments over grammar and style are often as fierce as those over IBM versus Mac, and as fruitless as Coke versus Pepsi and boxers versus briefs."*

Jack Lynch

*"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely... Broad, wholesome, charitable views...cannot be acquired by vegetating in one's little corner of the earth."*

Mark Twain

31. A great way to study is to work with a partner. Using the grammar from class, have short practice conversations.

### **Tips for using the workbook and other handouts**

32. Do homework when it is assigned, a little at a time; don't leave it all until the night before it is due.
33. Study before trying to do the activities.
34. Check your answers with care. Pay special attention to the spelling and accent marks. Write corrections above your errors in a different color ink.
35. Learn from your mistakes. Write personal notes in the margins to explain or clarify the reason for correction. Make note of any questions you want to be sure to ask your professor about in class the next time you meet.
36. When reviewing for exams, pay specific attention to the notes that you made in the margins.

### **Tips for using the audio portion of the course**

37. Listen to and do the pronunciation practice exercises when you begin to study each chapter.
38. Do the rest of the lab activities after studying each chapter.
39. Read the directions and items in each activity of your lab manual before listening to the recordings.
40. You are not expected to understand every word that you hear on the recordings. All that you need to be able to do is to comprehend enough information to complete the activities in the Lab Manual.
41. Listen to the recordings as many times as may be needed. Pause and rewind frequently.
42. After correcting your answers in the Lab Manual, listen to the tape again. Having the answers will help you hear what you have missed the first time.