



Who am I as a good teacher and my advises to students

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Abstract

What is the difference between effective and efficient? Let's say you had to travel from Rome to Paris; what means of transportation would you use? You could walk, run, ride a bike, drive a car, use a motorcycle, take a train, or fly (by plane). All of these methods of transportation are effective, they work; you will get there. But, which methods require the least amount of energy and accomplish the job in the shortest period of time? These methods are the most efficient. I am sure you would agree that traveling by plane is more efficient than riding a bike although Armstrong might not agree.

Learning English can be broken down into two areas: input and output. Input consists of reading and listening while output consists of writing and speaking. Clearly, in order to have good quality output, you must have a lot of good quality input. Think of how long a child listens before beginning to speak. As adults, we are not going to wait two years before attempting to speak, but the more input we get, the more output we can produce. The same applies for reading and writing. The more you read, the better you write. I can even say that the more you read, write and listen, the better you speak.

My advice to serious English learners is to approach your goal with a sense of urgency. That means you need to work effectively, but more importantly, you need to work efficiently. Based on my years of teaching and studying foreign languages, I have put together what I consider to be the most effective and efficient ways to develop each area of.

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Introduction: Reading

Learn at least five new vocabulary words every day. My suggestion is to use index cards with the word on one side and the definition on the other. Keep the cards in a box and review them frequently by saying the word and trying to give the definition. Keep the definitions as short and concise as possible. Five to seven words is best. If you learn five words a day, that's 1,825 words per year. Considering that the average high school student probably has a vocabulary of 5,000 to 6,000 words, in a few years your vocabulary should be sufficient enough to understand nearly everything written in English.

Time commitment: 30 minutes.

Listening

Listen to talk radio. The objective of listening to English is to hear as many words as possible in as short a period as possible. The more times you hear a word, the better you will be able to use that word. There is no more efficient way to do this than talk radio. The vocabulary is very diverse and there are no periods of silence because unlike television, visuals cannot be used to keep an audience's attention. The key is to listen as often as possible. Maximize your time by listening to talk radio when doing other activities such as driving, walking, cooking, eating, getting dressed. If you can, try keeping the radio on while you go to sleep so it's the last thing you hear while falling asleep and the first thing you hear as you wake up.

Output

Writing

Keep a journal and write at least 500 words per day. By writing every day you will be reinforcing everything you have learned. It will also force you to question the accuracy

of what you are writing. This process of intense concentration will help organize the vast array of information you have in your subconscious mind. Write about whatever you want, but be sure to challenge yourself with new vocabulary and various grammar structures.

Time commitment: 30 minutes.

Speaking

Read aloud. Reading aloud allows you to practice perfectly. Remember that it is perfect practice that makes perfect. By reading aloud you are speaking grammatically perfect English. If you have a typical conversation, errors will be made. Not just for English learners, but for native speakers as well. If errors are repeated continually, it becomes increasingly more difficult to correct those errors. Also, you will be using vocabulary words that you would not normally use. In a typical one hour conversation, you might speak for 30 minutes with a number of errors, but if you read aloud, you can speak for one hour without any grammar mistakes using new vocabulary words.

Time commitment: 1-2 hours minimum.

Here are 101 things (in no particular order) you can do to improve your English

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Be confident. People can only correct your mistakes when they hear you make them.

Surround yourself in English. Put yourself in an all English speaking environment where you can learn passively. The best way to learn is through speaking.

Practise every day. Make yourself a study plan. Decide how much time a week you are going to spend studying and stick to it. Establish a routine.

Tell your family and friends about your study plan. Get them to push you to study and also don't let them interrupt you.

Practise the 4 core skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. They all need to be worked on for you to improve. Keep a notebook of new words you learn. Use them in sentences and try to say them at least 3 times when you speak.

Visit EC's free learn English website at least once a day and complete a lesson.

Memorisation of lists is one of the most common ways of learning vocabulary for a test. It's only a good exercise for short term studying because you often do not retain the information that you have learned for a test.

Use your body clock. If you're not a morning person, study in the afternoon.

You will find words easier to remember if you try to remember an example sentence using that word rather the word on its own.

Plan to take a test. You'll find that you work harder when you need to study for something.

Saying that, it's better not to study just to take a test. Think of the bigger picture. What can you do when you have a good command of English? How will the quality of your life improve?

Give yourself a long term goal. Focus on working towards it.

Give yourself short term goals too and reward yourself when you achieve each one.

Create an atmosphere in which you want to learn, not because you have to. You'll learn more when you're learning because you want to.

Know what works best for you. Think about what methods have been successful for you in the past and stick with them. Figure out how you learn. It can be by memorising, reading, speaking, summarising or other methods. Find out how you study best. It can be in a quiet place by yourself or with a group.

Get help! If you don't understand something you've got to ask someone. Ask your teacher, classmates or friends for help.

Review! Review! Review! Make sure that you take the time to review things you have studied in the past.

It's not a good idea to study on your own for more than 30 minutes at a time. Take regular breaks, get some fresh air and stretch your legs.

Don't be in such a hurry to move up a level. Concentrate on the level you are at now.

Watch DVDs rather than TV. It's better to use something that you can watch over again to catch information you might have missed the first time.

Watching TV only gives you the chance to hear something correctly first time. This is better for high level students. It can be great practice for speaking to native English speakers so you don't have to ask them to repeat themselves!

Read graded readers. These books are especially written for your level. Read a whole novel. You can do it! You'll feel great afterwards.

Children's books have easier words and are a good alternative to graded readers.

Newspapers are a good place to find passive constructs. Read through an article and see if you can find the passive sentences.

Read for the general meaning first. Don't worry about understanding every word, then go back and look up new words.

For a word you don't understand in a sentence, look at the

other words around it. They will give you a hint. Try to guess the meaning from the context.

Learn root words. They'll help you guess the meaning of words. For example: scrib = write, min = small

When you learn a new word, think of all its other forms: Beautiful (adjective), beauty (noun), beautifully (adverb).

Learn prefixes (dis-, un-, re-) and suffixes (-ly, -ment, -ful), these will help you to figure out the meaning of words and build your vocabulary.

English, unlike Japanese or French, uses word stress. For new words, count the syllables and find where the stress is. Only one stress per word and always on a vowel. Two syllable verbs have a stress on the second syllable (begin). 2 syllable nouns (Teacher) and adjectives (Happy) stress the first.

Use English whenever you can. It's as simple as that!

Don't translate into English from your own language. Think in English to improve your fluency. Talk to yourself...but not on the bus otherwise people will think you have gone crazy!

You can't learn English from a book. Like driving a car, you can only learn through doing it.

The most natural way to learn grammar is through talking.

Keep an English diary or journal. Start by writing a few sentences a day and then get into the habit of writing more.

Why not start an online blog and share your writings with the world?

To become a better writer brainstorm as many ideas and thoughts onto paper without worrying about grammar or spelling. Then think about the structure. After that, write your piece using good grammar and spelling. Finally, read it through or give it to someone else to check for mistakes.

Keep an eye on your punctuation as it can totally change what you're trying to say. Check out the difference in meaning between these two sentences: "A woman without her man is nothing" and "A woman: without her, man is nothing".

Sing your heart out! Show the world your beautiful voice! Learn English songs and sing along with them to improve fluency and intonation... anyone for Karaoke?

Get a pen friend or use chat-rooms, forums and community sites. If you can't speak to someone in English, this is the next best thing.

Shadow English CDs. Listen to a few sentences then repeat what you heard. Focus on the rhythm and intonation.

Have English radio on in your house. Even if you are not actively listening to it, you will still be training your ears.

Mirror CDs. Read out loud along with a CD. Again, this is great for intonation, pronunciation and rhythm.

Dictation. Listen to a CD or friend and write down what you hear.

Nobody likes to hear their own voice, but be brave and try it! Record your voice and listen to your pronunciation and intonation. It will help you to identify your problem areas.

Ask your helpful teacher if you can record his lesson. This is a great way to review. You can also listen to your teachers speaking speed and intonation.

Use an English/English dictionary as it will help you to keep thinking in English and not translating.

If an English/English dictionary seems scary, there are learner's dictionaries for English students of your Level.

Don't become too reliant on your dictionary. Your dictionary should be an aid, not your main teacher. Try to guess the meaning of words rather than going straight for

your dictionary.

Stay positive! Sometimes you will feel that you aren't learning quickly enough. Enjoy it! We learn more when we are having fun!

If you get nervous when speaking, take two deep breaths before you say something. You'll speak better when you feel relaxed.

Keep yourself motivated by looking back at the textbooks and CDs you used in the Past. You'll be surprised at how easy they seem to you now! Congratulations, your level is improving!

You are never too young or too old to start learning English. Don't make excuses not to learn. What are you waiting for? Procrastination can stop you from being successful. To stop procrastinating, it's important you understand if your procrastinating is to avoid studying, or if it is your bad habit. If you haven't gotten the results you wanted yet, it's not because you're bad at languages, it's because you haven't found your own special way of learning yet.

Use resources which match your level. Don't use texts/listening exercises which are too difficult or too easy. Use materials which challenge you but don't frustrate you.

Don't worry about making your accent perfect. It's an important part of your cultural identity to keep your accent. Native English speakers enjoy hearing English spoken with an accent.

There are many types of English: British, American, South African and so on. None of these are wrong or not as important. English is English.

Instead, be aware of the differences in American and British English and use your words accordingly. For example: Elevator (US) / Lift (British).

Carry cue cards with you. These are small cards which you can write new words on. You can pull them out and look at them whenever you have a free minute.

Use post-it notes and stick them around your home. You can use them to label things. Stick one on your pet dog!

You can't ignore phrasal verbs (two words verbs), there are hundreds of them in English and they're widely used. The more you focus on their meaning, the more you'll be able to guess the meaning of new ones. You'll start to recognize their patterns.

Use your intuition. Go with your gut feeling, you'll be surprised how often your first guess is the right guess. Like we said before, be confident.

Gather your thoughts. Take a second to think about what you're going to say. You know the grammar, but maybe you don't use it correctly when you speak.

Meet new people. Make the effort to mix with English speakers in your town. You could join a club or go to bars where foreigners hang out. Buy one a drink, they love that!

Be the person to start conversations in English. Try to keep the conversations moving and use listening words ('really?' / 'go on...' / 'what happened then?') Don't wait for others to speak to you. Get in there!

Debate. Discuss topics in a group. Each person should choose a viewpoint (even if you don't agree with it) and debate it within the group. Make sure you get your point across. Learn to listen actively. Active listening will help in

the classroom and it will help you get more out of, and contribute more to, group study sessions. Focus on the person who is talking. Don't fidget or become distracted by other people or events. Concentrate on the speaker with your ears and eyes. Follow the movements the speaker makes in an effort to hear more. It may help to repeat what you hear others say in an effort to understand their thoughts. It's not enough to only learn English words. You can teach a parrot English words but that doesn't mean it can speak English! You still need to have an understanding of grammar.

Verb tenses are used by English speakers to talk about the timing of actions. You might not have the same expressions in your own language. It's important that you know these tenses and when to use them.

English has many irregular verbs. You should drill yourself on them.

Keep it up! If you take a break from speaking English, you will find that your level decreases and all your hard work has been wasted.

Don't be put off by a bad test score. Sometimes students have the ability to pass an English test, but can't communicate well with English speakers. If you can speak freely in English, you should be proud of yourself.

Remember that as long as you have tried your hardest, you have succeeded!

Learn English with a friend. You'll have someone you can practice with and you can motivate each other to study.

Remember, the way we write English is not the same as how it's pronounced. For example 'Ough' has over 6 pronunciations. Familiarize yourself the Phonetic Alphabet.

It will help you correctly pronounce words in the dictionary. Get used to the 'schwa' sound [ə] - an unstressed and toneless neutral vowel sound. 'Schwa' is the most common vowel sound in English. For example, the 'a' in about and the 'u' in supply.

Keep in mind that it takes longer to improve when our level is high. Usually the fastest progress is made when we are beginners. Don't think that you're suddenly not learning anymore, it's just a less noticeable progress.

Make sure that your English matches the occasion. It's OK to use slang with friends but not in a business meeting. Decide in which situation it's appropriate to use the words and phrases you have learned.

Textbook English is often different from the way we casually speak. To learn casual 'slang' watch movies.

Use the correct article (a/an, the). Be aware that there is more to this rule than a/an= non specific, the=specific. For example: A university (not an university because it begins with a consonant sound). An hour (not a hour because the 'h' is often silent).

For fluency, try image training. Before you go to that restaurant think through what the waiter is likely to say to you. The easiest one - Sleep! You'll learn more after a good night's sleep. You'll be able to concentrate more.

Take an English course in an English speaking country. If you studying abroad, mix with people from other countries. Enjoy a more cultural experience by spending

time with other nationalities.

Get yourself a teacher.

Find a comfortable, peaceful place for quiet study. You need somewhere where you can focus 180 % what you are reading

Last but not least, learn English with LOVE

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