

Extra Class - Developing Learner Autonomy

Background

It is fairly well established that in order to learn a language successfully and to be able to use it effectively in a university context, more than two-three hours a week of exposure to the target language are required. We have seen that most of our students start at proficiency levels that need to be developed further to do university study effectively but do not always have enough time alongside their regular work. This is especially true for University students doing Bachelors of English literature or English education whose first language is not English. This means that both developing learner autonomy as well as extensive reading and listening are of utmost importance.

Class Description

Learner autonomy is said to be 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Holec). In language terms this involves among other things, becoming more independent and aware of one's own learning styles and developing learning strategies. This completely voluntary class is for students who recognise the importance of learner autonomy and want to learn ways of becoming more autonomous and supporting that learning despite the constraints of student life. The class will also include a **reading and listening project, intensive reading activities, ways of noticing grammar and vocabulary and speaking and pronunciation activities**. Some classes will be left open so that **students can decide what topics and areas they would like to focus on**.

Duration: 6 weeks starting the week beginning 28th April 2015. Classes will be twice a week, on **Tuesday** beginning **6pm** and **Thursday**, beginning **4pm**. For details, see 'Class Structure' below.

Who can join: Students of Anglistik/Amerikanistik.

Homework and commitment: The course is completely voluntary but will require commitment. If you register you will be expected to attend the entire course. Please email me at tanya.matthew@uni-paderborn.de to register. The course will run if it has a minimum of five students. The homework will involve making some small changes to your daily routine to include some amount of targeted exposure to language. You will also be expected to read and listen to something in English regularly – ideally around 30 minutes a day. It could be a novel, a short story, newspaper articles, a blog, the radio, audio books or whatever you wish.

What the course is not: Extra tuitions to pass the CLC Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced courses.

Please note that you will not get any credit points for doing the course.

For further clarifications please email me or meet me during office hours.

Goals

To encourage learners to become more autonomous.

To explore ways of doing so (intensive reading, listening activities, using media, managing time, setting goals, doing as much as possible with given time constraints).

To develop a reading habit (extensive reading or reading for pleasure)

To notice grammar while reading – in class activities, using word and phrase.com and dictionaries.

A goal for the teacher - To scaffold and support students' learning and help create motivation and interest (through discussions in class, showing them ways of doing so).

Class Structure

Two classes a week, the first one for 1.5 hours and the second for 1 hour.

Class 1

- The reading project

Over six weeks students choose what they want to read, start reading, discuss what they've read and start applying the 'noticing' techniques they've learnt in class. These could even be texts that they are expected to read as part of their syllabus. Eventually, students will also present what they've learnt. We will look at ways of remembering useful words, phrases and grammar through reinforcing and repeating them.

- Analysis of one reading text with focus on noticing grammar and vocabulary + usually with a follow-up grammar exercise or speaking tasks.

Class 2

- Speaking task/open activities – students can structure these themselves

Final project/presentation/performance – depending on the interests of the group, students can work on a final project, showcasing some of the techniques they have learnt or any of the areas they have worked on (vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.). This could be in the form of a play, a presentation, a video, etc.

Students will get a final certificate of participation.

