

LEARNING ACTIVITY GUIDE

Guide For Working With Your Language Helper

I. PURPOSE

A. Linguistic

1. Practice Fluency - Speaking smoothly and evenly: gaining command of the language in full sentences; learning and improving the practical skill of putting your thoughts smoothly into the target language.
2. Practice pronunciation - try to say everything exactly as your helper (or tutor) says it -- isolate problems and work on them one at a time.
 - a. Work on vowels, consonants, rhythm, intonation; work in drill lists: a list of different words with the same sound, starting with the same sound, ending with the same sound, having the same consonant in the middle, the same vowel in the stressed syllable, etc. This will reinforce your work on one particular feature, limiting time needed for review later on the same feature.
 - b. A tape recorder will enable you to compare critically your pronunciation with your helper's.
3. Grammar (formal) is secondary or incidental - this can be dealt with best in phrase work, along with fluency, with full phrase practice. Set up short verb phrases; noun-adjective phrases; drill-list of several different verbs with the same tense, same ending, same object, same relative, etc. Practice to establish the pattern in your sub-conscious. One feature at a time.

B. Cultural

1. Items to learn and discuss: How members of African cultures think about things, reason things out, deal with various problems and questions, how they come to decisions (the factors they consider, what factors are given the greatest significance.
2. Two stages
 - a. First, information - communicating, questioning, eliciting information and explanations; UNDERSTANDING, organizing
 - b. Then, feelings, ideas, beliefs - learning cultural "world-view" in order to know how to relate your ideas to their world-view: APPRECIATING and using their thought patterns.

II. FORMAT

- A. Learner-Directed:** YOU determine subject matter and guide the session; the helper is a resource person for you.

1. Prepare ahead of time what you want to work on. Have a basic plan.
2. Deal with one particular topic or problem feature at a time.

3. Elicit - Describe a situation to your helper (as a setting for what you want to know or learn): who, what, where, when, why.
4. Direct: Clearly explain what you want to know or what you want to do, how you want to use the materials you have.
5. Record: Write down or tape the correct word, phrase or action given by your helper. This is particularly helpful on drills for pronunciation, or phrase/sentence drills for grammar patterns -- taped drills can be used over and over for repeat practice on persistent problems.
6. Avoid abstract explanations; work on settings and usages for meaning.
7. Practice
 - a. Phrases or pronunciation word-lists:
 - Listen 3 times
 - Repeat 3 times
 - Say 3 times
 - b. Cultural matters: Discuss or act out, preferably in the target language.

Discuss writings on a particular subject from any book or article - in your target language. Note special words you need to talk about this topic or question.

B. Indirect method

1. Do not ask for word definitions or equivalents of English words (there are very few equivalents) or grammar explanations (your helper will not usually be a grammar teacher). Even if you get a good explanation, you still have to go through the practice and experience of using it to really know what it means. **LEARN MEANING THROUGH USAGE, EXAMPLES.**
2. Do ask for examples of use in sentences - 3 or 4 examples to give you the context of the word, the proper use of the grammar feature; use pictures or objects. **LEARN BY EXPERIENCE, NOT BY EXPLANATION** -- Learn the language, not just about the language.
3. Keep records and come to your own conclusions -use it as you hear it used. **Be INDEPENDENT** - do not limit yourself by depending on whatever explanation you may get. Rather build your own powers of analysis and generalization from your observation of usages.

C. Keep It Oral - Do the kinds of things that give you as much practice as possible in listening and speaking.

D. You do not need to know the language -- You need to know **how to speak** and understand the language.

E. Be systematic - Plan ahead, keep notes by subject.

III. POSSIBLE SUBJECTS of Sessions

A. Texts you have elicited, or topics and sentences from books, exercises, newspaper

1. Practice actual phrases from the lesson
2. Discuss the general subject, new word meaning, application and usage
3. Work on certain words or sounds, certain grammar feature
4. Elicit an easier way to say the same thing
5. Go over review questions on your reading selections in books that have these -- write out ahead of time the answers, then have your helper ask you while you answer orally. Or do them orally first, then review by writing.

B. Pronunciation or grammar problems - ORAL Practice, not just explanations. Set up drills by making lists of words with one sound in all; or of phrases or sentences with the same grammatical feature in all.
LEARN BY REPETITION, NOT BY MEMORY -- LEARN BY PATTERN, NOT BY RULE.

C. Subjects related to your particular area of work, interests, disciplines of education, science, industry, plants, sports, parts of the body, medical items, diseases, treatments, etc.