Self-Directed Learning for English Language Learners

英語自主学習方法における考案

Jason Donald Arndt, アーント・ジェーソン・ドナルド
Tamagawa University, Center for English as a Lingua Franca, Japan
j.arndt@lab.tamagawa.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

Self-directed learning requires second language learners to take ownership of their language acquisition by making choices about how to proceed with their language education outside of a traditional teacher centered classroom. This paper contains a handout that was designed to raise motivated second language learners' awareness of the directions their self-directed language learning may take. The handout's six sections cover topics such as: learner needs analysis; goals & objectives; materials selection; learner strategies; self-assessment; and self-reflection. Japanese university students are the intended recipients of the handout. The handout is a prototype because it has not been field tested as of the time of writing.

KEYWORDS: Self-directed learning, Autonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

As an English teacher in Japan, I have been asked by various students for recommendations about what to study outside of the normal textbook. These students are first and second year English language students at a Japanese university. At these times I usually make a suggestion about one particular aspect the student should practice, such as listening comprehension, and recommend one activity they can do to improve on that particular area of focus.

These suggestions seem inadequate considering how complicated it is to learn a second language. True learning requires a deeper commitment on the part of the student. Instead of being passive participants, language students are in the unique position of being able to initiate their own goals, learning strategies and learning styles to maximize their language learning experience (Pemberton & Cooker, 2012). This means language students should become active contributors to their own learning.

2. REASON FOR STUDY

In response to these encounters, I have created a handout to expose the university students to the concept of self-directed learning and to provide them with a tool which they can use to develop their independent English study skills outside of the traditional classroom setting (see Appendices A, B, & C). The target students for this handout are Japanese university students. However, the focus areas that will be further discussed can easily be modified to fit the needs of any English language learner. These students should focus not only on current needs, but future needs as working professionals.

The aim of this handout was to raise student's awareness about the possibilities and directions their self-directed learning can take. The handout attached to this paper was intended to assist a motivated English language learner to take ownership of their own learning process and become an autonomous language learner who can direct their course of study in the manner that is most beneficial for himself or herself. It is not intended to be used in isolation, without guidance. A language instructor or language advisor will need to facilitate student learning by providing guidance, helping the learner select materials, set goals, choose strategies, and provide encouragement as the learner negotiates this new process (Du, 2013).

At the time of writing, the handout is only a prototype which has not yet been used by individual students or introduced in a classroom setting. The author primarily teaches first year Japanese university students. Patterson, Crooks, & Lunyk-Child (2002) identified six competencies that students must possess in order to be successful self-directed learners. These are: assessment of learning gaps; evaluation of self and others; reflection; information management; critical thinking, and critical appraisal. The majority of first year university students have not developed their language learning skills to the points specified by the authors. Older university students are more likely to have the skills necessary to successfully use self-directed learning to advance their second language acquisition.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-directed learning (SDL) is based upon the ideas of learner autonomy. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as "the learner's capacity to take control over their own learning" (as cited in Reinders, 2010, p. 40). Knowles (1975) defines self-directed learning as:

> …a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and mental resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (p.18).

Knowles also stated that students who are proactive learners will learn more and remember it better than those who are reactive learners. Based on Knowles' observations, the autonomous learner is more likely to be invested in their learning and more likely to be successful in their language learning experience. Benson (2011) argues that it is the natural progression for language learners to take control of their learning. He reasons that if learners lack autonomy, they are capable of developing it. Furthermore, Benson emphasizes that autonomous language learning is more effective for the learner than dependent language learning. King (2011) recognizes the importance learner autonomy has in relation to language learning precisely because it allows the student to gain control of their language acquisition. It is reasoned that the more a student has control over their learning, the more invested they will become in their growth as a language learner. For these reasons autonomous learning has the potential to greatly increase student learning through self-empowerment.

Autonomous learning is done outside of the traditional classroom and is therefore more flexible in its environment and content. Reinders and White (2016) attribute four modalities to autonomous learning: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control. Location refers to the setting in which learning takes place. Some universities and language learning institutions have self-access learning centers in which dedicated learning advisors assist language learners on their path toward autonomy. Formality refers to the degree to which learning is linked to organized courses. Pedagogy refers to the degree to which actual teaching is involved. Locus of control means how much control the student has over the choices for their learning.

The desired outcome of the self-directed learning process is for the English language learner to take responsibility for their own learning. Research shows that students who are more invested in their learning experience are more likely to be successful language learners (Mynard, 2011; Reinders, 2010). Those learners are better able to focus on the skill areas that are most needed in order to meet their language goals.

According to Reinders (2010), students will likely need training and a large amount of support before they can become autonomous learners. Language advising is a form of learning support in which guidance is provided to students about their language learning. Whereas teaching and tutoring focus directly on the language itself, advising focuses on how the students should go about learning the language (Reinders, 2008). A language advisor is highly recommended to help raise the students' awareness of the potential for learning outside the classroom and preparing students for self-directed language learning.

Several factors contribute to the success of the self-directed language learner. In a study on the benefits of self-direct learning, Du (2013) found that students with previous experience in self-study at the university level were more likely to have a positive learning experience. Also, students' self-efficacy was linked to performance in his project. Du reported that students who excelled in the project shared these traits: self-confidence, a willingness to take risks, a drive to attain goals, and a strong

intellectual curiosity (Du, 2013).

The largest potential problem with autonomy and self-directed learning is that the students must remain disciplined. A significant amount of self-motivation and critical reflection are required to undertake and pursue autonomous learning. It is the responsibility of the student and the advisor to hold the student accountable if they do not complete their work or if they do not take the time to study. A language teacher, language counselor, or other educational professional that advises the student is a valuable asset to help prevent attrition. Drawing on Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), we all have a universal desire to connect with other people. The relationship between the learner and the advisor can be a motivating factor for the learner in their search for autonomy in language learning. The advisor may provide the student with the incentive to continue on their desired path toward English language acquisition.

4. HANDOUT

Based on the four modals identified by Benson (Benson & White 2016), I envision the handout being used outside of the formal classroom. It will be informal in that it is independent of required university course work. The student is engaging in self-directed learning on his or her own accord. Counseling should take the form of advising, not formal teaching. Students should have control over their choices for goals, materials, and assessment. The following describes the six sections of the handout.

4.1 Needs Analysis

The language needs analysis takes the form of a self-report questionnaire (see Appendix B). The self-report questionnaire utilizes a series of statements related to the skills required to participate in those activities. The student will rate themselves on a 5 point scale regarding their self-perceived ability to perform those tasks. I have based my 5-point scale on Ellis & Sinclair's (1989) self-reporting scale (p. 6-8). The questionnaire takes language learners between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. After considering the results of their self-report questionnaire, the student can then prioritize which areas they need to focus on in their studies. Once their needs have been identified, students can restate those needs in terms of goals and objectives.

Once a learner has made the decision to begin taking ownership of their English language studies, the next step is to identify what areas they need to study. The purpose of a needs analysis is to help students identify their immediate language needs and potential language needs in the future (Brown, 1995). A needs analysis helps students to identify what areas they are likely to participate in and their confidence in those areas (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Reinders, 2010).

4.2 Goals and Objectives

The needs identified in the self-report questionnaire will help learners identify their language goals (Mynard, 2011; Reinders, 2010). A goal refers to a general statement about what must be accomplished in order to satisfy the need of a student (Brown, 1995). Goals provide the student a direction or purpose when studying the language. After completing the self-report questionnaire, each student should examine their findings in order to identify which areas and skills they wish to focus on. An example of a goal would be the improvement of presentation skills. In order to reach this goal, the student must consider the steps necessary to improve his or her presentation skills. These steps can be called objectives.

An objective refers to a precise statement about the skills a student must accomplish in order to reach the goal (Brown, 1995). Objectives are the specific steps that a student must take in order to accomplish a goal. For the goal of improving presentation skills, objectives could include organizing a presentation into an opening, body, and closing; identifying the four parts of a presentation opening; identify and choose appropriate opening statements; identify and choose introductory statements, etc.

4.3 Selecting Materials

After the formulation of goals and objectives, the student must then select materials for their study (Brown, 1995; Reinders, 2010). The modern language learner has a greater variety of English language learning materials to choose from than ever before. These can include more traditional language learning materials such as textbooks, reference books, or human resources. They can also include realia such as news reports, business reports, financial documents, press releases, etc. Technology and the internet have provided a seemingly endless array of language learning software and interactive websites. The student should select materials which focus on the needs identified in the self-report questionnaire. A language advisor can provide direction if the student is unsure about which materials are best suited to their needs.

Brown (1995) classifies materials development into three categories; adopting materials, creating new materials, or adapting existing materials. Adopting materials refers to using materials as they appear without the need to alter them. Examples of these types of materials are textbooks, newspapers & magazines, the internet or podcasts. Creating new materials requires the student to take a creative role in making their own, unique materials to assist their learning. Examples of such resources are flashcards, journals, or word lists. The final form mentioned by Brown (1995) is to adapt existing materials. This means altering any existing materials to better suit the needs of the student. No matter what types of materials are chosen, the materials should be suitable to the student's methods of learning. For example, a student who likes listening to lectures could listen to podcasts as part of their studies.

4.4 Learner Strategies

Once the learner has selected the appropriate materials for their development, they need to choose strategies to learn these materials and practice their language skills (Mynard, 2011). Cohen (2012) defined learner strategies as a learner's thoughts and actions, which are considered and executed, to assist the learner in carrying out a task at multiple levels. Reinders (2010) placed learning strategies into three main categories; cognitive, metacognitive, and affective. Cognitive strategies refer to how individuals process information and complete problem solving (Griffiths, 2012). Metacognitive strategies require a learner to consider and evaluate their own thinking process (Anderson, 2012). Affective strategies refer to the learner finding different opportunities to use the English language outside of a controlled setting (Reinders, 2010).

The center for the advanced research on language acquisition at the University of Minnesota published a language strategy survey to help learners identify strategies for language learning (http://www.carla.umn.edu/about/profiles/cohenpapers/lg_strat_srvy.html). These strategies are largely cognitive and affective strategies. The URL for the website is included in the handout. This survey takes the average language learner between 15 and 20 minutes to complete.

4.5 Self-Assessment

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the self-directed learning curriculum, the student must be able to assess their English learning progress (Luoma, 2013). Self-assessment of their learning progress will allow the learner to see where they have improved their language skills and where they should continue to focus their attention in future studies (Reinders, 2010). The learner's motivation to continue studying English is heavily influenced by their ability to see themselves making progress towards their learning goals (Reinders, 2010). Therefore, self-assessment of the learning progress is vital for a successful self-directed learning curriculum.

Self-assessment should be completed at regular intervals in the student's learning progress. Luoma (2013) states self-directed learning should progress in small intervals, with the guidance of an advisor. The reason for this is that learners may find the self-assessment portion of the curriculum to be challenging and possibly demotivating because the learner may not see themselves as making progress toward their goals. Professional educators may see the progress the learner is unable to see for themselves. Therefore it is highly recommended that learners seek out expert assistance when trying to measure their learning progress.

The self-report questionnaire (see Appendix B) is one tool the learner can use for self-assessment. What other forms of self-assessment are possible? Can-do statements and learning portfolios are two types of self-assessment tools that provide a variety of quantitative and qualitative data on learner's progress. Can-do statements provide learners with an opportunity to quickly measure their language acquisition progress by reading a statement and deciding if they can perform the task specified in

the statement, or they cannot (see Appendix C). The learners will be able to use the can do statements as a type of checklist to self-assess their confidence in ability to complete the tasks that are listed in Appendix C. A checklist such as this is useful for quantitatively measuring student learning progress. In order to get a more qualitative understanding of the student's learning progress, it is useful to look at the learner's efforts holistically. One method of doing this is for the students to collect their language work in a learning portfolio.

Learning portfolios are a collection of the work produced by the student as they learn English (Nunes, 2004). The student's portfolio should contain examples of the student's work generated through the self-directed learning curriculum. It is recommended for the student to review the components of their collection with an advisor.

What kinds of materials can be included in the learning portfolios? For writing components, student's essays and diaries can be included. The student can select an article to read that is appropriate for their ability levels. The student can then write a summary of the article. This summary can be corrected by the student or it can be corrected by another person. Similarly, students can write short essays on a topic of their choice. These essays can also be corrected by an advisor or self-corrected. A learning diary is is an account of which activities the learner is doing, how often they are doing them, and what are the results of those activities. The student should review the diary often and compare the types of activities they used to promote learning in order to see which ones are most effective. Critical comparisons are essential in order to focus on and improve areas that require further attention (Reinders, 2010).

For listening practice, the student can purchase a listening comprehension text book. With this type of material, a student can listen to a CD recording and write down what they hear. The student can then verify the accuracy of his or her writings by comparing their written account against the transcript of the CD. Similarly, the websites Voice of America (m.learningenglish.voanews.com) and Breaking News English (breakingnewsenglish.com) are English learning websites which offer news broadcasts aimed at English language learners. News reports are modified for different language ability levels. The audio recording of a news story is available as well as the transcript of the news broadcast. The student's transcription, along with the corrections, can be included in the learning portfolio.

Speaking is the final category that should be considered when planning portfolio submissions. A 4-3-2 activity can be self-administered by the student to practice fluency training (Arevart & Nation, 1991). This type of activity should be audio or video recorded. For presentation practice, the student can video record himself or herself giving a presentation on a topic of their choice. The recording can then be corrected by the student or another person. Finally, the student can engage in a conversation with another English speaker and record the encounter with audio or video recording equipment. All recordings should be submitted as part of the portfolio.

All of these suggestions would provide the student with many opportunities to fill their learning portfolio with examples of their development as language learners. Such information will be valuable as a means of measuring the student's language production as well as demonstrating improvement over time.

It should be restated that learners should not be expected to take immediate ownership over their learning. Autonomy in learning requires time and guidance. The student's instructor or advisor should provide steady support and advice for the learner as they make slow and steady progress in their self-directed learning curriculum development (Reinders, 2010).

4.6 Self-Reflection

Self-reflection should be completed in the final phase of the self-directed learning process. During self-reflection, the learner should examine the overall learning experience by reflecting on the components of their curriculum and how they used the curriculum to improve their English language skills. The student should consider of all the information that was used to create the self-directed learning curriculum including; the self-report questionnaire, the materials that were used, how the learner used the materials, the study habits of the student, the time and location of studying, and any assistance that the student received in their learning process (Brown, 1995). This is done in order to identify the things that worked and things that didn't work in the self-directed learning process. Because learning never truly stops, the process is cyclical and can be repeated when the student establishes new goals and objectives, creates new learning materials, and finds new learning strategies to improve their self-directed learning experience (Reinders, 2010).

5. DISCUSSION

As previously stated, the handout containing Appendices A, B, & C are a prototype. The author has envisioned it as a guide to help motivated, Japanese university students take their first steps towards autonomy in their acquisition of English as a second language. The students should pursue their self-directed language studies on their own time, outside of the classroom. The students would need the help of a language advisor. Consultations between the student and the learning advisor would be informal and take place at a mutually accessible location. The student would become responsible for the direction and content of their English language learning. The consultations are the student's opportunity for discussion and feedback on the work they have produced from their studies.

There are several limitations to this concept which must also be addressed. The handout and its intended use are only conceptual at the time of writing. The application of the handout in a real learning environment is absolutely necessary in order to evaluate its effectiveness as a language learning tool. It is likely the handout will require some revisions as it is field-tested. The handout does not specify the ability

level of the intended language learner. However, language students who possess specific language competencies are more likely to be successful as self-directed learners. The language advisor would do well to be selective when encouraging students to pursue self-directed learning. Furthermore, language advisors must consider their own abilities and the resources that are available to help the learner. Without the support of a language department or self-access center, an individual advisor may find it difficult to secure the resources necessary to properly assist the learner.

Consultation with university teachers and language advisors who have experience with self-directed learning may greatly benefit the design and execution of this handout. Securing material and mental resources in preparation for implementation would greatly improve the quality of assistance given to the learner. Finding competent and willing participants for a field test of the handout will highlight areas of the handout which require improvement.

Many future research opportunities exist as this handout is used to guide students in self-directed language learning. Each student's experience should be documented to judge the effectiveness of the handout as well as demonstrate the improvement of the student's language skills. Formal measures of students' improvements through autonomous learning are lacking in the research literature (Reinders, 2008). Any means of documenting the progress of students' learning would be very useful for the self-directed learning community.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper was written as an explanation of the information contained in the self-directed learning handout, self-report questionnaire, and self-assessment can-do statements. These documents are designed to provide a motivated learner with some ideas about how they can take ownership of learning English in order to hone the language skills needed to participate in the academic and the post-academic English speaking world. If the language learner is not prepared to undertake these responsibilities, the learning process will not continue. It is recommended the learner consult with a language advisor as they undertake self-directed learning.

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APPENDIX A

Self-directed learning handout for English language learners

This handout is intended to help you take ownership of your language learning experience by guiding you in the creation of a self-directed language learning curriculum. It is recommended to discuss this learning process with an experienced advisor. This document is only intended to expose you, the learner, to learning opportunities by focusing your English language studies specifically for your academic or post-academic needs. Please consult with your teacher or language advisor as you proceed through your learning experience.

The items listed below should serve as a guide to help you take the steps necessary to identify language needs, set goals to meet those needs, identify materials to help you learn, identify strategies to make the most of your learning experience, and then assess your progress.

1) **Language Needs Analysis:** What activities do you currently perform while using English? What are you likely to use in the future? Circle all that apply:

Presentations   Listening   Email writing   Writing papers

Small talk   General Communication   Interviews   Reading

Self-report questionnaire: What is your comfort level of using English in the areas mentioned above? Are you comfortable making a presentation in English? Can you make small talk in English? Please fill out the attached self-report questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire will highlight the skill areas in which you are proficient and those areas which require further English language practice. It should take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. The areas in which require further practice will be used to form your learning goals.

2) **Goals and Objectives:** Now that your areas of need have been identified, it's your opportunity to create your own goals and objectives for learning.

Goals: Goals refer to general statements about what must be accomplished in order

to satisfy the language needs of a student. Your goals should reflect what you want to be able to do using English. Example goal: I want to improve my presentation skills.

Objectives: Objectives refer to the specific steps that a student must take in order to accomplish a goal. Each goal will require several objectives in order to accomplish the goal. Example: For the goal of improving presentation skills, objectives could be; organizing the presentation into an opening, body and closing; identifying the four parts of a presentation opening; identifying and choosing appropriate opening statements; etc.

Based on the results of the self-report questionnaire, what English language learning goals will you set for yourself? What objectives will help you reach these goals? Create learning goals for yourself to help you focus your English language studies. Several objectives should be listed for each learning goal. These goals and objectives will be the basis for your self-directed learning program.

3) **Materials**: Now that you have identified goals and objectives, it is necessary to select materials to assist your language learning needs. Many types of materials are suitable for English language study. If you are having difficulty finding materials or are unsure of what type would best suit your learning needs, talk to an English instructor for some advice.

Traditional types: textbooks, reference books, human resources, vocabulary lists, flash cards, etc.
Realia: graded readers, emails, reports, classroom assignments, magazines, newspapers, news reports, financial reports, etc.
Technology: internet sites, CD-ROMs, on-line tutor, language learning software, online chat room conversation groups, etc.

The materials you have selected can be used in the form they are found or they can be altered to meet your needs. An alternative is to create your own materials. Feel free to use the materials in the manner that will best help your learning style.

4) **Learner strategies**: Now that you have set your learning goals and selected learning materials, it's time to think about how you learn best and what kinds of learning strategies you could use to be a more efficient learner. What actions or behaviors can you use to increase your English language abilities?

One resource to help you identify your current learning strategies is a language use survey. This survey is designed to help you think about how you learn best and what are some possible new ways to approach language learning. The language

use survey can be found at http://www.carla.umn.edu/about/profiles/cohenpapers/lg_strat_srvy.html

The survey should take approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to complete.

5) **Self-assessment**: Over the course of your English language studies, it is important to chart your learning progress. As you practice English you will create practice works. It is highly recommended to collect your practice works into a learning portfolio. This will serve as a record of your learning progress. This collection will help you see how much you have progressed and which areas you should continue to focus your attention. The items listed below are practice items which will generate works for you portfolio. Looking at the progress you make through your practice works will demonstrate which areas you are improving in and which areas you should increase your focus in order to improve.

For writing practice: •Write a summary of an article of your choice.
•Write an original essay on a topic of your choice.
•Keep a learning diary in which you record new words, phrases, grammar or any other pieces of information to help promote your learning.

For listening practice: •Listen to a recording, write down what you hear, and check the transcript of the recording and compare it to your notes. A listening comprehension textbook may be helpful for this exercise.
•Visit the English learning website Voice of America and use the website's online news source with audio, video, and transcript to write down what you hear and verify its accuracy. http://m.learningenglish.voanews.com/
•Visit the website Breaking News English for free English lessons. The website offers content at seven different ability levels. Students may select the speed at which the recording is played. Written text is also available for students to check their listening accuracy. http://breakingnewsenglish.com/

For speaking practice: •Audio record a 4-3-2 activity to build fluency. Record yourself telling a story or piece of information for four minutes. Then tell the same story in three minutes. Finally, say the same story in two minutes. Audio record all three examples.
•Prepare a short presentation on a topic of your choice. Video record the presentation and review it. Make any corrections you desire to the presentation and then perform the presentation a second time.

•Engage in conversations with English speakers and record the conversations. Review the conversations or areas in which communication became difficult or in which communication broke down. Research the causes of the communication breakdown and ways to repair those breakdowns in the future.

For reading practice:
•Extensive reading requires students to read material that is at or below the student's current reading level. Students will be able to read the material quickly and should not require the use of a dictionary. The website Extensive Reading Central, offers a wide variety of reading texts at different ability levels. The website also offers students vocabulary building activities. http://www.er-central.com/

•Intensive reading requires students to read materials at a level higher than their current reading level. Students will read slowly. Grammar and vocabulary will be difficult.

•Apply the SQ3R technique:
  1. Survey: Skim the text for an overview of main ideas.
  2. Question: The reader asks questions about what they will read about based on the survey of the material.
  3. Read: Read the text while looking for answers to the previously formed questions.
  4. Recite: After you read each section, tell yourself-out loud-what you have just read.
  5. Review: Write a summary of the most important information you have read.

6) **Self-reflection**: After you have spent the time and the energy to create your English learning curriculum, it is very important that you review the choices you made and the activities you practiced. Were your choices effective? Did you meet your learning goals? If yes, what helped the most? If not, what could have been done differently? Were you satisfied with your progress? How did you use your time to study? Where did you study? How often did you consult with an advisor about your language curriculum, progress, activities, or specific questions? Learning is an ongoing process. You are never done. It is now time to take what you have learned and begin the learning cycle again.

APPENDIX B

Self-report questionnaire for English language learners

Adapted from *Learning to learn English: A course in learner training,* (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989).

Adapted from *Teaching by Principles, An interactive approach to pedagogy*, (Brown, 2007).

Read the following statements. Consider your abilities to perform, in English, the tasks listed below. Give yourself a score for each task based on your current ability to complete each task. This questionnaire can be completed in approximately ten to fifteen minutes.

1	2	3	4	5
•Not able to complete the task	•A lot of difficulty completing the task	•Some difficulty completing the task	•Few difficulties completing the task	•No difficulties completing the task
•Errors are likely to stop communication	•Errors are likely to stop communication	•Errors are likely to disrupt communication	•Communication errors are minimal	•Communication is error free

Score	Email Writing	Score	Presentation
	Use an appropriate level of formality for your writing purpose		Identify the three major components of a presentation
	Clearly state why you are writing the email		In the opening of the presentation, provide an appropriate greeting, introduction, purpose statement, and outline of your speech.
	Create topic sentences for each paragraph		Organize the body of the presentation in a logical sequence
	Use transition words to guide the reader through the email		Provide supporting points for each main point in the body
	Write a concluding sentence		Use visual aids/PowerPoint to support your presentation
	Use appropriate vocabulary for the farewell		Provide a summary, conclusion, and future action statements in the closing
			Answer questions from the audience

Score	Writing Papers	Score	Reading
	Select a topic that is appropriate for the writing purpose		Choose reading materials that are at your level and fulfill your learning needs
	Create an outline before writing		Identify the purpose of the author's writing
	Write a thesis statement to give your paper focus		Skim the text for main ideas
	Organize the paper into an opening, body, and conclusion		Scan the text for specific information
	Paragraphs should include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a conclusion		Guess at meaning from the story
			Use the story to understand new vocabulary words

Score	Listening	Score	Small Talk
	Understand the type of speech you are listening to (a conversation, a speech, a news broadcast, etc.)		Introduce yourself to a new person
	Decide the speaker's purpose in speaking (persuade, request, affirm, deny, inform, etc.)		Ask questions with the appropriate level of formality
	Listen for the main idea and supporting ideas		Answer questions with the appropriate level of formality
	Guess at the meaning of unknown words or phrases		Ask logical follow up questions during a conversation
	Use the speaker's facial movements or body language to determine meaning		Politely end a conversation

Score	Interviews	Score	General Communication
	Describe your skills		Asking someone to repeat themselves
	Describe your qualifications		Restating what someone has said in your own words
	Describe your personal qualities		Asking about someone's schedule and availability
	Write a resume in English		Describe your schedule and availability
	Write a cover letter in English		Talk about daily routines
	Talk about your job history		Ask for or give directions to a location

Scores of 1 or 2 indicate areas where English language skills are lacking and should receive focused attention.

A score of 3 indicates further knowledge and practice is recommended.

Scores of 4 or 5 indicate ability to perform these tasks with confidence. Practicing these skills to maintain proficiency is recommended.

The results of this questionnaire should be used to create the learning goals and objectives for your self-directed learning curriculum.

Can-do statements for self-assessment of learning progress

Adapted from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, Can-Do Statements

Adapted from the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, Language strategy use survey

Place a mark in the space to the left of the statements in which you can successfully complete the task written in the statement.

Email writing

___ I can use an appropriate level of formality to write an email for any purpose
___ I can write an appropriate greeting.
___ I can write an appropriate opening sentence.
___ I can create clear topic sentences for each paragraph.
___ I can use transition words to move from paragraph to paragraph.
___ I can write a concluding sentence.
___ I can use appropriate vocabulary to write the farewell.

Presentations

___ I can identify the three major components of a presentation
___ I can create an appropriate greeting, introduction, purpose statement, and outline in the opening of a presentation.
___ I can organize the main points of the body of the presentation into a logical order
___ I can provide supporting points for each main point in the body of the presentation.
___ I can use visual aids in my presentation.
___ I can provide a summary, conclusion, and future action statements in the closing.
___ I can answer questions from the audience in English.

Paper writing

___ I can write a short paragraph about a topic I am familiar with.
___ I can write a paper of three or more paragraphs on a topic I am familiar with.
___ I can write a paper that is more than one page long on a topic I am familiar with.
___ I can write using formal or informal vocabulary and phrases.
___ I can use books, journal articles, and internet resources to support my ideas.
___ I can use other people's writing to support the ideas in my paper.
___ I can cite the work of other people who have influenced my writing.

Listening

___ I can understand greetings and introductions.
___ I can follow simple instructions and directions.
___ I can understand requests and warnings.
___ I can ask for help and permission.
___ I can understand simple small talk and social conversation.
___ I can understand descriptions of people and objects.
___ I can understand events listed in the order they occurred.

Reading

___ I can understand simple social messages.
___ I can understand simple instructions with multiple steps.
___ I can understand information about everyday topics.
___ I can look for and find information written in simple charts, schedules, and forms.
___ I can understand social conversation including common idioms.
___ I can find information in dictionaries, encyclopedias, textbooks, and online.

Small talk

___ I can introduce myself to a new person.
___ I can exchange business cards if necessary.
___ I can ask questions with the appropriate level of formality.
___ I can answer questions with the appropriate level of formality.
___ I can ask logical follow up questions during a conversation.
___ I can use knowledge of a topic to continue a conversation.
___ I can politely end a conversation or excuse myself from a conversation.

General communication

___ I can ask someone to repeat themselves.
___ I can restate what someone has said in my own words.
___ I can ask about someone's schedule and availability.
___ I can describe my schedule and availability to others.
___ I can talk about my daily routine.
___ I can ask for or give directions to a location.

Interviews

___ I can describe my skills.
___ I can describe my qualifications.
___ I can describe my personal qualities.
___ I can write a resume in English.

___ I can write a cover letter in English.
___ I can answer questions about my job history.

After considering all of the statements listed above, you should now be able to see which areas of English you are able participate in with confidence and those areas which require further study and practice.

At this time please think about what activities and learning practices you have used to learn in English in the past. Which activities and learning practices helped you to improve your English learning? Which activities and learning practices did not help you to improve your English learning? What can you change to improve the activities that did help you learn English? It is recommended to seek the advice of a language instructor when considering these questions. As you answer these questions, you and your language advisor can begin creating an English learning curriculum that will help you achieve your English learning goals.