

Module 9

Supporting learning to learn

Introduction

Supporting learning to learn

There are many different ways schools can assist students to learn. These include:

- working with teacher aides/bilingual tutors and support personnel
- working with peer tutors (other students, trained to help their schoolmates)
- setting up self-access learning centres, study support/homework centres or holiday programmes
- training students in self-monitoring and “learning to learn”.

For further information on peer tutoring, self-access learning and setting up homework or study support centres, see Learning Support Options Resource 9A.

Independent learners

Students who are independent learners are likely to make faster progress and achieve more than students who do not know how to learn by themselves and wait for help all the time instead of trying by themselves. Students need to know how to manage their learning when there is no teacher or teacher aide available. They also need to look for learning opportunities outside the classroom.

Independent learning:

- is essential for keeping up the pace of learning
- helps to avoid learned helplessness
- helps students take responsibility for their own learning
- helps students to become fully involved in their own learning.

Learning to learn

“Learning to learn” is the term used to describe how we develop the ability to manage ourselves as learners. Independent learners use strategies they have been taught and apply them to new areas of learning. They monitor, or keep track of how successfully they are learning. This is sometimes called “metacognitive strategising”. Metacognition, or “thinking about how we think” is also explained in *Effective Literacy Practice Years 1-4* (page 26) and *Effective Literacy Practice Years 5-8* (page 27) for primary and intermediate students. *Effective Literacy Strategies Years 9-13*, is a professional development programme for secondary schools which also has a section on learning to learn, pages 20-23.

Before you read the *ELLP* section (see next paragraph), go to the Module Task for this Module (KWLH) and fill in the first two columns (“What I Know” and “What I Want to know”) about learning to learn (metacognition). Then read the *ELLP* section.

Each year level booklet of the *English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP)* has a section called *Developing Independent Learners*, which explains some ways that students can be helped to develop these learning to learn skills. One way is to show them how to ask themselves questions at different points when they are learning something, to make sure they are understanding what they doing. Examples of some these **learning prompts** can be found in the *ELLP*.

Understanding what to learn and knowing when you have learnt it

The important things that the classroom teacher and/or teacher aides/bilingual tutors need to do whenever a task is set, are to:

- explain to students **what** they are learning about or doing (the learning intentions)
- explain to students **why** they are learning or doing it (purpose)
- explain to students **how** they will know when they have learnt it or completed it (success criteria).

The *ELLP* has a section on creating **checklists** for a task, given to students when they start a task, so that students can independently check if they have done everything they need to complete the task.

- **Check** while the students are working that they understand what they need to do, e.g. ask for a “thumbs up” raised hand, to show they have understood an instruction for example, or that they have finished a task.
- **Check** some time later (e.g. the next day or the next week) to see what students have remembered.
- **Prompt** students to look for links between what they learned in one topic to what they are learning in another topic (e.g. learning about pollution in social studies, then the water cycle in science).

The bilingual teacher aid can explain these clearly in first language.

Using strategies across modules to train students in learning to learn

Many of the resources (e.g. graphic organisers, mind maps, Before and After grids) which have been used in the other modules for helping students to organise their thinking and writing are also used for training students in learning to learn.

Module 9 Task 1 Using a Self-monitoring Chart – KWLH

Before you start this task, make a list of how you help yourself to learn new things, or ways you use to remember what you have learnt. Check with a partner to compare your lists.

KWLH is a note-making structure used at different points in a topic (or task) to help learners think through and record what they Know (K), what they Want or need to know (W), what they have Learnt (L) and How they learnt it (H). Sometimes the H is placed ahead of the L, and stands for How **will** I learn this?

It's important that students are shown how to compare what they know at the beginning of a topic with what they know at the end, so they can see what progress they have made in their learning. Sometimes students could complete these partly in first language, especially when working with a bilingual teacher aide.

Individual task and workshop task

As suggested in the Introduction, complete the first two columns with two or three ideas in each column **before** you read the *ELLP* section. Discuss what you have read with a colleague or a coordinating teacher, then use Think, Pair, Share (Module 1 Task) to make a list of some differences between the way students learn in your country (or your experience) and the suggestions in the *ELLP*.

After you have read the *ELLP* and had a discussion, fill in the second two columns of the KWLH chart. If you have a colleague, discuss the similarities and differences between your two charts. The KWLH chart can be used in many different subject areas at many different class levels.

Module 9 Task 2 Disappearing Text

Purpose: Using a Disappearing Text (sometimes called Vanishing Cloze) is a way of helping students to remember an important idea by saying and writing it often, as chunks of it are gradually removed. It also enables students with less English to hear the text several times before they have to say it and write it themselves.

Disappearing Text should only be used with important information that the students need to remember for a long time.

A text should not be too long, as it's too hard to remember, but it can be two or three sentences long for older learners and can be adapted for younger and lower level learners.

Because the students are reading the text aloud, they get practice in speaking and listening, and in reading, and the weaker students get support from hearing the stronger students and remembering what they have heard. Sometimes, teachers can choose confident students to read by themselves.

Use Resource 9 C to practise using a Disappearing Text.

Module 9 Task 3 Developing a Self-access Learning Plan

You need to make a plan for developing self-access resources over the year with the teachers you support. These materials can be used by students when you are not working with them, especially in mainstream classes when they are a long way below the class level. This might mean taking a selected number of the topics that students are studying across the curriculum, and making a listening or speaking task, a reading task and a writing task for the topic. You could make several of these tasks at different levels, for different students.

Individual task and workshop task

Read the section on Supporting Self-access Learning in the *Refugee Handbook* (pp13-16). For each group or individual learner you work with, prepare a self-access resource for each of the four modes; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Discuss these materials with your coordinating teacher before, during and after using them with students.

You could also use the both the *Focus on English* materials and the *Teachers' Notes* for the *Selections* series (for students in years 7-13) as models for the materials.

Good practice

Using self-access materials

| Content | Organisation |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop materials linked to the curriculum• make sure materials are at the learning level of the individual student (you could colour code sets of tasks to match the <i>ELIP</i> and <i>ELLP</i> levels)• state the aim of the task clearly• make sure the instructions for use are clear• provide a variety of task types - integrate the modes (reading, writing, speaking and listening) with oral, written and visual support• include “learning to learn” prompts and chances for a variety of self-assessments• provide opportunities for feedback from a teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• laminate materials if possible• provide answer keys for materials where appropriate• get students to keep records of each task they have done |

Computer-based learning is a very helpful way of giving learners time to practise English at their own pace.

Digital Learning Objects (DLOs)

An important source of free software to support English language learners are the Digital Learning Objects, available free to schools. These are produced for individual students to use on computers for the Learning Federation. Initial research in Australia suggests that using these materials can help students who are significantly behind their peers increase their understanding of curriculum concepts and tasks.

It is important to get some guidance on selecting appropriate content from the hundreds of items on the DLO resource bank. School Support Services can assist teachers with this.

What content is being developed?

TLF have produced digital content in a range of priority curriculum areas. There are DLOs in a number of curriculum areas including numeracy, literacy (for students at risk) and science.

How can you access this content?

This content is hosted in *Digistore*. All New Zealand schools and advisers (employed under the School Support Services contract) are encouraged to register online to gain access to this content. Once registration is approved, school principals and advisers will be sent login details to enable them to access *Digistore*.

www.tki.org.nz/r/digistore/register

Resources

Software and web-based learning

There are many software programmes suitable for supporting English language learners across the curriculum. Teacher aides should consult with teachers to ensure that students are using the programmes that best suit their needs. You should always check a website first to make sure it is useful and suitable.

Ministry of Education websites for students

Teacher aides/bilingual tutors have a very important role in helping students to access appropriate information to help them learn outside the classroom. They should make sure all students they work with know about websites that can help them achieve.

The Ministry of Education has two websites for students to use by themselves.

WickEd is the primary and intermediate website with lots of information and activities about learning in the curriculum. It is not designed especially for English language learners, but can be used to help all learners.

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/wick_ed/

Study-it is a secondary school website to help senior students prepare for NCEA qualifications. Students can access a tutor through the site and get information and practice that will help them achieve their qualifications.

<http://www.studyit.org.nz/>

Other websites – support in first languages

Study Guides and Strategies <http://www.studygs.net/>

This excellent website has Study Guides and Strategies (for senior secondary and tertiary students) in a number of languages, including European, Asian and Middle Eastern languages.

Print resources

The *Teaching Resource for Using the Picture Dictionary* has many suggestions on how students can use this dictionary for independent learning. These tasks are labelled with an “I” (independent).

Next steps

Work with other colleagues on the staff to gradually develop a set of self-access materials, according to your plan.

Module 10 is about giving subject specific-support to students.

Preparation: Make one list of the subjects you feel most confident about and another list of things you could use to learn more about, from Te Kete Ipurangi.

It is important for the coordinating teacher to read through Resource 9A with the teacher aides/bilingual tutors as it is linked to developing a self-access learning programme.

Peer tutoring – students helping each other learn

Primary

Peer tutoring is often used in primary schools. ESOL online has a case study of how peer tutoring programmes can be used in an ESOL programme.

http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/primary_esol/case_studies/ESOL_peer_support/home_e.php#link03

Secondary

Many schools have set up one-to-one support for students through a peer tutoring programme. The teacher who coordinates the programme calls for volunteer tutors from senior students and, after a training programme, these are matched with students who ask for subject help.

Students who are good communicators and have cross-cultural understanding are chosen to be tutors of students from a refugee background. They arrange to meet once or twice a week in lunchtimes, study periods or after school. An extra benefit from the tutoring programme is the development of friendship and understanding that often occurs between them.

A variation on peer tutoring can happen when senior students help with reading programmes for students who are English language learners at Foundation and Stage 1.

This could form part of a Health and Recreation module for Year 12 students. They receive training and then are matched with a student to hear them read a selected book and check understanding.

Supporting self-access learning

(from the *Refugee Handbook for Schools, ESOL Information for Schools* folder)

Self-access learning can make a very important contribution to students' learning. Not all learning can happen inside the classroom, and older students in particular who have very low first language literacy and numeracy need extra time to reach peer level.

Setting up opportunities for self-access learning in various ways can be a valuable school project, which all staff can share in. It can be managed and organised both in class and outside the classroom.

Self-access learning offers school-wide opportunities. It can be effective if it combines the resources and expertise of ESOL, special needs and curriculum teachers to select and develop resources and implement the programme.

Successful self-access learning relies on:

- accurate diagnosis of a student's needs in the particular subject/skill area
- provision of a range of materials at the learning levels of the students
- easy access to the materials
- careful organisation of the materials (classification by type/level/topic).

(Learners need to understand the classification system as well.)

NB Self-access learning materials can also be used for extension as well as support.

A modern self-access system should include access to CD Rom-capable computers, instructional videos (such as models of speeches/debates/seminars) and listening posts for listening to tapes.

You will never “cover everything” by providing self-access learning materials. However, you can provide models of typical tasks and materials to support learners with additional learning needs and build their confidence and understanding of the curriculum. You can also extend learners with special strengths.

Although a usual definition of self-access learning is that students should be able to do the task and self-correct it, providing only “yes/no” tasks and worksheets would lead to very boring learning. There are lots of different types of tasks that suit a modified form of self-access learning, meaning that students can work by themselves but get some feedback and suggestions for next steps or corrections from a teacher. Reading guides, three level thinking guides, and information transfer tasks are some of these.

Information Transfer can be done at a simple or more sophisticated level. Information in one form, such as on a graph, calendar, or chart, is translated into another form, such as a written paragraph or an oral story. By reversing the process, students can gather information from a simple oral interview: What’s your name/birthday/favourite _____? Transfer this to a picture or into words on a chart.

Content hints

You can include materials focusing on:

- curriculum content areas
- general knowledge about New Zealand culture and customs, history and geography
- particular language points
- reference skills (e.g. using a dictionary, atlas, finding your way round the school/library, note-taking, understanding how a text book is organised, creating a bibliography)
- presentation skills e.g. giving a speech, organising a research project, the language of examination instructions, making a poster
- learning to read
- developing reading skills.

| |
|---|
| Use the <i>English Language Intensive Programme (ELIP)</i> for materials for developing self-access learning resources. |
|---|

Where can self-access materials be used?

In-class self-access learning can be provided as a box of materials, classified and coded according to a school-wide system. It may also be linked to web-based materials and sites, **which should always be checked before students are directed to them.** These subject-related materials should be put in mainstream subject classrooms for students who are at very low levels of English.

One alternative is a self-access section in a library. Another is a special room. Usually the materials should not leave the room, but in-class materials may be able to be taken home, as long as there is another master copy. Guided use of self-access materials should be linked to the goals of the IPP’s (Individual Programme Plans) in each subject (see *Refugee Handbook for Schools, Section 3 page 7*). Remember to avoid “one-off” disconnected “activities”.

You need to keep scaffolding the learning. You could:

- put up charts with several suggested pathways for learners to follow (linking tasks either horizontally to connected tasks at the same level, or vertically, to similar tasks at increased levels of difficulty)
- provide each learner with a folder for self-access work, in which they keep a learning log, or a learning profile, which shows the links to the IPP for the term.

Conclusion

Self-access learning can be provided in a number of manageable ways on a large or small scale.

Students can develop learning independence by being asked to bring in their own materials for reading task development, by using vocabulary acquisition strategies in a range of classes and by showing their vocab logs, trees, etc. to the teacher aide/teacher, and learning to develop their own graphic outlines with the support of structures like the 4x3 grid.

Work with the other staff in the school and under the guidance of the coordinating teacher to collect and develop materials as a departmental team or syndicate, using principles shared across the school.

Allocate the materials to a year level (e.g. Year 4, Year 10), or a learning level (e.g. Foundation, Stage 2) to avoid repetition.

Make sure you always keep a master file of all materials, which is not the copy provided for students' use!

Suggestions for developing self-access materials across the modes

Listening

- dictated writing (from a tape) – on curriculum topics – either in full or as summaries
- minimal pairs – on tape – to write down and check against an answer key (e.g. hair/ here). This website has sound files for practice
<http://www.speak-read-write.com/minimalpairs.html>
- stressed words (writing down) from a spoken text (as indicators of main ideas)
- listening cloze texts
- information transfer tasks
- graphic outlines – completed from a spoken text
- picture or text sequencing (from a spoken text) – e.g. a life cycle
- summary of a news broadcast
- reading support from listening to *Choices* and *Selections* tapes/CD Roms and Journal tapes – selected for curriculum topic support
- video segment (1 or 2 minutes) with sound off and write down predictions as “what, where, who” sentences and what they are saying. Listen again and check predictions.

Speaking

- pair tasks – using Spot the Difference pictures e.g. different animals/plants in same species, different people from a literary text (This could also be a writing task, e.g. using a Venn Diagram.)
- reading poems onto a tape

- pronunciation/vocabulary practice – word lists from topic areas and general usage words (peer tested)
- games for language learning, including commercial board and card games and from the internet
<http://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster2/spttherapy.html>
- computer based speaking, using the microphone record option with programmes such as KidPix Deluxe
- minimal pairs (see Listening)

Reading

- reading cards with scaffolded tasks **using content from across the curriculum**
- intensive and extensive reading logs
- reading for content and language awareness – make language focus explicit – e.g. reading to understand pronouns/verb groups/different types of nouns/adjective order (Use *ELIP*)

Writing and general skills

- copying (content area texts) at early phases of learning
- punctuation tasks, with explanations of why marks are used, using content area texts, so that you maximise learning. Students could process the material as a one sentence summary, or pose a question about it for the next user to answer.
- spelling programmes (also using the computer, which keeps a record of individual progress)
- writing cards with guided tasks using models and frames
- free writing tasks (and self-editing sheets)

Module 9 KWLH – Learning to learn

Resource 9B

| What I K now (about learning to learn) | What I W ant to know (about learning to learn) | What I've L earnt (about learning to learn) | H ow I learnt it (about learning to learn) |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | | |

It's possible to do this by yourself, but it's much more fun to work in a group, with someone acting as the teacher. If you're working by yourself, use strips of paper to cover up sections of the text and say the whole definition, then write it out at the end when all the text is covered up, then check what you wrote against the original for accurate spelling, punctuation and to make sure all the information is complete.

Steps

1. Write the text on a whiteboard.
2. Rub out some small chunks of the text. In the example below the chunks to rub out (remove) are numbered. Rub out all the groups of words with the same number at once.
3. Each time you have rubbed out text, the student/group reads the whole text aloud, replacing the missing words as they speak.
4. When all the text has been rubbed out, the whole class/group repeats it again from memory, then each student writes it down.
5. Each student checks what they have written with the original text, to make sure it is accurate.
6. The next day that the group/class meets, each student should repeat the text to a partner to make sure they have remembered it.

Foundation text

A triangle is a shape with three sides.

(Rub out one word at a time, but not in the order they are written).

Stage 1 Text

The world
 There are seven continents in the world- Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa, Australia and Antarctica. There are also four large oceans - Pacific, Atlantic, Indian and Arctic.

Rub out all groups of words with the same number at the same time. Keep chunks that make sense together.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. seven continents | North America | Pacific |
| 2. There are | Indian and Arctic | Africa |
| 3. four large oceans | in the world | Australia and Antarctica |
| 4. Europe, Asia | There are also | Atlantic |
| 5. South America | | |

Stage 2 Text

What is a cell?
 Cells are groups of molecules that comprise units which make up living organisms. They carry out all the functions of life. Cells are made up of different parts. They contain a nucleus, a nuclear membrane, protoplasm and cytoplasm.

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. groups of molecules | They carry out | a nucleus |
| 2. Cells | which make up | and cytoplasm |
| 3. Cells are | living organisms | are made up |
| 4. that comprise units | all the functions of life | a nuclear membrane |
| 5. of different parts | They contain | protoplasm |