



Five College Center for World Languages

Published on LangMedia (<https://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>)

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# The Student

## An Organized Student

The successful student is one who is a self-starter, someone who can accept a task and complete it within a given amount of time with minimal supervision. The student must be able to organize the academic work week so that s/he can dedicate a consistent amount of time to language study each day (we recommend at least one hour per day for a ½ course and two hours per day for a full course).

## Comprehensive Practice: The Example of Vocabulary Acquisition

The successful student takes full advantage of the independent study time to practice everything in the week's lesson over and over and in every iteration imaginable. For example, successful preparation of a vocabulary lesson does not mean that an individual can look at the word in the target language and give an English equivalent. Rather it means that the student knows the words so well that s/he can produce the word without visual or textual prompts.

S/he can use the word in a variety of sentences and employ the word in appropriate social situations and with all ages and genders. Furthermore, the student can create a scenario in which the word is used and can utilize appropriate body language when using the word so that the language and its cultural context are never separated. The student has imagined how the mentor or conversation partner will use the word and has already created imaginary responses. Finally, if the student, in the course of this preparation, has unanswered questions about the word or its usage, s/he writes down a coherent question for the next language meeting.

## Self-Drill and Oral Practice

Students must be prepared to self-drill and to take risks with language usage in order to expand their vocabulary and the range of their syntax. They must find a place to study that is conducive to oral drill; in other words, they must be able to use a speaking voice when practicing language, so working in a location such as a library is not recommended. Students should take advantage of the many online self-recording programs to record themselves speaking the language and then listen to their oral production and note any issues that they hear.

## Self-Correction

The student's ability to self-correct by listening to speech produced or checking exercises completed is an additional skill to be honed in independent language study. If the student listens to her/his recorded speech and determines that there is a pronunciation problem, s/he can continue to work on

that issue all week. Similarly, if the students use answer keys to check textbook/workbook exercises and find that they have gotten some of the answers wrong, the process does not stop there. The students must then go back to the chapters and figure out why the answer is incorrect. In the process, the student is correcting a misunderstanding that occurred during the learning process. By the time the student reaches the language session, s/he will have resolved the problem and be prepared to use the word or construction correctly. If s/he has not been able to resolve the issue, s/he has been able to formulate a detailed question for the mentor.

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