



The Role of Language Advisor

A Guidebook



Lifelong
Learning
Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

L²paths

Pathways to Host Country Languages
for Migrants

The Role of Language Advisor

A Guidebook



LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME

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Visit the L2 Paths: Pathways to Host Country Languages for Migrants website: www.l2paths.eu/

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The L2 Paths Consortium:



BalticBright

Baltic Bright

Baltic Bright is a non-formal education and consulting centre. It has been officially registered by the Ministry of Education of Latvia as an education institution.



Folkuniversitetet

Folkuniversitetet Kursverksamheten vid Lunds Universitetet

Folkuniversitetet is an adult educational association that offers a wide range of adult education all over Sweden.



Iberika

iberika Group

iberika group is a private education centre in Berlin with many years of experience. They have been teaching foreign languages at three central locations in Berlin since 1996.



The Language Center

The Language Center S.r.l.

The Language Center srl or TLC was founded by Stefania Belli in 1988 and since then has been a future-oriented language training institute, sensitive to cultural changes and market needs.



TRANSLEX

Translex

Translex is a diversified language services business based in Galway, Ireland.



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VCAT Consulting GmbH

VCAT Consulting GmbH is a specialist internet applications developer based on open source customer oriented solutions for web sites, portals and data bases.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Language Advisors and Language Advice Centres

There are more options than ever before for learning a new language. In addition to the traditional classroom, there are now a variety of resources for independent study and for group and tandem learning experiences. In fact, there are now so many ways to acquire a new language that hardly any individual can know them all.

Time and monetary constraints prevent many learners from attending formal courses. However, self-directed learning and personal learning plans tailored to an individual's learning style can be applied to language learning and help to overcome some of these problems.

Some aspects of language learning are different to the acquisition of other knowledge and skills. For example, both cognitive and motor skills are involved, spontaneity and instant recall are required, and the learner must overcome shyness, embarrassment, and personal perfectionism to practise and to become proficient in the new language.

Second and third language competence also has socio-political implications. The EU has a continuing goal of each EU citizen becoming competent in their mother tongue plus two additional languages. And most recently, mass migration into the countries of the European Union from Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries has made host country language acquisition a priority for successful integration and social cohesion.

All of these factors point to the need to make language learning easier, more efficient and more accessible.


Project Background

The aim of the L2Paths project (Pathways to Host Country Language for Migrants) was to help migrants find the best way to learn the language of their host countries, thereby enhancing their integration and employability. This was to be achieved by developing a programme for training professional language advisors; by training a number of language advisors in several countries and conducting over 100 language advice sessions; by establishing Language Advice Centres; and by creating a tool called Pathfinder for matching a learner's needs with the learning options available. The aim is to enable the learner of a new language to create and monitor their own personal learning plan.

What is a Language Advisor and What is Their Role?

The language advisor is a professional who assists and gives learners advice on finding the best possible personalised learning pathway to reach their language objectives. An advisor facilitates rather than directs a migrant's personal learning plan and self-directed learning process when required.

Language advisors should be experienced language teachers with relevant teaching qualifications and a passion for language learning. They should be able to assess skills and competences according to the Common European Framework for Languages. A key part of this role is to understand how people learn a second language and how to apply effective tools and methods with students, as well as understanding how various backgrounds, goals, learning styles, and time limitations affect the language learning process for each individual. A language advisor should be knowledgeable about the various language learning tools and programmes available and what will best



suit students' individual circumstances and learning styles. They help learners to find tools within their budget and suitable for their level of technological skill. Consequently, advisors should be familiar with the costs of various learning tools and should be comfortable with ICT and blended learning.

At the core of this role is the ability to conduct an effective language learning needs analysis from which to draw conclusions that will lead to the development of realistic and sustainable learning goals, a personal learning plan, and tools to monitor and assess progress for each individual learner. This role is one that provides positive support and encouragement for students, and so advisors should have the appropriate motivational skills and should maintain a bias-free and open-minded approach.

To facilitate effective language learning, it is necessary to create a positive learning environment. This is achieved by establishing trust and empathy, and by demonstrating a genuine concern for the welfare of the migrants one is working with. A certain level of coaching presence, as well as personal integrity and sincerity, are also necessary. Establishing clear agreements and having respect for perceptions, learning style and personal being is a cornerstone of the language advisor role; so is providing ongoing support and championing new behaviours and actions, especially those that encourage students to let go of their fears of failure.

The steps for the language advising process can be summarised as follows:

- Creating awareness
- Designing actions
- Planning and goal-setting
- Managing progress

What is a Language Advice Centre?

A Language Advice Centre is any dedicated physical space where an advisor can meet privately with a learner to conduct an assessment, review appropriate learning options, and develop a personal learning plan. The centre is also a place to meet with the learner from time to time to review progress, iron out problems and revise the personal learning plan. The centre can be simply equipped, or equipped with a range of resources and tools.

For a comprehensive guide to setting up a Language Advice Centre, refer to the document **"Guidelines for setting up an Advice Centre"** on the L2 Paths website.

Chapter 2: How We Learn

How our Brains Work

The University of Michigan's biopsychology programme confirmed that the brain behaves selectively about how it processes experiences that enter holistically and through our five senses. The brain is programmed to pay special attention to any experience that is new or unusual.

Our brain is divided into two hemispheres, left and right, that are both important for the learning process. Each hemisphere has its own specific qualities and functions that cooperate in the acquisition of both familiar and new information. Effective learning involves both hemispheres of the brain in order to increase understanding and retention.

Analysis and features of hemispherical functions

Left Hemisphere	Right Hemisphere
Verbal Uses words to manipulate, describe and define	Non-verbal Has knowledge of things through a form of non-verbal relationship
Analytical Resolves things gradually, piece by piece	Synthetic Unifies things to form a single set
Symbolic Uses a symbol to represent anything	Concrete Relates to things as they are and in the present moment
Abstract Takes a small fragment of information and uses it to represent the whole	Analogical Notifies the similarity between things, understands relationships metaphorically
Temporal Considers the time and the order of things in succession	Atemporal Does not take time into account
Rational Arrives at a conclusion based on reason and data	Irrational Does not need to rely on reason or data
Logical Arrives at a conclusion based on logic; everything follows a logical order, such as a mathematical theorem	Intuitive Bases conclusions on incomplete data, sensations and images
Aspatial Does not see the relationship between one thing and another and how the parts come together to form a whole	Spatial Sees the relationships between one thing and another and the way the parts come together to form a whole
Linear Thinks in terms of concatenated ideas	Holistic Observes the totality of things all at once, perceives connected forms and structures
Short-term Responsible for the short-term memory	Long-term Responsible for the long-term memory

What does this neuroscience research suggest about learning?

We need to ensure that learning engages all the senses and taps into the emotional side of the brain by using methods such as humour, storytelling, group activities, physical movement and games.

Emphasis on only the rational and logical side of the brain does not produce powerful memories, and this is why the right hemisphere should play a central role in gathering and processing information. If learners are unable to involve both the logical and emotional sides of the brain, the learning process can become slow and tiresome, which decreases the chances of them reaching their learning goals.

For advisors, it is therefore important to present information in a meaningful way that has a personal relevance to the learner and to use one's skills and knowledge of various learning tools to fully involve the learner in the learning process.

Recent brain research finding	Implications for learning
Frequent and recent neuron synapses increase memory	Increase frequency through practice and maintain fluency through use
Emotions strengthen memory	Appeal to and engage emotions while learning
Learning causes changes to the physical structure of the brain	Engaging in learning increases our ability to learn throughout our lives
Memories are stored in multiple parts of the brain	Engage all senses when learning
Our brains are programmed to focus on new and unusual inputs	Learning should tap into the brain's natural curiosity and intrinsic motivation



Emotional Intelligence and the Affective Filter

Emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) is a term that was coined by two researchers – Peter Salavoy and John Mayer – and popularised by Dan Goleman in his 1996 book of the same name. It is believed that emotional intelligence counts for twice as much as IQ and technical skills combined in determining success (research by Harvard Business School and cited by Daniel Goleman, in his book *Working With Emotional Intelligence*). This may be due to many reasons, including an inability to build good and supportive social networks and relationships. EI is essential in effectively managing emotions, particularly in times of stress or tension. Strong EI is positively correlated with leadership, decision making skills, happiness, and a deeper understanding of behaviour and how to modify it to achieve goals. In terms of language learning, understanding and developing emotional intelligence in oneself and in one's students is an essential part of skilfully managing and overcoming the following issues, among others:

- Giving and receiving feedback
- Meeting tight deadlines
- Dealing with challenging relationships
- Not having enough resources
- Dealing with change
- Dealing with setbacks and failure

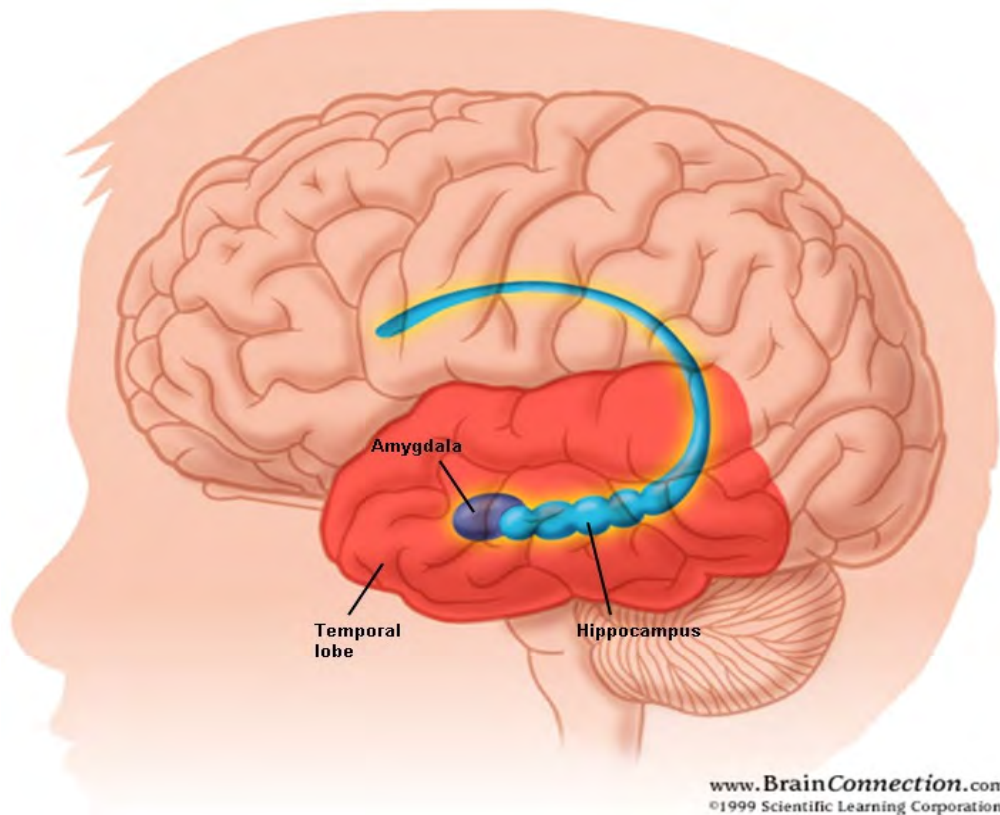
Mitchell Adler, author of the book *Promoting Emotional Intelligence in Organizations*, defines EI as follows:

The four broad dimensions of EI

1. **Self-awareness** means knowing our own internal states, preferences, resources and intuition. It is about understanding our emotions, about accurate self-assessment and taking responsibility – knowing one's strengths and limits. It develops self-confidence.
2. **Self-management** is the ability to manage our own internal resources and to gear our impulses towards reaching goals. It helps us become flexible and adaptable in different environments. It develops initiative and is a crucial part of developing the ability to create a drive for innovation and achievement, striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence, as well as having the persistence to pursue goals despite obstacles and setbacks.
3. **Social awareness** is the ability to be aware of others' needs, feelings and concerns, and to show empathy. It is a crucial skill for developing the ability to create empathic and happy relationships. It is service-oriented and leads to anticipating, recognising and meeting learners' and clients' needs.
4. **Social skills** are the ability to develop leadership skills, inspire and guide individuals, manage conflict and change, and develop communication strategies.

Advisors who invest time in developing their own and their students' emotional intelligence will likely be able to listen effectively, accept personal accountability and admit mistakes, as well as remain calm under pressure, give and receive feedback positively, understand the motivations of others and manage difficult situations.

The emotional brain



In order to understand emotional intelligence, it is important to understand how emotions affect learning. Thanks to innovations in neuroscience, researchers have been able to observe how learning actually occurs in the brain at the molecular level, making use of new technologies such as neuroimaging (positron emission tomography, functional magnetic resonance imaging) and brain mapping (electroencephalography). Through this, we now know that positive learner motivation and engagement impact the brain's metabolism, the conduction of nerve impulses through the memory areas, and the release of neurotransmitters that increase executive function and attention. Negative motivation and lack of engagement, however, can have a massive impact on a learner's ability to absorb information. All learners in the process of acquiring a second language can experience an emotional state of stress during which they are not fully responsive to learning and storing new information.

This affective state has been called the "**affective filter**" by Stephen Krashen and others, and occurs when learners feel alienated from their academic experience and anxious about their lack of understanding, which results in stress, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, mental foggy, and the inability to move forward.

The affective (emotional) filter is located in the limbic system, or limbic brain, which in turn is located in the middle part of the brain (in the temporal lobe). It is the seat of emotion and is involved in the regulation of emotion and memory, and also in the processing of complex socio-emotional communication.

It includes two structures, both very small:

The amygdala, an almond-shaped structure that helps store emotional memories, and the **hippocampus**, a seahorse-shaped structure that forms factual and semantic (or word-based) memories. Your hippocampus knows who your best learner is, and your amygdala knows whether you like them or not.

The affective filter is strictly connected to the amygdala and the hippocampus, and has an important role in the learning (or not) of another language.

Information stops in the emotional brain if incoming data is too emotional, or at least considered so by the amygdala, or if the brain is already in an over-emotional state. In any state of stress, fear, or anxiety-induced over-activation, new information coming through the senses can keep the brain from thinking at high levels. Information is absorbed and stored in long-term memory only if the amygdala is "healthy", i.e. if it is relaxed and perceives the information received as being safe and not dangerous. Some people have a naturally low affective filter and are relatively confident about learning a second language. However, not everyone is so lucky. Many other people have experienced the inability to effectively comprehend or communicate well in another language, and the anxiety associated with this.

The hippocampus, on the other hand, takes sensory inputs and integrates them with relational or associational patterns from pre-existing memories, often resulting in stressful situations being stored as highly emotional memories that can provoke anxiety if triggered. If a student has had a negative experience with language learning in the past, it can lead to them becoming instinctively resistant or defensive to re-engaging with it.

Neuroimaging studies of the amygdala, hippocampus, and the rest of the limbic system, along with measurement of dopamine and other brain chemical transmitters during the learning process, also reveal that learners' comfort level has a critical impact on information transmission and storage in the brain.

Creating a **learner-focused** programme helps to **lower the affective filter** and produce the best learning outcomes. In self-study programmes, learners with a high affective filter tend to lose motivation, fail to implement the targets set initially, and drop out.

Advising sessions should encourage a low affective filter by:

- Establishing trust and empathy with the learners
- Showing genuine concern for the learners' welfare
- Coaching presence
- Demonstrating personal integrity and sincerity
- Establishing clear agreements
- Having respect for their perceptions, learning style and personal being
- Providing ongoing support and championing new behaviours and actions, including those involving risk-taking and fear of failure
- Transmitting positivity and enthusiasm
- Encouraging learners to focus on their strengths
- Lowering their anxiety (changing negative beliefs, developing sense of humour, creating a relaxing learning environment)
- Acknowledging, celebrating and rewarding learners' successes
- Getting them involved in the learning process
- Developing the brain's learning ability, which is responsive to novelty
- Breaking down goals into smaller attainable ones

Chapter 3: Language Advising in General

The General Skills of a Language Advisor


In the past, L2 teaching focused on the importance of teachers and grammar and their central role in the learning process. Learners were thought of as mere receivers and processors of information who had to listen, repeat and memorise, as L2 learning was based on the use of the left hemisphere of the brain. Today, our teaching approach highlights using the right hemisphere of the brain and focuses on the students, their emotions and their creativity.

This “affective-communicative” method has its roots in Carl Rogers’ human-centred approach. Carl Rogers is commonly viewed as one of the most influential psychologists in American history. He is the inventor of client-centred therapy, which helps or counsels the client by assessing the problem from their point of view. His belief was that people are by nature good and that each one of us strives to do our best. Rogers also applied his innovative theories to the field of education and instruction, and is considered the modern-day father of humanistic education. He believed that advisors should seek to create emotionally warm and supportive environments where they can work collaboratively with their learners in order to achieve mutual goals. This is facilitated by the advisor’s attitudes to their personal relationship with the students. The three “core conditions” necessary for the facilitation process in both counselling and education are:

- **Realness:** Advisors should not deny themselves. They should be aware of their feelings and able to communicate them appropriately, no matter how they feel.
- **Praising, acceptance, trust:** Advisors should care about the learners, praise their accomplishments, and accept their feelings in order to create a learning environment based on trust and sincerity.
- **Empathy:** Advisors should be able to “walk in their learner’s shoes”. They understand learners’ perspectives and their reactions, instead of judging or evaluating them.

Rogers distinguished between cognitive (meaningless) and experiential (significant) learning. Cognitive learning corresponds to academic knowledge such as learning vocabulary or multiplication tables, while experiential learning refers to applied knowledge such as learning about engines in order to repair a car. Experiential learning addresses the needs and wants of the learner, and is equivalent to personal change and growth.

To facilitate such learning, the advisor needs to set a positive climate for learning by showing learners empathic understanding and maintaining a positive eye contact. It is important to allow learners some “freedom to learn”, such as choosing which tasks they would like to do and how they will go about them. An equally essential part of the L2 advising approach is organising and making available resources that help to learn experientially, as well as balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning. The advisor should not be dominating or judgemental, but should share their own feelings and thoughts with learners, while also acknowledging learners’ feelings such as lack of self-confidence and occasional apathy. Showing interest in your learners and in their work is an important factor in building empathy. Learners often adopt the same attitude as their advisors, so it helps to smile, move, and to encourage and praise them. If learners give you feedback, do take it into account in order to further improve your methods.



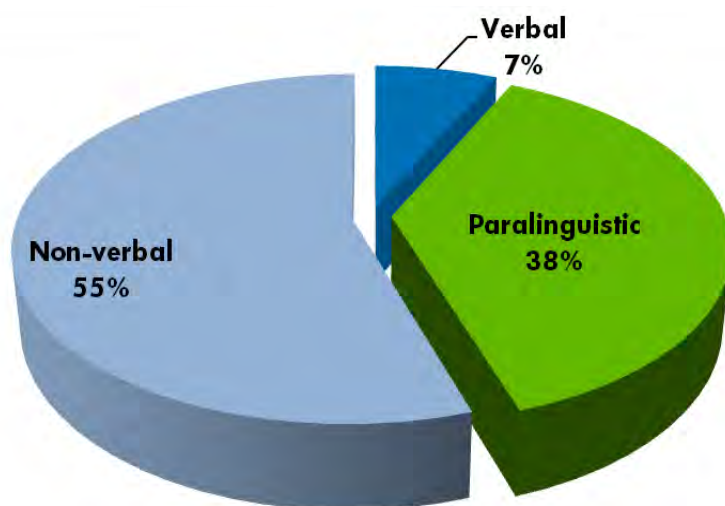
Still, not all of the work during the educational process can be done by the advisor. Its effectiveness also depends on the learner. It is the advisor's goal to be able to motivate and train the learners so, in turn, the learners can actively contribute to their own learning process by being aware of the facilitative conditions created for their benefit and that the material to be learned is realistic, relevant and meaningful. Learners need to be participative and motivated, and willing to assess progress or success through self-evaluation and openness to change. The advisor can help learners become more responsible and active in their learning process by guiding them towards self-assessment, fostering learners' responsibility for their own learning, and giving relevance and meaning to the subject matter. Self-initiated learning is the most lasting and pervasive, and so the advisor should make an effort to promote this in language learners.

Building Rapport Through Empathy

Rapport is a state of harmonious understanding with another individual or group that enables greater and easier communication. Looking for and identifying things in common makes the communication process easier and much more effective. Sometimes rapport is built naturally without having to try, however rapport can also be consciously developed by finding common ground, developing a bond and being empathetic. For many, starting a conversation with a stranger is a stressful event; we can be lost for words, awkward with our body language and mannerisms. Creating rapport at the beginning of a conversation will often make the outcome more positive. However stressed or nervous you may feel, the first thing you need to do is to try to relax and remain calm, which will decrease the tension in the situation so that communication becomes easier and rapport grows.

To help build rapport, you can lean forward, towards the person you are talking to, with hands open and arms and legs uncrossed. This open body language will help you and the learner feel more relaxed. Give plenty of eye contact but be careful not to make the other person feel uncomfortable. When listening, it helps to smile, nod and make encouraging sounds and gestures. Using the learner's name early in the conversation is not only seen as polite but will also reinforce the name in the advisor's mind and make you less likely to forget. It can also be helpful to ask the learner open questions that require more than a yes or no answer. The advisor can use feedback to summarise, reflect and clarify back to learners what they have said, giving opportunity for any misunderstandings to be rectified quickly. Talking about things that refer back to what the learner has said can help you find links between common experiences. Be open and build on the learner's ideas, and if you have to disagree with someone, first say what part of their statement you agree upon, and then explain the reason why you disagree. It is also important to admit when you don't know the answer or have made a mistake. Being honest is always the best tactic, and acknowledging mistakes will help to build trust.

It is important to pay attention to body language (non-verbal communication) and voice tone, inflection and volume (paraverbal communication) in addition to the words we use (verbal communication). The following graph shows the average percentages the different communication types take up in a typical conversation:



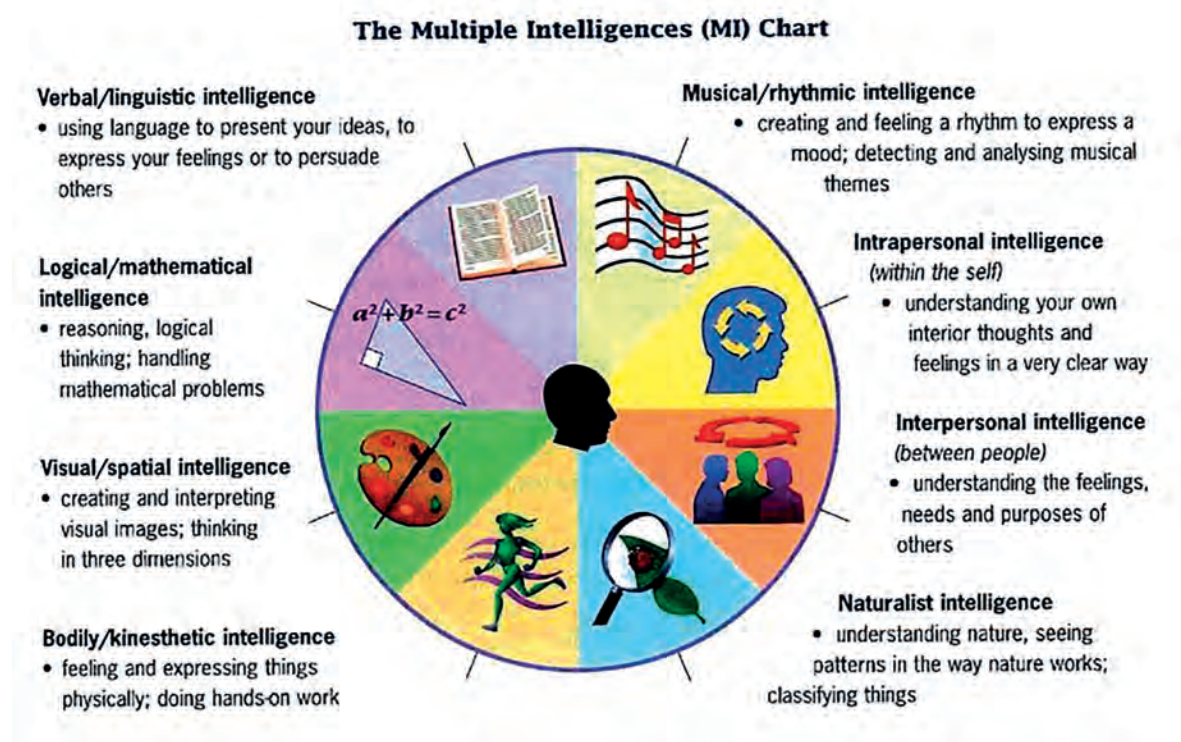
As you can see, verbal communication makes up only 7%. A study carried out by the University of California on the impact of body language and voice tone on our perception of trustworthiness showed that if words and body language conflict, we almost always take the non-verbal message to be more significant, although our conscious attention is on the words.

Since body language is such an important part of building trust and rapport, it can be very helpful to adopt a similar posture as the person you are talking to, and to match their hand gestures and voice tone. We all do this naturally to some extent. The intention behind body matching is to connect to the other person's experience of the world. How we use our body influences our emotional state and how we think, so it is essential to be conscious of our movements as well as our words.



Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory is a rationalist model that describes eight different intelligences. MIT has evolved in response to the need to reach a better understanding of how individual cognitive differences can be addressed and developed in any learning or training environment. Gardner and his research associates identified the following types of intelligence:



These different intelligences reflect a pluralistic panorama of learners' individual differences; they are understood as personal tools each individual possesses. Traditionally, whether in an explicit or implicit manner, many learning contexts have been organised in a way that considered all learners the same. However, Gardner's research shows that it is important to be aware of learner diversity. Each student in any learning environment has greatly different learning profiles, and will make greater progress if given the opportunity to use their areas of strength to master the necessary material. Genuine understanding is most likely to emerge when advisors use a wide variety of ways to deal with the subject. Motivation is encouraged when language learning activities are varied and related to the learner's strengths. These activities become more comfortable and more pleasant, and therefore are more likely to be appraised positively by the language learner. For example, learners with high visual-spatial intelligence who do an activity requiring them to draw pictures of four things that are important to them and then, in the foreign language, ask each other about their drawings, would probably appraise the activity in a favourable way and therefore their motivation towards the activity would be increased.

According to Gardner's cognitive model, people are multidimensional subjects that need to develop both their cognitive capacities and other aptitudes such as the physical, the artistic and the emotional. Neuroscience points to the need to develop a holistic view of each learning environment and each advising session, taking the physical and affective dimensions of learners into account to enable their cognitive side to function optimally. Within this perspective, the incorporation of MIT is an effective way to broaden both the goals and the range of tools at our disposal for teaching a language.

The relevance of MIT to language learning

Although most individuals are capable of learning a second language to some degree of competence, some learners are better equipped for the second language learning task than others. Applying MIT in language advising sessions enables advisors to tap into their learners' areas of personal meaningfulness. Language learning can be supported by bringing in the musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, mathematical and naturalistic abilities, as they constitute distinct frames for working on the same linguistic content. Not only does this variety of presentations allow learners to learn in their own best ways, it also helps to reduce boredom as language learning requires frequent circling back over the same material if learning is to be sustained.

Each of these eight different intelligence frames is autonomous, changeable and trainable, and they interact to facilitate the solution of daily problems. They are of neutral value; none of them is considered superior to the others. In their basic form, they are present to some extent in everyone, although a person will generally be more talented in some than in others. In order to apply MIT to a language learning context, we will explore the individual intelligences in some more detail and identify some ways to help learners with each intelligence frame.

The verbal-linguistic frame involves a language-based knowledge through *reading, writing* and *speaking*. It enables a learner to understand the order and meaning of words in both speech and writing and how to properly use the language. People with this intelligence tend to think in words, and connect ideas through reasoning, associations, or analogies. They are usually good at understanding the socio-cultural nuances of a language, including idioms, play on words, and language-based humour. They are likely to spot and use the similarities and differences in structure, grammar, idioms and vocabulary among different languages. As a result, people with a strong verbal-linguistic intelligence usually love learning new words and do well with written assignments or compositions, and often better comprehend what they read. Many of them are very good joke- and storytellers. For learners with strong verbal-linguistic intelligence, the advisor can suggest activities involving reading, speaking, and writing to ensure full engagement by the learner, for example gap fillers, puzzles, inventing stories, daily journals, essays, or grammar exercises. Learners can also benefit from reading newspapers and comics, playing word games, conducting discussions or debates with others, making up and telling stories, or doing creative writing exercises.

The musical-rhythmic frame has to do with the ability to perceive and appreciate *rhythm, pitch* and *melody*. This tuning tends to affect language in several ways: pauses between thought groups become more obvious, musical rhythm causes a slowing down in speech production, and musical melody guides the person's pitch variation. Music also has physical effects such as the adaptation of breathing to the musical rhythms, the impact on muscular energy and the ability to induce a certain type of mood. For learners with strong musical-rhythmic intelligence, background music can stimulate the creative process and foster a relaxed, motivating and productive learning atmosphere at the same time. To facilitate learning, the advisor can suggest listening activities of all kinds, like rhyming words to a song, rap or jingle. Listening to songs in the language to be learned, interpreting the meaning of a song or having music play while working can also help these learners.

The visual-spatial frame is the ability to perceive all the elements (form, shape, line, space, colour) necessary to create a mental image of something. Visual elements are especially useful for providing comprehensible and meaningful input for second language learners, and research on language comprehension has pointed very conclusively to the importance of imagery. To support learners with strong visual-spatial intelligence, some examples of what the advisor can suggest are the creation of a board or display for the learner's daily activities, a "pictionary" linking words with images or symbols, or learning activities such as language puzzles or visualisation exercises. Viewing films, photos, or slides can also be very helpful to language learners who have this intelligence frame.

The logical-mathematical frame gives us the ability to use numbers effectively and to understand the underlying principles of a causal system. Reasoning strategies are an important aspect of a logical-mathematical learning environment. These include finding analogies, dissecting the various parts of a problem, proposing a possible solution and then working backwards, or describing the characteristics a solution should have. For language learners with strong logical-mathematical intelligence, the advisor can suggest using graphs, charts or diagrams, breaking down a goal into specific and definite tasks, and classifying or categorising words. Activities that can be helpful to language learners with strong logical-mathematical intelligence include pattern studies or games, and using IT resources to study.

The bodily-kinaesthetic frame helps us to feel and express things through movement, as well as doing physical work. The human need for movement is often overlooked and therefore its potential value for learning and for maintaining attention is greatly underestimated. Non-verbal aspects of communication such as gestures and movements of the body used to communicate an idea, intention or feeling, as well as speech-independent gestures are very relevant to learners with strong bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence. For these learners, the advisor can suggest outdoors lessons, role playing, miming or drama as learning instruments. Physical exercise while learning can also be of great help.

The interpersonal frame gives us the ability to understand other people, to work cooperatively and to communicate effectively. It is connected to the ability to harmonise with others, to understand their perspectives and opinions, but also to convince others in order to achieve personal objectives. Cooperative learning in groups that integrate and cooperate to carry out different tasks is a method that helps both to develop this intelligence in the language classroom and to learn negotiation strategies to convince others, or even to understand someone else's point of view. For learners with strong interpersonal intelligence, the language advisor can suggest listening comprehension exercises, taking part in social events and clubs or interviewing people with knowledge about content-area topics. Giving and receiving feedback and person-to-person communication can also be beneficial.

The intrapersonal frame enables us to understand the internal aspects of our selves and to practise self-discipline. Identifying personal emotions and reflecting upon what is causing them constitutes the first step to learning self-control. An important part of learning is the knowledge of our mental processes. This includes an awareness of our personality, feelings, motivation, attitudes and learning style at any particular moment. For learners with strong intrapersonal intelligence, the advisor can suggest independent study and individual instructions, mapping places in the environment where they feel most comfortable and creative, and activities such as keeping a diary or learning logs, writing essays, or reflective writing. For these learners, it is important to develop a complete set of personal goals and to pay attention to their dreams and inner vision.

The naturalist frame is the ability to discriminate among numerous species of flora and fauna, enjoyment of the natural world and ecological sensitivity. Some examples of activities related to the naturalist intelligence are brainstorming on how to preserve the environment, tasks involving direct field observation, and the classification of the vegetal and animal world. For learners with strong naturalist intelligence, the advisor can also suggest writing semantic maps relating to nature to develop a learner's lexical knowledge, identifying and categorising one's surroundings, taking photos and writing photo essays, or nature walks and outdoor learning.

Here are some useful questions to help you understand a learner's strongest intelligence:

- When you were at school, what was your favourite subject?
- Through what activities do you think you learn the best?
- Through what activities do you think you learn the worst?
- What is your favourite learning environment?
- What do you like to do in your leisure time?
- What kind of films/books do you like?
- You're sitting in the dentist's office waiting for your appointment. How do you choose to pass the time?
- Do you like being outdoors?
- Do you enjoy complimenting people when they do well?
- Do you play any instrument or have you ever played one?
- It's spring time: what is the first thing you imagine doing on a nice spring day?
- How easy is giving or following direction for you?
- When you are trying to come up with ideas for a new project, what are you most likely to find inspiration in?
- Do you ever reflect on the meaning of existence?
- Do you find it easy to pick up another language?
- When you are in a social environment, what do you like to do?
- What kind of television programmes do you usually watch?
- How would you describe your room?
- Do you like puzzles?

Neurolinguistic Programming and Communication

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) was created in the early 1970s by Richard Bandler, a computer scientist and Gestalt therapist, and Dr John Grinder, a linguist and therapist. Bandler and Grinder studied three influential therapists: Dr Milton Erickson, father of modern hypnotherapy, Fritz Perls, co-creator of the Gestalt therapy, and Virginia Satir, the mother of modern-day family therapy. Bandler and Grinder wanted to know what made these therapists effective and to train others in their methods. What is offered today as NLP is the product of this process. Many difficulties in our lives are caused by poor communication: stress, pressure, insufficient knowledge, shyness, etc. The consequences of miscommunication can be costly and have a significant impact on productivity and efficiency. Neurolinguistic Programming combines the most accessible, positive and useful aspects of modern psychology, and can be extremely helpful in improving communication skills. It proposes a four step basic action model:

1. Know what you want – set your objectives
2. Take action – plan something and do it.
3. Notice the response.
4. Respond to the response you get, remember that *there is no such thing as failure*.

NLP poses a number of presuppositions, one of which is that the mind and body are connected. For example, if you are feeling dejected, this will show in your body language. By changing your posture – standing more upright, looking up, smiling, you will change your physiology and actually feel better. One of the major contributions of NLP in education is to make us think more about the different learning styles previously discussed. NLP techniques help particularly by making it possible for people to set clear goals and define realistic strategies, to understand and reduce stress and conflict, and to enhance interpersonal relations and understanding of others' needs. They enable advisors to help learners gain greater motivation and performance, and to improve learners' effectiveness, productivity and results.

Another principle of NLP is feedback instead of failure. It is more valuable for a person to view their experience in terms of a learning frame than in terms of a failure frame. If a person doesn't succeed in something, that doesn't mean they have failed. What it means is that they have discovered one way *not* to do that particular thing, and can now work on developing a different approach until they succeed.

The four key concepts from NLP that form the basis of this programme are *Mirroring*, *Reframing*, *Changing Beliefs*, and *Anchoring*. By using these key concepts of NLP, we can put theory into practice and communicate more confidently and effectively.

Mirroring

We have previously discussed matching our body language while interacting with others to enhance rapport. NLP refers to this type of matching, both non-verbal and paraverbal, as a *Mirroring technique*. Body and voice matching create a rapport at behaviour level, but body matching is not sufficient for rapport if values are mismatched. Shared beliefs and values establish rapport; political and religious groups are an obvious example. In the advisor/learner relationship, this means sharing the same goals and believing that they are possible. The strongest rapport comes from acknowledging the other person's identity – when a person feels acknowledged at this level, they are open to being influenced.

Reframing

Behind every behaviour is an intention, and motives drive behaviours. These are basic NLP presuppositions. Our brains do nothing without some (usually unconscious) purpose. *Reframing* simply refers to something we do all the time: the process of changing the meaning of a statement or situation. In education, it is important to reframe students who lack self-confidence. In negotiation, reframing can be done by both parties so that they come to a solid agreement faster. Reframing enables us to give otherwise negative things a positive connotation: "mistake" becomes "lesson", "ending" becomes "beginning", and "problem" becomes "challenge".

Here are some example sentences a teacher or advisor can use to reframe a learner's statements:

Student:	Teacher:
I'm not courageous	You're just being cautious
I'm so slow	You are taking your time/being thorough
My questions are holding everyone up	Your questions are getting us all to think
I don't get enough attention from the teacher	I trust you to get on with your work
I keep on making mistakes	If you didn't make mistakes, you wouldn't be trying
I'm too old	You have a lot of experience
I'm hopeless at remembering people's names	You do remember important things about people
I'm always at the bottom of the class	You can make more progress than others

Changing Beliefs

Our thoughts and actions can change the structure and function of our brain. The process of changing the brain is called neuroplasticity. In response to the environment, neurons change their activity and reorganise pathways. The brain's plasticity enables us to learn and remember. For example, imagine that you decide to learn how to play bridge. You have played other card games before, and so your brain contains networks (neurons that have connected to each other) for basic card game information: 52 cards in a deck, four different suits, two red, two black, and the numbering system for each. As you learn to play the new game, your brain connects the rules to the previously stored information. Learning bridge is therefore much easier for you than for someone who has never played cards before.

Here is an activity you can do with learners to help them "chuck out" their limiting beliefs:

Step 1: Ask learners to write down two or three things that they believed in the past they would never be able to do, and that they succeeded in doing.

Step 2: Now ask them to write down one or two things that they believe they can't do and something that they would really like to do or be good at.

Step 3: Now ask participants to re-write their lists in the form of "I can...if I choose to", or "I can't...yet".

Step 4: Ask participants to take the first list and throw it into the bin, saying goodbye to their limiting beliefs.

Anchoring

Anchoring is the process of associating an internal response with some external trigger so that the response may be quickly, and sometimes covertly, assessed by activating the trigger. An anchor is a term used to describe the process when a stimulus and a state are neurologically aligned. The best-known example of this is Pavlov's experiment with dogs: The sound of a tuning fork was deployed each time Pavlov presented food to his hungry dogs. Soon, the dogs associated the sound of the tuning fork with being presented with food and would salivate at hearing the sound, without the presence of food.

Celebrating

Celebrate every single success, however small.

Don't wait until goals are complete and visions are realised. Look for opportunities to celebrate the small successes along the way. Celebrations don't have to be flamboyant or costly.

Simple words or gestures can also be an expression of celebration. Everyone likes and needs their successes to be acknowledged and celebrated to keep motivation high and goals in focus.

Channels of Communication: Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic (VAK)

Knowing *how* a person is communicating is very useful if you want to make your communication as effortless and effective as possible. There are three basic communication modes:

1. The visual communicator

People who use the visual mode frequently in their communication often speak quickly and in a high pitch as they synchronise their voice with the images flashing through their mind. This process affects breathing, because when you speak quickly there isn't time to take in air all the way down to the lower abdomen. You will notice your upper chest rising and falling. In conversation, the visual communicator will have the tendency to choose visual words, such as:

"I'll **paint** you a picture"

"It's **bright** and **clear**"

"Let's **zoom** in on this"

2. The auditory communicator

People who use the auditory mode frequently in their conversation tend to have voices that are pleasant to listen to and they are likely to breathe from the mid-chest area. In conversation, the auditory communicator will have the tendency to choose auditory words:

"I **hear** what you say."

"That **rings** a bell"

"It **sounds** ok to me."

3. The kinaesthetic communicator

People who use the kinaesthetic mode are often immersed in feelings, and so tend to look down a lot. They are likely to breathe from the lower abdominal area and so will speak slowly, with gaps between the words. Sometimes the gaps will be long and allow the person have time to form feelings before committing a word or phrase to speech – it must feel right before it is said. Their voice is likely to be low-pitched. In conversation, the **kinaesthetic communicator** will have a tendency to choose emotional words, such as:

"This just **feels** right."

"Let's **run** with this idea for a while."

"Let's keep in **touch**."

Learners use all three modalities to receive and learn new information and experiences. However, one or two of these receiving styles is normally dominant, and this is how a person filters and learns new information.

V.A.K learning styles self-assessment questionnaire

Circle or tick the answer that most represents how you generally behave.

1. When I operate new equipment, I generally:
 - a) read the instructions first
 - b) listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before
 - c) go ahead and have a go, I can figure it out as I use it
2. When I need directions for travelling I usually:
 - a) look at a map
 - b) ask for spoken directions
 - c) follow my nose and maybe use a compass
3. When I cook a new dish, I like to:
 - a) follow a written recipe
 - b) call a friend for an explanation
 - c) follow my instincts, testing as I cook

4. If I am teaching someone something new, I tend to:

- a) write down instructions for them
- b) give them a verbal explanation
- c) demonstrate first and then let them have a go

5. I tend to say:

- a) watch how I do it
- b) listen to me explain
- c) you have a go

6. During my free time, I most enjoy:

- a) going to museums and galleries
- b) listening to music and talking to my friends
- c) playing sport

7. When I go shopping for clothes, I tend to:

- a) imagine what they would look like on me
- b) discuss them with the shop staff
- c) try them on and test them out

8. When I am choosing a holiday, I usually:

- a) read a lot of brochures
- b) listen to recommendations from friends
- c) imagine what it would be like to be there

Key:

If you chose mostly A's you have a **VISUAL** learning style.

If you chose mostly B's you have an **AUDITORY** learning style.

If you chose mostly C's you have a **KINAESTHETIC** learning style.

There are many aspects of learners' physiology that help us understand how they are thinking or feeling. Understanding them can prevent mismatched styles and one-way communication. In NLP, this is called "**sensory acuity**".

In any form of communication, people also need time to think about what they are observing and listening to. They want to process information as it is received. While doing so, they have to stop listening – in NLP, the term used for this is "**downtime**". Having the sensory acuity to notice when a person is processing in downtime is fundamental to rapport-building, pacing and leading, and ultimately to effective communication.

Visual learners, auditory learners, and kinaesthetic learners

Visual learners have two sub-channels: linguistic and spatial. Learners who are visual-linguistic like to learn through written language, for example, by doing exercises such as reading and writing tasks. They remember what has been written down, even if they do not read it more than once. They like to write down directions and pay better attention to lectures if they watch them. Learners who are visual-spatial, on the other hand, usually have difficulty with the written language and do better with charts, demonstrations, videos, and other visual materials. They can easily visualise faces and places by using their imagination and seldom get lost in new surroundings.

To accommodate for visual learners in the learning environment, you can utilise graphs, charts and other visual aids as well as handouts containing text, pictures, maps, etc. These learners work best when they can see the outline of the course and when potential distractions are eliminated. Encourage them to do illustrations, take notes, and act out the subject matter of the learning.

Auditory learners often talk to themselves. They also may move their lips and read out loud. They may have difficulty with reading and writing tasks, and often do better talking to another person or a tape recorder and hearing what was said.

For auditory learners, make sure to provide verbal explanations in advance and conclude with a summary. Use the Socratic method of lecturing by questioning learners to draw as much information from them as possible, and then fill in the gaps with your own expertise. Include auditory activities such as brainstorming and games and leave plenty of time to debrief after activities, allowing them to make connections of what they have learned.

Kinaesthetic learners do best while touching and moving. They tend to lose concentration if there is little or no external stimulation or movement. They often will take notes during lectures just for the sake of moving their hands. When reading, they like to scan the material first, and then focus in on the details. They respond to colours, pictures and diagrams and are prone to doodling.

For this type of learner, it is important to use as many movement-based activities as possible. Play music when possible and use colourful markers and presentations. Kinaesthetic learners need plenty of breaks to get up and stretch, and will remember things better when associated with another sensory experience, for example scent.

Leadership and Negotiation

A leader is simply a person who leads people from one place to another; sometimes physically and most of the time mentally. It derives from an old Anglo-Saxon word *lead* which means path, road, or way – It's a word that expresses some type of journey. There is a distinct difference between a boss and a leader. A boss says "Go!" whereas a leader says "Let's go!"

We all have the capacity to inspire and empower others. But we must first be willing to devote ourselves to our personal growth and development as leaders. If you can lead yourself, you can lead others. Developing as a leader requires a commitment to knowing your authentic self and becoming self-aware. It means practicing your own values and principles and balancing extrinsic and intrinsic motivations while also having the self-discipline to get results. Leaders are people who know who they are and can pass those feelings of security on to others, inspiring cooperation, trust and change.

Leadership in the learning environment means being able to empathise with others and understand the specific needs and individual strengths of each student, so that obstacles in the path of learning can be removed and progress can be made. Students need to feel secure, and there should be an atmosphere of trust and cooperation.

Setbacks and mistakes should be seen not as failures, but opportunities to learn. Establishing this atmosphere and utilising the NLP techniques discussed previously will allow students to view their advisor as a leader. This chapter will look at a few of the common challenges that can arise for a person in a leadership role, and how to overcome them.

Communicating in challenging situations

Challenging situations are an inevitable part of teaching and advising. When faced with difficult situations, try implementing the following steps:

Relax: When we are nervous, we tend to talk more quickly and therefore less clearly. Being tense is also evident in our body language. Instead, try to stay calm, make eye contact and smile. Let your confidence shine. Take time to relax.

Clarify: Show an interest in the people you talk to. Ask questions and seek clarification on any points that could be easily misunderstood.

Be positive: Try to remain positive and cheerful.

Empathise: Understand that other people may have different points of view. Try to see things from their perspective. You may learn something whilst gaining the respect and trust of others.

Understand stress: Learn to recognise, manage and reduce stress in yourself and others. Although stress is not always bad, it can have a detrimental effect on your interpersonal communication. Learning how to recognise and manage stress, in yourself and others, is important for managing challenging situations.

Learn to be assertive: You should aim to be neither passive nor aggressive. Being assertive is about expressing your feelings and beliefs in a way that others can understand and respect. Assertiveness is fundamental to successful negotiation.

Reflect and improve: Learn from your mistakes and successes. Always keep a positive attitude, but realise that you can always improve your communication skills.

Negotiate: Learn how to effectively negotiate with others to pave the way to mutual respect, trust, and lasting interpersonal relations.

Working in groups: Understand who the learners are and what they need.

There are two ways to influence people:

- PUSH – the first reaction to this is usually resistance and mistrust
- CONVINCING and COOPERATING through open communication and shared goals.

Negotiation is a means of dealing with resistance and resolving differences between people. In the process of negotiation, not only different opinions are taken into account, but also individual needs, aims and interests, and differences in background and culture.

There are two different ways we can negotiate:

- The "win-lose" approach to negotiation
- The "win-win" approach to negotiation

The win-lose approach

This approach is sometimes seen as "getting your own way", "driving a hard bargain" or "beating off the opposition". It's difficult to dismantle assumptions and develop a collaborative approach when people assume that more for one person means less for the other. This win-lose approach can achieve the aims for one side in the short term, but because the other party loses as a consequence, this increases the likelihood of relationships breaking down. Effective professional negotiators prefer to aim towards what is known as a win-win solution.

The win-win approach

This involves looking for resolutions that allow both sides to work together towards finding a solution to their differences, resulting in both sides being satisfied.

Key points when aiming for a win-win outcome include:

- **Focus on maintaining the relationship** - separate the people from the problem
- **Focus on interests, not positions**
- **Generate a variety of options** that offer gains to both parties before deciding what to do
- **Aim for the result to be based on an objective standard**

To avoid negotiation breaking down into an argument, it is helpful to consciously separate the issues under dispute from the people involved.

Statements that might be used by a good negotiator

"You've expressed your points very clearly and I can now appreciate your position. However..."

"I understand why this is important for you and I share your views in many ways. However, I think we need to look at it from a different angle..."

"Why don't we go through this together and see how we can come up with the best solution for both of us."



The most important trip you can take in life is to meet people half way. (Henry Boyle)



Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills include both verbal and non-verbal communication (e.g. body language). They also include listening skills, negotiation, problem-solving, decision-making and assertiveness.

Interpersonal skills become so natural to us that we may take them for granted, never thinking about how we communicate with other people. But with a little time and effort, we can further develop these skills.

Active listening

Active listening is a key part of improving interpersonal skills. It is important to learn to listen effectively and not just hear what the other person is saying verbally. Good listening means paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication. Your own words are also a vital part of active listening – be aware of the words you are using and understand why communication sometimes fails. Use encouraging words alongside non-verbal gestures, such as head nods, a warm expression and maintaining eye contact. Regularly check that you understand what the other person is saying and ask for clarification if you need it. The following table will demonstrate listening vs. non-listening behaviours.

	Non-listening behaviour	Listening behaviour
Time limitations	Demonstrates, rather than says, that they are busy	Is open and honest about time limitations
Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judgemental and evaluative Controlling Uses strategy Neutral, conceals feelings Shows superiority Firm and dogmatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-evaluative and non-judgemental Problem-oriented Honest and spontaneous Accepts and shows feelings Sets up an equal environment Tentative about conclusions
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on self or work Does not look at the speaker Pays attention to the mechanics of the conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on the speaker Looks at the speaker Pays attention to what is being communicated
Non-verbal behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed posture Expressionless Facing away from the speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open posture Expressive Leans towards the speaker
Dialogue	Is silent or dominates the conversation	Reflects and summarises what the speaker has been saying, clarifies unclear points, and asks relevant questions
Overall attitude conveyed	Not interested	Interested

Mirror neurons



A mirror neuron is a neuron that fires both when **performing** an action and when **observing** the same action performed by another person; for example, when someone smiles at you and you automatically smile back. Mirror neurons are located in the frontal lobes of the brain, among the motor command neurons, which orchestrate a sequence of muscle twitches that allow us to complete actions. These mirror neurons were discovered by Giacomo Rizzolatti and Vittorio Gallese at the University of Parma in Italy. During one of their experiments, they discovered that individual neurons in the brains of macaque monkeys were fired both when the monkeys grabbed an object and also when the monkeys watched another primate grab the same object.

Mirror neurons are also fundamental in behavioural learning and language acquisition. They allow us to simulate not only the action of other people, but the intentions and emotions behind those actions, which fosters understanding and empathy. By using these neurons and mirroring the learners' emotions, the language advisor can gain greater insight into the student's mental state, behaviour, knowledge and intents.

Language acquisition

Mirror neurons help us acquire language unconsciously and spontaneously. However, in teaching, we can utilise mirror neurons through techniques such as TPR (Total Physical Response) and drama exercises.

TPR or "the physical response to a verbal command" is a language teaching method developed by James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San José State University. TPR is essentially based on the coordination of **language** and **physical movement**. Instructors give commands to students in the target language, and students respond with whole-body actions. This serves two purposes. It promotes quick recognition of meaning in the target language and also enables passive learning of the structure of the language itself, in that grammar is not taught explicitly but can still be learned through language input. This technique allows learners to engage the right side of their brain through movement and emotion, which, as we learned in previous chapters, promotes better learning and overall retention.

Drama techniques such as the Stanislavsky system also utilise mirror neurons. This method was developed by Russian actor, producer and theoretician Konstantin Stanislavsky and is a highly influential system of dramatic training. It requires that an actor utilises, among other things, their emotional memory. This actor is asked to become the character, to understand their emotional memory and experience the world as the character would. This method can be applied to language teaching through learning by imitation. When learners are asked to mimic a person whom they admire and who speaks their target language, they will identify with that person and will communicate not only the meaning but also the emotions and gestures of that personality by using their mirror neurons. Giving learners licence to “become someone else” helps to lower anxiety and the previously discussed affective filter. It can also strengthen social awareness and stimulate better language acquisition.

Behavioural learning

According to the behaviourist theory, learning is an observable change in behaviour. General educational implications of behaviourism are:

- **Emphasis on behaviour:** People are most likely to learn when they actually have a chance to use the knowledge, so students should be **active respondents**; *Only measurable behaviour changes can confirm that learning has taken place – learning is largely the result of environmental events.*
- **Drill and practice:** Repetition of stimulus-response habits strengthens those habits. *Learning processes can be studied most objectively when the focus of study is on stimuli and response.*
- **Breaking habits:** Learning involves a behaviour change. *By replacing the old incompatible habit with another habit, eventually a “new” behaviour is adopted in response to the stimulus.*
- **Rewards:** many theorists emphasise the importance of rewards or reinforcement for learning.

Time Management

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity.

The key to effective time management is to understand the difference between urgent and important. “Urgent” tasks demand your immediate attention, but whether you actually give them that attention may or may not matter. “Important” tasks definitely matter, and not doing them may have serious consequences for you or others. This distinction is important for prioritising your time and your workload, whether at work or at home.

Below are some suggestions on how to help learners manage their time:

- **Assess your learners’ goals.** Ask yourself why they are here, what they hope to learn and what they want to achieve. Writing down a list of objectives can help to stay focused and motivated.
- **Break down their goals** into smaller ones and set shorter deadlines for each of them.
- **Find a calendar system that works.** Some prefer mobile devices, others use built-in computer software or even just old-fashioned paper calendars. The method is not important; choose a calendar or project management system to help you and your learners keep on track.
- **Keep your learners’ deadlines and their learning programme close. Include our Pathfinder System and define how much time will be spent on self-learning.** Online learning requires self-discipline and a good road map. The class syllabus is the road map that typically lists all the course readings, assignments and deadlines.

- **Create the perfect study space.** Be sure you and your learners have everything you need. Pay attention to what interrupts your focus and then change or eliminate it.
- **Eliminate social distractions.** These days, we are bombarded with notifications and pop-ups. Consider turning off your phone and logging off social networks during study time.
- **Try some tricks.** It takes some effort to keep the commitment and focus up, especially after a long day. A few tricks can provide a boost. For example, set a timer for 30 minutes or an hour – and don't stop studying until it goes off.
- **Reward yourself.** Reward yourself along the way and celebrate successes.
- **Recognise when it's not working.** Despite your best efforts, every moment isn't the same. Sometimes the best choice is to stop. Remember, learning is a journey towards reaching goals and self-discovery. Enjoy it.
- **Identify additional learning resources.** Increase your learners' knowledge and motivation by varying the ways in which you advise them.
- **Evaluate yourself.** Take a critical look at your performance as you go and target areas for improvement. Try to identify which advising strategies produce the best results.
- **Don't procrastinate,** but do ask why you're tempted. If a task is genuinely urgent and important, get on with it. If, however, you find yourself making excuses about not doing something, ask yourself why.
- **Don't try to multitask.** Generally, people are not very good at multitasking, as it takes our brains time to refocus. It's much better to finish off one job before moving on to another. If you do have to do a lot of different tasks, try to group them together, and do similar tasks consecutively.
- **Stay calm and keep things in perspective.** Feeling overwhelmed by too many tasks can be very stressful. Remember that the world will probably not end if you fail to achieve your last task of the day, or leave it until tomorrow.
- **Keep tidy.** Being tidy helps you to stay on top of things and can boost motivation and self-esteem.
- **Pick your moment.** All of us have times of the day that we work better. It's best to schedule the difficult tasks for those times.



Dealing with conflict

Interpersonal conflict has been defined as “An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals”.

There are three types of conflict: Personal or relational conflicts, instrumental conflicts and conflicts of interest.

- **Personal or relational conflicts** are usually about identity or self-image, or important aspects of a relationship such as loyalty, a breach of confidence, perceived betrayal or lack of respect.
- **Instrumental conflicts** are about goals, structures, procedures and means.
- **Conflicts of interest** concern the ways in which the means of achieving goals are distributed, such as time, money, space and staff. They may also be about factors related to these, such as relative importance, or knowledge and expertise.

Learning to deal with conflict in a positive and constructive way is important if we want to improve interpersonal relationship skills.

Conflicts between advisors and learners can arise in many situations, some of which are:

- The learner's insistence to set starting-point goals that are incompatible with a short-term timeframe
- The advisor's difficulty in understanding the learner's needs and setbacks
- The learner's resistance to take on responsibilities
- The advisor's and learner's disagreement on the choice and use of learning resources
- Each perceives the other as interfering with achievement of set goals

An advisor should be aware of and prepare for conflicts that could possibly arise. The best tactic for preparation is to de-escalate potential conflict situations by imagining yourself in the other person's position and trying to act in a way that you would respond positively to in such a situation. Avoid closed or defensive body or verbal language. Ensure that the learner feels heard and is able to state their side of the story without interruption and try to compromise if possible. The role of language advisor is to be supportive and so it is more important to be flexible and understanding than to be right.





Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to tap into your emotions and use them to make your life better. Being in touch with your feelings allows you to manage stress levels and communicate effectively with other people, two skills that enhance your life both personally and professionally. Unlike IQ, which usually remains constant throughout your life, EQ can be developed and honed over time. This chapter will outline eleven simple steps to developing your EI.

1. *Tap into your emotions*

Taking time to acknowledge how you feel about experiences is essential to improving your EQ. If you ignore your feelings, you're ignoring important information that has a big effect on your mindset and the way you behave.

Start paying more attention to your feelings and connecting them to experiences. For example, say you're at work and you get cut off during a meeting. What emotions arise when this happens? On the other hand, how do you feel when you get praised for good work?

Getting into the practice of naming your emotions as sadness, embarrassment, joy, contentment, or any other number of feelings will start raising your EQ right away.

2. Pay attention to your body

Instead of ignoring the physical manifestations of your emotions, start listening to them.

Our minds and bodies are deeply connected. Learn to read physical cues. For example: Stress might feel like a knot in your stomach, a tight chest or quick breathing, and joy or pleasure might feel like butterflies in your stomach, a racing heart or increased energy.

3. Observe how your emotions and behaviour are connected

Tune into your gut responses to situations you face every day, instead of just reacting without any reflection. The more you understand what spurs your behavioural impulses, the higher your EQ will be, and you'll be able to use what you know to actually change your behaviour in the future. The following are some examples of behaviours and behavioural responses:

- Feeling embarrassed or insecure might cause you to withdraw from conversation and to disconnect.
- Feeling angry might cause you to raise your voice or angrily stomp away.
- Feeling overwhelmed might cause you to panic and lose track of what you were doing, or cry.

4. Avoid judging your own emotions

All the emotions you have are valid, even the negative ones. If you judge your emotions, you'll inhibit your ability to fully feel, making it more difficult to use your emotions in positive ways. Think of it this way: every emotion you have is a new piece of useful information connected to something that's happening in your world. Without this information, you'd be left in the dark about how to adequately react.

That's why the ability to feel your emotions is a form of intelligence. It's hard at first, but practise letting negative emotions surface and connecting them to what's happening. Fully experience positive emotions, too. Connect your joy or satisfaction to what's happening around you, so you can learn how to feel that more often.

5. Notice patterns in your emotional history

When you have a strong emotion, ask yourself when you last felt like this. What happened before, during and after? When you see patterns, you can exert more control over your behaviour. Observe how you handled a certain situation before, and how you'd like to handle it next time. Consider keeping a journal of your emotional reactions, or how you feel from day to day, so you can clearly see how you tend to react.

6. Practise deciding how to behave

You can't help what emotions you feel, but you can decide how you want to react to them.

If you have an issue with lashing out in anger or shutting down when you're hurt, think about how you would rather react. Instead of letting your emotions overwhelm you, decide how you're going to behave next time. Then, when something negative happens, take a moment to feel your emotions. Some people describe it as having a wave of sadness or anger wash over them. Once the initial wave has passed, make a decision about how you want to behave. Decide to communicate your feelings instead of repressing them, or get up and try again instead of "throwing in the towel".

Don't turn to escapist habits that numb the pain. If you do this often enough, your EQ will begin to suffer.

7. *Connecting with other people*

Openness goes hand-in-hand with emotional intelligence. A narrow mind is generally an indication of a lower EQ. When your mind is open through understanding and internal reflection, it becomes easier to deal with conflicts in a calm and self-assured manner.

To strengthen this element of your EQ, consider listening to debates on television or the radio. Consider both sides of the argument, and look for the subtleties that require closer inspection. When someone does not react emotionally the same way you would, consider why this is, and try to see it from their point of view.

8. *Improve your empathy skills*

Empathy means being able to recognise how other people are feeling, and share emotions with them. Being a more active listener and really paying attention to what people are saying can help you get a better sense of how they're feeling. When you can use this information to inform your decisions and improve your relationships, that's a sign of emotional intelligence.

When you see someone experience a strong emotion, ask yourself, "How would I react in the same situation?" Be truly interested in what people are saying, so you can react in a sensitive way. Instead of letting your thoughts drift, ask questions and summarise what they're saying so it's clear that you're in the conversation.

9. *Read people's body language*

Make a point of trying to read between the lines and pick up on people's true feelings by observing their facial expressions and other body language.

10. *See the effect you have on others*

Understanding other people's emotions is only half the battle when it comes to EQ; you also need to understand the effect you're having on other people. Do you tend to make people feel nervous, cheerful or angry? What happens to a conversation when you walk into the room? Think about what patterns you might need to change. Ask trusted friends or loved ones what they think about your emotional impact. You may have trouble recognising the effect you have on others, and they can help.

11. *Practise being emotionally honest*

If you say you're "fine" and have a scowl on your face, you're not communicating honestly. Practise being more physically open with your emotions, so that people can read you better.

Being yourself helps other people really get to know you, and they'll trust you more if they see where you're coming from. However, understand that there's a line: control your emotions so as not to hurt others with them.



Putting EQ to practical use

Being intellectually capable is important in life, but being emotionally intelligent is just as essential. Having high emotional intelligence can lead to better relationships and job opportunities. There are four core elements to emotional intelligence that help you lead a balanced life. After reading these, decide where you might have room for improvement, and then take steps to practice your skills in that area:

Self-awareness: The ability to recognise your own emotions for what they are, and to understand their origins. Self-awareness also means knowing your strengths and limitations.

Self-management: This is the ability to delay gratification, balance your needs with those of others, take initiative, and to control impulsivity. Self-management means to be able to cope with change and stay committed.

Social awareness: This is the ability to be attuned to other people's emotions and concerns, as well as being able to notice and adapt to social cues. Being socially aware means being able to see the power dynamics at play within any group or organisational context.

Relationship management: This requires being able to get along well with others, manage conflict, inspire and influence people and to communicate clearly.

Lower your stress level by raising your EQ

Stress is a catch-all word for feeling overwhelmed by a variety of different emotions. Life is filled with difficult situations from relationship breakdowns to job loss. In between, there are myriad stress triggers that can make any daily issue seem much more challenging than it probably is. If you're stressed, it's difficult to behave in the way you want to. Having a good plan for relieving stress improves all aspects of your EQ. Figure out what triggers your stress, and what helps relieve it.

Make a list of effective forms of stress relief, like spending time with a friend or taking a walk in the woods, and put it to good use. Get help if you need it. If your stress feels too overwhelming to deal with alone, seek the help of a therapist or psychologist who can give you tools to cope (and help you raise your EQ in the process).

Chapter 4: The Specific Skills of a Language Advisor

Key Principles

There are some common problems that both learners and advisors may encounter in a learning environment, for example their financial situation, time availability, or living far away from the location of the training. A high affective filter, lack of motivation or low self-esteem can be equally detrimental to the learning process. A lack of empathy can make it difficult to build an honest relationship and to facilitate the learners in identifying their goals. The principles of *development advising* help to ensure that these issues do not hinder the learners in their progress.

Prescriptive vs. development advising

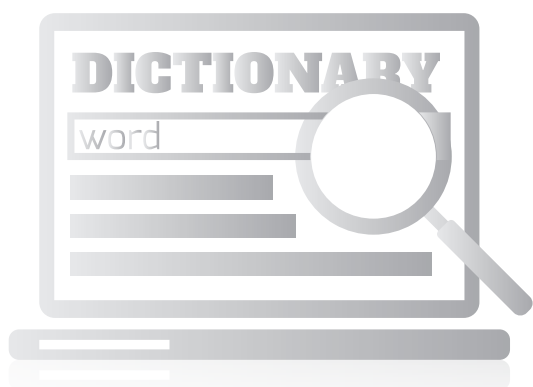
Prescriptive advising refers to a teacher-focused approach, while *development* advising refers to a student-focused approach, where the student is at the centre of the learning process. Development advising assists learners in the clarification of their educational, career and life goals, as well as the development of educational plans for the realisation of these goals.

In development advising, it is important that advisors help students become familiar with the learning resources at their disposal and that the students can use these effectively, setting realistic academic and career goals and developing plans to achieve these. A good advisor can help learners identify their personal strengths and develop their emotional intelligence, enabling them to remain focused and motivated. When advising learners, we need to pay close attention to them by listening actively and avoiding shutting down or interrupting them. The advisor should focus on the best and highest goal the learner can reach, and assist them in developing a way to reach these goals.

A good example of an effective advising session is when it is based on dialogue rather than on debate. In a debate, we are trying to win an argument. We have a paradigm set up: there is a right and a wrong, and we need to prove that we are right. In a dialogue, we acknowledge that we have different perspectives, and try to share our own perspective while also making an effort to understand different views. This enables us to discover solutions we would not have thought of if we were fighting for our own point of view. A dialogue can set the foundation for a real relationship based on empathy, understanding and exchange. Dialogue is the appropriate use of all the macro and micro skills for language advising.

Macro skills for language advising

Skill	Description	Purpose
Initiating	Introducing new directions and options	To promote learner focus and reduce uncertainty
Goal-setting	Helping the learner formulate specific goals and objectives	To enable the learner to focus on a manageable goal
Guiding	Offering advice and information, direction and ideas, making suggestions	To help the learner develop alternative strategies
Acknowledging and Modelling	Helping the learner see things they may not know about their strengths, demonstrating target behaviour	To provide examples of knowledge and skills that the learner desires
Supporting	Providing encouragement and reinforcement, requesting the learner to stretch beyond perceived limitations	To help the learner persist: create trust, acknowledge and encourage effort
Giving feedback	Expressing a constructive reaction to the learner's efforts	To assist the learner's self- awareness and capacity for self-appraisal
Evaluating	Appraising the learner's progress and achievement	To acknowledge the significance of the learner's effort and achievement
Linking	Connecting the learner's goals and tasks to wider issues	To help establish the relevance and value of the learner's project
Concluding	Bringing a sequence of work to a conclusion	To help the learner establish boundaries and define achievement



Micro skills for language advising

Skills	Description	Purpose
Attending	Giving the learner your undivided attention	To show respect and interest; to focus on the person
Re-stating	Repeating in your own words what the learner says	To check your understanding and to confirm the learner's meaning
Paraphrasing	Simplifying the learner's statements by focusing on the essence of the message	To clarify the message and to sort out conflicting or confused meanings
Summarising	Bringing together the main elements of a message	To create focus and direction
Questioning	Using open-ended questions to encourage self-exploration	To elicit and stimulate learner disclosure, self-reflection, self-definition, clarity, insight and action
Reframing disempowering language	Retelling in positive words learners' negative statements	To let the learner hear positive words and thoughts that will also make them feel positive
Self-managing	Following intuitions without judging, giving advice or holding back	Giving attention to the learner without getting caught in your own internal reactions
Interpreting	Offering explanations for learner's experiences	To provide new perspectives and help self-understanding
Reflecting feelings	Surfacing the emotional content of the learner's statements	To show that the person has been understood
Empathising	Identifying with the learner's experience and perception	To create a bond of shared understanding
Confronting	Surfacing discrepancies and contradictions in the learner's communication	To deepen self-awareness, particularly of self-defeating behaviour
Holding silence	Discerning when to create space for the learner to look internally	Pause allows space for self-intimacy and time for both the advisor's and the learner's intuition to emerge.
Visioning	Exploring the big picture and creating a visual picture of what the learner wants to come into being	Help the learner positively view challenges, goals, efforts and results.

Asking empowering questions

Advisors do not give out a lot of advice; instead, their role is to encourage learners to consider their situation and come up with solutions on their own. To do this, the advisor needs to ask "curious", empowering questions. Empowering questions are open-ended questions that invite people to ponder, consider, open, notice and discover. They move towards creativity and elicit new learning or new action. **Empowering questions** typically begin with "What" or "How", and are often simple, intuitive or spontaneous. Questions beginning with "When" and "Why" can also be empowering, but may create defensiveness and cut off information when they are used to satisfy the advisor's desire for information extraneous to the main focus. Questions that can be answered with simply "Yes" or "No" are considered closed questions that limit exploration, possibility and dialogue.

The following are some examples of empowering questions:

Probing questions

- What do you really want?
- What's important about that?
- What are you excited about?
- What is your intention?
- What are you overlooking?

Clarifying values

- What do you care about in this situation? What value does this experience have for you?
- What do you want? If you get that, then what do you want?
- How does this plan honour your values? What are you committed to?

Setting stretch goals

- If you knew you'd succeed, what else would you do?
- If you were to raise the bar, what would it look like?
- What's the big picture?
- What action would really excite you?
- What is getting between you and your goals?
- What are your next steps?

Expanding options

- What is possible?
- If you had a magic wand and everything were possible, what would you like to do? What impact would you like to have?
- What are your choices?

Getting support

- What do you need help with? Who can help you with that? What can you delegate?
- What new thoughts or behaviours can help you to reach your goals?
- What requests can you make?

Action questions

- How do you plan to achieve this?
- How can you break that down into smaller steps?
- What are you going to do? By when? Whom will you tell? Is there anything else you need to do? What is your next action?
- On a scale of one to ten, how committed are you to this plan?

Breaking through barriers

- What's stopping you?
- In an ideal world, how would you face this problem? What would motivate you to change?
- What would it cost you if things remained the way they are?

Reducing an overwhelming workload

- What can you say "no" to?
- What can you stop doing so that you can make room for what's important? What can you stop tolerating?
- What are you doing now that's working?
- If you only focused on one thing, what would it be?

Eliciting wisdom

- What might you do differently next time?
- When you're at your best, what's different?
- What is your gut feeling?

Limiting or close-ended questions that ask for a yes/no response should be avoided. Why-questions can also be counterproductive in some cases, as they often imply judgement or criticism and can become a mental rehashing of old beliefs. For example, questions like "Why didn't you take action?", "Why did you do that?" and "Why are you going to get help?" can put learners on the defensive. Of course, there are exceptions, such as "Why is this important to you?" or "Why don't we try a new path?"

The three 'uns'

As advisors, we may often encounter *uninspired*, *undecided*, or *under-qualified* students.

To advise *uninspired* learners, the advisor should encourage the learners to be proactive and to take responsibility in order to raise their self-esteem. To maintain motivation, it is important to focus on the learner's values and assist them in defining clear goals as well as a timeline within which to reach these goals.

To assist *undecided* learners, the advisor should help the learner determine why they are undecided and support them in decision-making, guiding them through the Resource mapping and helping them integrate all the information. The advisor can also help the learner develop and initiate an action plan.

When faced with an *under-qualified* learner, the advisor should focus on identifying and clarifying the learner's strengths and raising their self-esteem. Brainstorming options and encouraging alternate plans (a plan B, C, and D) as well as cooperative studying can also be very helpful.

The following list is a summary of advising skills. It shows the different types of skills and their corresponding code. On the pages following this list, you will find some examples of dialogues between advisors and learners where these skills have been applied. The codes from the table are given within the dialogues as keys to the technique being used.

Code	Types of peer advising skills
T1	Guiding the advisee to think about learning need
T2	Showing empathy
T3	Encouraging the advisee to exploit the learning resources in their learning environment
T4	Sharing language-learning experiences with the advisee
T5	Encouraging the advisee to utilise different strategies
T6	Helping to increase the advisee's confidence in language learning
T7	Encouraging the advisee to reflect on their learning experience
T8	Establishing a friendship with the advisee
T9	Creating a comfortable surrounding for advising
Ar	Advisor's utterances related to learning awareness
Ae	Advisee's utterances related to learning awareness
We	Advisee's utterances connected to the willingness to be autonomous in language learning

Example of a one-to-one advising dialogue

- Advisor:** Could you tell me which aspects of your English skills you want to improve? (T1)
- Advisee:** Well, my English was always very poor (Ae1). I am afraid of (We1) speaking in English because I think others might laugh at my poor pronunciation.
- Advisor:** How do you know that others might laugh at you (T7)?
- Advisee:** I had that experience before, when I was in high school. Whenever the teacher asked me to read out the English text, some of my classmates would laugh when I didn't pronounce certain words correctly (Ae2). I felt so embarrassed when that happened. It was terrible (We2).
- Advisor:** I am sorry to hear about the experience you had before (T2). Well, I was also afraid of making mistakes, especially when I had to deliver a presentation (Wrl). I get nervous easily and would make many mistakes that I don't normally make. It was difficult to deal with, but I tried to get over it and prevent it from happening again by practising more (T4/Ar1).
- Advisee:** How can you actually improve your speaking?
- Advisor:** Hmm. Sometimes I will go to the library to borrow English learning books with a CD and utilise the audio learning room (T4/Ar2).
- Advisee:** The audio learning room?
- Advisor:** Did you know that there are several audio learning rooms in the library?
- Advisee:** Now I know. But where are they exactly? (We3)
- Advisor:** They're located in the basement of the library. And there are quite a lot of choices of English learning materials to choose from (T3). You can go and try it out (TS).
- Advisee:** Cool, I'll go and check it out next time I go there (We4).
- Advisee:** So, how do you practise speaking?
- Advisor:** Oh, yes...I will normally play the CD and try to repeat its content (T4). I think it really helps me a lot with my pronunciation (Ar3). If you like, you can try this method and see whether it works for you. (TS)
- Advisee:** Hmm, maybe... (We5)



One-on-two advising dialogue

Advisor: So you said you have a question for me (T1)?

Advisee 1: Well, I am just curious. Was English always easy to you? We both find it difficult to pass any English exam (Ae1) and we are so afraid to fail the course (We1).

Advisor: I think you should have more confidence in yourselves (T6). To be honest, when I first started learning English, it was the most difficult subject for me. To remember English vocabulary, even the short words, was a hard task (T2/Ar1). Believe me, I know exactly how you feel (T2).

Advisees 1&2: Really?

Advisee 1: No way!

Advisor: Really! But I did not give up. I tried to spend more time studying English, and asked my classmates for help. After quite a long period of time, my English started to improve (T4/Ar2). So, I believe your English ability will improve as long as you try different ways to learn (T5).

Advisee 2: How long did it take you to improve?

Advisor: Well, about a year or so. It was tough, but it was worth it. Have you ever tried to do anything to improve your English (T7)?

Advisee 1: I once tried very hard to study English. I even translated lots of English texts into my own language and spent a lot of time memorising the words. But it didn't seem to work for me (Ae2). My English scores remained low. I was so disappointed with English learning since then (We2).

Advisor: I understand your feelings (T2). But maybe you could try to use other methods instead of translation (TS). When I was learning English, I tried different ways of remembering English vocabulary, such as preparing vocabulary cards for revision, recording vocabulary with examples of phrases or sentences so that I could review them by listening on my MP3 player, or even testing myself. Some of the methods I employed worked but others didn't (T4/Ar3). I am sure you can find out the methods that work for you (T5).

Advisee 1: Well, there's a question I would like to ask you, but not directly related to our course.

Advisor: Well, go ahead and ask (T9).

Advisee 1: I found out recently that there's a lunch-time English learning programme that starts next week and will last for five weeks, and the instructor of the course is a native speaker of English.

Advisor: I know that programme and I also know that teacher. I attended the programme last year and it was really good fun (T4/Ar4).

Advisee 1: Great, so you can tell me more about it. I really would like to attend the course, but I am so afraid of going (We3).

Advisor: Don't worry, I had similar thoughts before attending the programme (T2), but I really gained a lot of confidence after the experience (Wr1). It was a wonderful experience to actually have the chance to start a more real, life-like conversation...Well, I would encourage you to attend the programme if you are interested in practising your speaking and listening skills (T1). The teacher is always helpful and friendly, so you should not be afraid of attending (T6). As it is a program that is available to you on campus, why not make the best use of it (T3)?

Advisee 1: Maybe we should go together (We4).

Advisee 2: If you go, then I will go with you (We5).

Setting Goals and Making Plans

Setting SMART goals in language learning

When learning a language, it is important to have goals and ambitions. However, there is a difference between general, vague statements such as "I really want to learn English" and clear, specific ones such as "My aim is to reach level C1 in the next two months." The former can be too broad and overwhelming, whereas the latter sets a specific and achievable target, helping the learner to understand what exactly they would like to achieve and to create a plan to get there.

Business experts and psychologists have found that setting so-called *SMART goals* can help learners reach their goals much more efficiently and effectively. SMART goals are a series of smaller, easy to accomplish action steps towards achieving a bigger goal, allowing learners to measure and see the progress they have made.

The word SMART is an acronym for the following principles:

SPECIFIC:

The learners' goals should be specific, not general. If a learner tells you "I want to improve my grammar", you can suggest rephrasing this to a more specific statement such as "I want to be able to write with only 10% of verb tense mistakes" or "I want to understand and use prepositions properly 80% of the time."

MEASURABLE:

The learner should be able to measure their goals and achievements. The language advisor can start working towards this by asking learners to count the number of specific kinds of errors they have made or to start proofreading and editing their writing, so as to monitor their improvement in the specific area they are working on.

ATTAINABLE:

The advisor should make sure that learners can achieve their goals within a certain time frame, and that they do not set too many goals at the same time or too far into the future. For a language advisor, this means helping learners understand that they are not likely to become totally fluent within a few months, but that they can still feel comfortable when interacting in everyday life social situations.

REALISTIC:

The learners' goals should match their needs, and they should focus principally on areas they are weak in rather than those that they are already strong in. To help with this, the language advisor can start by determining the kind of vocabulary a learner wants to be able to actively use correctly in a specific time frame, and making a detailed plan as to how to accomplish this. Make sure these words are useful ones for the learner's life, not just words that will be used only once during a TOEFL test.

TIME-BOUND:

The language advisor should help learners set a time frame or deadline within which they want to achieve smaller goals, as short-time goals are more easily achievable than long-term ones. For example, the advisor can identify and subdivide different adjective categories, defining short-term goal deadlines for each learning category (e.g. 2 weeks).

Some useful questions to help you set SMART goals

- Specify when, where and with whom they want this goal to be effective.
- Ask them if there is anything they will lose if they achieve this goal.
- Is achieving this goal within the advisor's and the learner's control?
- Focus on the learners' strengths and ask them what they are already good at that can help them. What resources and skills do they have that make them more likely to succeed in achieving their goals?
- Ask them if they need anything they don't currently have and if what they need is under their control. If not, create a strategy to make it obtainable.

Once the advisor and the learner have agreed on a SMART goal, the advisor can facilitate the learner in creating their own personal action plan.

Creating a personal learning plan

A personal learning plan is a more detailed description of a learner's goals for a defined time frame. This section provides an overview of the purpose and process of creating a personal learning plan. For a more complete description, skip to sections 3 and 4 below.

The advisor should have five key questions at the back of their mind as they discuss the learner's assessment and goals. The answers to these questions provide areas of focus during the discussion.

1. Are the goals achievable?
2. Does the learner really believe in their abilities?
3. Is the plan feasible for achieving the learner's goals?
4. Is the learner spreading themselves too thin?
5. Might the learner easily give up?

The following is an example of how a personal learning plan might be developed. For the development of the personal learning plan using the Pathfinder system, you can skip to sections 3 and 4 below.

Learner: "I'm Italian and want to study Spanish. I have already studied this language for one year and I am at the A2 level. I want to move to Spain and want to reach C1 in the next three months."

The first step is to conduct a language learning assessment (see section 4.2 below).

Following completion of the assessment, the advisor will negotiate the best path to reaching the learner's goals. With the five questions from above in mind, it is fairly obvious to the advisor that the learner's goal of reaching the C1 level in such a short time frame is unrealistic. However, the learner appears confident and ambitious. In this case, the advisor would negotiate a longer time frame (e.g. 8 months) to achieve the goal, after having elicited other information from the learner by asking a series of questions to find out the following details:

1. What the learner's predominant intelligence is according to Gardner's MIT System
2. What is the most frequent obstacle on the learner's path to reaching their goal
3. How much time they can invest in formal learning
4. How much time they can invest in non-formal learning
5. How much time they can invest in informal learning

The advisor notes down the following answers:

1. Verbal-linguistic/social
2. Loses interest easily; gets anxious very often about not pronouncing words perfectly
3. 2 hours weekly
4. 1 hour weekly
5. 1-2 hours weekly

The advisor then negotiates the following actions with the learner:

Taking 2 formal lessons weekly (in a language school, a University, Tsc), one hour in a group (because of the learner's social intelligence) and one hour one-to-one with the teacher (because they lose interest easily).
Lessons based on storytelling, on understanding the order and meaning of words in both speech and writing, and how to properly use the language.

Lessons based on understanding the socio-cultural nuances of a language, including idioms and puns (wordplay).
Non-formal: 1 hour weekly – using Pathfinder and access to National Language Mapping
Informal study: 1 or 2 hours weekly – watching YouTube videos about the learner's preferred topics, Skyping with Spanish or South American friends, meet-up groups.

The advisor will break down the learner's eight-month goal into eight separate months and detail specific goals to be reached by the end of each month.

Once it has been agreed, the personal learning plan should function as a contract between the learner and the language advisor. It is important for the learner to understand that learning is their own personal responsibility. If the learner follows the professional advice provided by the language advisor and executes the plan that has been agreed, they will achieve their goal. The plan should be reviewed periodically. If the learner is not achieving their goal, the plan should be re-negotiated, however always in consideration of whether the learner has followed the plan, and/or whether the resources are the most appropriate in view of the learner's needs.

When conducting the periodic review the language advisor should keep the following questions in mind:

How easy was it for the learner to follow the agreed-upon actions? Has the learner met any obstacles? Have they overcome them? Have they gotten stuck?

Has the learner reached their monthly goal? If not, the advisor asks the reasons, and they will need to reconsider the initial action plan. If the learner has reached their monthly goal, then they will proceed to the next monthly goal. Has the learner lost motivation or interest? If so, the advisor enquires about the reasons and will negotiate with the learner a different action plan. Were their motivation and interest high?
How can the advisor keep the learner's motivation at its highest?

The personal language learning portfolio

The learner's assessment, personal learning plan, periodic reviews and revisions to the learning plan should all be captured in the personal learning plan portfolio document in Appendix A.

Chapter 5: Language Advising With the Pathfinder System

Pathfinder is an online tool designed for independent use by language learners or for assisted use by a language advisor working with a language learner. Using Pathfinder, the needs of a learner can be assessed and appropriate options that suit the learner's current skill level, targeted improvements, time available and monetary resources can be determined. The system will recommend the most appropriate courses – both fee-based and free –, any available language exchanges, and a range of on- and offline resources that can be utilised for reaching the learner's objectives. The learner can then choose which of these options they want to pursue, and these can then be entered into a personal learning plan.

The system also contains a learning diary, so that progress and problems can be noted and reviewed at a later date by the learner, or by the advisor and learner working together. The personal learning plan can then be revised and adapted to the learner's experience.

You can find the Pathfinder tool at www.language-pathfinder.eu



Visit the L2 Paths: Pathways to Host Country Languages for Migrants website: www.l2paths.eu/

Creating the Right Atmosphere, Getting Started and Registering



Starting from the first meeting with the learner, the advisor should set the tone of the advising session by highlighting the importance of the person, their emotions and their own contribution to the learning process. On the basis of Carl Roger's theory of the "human-centred approach", the advisor should facilitate the counselling process using this attitude in the relationship with the learner.

The advisor should make the learner feel welcome and relaxed. Smile, greet the learner warmly, shake their hand and invite them to sit down so that you can work together to find the best possible learning program for each individual.

Registration

What is your reason for joining?

I want to learn a new language

Please type the code shown below

Type here



☐ I understand and agree to all [terms and conditions](#)

Register me!

A language advice session can be conducted by a trained language advisor with the aid of the Pathfinder system, by a language advisor working without the aid of the system, or by a learner using the Pathfinder system independently. This guidebook is based on the advisor assisting a learner with the aid of the Pathfinder system.

The advisor should explain why Pathfinder is being used, being especially sensitive to suspicions that the system could be used to track a person's location and activities.

The first step when opening Pathfinder is for the student to register as a learner. A user can register on Pathfinder as a *learner*, a *resource provider*, or a *language advisor*. The *language advisor* section is currently not active, but it will eventually be used to help the independent learner locate an online advisor and for language advisors to join an online community of practice. The *resource provider* section is only for course and material providers to enter their information into Pathfinder.

Beginning an Assessment

Language skills assessment

Click here to close

Do you have a certificate stating your level? : yes Skill level : no restriction

Progress: 65%

Level description
Here is a description of what each level means:
[Deutsche Beschreibung](#) [English description](#)

Online tests
If you don't know your skill level here are some tests to determine it:
[Save and next](#)

The first step in the advising process is to conduct an assessment of the learner's background, previous language learning experience, learning styles, goals, preferences, resources, and constraints. An assessment is a structured set of questions designed to obtain the information necessary for creating a learning plan tailored to the individual's needs.

For this purpose, the Pathfinder system contains an assessment section. In order to match the information about a learner with the resources available, only the most objective and essential information is required:

- Personal data
- What is to be learned and where
- Education and work experience
- Skill level
- Learning goals
- Learning preferences

The answers to the questions under each of these headings will be sufficient for the system to match the responses with appropriate courses and resources. However, the Pathfinder system is somewhat constrained in what it can ask and evaluate. In a personal session with a professional language advisor, the advisor should use the system assessment as a starting point for a more wide-ranging exploration of the learner's needs.

It may be desirable to find out more about the learner, such as their hobbies, social life, feelings, degree of confidence, etc. However, these things cannot be measured objectively and therefore are not included in the system-based assessment. An individual teacher, academic advisor or language school may have their own protocol for conducting an assessment, and there is no reason that these assessments should not be carried out alongside or in addition to the Pathfinder assessment.

What to Listen for and What to Consider

The advisor should also have certain objectives during the session:

- Understanding the learner's favourite channel of communication and their favourite modality of processing information
- Understanding the learner's most relevant "intelligence" (according to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory), through some simple questions about their likes and dislikes, to better tap into the learner's areas of personal meaningfulness
- Introducing new directions and options to promote the learner's focus and reduce uncertainty
- Providing examples of knowledge and skills that the learner desires
- Offering explanations for the learner's experiences to help self-understanding
- Surfacing discrepancies and contradictions in the learner's communication to deepen self-awareness
- Bringing together the main elements of a message to create focus and direction
- Reframing: i.e. retelling in positive words the learner's negative utterances

What if the Learner's Goals are too Ambitious?

If the learner's goals are too ambitious, the advisor should negotiate a more realistic goal with them, trying to:

- Help the learner set a time frame or a deadline within which they can achieve smaller goals. Shorter, time-bound goals are more easily achievable than those that are vague and long-term. Dividing bigger goals into a number of smaller ones will help the learner understand whether or not their goals are realistic.
- Be non-judgemental towards the learner.
- Help them to see the issues in a different light.
- Restate and paraphrase to improve communication and to reinforce the feeling of acceptance.
- When disagreeing with the learner, first say what you agree on, then explain the reason for the remaining disagreements.
- Admit when you don't know an answer or have made a mistake. Being honest is always the best tactic.
- Acknowledging mistakes builds trust.
- Offer a compliment, avoid criticism, and be polite.
- Help the learner face fear and learn from it.

When addressing the items the learner might not understand, or dealing with questions that are not clear, or when the learner is not sure how to answer a question, the advisor can help with the following tactics:

- Restating: i.e. repeating in your own words what the learner has said
- Paraphrasing: i.e. simplifying the learner's statements by focusing on the essence of the message
- Using feedback to summarise, reflect and clarify back to the learner what you think the learner has said. This provides the opportunity for any misunderstandings to be cleared up quickly.

Options and Choices

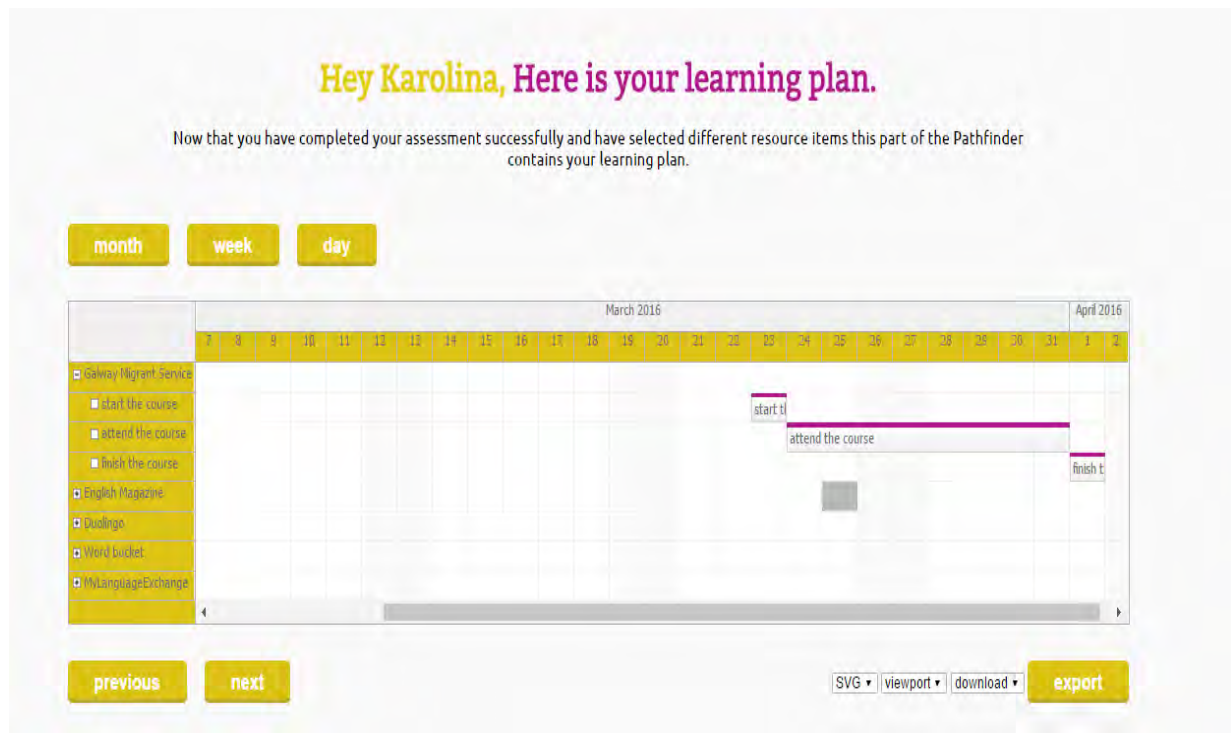
Smartphone (iPhone)					
Word subject	Short description	Focus	Skill	Price	Rating (5 points = top)
Free phone app		Work, Travel, Everyday situation, Study	no restriction - no restriction	0 €	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Smartphone (Android)					
Word subject	Short description	Focus	Skill	Price	Rating (5 points = top)
Free phone app		Work, Travel, Everyday situation, Study	no restriction - no restriction	0 €	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Internet					
Word subject	Short description	Focus	Skill	Price	Rating (5 points = top)
English Magazine	You can read lots of different articles. You will see how to use English in adverts and quotes. You can read English stories and jokes. You will learn about English Grammar.	Work, Travel, Everyday situation, Study	no restriction - no restriction	0 €	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Duolingo	You can use a program for 14 hours a day learning English and in the end of each day you will receive your results	Everyday situation	no restriction - no restriction	0 €	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
MyLanguageExchange	You can practise English with native speakers, online meetings	Work, Travel, Everyday situation, Study	no restriction - no restriction	0 €	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

A professional language advisor should know all of the language courses and language exchanges, whether fee-based or free, in the given area. In addition, an advisor should be familiar with the leading online resources and the major language learning text books, as well as local newspapers, radio stations, and public libraries.

Depending on how the assessment questions were answered, the Pathfinder system will generate a list of options for the learner. This may include formal, paid courses, free courses, language exchanges, and online resources as well as other print, broadcast, and recorded learning resources. If the learner wants to find out more about the proposed options before making their choice, they can double-click on any option and will be brought to a description page that provides more information about the offering.



Creating a Personal Learning Plan



If the learner is using the Pathfinder system independently, they can place a tick mark in the box to the left of the course they want to attend and/or the resources they want to use. When the box is ticked, the courses and resources move up into a planning calendar. Boxes appear to the right of each resource, representing the tasks associated with it. For example, the tasks assigned to a formal language course might be: *start the course*, *attend the course*, and *finish the course*. The learner can move these task boxes, stretch or shrink them according to the dates and length of time required to complete the tasks. Appropriate tasks for each type of resource have been pre-assigned by the resource provider and will automatically appear when the resource has been selected.

The learner can also add tasks that are not pre-entered and not associated with a particular resource. For example, they might want to add a date for doing a progress test or to meet with their Language advisor. When the learner double-clicks on any place below a calendar date, an input screen will appear that allows the creation of a one-off task. When the screen has been completed and saved, a corresponding task box will appear on the calendar. These task boxes can also be moved, stretched, shrunk, or deleted.

When the learner has scheduled all of their tasks, they are given an overview of their personal learning plan and can make adjustments to balance their time, work load, variety of courses and resources.

The process of creating the learner's personal learning plan is essentially the same when a professional advisor is involved. Courses and resources are proposed, selected and scheduled following an assessment. The difference is simply that a more wide-ranging discussion and assessment of the learner's needs can take place, and a better review and selection of the learner's choices can be facilitated. The advisor is in a position to influence the learner to consider methods of learning that might not have previously occurred or been known to them. A professional Language advisor can also offer personal encouragement and support to the learner, which the system cannot provide.

Keeping a Learning Diary and Following Up

Add a new entry to your learning diary

	Progress / Observations	Pace	Problems	Conclusions
Course	You can write your thoughts here	You can write your thoughts here	You can write your thoughts here	You can write your thoughts here
Materials	Click to open			
Exchanges	Click to open			
Self study	Click to open			

Add new diary record

No plan is perfect; however, a plan that isn't working offers an opportunity to review the assumptions that led to it, and to re-plan activities based on the experience and new knowledge gained by the learner. The learning diary function in Pathfinder provides a way to document the learner's experience and to rate the courses and resources according to their quality and efficacy.

By periodically reviewing the learning diary, the learner can re-do their assessment to find different resources or review the list of proposed resources from their first assessment and choose alternative paths to achieve their learning goals.

Working with a language advisor can significantly enrich this review. Therefore, the learner and advisor should meet periodically to review and revise the learner's personal learning plan. Through discussion, the advisor can conduct a more in-depth review of the learner's experience. The advisor should praise the progress that has been made and tease out the underlying reasons for any lack of progress. The advisor can also challenge the learner in a non-threatening way to be honest with themselves. The learner should be encouraged to reflect on whether their goals were realistic, whether sufficient time was dedicated to the activities in their learning plan, and if the courses and resources were appropriate for achieving satisfactory progress. The advisor and learner are now in a position to re-plan the activities according to the insights gained in the advice session.

Appendix A

My Personal Language Learning Portfolio

For: _____

My personal language learning assessment:

	Your current skill level						Today's date			Your skill level goals						Time to reach your skill level goals		Date to reach your skill level goals		
	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	M	Y	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	Days	D	M	Y	
							00	00	0000								00	00	0000	
Listening							00	00	0000							Days	00	00	0000	
Speaking							00	00	0000							Days	00	00	0000	
Reading							00	00	0000							Days	00	00	0000	
Writing							00	00	0000							Days	00	00	0000	

This is why I want to learn:

Purpose	√	Comment – destination of travel, type of job, level of study, situations
To travel		
To get a job		
To study		
To socialise		
For everyday situations		

This is how I want to learn:

Courses, exchanges, and resources	√	These are the hours per week I can spend
In a class with a teacher and students		
With a private teacher		
In a language exchange		
Using online, interactive resources		
Using online, non-interactive resources		
Self-study using a text book		
Using recorded audio material (CDs, MP3s, DVDs)		
Using television, videos, and films		
Using radio		
Using other printed materials (magazines, Newspapers, books)		
Other – please specify		

My Learning Plan

Type of course or resource	Name (there can be more than one of each type)	Weeks																											
Language course																													
Language exchange																													
Online resources																													
Books																													
Audio-visual recordings																													
Radio																													
Television																													
Films																													
Printed materials																													
Other																													

This is the review of my progress:

Type of course or resource	Name (there can be more than one of each type)	Review date	Progress	Problems	Changes
Language course					
Language exchange					
Online resources					
Books					
Audio-visual recordings					
Radio					
Television					
Films					
Printed materials					
Other					

My observations and comments:

My advisor's observations and comments:

My signature: _____

My advisor's signature: _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

My advisor's name: _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Appendix B

Case Studies

This section contains a sample of case studies from the five partner countries in the L2_Paths project, Pathways for Host Country Languages for Migrants. During the project over 200 advice sessions were conducted and from these twenty five case studies were written up in detail. All twenty five of these case studies can be viewed on the project web site, www.l2paths.eu. This appendix contains five of these case studies. They were chosen because they represent a cross section of learners from different backgrounds, and because they illustrate some of the challenges that learners face, as well as the solutions that could be proposed to them. The names of the learners have been shortened to an initial to protect their identity and safety.

Here are some observations and tips based on these case studies:

1. There is as much variation in the factors that influence the success of learning a new language as there are different types of people. These factors range from personality, psychological, social, economic, familial, temporal, learning style, to motivational, etc. The advisor must put all of these factors together to form a picture of what will work for the learner. Fortunately there are now so many learning options available that there is a solution for everybody. The skill is to put these options together into a personal learning plan, then to provide the monitoring and encouragement the learner needs to stay the course and achieve their goals.
2. All of the language advisors took considerable time to get to know the learner personally; to understand their backgrounds, their motivation for learning, and their learning style preferences.
3. There is a special challenge in providing learning advice to absolute beginners when there is no common language shared between learner and advisor. The advisor should bear in mind that the responsibility for the success of the communication resides with the advisor not the learner. Ideally the advisor should be able to communicate in the learner's language. If that is not possible then perhaps an intermediate language might work, for example, French or English. Another possible solution would be the use of an interpreter. The Pathfinder system may also help because it is available in several languages.
4. The most common problem encountered was lack of time because of shift work or family responsibilities, followed in some cases by lack of money to attend formal courses. This made the recommendations for independent learning via on-line resources, radio, television, films, reading, and social conversation all the more important and relevant.
5. As attractive as independent learning may seem it requires a discipline and perseverance that not everyone possesses. Therefore monitoring and follow-up are critically important.
6. The Language Advisor often acted in an overall cultural integration support role. This involved explaining to the learner the availability of free courses, the importance of mastering certain aspects of their new language, cultural norms, and other opportunities, responsibilities, and obligations associated with life in their new host country.
7. Most striking was the role that the advisor played in instilling confidence in the learner and providing motivation to strive for improvement in their language skills in spite of setbacks and slow progress.

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L2_Paths Project
543020-LLP-1-2013-1-IT-KA2-KA2MP
Language Advice Sessions

Case Study I

Partner: Italy

Learner Description:

Name, nationality, approximate age, life situation

A is a 20-year-old girl from Eritrea. She arrived in Italy last November with her brother, escaping from her town and leaving there the rest of her poor family. She came to Italy to look for a better life and to accompany her brother who wanted to leave the country because of the very oppressive government that obliges each man to join armed groups. Those who do not join them are put into prison, tortured and killed. Before leaving Eritrea A had not finished high school.

Assessment of the Learner's language learning goals, their skill levels, learning styles, and preferences

A wants to finish secondary school and in September she is attending the last year of a secondary school here in Todi. Without having a good knowledge of Italian language it would be very difficult for her to attend the lessons, understand the subjects and pass the final exam, this is why from February to August she really wants to reach at least a B1 level of Italian. Her goal is very tough because she is a complete beginner, she has no money available but lots of time to invest.

A is a very shy, reserved, sometimes emotional and very reflexive person; she is aware of it even if it is still difficult to control these feelings. While talking to her, I understood she is an "intrapersonal" girl, that means she has the capacity to understand the internal aspects of oneself and to practice self-discipline so in creating a trustful relationship I encouraged her to identify her personal emotions and to reflect upon what is causing them, this was the first step for A to learn self-control.

What advice were you able to give them

The suggestion for a learning path good for A have been:

From the beginning of February until the end of March she is attending a municipality 60-hour free course that will enable her to reach level A2. She is attending class three times a week for three hours each.

From the beginning of May until the middle of August she will be attending a municipality 100-hour free course that will enable her to reach B1 level.

Listening to videos, doing grammar exercises and enriching vocabulary through the use of free web-site links, like: www.impariamoitaliano.com, www.oneworlditaliano.com, www.educational.rai.it.

Writing a very essential daily diary

Taking part in reading group for young people run by the public library

Meeting the language advisor once every two weeks to give her feedback on the learning path. The meeting could be held wherever A feels comfortable, in a bar, in a park, in an office, while walking in town or in the countryside.

What was their experience of learning after your advice? Was it successful? What problems did they have?

For students with strong intrapersonal intelligence, the best ways to learn are:

Individual instructions and independent study, this is why I suggested her the course in class and the self-study at home

Online activities, this is why I suggested studying through on-line resources

Free writing activities, this is why I suggested keeping a diary

Mapping places in the environment where the student feels comfortable, most creative and happiest, this is why I suggested having advising sessions where A prefers

Your observations about your interaction with this learner.

A is a very nice, well-behaved girl. The interaction was easy with her, the biggest difficulty was to help her become aware that she is the real of her learning plan and of her future. I helped her understand that the awareness of her capacities, strengths and potentials is the key to optimize her own performance.

Case Study II

Partner: Germany

Learner Description:

Name, nationality, approximate age, life situation

T had been learning German for some years before moving to Berlin. Nevertheless, the immigration agency obliged him to complete an integration course in order to maintain his residence permit. This is what brought T to the Language Advice Center.

Assessment of the Learner's language learning goals, their skill levels, learning styles, and preferences

During the first advice session it became clear that T was at B2/C1 level and spoke German fluently. He had also taken an official exam. He was happy, however, to improve his German in a language course. However, it also became clear that not any type of language course would be suitable for him and that his biggest obstacle would be his unpredictable working hours which would make it very hard to attend a language course continuously over a longer period of time.

What advice were you able to give them

The Language Advisor started by getting to know T and finding out about his reasons for moving to Germany, his new job as a Spanish teacher and about his previous experiences learning German.

Then, the Language Advisor checked T's exam certificate to find out what his level was according to the CEFR. Even though T's German level was excellent when he came to the first advice session and despite him being able to prove his language skills with an official exam certificate, the Language Advisor made it clear to T that he had to attend an integration course to fulfil his visa requirements. The Language Advisor, provided T with names and addresses of different language schools that offer suitable courses for him and agreed that he would get in touch with them to enrol for a language course and that he would come back for a feedback session within a week.

In the second advice session, T had taken the necessary steps to enrol in a language course. The Language Advisor showed him some self-study materials to prepare for the official language exam after the language course and provided T. with a list of exam dates and exam centers that T. contacted after the session.

What was their experience of learning after your advice? Was it successful? What problems did they have?

T was overwhelmed by the amount of paper work and variety of different learning options and chose to speak to a Language Advisor to find out what he needed to do and where to find a suitable language course.

The main problem for T were his unpredictable working hours and work load which we thought would make it very hard for him to attend a language course on a regular basis over a longer period of time. For this reason, in addition to the language course, the Language Advisor provided T with information about self-study materials that he could study at his leisure to better prepare for the official exam.

Your observations about your interaction with this learner.

T was a very friendly and co-operative client. On the one hand, his good level of German made communication with him very easy. On the other hand, it was hard to find the right words to convince him he had to attend a language course anyway to fulfil all legal requirements when he was already fluent in German.

However, he appreciated the advice, fulfilled all tasks he agreed on with the Language Advisor and successfully completed the final language course exam before the end of the year.



Case Study III

Partner: Latvia

Learner Description:

Name, nationality, approximate age, life situation

Y, Russian, 30 graduated from Russian high school in Riga. She had the minimum points required for passing State exam in Latvian language. Later on she studied in one private higher education institution with Russian language as the medium of instruction. She lived in Ireland for a long time.

The advisee expresses that she is enjoying the language learning but is feeling overloaded because of work. Her husband has moved to Ireland. Finances is a huge stress factor for Y. She feels unconfident when talking to people due to the Latvian language barrier and is unsure about choosing the right way to improve her Latvian language competence. She has B2 level.

Assessment of the Learner's language learning goals, their skill levels, learning styles, and preferences

Using adviser-provided tool, Y self assessed her learning styles and preferences, strengths and weaknesses. Identification of learning styles in terms of preferred way to work with information (concretely or abstractly) and in terms of preferred way to process information (through observation/reflection or through experience/action) allowed advisor and advisee outline activities that helped Y achieve her language learning goals.

What advice were you able to give them

I advised Y to use flashcards that can help expand vocabulary; make grammar drills; exercising in everything she has learned; to read books, magazines, news articles in Latvian language out loud. She needed a lot of practice in conversation with native speaker in order to get better at listening comprehension.

What was their experience of learning after your advice? Was it successful? What problems did they have?

During the first of three language advice sessions, Y learned how to weigh up advices and options and came up with own offers for moving forward. Speaking practice improved Y's listening skills as well as speaking skills.

We reported Y's progress toward meeting her goal in receiving C1 level. Identification of learning styles and proposed changes in language learning affected Y very positively. In December 2015 she passed Latvian language exam and gained C1.

Your observations about your interaction with this learner.

I am very happy about our meaningful collaboration with advisee Y that led to achieving Y's language learning goals.

I monitored and reviewed the advice procedures regularly to ensure they are the most effective form of advice.

Case Study IV

Country: Sweden

Learner Description:

Name, nationality, approximate age, life situation

K is from Syria. She is 47 years old, is married and has 4 children. She came to Sweden with the family two and a half years ago. Her husband worked at UN in Damascus

She has learnt Swedish very quickly and is working as a teacher. The children speak very good Swedish as well. K is a very social person, she really wants to learn Swedish but she doesn't have much time to study. Her husband is helping a lot of refugees and K is always cooking for everyone.

Assessment of the Learner's language learning goals, their skill levels, learning styles, and preferences

K really wants to learn Swedish, she knows a lot of words and is always looking up new words. She likes to talk, in the beginning she was shy talking Swedish but not any longer.

Her goal is to speak Swedish without problems. The family is determined to live in Sweden, and integrate. She has not much time to study at home. She needs to study more grammar and to write Swedish better. Her level is B1.

I told her to listen to the radio while she is on the bus (she has to be on the bus 1,5 hour every day to go to school), study easy books, and magazines. She is very curious and wants to find out how things work in Sweden, about family and traditions.

What advice were you able to give them

K is going to the free Swedish course at Folkuniversitetet, paid by the government.
I have suggested K to download apps for newspapers on her mobile.

What was their experience of learning after your advice? Was it successful? What problems did they have?

K is listening and wants to follow my advice, her problem is that she has very little time at home. Her family is big and always has a lot of guests, she is often very tired and then it's hard to learn a new language.

Your observations about your interaction with this learner.

We have a very good relation, she is asking me about a lot of things not only about the language.

It means a lot that I encourage her and help her with different things. She often comes with stories that she has written and ask me to correct it. She needs someone to help and motivate her, and she is very grateful.

Case Study V

Country: Ireland

Learner Description:

Name, nationality, approximate age, life situation

M is 27 years French student. He has completed his masters in Business. He wants to improve his English for future business projects. Therefore, he is currently studying English in a language school in Galway and he is going to stay for a year to do so.

Assessment of the Learner's language learning goals, their skill levels, learning styles, and preferences

His level of English is A2, pre-intermediate. He has been in the school for almost 7 weeks. From his first week, M was able to establish an open and friendly relationship with his other classmates. "Irish food and weather were more difficult to adapt than Irish accent", he stated. In relation to his level of his performance in English, he was able to communicate simply and understand in familiar situations but only with some difficulties. However, after spending some time in Galway, he showed some progress as he became able to speak English more fluently and understand reasonably well and can use basic tenses but have problems with more complex grammar and vocabulary.

M likes learning by visualising, listening and doing things.

What advice were you able to give them

The advising sessions were carried out through informal face-to-face sessions. The length of sessions varied depending on the purpose of the sessions. The first session lasted 30 minutes. The first session usually helps both the student and the advisor to determine the learner's needs. However, this was different with M as he knew what he needed from the advising sessions. As it was mentioned earlier M joined the language school to improve his English particularly his speaking skills. He also wanted to make progress in his both listening and writing skills.

The first advisory session started with a discussion about his needs analysis then he soon expressed his interest in improving his skills in listening and writing. He planned to give them three extra hours a week to address the problem.

When the advisor and the learner sat for the first session, together they explored his learning strategies to improve his writing and listening skills. To do so and for guiding purposes, M and the advisor has negotiated the most common mistakes that are considered as major obstacles to improve their listening skills. Many students focus on translating English words into their own native languages and then back to English which in many cases students stop listening to the conversation or they get lost in the middle of it. Or when they try to understand everything the English speaker says which frustrates many students including M.

The advisor suggested some online resources such as TED talk (Technology, Entertainment, Design), advising M to select a topic and maybe read about it before he listens to it. The session was concluded by the learner repeating the tasks for the coming week and the advisor confirming them in follow-up sessions.

In relation to writing M chose topics he was interested in writing about and gave them to the advisor for comments. In order to help with direction, the advisor consulted with the learner about reading the topic which he wanted to write about. This helped the learner to organise his ideas and increase his vocabulary.

What was their experience of learning after your advice? Was it successful? What problems did they have?

The advising sessions were very successful. M was happy that there was someone to check and guide his learning methods. He found the sessions supportive and motivating which helped a lot to build up his confidence to carry in learning English independently.

Your observations about your interaction with this learner.

M has developed a wide range of confidence when talking with others. He could communicate in a clear, fluent and expressive way.

