

Learning to learn

Learning to learn is not only about learning to memorize, it is about the willingness and ability to organize and control one's own learning. This includes the ability to manage time effectively, to set goals, to make self-assessments, to acquire, process and apply new knowledge in a variety of contexts. This competence is contextualised in the local environment : one needs to know what courses are available and how to access them. It is also a time dimension : what are the consequences of our choices for our professional careers ?

Learning to learn therefore requires getting to know oneself, to know techniques and methods and to behave in a socio-economic environment. It needs to be considered as a competence that can be developed with the support of trainers.

1. On the trainer's side : how to facilitate the act of learning ?

While the way of teaching varies from one country to another, the way of learning is also linked to cultural and educational factors. It also varies according to individuals who have different expectations, needs and means that the trainer will try to understand.

Create a climate of trust with the learner and between learners. Before starting a course, migrants feel insecure about who will be the trainer, the other learners, what will they learn, will they be up to the task ? The trainer shall prevent these fears and create a climate where the pleasure of learning must take root.

Engage the learner

Since not all learners have the same degree of motivation at a given time in a given system, the signing of a learning pact will prevent the learner from transferring responsibility for his learning to the teaching system. It is at the time of the expression of needs and the definition of objectives that a mutual commitment can be formalised.

Empowering learners

The heterogeneity of the learners' level requires to implement a self-directed learning environment that will serve both parties. All learners won't develop learning autonomy in the same way but they first need to understand the objectives and expected results before they are able to work alone or in small groups and before they can use the knowledge and skills of other learners.

Propose different strategies for learning

There is a profusion of typologies of cognitive styles (personal and cultural way of processing information) and learning styles (individual way of facing the act of learning). One of the most commonly used with adults, particularly for orientation or recruitment, is the Allinson and Hayes Cognitive Style Index. While each classification can partially explain some aspects of our learning behaviours, these are only hypotheses whose pedagogical applications have never been experimentally validated. Furthermore, the benefit of matching the teaching style to the learner's cognitive style has never been demonstrated, nor has the opposite approach that consists in trying to stimulate the learner by proposing learning strategies that he does not master but that should boost his motivation.

It is not a question of locking the learner into a profile or adapting training sequences according to supposed profiles, but on the contrary, of allowing several learning strategies by diversifying resources and activities (simulation, small group discussion, role-playing, outdoor activities, observation, presentations, problem solving, project implementation, etc.).

However, it remains interesting to make the migrant aware of the different learning styles, for example by analysing the activities, because this will lead him to question himself on how he learns. He may discover other ways of learning and realise that using different routes will improve his knowledge and skills. For Merrill (2002), adults learn more when :

- They see real examples or when they need to solve problems (through task to perform and problem-based activities).
- They can relate the new information to their previous knowledge.
- The knowledge and skills worked on are contextualized and useful in a real situation.
- They can apply what they have learned in a real context and receive feedback and advice on their performance.
- They are supervised to reflect, discuss, present or consider the use of new knowledge and skills.

The memory

Research has shown that physical exercise and sleep help to develop memory. While these are the only reliable data in this area, there are some techniques to memorise better on the long term. Thus it seems that everything that requires extra effort contributes to this : it would be better to take notes after a class than during it, to take breaks to remember what has been seen, to favour interleaving learning over sequential learning (taking care not to create cognitive overload). There are also many activities helping to train memory.

2. Give the learner some keys for a global approach to the learning to learn competence

Give the learner the *How do I Learn ?* grid or fill it in with him/her. Analyse together the answers before thinking about the following questions to set the competence in its broader context.

- Why am I learning ? What are my motivations ?

- How do I learn ? Can I talk about the different learning strategies I use ?
- Do I regularly evaluate what I have learned ?
- Where do I learn ?
- What do I need to change in my daily organization to learn better ? What are the constraints I need to remove ?
- Do I always look for opportunities to learn ?
- Can I list the tasks to be done and set priorities ?
- Do I make the connection between what I learn and my life projects ?
- Am I aware of the influence of social factors on my career choices ?
- Do I know where to find out about the education and training offer ?
- Do I know the training courses that I should take to achieve my objectives ?
- What advice would you give to a friend to learn better ?

Resources

- GAUSSEL, M. (2016). Ce que la recherche nous dit sur les styles d'apprentissage (ou retour sur un mythe tenace). IFE, ENS de Lyon, Institut français de l'éducation. Edupass.
- MERRILL, M. D. (2002). First principles of instruction. Educational Technology Research and Development.
- www.competencescles.eu



<http://velay.greta.fr>