

Some Useful Tips How to Work with the Portfolio - For Students

Remember that all progress is up to you and your work!

A 15-minute study a day is enough

Too high expectations and unreal resolutions can easily spoil your studies – when you decide to study two hours a day to get quick improvement, you soon realize you do not have enough time for it and lose your motivation.

Set realistic targets in your studies and try to reach them

Do not want to learn and remember all grammar in three months because learning a language always needs some time for revising, practical use and transfer of your new knowledge from your short-term memory into your long-term memory.

Think about the positives which will come if you study hard and do not quit

It can happen easily that you lose your motivation because you do not see any progress in your studies. Try to imagine how your knowledge of a foreign language would help you to get promoted, to find a better job or just enjoy reading a book in its original version.

Mark all your personal achievements in CAN DO statements in the European Language Portfolio

Using the Portfolio will show you how much you have already learnt and what you already can understand in a foreign language. It will help you to get rid of the thoughts that you have not learnt anything or that you have not made any progress.

Make your own Dossier with your best works

Collect your best writings, projects, tests, recordings and all other pieces of your work which can tell your present or future employer what you know in a foreign language. Add new pieces of work and sort them regularly.

Listen to songs, watch films and read books in the target language

Do not forget that you can learn a foreign language also outside a classroom. A good dictionary or foreign language subtitles will help you to understand easier all texts and you can read them again and again until you understand them well.

Write emails and talk to friends in the target language

Contacts with friends or business partners in a foreign language will show you how important your study is and it will motivate you to work hard and enjoy your studies.

Do not forget that learning outside the classroom is as important as your study with a teacher

Your teacher might be the best teacher in the world but still you need to do some homework, revise the vocabulary and study your new language in your free time.

Keep the records of your projects and essays and check them again after some months

After some time of your studies go back to your earlier works and try to improve them or find the grammatical and stylistic mistakes. This will show you that you have made progress since writing that particular piece of work.

Find your personal way how to learn and record new vocabulary

Ask your teacher and your friends what their best way of recording and learning new vocabulary is. Try to find the way which you personally find useful and use it regularly.

When you travel, use the language at each possible opportunity and talk to local people as much as possible

Do not be shy and try to ask the local people about their lives, landmarks, transport or good restaurants. Talk to people in a bar, at a disco, in a club or a hotel lobby.

Use all kinds of modern technologies to practise the target language

Find new Skype or ICQ friends, become a Facebook member and use a foreign language as the only means of communication. Real people and new contacts will enable you to practise the language in the most natural way.

Remember that all progress is up to you and your work!

Some Useful Tips How to Work with the Portfolio - For Teachers

Be kind and patient with your students – learning a foreign language is a long-lasting and hard work!

Always show your students how much they have already learnt

Support and encourage your students, let them collect all their works, compare their earlier works with the latest ones. Let your students correct their own older works and explain the grammatical and lexical reasons for their answers.

Work with the European Language Portfolio and let your students mark all their personal achievements in CAN DO statements

Use the Portfolio on regular basis in your classes and encourage your students to use it for all languages they study. CAN DO statements can be very motivating if used and discussed in the class regularly.

Support your students if they start to lose motivation

In each student's life there are some moments when they can not see any progress and start feeling desperate and lost. Then your time comes – you have to explain that this is just a normal phase of a learning process and it will soon overcome.

Let your students prepare their own practice tasks

After each new part of grammar or vocabulary let your students prepare a short exercise for their classmates - it makes students think more about what they learn and want to learn and in this way they take more active part in the learning process.

Let your students choose their own homework

When your students are asked to choose their own homework, they have to think about what they know well and what they do not know so well. You can give them some options what to do to improve their knowledge. It helps them to be motivated.

Use the real materials in your classes as much as possible

Real materials is the connection between learning and using the language in the real life situations - at work, on holiday, on a business trip...

Let your students choose the topics they find useful or interesting

Students' interest is one of the key elements of the learning process. If they are given the opportunity to choose topics which they find important or useful for themselves, their motivation increases.

Use the target language in the class as much as possible, even with complete beginners

Try hard to avoid using the students' native language and create real life situations/environment within the class as much as possible.

Encourage your students to watch films in target language with the target language subtitles

Explain your students that watching a film is one of the best ways how to learn and understand a foreign language. Show them how they can work with it, what and how much they can learn from it.

Encourage your students to read simplified books and listen to book recordings

Provide your students with books and recordings and encourage them to use the Internet as a resource for reading (books, texts, samples, recordings along with transcripts...) Your students can then swap tips on useful sites with each other.

Show your students different ways how to record new vocabulary

Using proper and neat records on the whiteboard will encourage your students to keep the vocabulary records also well organised and ready for everyday revising and studying.

Use a great variety of teaching techniques and materials in your classes

Remember that your students can be of different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic learners). Knowing and understanding your students' learning styles can help you to teach them more effectively.

Be kind and patient with your students – learning a foreign language is a long-lasting and hard work!