

Beyond the Workbook: Ways to Encourage Students to Use English Everyday

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The Challenge

- ◆ Some students don't study or practice English outside of their tutoring sessions.

Because they
are too busy.





Because they
don't have many
opportunities.



Because they
are shy or lack
self-
confidence.



What barriers are keeping your student from doing traditional homework or using English outside your tutoring sessions?

*Please do not use your student's name.

Research

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- ◆ Language learning can take place at any time and in any place, including the home and the community. (Hyland, 2004)
- ◆ Out-of-class activities can be devised to show students that they are surrounded by English if they make a little effort to pay attention to the language as it is used in their daily lives. (Guo, 2001)

Our Own Experiences

- Who has studied a foreign language?



Our Own Experiences



Our Own Experiences



Our Own Experiences

USE IT



OR LOSE IT

Tips

- ◆ These tips are supplemental to structured instruction during tutoring sessions.
- ◆ One size does not fit all.
- ◆ It may take time to build habits or get your student to try something new.

Tips: At Home / Family

- ◆ Watch a TV show in English with subtitles.
- ◆ Watch TV with children (Sesame Street, for example).
- ◆ If there are other English speakers in the home, have an “all English” meal each week.
- ◆ If children speak English, agree to speak only English on the way to/from school drop off or sports practice.

Tips: At Home / Family

- ◆ If there is a computer in the home, read and listen to stories on the Voice of America, Newsela, or News in Levels.
- ◆ Talk to yourself in English, describing what you see.
- ◆ Translate names of ingredients while cooking.
- ◆ Spend a little time with printed material that may come in the mail, such as flyers or catalogs.

Tips: Out and About

- ◆ Low stress and safe conversations with strangers:
 - Ask where to find an item in the grocery store;
 - Speak to the bus driver or fellow friendly passenger;
 - Speak to a friendly neighbor or co-worker.

Tips: Out and About

- ◆ Listen to the radio in English while driving.
- ◆ Try to understand song lyrics and sing along.
- ◆ “Eavesdrop” while riding the bus or waiting in line.
- ◆ Look at signs, billboards, names of businesses while going about your daily routine.
- ◆ Use supermarket or drug store flyers to become familiar with new products.

Tips: Phones

- ◆ Exchange a brief text message (with your tutor) each day.
- ◆ Switch Facebook setting to English.
- ◆ Record yourself reading aloud on your phone for 10 minutes each week. (Students can check out readers from the LVCA library.)
- ◆ Use the “Notes” function to copy new or unfamiliar words.
- ◆ Use phone apps such as Duolingo or Memrise to practice English when you have a few minutes during the day.

Tips: Community

- ◆ Use the public library:
 - Get a library card;
 - Take children to the library each week and get books;
 - Ask the librarian for help finding something;
 - Learn basic computer skills.
- Look for ways to join groups such as neighborhood associations or groups at your place of worship. Consider volunteering or joining a community garden.

Tips: Other English Learning Opportunities

- ◆ Adult Learning Center ESL classes.
- ◆ Dialogue Café conversation group.
- ◆ Conversation groups run by churches.
- ◆ English Conversation Circle at the Northside Library.
- ◆ UVA International Center free conversation and book discussion groups.

Tips: LVCA Opportunities

- ◆ LVCA conversation groups.
- ◆ Extra time on the LVCA computers.
- ◆ LVCA field trips and workshops for students, such as the library tour and the visit to Monticello.
- ◆ LVCA citizenship classes (if appropriate).
- ◆ Check out books from the LVCA library and read a little before bed, while waiting for an appointment, or while on the bus. Take a few minutes before/after tutoring to look at the Daily Progress.

Activity

- ◆ With your partner or small group, read over the description of your student and then look at the list of ideas and tips.
- ◆ Select 2 or 3 tips that you think might work for your student and jot them down on the form.
- ◆ Can you think of any other strategies not on the list that you might suggest?
- ◆ Share with the whole group the ideas you think your student could use to incorporate more English into to his/her everyday life.

Example: Few Opportunities

Luz works for a cleaning service. Her supervisor and co-workers all speak Spanish. She shops at a Latin market and speaks only Spanish at home. She'd like to improve her English, especially to talk to her children's teachers, but she has a busy schedule and her tutor knows she has no time for formal homework.



Example: Low Self-Confidence

Jin's husband works long hours and she is home with 2 small children. She has a few Chinese friends but they never speak English together. She is very self-conscious about her pronunciation and is uncomfortable speaking when she is out in public. She relies on her husband to do all the talking whenever they do things as a family.

Now that her children are in school and she has more time, she'd like concentrate on improving her English. She is very comfortable with her tutor but is a bit intimidated to try something new.



Example: Isolation

Abid and his wife came to the U.S. several years ago to join their son and his family. He depends on his son and daughter-in-law for transportation. Meeting with his tutor is one of the few times he interacts with anyone outside his family. His grandchildren speak mostly English but he feels embarrassed to practice with them. He keeps up with his family back in Iran by using the family computer.



Example: Busy Schedule

Marcos works for a painting contractor. He works long hours and likes to relax with his friends after work, listening to music and playing video games. He didn't like school much and reading is a challenge.

But, he knows learning English is important for communicating with his boss at work and he'd even like to have a business of his own someday. He comes to tutoring sessions regularly but doesn't have a lot of time or interest in doing homework outside of class.



Example: Where to Start?

Omar and his family arrived as refugees 4 years ago. He and his wife work in housekeeping at UVA and balance life with 3 active children. Omar is determined to become a U.S. citizen but knows his pronunciation, reading, and writing will have to improve before applying. He is very interested in learning more about the United States but little formal schooling and limited free time have held him back from moving forward with his goal.



More Tips?

- ◆ Look at the ideas you jotted down at the beginning of the workshop. Any other suggestions?
- ◆ Have you used any strategies with your student that you can share?
- ◆ Any questions, comments, observations?

Final Thoughts

- ◆ Encourage your students to try new ways of using English.
- ◆ Assure your students that mistakes are OK and are part of the learning process.
- ◆ Remind your students that English is all around them. Just taking time to tune in and absorb what they see and hear can help improve their English skills.