Learning to Learn: A Course on Language Learning Strategies

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Abstract : In an increasingly global world, more and more international students attend academic courses and programs in a second or foreign language, and local students register in language learning classes in order to improve their employability. These students need to quickly become proficient in the new language. How can we, as administrators, curriculum developers and teachers, make sure that they have the tools they need in order to develop their language skills in an academic context? This paper will describe the development and implementation of a new course, Learning to learn, as part of the Major in French/English as a Second Language at the University of Ottawa. This academic program was recently completely overhauled in order to reflect the current approaches in language learning (more specifically, the action-oriented approach as embodied in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and the concept of life-long autonomous learning). The course itself is based on research on language learning strategies, with a particular focus on the characteristics of the "good language learner". We will present the methodological and pedagogical foundations, describe the course objectives and learning outcomes, the language learning strategies, and the classroom activities. The paper will conclude with students' feedback and suggest avenues for further exploration.