

# Focus on the learner



My student is called Samara Salem Abdullah AY-Susan'. He is an Oman student working as an employee in the Bluebag Company. He speaks Arabic which is his mother tongue and a little English. He's at the elementary level at Polyglot Institute. He first studied English in the Oman public schools where he didn't learn much according to him. He felt he couldn't respond , when talked to In English, and needs to improve his speaking skills so he decided to Join Polyglot Institute for an English language course.

When I met Samara I asked him: " why didn't you learn speaking at school. What's going to change now? " He simply said that he hadn't had the same motivations . He had been careless and that now he really cares. At school he didn't feel the need for this language and the number of students in the class didn't help at all. Days and days passed in class and he did not utter a word in English. The teacher didn't talk to him either. Now, It's completely different . He has a clear goal. It's to be more comfortable at work where he has to talk to people In English.

Samara has a passive studied learner style while at school and a passive experiential learner in real life (see the attached questionnaire). As such, Samara cannot improve so much in speaking unless he becomes active studied . The speaking skill needs some more initiative and to be more daring. Samara, according to the questionnaire, is of a visual interpersonal Intelligence. He prefers learning by watching and forming a mental image of target knowledge. He also learns better when listening to the other's explanations or Instructions.

I think Samara should be helped to acquire more learning intelligence (verbal or kinesthesia) to move to the active style of learning. This is not difficult, I think, as according to his above explanation of how he studied at school, he is not naturally passive but forced by negligence to be so. 2- General ability: During the last week Samara was present on three occasions only. Therefore, I will rely on the Interview I had with him more than the In-class observations, to analyze his general valuables. As a matter of fact, Samara has a very reduced range of vocabulary. While speaking he was very reluctant about what to say.

However, when receiving language he understood roughly what was being said. I think he has strong logical guessing. He asked me three times to explain and twice to repeat the question for him. In a questionnaire of 16 points, that's not a lot. However, he wanted me to read the questionnaire for him instead of reading it himself. I suppose that proves he knows the sounds more than the writing. He has then to work on his reading skill and to do frequent activities where an association between graphs and sounds is emphasized. He also prefers verbal instructions where the language is simplified. - Grammar: I used an in-class writing assignment, the questionnaire about his learning style and the interview I had with Samara to get the following errors: Error | Correction | Comment | Not like speak Spanish | I don't like to speak Spanish. | Problem with the use of other tongue, Arabic, where there's no auxiliary and the subject is not physically apparent. | Age at 28 | I'm 28. | Problem with the use of "be" a state verb that does not exist in Arabic. | I Drink TOT of coffee. | I drink lot of coffee |

Random use of capitalization . I 4- Vocabulary: Error I Correction I Comment I  
Not like moving I I don't like traveling.

I He thinks in Arabic(interference)The word moving in Arabic is like traveling  
in meaning. I I live the house early. I I leave the house early. I

Mispronunciation of live with long vowel instead of a short /l/leads to confuse  
it with leave. I He speak us a story I He tells us a story. I The student does  
not distinguish tell from speak I 5- Pronunciation: A lot of people /bi: bal/ I

People /pi: Pl/ I Problem with voiceless " p" and voiced " b" sound I

Wednesday /Wednesday/ I Wednesday /winded/ I The notion of silent letter(d  
here) is not easy to follow by an Arabic speaker.

I Garage /g|RA: g/ I Garage / g|ray' I Some local people pronounce the  
sound / 3 / as [g/ I 6- Speaking: Samara is weak at speaking. He said it  
himself when asked about why he wants to learn English. He's not fluent at  
all. He hesitates to utter a word but can repeat it when told to. He fears  
mistakes a lot. When I asked him about how he learned English at school, he  
understood the question but couldn't express himself, he paused a lot and  
tried to use Arabic words. If he has to , he uses single to two or three-word  
utterances to communicate and most of the time without a  
subject. ReadPronunciation Problems in Egyptessay.

E. G: " yes, play football" or " no, not like to read" . Alt 's clear that Samara  
didn't have the opportunity to express himself in an English-speaking circle.

7- Other skills: As for reading, the learner responds positively when the text  
is not too long. He also finds it very helpful if the instructions/questions  
contain words from the text. That arks as a reference point to where he

should look for the answer. However, when the text is long or when he encounters difficult words, he feels lost and looks for help from his peer or the teacher (though rare).

When it comes to listening, the learner would like the recording to be slower and to be played more than once. He performs better when a pre-listening set of questions are given. (listening for a purpose). Materials Activity 1 | Pronunciation | Source | Ship or Sheep [Ann Baker pop to pop 1 Weakness | Pronunciation. The confusion between the voiced /b/ and the voiceless /p/ | How you would use it? | Will you adapt it? Shorten it? Extend it? Will you pre teach anything or do other preparation? Will adapt it and with some more tasks prepare a practical activity about how to pronounce [p/ and /b/ if necessary make a discover his errors. With his classmates they can correct these errors | Why it will help the learner? | The student needs some practice on the level of these two sounds, and needs to know the difference between them. But first of all he has to know that his pronunciation of [p/ and /b/ is not correct and this will be by practice and auto correction | Activity 2 | grammar | Source | English Grammar in Use/Raymond Murphy |

Weakness | Use of auxiliary do/does in negative sentences | How you would use it? | Will you adapt it? Shorten it? Extend it? Will you pre teach anything or do other preparation? ' will adapt the exercises about the simple present in the negative laid some more tasks and make the student do these exercises with his peers to exchange ideas and help each other | Why it will help the learner? | It will give the learner more practice and being with his peers will give him the opportunity to ask and get answers from somebody he deals with openly. It will also give the others a chance to revise.

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