

Lesson 39: Common Mistakes in Learning Methods (Part 1)

In this final section of the [course](#), I'd like to tell you about some learning and mindset mistakes that I've observed among the hundreds of students whom I've worked with. This part is going to be a little different because it's not about fixing specific words or phrases; instead, it's about correcting common problems that language learners tend to have.

In some ways, this is the most important section of the course because these habits or thoughts or attitudes are at the foundation of everything you do when you're working on learning English. So I'd encourage you to reflect and ask yourself if you've been making any of these mistakes.

Today I'll tell you about four common learning mistakes.

Error #185 – Not practicing or reviewing what you've learned

A lot of students tell me they have a hard time remembering what they study. They might learn 10 words today, but tomorrow they can only remember one of them. Or maybe they've spent a lot of time learning about the present perfect tense, but when they're speaking, suddenly their mind goes blank and they forget how to use this grammatical structure.

The first thing I want to tell you is that this is natural! We're human beings, not computers or machines, and when the volume of information is very large - as it is when learning a language - we won't remember everything perfectly.

But you can help yourself remember things better by doing two things - practicing and reviewing. Practicing is important because there are two ways we use language - one is passively, meaning listening or reading. That's when someone else is using English and you are just receiving it and trying to understand it. The other way we use language is actively, meaning speaking or writing. That's when YOU are using English, creating sentences and paragraphs to express your own ideas.

The error a lot of students fall into is studying, studying, studying - they read books, they listen to podcasts, maybe they even watch videos like this one, or attend an English class... but those are all passive activities, and you need to use English ACTIVELY as well.

Yes, you can do it a little bit by taking quizzes like I've included in this course, but it also means trying to speak and trying to write as much as possible. If you've just learned a new vocabulary word, write a sentence with it! If you've just been studying the past tense, try to tell a story about a memory from your past. Actively practicing your English is a great way to build confidence and to remember all the information you're taking in.

The other thing that can help you remember is reviewing. It's been proven that we retain information better when we review it regularly. Reviewing can involve watching a video again, or simply looking over your notes to remind yourself of what you learned previously. One way to develop the habit of reviewing is to do this:

- Every time you begin a new study session, first spend a few minutes reviewing what you learned in the past session
- Once a week, don't study anything new. Instead, review everything you learned in the past week.

OK? I know it's fun to watch my videos and learn from me, but definitely don't forget to practice and review as well.

Error #186 – Focusing too much on some areas of English and ignoring others

If you want to be fluent in a language, you have to be good at all these areas:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening
- Grammar
- Vocabulary

Many students make the error of focusing too much on one or two areas, and they end up being weak in the other areas. So you might be GREAT at doing grammar exercises, but really bad at listening. Or maybe you're excellent at reading, but you can hardly speak at all. Or perhaps you have a terrific vocabulary, but your grammar is full of problems.

Make sure to balance all these aspects of English - one tip is to **dedicate one day per week** to studying and practicing each area, so Monday you practice reading, Tuesday you work on writing, and so on.

Here at Espresso English we also have courses focusing on all these areas, so if you'd like to learn more, you can join our programs!

Error #187 – Being an “on and off” student

Let me tell you a story about two of my students.

One student – I'll call him Evan – started taking lessons with me when he was a beginner. He had a lot of problems – his pronunciation was very difficult to understand and listening was almost impossible for him. He just didn't have a natural ability for learning English.

But he took class almost every day, he did homework on the bus, he kept practicing listening, even though it was frustrating, and he studied with me continuously for a year and a half.

And by the end of that time, he had improved a lot. He went up two levels, from beginner to pre-intermediate to intermediate. He was able to have conversations in English and even work for an English-speaking manager. It made me really happy to see all his progress!

Now compare Evan with my other student, who I will call Laura. Laura was at the intermediate level when she started studying with me, and she signed up for a semester-long course – but she missed or canceled her class many times. She didn't study at home, and then she took several months off because of work and travel.

When she returned, she started taking classes again, but she was at the same level – in fact, she had to learn again some of the things she had previously studied, but forgotten.

What was the difference between Evan and Laura?

Evan studied consistently. Even though he worked a lot and didn't have much time, he always took a few minutes to work on his English – and he was successful in improving.

But Laura was not consistent. She stopped and started her studies several times – and she didn't make any progress, even though the time was passing.

One of the worst mistakes you can make when learning English is being inconsistent; being an "on and off" student. If you do this, your English won't improve... in fact, it might even get worse because you'll forget what you already learned.

But if you study consistently and you have persistence – you will make great progress over time!

Error #188 – Not studying in a way that you enjoy

Learning and mastering a language takes a long time - often years. So it's very important to study and learn in a way that you enjoy! Don't read books that you don't find interesting, or use an app or a software program that you think is confusing, or watch movies in English that you don't enjoy. If you do that, then English learning will become something that you hate or you don't look forward to.

Instead, I'd highly encourage you to learn English in a way that you enjoy - maybe that's through lessons here at Espresso English, maybe it's through an app or video game, or maybe it's through informal conversations with tourists in your country.

And when reading or listening in English, choose topics you enjoy. What do you normally enjoy reading or listening to in your native language? Is it current events, or sports, or entertainment, or science fiction? Try doing it in English. Everyone is different, and everyone learns best in different ways, so you need to find what is easiest and most fun for you.

This tip is linked with the previous one - when you're doing something you enjoy, you're much more likely to do it often and do it consistently in the long term. And that is the way to make great progress in English.

I hope today's video has given you some things to think about - in tomorrow's lesson we'll cover four more common learning mistakes.

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[200 COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH COURSE:](#)

