Erasmus ALL-SR

Autonmous Learning: learner pack

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3. Pilot overview

3. Session records

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0. What does learning mean to me?

1. What does learning mean to you?

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3. Successful learning

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Prompt for initial discussion ('how the coaching will work')

What is coaching?

Coaching is where someone helps you plan and carry out a learning project of your choice.

How is coaching different from teaching?

With teaching, a teacher tells you what to learn and how to learn it. The **teacher** is in charge of your learning.

With coaching, **you** choose what to learn and how to learn it. The coach helps you to think how best to do this, but **you** make the decisions. **You** are in charge of your learning.

How does coaching work?

Coaching is very simple and easy. You just sit down with your coach every week and talk about how you are getting on with your learning. Your coach listens, asks helpful questions and encourages you.

How will your coaching programme work?

You choose a learning project to help you develop your language and/or literacy skills. You then get **12 sessions** with your coach to help you carry out your learning project.

Please note The coach will <u>not</u> be teaching you. Their job is simply to help and support you.

How will you benefit?

You will improve your language skills <u>and</u> become a more confident and effective learner.

The aim of coaching is to help you find out what works best for <u>you</u> to solve problems and learn.

The job of the coach is to help you do that (i.e. help you find out what works best for <u>you</u>).

It works as a partnership between you and the coach.

You choose something to do with [e.g. communication/English/writing etc.] that you want to work on – it relate to a problem or it might just be something that you want to do better – and the coach helps you think through the best way to do.

The coach can't <u>tell</u> you, because s/he doesn't know! What seems like the best way to the coach might not be good for you. So his/her job is to help you find the way that works best for you.

S/he will do that just by asking you questions. The questions help you find the way that works best for you.

Shall we give it a go?

OK. Before thinking about what learning you would like to focus on for the coaching, the coach would like to learn more about your experience of learning generally – to help her understand better what has worked for you in the past – and what hasn't. Let's start by looking back over the last year and thinking about <u>any kind</u> of learning you have done in <u>any part</u> of your life. What made you do it? How did you do it?

Now go to part 2 of this booklet. Try and work through one activity every few days, ask your friends for help if you need to.

Coaching overview: coaching sessions

Meeting 0/1

Tasks:

Discuss how coaching works
Agree coaching contract
Introduce learning project plan (p.6)
Complete learning project plan and/or
session record

| Project information sheet for learners | Written consent form *If possible* | How the coaching will work (Discussion prompt) |

| Coaching contract (template) | Learning project plan (template) | Session record (template) |

Meeting 1/2

Tasks:
Complete learning project plan
Complete session record

| Learning project plan (template) | Session record (template) |

Meetings 3-11

Tasks:

Complete session record

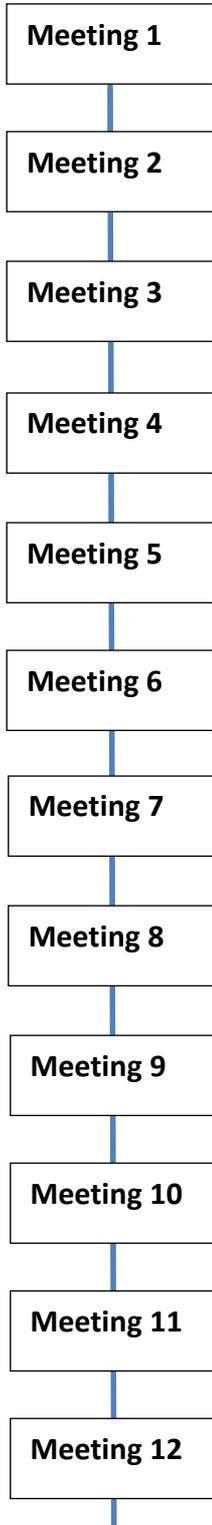| Session record (template) |

Meeting 12

Tasks:
Complete session record
Complete evaluation

| Session record (template) | Coaching pilot evaluation (template) |

Coaching overview: plan for learning reviews

Now

Meeting 1

Meeting 2

Meeting 3

Meeting 4

Meeting 5

Meeting 6

Meeting 7

Meeting 8

Meeting 9

Meeting 10

Meeting 11

Meeting 12

Coaching overview: plan for learning reviews

Coaching: learning project plan

Learner name: Date (DD-MM-YY):

Coach name:

Project plan *Please include (1) learning goal, (2) reasons for choosing goal, (3) how you will know you have succeeded (4) difference achieving goal will make to you, (5) steps you plan to take to achieve goal (with time frame for each step), (6) resources, (material, human) you will draw on, (7) obstacles/problems you foresee (8) solutions you propose (9) how you think the coach can support you*

Learner signature/initials:

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3. Coach name:	4. Session duration (HRS-MINS):

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7. What issues were discussed?

8. What action have you decided on – and for what reason(s)? What is the time frame for this action?

9. How will you act on the learner's decision?

Session evaluation

10. How <u>useful</u> was today's session – and for what reason(s)? (*Things to consider: Progress towards goals, new insights and awareness, learning [by learner and/or coach] about how to make good use of coaching, etc.*)

Your view:

Coach's view:

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about today's session?

You:

Coach:

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Thanks for your time!

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Learner name:

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End-of-pilot evaluation *Possible questions for discussion: (1) What have we learned from our sessions together? (2) What value have we found in these sessions? (3) What has been the most rewarding thing about these sessions? (4) What has been the most difficult thing? (5) If a friend asked whether this approach was worth trying what would you say? (6) Would you like to go on using this approach? – plus, for all questions: What are your reasons for saying this?*

Learner views

Coach views

Learner signature/initials:

Part 2: Coaching

Stage 0. What does learning mean to me?

Introduction

Learning

There is a lot of talk these days about learning. News broadcasts are full of items about learning at school, at university, at home and at work. We talk about e-learning and about lifelong learning. This section asks an important question: What does *learning* actually mean – to you?

This stage will help you find out how you enjoy learning most

In this section you will

- put into words what learning really means *to you*
- notice when, where and how you really learn
- find out how other people learn
- decide what helps *you* learn – and what doesn't
- think about the idea of *lifelong learning*

You will need

- a notepad
- a pen or pencil
- a modern dictionary *and*
- someone you can talk to about your ideas

1. What 'learning' means to you

Most people agree that learning is important.

The aim of Progress File is to help you learn. So it is worth asking the question, "What does *learning* actually mean to you?"

Use the activities below to answer this question.

Activity 1.1 The learning chain

What does the word learning *make you think of?*

Method

1. Say the word *learning* to yourself.

2. Say the very next word that comes to mind.

3. Do exactly the same for that word: say whatever word it calls to mind.

4. Repeat the process one last time.

5. Write your words on the form below.

| learning | ⟹ | 1. | ⟹ | 2. | ⟹ | 3. | ⟹ |

Comment

You have created a chain of words linked in your mind to *learning.*

Look at the words in your chain. For each word ask

  Is it positive or negative?

  Is it something you can touch – or not?

  Is it a thing, is it something you can do, or is it a feeling?

  Does it involve other people?

Most important of all,

  Why do you link this word to *learning*?

Your answers will help you see what learning means to you.

Taking it further (optional)

We have each had our own experience of learning. Find out what *learning* means to people around you.

Ask five other people what words they associate with learning.

Compare their answers with your own.

Activity 1.2 Learning is...

Put into words what learning means to you

1. Use the five questions below to define 'learning'.

2. Work quickly – note the first answer that comes into your mind!

Q 1. What was the first thing you can remember learning?

Answer

Q 2. Why did you learn it?

Answer

Q 3. At what age does a person stop learning?

Answer

Q 4. How can you tell learning has happened?

Answer

Q 5. Give an example of something that cannot learn.

Answer

Now write your definition of learning here.

Learning is

Comment

[image: infant – child – adolescent – adult]

As infants we learn to walk and talk.

Later we learn to feed and dress ourselves, to say please and thank you.

At school we learn how to get on with other people. We start to think for ourselves and to understand something of the wider world we live in.

As adults we learn to take on new responsibilities both at work and at home.

It is worth noticing two things:

1. Learning is linked to change.

2. Change happens all the time, throughout our lives.

Doing things differently is how we cope with change.

That is where learning comes in. To do something differently we need to gain new knowledge and new skills. Sometimes we need to think about things in a new way.

Take learning to drive as an example.

Learning to drive means

- *new knowledge* You must know the highway code, how a car works and what the law demands of a driver.

- *new skills* You must learn how to control a car.

- *thinking about things in a new way* You must learn how to drive *safely*.

Taking it further

Look back at your responses to the five questions in Activity 1.2 and your definition of learning.

Do you still agree with your answer?

Would you like to change your answer?

Discuss your ideas about learning with someone you know.

This activity helps you understand how learning helps us cope with change.

2. How do we learn?

In today's world, change happens faster and faster. The ability to learn has never been so important. How well do you learn something new? Use the activities below to discover when, where and how you learn well.

Activity 2.1 Many ways to learn

Think about how you learn best

Method

1. Look at the speech bubbles, then…

2. Look at the table.

3. Complete the table for each bubble.

4. Add five examples from your own life to the table.

1

All right everyone, sit down and be quiet. Today there is test on fractions. You will have exactly one hour. No talking. No asking

2

Excuse me, how do I get to the post

3

Can you show me how this CD player works?

What are you learning?	Where are you learning it?	How are you learning it?
1. Maths		Test
2.	On a street	
3.		Watching a demonstration

Suggested answers at the end of this section

Comment

There are many ways to learn. Research into learning suggests that three things are important for any kind of learning.

1. You know what you want to achieve when you start – in other words, you have a reason to learn.
2. You can get help from other people when you want it.
3. You can learn at a pace that suits you.

Look back at your examples. Were these three things true for your learning?

Other factors are important too. Look at the following two questions.

1. How easy is it to learn in situations where you feel uncomfortable?
2. How easy is it to learn if no one tells you how well you are doing?

For most of us, the answer to both questions is, 'Not very easy.'

Activity 2.2 Successful learning

Identify what makes learning successful
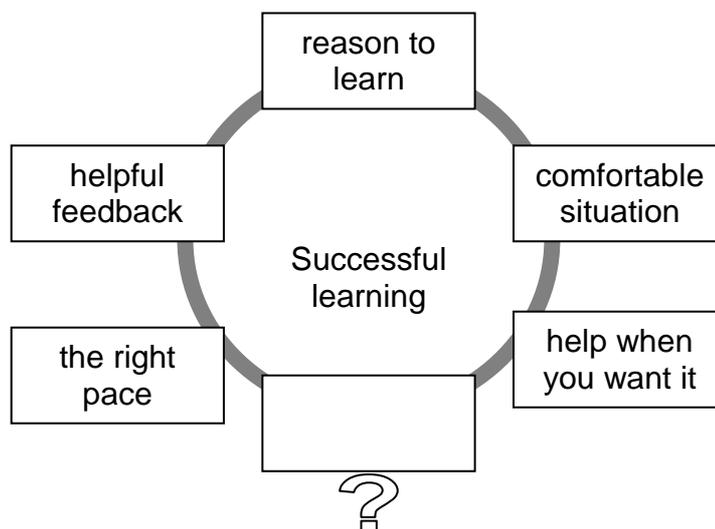
Method

1. Study the *Successful learning* diagram.

2. Read *Learning from experience* (below).

3. Fill in the empty box on the *Successful learning* diagram.

Learning from experience

'Made a mistake? Don't worry. Put it down to experience!'

How do you feel about making mistakes? If you feel uncomfortable it is worth considering this. The student who never said anything, never made a mistake. But – the student who never made a mistake, never learned anything.

The simple truth is, to get anywhere in life we have to take a chance or two. And that means we have to be prepared to get things wrong sometimes. Is that a problem? Only if the people around us make us feel bad about it. Otherwise, making mistakes is fine. It's how we learn. In fact, it might help to call 'mistakes' 'learning steps'.

Comment

The final factor for successful learning is the freedom to make mistakes.

The complete *Successful learning* diagram looks like this.
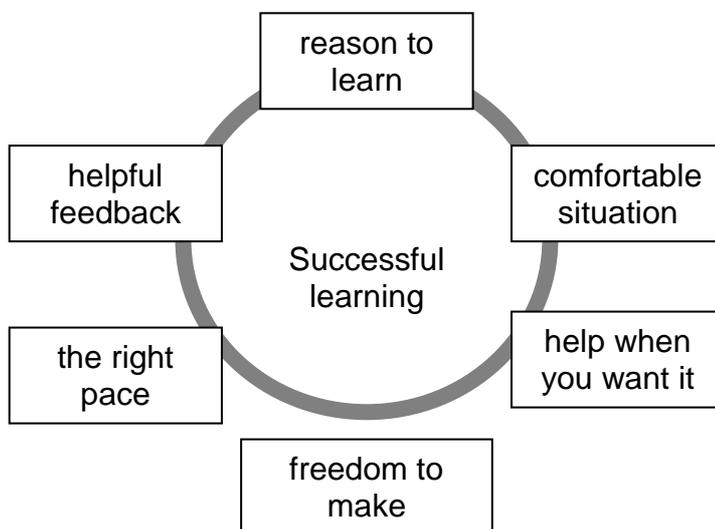
3. Successful learning

Use the activities below to find out more about some important learning skills.

Activity 3.1 Effective learning

Think about successful learning

1. Read the short case study below.

2. Answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Amjad wants a driving licence. To get it, he must pass two tests, the theory test and the practice test. Amjad is determined to do more than just pass the tests, though. He wants to learn to drive really well. To do this, he has planned a learning 'programme' for himself. He has booked two lessons a week with a driving instructor. He has also bought a book about driving theory and a book about practical driving skills. His plan is to study each book for half an hour at least four times a week. He has also bought the official driving theory test CD Rom – so he can take practice tests. He plans do a ten-minute practice test every other day. But that is not all he is planning to do. Amjad has asked his sister, who has been driving for a couple of years, to take him with her in her car whenever she can for a couple of weeks. 'I just want you to explain what's going on in your mind while you're driving,' he told her, 'so I know what you have to pay attention to while you're driving.' The last part of Amjad's plan involves a friend, Shakeh, who has just bought a second-hand car. Amjad has offered to help Shakeh rebuild the engine. 'That way I will learn how it works.'

---

1. How is Amjad finding out about the theory of driving?
2. How is Amjad finding out about practical driving skills?
3. What different kinds of learning is Amjad doing?

Suggested answers at the end of this section.

Comment

Amjad's learning programme should succeed.

This is because he has

- a **clear goal** (Amjad knows what he is aiming for)
- used a **variety of different learning activities** (which should help Amjad stay interested in learning to drive)
- **involved other people**, including friends and family as well as experts (their interest and help will motivate Amjad)
- covered **all three areas**: **knowledge** (of driving theory and how engines work); **skills** (driving practice); and **attitude** (the new ways of thinking about driving which Amjad will pick up from his sister as well as from his instructor)
- **paced his learning** (Amjad is learning 'little and often' so he is more likely to remember what he learns).

Activity 3.2 Learning to learn

Relate Amjad's story to your own situation

1. Think about your own learning goal.

2. Bearing in mind Amjad's case study, identify five different ways to support your own learning.

Comment
There is a saying,

Tell me, I'll listen; show me, I'll understand; involve me, I'll learn

The more involved you are in your learning, the more you are likely to learn.

Active learning means

- making decisions for yourself about what you learn, how you learn, when and where you learn
- taking personal responsibility for your learning (and resisting any temptation to leave it all to the 'teacher')
- making as many links as possible between your learning and your daily life

Activity 3.3 Noticing, practising and going back over things

Find out more about learning

1. Think of three words you can read easily but are not sure how to spell.

2. Write them down below.

3. Check how they are spelled.

2. Note down how you could learn to spell them once and for all.

How you think the words are spelled
1.
2.
3.
How the words are spelled (check in a dictionary, ask someone who knows)
1.
2.
3.
Ways you could learn to spell them

Comment

The most common way of learning to spell a word is to copy it a few times, then cover up what you have written and try to write it again from memory. Then you check what you written against the correct spelling. You do the same every day for a week and then test yourself at the end of the month.

This way of learning is based on sound principles.

Writing the word and then checking helps you **notice** how the word is spelled.

Repeating this every day for week helps you **practise** the spelling.

Testing yourself at the end of month helps you **go back over** the spelling.

Noticing, practising and **going back over** things are how learning works – whatever way you do it. When you think about it, it stands to reason.

Noticing

Have you spent ages trying to get something to work, then realised you hadn't looked at the instructions properly?

To learn something you have to really *see* it – and that often means looking at it from a number of different angles.

Practising

Have you ever found it really difficult to do something that looked easy when someone else showed you how?

Just as important as noticing is practising. The saying 'practise makes perfect' tells an important truth. The more often we do something, the better we become at it. Finding ways to use what you are learning is a good way to practise it.

Going back over things

Have you ever forgotten something you once knew well?

Going back and looking again at what you have learned stimulates your brain and helps maintain the network of brain cells that holds your learning.
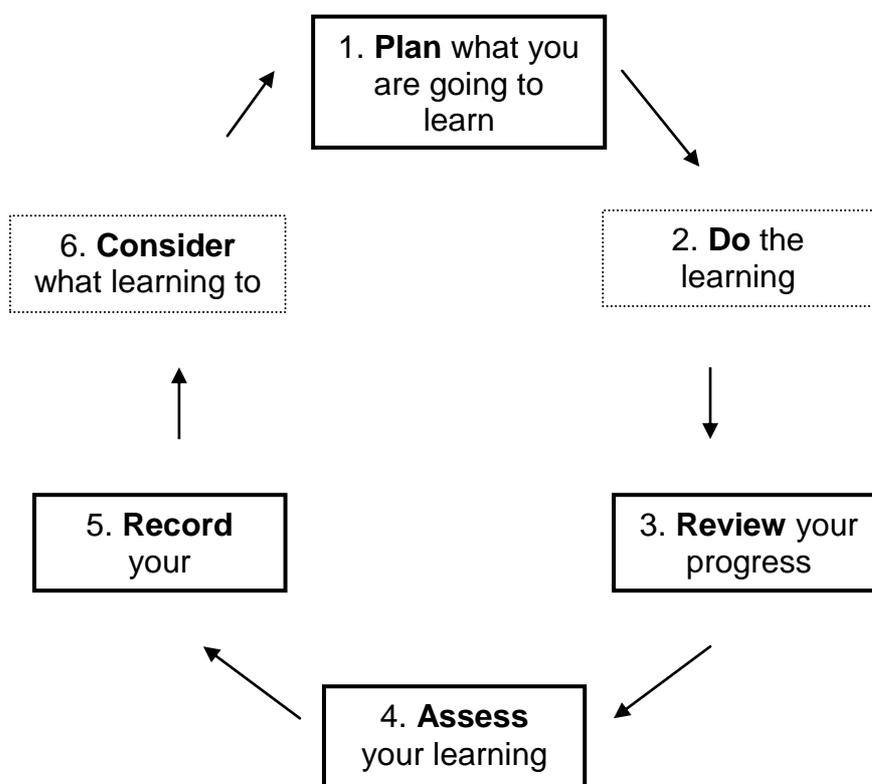
4. Planning learning, reviewing progress, assessing and recording achievement

We have looked quite closely at what learning means and what makes learning successful.

Knowing what makes learning successful helps us plan learning – and although most learning in life just 'happens', a lot is planned. School, college and university, community education classes and training at work are all examples of learning that is planned.

If you have ever decided to find out more about something and planned how to do so (e.g. read a book about it or search the internet) then you have planned some learning for yourself.

Planned learning is based on a cycle.

```
                    1. Plan what you
                      are going to
                         learn

   6. Consider                          2. Do the
  what learning to                       learning


   5. Record                            3. Review your
     your                                 progress


                    4. Assess
                   your learning
```

Planning helps you organise your learning.

Reviewing helps you keep on track.

Assessing helps you check what you have learned.

Recording achievement helps you see what you have learned.

Activity 4.1 Planning learning

Decide how learning is best planned

Method

1. Look at the items in the box.

2. Plan how to do it using the table below.

Item box

Learn how to	paint
	operate a fork-lift
	read
	do book-keeping
	be a doctor
	assemble a flat-pack cupboard

How to do it	**Item**
1. Community education class	*e.g. Learn how to paint*
2. University course	
3. Workplace training course	
4. Literacy class	
5. Follow the instructions	
6. College course	

Suggested answers at the end of this section

Comment

For some of the items in this activity there is clearly only one sensible answer. For other items several answers are possible.

Notice also the *kind* of learning the items require.

In some cases, it is learning you organise for yourself (such as following instructions to assemble a flat-pack cup-board).

In other cases – such as a university course – someone else organises the learning for you. This normally means enrolling on a course and attending classes at agreed times. It may or may not be free. It often leads to an official qualification (such as a certificate).

Sometimes it is a bit of both – for example, learning to paint at a community education class where a teacher helps you pursue your own goals.

Whatever way you choose to learn planning helps you organise your learning.

Planning happens in a number of ways.

Most courses have aims and objectives. These are often expressed in the course curriculum. This is a document that sets out what the course will cover.

Whoever is running the course should be able to show you the course curriculum.

An Individual Learning Plan is another way to plan your learning. This is a plan that you draw up, with or without the help of a tutor, to guide your own learning.

Planning with SMART targets

Nowadays, most planning tries to be SMART.

SMART stands for

Specific (saying exactly what needs to be done)

Measurable (easy to tell when achieved)

Achievable (possible to achieve in the near future)

Relevant (really will take you where you want to go)

Time-limited (a date has been set to achieve the target)

SMART targets make it much easier to review progress.

Reviewing also happens in a number of ways.

If you are learning on your own, you can check your progress against your plan. This is easier to do if you have given yourself SMART targets.

If you are on a course, ask about tutorials. Tutorials are informal chats between you and your tutor. They normally last between 15 and 30 minutes and give both you and your tutor a chance to talk about how you are doing.

Another way of reviewing progress is to do an assignment. Assignments are tasks given out by the tutor for you to do on your own (though often the tutor will help you). The assignment gives you a chance to think about and use what you have been learning. Assignments vary from writing essays to decorating cakes – it all depends what you are studying.

In schools, tests are often used to check progress. How do you feel about tests? Do you find them motivating? Or scary? Or both? Some people dread tests. Other people quite enjoy them.

It doesn't really matter how you review your progress – just be sure to make time every week or so to look at how you are getting on. (*Tip* Getting feedback from other people often helps.)

Reviewing is important while you are learning. Once you have finished, it is time to **assess.**

Assessing means checking what you have learned – in other words, to find out what you can do now that you couldn't do before.

There are lots of ways to do this.

Activity 4.2 Assessing learning

Decide how to check what you have learned

1. Look at the items in the box.

2. Choose the best way to assess learning using the table below.

Item box

Learn how to	paint
	operate a fork-lift
	read
	do book-keeping
	be a doctor
	assemble a flat-pack cupboard

How to check your learning	*Item*
1. Paint a picture	*e.g. Learn how to paint*
2. Pass the medical exams	
3. Put it together	
4. Read something you want to read	
5. Take a test	
6. Pass the course assignments	

Suggested answers at the end of this section

Comment

If you are learning to do something practical, the best way to check your learning is to see if you can do it! For example, if you learning how to send an email, the best way to assess your learning is simple: try to send an email. If you succeed, your have learned what you set out to learn. If not, notice where you had difficulty – that's where you need to learn more.

If you are going to do a course, find out how it is assessed. Most courses have **assessment** built into them – either through assignments (tasks to help you check you have learned the skills taught on the course) or through course exams (which may be written or practical).

5. Lifelong learning

Finally in this opening section of Progress File, let us look briefly at 'lifelong learning'. Use the activity below to investigate lifelong learning.

Activity 5.1 Lifelong Learning

Examine how life has changed

1. Look at the statements below.

2. Tick 'true' or 'false' for each statement.

Statement	True	False
1. The world is changing quickly these days.		
2. Much of today's technology was not in common use twenty years ago.		
3. Much of today's technology will probably not be in use in twenty years time.		
4. The way we work today is different from the way we worked ten years ago.		
5. You need to keep your qualifications up-to-date if you want to get ahead at work.		
6. The way we work in ten year's time will probably be different from the way we work today.		
7. To keep up with all the changes it is necessary to learn new things on a regular basis.		
8. It is important to have the chance to learn new things at all stages of one's life.		
9. Today it is possible to do courses no matter what age you are.		
10. Today it is possible to take courses in many different ways – including from your home using the internet.		

Comment

Each of the ten statements is true. Together, they explain lifelong learning. In a world changing as rapidly as ours, learning must go on all the time. Because of this, colleges and universities now welcome students of all ages.

What have you learned from completing this stage of Progress File?

In this stage you have completed a number of activities to help explore what learning really means.

You have looked at the different situations in which learning happens.

You have seen that people find some ways of learning work better for them than other ways of learning.

You have noted some important learning skills.

Finally, you have familiarised yourself with some important aspects of formal learning and analysed the concept of lifelong learning.

Now think about what you have learned from doing these activities.

You may find it helpful to discuss this with other people or to write your thoughts below.

Suggested answers to Activity 2.1

What are you learning?	*Where are you learning it?*	*How are you learning it?*
1. Maths	In a classroom	Test
2. The way to the post office	On a street	Asking for directions
3. How a CD player works	By the CD player	Watching a demonstration

Suggested answers to Activity 3.1

1. Amjad is finding out about the theory of driving by studying a book and using a CD ROM to test himself. The CD ROM adds variety to his study (so it is not just all 'book-learning'). Testing himself offers Amjad objective feedback on how effectively he is studying.

2. Amjad is finding out about the practice of driving by taking lessons, by 'shadowing' his sister and by rebuilding an engine with his friend.

3. Amjad is doing self-study with books; he is doing e-learning ('electronic learning') with the CD ROM; he has hired an expert instructor; he has asked his sister to act as a mentor; and he has arranged with a friend to some practical work.

Suggested answers to Activity 4.1

How to do it	Item
1. Community education class	*e.g. Learn how to paint*
2. University course	be a doctor
3. Workplace training course	operate a fork-lift
4. Literacy class	read
5. Follow the instructions	assemble a flat-pack cupboard
6. College course	do book-keeping

Suggested answers to Activity 4.2

How to check your learning	Item
1. Paint a picture	*e.g. Learn how to paint*
2. Pass the medical exams	be a doctor
3. Put it together	assemble a flat-pack cupboard
4. Read something you want to read	read
5. Take a test	operate a fork-lift
6. Pass the course assignments	do book-keeping