

Success and Failure

It sounds too simple, you say. Are there no other factors involved in learning another language than just ability, readiness and willingness? Yes, there are other factors involved in success and failure.

Fifteen Factors

A number of other factors determine success-failure in learning another language. Fifteen are highlighted in the chart below. These highlights are followed by a fuller comment on each of them, and they will be dealt with in even further detail in subsequent chapters. Understanding them will help you decide whether or not to pursue your interest. Here is a snapshot of each:

	Factor	in failure	in success
1	How do you see your significant others involved in the process?	I don't see them as involved. I am the one working.	They are integrally involved in my development as I am in theirs.
2	What is your main goal in learning to talk again?	I aim to develop language competence at a level measured by the FSI scale, if at all.	I state it in terms of the number and kinds of local people with whom I engage in <i>bi-passing</i> .
3	What central organizing principle do you use in reaching this goal?	I follow my teacher's or tutor's agenda which is typically stated in terms of linguistic topics or social situations.	I organize my development in terms of a 200-step program for de-alienation preceded by a pre-field program focusing on de-parochialization.
4	How do you relate formal learning and learning in the community from ordinary people?	I see formal learning as an end-in-itself with community work merely as reinforcement.	I see formal learning as the means by which I learn how to learn from ordinary people in my community.
5	What main theory of learning do you employ?	I have no particular theory of learning to guide me.	I develop competence in contact with ordinary people, utilizing information of teacher/expert.
6	How do you handle attitudes, feelings and emotional factors involved in learning?	I tend to disregard them and see them as distinct from my learning.	I recognize their impact, especially in role-deprivation, and deal with them as part of my learning process.

7	How do you understand your overall development and how do you plan for it in learning?	I feel that development happens; I cannot plan it in some special way.	I plan my development in terms of a cycle of expectations-opportunities-evaluation-follow-up.
8	How do you plan for reaching the point at which you can get along without English?	I have no special plan for reaching the point where I can use my target language to learn the language without depending upon English.	I have a 40-step plan (as above) for reaching the critical point where I can learn my target language without recourse to English.
9	How do you manage the magnitude and complexity of the learning task?	I have no special guiding principle. I just take what comes, chunk by chunk.	I plan my first twenty days in terms of "the sticky little ball" and my second twenty days in terms of ways and means of learning vocabulary.
10	How do you organize your daily activity?	I organize my daily activity around the study of the minimal units mentioned above.	I organize my daily activity in terms of the learning cycle and the discovery cycle.
11	Where does your learning take place?	I am learning in a community that does not use my target language.	I am learning in a community that makes natural use of the language I'm learning.
12	How relevant is your community in learning to talk again?	My community is irrelevant in learning to talk again.	My community is integral in learning to talk again.
13	How is contact with ordinary people important in learning to talk again?	Contact with ordinary people is irrelevant in learning to talk again.	Contact with ordinary people has a central role in my learning activity.
14	How are language, culture and social relationships related in learning to talk again?	I see language, culture and social relationships as distinct and handle them separately.	I see language as the vehicle by which people in structured relationships exchange cultural ideas. I handle them together.
15	What is the minimal unit around which you plan your learning activity?	I plan it around particular types of linguistic units like vocabulary, pronunciation, sentences, texts, etc.	I plan my activity in terms of managing particular kinds of communicative events as minimal units.