



ICC Language Learning Tips: Create Your Own Language Development Journal

Why start a language development journal?

Keeping a language journal is an effective way to turn everyday interactions (e.g., meetings with your advisor, class discussions, conference presentations, TV, etc.) into productive language learning activities. Second language acquisition takes time and practice; using a journal can help you maintain this practice in an organized way. In addition, a journal can allow you to focus on the language and cultural issues (both in your daily life and at ICC) that are most pertinent to your personal language interests.

Tips on using a language development journal

- Choose a notebook small enough to carry around with you in your bag or backpack; a 3 by 5 inch or 5 by 7 inch notebook is a good size.
- Get a notebook with a spiral binding; it is easier to use when no desk or table is available.
- Set personal language goals (e.g., improve presentation techniques, participate better in group meetings, improve listening, strengthen fluency, pass the ITA test etc.), and use the journal to focus on your specific goals.
- Use whatever strategies are most effective for you. For example, some students found it useful to:
 - Organize the notebook by topic (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, presentation techniques), or simply fill it in chronologically
 - Chart progress by reflecting on their own performance (e.g., “*Today I gave a great presentation*” or “*I was able to answer unexpected questions by using the following strategy...*”)
 - Keep notes from ICC workshops and tutoring
 - Record good communication strategies observed in daily life (e.g., *the conference speaker used stress for emphasis very effectively*)
 - Collect useful examples of language (e.g., vocabulary choices, idioms, linking language, etc.) used by fluent speakers
- Experiment with different modalities to find what is most useful for you (for example, you can write, draw, create graphs and charts of language samples, etc.). Be creative – this is your journal. There is no right or wrong way to use it.