ienglish

LIFE IS THE CLASSROOM - IMMERSE YOURSELF

Activity 1

Although the iEnglish Plan at a Glance can help you stay organized, you may have already designed your own system that works well for you. There is no rule that iEnglish students need to use the Plan at a Glance. To see if it works well for you, complete the following activity.

1. If you have already finished an iLEAP cycle without using the Plan at a Glance pages, then continue to #2. Otherwise, complete a short iLEAP cycle without using Plan at a Glance. Then, continue to #2.

2. Print out a blank copy of the Plan at a Glance. As you work through your iLEAP cycle, fill out every section. Use Veronika's sample to help you.

3. Compare your Plan at a Glance pages with the system that you used before you learned about the iEnglish Plan at a Glance. Then, fill in the checklist below to compare the two systems:

Which system…	My own system	iEnglish Plan @ a Glance
…matches your learning style?		
…was easier for you to follow?		
…helped you move through the iLEAP cycle		
…organizes the information in a way that is		
…takes up less space?		
…helps you consider all of the important steps		
…do you think you will continue to use in the		

4. Look at your responses above. If you have more checks in the "My Own System" column, congratulations! You already have a system that works well for you, and you should continue to use it. However, you might like to use parts of the iEnglish Plan at a Glance, even if you don't want to use all of it.

5. If you have more checks in the "iEnglish Plan at a Glance" column, congratulations! You've just discovered a great way to keep your studies organized and efficient. Remember, you can choose to use or not use any section in the iEnglish Plan at a Glance: do what works best for you!

Activity 2

You will be completing many iLEAP cycles if you continue to follow the iEnglish program. You will want to personalize your organizational system so that you can complete your iLEAP cycle efficiently, access your information easily, and keep track of your progress.

Below are some common problems that iEnglish students face when they begin to complete many iLEAP cycles using organizational systems like the iEnglish Plan at a Glance. Read each question, and then provide a suggestion to the student that might help them solve their problem. Check the Answer Key for "Sample Answers" to see some other possible solutions. Maybe you will find a solution to a similar problem of your own!

1. "I use the Plan at a Glance to organize my learning, and it works well for me. However, I have completed about 20 iLEAP cycles, and the pages are really adding up! I have a pile of Notebook pages on my desk next to my computer, and if I have to refer back to something, I need to search through all of them. What can I do?"

Your suggestion:

2. "I use my own system to organize my learning. I take notes on my laptop, and save the file under a name that makes it easy to find the information I need later. However, entering a lot of text is very time consuming. I have a physical disability that makes writing with a pen and paper difficult, so that is not an option. What can I do to reduce the time it takes to take notes?"

Your suggestion:

3. "I use the iEnglish Plan at a Glance to keep track of my goals, locate samples, and process my learning, but I use a regular note-pad for the 'explore' or 'act' sections (it is just easier for me). I have completed several iLEAP cycles, but sometimes I feel like the more I learn, the more discouraged I become. There is just so much English to learn…I feel like I might never learn enough to get a good job, enjoy English-language movies and music, or have a close relationship with a native English speaker. What can I do?"

Your suggestion:

Activity 2 ANSWER KEY

Sample Answers

1. "I use the Plan at a Glance to organize my learning, and it works well for me. However, I have completed about 20 iLEAP cycles, and the pages are really adding up! I have a pile of Notebook pages on my desk next to my computer, and if I have to refer back to something, I need to search through all of them. What can I do?"

Your suggestion: The iEnglish Plan at a Glance pages will help you organize yourself throughout the iLEAP cycle, but organizing your iEnglish course will require its own organizational strategy. Get a binder and dividers (these can be found at your local dollar store). Try to sort your iLEAP cycles into categories according to the goals. For example, one category might be "Interacting with People at Work", where you could put your "I want to make small talk with colleagues" and "I want to ask the boss for time off" iLEAP cycles. All of your work will be nice and neat, and you should be able to find the information you need quickly by looking at the divider labels.

You also mentioned that you have a computer. If the paper clutter is getting on your nerves, you could also fill in the Plan at a Glance digitally, typing right into the PDF document. Then save the files with names that tell you about the information within them. Then, you could store each file in a folder with a descriptive name. This will take up little space on your computer, but clear a lot of space on your desk!

2. "I use my own system to organize my learning. I take notes on my laptop, and save the file under a name that makes it easy to find the information I need later. However, entering a lot of text is very time consuming. I have a physical disability that makes writing with a pen and paper difficult, so that is not an option. What can I do to reduce the time it takes to take notes?"

Your suggestion: Before computers, professionals who needed to write often and quickly developed a system called shorthand. Shorthand is a series of symbols that writers can use to get a lot of information down quickly, without writing an entire word. You don't need to learn the entire shorthand system (unless you really want to!), but you can develop your own system to reduce the amount of time you spend entering information. For example, instead of writing "with" or "without" in their full forms, you can write "ŵ" or "ŵout". This will save you some time. Also, you could try abbreviating long words: compare "information" with "info". You could also create short forms for words that you will use often, like "acct" for "accounting", or "cl" for "client". If you decide to use a lot of abbreviations and codes, make sure you keep a key so you don't confuse yourself!

If you have a mobile phone or tablet, you might also have a voice recorder feature. This will let you record your voice (or the voice of someone else), save it, and then play it back when you need it. Speaking instead of entering words might save you a lot of time and energy. Experiment and find out what works best for you!

3. "I use the iEnglish Plan at a Glance to keep track of my goals, locate samples, and process my learning, but I use a regular notepad for the 'explore' or 'act' sections (it is just easier for me). I have completed several iLEAP cycles, but sometimes I feel like the more I learn, the more discouraged I become. There is just so much English to learn…I feel like I might never learn enough to get a good job, enjoy English-language movies and music, or have a close relationship with a native English speaker. What can I do?"

Your suggestion: Congratulations on perfecting a combination of systems that works for you! Your problem is common with language students. It feels like you are making more errors and getting further behind the more you study. However, this is because as you learn more, you realize you are making mistakes, and you are more aware of how rich and complex the English language really is. This is a very important part of language learning – only when you are aware of your weaknesses can you address them!

You need to find some good motivational strategies to keep you on track. You might try something like a Progress Chart! Start with a blank piece of paper. In the lower left corner, write down the kind of mistakes you used to make when you started your iEnglish journey. Next, write down what you did to fix it. If you continue this, you'll see that you have followed a 'path' that will go up the page, to the other side, and maybe to another sheet. Hopefully, you'll see that you have made a lot of progress, even if it doesn't seem significant now. Keep at it, and have fun!