

Re: successful language learners -- the little details

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Justin Wilson wrote:

> *Hi again everyone:*

>

> *I was very pleased to hear some of your suggestions as far as the
> necessity of being social and pursuing Japanese friends without a
> terribly strong interest in English, taping tv dramas etc.. While that
> is all fine and dandy, I'd like at this point -- if you'all don't mind
> -- to ask you to share some specific details of what you think the
> best attack plan for the language is... I'll give a summary of some of
> the ideas I have. Please critique it, as well as telling me what you
> did do and were pleased with the results, or what you would have done
> differently in retrospect.*

>

> *My goal is to reach the highest proficiency level possible in 2
> semesters time in Japan, while not feeling miserable and enjoying
> myself at least a good part of my time here.*

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> *Here are my thoughts/plan of action:*

>

> *Vocabulary: Before I waste my time randomly picking words out of books
> that may very well be completely obscure, it is essential that I learn
> all of the high-frequency words that can pay dividends every single
> day. (ie, understanding a word that will occur 10 times in a short
> conversation, instead of one that may occur once, will improve my
> listening comprehension ten times faster for an equal investment in
> study time).*

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> *I have the very lovely Oxford Starter Japanese dictionary. One of the*

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- > *niciest things about it, as opposed to using EDICT, is that it lists*
- > *but 1 or 2 essential meanings for a word. That is good because I won't*
- > *be so tempted to put all those extraneous ones into my learning*
- > *software, and thereby make the memorization process extremely tedious!*
- >
- > *From my estimates, the Japanese->English half of the dictionary*
- > *contains in the neighborhood of ~5,000 words. My experience using*
- > *Oxford Starters for other languages tells me that nearly every single*
- > *one of those words is essential and extremely useful. So my plan is to*
- > *add in the neighborhood of 20-50 words from the dictionary into*
- > *Suprememo per day until I have learned'em all.*
- >
- > *In the meantime, I carry a pad in my back pocket at all times.*

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When I

- > *go out to eat, go shopping, etc.. every time I see a sign that seems*
- > *important etc.. that has a word I don't know, I jot it down. I try to*
- > *write a minimum of 10 per day.*

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After I get home and look these up, I

- > *will add the most useful ones into Suprememo. As for the ones that*
- > *don't seem so important, I may just append a definition to them on my*

- > pad, and casually review them later. (I'm considering writing these
- > with a red pen and then using the red/green clear plastic testers when
- > reviewing. Good idea ne ?)

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- > After I finish with the Oxford, I intend to start with the JLPT 4 list
- > and make sure there isn't anything I have missed. Then the JLPT 3,
- > then the JLPT 2, and finally the JLPT 1 list. I would guess that my
- > vocabulary is around ~1,500 words at this point. I hope that I can
- > finish the JLPT 1 list within 4 month's from now, though that may be a
- > tad bit optimistic.
- >
- > After that, I sincerely HOPE that it will be possible for me to simply
- > pick-up a book and only have to look up 4-5 words per page. In that
- > case, I'll save everything I look up to a list -- and periodically
- > parse for dups. Any dups I will then immediately add into Supermemo.

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- > Overall, I expect that I will need to spend in the neighborhood of 3-4
- > hours/day studying vocabulary -- drilling with Supermemo, and looking
- > things up that I have written on my pad.

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- > I read a webpage the other day that suggests if you have the
- > opportunity to learn 10 nouns or 1 verb, learn the verb. Does anyone
- > have any strong opinions about such an idea ?

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- > Grammar: I don't have any real specific plans for this. I've got a
- > decent grounding, having studied Yookoso 1 & 2. I've got a few
- > supplementary books on verbs, adjectives/adverbs, and sentences
- > structures. I'll read through these a bit, though by my estimations
- > the most important thing for my grammar will be massive input --
- > hearing native speakers conversations. Once my level is high enough
- > (though it is a lofty goal I admit), reading books ought to do wonders
- > for my ability to construct more complex, yet completely grammatically
- > accurate sentences.

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- > I'm going to be taking Japanese classes 5-days/week for about
- > 3-hours/day at the university here, so I think my in class time ought
- > to provide sufficient opportunities to have any huge grammatical
- > blunders corrected by the teacher, or otherwise NOTICED.

sci.lang.japan: Re: successful language learners -- the little details

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- > *Speaking: Since I'm not the most socially adept person, this isn't*
- > *something I can specifically plan out. I'm going to make use of the*
- > *opportunities I can find. In a worst case scenario, I'm sure I can*
- > *find a language exchange partner to speak one hour of Japanese with me*
- > *for every hour of English I speak with him.*

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- > *Time Utilization: When I studied in China I did far less studying than*

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- > *I should have, were I to reach the proficiency levels I wanted to*
- > *reach. Even knowing this, I'm still not sure exactly how I should*
- > *divide my time up between studying vocabulary, being in class for a*
- > *guaranteed 3–hours/day, watching TV dramas for listening practice, and*
- > *holding actual conversations. Since my biggest hurdle to understanding*
- > *at the beginning is very likely to be my small vocabulary more than*
- > *anything else, I think it is prudent to initially spend massive*
- > *amounts of time building my vocabulary up. I think it is much easier*
- > *to have it in the back of my mind and "activate" it after the fact.*
- > *(Ie, the first few times I pick it out in a conversation it may take a*
- > *few seconds before it kicks in, but that's far better than not kicking*
- > *in at all!)*
- >
- > *Well, what do YOU think !? =)*

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