

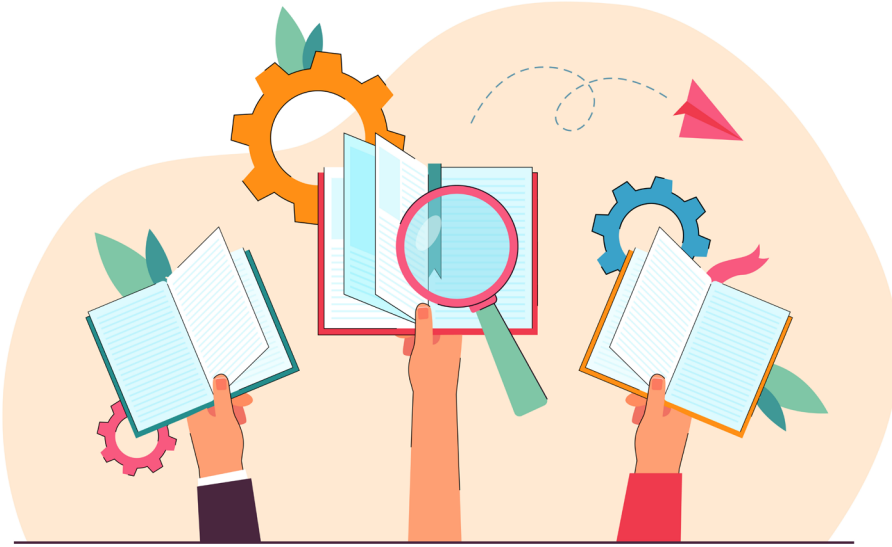
new strategies that they have learned along the way, in order to ready themselves to successfully navigate any future problems. Learning agility can be taught and learned at any stage in life. Agility also means making sure in the class, both the teaching and learning aspects, are constantly on track from day one. The Agile Teaching/Learning Methodology (ATLM) achieves this type of agility by maintaining a high degree of communication, interaction and feedback between the student and teacher. There have been hundreds of studies into the benefits of using learning agility on knowing a new language, unanimously agreeing that it improves cerebral functionality due to the challenge of recognizing, deciphering and communicating in a different language system – something that transfers into many other areas of learner's life. By being able to juggle between two more language systems, your ability to juggle multiple priorities and generally multitask improves. Similarly, learning a new language involves memorizing rules and vocabulary, strengthening your mental “muscle”, so much so that linguists

retain other types of information better. Multilingual people might be more perceptive, due to being better at observing their surroundings, focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. Linguists can strip away the subtle implications in their native vocabulary which can subconsciously bias judgment by thinking it over more logically in their second language. Finally, on a basic level, it is a big boost to the self-confidence to have that feeling of personal success in achieving the ability to communicate in another language. The ability to speak a second language opens up a world of possibilities for people at all stages and all levels of their careers.



**Keywords: learning
agility; agile
learner; language
learning.**





Introduction

Learning agility is a set of complex skills that enable the learner to learn something new in one place and then apply what he has learned elsewhere, in a wholly different situation.

It dictates how one can figure out a way through a new situation without actually knowing what to do, by using past and present experiences to make sense of an uncertain situation.

. Agile learners have the mindset that allows them to continually develop their understanding, to grow, and use new strategies that they have learned along the way, in order to ready themselves to successfully navigate any fu-

ture problems. Learning agility can be taught and learned at any stage in life. The good news is that learning agility is a skill that can be developed, and everyone can do it on his\her own. It is not a straightforward and easy route to learning but by working through the discomfort and setbacks that often accompany learning in new situations, ones comes out better and stronger and ready to tackle the next challenge. Agility also means making sure the class, both the teaching and learning aspects, are constantly on track from day one. A good teacher will need to know the subject well. But he must also know the students well and how they are progressing.

The Agile Teaching/Learning Methodology (ATLM) achieves this type of agility by maintaining a high degree of communication, interaction and feedback between the student and teacher. Therefore, teachers need to be as agile in their learning and delivery as students. There have been hundreds of studies into the benefits to the brain of knowing a new language, unanimously agreeing that it improves cerebral functionality due to the challenge of recognizing, deciphering and communicating in a different language system – something that transfers into many other areas of your life. By being able to juggle between two more language systems, your ability to juggle multiple priorities and generally multitask improves. Similarly, learning a new language involves memorizing rules and vocabulary, strengthening your mental “muscle”, so much so that linguists retain other types of information better. Multilingual people might be more perceptive, due to being better at observing their surroundings, focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. Linguists can

strip away the subtle implications in their native vocabulary which can subconsciously bias judgment by thinking it over more logically in their second language. Finally, on a basic level, it is a big boost to the self-confidence to have that feeling of personal success in achieving the ability to communicate in another language. The ability to speak a second language opens up a world of possibilities for people at all stages and all levels of their careers. Linguistic abilities can definitely provide an edge in both increasing and realizing the choices open to you, whether you want to expand or change your currently role, consider where in the world you are capable of living and working, and enhance the skill-set you can demonstrate in these situations .

Agile learning has become a hot topic in the world of learning and development. Technology has transformed the way to communicate, the way to shop, and even the way to learn. Society is changing faster than ever before, and it is needed to respond ever more quickly to these changes. But what has

enabled people to be so adaptable? It is Agility. Agile learning has become incredibly important.

It compels to not only create content quickly, but also consume content quickly.

We are in the midst of an ongoing 4th industrial revolution. This is the new age of automation — an era of rapid change where advances in technology are disrupting the very way we work and live. As this fourth industrial revolution continues to unfold, learning agility will be the difference between an organization thriving or disappearing. For the threats are real. Rapidly changing technology has led to the emergence of a skill gap. Ultimately, our ability to continuously learn and adapt will determine the extent to which we thrive in today's turbulent times. The extent to which we are able to do this will have an impact not only on who we are today but also on who we can become tomorrow. We also need to adapt and renovate on the lines we think about strategy and implementation. The old school set the goal – plan – execute the ap-

proved plan does not work anymore. We need to adopt a 'context-mindful' framework that embraces situational awareness.

But what exactly is agile learning? Furthermore, how can you cultivate an agile learning culture?

What is Agile Learning?

Agile learning means taking a continuous approach to learning. The term evolved from the software development industry. This is because electronic content development or 'e-Learning' has characteristics that are pretty similar to software development. Agile learning focuses on speed, flexibility and collaboration. It works by transferring effective project management processes to the world of learning. This approach breaks complex projects into smaller steps. As a result, work is separated into time-boxed interactions called sprints. Therefore, agile learning moves in small steps and via an iterative process. That means continuously testing, refining and improving content until you are pleased with the final result. This led to the creation of agile learning design (ALD).

Instructional designers and content creators use this approach to prioritize speed and flexibility.

Learning agility is the ability to learn, adapt, unlearn, and relearn to keep up with constantly changing conditions. Learning agility dictates how one can figure out a way through a new situation without actually knowing what to do, by using past and present experiences to make sense of an uncertain situation. It is also being open to new ideas and innovating rather than relying on outdated information. Agile learners seek out new challenges, ask for feedback from others to learn and grow, and are reflective. An agile learner has the mindset that allows them to continually develop their understanding, to grow, and use new strategies that they have learned along the way, in order to ready themselves to successfully navigate any future problems. Learning Agility also means the willingness and ability to learn from experience and

subsequently apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions (Lombardo &

Eichinger, 2000). Learning agility is the ability to know what to do when you do not know what to do. That probably captures its essence better than any formal definition, but to put learning agility in more specific terms, it involves the practice of four specific and interrelated sets of behaviors that allow people to learn deeply from their experiences and then apply the lessons they have learned when faced with new and challenging circumstances.



It requires four sets of behaviors:

Seeking

Learning agility requires an intentional willingness to immerse oneself in new and challenging situations that broaden and expand his\ her experiences. Learning agile individuals see these situations as prime opportunities for new learning and growth. Furthermore, these are opportunities to seek out and embrace, not just to accept.

Sense making

Learning from experience is a highly active and ongoing process marked by curiosity and a willingness to experiment. Asking “Why?” “How?” and “Why not?” are essential to gaining the insight and perspective that fuels learning. Failed experiments, and the setbacks and criticism that accompany them, are just a part of the ongoing journey for learning agile individuals.

Internalizing

Learning does not end with the experience. Seeking feedback and taking time to reflect is critical for deepening insight and embedding critical lessons

for future recall and application. They also strengthen self-awareness, which is essential for dealing with future challenges in a realistic manner and staying open to new learning.

Applying

A lesson is not truly learned until it is applied. Learning agile individuals excel at adaptive learning—accessing principles and rules of thumb from previous experiences and applying them to navigate new and challenging situations. Swiftly adapting to new circumstances based on an understanding of what has (and has not) worked in other situations is at the heart of what distinguishes learning agile individuals.

Learning agility is a skill you can continue to develop over the course of your life. Immerse yourself in new environments, be open to different ways of doing things, and keep asking questions. Failure is a part of the journey for all successful independent professionals; how you learn from these experiences will help keep you on a path of continuous learning and future growth.

The question now is: Are some people more learning agile than others? Fortunately, learning agility can be taught and learned at any stage in life. And like a muscle, if you want this skill to grow stronger, you need to constantly work at it. Being able to call him \ her, an agile learner is not about what he\she has accomplished previously, it is about the potential he \ she has to accomplish future tasks. On the other hand, a person who is emotionally unstable is less likely to be learning agile. Likewise, those who believe that events in their life are caused by uncontrollable external factors are also less likely to be learning agile. The good news is that learning is a skill that can be developed, and you can do it on your own. There are many specific approaches, but the overall best way is to gain access to experiences that get ones out of his\her comfort zone and literally force him \her to try different things and acquire new skills and insights. It is not a straightforward and easy route to learning but by working through the discomfort and setbacks that often accompany learning in new

situations, ones comes out better and stronger and ready to tackle the next challenge.

Richard Branson, in many ways the epitome of learning agility perhaps said:

“If somebody offers you an amazing opportunity, but you are not sure you can do it, say yes—then learn how to do it later!”

So next time you find yourself in that situation where you do not know what to do, tap into learning agility to help lead the way to rapid solutions and continued personal and professional growth. Learning agility is: knowing what to do when you do not know what to do. It is the ability and willingness to learn from experience and then apply that learning to perform successfully in new situations by acquiring the necessary capabilities.

People who are learning agile have the following characteristics:

Constantly look out for new experiences to learn from.

Thrive on complex problems and challenges.

Enjoy making sense out of the different experiences they encounter.

Deliver better performance as they have new skills ingrained in them.

In particular, leaders have to be more agile today than they were ever before.

Adapting to continuously evolving business strategies, working with people across cultures having cross-functional resources to handle, and taking

on dynamic assignments on a real-time basis, all demand that leaders be flexible and agile. Agility brings the

following values into learning:

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Responsiveness

Learning agility offers more adaptability in today's world of rapid changes.

Planning is not something that is done only once at the beginning. It's an ever-evolving process.

It's an ever-evolving process.

Flexibility

The virtue of flexibility that agile brings, whether in IT or in learning, is priceless!

The purpose of learning is no more to certify an individual with a badge but to keep sharpening his skills across the entire delivery spectrum, on a continuous basis.

on a continuous basis.

on a continuous basis.

Adaptability

As an agile learner, you are expected to adapt and change quickly with the learning process or as the situation's needs evolve.

Note the difference between flexibility and adaptability in the context of learning agility.

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things that surround one's ecosystem. Harvard Business Publishing has identified some key elements that could boost learning agility. These capabilities comprise three components: Potential to Learn: The competencies that make the learner successful in a specific role today might not be sufficient tomorrow. A learning agile person has an open and receptive mindset to constantly experience new things to reach new goals.

Motivation to Learn: Learners need to be engaged and inspired by the learning process for learning to take hold because changing ingrained behaviors and long-held habits is hard work. Adaptability to Learn: learning agile learners have an adaptability to learn attitude, consistently working on improving their skills. Agile learners are proactive; they look for opportunities to learn and experiment with new approaches (Wilson, 2016).

What does being 'agile teacher\learner' mean in the learning context?

In order to stay relevant and competitive within learning, the learner must be willing to adapt and change.



One specific skill that helps with this mindset is learning agility—the ability and willingness to learn from experience and apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions. Or, more simply put, knowing what to do when you do not know what to do.

In his webinar, *Adapt... or Else! Tap into the Power of Learning Agility*, George Hallenbeck discussed the core behaviors of learning agility, how to develop them, and how to apply them. The four key components of learning agility are as follows:

1. Find Learning Opportunities
Actively place yourself in a learning mindset to better manage new and difficult situations. One of the goals of learning agility is to be in a continuous state of growth, which will help

you become more comfortable with the unknown.

By embracing situations that may be intimidating or challenging, you can broaden your experience, expand your perspective, and test out new ways of doing things. Seek out projects that are outside of your comfort zone and approach unfamiliar experiences as a chance to jump in and learn something new.

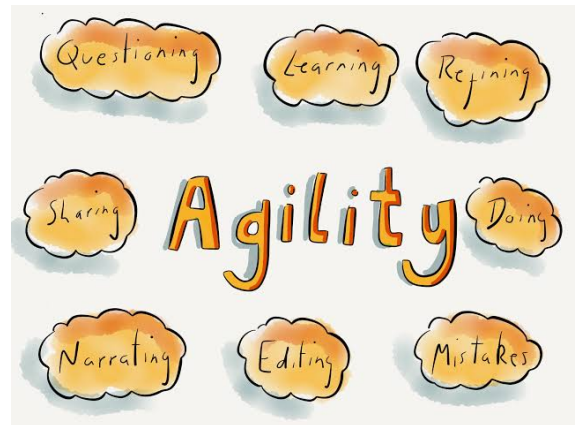
2. Always Stay Curious

In order to keep learning and progressing, it is important to stay curious and actively experiment. When road bumps or an uncertain situation arises, curiosity can help you to make better decisions when you have to course correct.

Listen to peers and others to learn different approaches and perspectives. As you take more chances and put yourself in new situations, remember that ambiguity and uncertainty are okay. If you do not have expertise on a particular topic or project, bring in experts to help and be open to learning from them.

3. Ask for Feedback

Lifelong learning is a major tenant of learning agility. By continually evaluating and reevaluating your strengths and weaknesses, you can benchmark what you are doing well and where you need to grow. Seek out feedback as well to support self-evaluation; obtaining an outside perspective often reveals additional learning opportunities or areas for improvement that you may not notice yourself. Mistakes are important chances for learning as well—reflect on them and think of them as critical lessons to inform future decision making.





4. Apply What You Learn

By applying what you learn from previous experiences, feedback, and mistakes, you will be able to better navigate new and challenging situations. Encountering setbacks is tough, but getting back on your feet and putting an action plan in place is easier when you can think back on similar situations you have been in or questions you have asked. Stay open to new ways of solving problems and ask questions when you encounter a new way of doing something to continue to build your inventory of reference points.

According to a research paper titled Learning About Learning Agility from the Columbia University's Teachers College (2004) there are three main characteristics:

Agility: it means the ability for the teacher to quickly adapt and change course pace and possibly structure to suit the needs and abilities of the students. The main objective for teaching is to help students learn. Each and every student is unique. Their learning needs are also unique. Not all students in a class will be able to learn at the same rate or in the same manner. Each time a course is offered, it should not be taught exactly the same way as the students in each class will be different with different learning needs. A teacher will need to ensure that different learning needs are catered to rather than just following a predefined plan. Another way to describe this is "in-sync teaching" – making sure the whole class is in-sync with the material being taught. This is particularly important when there is a mixture of students with different academic backgrounds

in the class. Do not confuse learning rate with learning capacity. As educators, be sensitive to and facilitate the needs of students from a diverse academic background. It is important to be able to patiently shepherd and encourage weaker students, while showing equal respect and openness.

Agility also means making sure the class, both the teaching and learning aspects, are constantly on track from day one. A good teacher will need to know the subject well. But, he/she must also know the students well and how they are progressing. Agility enables a self-adaptive teaching/learning process, which adapts to the specific learning needs of each class.

The Agile Teaching/Learning Methodology (ATLM) achieves this type of agility by maintaining a high degree of communication, interaction and feedback between the student and teacher. Teachers need to know how the students are doing and how they like/dislike the teaching approach. Students need to know what is expected from them. ATLM uses a variety of technologies to open up many

channels of communication to achieve agility.

2. Extreme: it means if something is good for teaching/learning, go to the extreme and do it constantly. If giving feedback to students on their learning is good, teachers should allow students to give feedback whenever they want. If students learn better by teaching, they should be allowed to teach and share their knowledge constantly. ATLM encourages teachers to solicit student feedback on their teaching constantly and from day one. This should not be a formal teaching assessment but rather an informal and possibly anonymous feedback from the student with the main intent to guide and fine-tune the teaching approach. Formal teaching assessments are usually done towards the end of the semester. By the time teachers get results from them, it will be too late to do anything to help improve the teaching for that class. The ATLM e-learning platform provides many different options and means to solicit feedback.

3. Independent: One of the aspects of ATLM is to train students on “learning the learning process” and not just learning the course content. One of the objectives of ATLM is to gradually take the role of the teacher “out of the loop.” With each iteration in the ATLM teaching/learning cycle, the student grows more confident of self-learning so that ideally at the end of the course, the students will be confident in continuing the learning process on their own. This is extremely important for disciplines that are constantly changing, such as Computer Science and learning languages. Some of the technologies student learn in school

can become obsolete in a short time; students need to constantly update themselves and learn on their own. Empowering students with skills for life-long learning is important aspect of ATLM.

Although ATLM was designed using concepts borrowed from software engineering, the methodology itself can easily be applied to a wide variety of courses that might require agility in teaching and learning. This paper explains the objectives behind ATLM and the process architecture of the methodology. ATLM emphasizes agility, communication and the learning process. Agile Teaching/Learning





Methodology (ATLM) is a systematic approach to teaching/learning that has been successfully applied to the teaching of several Computer Science courses at the City University of Hong Kong for a number of years. Although used for teaching technology-related courses, the methodology itself is general enough to be applied to other disciplines as well. Many other disciplines share the same teaching/learning objectives and goals that are promoted by ATLM. For example, teaching must be agile to cope with changing and diverse learning needs. Learning must be agile to cope with changing research,

learning languages, and technology environments. ATLM also encourages communication, knowledge sharing, and the learning process to nurture self-learning individuals. As the ATLM name implies, it is a methodology for teaching as well as a methodology for learning. Teachers need a well-defined approach to teaching just as much as a student needs a well-defined approach to learning. Teaching and learning, of course, go hand-in hand. ATLM is a balanced methodology that supports both sides of the equation. Agile Teaching/Learning Methodology values students/teachers and their in-

teractions rather than a particular approach to teaching/learning, working knowledge rather than rote-learning, communication rather than negotiation, and responding to changes rather than just following a schedule. ATLM emphasizes teacher student communication and stresses the importance of being self-adaptive to cater to changing needs. Like other modern software development methodologies, ATLM is also an iterative methodology. This means the cycles of the methodology are performed over and over again in iterations; each iteration may progressively have slight variations to be self-adaptive. For teaching, each lecture or lecture/tutorial combination is one iteration. In ATLM, since they are dealing with both teaching and learning, there are two cycles that operate in parallel in each iteration – one for the teacher and one for the student: The Teaching Cycle for the teacher to follow is: adjust and monitor, while the Learning Cycle for students is share and practice.



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Both the Teaching and Learning Cycles share the Lecture/Tutorial task:

Lecture/Tutorial – this is the standard lecture and tutorial components of a class. In ATLM, the researcher assumes each iteration is the time between two lectures: usually a week. The role of the teacher-led lecture/tutorial will be greater at the beginning of the course and will gradually diminish towards the end when the students are confident in the course material and can begin to learn independently on their own, using skills and techniques learned in the course.

In addition, the Teaching Cycle has the following tasks:

Monitor – As one of the key characteristics of ATLM is agility in meeting student needs, the teacher must constantly monitor student progress as well as feedback from students on their own teaching progress/perfor-

mance. Student progress can easily be monitored, for example, by providing a simple weekly quiz that might or might not be counted as part of the official student assessment. Quiz results should be provided to students immediately after the class/tutorial. Statistics on quiz results will help students understand learning expectations and also identify weaknesses that need more work. Some teachers do not like giving weekly quizzes, even if they are informal quizzes. The result is a less agile class. Teachers will have to wait until the first assignment has been collected and graded to see how well students are doing. This may take several weeks. For a semester, this latency is too slow and not efficient. In addition to student performance, the teacher will also need to monitor his/her own teaching performance as perceived by the current group of students. This can be done through feedback forms, surveys as well as forums that students are encouraged to participate on an on-going basis. The feedback can be anonymous. The main point is for the



students to understand that these are not teacher assessment exercises but rather a way to allow the teacher to adapt his/her teaching approach to cater to current students learning needs. Therefore, feedback is taken to the “extreme” in ATLM and is done constantly at each iteration.

Adjust/Adapt – Once student and teaching performance are both understood, the teacher should immediately

make any necessary adjustments to the course plan, schedule or content as well as coursework to help ensure students are “in-sync” with their learning. Changes are necessary for agility. All these three steps are done during each Teaching Cycle.

For the Learning Cycle, it has in addition:

Practice – this is the standard coursework component of a class. The nature of the coursework will of course depend on the course being taught. However, ATLM encourages giving students' assignments that help reinforce a working knowledge of the course material instead of simply rote-learning. Assignments should also be open-ended with plenty of room for creativity. The creativity aspect also adds an element of competition among the students to create more interesting solution to the assignment problem.

Independent Study – One of the aspects of ATLM is to promote learning skills and prepare students for lifelong learning. Tasks should be given to gradually guide students in learning the learning process and understanding where to find resources to support their learning. ATLM encourages knowledge sharing and collaboration among students as a catalyst for self-learning.

Getting students ready for lifelong learning is an important component of ATLM.

Knowledge Sharing – Sharing knowledge is an important part of learning. At each teaching/learning iteration, sometimes should be allocated for students to talk and share what they have learned during their own studying/research. For example, students may be asked to simply find something interesting from the Web that is related to what is being taught in class and to share that with other students. It should not be a formal presentation and there is no PowerPoint to prepare for. Instead, the student might just open a website and explains what he thought was interesting, what new concepts he learned and how it relates to the course. Letting students “teach” greatly enhances their learning experience. Firstly, they learn from others. Secondly, they learn when they prepare for their own presentations. But, most importantly, through the whole process they get to learn one of the most important skills of their life – how to learn on their own.

The ATLM have been successful used for teaching technical courses. The methodology focuses on the learning process to ensure students can continue to learn and update their knowledge even after the course has been completed. The researchers assure that this is crucial for technical courses, since technologies change so rapidly and what students learn in class may quickly become outdated. However, at the same time, they feel the motivations and objectives behind ATLM might also make it useful for non-technical course contents such as learning languages, math and science as well.

Learning agility and language learning

The problem educators face is identifying individuals, teachers, who have the intelligence to function in an always changing environment and prepare their students to do the same. "If school teachers and administrators are to behave as leaders rather than as managers and technicians, then school systems must invent leadership development systems that are at least as sophisticated as those in the business

sector" (Schlechty, 1990, p. 143). In an environment that is always changing, teachers, just as business employees, need to be flexible to adapt, while at the same time, staying effective, productive, and delivering experiences that promote learning in today's world and into the future (Vaill, 1996).

No program or reform strategy will ever be the answer because whatever the new program, inadequate teachers cannot use the new program just like they could not use the old program. No program can be brought in to fix a bad teacher, but a good teacher can fix any program. The question then becomes how to get the right people, the good teachers, into every classroom? The construct of learning agility may be the answer to this question. Learning agility is the willingness and ability to learn from experience and subsequently apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000). In the business world, executives are realizing that a distinguishing characteristic of successful organizations is the ability

to identify, develop, and deploy exceptional leadership talent (Barner, 2006). For organizations to be fully equipped and prepared to thrive in a marketplace that is under fast-changing conditions, as education is their human capital, the corner stone of competitive advantage, should adapt and thrive in new situations (Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Therefore, organizations that have human capital high in learning agility should be better prepared to thrive. Learning agility assessments have been used as a tool to identify high-potential employees, those who can excel in first-time situations. Individuals who have a high learning agility competency have been shown to be high performers in their job. Dries, Vantilborgh, and Pepermans (2012) pointed out in their results that learning agility is a strong predictor of being identified as high potential. Furthermore, their research provided evidence that learning agility is a better predictor of high potential than job performance, which is the key determinant of high potential identification processes in many organiza-

tions. Based on their findings, when organizations identify high potential employees, those who are high but those who have a high competency in learning agility are 18 times more likely to be identified as high potential. Learning agility looks at both current performance and long-term potential (Gravett & Caldwell, 2016). Learning agility may be the missing factor in the practice of education and it may be the missing link to identify those who can excel in the new educational situations brought about in the 21st century. The factor that matters most to educational leaders may be the need to bring the most learning agile, high potential, employees into the field of education to be successful in a complex new age of change. "You cannot have students as contin-



uous learners and effective collaborators, without teachers having the same characteristics" (Fullan, 1993, p. 46). Therefore, teachers need to be as agile in their learning and delivery as students. Howard's (2017) study concluded with a discussion on how to grow the learning agility of individuals (students), moving them from effectiveness to greatness, which in turn grows the learning agility of an organization (school) to seek out new learning opportunities, make sense of complex situations, internalize learning experiences to grow self-awareness, connect with others, apply learning to analyze data, and perform in future first-time situations.

The question now is how to make use of agile learning to learn foreign languages? One of the classic myths of learning foreign languages is that if you do not do it when you are young, with all that available time and brain space, you have got little or no chance in later life especially if you are a busy professional with a bulging schedule and a multitude of plates to keep spinning. Another similar truism is that

with English being the 'international language', there is just no commercial reason or benefit for a senior executive to even consider it as an option for them when there are so many other priorities to focus on.

The following is a study that busts these myths conducted by (Wilson, 2016). He pointed out that in today's tough and opportunistic world we need learners who are agile. Learners who are comfortable with ambiguity and not knowing the answers. Learners who can learn craft solutions by collaborating and cutting through the complexity. Resilient learners who are fit enough to thrive in today's volatile times are needed. Learners, who are courageous enough to unlearn old habits and learn new ways of working, develop new habits and use new skills; learners who can operate from a higher purpose and inspire action. Wilson assured that there is urgent need to teachers who can teach how to create a high-performance environment where success is inevitable and awaken possibility in learners to deliver extraordinary results. So, Wil-

son (2016) asked how can an interest in – and ability to speak – foreign languages help to give learners the tools, mindset and mental agility needed to achieve this, both for their own individual success and that of their learning? He busted the first myth. Aside from the fact that adults are equally capable of learning a language as children (they just go about it in a different way), business leaders are, generally speaking, more capable than most of learning a new language. This is because the skills required to lead successfully are similar to those required to learn a new language successfully. He stated that agile learners possess the curiosity and broad horizons to want to immerse themselves in something completely new and alien to them, like learning a whole new system of communication from zero. They have the strong sense of purpose as to know exactly why they are setting off on such an ambitious new challenge, and exactly what they want to achieve through learning that language. They are personally courageous enough to step out of their comfort zone and ac-

cept some level of vulnerability and risk as they take those first uncertain steps into the learning process. They know how to set tough but achievable goals in their learning program, and they regularly and objectively assess themselves against those goals in order to ensure that they continue to progress and improve. They have the mental capacity to cut through the complexity inherent in a new language to find a learning technique amongst the plethora of available options that works for them and gets them to where they want to be as quickly as possible. And they possess the enormous amounts of resilience and positivity needed to stay motivated and get through the inevitable frustrations and difficult moments, where others may just give up.

Wilson (2016) assured that the second myth can be busted by exploring some of the hard-and-fast reasons why agile learners should view language speaking abilities as a professional differentiator on a number of levels and look at their own abilities (or lack thereof) as a priority focus and area of im-

provement for them. He clarified the relation between agile language learning and different human connections. He gave the following tips:

Connect instantly; build better relationships faster

- If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.

- Nelson Mandela

First impressions matter and they last. The ability to connect with another person quickly and deeply – whether it is a potential or actual customer, business partner, colleague, employee or a prospective new recruit – is often crucial to differentiating yourself and achieving the desired outcome from that connection.

Put another way, the difference between your company winning a contract or JV in Spain or South America and your competitor winning it, could be who builds an instant connection with the decision-maker simply by being able to have those critical initial discussions in Spanish (or Portuguese in the case of Brazil). If you are look-

ing to recruit a market-leading local team into your company for a new operation in, for instance, Shanghai, the ability to start the interviews with a few words in Chinese could be the deciding factor in them joining or not.



Communicate with greater impact (including in your own language!)

Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

You can never understand one language until you understand at least two.

- Geoffrey Willans



It almost goes without saying that your ability to communicate with greater impact, to a greater number of people, in a greater range of situations, improves with the addition of a new language to your arsenal. However, it might be less obvious that it can also help you understand and utilize your first language better. Learning a foreign language involves laser focus on the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, sentence structure, all things that you do instinctively (and sometimes lazily) in your own language. This makes you more aware of the ways language per se can be structured and manipulated, helping you to be a more effective communicator and a sharper editor and writer, in any language including your native one. Given effective listening is an essential skill for outstanding communicators (and leaders), it is useful to note that it is believed that multiple language speakers also develop a better 'ear' through all that active listening in their language learning experience. Improve your own mental skillset There have been hundreds of stud-

ies into the benefits to the brain of knowing a new language, unanimously agreeing that it improves cerebral functionality due to the challenge of recognizing, deciphering and communicating in a different language system – something that transfers into many other areas of your life. By being able to juggle between two more language systems, your ability to juggle multiple priorities and generally multitask improves. Similarly, learning a new language involves memorizing rules and vocabulary, strengthening your mental “muscle”, so much so that linguists retain other types of information better. Multilingual people might be more perceptive, due to being better at observing their surroundings, focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. You may even make better decisions – linguists can strip away the nuance and subtle implications in their native vocabulary which can subconsciously bias judgment by thinking it over more logically in their second language. Finally, on a basic level, it is a big boost to the self-confidence to have that feeling

of personal success in achieving the ability to communicate in another language.

The ability to speak a second language opens up a world of possibilities for people at all stages and all levels of their careers. This is especially true in the modern 'connected' global business world where companies of all shapes and sizes have interests, offices or operations in multiple countries. For leaders of businesses, linguistic abilities can definitely provide an edge in both increasing and realizing the choices open to you, whether you want to expand or change your currently role, consider where in the world you are capable of living and working, and enhance the skill set you can demonstrate in these situations (Wilson, 2016).

Mental agility which is part of learning agility can be boosted by even a short period of learning a language, suggests a new study by Bilingualism Matters researchers. Researchers (Bak, &Howard, 2017) stated that students aged 18 – 78 were tested on their attention levels before and after



Career enhancement – mobility, promotion and new role identification

One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way

-Frank Smith

The limits of my language are the limits of my world.

-Ludwig Wittgenstein



a one-week intensive Gaelic course on the Isle of Skye. Researchers compared these results with those of people who completed a one-week course that did not involve learning a new language, and with a group who did not complete any course. At the end of the week, participants on the language course performed significantly better than those who did not take any course. This improvement was found for learners of all ages, from 18 to 78 years. There was no difference between those who took a non-language course and those who took no course. Bak, & Howard, (2017) also found that these benefits could be maintained with regular practice. Nine months after the initial course, all those who had practiced five hours or more per week improved from their baseline performance. They summarized three important messages from the study: firstly, it is never too late to start a novel mental activity such as learning a new language. Secondly, even a short intensive course can show beneficial effects on some cognitive functions.

Thirdly, this effect can be maintained through practice.

Dr Thomas Bak Lead researcher, Dr Thomas Bak of the School of Philosophy, Psychology Dr Thomas Bak of the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences said the results confirm the cognitive benefits of language learning. The study was completed with the help of students from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic language and culture on the Isle of Skye, which forms part of the University of the Highlands and Islands.



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Learning Agility and Language Learning

التعلم الرشيق و تعلم

اللغات

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العقلية ، لدرجة أن اللغويين يحتفظون بأنواع أخرى من المعلومات بشكل أفضل. أخيراً، فإن الشعور بالنجاح الشخصي في تحقيق القدرة على التواصل بلغة أخرى، يعد دفعة كبيرة للثقة بالنفس حيث تفتح القدرة على التحدث بلغة ثانية عالماً من الإمكانيات للأشخاص في جميع مراحل ومستويات حياتهم المهنية وهو ما يصبو إليه التعلم الرشيق.



الكلمات الرئيسية التعلم الرشيق ، المتعلم الرشيق - تعلم اللغات



يقصد بالتعلم الرشيق مجموعة من المهارات المركبة التي تعين المتعلم على التعلم ، ونقل ما تعلمه الى موقف جديد مختلف. فالمتعلم الرشيق يتمتع بعقلية تسمح له بتنمية استمرارية لما أكتسبه من مفاهيم ومعارف، تساعد على استخدام استراتيجيات جديدة لتعينه على كيفية مواجهة المشكلات المستقبلية. ولحسن الحظ فإن التعلم برشاقة يمكن أكتسابه وتعلمه في أى مرحلة عمرية . ولتحقيق التعلم الرشيق داخل الفصل لا بد وان تكون عملية التعليم والتعلم على قدم المساواة منذ اللحظة الاولى. وتضمن طرق التعليم والتعلم القائمة على الرشاقة العقلية هذه الموازنة من خلال الحفاظ على درجة عالية من التواصل، والتفاعل، والتغذية الراجعة بين كل من المتعلم والمعلم. وهناك العديد من الدراسات حول فوائد استخدام التعلم الرشيق في تعلم لغة جديدة ، حيث وافقت بالإجماع هذه الدراسات على أنه يحسن الوظائف الدماغية بسبب التحدي المتمثل في التعرف على نظام لغة مختلف وفك تشفيره والتواصل معه - وهو أمر ينتقل إلى العديد من مجالات المتعلم الحياتية الأخرى، وهو ما يهدف إليه التعلم الرشيق. فمن خلال القدرة على التوفيق بين نظامين لغويين مختلفين، تتحسن قدرتك على التوفيق بين أولويات متعددة والقدرة على تعدد المهام بشكل عام . بالمثل، فإن تعلم لغة جديدة يتضمن حفظ القواعد والمفردات، وتقوية «عضلاتك»



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