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## Learning in English

“Only the curious will learn and only the resolute will overcome the obstacles to learning.” Russell Baker, journalist and writer

Today’s global economic crisis calls for leaders with a different approach to business— sustainable, ethical and responsible ones that will create lasting value for organizations, communities and the world. Furthermore, there is a great need for a well-qualified and internationally educated workforce in modern economies worldwide. Businesses need leaders who are not only good at generating share holder value, but people who have heart and soul; people who are not only focused on metrics and on GDP growth but on issues like the environment, culture, and sustainability. These professionals should: be always up for a challenge; be enthusiastic, self-starters who enjoy working with other people; be socially self-confident with the ability to converse with people at all levels; be relationship builders who are able to help others succeed.

English language skills are crucial for growth and jobs. Each year thousands of companies lose business and miss out on contracts as a result of their lack of language skills and intercultural competence. The challenge for internationally active firms is to integrate different organizational cultures and communicate efficiently in order to maximize performance, as it is pointed out in the “ELAN” study (Effects on the European Union Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise for the European Commission, 2008).

Students who are in non-English majors often face a difficulty to put their thoughts into words. One productive approach in learning English and business is to read literature so that they can not only express themselves effectively in speaking and writing but also acquire knowledge of business practices and business needs for the workplace. These goals are achieved through extensive reading and better understanding of collocations within a given context. Extensive reading proves to be a very powerful engine for English language learners in today’s closely connected global business environment. Through reading they develop their curiosity and sustain their learning ability across a life span. There are many practices on how reading is incorporated into our English lessons. For example, one of them is PowerPoint presentations that provide visual support to complement the core ideas of a book or an article and also enhance comprehension and interest that stimulate students’ post-reading activities. As a rule, students have enough time to read a book and prepare a meaningful presentation by activating their background knowledge on the theme of the book or the topic discussed in class. Their needs for autonomy are completely met: they choose whatever book they would like to read. This autonomy boosts students’ desire to read more, to find enjoyment and sense in reading, and builds confidence in their abilities that can effectively transfer to further learning and employment contexts. According to a survey made by the Business English department at Poltava University of Consumer Cooperatives in Ukraine, one student wrote:

“Reading in English has been the fuel of my motivation to learn more, to go an extra mile in my learning, it has changed the direction in which I have traveled, and it has enhanced my creative imagination more than any other activity I have ever pursued.”

There are activities outside of the regular curriculum, such as intensive English classes run by Peace Corps volunteers that actively encourage disagreements. In this environment, students learn how to deal with confrontation in a polite manner. In

addition, participation in the Work and Study Program allows students to work for a summer in the US. Students have the opportunity to take on-line courses at the US universities—straightforward prerequisites to learn about and understand the language and culture of an English speaking country. This exposure benefits students' personal and professional growth, and makes for more rounded individuals. The drive and motivation that this experience embeds in the individuals at an early stage of education is reflected and continued throughout their educational career and onwards as they join the workforce. These extra-curriculum activities deliver a personalized experience that helps them better understand themselves and their learning styles. This kind of personal touch is a part of our University culture, and one more way it is trying to stand out in a crowded marketplace.

The development of students' abilities to learn is what makes a university education worth so much in our society; the university should help students reach the self-autonomy to learn on their own. Having these learning skills will allow students to be successful in their career and personal life, and to be contributing members of society.

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