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This article introduces the role and work of the Language Learning Adviser based in the University of Leeds Language Zone, one of the largest self-access centres in the UK. The Language Zone houses language learning resources for over 40 languages, including English. The Language Learning Adviser's office is located in this area. The article will present an overview of the facilities available in the Language Zone (LZ), followed by a detailed description of the Adviser's role. The role consists of three principal elements: providing individual consultations with students, developing and monitoring materials, and offering workshops on aspects of language learning. The increasing role of technology in language learning is also discussed and mention made of activities and events organised for language students by the Language Zone and the Language Learning Adviser.

Overview of the Space

The Language Zone offers learning materials and resources to language learners at the University of Leeds, UK. It supports English and foreign language students taking courses in the Language Centre and the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, as well as independent learners, who might be learning a new language for work, study or leisure.

The space underwent a major refurbishment during the summer of 2014, making it a physical focus for internationalisation, a meeting place for international and EU students with an interest in outward mobility and/or the learning of languages in Leeds. The space provides a mixture of formal and informal learning areas, physical and virtual learning resources.

Overview of the Role

The post of Language Learning Adviser was established in 2005 and has grown and developed into a successful and varied service. The service has three main aims: firstly, to support language learners by working with them individually to identify their obstacles to learning and to find ways of resolving these in accordance with their individual learning styles; secondly, to create and collate language learning resources in response to perceived and articulated student and staff needs and make these freely available on the Language Centre's Virtual Learning Environment. Thirdly, the Language Learning Adviser delivers workshops.

Individual advice sessions

It is important to distinguish the Language Learning Adviser's role from other university support services such as personal tutoring, student counselling and library skills sessions. The distinctive feature of this role is that it focusses on specific language related skills and on developing diverse strategies, techniques and resources for students (and staff) to work with in their language learning. The adviser is guided initially by learners' perceptions of their difficulties and needs. The next step is to assess these perceptions and work with the learner to develop a suitable learning strategy. As advice sessions are conducted within the Language Zone, learners can be shown available physical and virtual resources and how to use them.

The users of the Language Learning Advice service range from clearly identifiable groups of students such as those registered on English Language programmes, whose use of independent language learning resources may be monitored, to a large number of miscellaneous students who have no formal relationship with the Language Centre. Statistically, Language Centre students are the main users of the service, followed by international graduates and postgraduates, with fewer users studying other languages (see Table 1).

Table 1. User Details: Academic Year 2014 – 15, Semester 1

Postgraduates	10
Undergraduates	18
Language Centre students	52
Students learning other languages	8

Monitoring resources and compiling self help guidance

An important feature of the Language Learning Adviser's role is to monitor and analyse available language learning resources, documenting what is available in a user friendly format (e.g. an *Independent Learning Guide* for students of English, which is widely distributed to new students). They review new off- and online publications and resources, deciding whether to recommend their use to students or order them for the Language Zone. The Language Zone Manager and Deputy Supervisors also share responsibility for this.

In addition, the Language Learning Adviser produces bespoke materials giving general guidance on language learning techniques and resources, often at the request of teachers and students.

Delivering workshops

The Language Learning Adviser delivers an average of two EAP workshops per week on different aspects of language connecting independent study and topics covered in the classroom. This involves close cooperation with teachers. The aim of the workshops is to provide extra support; those who attend are often encouraged to come and talk through their language learning issues with the adviser.

Independent Language Learning and New Technology

As technology becomes ubiquitous and increasingly mobile, students are keen to use its applications to enhance their learning, but often need guidance on how best to do this. Online resources for independent use are currently being further developed in the Language Centre. These include: a project on accents in English, websites for student cultural projects, flipped classroom grammar, video guides. Increased emphasis on independent learning throughout the university means that students need to develop their own learning styles and creativity, while making use of freely available materials.

The Future

In the early 2000s, Marina Mozzon-McPherson, based at the University of Hull and fellow academics from other UK universities were instrumental in promoting the idea of 'language advising' (Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans, 2001). Various academics predicted that this was the way forward for language learning and announced the demise of traditional classroom approach to languages. Although classroom teaching still flourishes, the increasingly available technology is gradually making independent learning easier. Advice and guidance from Language Learning Advisers, group activities led by students as well as advisers, will be essential ingredients in the future development and diversification of independent language learning.

Notes on the contributors

Jadzia Terlecka, an experienced teacher of languages including English, both in the community (ESOL) and for academic purposes (EAP), took up this role in 2005. She has

since developed the function of Language Learning Adviser to include running workshops, small group sessions, advising staff and producing resources for learning.

Carolin Schneider, a chartered librarian, manages the University of Leeds self-access centre, the Language Zone, where the Language Learning Adviser is based.

References

Mozzon-McPherson, M., & Vismans, R. (Eds.) (2001). *Beyond language teaching towards language advising*. London, UK: CILT.

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