

THE CELAC STUDENT VOICE

5 Steps to Get Fluent in Any Language

by Willan Jandir Armas Suqui

Learning a foreign language is one of the most fulfilling activities a person can do. A new world broadens out when we get to speak another language; however, this could turn out to be stressful, and sometimes frustrating because we do not manage to speak fluently at once. Students of foreign languages put much pressure on themselves to get a good fluency, and this could lead to frustration, resentful feelings towards the language, and thus to go give up on it. Learning a new language does not have to be a torture; therefore, five useful steps are listed below to make the learning of a new language easier and more interesting.

1. Make mistakes

Students of a foreign language worry excessively about making mistakes in the new language, which is why most of them hesitate to speak in public. Do not forget, this is the first time you are getting acquainted with the language, so it is normal if you make mistakes while speaking, and actually, it is excellent in order to improve your fluency. Feel free to make mistakes, mispronounce words, or even say something that neither exists nor makes sense in the language you are learning.

2. Exclude the alphabet of the foreign language

Many students have problems becoming fluent since they pay much attention to the rules and grammar structures so as to speak fluently. Remember that the point is to get a good fluency in the language; therefore, you should try to speak without thinking about whether the structure is correct or not. Let your ideas flow, once you get an acceptable fluency, you could focus more attention on the order of your words while speaking.

In this Issue

5 Steps to Get Fluent in Any Language

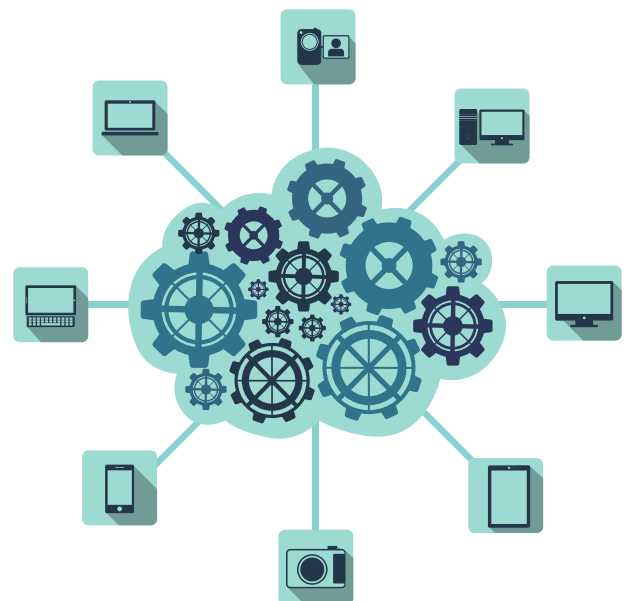
Someone's Warmth

Snow Season

Left-Behind Children

How to Manage Stress While at University

My Favorite Types of Movies



3. Find someone who wants to learn as much as you

This point is quite important because you have to be in touch with the new language at any time. The best manner to do it is by talking to someone with whom you feel comfortable enough to make mistakes without feeling embarrassed, someone who not only wants to learn, but also motivates you to keep on trying. When you are in touch with the language, you avoid speaking in your native language as much as possible.

4. Talk to yourself

Sometimes there will be nobody to whom you can talk, but do not worry because you can practice the language by talking to yourself while you are at home, in the bus, or on your way to the university. You can practice your vocabulary, new sentences, or imagine any situation in which you are required to use the language you are learning. A good idea to put this method into practice is to ask questions to yourself and try to answer them.

5. Learn a new word every day

The key to speaking faster is to increase the vocabulary in order for you to know how to express yourself and to avoid uncomfortable pauses. Try to learn at least one new word every day, and use it while talking to others or to yourself so it becomes part of your daily vocabulary. The more words you know, the faster you will speak because you will not have to think much to convey your ideas.

Featured Essay: Someone's Warmth

by Yuta Kimura (High Intermediate)

In the story "High Land Remedy" by Fran Palumbo, a Scotsman pays for her food in a restaurant without saying anything, even though they met for first time (Palumbo 2003). Palumbo says, "I meet one person in a remote corner of the world who gives just for the sake of giving, wanting nothing in return, not even a 'thank you'" (Palumbo par. 13). I totally agree with the writer's conclusions because humans can live helping each other out of kindness, so we should help each other without getting something in return. Therefore, I was not surprised when I read this "Highland Remedy" because I already knew some people are very kind. I have experienced this on both ends; I did something nice for someone without expecting anything in return.

Someone also did something nice for me without expecting anything in return.

One day in winter, I was lost around a train station when I went to Germany because I could not find my hotel. I could not ask someone about my hotel place since I could not speak German. Also, I could not speak English; therefore, I just went around the station, this way and that, for about an hour.

While I was lost around the station, I met an elderly woman there who asked me, "where do you want to go?", and I said in my bad English, "I want go this hotel." She brought me to my hotel and gave me a cup of hot coffee because it was so cold outside. I said, "thank you so much," and she said "you're welcome, have a nice trip" in a big smile after she went to her home.

An elderly woman helped me and she gave me a cup of hot coffee. She did not get anything through this action because I did not do anything to her. Someone does not need anything because he or she just wants to help without expecting anything in return of a kind heart. Thus, my experience relates to this article and the woman who helped me is similar to the Scotsman in "Highland Remedy."

In summary, when people do a nice thing for me, I can feel someone's warmth, which makes me feel very happy. I hope that people want to continue to be kind to others so that they will be willing to help someone without expecting something done in return.



Snow Season

By Abdul Bahri

The winter has come to us carrying the snow with it. Because of the snow, this season has been the most significant season in the U.S. I will address some activities that you can do to enjoy the season. There are such great activities like customizing a house, crafting a snowman and making Christmas food.

Christmas Decorations



First of all, customizing a house is the most enjoyable activity. You should buy a Christmas tree and customize it with lights. The Christmas tree has an important meaning. It teaches the patience; the Christmas tree does not fall its leaves, so even though the winter is hard, you should be strong enough to face the cold just like the Christmas tree. Another tradition is covering the house with lights and Christmas ornaments. The lights are green, yellow and red. This activity means that the winter has come.



How to Make a Snowman



Second, crafting a snowman is amazing. If you get enough snow, you should make a snowman.

Making a snowman requires a great deal of snow. First of all, you need to shape a ball and roll it along the ground, banking a lot of snow. As it gets big, make the ball tight enough because this will be the bottom of the snowman. Then, do the same step again, but with smaller a ball, and this ball will be the midsection of the snowman. Later, make another small ball to make the snowman's head. When you finish crafting, you should put a scarf on his neck in order to let him stay warm. Also, you should stick a carrot in his face to show the nose and make a smiley face, this way, when you go somewhere out of your house, you will see your snowman smiling to you.

Making a Gingerbread House

Third, the taste of Christmas food is unbelievable. There is popular food for Christmas, like the gingerbread house. It takes time to make the gingerbread house, but it is fun in the same time. First, you need 1 ¼ cups of margarine in a bowl, 1 ½ cups of brown sugar, 1 cup of dark corn syrup, 1 cup of light corn syrup, and put them all in a bowl. Then, microwave it until it gets melted. After, add into the bowl 9 cups of flour, ½ tsp pf salt, 1 tsp of ginger, 2 tsp of cloves, and 1 tsp of cinnamon. Then, mix them until it becomes a dough. Roll the dough into ¼ inch thick. Here the best parts come. Shape the dough like a house and cut it with a pizza wheel for clean edges. Then, bake the cuts for 10 minutes. Later, assemble and decorate your gingerbread house with candies as you see fit. This food brings families together and makes the children happy because they like the sweet candies.

Snow Season, cont.

All in all, the winter is a wonderful season. You can make your house remarkable by customizing it, making a snowman and by enjoying the delicious food. These activities make the winter more beautiful.

Featured Essay: Left-Behind Children

By Jing Qin (Academic Bridge)

In China, the term left-behind children(LBC) usually refers to “the children who are from the countryside and their parents go to the city for working” (left-behind children in China, 2018). Generally, the children will be taken care of by their grandparents, or family groups, who live in the rural areas. It probably isn't a common social phenomenon in more developed countries such as the United States, Canada, and Japan. However, with the social rapid development, LBC became a really normal occurrence in China. According to the article “China’s Negligence Epidemic” (2012), “in 2012, left behind children in China were estimated at 55.1 million” (Left Behind: “China’s Negligence Epidemic” 2012). To put in perspective, that number is similar to the entire population of South Africa.

There are many reasons for this problem in China but the main cause is due to the politics. Because of the in-depth development of the Reform and Open Policy, a lot of people from rural regions move to the coastal areas for better pay. In addition, the unemployment rate in rural areas rises because the agriculture is utilized by the city. Therefore, people move from rural to city for the jobs.

Yet, the government enacted the Hukou system, a household registration system in China, in order to prevent this migration. This means that if you go to different cities, you cannot enjoy the benefits of these cities' education, medical services, and housing. Thus, if a couple goes to the cities to work, they cannot bring their children because their children can't register for school to receive a free education.

Hence, they have to leave their children back in their home town and the children are raised by grandparents or relatives instead of their parents.

I was a left-behind child. I stayed with my grandparents from when I was born until I was 7 years old. My grandparents had to go far away to farm, so I usually stayed at home by myself. When I woke up from bed in the morning, the first thing I would do is call grandmother and grandfather loudly because I was afraid that they left without me. However, they could not hear me because the farm they worked on was far from the house, and located in a forest. My mom went to the city to work as a waiter in a restaurant. She would come back to our village once a month because she had to work 28 days a month. Every time she came back, she always brought a lot of caramels for me. I would hide them in my secret box and eat one a day until my mom came back. When my parents got divorced, legally I should follow my dad, but my mom took me and my dad gave me alimony. The first time I saw him, I was 5 years old, the year I started school.

When I was 8 years old, my mom took me to city for a better education, but I could only go to a private school abroad. I returned to my grandparent's house or another relative's house once every two weeks, but, if there was nobody to pick me up, I had to continue to stay the next two weeks. I missed mom in the middle of night. I hid under the comforter to cover my sobs. Waiting for the darkness to turn to light and bring a little of blue, I brushed my teeth again and again. I stayed at the private school for two years until one day when mom told me she had to work on a farm and asked if I wanted to come with her. At that moment, I didn't have any hesitation. We took two days of bus, crossed numerous mountains and limitless oceans. Finally, I could stay with my mom for the rest of my primary education.

After elementary school, I went to middle school. However, I couldn't go to city's public school; my choices were to either go back to the village, or go to private school again. I choose the latter. The private school was 5 hours away from home. I stayed at the school for 5 years. The first year, I came back often, but by the time I was going to graduate, I went back only once or twice a month.

I think the most effectual way to solve the left-behind children crisis is to change the HuKou system.

Left-Behind Children, cont.

The government should gradually eliminate household registration differences and organically integrate the issue of left-behind children with the issue of urban migrant children attending school, and implement the “citizen treatment” of migrant workers to fundamentally solve the problem of left-behind children. In other words, it should be fair between city children and rural children wherever they are. Han Qing (2016) who is a public person said that: “To solve the problem of left-behind children, we must first protect the right of migrant children” (Han 2016)”. It is not the problem of left-behind children that the parents go to work, but various policies that force tens of millions of children to stay. This is not a lack of family ethics, but a lack of policy ethics.

Another effectual way to figure out this problem is to address the educational and psychological needs of LBC. Shen Guanchen and Shen Shijie (2014) stated that “it is a must for the educational institution where LBC reside to make full use of all kinds of educational resources by all means to make more contributions to the health and psychological development of LBC” (Shen, Shen 2014). For example, the school needs to set up special psychological counseling rooms and establish a home visiting system for LBC. The psychological counseling center can also offer training for parents and the guardians to enable them to correct the concept of education in their mind and master methods and skills to communicate with the children.

The problem of Left-behind Children has existed in China for decades. People call LBC orphans who have been left-behind due to the Chinese “economic miracle.” I wish one day that the government, the school and the parents will work together to solve this problem. Don’t let left-behind children become real orphans.

How to Manage Stress while at University

By Maria Catalina Cardenas

For students, stress is a common issue at the end of the semester. For that reason, it is very important to learn what stress is, how to identify symptoms of stress, and finally, how to manage it. According to Psychology of Human Adaptation, to have stress is “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it.” When someone is the subject of stress, that person can experience many symptoms.

First, stressed people commonly cannot sleep because they are thinking about the pending task that needs to be accomplished in a short period. In addition, stressed people are worried and irritated all day; consequently, they are always in a bad mood. Moreover, people with stress are not productive because they spend too much time working and do not have time to rest. In the same way, people who are stressed are always tired from the beginning to the end of the day, even when they have not done any activity. Stress is a condition that can affect any person independently of the age, or sex.

Preventing stress is very important to have a healthy and happy life. Follow some tips, and it will help students to avoid this problem. First, organize your pending task according to the level of importance, which means to do the urgent responsibilities first, and then do other less important activities. Another option could be to organize the activities according to the level of difficulty.

Second, never leave your homework for the last day. If you start to do your homework with enough time, you will have time to fix the mistakes and do a better job. Furthermore, if you have something unexpected to do, you do not have to worry about it because you have done your homework ahead of time. Third, study for the test with enough time. When you study for the test in advance, you have the opportunity to clarify your ideas and answer any question that you might have. Fourth, practice any exercise. When you exercise or practice yoga, you are going to feel full of energy to start your day. Fifth, have time to rest and enjoy the day. When you have time for yourself, studying will be more enjoyable. Sixth, eat healthy food. Eating healthy is important to provide your body and mind with enough energy.

How to Manage Stress, cont.

In conclusion, organizing your tasks and time properly, getting enough rest, exercising, and eating healthy reduce stress levels, which will make time at school more enjoyable for students.

Source: Psychopathology Of Human Adaptation



Featured Essay: My Favorite Types of Movies

By Kiko Lyu (Low Intermediate)

Watching a movie is an interesting thing to do in spare time. There are many different kinds of movies, but the 3 types of movies that are my favorite are comedies, documentaries and thrillers.

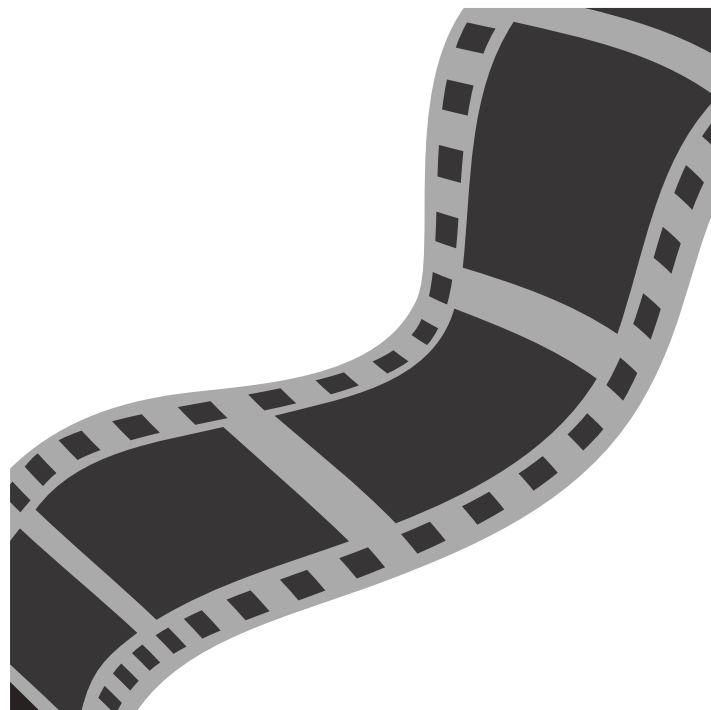
I love comedies and the actors and actresses who can make me laugh. Watching a comedy is a good way to release pressure, and watching the funny actions helps me to feel good. In addition, comedies help me step down and stop my brain thinking about the items or pressure from study.

In contrast, watching thrillers makes me cry and frightened. However, thrillers also help me meditate and clear my mind. I find that I am happy while I am screaming, which may because my brain is creating happy hormones. On the other hand, some thrillers are too frightening for me, which may lead to nightmares and insomnia.

Another kind of movie I like is the documentary, which helps me to gain knowledge that is not from books. Furthermore, most documentaries are instructive and easy to understand, which is helpful for kids and students who are still learning. Besides, watching documentaries is a good method of knowing the world.



In conclusion, movies give us different ideas and feelings about the world. Different people may have different feelings about the same movie, but it is undeniable that watching movies is a good approach to release pressure.



Meet the Staff of the CELAC Student Voice

Liliana Alva Regalado



I'm from Morelia, Michoacán, México. My interest are dogs, movies, cooking and traveling. I was a journalist and teacher in Mexico, and now I'm a lobo.

Willan Jandir Armas Suqui



Willan Armas is an Ecuadorian student who is passionate about writing. His field of study is Languages. He speaks Spanish, English and French. Willan Armas lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Abdulrahman Bahri



I am Abdulrahman Bahri. I am from Saudi Arabia. I am a video gamer. I also like soccer. Thank you and have a nice week!

Maria Catalina Cardenas



My name is Maria Catalina Cardenas Garcia. I am from Colombia. I was born in Bogota. I studied Finance and Business Administration at the Sergio Arboleda University. I am so happy living in Albuquerque and enjoying this new experience in my life. I prefer outdoors activities, so that I like hiking and playing volleyball.