

The Communicator

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*The one who knows two languages is worth double.
El que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos.
L'homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes.*

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Students at work in the WLL

The Coordinator's Comments

FAQ = Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How long does it take to learn a language?

(answer in the next column)



A. This question is sort of like asking, "How long will it take me to learn to play the guitar?" Everything depends on you - how much time you're willing to put in practicing. Likewise, with language acquisition, how fast you learn a new language depends on how much exposure you have to the target language and how hard you're willing to work to learn the language.

I will illustrate this by giving a couple of examples from my own experience. In 1995 I had the opportunity to go to Laos (on the western border of Viet Nam) with one of my Laotian refugee friends and accompany him as he visited his family on the border of Thailand and Laos, next to the famous Mekong River.

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Mekong River

I carried my little Laotian grammar book with me and would study it as I traveled around Laos. I also carried a little notebook and wrote down Laotian words all during the day. I was picking up the language very rapidly because I was immersed in the cultural-linguistic environment. I think that in that situation I could have become reasonably fluent in three months.

But to give you a view from another angle, back in the late 80's I decided to re-learn the Spanish I had forgotten from my high school and college courses. So I took several college courses at a local university, and re-learned enough Spanish so that I was able to get a job with the Dallas Public Schools as a bilingual elementary school teacher.

This is 2008, of course, and I am still in the process of slowly improving my ability to communicate in Spanish. The problem is I don't practice it enough; I don't expose myself enough to the language. This is a common problem – whether a person is learning English or Spanish or French. A person has to put themselves in a situation where

they are forced to use the language.

So, this is a long answer to the original question. But two keys, as I see it that determine the rate of language acquisition are:

- 1) the degree of language immersion a person is exposed to
- 2) how hard a person works.

One of the advantages of our language learning software here in the World Languages Lab is that it **replicates an immersion experience**. When you put on the head phones you can hear, read, write, and speak your target language. **The rest is up to you!**

Save time flipping pages:



fluent in three months.

Although having a traditional bilingual dictionary is still a must, another very useful tool is to use one of the free on-line dictionaries now available to anyone with Internet.

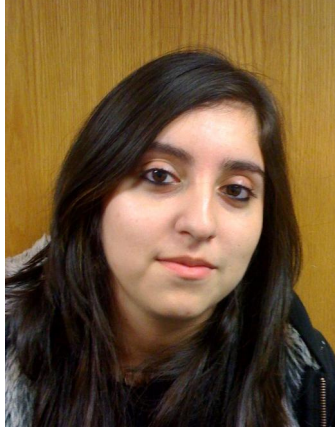
Some good examples are:

www.spanishdict.com

www.Merriam-webster.com

With two or three clicks of your mouse you can find the meaning of that word you need to know.

WLL Staff
Let us introduce our newest lab assistant...



Carmen Ayala

My name is Carmen Ayala. I was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. I have three younger brothers and about a million pets. I'm studying to become a veterinarian with a minor in political science. "Politician by day; veterinarian by night."

This is my first semester working here in the language lab, and I can honestly say, I enjoy it. Learning a new language is not as easy as learning the lyrics to your favorite Barry Manilow song... However, it's not impossible either, especially with the programs offered here at the language lab.

I myself have used Rosetta Stone a couple of times in my own attempt to learn French, and well let's just say I already know the alphabet.

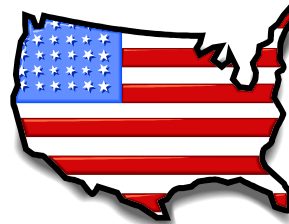
"If you can speak three languages you're trilingual. If you can speak two languages you're bilingual. If you can speak only one language you're an American."

Why Spanish pronunciation is easy for English Speakers:



The beautiful Latin language Spanish has only five (5) vowel sounds. They do not vary in their pronunciation. This makes Spanish relatively easy for the English speaker to learn to pronounce. For example, when you see an "i," it is always pronounced just one way (like **ee** in English).

Why English pronunciation is difficult for Spanish speakers, as well as speakers of other languages:



English evolved over the centuries as a mixture of Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Latin, French, and other linguistic influences. It has five (5) written vowels but approximately fifteen (15) vowel sounds. Therefore, a native Spanish speaker has to learn approximately ten (10) new vowel sounds in order to pronounce English.

This is no easy task, especially when the written vowels may give no clue as to the proper pronunciation. For example, look at the diphthong

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“ou” in the following words:

through – though - thought

It is pronounced differently in all three words!!

But take comfort in this: whether you are learning English, Spanish, or French, we have an excellent team of language instructors at El Centro, as well as some of the latest computer programs in the World Languages lab that will help you deal with the challenges of learning a new language.

school. He does not like work, and he never wants to get out of bed in the morning. But he likes swimming and fishing, and having adventures with his friends. One night, he and his friend, Huck Finn, go to the graveyard to look for ghosts. They don't see any ghosts that night. They see something worse than a ghost – much, much worse...”

Featured Audio Book in the WLL

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer



Front piece of 1st Edition

We have the shortened form (only 41 pages) of a classic book in American literature, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. It has an accompanying CD so you can listen as you read. Here is a review of the contents of this book:

“Tom Sawyer does not like

Featured Instructor



Elsa Moushegian

My name is Elsa Moushegian and this is my first year at El Centro College. I enjoy teaching my students very much. I grew up in Veracruz, Mexico. I graduated from The University of Tamaulipas as a Doctor of Dentistry and later received my Orthodontics degree. I have lived and worked in Dallas since 1991. I have taught the Spanish language to all ages.

Studying the Spanish language and culture will take you on an exciting and enriching journey through the ages in many different

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countries. Some of the world's finest authors are of Hispanic or Latin descent.

Learning a second, a third, or more languages will enhance intellectual and social development. Being able to speak more than one language will expand your opportunities to work in many different fields.

I would advise language students to take advantage of the excellent language laboratory here at El Centro. Use it at least twice a week for the opportunity to become proficient in your language of choice. The best way to learn a language is to read, write, listen, speak, and think in the language you are engaged with. I look forward to teaching Spanish for a long time and would invite you to take some of my classes! You will be glad that you did!

Spanish translation

(for our students of Spanish)

Mi nombre es Elsa Moushegian y éste es mi primer año trabajando en El Centro College. Crecí en el estado de Veracruz. Me gradué en México de dentista y después de ortodoncista. Vivo y trabajo en Estados Unidos desde 1991. He enseñado español a todas las edades.

Estudiar el idioma y cultura española te llevará a un viaje enriquecedor a través de los años por diferentes países. Algunos de los más famosos autores del mundo son de ascendencia hispana o latina.

Aprender una segunda lengua es

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muy importante para el desarrollo intelectual y social. Además amplía las oportunidades de trabajar en diferentes áreas.

Mi recomendación para los estudiantes de otro idioma es que aprovechen la oportunidad que El Centro College ofrece de practicar en el excelente laboratorio de lenguas. La mejor manera de aprender otra idioma es escuchar, escribir, hablar y pensar en la lengua que estás aprendiendo. Espero enseñar español por un largo tiempo y los invito a tomar algunas de mis clases. ¡Estarán felices de haberlo hecho!

Featured Special Language

*Have you heard of **Cajun**?*



a crayfish

Cajun French is a dialect of French that is spoken in certain areas of South Louisiana. Historically, in 1755 a group of Acadian French speaking people immigrated to south Louisiana from Nova Scotia in Canada. The language has been colored by association with Native American and African languages, as well as English.

Cajuns (as we call the people) are famous for their tasty and spicy foods, such as crayfish etouffee, a seafood stew served over rice.

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Here are some of the lyrics to a famous Cajun song written by the popular country singer, Hank Williams:

Jambalaya and a crawfish pie and file' gumbo...*

Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou!

* a spicy dish of various meats mixed with rice

Featured ESOL Student



Sandra Gutierrez

My name is Sandra Liliana Robinson (this will be my last name, when I have my official documentation). I was born in Cali, Colombia, South America. My country is known for exporting some of the best coffee in the world, and my city is known for the salsa dance and the production of sugar cane. In Cali there are many salsa groups and people enjoy dancing salsa.

I studied Business Administration in my country before I came to United State, and have been living in Dallas for 6 months because I got

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married to an American man with whom I am so deeply in love. Although, I am living in Dallas, frequently I travel to San Antonio because my husband's family lives there.

Right now, I'm taking English classes in El Centro College. I'm really glad to be studying here, and my English is improving every day. It has been one of the better experiences I have had in this country because while I practice and learn this language, I can know and share with many people from different countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, Honduras, China, Egypt, and other countries. As a result I have gotten good friendships. I enjoy every class, and my teachers are really good for teaching.

At the same time I enjoy going to the World Languages Lab. In this place there is excellent software to use to practice and study. Moreover, the coordinator has always been very nice and kind with all the students; students can always obtain his help.

In short, I can say that living in Dallas and studying English in El Centro College has been a fascinating and exciting experience.



Famous quote by our Chancellor:
"The largest room in any house is the room for improvement."

-Wright Lassiter