

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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In the Winter Term (Dec.-Jan.) our French instructor, Erin Lestrade, continued engaging the students with French with an extra movie night and study session on Saturday. Small classes and personal attention by the instructor provided students a valuable learning experience. Similar intensive language courses will be offered in the mornings and evenings for the May Term, May 18-June 4.

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The Fast-Paced Winter and May Terms

“Intensive” is the best way to sum up the 3 week Winter and May Terms that are now offered to our Spanish and French students. They spend three hours in class per day plus two hours per day doing lab work.

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Ms. Lestrade and students

Recommended Free Web Site

At this site you can get the news in 32 languages. For some languages, such as English and Spanish, you can watch short video clips (about a minute or two in length). These clips have a one paragraph summary, so by reading the paragraph you can get an idea of what the clip is about, even if your oral comprehension is not strong. But the bottom line is you can get both reading and oral comprehension practice.



BBC (British Broadcasting Company)'s news site:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

In addition, BBC has a *Learning English* tab which will direct you to some very valuable help in learning English.

This is a good website to use on a regular basis to help move you forward in acquiring more of your target language.

Proverb:

Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.
 (Meaning: don't be ungrateful for a gift).

Featured Lab Assistant



Andrea McCullough

Hi, my name is Andrea McCullough. I graduated from El Centro College in May of 2007 with an Associate in Liberal Arts degree; I also earned a certificate in Management and Supervision at Cedar Valley Community College. I love learning new things and enhancing the skills that I already have. My husband Marc, who is a student at El Centro, actually worked in the Language Lab before me. I love working here because I love meeting new people and helping in anyway possible. So believe and all things are possible.

Featured Audio Book in the WLL

Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

This classic American novel in shortened form (only 47 pages) by the famous author Mark Twain is an action packed adventure story of a journey down the Mississippi River. It has an accompanying CD that you can listen to as you read.

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Jim and Huck on the raft

Here is what the back cover says about the book:

“Who wants to live in a house, wear clean clothes, be good, and go to school every day? Not young Huckleberry Finn, that’s for sure. So Huck runs away, and is soon floating down the great Mississippi River on a raft. With him is Jim, a black slave who is also running away. But life is not always easy for the two friends.

And there is 300 dollars waiting for anyone who catches poor Jim...

© 2000, Oxford University Press

English Idioms

(from farm life – Do you understand them?)

1. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
2. Make hay while the sun shines.

Featured Instructor

Hi. I'm Lisa Yabuki, and I've been teaching in the Dallas County Community College District since 1998, the year we moved here from Orange County, California. Most of that time has been at El Centro, with a few terms at Northlake and Mountain View. I really like teaching Level 3 ESL Writing and Grammar. My favorite part of teaching is getting to know students from all around the world.



Lisa Yabuki

My family is also somewhat international, as my husband is a Japanese-American. We have 3 kids, boys ages 12 and 8, and a girl age 5. We adopted our daughter from China when she was 1 year old. So, I am the only person in my family with blonde hair and blue eyes! During Christmas break we drove over 4000 miles to California and back, stopping in 4 national parks. Can you guess which ones? We saw lots of snow and had a great time. We hope to take a trip to East Asia in 2010, visiting China, Taiwan and Japan. My son and I are actually studying Japanese now, so I also know what it is like to be a language student. It's hard work!

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In case you are curious, I'll tell you which parks we visited --Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest/Painted Desert, and Carlsbad Caverns. If you ask, I'll tell you which one I liked the best.

How is Your Foresight? (Good advice from our Chancellor)



How does an individual, and an organization, prepare for a changing world?

I am of the opinion that the circumstances that impact our lives today are, in large measure, the result of individuals not practicing the art of foresight.

Foresight is the secret ingredient of success, because without foresight we cannot prepare for the future.

Foresight, in contrast to fatalism, gives us increased power to shape our futures, even in the most turbulent of times.

The relation of foresight to success is poorly understood. As a result, we often think people are successful because of luck, when in fact it was their foresight that made them "lucky." Foresight enabled them to take advantage of opportunities and to avoid problems that trap other people.

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Key essentials needed for success in tough times are courage, compassion and determination. Those three essentials can be captured in one word – SOUL. Which means you can't be afraid. You must be optimistic. You must have a growth mind-set.

-Dr. Wright Lassiter

How to Build Your Vocabulary (and why you need to)

by Jeff Gregory



Why It's Important

The reason you need to build (i.e., increase) your vocabulary is because failure to understand the meaning of a word can seriously hinder your understanding of printed or oral communication.

One of the major reason students have difficulty in understanding a text is because their vocabulary is weak: they just don't understand enough of the words to catch the point being made by the author.

A person's ability to communicate with fluency and exactness in all fields of knowledge increases as their vocabulary increases. For

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example, physicians can communicate with one another and understand one another easily because they have been trained to understand the meaning of medical terms that the average person may not understand.

The Cause of a Weak Vocabulary



It is generally agreed by educators that the number one cause of students' weak vocabularies is the fact that **most students read very little**. A major reason they read very little is because they watch so much television. Watching television is not all bad, but most people watch a lot of entertainment - everything from game shows to comedies to kung-fu action shows. This kind of entertainment is written in a low-level vocabulary so that even a person with little education can understand everything. Entertainment happens but not vocabulary building nor intellectual stretching.

Some Solutions

Building a stronger vocabulary is not something that can be done overnight - it will take time. But the good news is that it can be done. Here are a few suggestions:

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1. Make up your mind to build a stronger vocabulary. The necessary ingredients to building a stronger vocabulary are commitment, effort, and time. Once a student realizes their need to build up their vocabulary and commits themselves to doing it, victory is in sight. Determination to fight the good fight of vocabulary building is the first step.

2. Use a dictionary.

Several formats are available and all are good: a traditional book, an online program, or a mobile electronic dictionary. The point is that **you must look up words**. Laziness is probably the number one reason for failure to use a dictionary. But chances are we will run into that unknown word again. So why remain ignorant? Go look up the word and learn it so it won't trip you up the next time.



3. Use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Many times you will be able to figure out the probable meaning of an unknown word by taking note of the context in which the word is found. This may involve not only the word's location in a sentence, but also in the paragraph and even the article in which it is found. This will save you

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time in having to look up the word. So, use and develop this skill. You can always write a word down and look it up later when you have time.

4 Read as much as you can. Make a determined effort to spend at least 15-20 minutes a day reading something: a book, magazines, newspapers, articles on the internet, etc. Read what interests you! Your vocabulary will naturally grow as you become familiar with more and more words.

5. Take college courses. Courses in reading and English are especially helpful, but nearly any course you take is going to require you to learn new words appropriate to that field of knowledge.

6. Play crossword puzzles or other games such as *Scrabble*. These activities can be a fun way of increasing your vocabulary.

In summary:

Personal vocabulary building is a process that continues throughout a lifetime. As an individual's personal vocabulary grows and expands so will their ability to communicate in an increasingly skilled manner. Vocabulary building takes hard work. Yet the rewards of enhanced communication skills make the effort of the journey worth every step.

SPANISH PROVERBS

These are proverbs supplied by one of our ESOL students, Anabel Karns.

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They were given to her by her grandmother in Guadalajara, Mexico:

El que no oye consejo no llega a viejo.

(He who doesn't listen to advice won't reach old age.)

La necesidad es madre de la creatividad.

(Necessity is the mother of creativity).

Dime con quien andas y te diré quien eres.

(Tell me who you walk with and I'll tell you who you are.)

No es cuanto tenemos, sin...cuanto disfrutamos.

(It's not how much we have, but...how much we enjoy.)



¡El interés tiene pies!

(Interest has feet!)

Más vale palida tinta que la más brillante memoria.

(Pale ink is worth more than a brilliant memory.)

When Anabel would hurt herself as a little girl playing, and come crying, her grandma would say:

Golpes más duros da la vida.

(Life gives you harder blows...)