

Start Learning a Second Language this semester

Challenge: I challenge each of you to begin learning a second [or third] language this semester. You will be teaching second language learners during your teaching career and need to have firsthand knowledge and experiences about learning a second language [L2]. Taking this class is only the beginning of your professional preparation to be a successful teacher working with English Learners.

One hour per day: Commit one hour every day to listen to a second language to allow your brain to process the sounds into meaningful information. This is called the Silent Period. After 70-80 hours of listening you will find yourself starting to talk. You can listen to other people talk, listen to the radio, watch movies, listen to CDs, listen to songs on your i-Pod, etc. Keep a daily log of your time, what you do, what you learn, and how you feel.

“The first stage of the language acquisition process is called “The Silent Period” simply because the students aren’t doing much talking yet. In some learners this period may be shorter or longer, ranging between 2 to 6 months, though it may take much longer too, depending on the exposure to the foreign language that the learner has.”

SOURCE: The Silent Period of Second Language Acquisition – Know This Before Frustration Takes Over! By Julio Foppoli

<http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/articles/index.pl?page=2;read=1677>

Create picture/word cards: Use index cards to place a picture representing your word or concept on the front side of the card. Write the English word and the word in the second language on the back of your card. Select 5 words to learn. Look at the picture and say the word in the second language. Then look at the back to see if you were correct. When you can identify the picture in L2 without hesitation, punch a hole in the card and place it on a Key Ring. Select a new card. Every week review the Key Ring cards. If you hesitate on any of the cards, remove it from the Key Ring. Ask a native speaker of the language you are learning to help you with pronunciation and weekly testing.

For more information see Language Experience Approach to Reading and Writing by Carol Dixon. 1990, Longman Publishing Group. ISBN: 0135213525