

Learning a New Language: Frustrating or Fun?

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Complete the following sentences using the adjectives listed below:

1. Learning my first language was....
2. Learning a new language was....

Exciting, tedious, easy, frustrating, difficult, natural, simple, challenging, effortless, stressful, fun.

Chances are that you did not choose “easy, natural, simple, effortless, and fun” for the second sentence. Why not? Where was the gap?

- a) Consider your first teachers: parents, family, caregivers who made you feel important and loved. They encouraged you, wanted you to succeed, and provided positive messages and rewards.
- b) Examine their methodology: creative play, songs, movement, rhythm, rhymes, stories, toys and games, endless and frequent new activities.
- c) Visualize your “classroom”: lots of bright, lively colors, pictures on the walls, your home, yard, playground, neighborhood, town, community, being in nature.
- d) Recall your attitude: excitement and anticipation, fascination, exploration, discovery, curiosity.
- e) Look at the results: long-term retention of everything you learned.

Now, try to remember your foreign language teachers, methodology, classroom, your attitude, and the results. Did you have a scary or intimidating experience? Did you parrot phrases, do endless verb drills, memorize dialogues or try to master elusive grammar rules? Was there frequent testing and homework? Did you experience awkwardness, stress, fear of failure? Were your textbooks unexciting? Did you spend hours wearing headphones at the language lab? Was the result “I forgot most of it?”

What if learning a new language, especially as an adult, could be as easy as acquiring your first language? What if it could be as much fun as pre-school or kindergarten, a place where:

- You are greeted each day by name, with a smile
- Your teacher exclaims over your haircut or new pair of shoes
- You sit in a circle and sing, and listen to entertaining stories
- You get to close your eyes and relax your mind
- You do the hokey pokey, and sing “head and shoulders, knees and toes”
- You dress up and play act or pretend
- You shake musical instruments, clap, dance or chant to rhythm
- You make new friends with whom you feel happy and at ease
- Everything you do appears to be a game

- You get encouragement and rewards, and minimal correction, even if your answers are not perfect!

In the 1960's and 70's, a Bulgarian psychiatrist and educator, Dr. Georgi Lozanov, fascinated with the human brain, and more specifically, how adults learn and retain large amounts of information, studied the Maori, the East Indian, and the Ancient Greek cultures. After years of research, he devised a teaching/learning method he named "Suggestopedia." It incorporated all of the elements of a pre-school classroom setting: rhythm, music, creative play, positive emotions, relaxation, and visualization. At the core of his materials was an entertaining 2,000 word play, containing all the grammar and vocabulary included in a traditional 2-year language class. The material was to be read aloud to the students to classical music (in increments of 300 words, as different acts of the play), with classical music playing in the background, first using composers such as Mozart and Beethoven, followed by baroque composers such as Vivaldi and Handel. The students eventually were to read and act out the play in the classroom, with lots of role-playing, laughter, and enthusiasm. New vocabulary and grammar were to be taught through games and songs.

Lozanov first tested his method on a group of fifteen of his adult "patients" (remember, he was a psychiatrist!), by teaching them Italian. The reason he used a new language as his "testing ground" was that he would be able to prove without a doubt if his students had learned and retained a large amount of new material (2,000 words) in a short period of time, since they did not already know this material in advance. The result? In one month (100 hours), all 15 students were able to understand, read, and speak Italian... and their psychological problems disappeared!

Thus, a new method of language teaching was born. U.N.E.S.C.O hailed Suggestopedia as one of the best methods for learning a language. Today, the method is called Accelerated Learning. Students in an Accelerated Learning classroom learn five to ten times faster than with traditional approaches, and have 90% retention.

Following in Lozanov's footsteps, American foreign language teachers Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell, and James Asher, discovered that students of any age are able to "acquire" a new language in much the same way that babies and young children (ages 1-5) acquire their first language, by creating a parallel environment. Their methods, contained in the books, *The Natural Approach*, and *Total Physical Response (TPR)* have been adopted by a great number of foreign language instructors since the 1980's.

I discovered Accelerated Learning, as well as *The Natural Approach* and TPR, in 1984. As a polyglot (I speak Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, Italian, and a smattering of German), I have taught languages for over 35 years. In 1982, I founded my own language school in Minneapolis, International Language Services, Inc. Until 1984, I had been using the direct method (listen and repeat) used by companies such as Berlitz and Inlingua. Upon reading the book *Superlearning* (Ostrander and Shroeder), which described Dr. Lozanov's research and methodology, I learned that with the direct method, material only goes into the students' short-term memory, so I sought out a trainer who had studied under Dr. Lozanov. My life has never been the same! Through Accelerated

Learning, I have found my true passion in life, and have combined my love of people and languages, music and rhythm, fun and games, play-acting and laughter, into my life's work. I have taught hundreds of adults, including corporate executives and employees, how to communicate with people from around the world. My language school has now become a full-service translation agency, www.ilstranslations.com. I continue to teach language classes through Demystifying, Inc.

Quotes from past students:

"Arlene's class was terrific! She is a master teacher and her energy and enthusiasm were contagious! This was a class I always looked forward to -wonderful experiential learning. We learned a great deal in a short amount of time. I would highly recommend it!" Mary A. (General Mills Human Resources).

"As a Global Manager for a Fortune 200 company, I decided it was time to learn another language. I enrolled in Arlene Jullie's Spanish immersion class and soon found myself speaking and understanding quite a bit of Spanish. I highly recommend this class for anyone interested in learning another language in an interesting, fun and non-threatening setting." Gary U. (Fedex Corporation).

"Learning, particularly another language, can be a pain, a drag, and something that may not stay with you. But learning a language with Arlene Jullie can be a joy, a super trip, and something that will stay with you, and make you want to learn more. Arlene packs more energy into a class than the traditional two-year-old packs into a day – and she makes it fun. I've studied language in college and in Mexico, but nothing can come close to the exceptional method Arlene uses." Jean B.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience working with Arlene Jullie. The class style was exciting, unique, encouraging, and above all FUN! I am still amazed at how much material was covered, and how much I actually retained! Arlene's commitment and enthusiasm, to the class and to each student, was incredible. Often in previous experiences, I have felt intimidated about language and working with an instructor. On the contrary, she was so excited and happy to be there - every activity and every class was one that I enjoyed and really looked forward to! The class did wonders for my confidence." Melissa A.

For books and language CD programs: Arlene Jullie is the author of: *Quick-Start Spanish: Everything You Need to Know Before You Start or Restart Spanish*. The first edition of *Quick-Start Spanish* was published in 2000 by NTC Contemporary/Passport Books. The second edition was released in 2005 by McGraw-Hill. Both editions are out of print, but soft cover copies of the second edition are still available directly from this website, or online at Amazon.com. The new full-color third edition of *Quick-Start Spanish* was released in late 2010 as an e-reader and can be purchased as a PDF download from this website or on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or Apple. Cost: \$8.76. Arlene also authored the *EasyLearn* Spanish and French CD program, designed to teach 600-800 words and phrases in French, Spanish, and German, using relaxation and Accelerated Learning techniques. Cost: \$60 for all 3 languages, includes shipping/handling/tax. Available through this website. Arlene's latest language learning tool is the new *Handy Dandy Pocket Guide* series for Spanish, French, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, German, and English for Spanish-Speakers, available for \$5 as a PDF printable download, and includes an MP3 audio guide. Most recently, Arlene has authored a new language learning relaxation series for Spanish, French, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, German, and English for Spanish-speakers, *Learn as you Go: an 8-day Adventure*, to be released in March, 2011.

Classes: Contact Arlene at ajullie@comcast.net to find out about 84-96 hour Spanish classes, and 20-hour weekend intensives in Spanish, Italian, French, or Portuguese. Classes are offered at the International Language Services (ILS) corporate office in Minneapolis, or arrangements can be made to have on-site group Spanish classes in your city or at your clients' offices.