

Tips for Maximizing your Language Learning Experience on Study Away

- ★ Monitor your motivation:
 - Identify *why* you want to learn the language and remind yourself along the way.
 - Set SMART goals: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant & **T**ime-Based
 - Overcome “motivational baggage”: ex: self-confidence, others' perception, fear of failure, etc.
- ★ Recognize and cope with “language fatigue”:
 - Celebrate your accomplishments along the way.
 - Prepare to be challenged, frustrated, and tired; then find ways to overcome these feelings.
 - Allow yourself the language or mental break that is right for you, then get going again!
- ★ Be daring! Make mistakes! Have fun with your learning!

Below are tips for the different areas of language learning:

- Listening
 - *Increase exposure*: watch tv (especially soap operas) and movies, listen to the radio, listen to music, eavesdrop on conversations, ask questions (even if you think you know the answer), ...
 - *Avoid faking comprehension!* Learn culturally appropriate ways to indicate you are not following, ask the speaker to slow their speech, or explain in another way.
 - Focus on your *active listening skills*: paraphrase, ask clarifying questions, take notes on what you didn't understand clarify when appropriate.
- Learning Vocabulary
 - *Increase exposure*: keep a list or make flashcards for new words, ask native speakers to teach you synonyms of words you use frequently and how they vary in use, set a goal (ex: 10 new words a day), make note of when you lack the vocabulary you wish to have- be sure to look up or ask, ...
- Speaking to Communicate
 - *Increase exposure*: mimic native speakers, make small talk on the bus or in other similar opportunities, seek out a native-speaking conversation partner, make language commitment with fellow English-speakers, push yourself to speak up in class, use non-verbals, seek new ways to say the same thing, ask those you're comfortable with to correct you, ...
- Reading for Comprehension
 - *Increase Exposure*: read local news sources, ask language instructor to suggest novels appropriate to your level, watch a movie or show with subtitles in target language ,...
 - Use both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries sparingly- try to work through context first.
- Writing
 - *Increase exposure*: keep a journal in the target language; email, text, write to others in target language, ...
 - Seek a native speaker to edit and give feedback; maybe reciprocate if they have English language needs.
- Cultural Context
 - Remember that direct translation does not always work; seek to understand the cultural context of language.
 - Common scenarios to seek cultural guidance: giving/receiving compliments, making refusals, thanking, making requests, making complaints, giving advice, greetings, making apologies, ...

Modified from: Paige, R. (2006). *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.