

HOW TO WORK ON THE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS THIS SUMMER, by MF (June 2014)

If you have failed any of the parts of the exam listed below, it's because you need to improve. If you work on your English, you will probably pass the next September Exam. Just consider that people who speak languages know that for 4 hours a week of class, the student needs to do from 8 to 12 hours a week at home. If you cannot find that time, it's harder to learn well. Re-read my notes, and the Welcome Handout and do some constructive self-assessment. Don't victimize yourself: it's not because you are incapable of learning. It's just that you are probably not devoting enough time or not doing what you need to do. Just think of all the things I told you about regarding learning to learn.

LISTENING. If you don't listen to English every day, you might not be really good at three skills: listening comprehension, speaking, and writing.

You probably need to listen to English for many hours to make up for that lack, so I suggest listening to English every day (textbook audios, original podcasts in English where people talk and are interviewed, news, and EFL podcasts where language students are addressed) doing various kinds of things. And you need to use the same audio several times, preferably just listening and then doing different things with it.

Check out the following handout I gave out at the beginning of this course and assess which of those exercises you need to work on. See "WAYS of listening" at

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/howtolearn/listening/developingOralSkills.html>

If you have numerous fossilized grammar mistakes, or pronunciation mistakes, you need to do a lot of listen and repeat, too. You should have a clear idea of which your mistakes are. Use your List of Mistakes or create such a list. You also have examples of common mistakes on my blog, Plans-n-what-we-did and on Talking People – How to Learn.

More: Ways of listening:

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/howtolearn/listening/waysoflistening.html>

and <http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/howtolearn/howtospeak.html>

SPEAKING. To improve your fluency and accuracy, use the "Useful Language" segment at the Talking People Podcast. It's all about listening and repeating.

Here is the link to my podcast and also to podcasts I suggested students to use during this course:

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/audio/podcasts.html>

Communicative Strategies:

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/skills/speaking/commstratsindex.html>

WRITING. If you failed the writing test, it's probably because you had frequent grammar mistakes, some of which could be below the tested level. You see, the 2014 tasks were easy in terms of structure and complying with the task. (Check the Evaluation Table to see if there is another reason and if there is, you can ask me.) So again, you need to improve your English, and that is done by listening to English a lot, a lot more than you do, and diversifying the types of audios. You should listen to stories (I have some at my podcast), learn poems by heart, or texts from your textbook. And then you should read, trying to appreciate how texts are written. Reading while listening is exceptionally useful here.

But if you failed because you did not know how to structure a text or select the correct vocabulary, register, structures, you can always go through your textbook, where they teach you the characteristics of each kind of text. Do you have a Writing File? Create one if you don't. But that

won't make up for learning to speak English, learning "correct" English, so that by itself won't be enough.

The most important thing is loving the language, enjoying using it, establishing a personal connection to the language, so that you find time for it, so that you feel like finding time for it. Languages are amazing: if you have a positive attitude and proceed correctly you learn very fast, and you can immediately notice your progress. But you have to learn to assess your progress without mortifying yourself or "putting the blame" on people.

We're here to help you become a competent user of English. The moment you achieve the level, you will get your certificate. You will get it when you learn English at the required level. It's not about learning how to pass an exam – that can be learned by doing a couple of similar exams, or similar exercises. But you cannot perform well if you don't know the language at that level.

Remember you can always find reminders of what we learned this year on my blog and that Talking People is full of exciting materials!

Enjoy your summer
Enjoy your English

Start today. Language learning happens throughout time. It's a process that needs time, and a learning habit.

Big hug!

Your Teacher

<http://plansnwhatwedid.wordpress.com>

<http://talkingpeople.net>

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tppodcast/>

This year's new audios are here: http://www.ivoox.com/podcast-minipodcast-mf-eoi-andalucia_sq_f1117689_1.html