

The Magic of Language Learning

'I must practise my Spanish.' 'I need to keep up my French'. 'I'm so terrible at languages.' 'I can't remember a word I learnt at school'. Do any of these sound familiar? As 2007 dawns upon us, now is the time to make (and keep) a linguistic new year's resolution. 'I will make more time for my languages in the New Year.'

The main reason we never 'make time' for our languages is the fun of speaking has been lost somewhere. Think back to when you learnt a language be it at school, university or when living or studying abroad. Did you enjoy yourself more conjugating verbs in class or speaking to the locals? Those wonderful moments when you make yourself understood, or make friendships abroad speaking in another language, are what learning another tongue is all about. This is the reward for your hard work toiling with irregular verbs and classic texts. We need to take this magic and put it back into learning language.

The reality is language learners often don't want to go back to school to go over what they've learnt before. Answer English, a Central London language agency, saw that what people wanted was a forum to meet mother tongue speakers. To effectively recreate the same conditions people enjoyed so much being abroad, here at home. They started a series of fun evenings to encourage language learners to meet people, have fun and speak in the languages they have learnt. These are organised in comfortable surroundings in Central London bars and are attended by groups of between 20 to 30. Half of the people are native in one language and half are fluent in another.

Jordi Quintana from Girona went to the Spanish English evening. He said 'it's a great opportunity to practice my English' and 'I make a lot of friends'. Answer English also organise French nights and will be opening in the New Year Italian, German, Chinese, Hungarian, Russian and Polish evenings. It doesn't matter what level you are at as people are paired off into tables of four, two speakers of one language and two of another. The group then chats in one language for half an hour then half in another.

As Michel Thomas used to say 'it's all about getting the ball over the net'. As long as you make yourself understood and enjoy yourself that's what the evening is all about. By practising with a mother tongue speaker you not only have fun but your vocabulary rapidly improves. These language learning evenings are one way to put the fun back into learning languages.

James Herbertson
Managing Director
Answer English
www.answerenglish.com

Answer English assists language students coming to London find languages schools and accommodation. James Herbertson can be contacted on: 020 7402 8651 or by e-mail: james@answerenglish.com