

Why Don't They Just Learn English?

The Realities and Challenges of Mastering English as a Second Language



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Please follow the
directions given.

How long does it take to learn a second language?



The 10,000 hour rule

1 two hour adult ed. course for 8 weeks = 24 hours

1 year, 1 hour per day self study = 365 hours

(Archibald et al 2007/Ericsson et al. 2007/Dr. Sarah Elaine Eton, Phd. 2011)

Proficiency and Mastery

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Comprehension and Use of Social Language

Hello
What's your name?
I'm...
Nice to meet you



Specialized Proficiency and Mastery



Academic - school subjects, classes



Legal – police, courts, DSS



Medical - doctors, pharmacies, hospitals



Political – citizenship, voting



Technological- computer, electronic equipment

Socio-Economic Situations that Lead to Illiteracy

- ❑ It is thought that the percentage of learning disabled students in adult education classes is as high as 80% of the entire adult population. (*Seattle- King County Private Industry Council*)

- ❑ **Haiti**

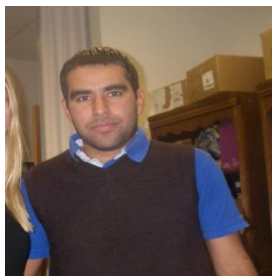
- ✓ social inequality
- ✓ Inability to fulfill basic needs

- ❑ **Civil War in El Salvador 1970s-1990s**

- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Lack of economic resources
- ✓ Socio-economic instability
- ✓ Persistent crisis (*Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress*)

Disabilities that Could Prolong the English Learning Process

- One of the most common phenomenon immigrants face is “culture shock.” (*Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*)
- **Illiteracy**
- **Dyslexia** (reading disability)
- **Dysgraphia** (writing disability) (difficulty forming letters)
- **ADD** (attention deficit disorder)
- **PTSD** (Post traumatic stress disorder)



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Obstacles

- ❖ Illiteracy in their own language
- ❖ Location of classes/Transportation
- ❖ Childcare
- ❖ Finances
- ❖ Scheduling/Availability of classes
- ❖ Teachers' types instruction, accents and qualifications
- ❖ Racism/favoritism both intentional and unintended
- ❖ Assessment, placement and promotion of students. (no way for students to move up, no placement test)
- ❖ Lack of information (largest problem named by public libraries was outreach)

Our Immigrants Do Learn English

- 1990 Census-only 3% of immigrants reported not speaking English well. (*Cato Institute*)
- Assimilation does occur but it takes time. (*Fiscal Policy Institute*)
- The number of immigrants who speak English “very well” increase over time as does the number who speak only English at home. (*Fiscal Policy Institute*)

Availability of Classes, Demand & Budget Issues

- **New York State**, more than **1.7 million immigrant** adults have limited English proficiency, yet only **5% are enrolled in a state-run ESL programs** according to figure from the State Department of Education.
- **Nassau County** has almost **90,000** working-age adults with limited English Proficiency but only **9,466** seats in state-administered ESOL classes.
- **Suffolk County** nearly **87,000** have Limited English skills but only **12%** in ESL Classes.
- **Literacy Suffolk**
 - Reported in 2010 that there was 900-1000 people the waiting list
 - In August 2012, Newsday reported 500 people on their waitlist.
- **Literacy Nassau**
 - In August 2012, Newsday reported 125 on their waitlist.
- **Eastern Suffolk BOCES**
 - 32% funding cut from the NY State Department of Education.

How do today's immigrants compare to past generations?

- Today's immigrants are adjusting and blending in to U.S. Society at the same rate as past generations of immigrants. (*Anti-Defamation League*)
- In a comparison of current immigrants with German immigrants in Wisconsin in 1910, the majority of which had arrived in the U.S. before 1880, the current group is acquiring English at a faster rate. (*Cato Institute*)

How are present day immigrant doing currently?

- Nationally, within 10 years of arrival in the U.S., more that 75% of immigrants speak English well. (*U.S Census Bureau, U.S. Dept. Homeland Security, USCIS*)
- The children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of Latino immigrants learn English so well that by the third generation an inability to communicate in Spanish is far more likely than an inability to speak English. (*Cato Institute*)
- On **Long Island** after 10 years of arrival in the U.S., **58%** speak **only English** at home or speak English “**very well**,” a level generally considered to be equivalent to **proficiency**. (*Fiscal Policy Institute*)

Conclusion

- Our current immigrants do learn English.
- Learning English takes a long time.
- This does not happen over night. Despite their schedules, hectic life styles, all of them old or young, literate or illiterate take the time to learn the language.
- And this is why we are members of the Long Island Language Advocates Coalition (LILAC)

Long Island Language Advocates Coalition



LILAC



www.longislandlanguageadvocates.org

Building Understanding through Language Access

Thank You for Being our Audience!

Are there any questions?



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Please visit www.longislandlanguageadvocates.org for update class list and presentation bibliography

**-You cant spell 'brothers' without spelling 'others'
(unknown)**