



TEACH (and learn) FROM DAY ONE

2026

***PRACTICAL MANUAL ON HOW TO TEACH A NEW LANGUAGE
IN AN EASY, PLAYFUL AND ENGAGING WAY***

NON-FORMAL METHODOLOGIES SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES



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INTRODUCTON

EXPANDING ACTIONS TO REMOVE LANGUAGE LEARNING OBSTACLES 2025-1-IT03-KA153-YOU-000305057

This manual was created within the Expanding Actions to Remove Language Learning Obstacles (PARLO II) project, building on the success of the 2023 PARLO initiative. It responds to a growing need: equipping youth workers with the skills, awareness, and tools to actively support language learning in their communities.

In a rapidly evolving educational landscape, youth workers play a key role in promoting multilingualism, especially through non-formal education. Yet, many are not fully aware of their potential to motivate young people or lack practical strategies to guide them. While formal education often focuses on one or two languages, learning additional languages is still left to personal initiative and remains out of reach for many.

At the same time, young learners may face a range of challenges, from learning difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD to psychological barriers like foreign language anxiety. Without the right support, these obstacles can lead to frustration or disengagement.

PARLO II addresses these gaps by empowering youth workers to recognise learning barriers, share experiences, and apply inclusive, practical methods that make language learning more accessible and motivating for all.

This manual offers concrete tools, activities, and approaches to help youth workers create supportive environments where every young person has the opportunity to explore and succeed in language learning.



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1. HOW TO TEACH A LANGUAGE FROM DAY ONE

Practical principles and concrete techniques to help learners speak immediately, reduce fear, and learn real-life language from the first minute.

1.1 CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Start with communication, not rules.** Introduce phrases that the learner can use in real life within seconds. Choose sentences that have a useful grammatical structure that can be repeated many times in that session and in real life (e.g. Mi piace leggere, mi piace nuotare, mi piace correre, mi piace ballare, mi piace cantare)
- **Keep input extremely simple.** Use words and short phrases from daily life that are EASY to pronounce for a total beginner.
- **Avoid teaching colors, alphabet drills, and long explanations.** Focus on actions, basic needs, preferences, and real communication.
- **Use multi-sensory learning: speaking, listening, movement, visuals.**
- **Build confidence before complexity.** Confidence accelerates acquisition.
- **Introduce only a few new sounds at a time.** Never overwhelm the learner.
- **Create success immediately.** Learners must leave the first lesson feeling, “I can speak!”
- **Always build on what the student already knows.** Expand step-by-step.

1.2 WHAT TO TEACH ON DAY ONE (SIMPLE, USEFUL, REAL-LIFE)

These elements are realistic for beginners of all nationalities and all languages:

1. **Useful verbs in the “I” form (and after a bit, depending on how complex it is, the “you” form):** I go, I want, I like, I cook, I work. Choose first many useful regular verbs and max 1-2 irregular verbs so as not to confuse them.
2. **Simple structures:** I want + noun; I like + verb. **Then a few essential nouns and adjectives:** that go well with the verbs taught (I cook well. I work a lot.). For words like food, drinks and objects (for example from the room), at the beginning only things they individually need, don't learn things you won't use..
3. **Action commands (especially for kids or for people who like to move):** stand, sit, jump, turn, take, give.
4. **Basic preferences:** I like / I don't like + easy things or actions. Always things they would really say in real life.
5. **Polite requests:** Please, thank you, excuse me. But don't overwhelm them with too many of these because at the beginning they cannot remember so many of them.
6. **One easy question form:** What do you like? Do you want...?
7. **Mini-situations:** café, home, classroom, shopping. At the beginning keep it super simple and easy.

1.3 ACTIVITIES TO MAKE STUDENTS SPEAK ON DAY ONE

Some ideas:

Activity 1: Action Circle

Learners stand in a circle. The teacher gives simple commands (“Jump”, “Turn”, “Sit”, “Take the pen”). Learners repeat each command aloud while performing it. The fun part is that after a bit the students can be the teachers.

Activity 2: Daily-Life Mini-Phrases

Teach 5 micro-phrases like: “I like coffee”, “I need water”, “I want bread”, “I’m ready”. Students use them in improvised mini-dialogues.

Activity 3: The Chain Dialogue

Student A: “I like tea.”

Student B: “I like tea and I like pasta.”

Continue adding one element. Builds memory + confidence.

Activity 4: Real Objects Interaction

Place objects on a table. Students pick them up and say a sentence: “I want the book.”, “I need the phone.”, “I like the cup.”.

Activity 5: Emotion Sentences

Learners say the same phrase with different emotions—happy, angry, tired, surprised. Helps pronunciation + memory.

Activity 6: Quick Choices

The teacher says two options: “Coffee or tea?” Students answer quickly: “Tea!” Then expand: “I want tea.”.

Activity 7: Walk-and-Talk

Students walk in the room and say phrases on each step: “I like...”, “I want...”, “I see...”. Movement reduces fear. If they are total beginners, teach them 2-3 useful objects that can use with those verbs and use the same ones with all those verbs.

Activity 8: Gesture + Phrase Association

Each phrase gets a gesture. “I like” = hand to heart. “I want” = hand forward. Students repeat phrases + gestures.

Activity 9: One Picture, Three Sentences

The teacher shows a picture. Students must say: - one thing they see (depending on the level the sentence can be one word or 2-3 and so on). Later depending on complexity of grammar and level they can ask each other questions to prompt them to describe the picture.

Activity 10: The 10-Second Dialogue

Very short dialogues reduce anxiety. Two students speak for exactly 10 seconds (and then you increase the time).

2. HOW TO MAKE SELF-STUDY EFFECTIVE

The goal: build the student's ability to practice on their own in a way that is focused, efficient, and aligned with personal goals.

2.1 CORE RULES FOR EFFICIENT SELF-STUDY

- Focus daily time on the main goal (if the goal is speaking → speak).
- Use multiple channels: listening, reading, speaking, writing.
- Speak OUT LOUD as much as possible.
- Expand phrases based on what you already know.
- Do short, high-frequency, consistent sessions.
- Only work with useful language.
- Keep emotional pressure low.

2.2 TEN TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNERS (ZERO OR ALMOST ZERO KNOWLEDGE)

- Shadowing slow phrases (listen → repeat slowly).
- Speak a phrase aloud 5 times throughout the day.
- Use objects in the room to create micro-sentences, only useful sentences.
- Describe what you're doing ("I'm cooking", "I'm walking").
- Mini-dialogue with yourself with or without a mirror.
- Write one simple phrase and read it out loud.
- Daily phrase challenge: choose 1 useful phrase and use it 5-10 times.
- Record 20 seconds of audio speaking.
- Ask yourself 2 easy questions and answer them.
- Use gestures + phrases for better memory.

2.3 TEN TECHNIQUES FOR NON TOTAL BEGINNERS (A1+, A2, B1 LEARNERS)

1. Create longer variations of known phrases.
2. Add a connector: because, but, and, so.
3. Change one word in a sentence multiple times.
4. Role plays for real-life situations.
5. “How do I say this?” moment once per hour.
6. Record 1-minute monologues.
7. Conversation with a timer: speak 2–3 minutes non-stop.
8. Describe photos from your phone.
9. Tell a short story in the past.
10. Combine two phrases into one.

2.4 OTHER SUGGESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES ON HOW TO MAKE SELF-STUDY EFFECTIVE

CREATION OF A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Target audience: everyone (especially adults)

Time needed: different for everyone (depends on the situation)

Aims: to create an environment to support the learning process.

Instructions: A well-designed learning environment plays a critical role in successful language acquisition. Effective preparation begins before the study session itself. Preparing the body and mind in advance—particularly by obtaining sufficient sleep the night before—supports attention, working memory, and long-term retention. Sleep has been shown to be essential for memory consolidation, especially for vocabulary and grammatical patterns, making adequate rest a foundational component of language learning.

The selection of an appropriate study space is equally important. Bedrooms are generally not recommended, as they are strongly associated with rest and relaxation, which can reduce cognitive alertness. For some learners, studying at home may lead to distraction and reduced productivity due to competing stimuli and habitual behaviors. In such cases, alternative locations such as libraries, quiet cafés, or dedicated study spaces may provide a more cognitively activating environment. Regardless of location, consistency is crucial; repeatedly studying in the same place (and ideally at the same table or seat) strengthens contextual learning cues and facilitates faster entry into a focused mental state.

Once a suitable learning location is established, minimizing distractions becomes essential for effective language learning. Attention is a limited cognitive resource, and interruptions significantly impair comprehension and retention. Preparing meals and beverages in advance reduces unnecessary task switching during study sessions, thereby preserving cognitive focus. Managing physiological needs proactively allows the learner to maintain sustained engagement with the learning material.

Resource management and spatial organization further contribute to learning efficiency. Placing textbooks, notebooks, digital devices, and reference materials within easy reach reduces friction and cognitive load. Clearing unnecessary objects from the desk helps prevent visual distractions and supports sustained attention. Turning off phone notifications, placing the phone face-down, or removing it entirely from the immediate environment reduces attentional fragmentation. Additionally, the use of noise-canceling headphones or neutral background sounds can help stabilize focus by masking unpredictable environmental noise. Finally, incorporating appropriate breaks between study sessions is critical for maintaining learning quality. Prolonged studying while fatigued leads to diminished returns and weaker memory encoding. Learning performance is based on physical and mental states, and some days may be unproductive despite effort. Recognizing signs of fatigue and respecting the body's need for rest allows learners to avoid inefficient study habits and long-term burnout. Strategic breaks and recovery periods ultimately support more sustainable and effective language learning over time.

Expected results: A good learning environment helps language learning. Getting enough sleep improves focus and memory, especially for vocabulary and grammar. Studying in a quiet, consistent place like a library or a dedicated study area makes it easier to concentrate. Reducing distractions, organizing materials, and taking regular breaks help maintain attention and prevent fatigue. Overall, preparing both the body and the study space makes learning more effective and efficient.

FREE SPEAKING EVENTS IN YOUR AREA

Target audience: language learners of all levels who want to improve their speaking skills through self-study, especially students, young adults and adult learners studying a foreign language outside the classroom.

Time needed: 90–180 minutes.

Target Audience: Language learners of all levels who want to improve their speaking skills through self-study, especially students, young adults, and independent learners studying a foreign language outside the classroom. Approximately 8–30 people can participate in this activity.

Instructions: using online resources or through talking to your peers or co-workers find out if there are accessible events for language practice in your area. Some of the online resources that you can use can include Facebook groups of your city or , for example, web platform <https://www.meetup.com> and others, where you can find events announcements and possibilities of meeting like-minded individuals with whom you can practice language.

Aims of the activity: The main aim of free speaking events is to support effective self-study by offering real-life speaking practice. They help learners build confidence, improve fluency, pronunciation, and listening skills, and become more comfortable using the language spontaneously. As a result, students often feel more motivated to continue studying independently and are better able to connect what they have learned through self-study with practical, real-world communication.

Expected results: As a result of participating in free speaking events, learners become more confident and comfortable using the foreign language in conversation. Their fluency improves, and they are better able to express their ideas without excessive preparation. These events also increase motivation to continue self-study beyond formal learning settings, as learners see clear progress in their communicative abilities. In addition, participants develop a stronger connection between theoretical language knowledge and real-world language use, which helps them apply what they have learned more effectively in everyday situations.

CREATING A SELF-AWARD SYSTEM FOR PROGRESS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Target audience: This activity is designed for adult learners of all levels who are studying a foreign language by themselves. It is especially suitable for those who want to stay motivated, track their progress, and take responsibility for their own learning.

Time needed: The activity does not require a fixed time for each session, but learners typically spend 10–15 minutes per week setting goals, monitoring their progress, and assigning rewards, in addition to their regular study time.

Organization: This is an individual activity, but learners may choose to share their goals or progress with peers for extra accountability. Participants set specific, measurable goals, such as completing lessons, learning new vocabulary, or practicing speaking for a certain amount of time. Rewards are given only after achieving these goals and should be meaningful yet realistic, like taking a break, enjoying a favorite activity, or buying a small treat. Consistency and honesty are essential to make the system.

Aim of the activity: The main aim of the self-award system is to enhance motivation and self-discipline in adult learners. It encourages regular study habits, helps learners take responsibility for their own progress, and provides a structured way to recognize achievements. The reward should be chosen by the participants itself, so it would be an encouraging and pleasant prize for their achievement. For example, even buying and putting stickers into your work plan for every completed task will create a sense of achievement and completion that will be a good stimulation in order to continue studying a foreign language.

Expected results: Learners who use a self-award system are likely to become more confident and engaged in their language learning. They experience steady improvement, increased satisfaction with their progress, and a stronger sense of control over their learning journey. This approach also helps connect their efforts with tangible results, reinforcing the effectiveness of self-study.

CHECK LIST / PLAN

Organisation helps us stay consistent and see our progress. With a simple plan, we know what we do, when we do it and when we tick .

My weekly vocabulary plan

Weekly goal

- 10 new words

(The goal can change every week, for example focus on speaking or pronunciation.)

What can we do:

- Create a vocabulary check list
- Tick the words we have learned
- Set small
and realistic goals

Example checklist:

- 10 new words per day or per week
- 3 sentences for each word
- Revision at the end of the week

Example plan:

- Monday: new words
- Wednesday: revision
- Friday: a small self-test

When we tick something, we feel motivated and satisfied.

How often do I revise?

- The next day
- At the end of the week
- Once a month (quick review)

Reward time!

(Weekly reward)

If I complete my plan, I reward myself with something small: a tea, a walk...

DAILY VOCABULARY ROUTINE

Goal: Create the habit of studying a little vocabulary every day.

How the activity works: Choose 5–10 words to learn for the week. For each word, complete these four micro-tasks:

1. Write it
2. Say it out loud
3. Associate it with an image or a sentence
4. Use it in context (a sentence or a short dialogue)

When all four tasks for a word are completed, add a check mark. Continue until all weekly words are completed. At the end of the week, spend 30–40 minutes on revision and a short self-test.

Recommended routine

10–15 minutes per day to work on vocabulary

30–40 minutes per week for review

Rules: Can be done individually or in groups. Each learner chooses their weekly goal. A check mark is added only when all tasks for a word are completed.

Expected result:

- Better vocabulary retention
- More confidence when speaking
- More consistent and organised study habits

REVISION OF PREVIOUS NOTES

Revision is a very important part of learning.

Time needed: 5–10 minutes per revision session.

Rules: Can be done individually, learners revise words at specific times (1 day, 1 week, 1 month), active revision is required (not only reading).

Aims of the activity

- Strengthen memory through regular revision
- Use new vocabulary in context
- Increase confidence with new words

Expected results

- Better long-term vocabulary retention
- More confidence and less forgetful

How to do it properly: We look at our notes after 1 day, after 1 week and after 1 month. We don't just read. We actively practice!

What we do:

- We cover the translation and try to remember the meaning.
- We create our own sentences with the word.

Example:

You see the word “travel”

- you try to remember what it means
- then you make a sentence: *I want to travel abroad in the future.*

Tip: Using the mother tongue for support. If the learner is not ready to make full sentences in the new language, they can use the mother tongue and include the new word. This helps connect the word with real context and meaning.

Example: Yesterday I went to the supermarket and I bought vegetables, milk and fruits.

KEEP VOCABULARY ACCESSIBLE

It is helpful to keep new words easy to access, for example on a mobile phone. Learners can:

- save words in notes or an app
- look at them anytime during the day
- quickly revise when they have free time

This helps learners:

- remember words more easily
- revise without stress
- stay in contact with the language every day

Even a quick look at the words can make a big difference!

VOCABULARY GAME: CREATE SILLY COMBINATIONS

Target: Language learners of all ages and levels.

Time needed: 5–10 minutes per vocabulary session.

Rules: Can be done individually or in small groups, learners create funny or strange associations for new words and there are no wrong answers.

Aims of the activity and expected results:

- To help learners remember vocabulary more easily.
- To use imagination and creativity in learning.
- To reduce stress and make learning more fun.
- Faster recall of vocabulary.
- More enjoyment and motivation during learning

Create silly combinations- associations: The funnier or stranger something is, the easier it is to remember it. Our brain remembers images, stories and emotions better than simple lists of words.

How it works:

We connect the new word with:

- a funny image
- a strange or silly story
- something exaggerated or impossible

Example 1:

Word: elephant → Imagine an elephant drinking coffee at your school: this funny picture helps the word stay in your mind.

Example 2:

Word: pan = bread in Spanish → NO bread for Peter- pan

Extra ideas:

- Try to connect the new word with a word from your mother tongue.
- Try to connect the new word with another word it sounds like or reminds you of. This creates a strong memory connection.

WRITING WORDS/VOCABULARY

Target: Language learners of all ages and levels.

Time needed: 10–15 minutes per study session.

Rules: Can be done individually, learners write each word or phrase several times and use the word or phrase in a sentence (in the target language or in the mother tongue with the new word included).

Aims of the activity and expected results:

- To improve memory and spelling.
- To help learners understand meaning and context.
- To support both written and basic speaking skills.
- More confidence in using new words.
- Improved organisation and study habits.

How we can do it:

- We write the word 3–5 times.
- We write the word in sentences.
- We write the word together with: the translation, a synonym, an antonym.

Example:

Happy = I feel happy when I listen to music - Opposite: sad

The learner uses the word in a sentence.

This can be:

- a sentence in the target language, or
- a sentence in the mother tongue with the new word included.

Extra idea:

Use different colours (for example, blue for the word and red for the translation).

RECORD 1-MINUTE MONOLOGUES

Language learners of all levels who want to improve speaking fluency. Time needed: 1–2 minutes per recording.

Rules: Done individually, the learner chooses a simple topic and speaks non-stop for 1 minute and records their voice.

Aims of the activity:

- To improve fluency and confidence.
- To help learners speak without stopping.
- To raise awareness of pronunciation.
- Less fear of making mistakes.

How it works:

- Choose a simple topic (your day, your weekend, your plans).
- Speak for 1 minute without stopping.
- Record your voice.
- Listen and notice pronunciation and pauses.

Example topics:

- *What did I do today?*
- *How do I feel today?*
- *What are my plans for tomorrow?*

Tip: Don't stop if you make a mistake. Keep speaking.

CONVERSATION WITH A TIMER

For language learners who want to practise spontaneous speaking. Time needed: 2–3 minutes per session.

Rules: Can be done individually or with a partner, a timer is set for 2–3 minutes and the learner speaks continuously until the timer stops.

Aims of the activity and expected results:

- To encourage continuous speaking.
- To reduce overthinking and anxiety.
- To improve speaking speed and fluency.
- More natural speech.
- Greater speaking confidence.

This activity helps learners speak without overthinking.

How it works:

- Set a timer for 2–3 minutes.
- Choose one topic.
- Speak non-stop until the timer ends.
- Focus on communication, not perfection.

Example topics:

- *My hobbies*
- *My favourite food*
- *My last holiday*

Tip: If you don't know a word, explain it in a different way.

DESCRIBING PHOTOS

For language learners of all ages and levels. Time needed: 1–2 minutes per photo.

Rules: Done individually or in pairs, the learner chooses a photo (for example from their phone) and describes what they see and what is happening.

Aims of the activity and expected results:

- To practise descriptive language.
- To help learners speak using visual support.
- To make speaking easier and more natural.
- Better vocabulary use in context.
- Improved fluency and clarity.
- More confidence when speaking about real-life topics.

This activity helps learners practise describing and storytelling.

How it works:

- Choose a photo from your phone.
- Describe:
 - * what you see
 - * where you are
 - * what is happening
- Speak for 1–2 minutes.

Example:

In this photo, I am with my friends. We are at a café. I feel happy.

Tip: Photos make speaking easier because you already have ideas.

MIX LANGUAGES TO START SPEAKING

For beginner and low-level language learners. Time needed: 5 minutes per speaking session.

Rule: Can be done individually or in pairs. Learners use their mother tongue and insert new words from the target language. Fluency is more important than accuracy.

Aims of the activity:

- To encourage learners to start speaking early.
- To reduce fear and speaking anxiety.
- To help learners use new vocabulary in context.
- Smoother transition to full sentences in the target language.

How to do it :

This activity helps learners speak even if their level is low.

How it works:

- Use your mother tongue.
- Add new words from the target language.
- Speak naturally, without pressure.

Example:

Χθες ήμουν πολύ tired και πήγα νωρίς για ύπνο. (Yesterday I was very tired and I went to sleep early)

Tip: Mixing languages is okay at the beginning and reduces anxiety.

3. IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION

3.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Never teach too many new sounds at once.
- If the language has only 3–5 new sounds compared to their mother tongue → teach them on Day 1.
- If more than 5 → teach 2–3 on Day 1, 2–3 on Day 2 (or later if they are very complicated).
- If a sound is very different from the learner's language → expect it to take days/weeks.
- Combine sound in a word and later in an easy and short sentence.
- Use micro-practice, not long sessions.

3.2 TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION ALONE

- Watch 2–3 short videos about one difficult sound.
- Do NOT over-practice: rest is essential.
- Try again the next day: often it works immediately.
- Imitate slowly, one word at a time.
- Use mirror practice for unfamiliar mouth positions.
- Use gestures to connect sound with movement.
- Practice sound in 3 positions of the word.
- Make a tiny pause before difficult sounds.

MORE ACTIVITIES ABOUT PRONUNCIATION ACTIVITIES: AWARENESS, PRECISION, AND CLEAR SPEECH

Many learners speak too fast or too softly, especially when they feel insecure. Others speak slowly but still mumble or swallow sounds.

In pronunciation work, the main difficulty is usually not speed, but unclear articulation.

For pronunciation practice, speed is not the priority. The priority is that every sound is produced clearly and can be heard without effort. The following activities focus on precision, awareness, and control of sounds, helping learners build clear and confident pronunciation from the beginning.

Activity 1: Over-Articulation Game

Goal: Help learners pronounce every sound clearly by exaggerating articulation and increasing awareness of mouth movement.

Step 1: Choose Sentences According to Level

Basic / Beginner (A0–A1)

Use very short, useful sentences learners can realistically say in daily life:

- I like coffee.
- I want water.
- I need help.
- This is good.
- I work here.

Word focus examples:

- *water* → **WA – TER**
- *coffee* → **COF – FEE**

Intermediate (A2–B1)

Use slightly longer sentences and more complex words:

- I really like this place.
- I want to improve my pronunciation.
- This room is comfortable and quiet.
- Clear speaking is important.

Word focus examples:

- *exaggerated* → **E – XA – GE – RA – TED**
- *comfortable* → **COM – FOR – TA – BLE**
- *pronunciation* → **PRO – NUN – CI – A – TION**

Step 2: Three Rounds of Speaking

1. Normal speech

2. The learner says the sentence once at a natural pace.

3. Over-articulated speech (clarity round)

4. The learner repeats the sentence **slowly and clearly**, opening the mouth and separating syllables so that **every sound is fully audible**.

5. No sound should be swallowed, shortened, or hidden.

Example:

- *normal: I like coffee.*
- *practice: I LIIKE COF – FEE*
- *Natural speech with full clarity*
- *The learner says the sentence again naturally, keeping all sounds clear and complete.*

Teacher's Role

- Do not interrupt if pronunciation is clear.
- Intervene only when a sound is unclear, mumbled, or missing.
- Ask for clearer articulation, not faster speech.
- Model the word or sentence if needed.
- Ask the learner to repeat until every sound can be clearly heard.
- After one round, the learner says the sentence to a classmate, who repeats it.
- The learner then turns to the next classmate and repeats the process.

Key rule:

If a sound cannot be clearly heard, the pronunciation is not finished yet — even if the sentence sounds fluent.

Why it works:

Over-articulation increases awareness of how sounds are formed and prevents learners from hiding behind speed or mumbling.

When learners return to normal speech, pronunciation becomes clearer, more stable, and more confident.

Activity 2: Which One Do You Hear? (Minimal Pairs – Competition Version)

Goal: Train learners to hear and produce small sound differences clearly.

Procedure

1. Divide learners into **small teams (3–5 learners)**.
2. The teacher says **one word** from a minimal pair.
3. Teams listen carefully and decide which word they heard.
4. Teams answer within **5 seconds** (spoken or written).
5. Each correct answer earns **1 point**.

Examples According to Level

Basic (A0–A1):

- *ship / sheep*
- *pen / pan*
- *bad / bed*

Intermediate (A2–B1):

- *live / leave*
- *pull / pool*
- *thought / taught*

Speaking Extension

After the listening rounds, teams create short sentences using both words from the minimal pair and say them out loud.

Example:

- *I see a ship.*
- *I see a sheep.*

Each clearly pronounced sentence earns bonus points.

Why it works:

Learners train their ear before producing the sound themselves.

This reduces guessing, increases accuracy, and makes pronunciation improvement faster and more natural.

Activity 3: Broken Telephone (Language Edition)

Goal: Demonstrate how unclear pronunciation, mumbling, or weak articulation leads to misunderstanding.

Procedure

1. Learners stand or sit in a line or small circle.
2. The teacher whispers a short sentence to the first learner.
3. The sentence is whispered from person to person.
4. The last learner says the sentence out loud.
5. The original sentence is revealed and compared.

Rule: Speak clearly but quietly — no shouting.

Sentence Examples

Basic (A0–A1):

- *I like coffee.*
- *This is very good.*

Intermediate (A2–B1):

- *I really want to improve my pronunciation.*
- *Clear speaking is important in communication.*

Variation: Pronunciation Challenge

Repeat the activity asking learners to:

- separate words clearly
- avoid mumbling
- maintain control over sounds

Briefly ask:

- What changed?
- Which sound or word was lost? Why?

Why it works

Learners experience in a very concrete way that communication problems come not from lack of vocabulary or grammar, but from unclear or incomplete sounds. When the message changes, learners can usually identify which sound, syllable, or word disappeared.

This helps learners understand that:

- speaking faster does not improve communication
- mumbling or swallowing sounds creates misunderstanding
- clear articulation makes even very simple language effective

Because the activity is playful and low-pressure, learners become aware of pronunciation issues without fear or judgment, which increases confidence and motivation.

Teaching Insight

Clear pronunciation means that **each sound is produced with enough precision to reach the listener without effort**. The listener should not need to guess or reconstruct missing sounds. When learners focus first on clarity and control rather than speed, they build a strong foundation. Fluency develops naturally through repeated clear production, not by forcing faster speech. Teachers should consistently reinforce the principle that **clarity comes before fluency**, and that understandable speech is more important than speed or grammatical perfection.

4. TEACHING LANGUAGES WITH A DIFFERENT ALPHABET

4.1 PRINCIPLES

- Do NOT teach/learn the entire alphabet on the first day.
- Teach 2–3 letters inside real words.
- Choose easy, useful, everyday words.
- Create short phrases using those words.
- Add 2–3 more letters the next day.

5. MEMORY TECHNIQUES (MULTI-SENSORY, FUN, REAL)

5.1 WHY MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING WORKS

When you: - see the word - hear the word - say the word out loud - write the word - use the word in a phrase or context

Memory becomes much stronger and long-lasting.

Saying the word out loud combines auditory feedback + physical movement.

5.2 MULTI-CHANNEL ACTIVITIES FOR MEMORIZATION

Some examples:

Activity A: The 3-Channel Word

Say each new word by: 1. reading it 2. speaking it out loud 3. using it in a sentence

Activity B: Word in 3 Contexts

Choose one word and use it in: - a memory - an emotion - an action phrase

Activity C: Real Object Words

Touch an object while saying its name.

Activity D: Moving Vocabulary

Walk slowly while naming objects or verbs.

Activity E: Draw + Phrase

Draw a tiny icon representing the word, then create one short phrase with it.

Activity F: 10-Second Story

Create a funny micro-story using the new word.

Activity G: Phrases with Emotion

Say the same sentence with joy, anger, surprise, tiredness.

Activity H: Photo Description

Pick one photo from your phone. Describe it with 3 sentences.

Activity I: Daily Phrase Routine

Choose one phrase per day and say it 10 times.

Activity J: Multi-Sensory Memory Game

Match pictures, words, and phrases written on cards.

More activities:

SPORT CHANNEL WORD EXERCISE

Description: You are a journalist observing athletes in a Sports Center, who prepare themselves for the Olympic Games. You can carry out many tasks with this picture according to the level of the participants and goal of the activity. Here below you can find some examples of how to use this but then feel free to experiment and adapt it to you or to your students. Your task is to read loud the words in the list below, pronouncing them correctly (if you have someone who can correct you or you can check using one of the many tools available like Google translate) and then:

- **Option 1:** you use them in sentences to describe the picture.
- **Option 2:** you can work on a particular grammar structure (Nick is a journalist (verb to be); The biker is watching the swimmer (present continuous); Paul went to the gym to swim (past tense), etc.
- **Option 3:** (more advanced) you can imagine and describe stories and interactions among the people in the picture, describing dialogues and actions.
- **Option 4:** working on adjectives (running fast, hit strongly, jumping high, etc.)

The activity is now in English but you can use this and any picture to work with your target language.

EXAMPLE LIST (for beginners): basketball, player, football, tennis, badminton, cyclist, jump, cardio, run, volleyball, swimmer, bike rider, boxer. (you can add more words according to the level and aim)



YOUR ITALIAN MULTI-FUNCTIONAL GUIDE

Description of the game: card game to learn vocabulary.

Objectives of the game: The aim is to learn new vocabulary and to be able to create some basic sentences related to tourism in an interactive way.

You have three types of cards with typical and simple (for beginners) words and questions that are going to be useful for your trip.

There are 3 categories which are VERBS, NOUNS and QUESTIONS. The teacher should prepare the cards, for example 7 for each category depending on the current level and age of the participants (children and completely beginners should receive a limited number of cards, for example 3 each).

Players: Work in groups of three.

Cards: Each group receives a small set of cards from three categories: VERBS, NOUNS, QUESTIONS.

A very important rule: You cannot say the word you see either in English or the target language before the rest of the group has guessed it.

Practicing “The 3-Channel Word”

1. One player reads a card and explains (in the target language or in a common language depending on the level) the meaning to his team without showing the card nor saying the word itself.
2. After the word has been guessed (in the target language or in a common language, as agreed in advance), the team will say the word aloud for at least 5 times, while doing that try to pronounce them with different emotions, gestures or interpreting the culture.
3. If level allows, create sentences with the card (s).

Example card: (I go – VADO)

1. *You describe it: it's an action that you do when you move from a place A to a place B*
2. *You say it aloud*
3. *You use it in a sentence (I go to the museum – VADO AL MUSEO)*

How to play:

1. In each round, one player holds all the cards so the others cannot see them.
2. The other two players each take one random card.
3. They must help the group guess the word or question by:
 - *miming*
 - *using gestures*
 - *giving a simple verbal description (without saying the word)*
4. When the group guesses correctly, the player who had the card:
 - *reads the word or question in the target language*
 - *the whole group repeats the pronunciation together.*
5. In the next round, a different player holds the cards, and the game continues.
6. The person who plays with you must find cards which can combine a whole sentence.

Extra Learning Support:

- Prepare a mini-guide sheet with useful collocations and prepositions (for example: centro DI Roma).
- The teacher or audio recordings can help with:
- correct pronunciation
- fixing mistakes.

Review Activity

After several rounds, stop the game and:

- Review the new words and questions from previous rounds.
- Test memory with a quick quiz or speaking activity.

6. ASSESSING A STUDENT'S LEVEL (WITHOUT RELYING ON WRITTEN TESTS)

Realistic strategies for teachers:

1. Try to have a 5-minute conversation. Start with something very basic so that you put them at ease and increase the level according to whether they are able to interact with you or not (you test different grammar structures, present, past, future, etc. but if you see that it's already too difficult you don't insist)
2. Describe a picture (if they can do that, they are minimum at A2).
3. Reformulate or repeat a message. (from B1 onwards)
4. Handle a misunderstanding. (from B1-B2)
5. Short listening test is done by talking to you so that you can test different topics according to the level)
6. Check use of essential verb tenses.
7. React spontaneously to questions.
8. Evaluate autonomy.
9. Consider motivation and personality.

7. LEARNING STYLE AWARENESS & MINDSET COACHING

Practical activities to help learners know themselves and overcome limiting beliefs.

7.1 ACTIVITIES TO DISCOVER LEARNING PREFERENCES

- 7-day learning diary: discover what you enjoy, write down your progress, write down what activities you had the impression to learn the best (and then test whether you remember something from that activity), experiment different techniques, methods and strategies to find what works for you. Choose top 3 favorite activities but remember that to truly improve you need to vary.
- Use different channels by speaking, writing, listening, moving, etc. and combine them too.
- Identify the best time of day for focus.
- Map out personal challenges but be aware of negative self-talk (that usually is not true, it's something that we tell ourselves because of what others told us or because of fear, but anything that is new is a bit difficult at the beginning, for everyone).

7.2 ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

- Write down automatic thoughts after mistakes.
- Replace negative thoughts with positive reframing.
- List 10 things you can already do.
- Reflect on how you overcame fears in the past.
- Choose a personal mantra to support you.

7.3 ACTIVITIES TO OVERCOME ANXIETY & LIMITING BELIEFS

- The 1-minute courage task: on your own or in real life.
- Permission to make mistakes. (teachers to you but also you to yourself)
- Error-as-points game.
- Talk while walking (movement helps)
- Low-pressure conversation topics.

7.4 OTHER ACTIVITIES ABOUT LEARNING STYLE AWARENESS, MINDSET COACHING

7.4 OTHER ACTIVITIES ABOUT LEARNING STYLE AWARENESS, MINDSET COACHING

ACTIVITY 1 - SPEED BOAT

Target group: Teenagers and adults

Aims: To know one's goals and try to achieve them

The activity: Each person must complete every part of their speed boat in order to identify their goals. It is a personal commitment. This activity refers to the integration of newcomers and is based on the competences of youthworkers.

Participant: can be an individual or a collective task

Skills/Knowledge: Awakeness of learning, cultivate autonomy, develop resilience skills

Time: It all depends on the time the learner needs.

Note: The person who is integrating should take time to reflect on their integration into a new learning and communication situation. The youth worker supports and facilitates this integration. It is an integration process, not a process of forced or violent assimilation.

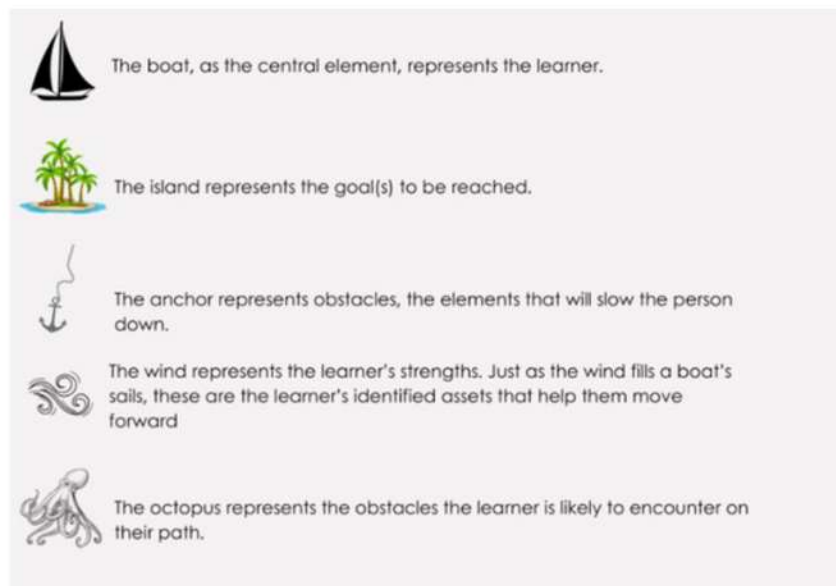
First step - Creation of a cocoon class: The Cocoon Class is an innovative concept designed by our teams to rethink the way we welcome people. By creating a warm and safe space through a targeted approach, we aim to offer an environment where expressing our needs is easier and where listening is the heart/main goal of every interaction.

Second step - Learners' Coffee Welcome: Offering a coffee or a tea to each learner. It is always more pleasant to start a conversation and learning with a friendly and welcoming start - just like tea or coffee.

Third step - Speed boat: Through the boat metaphor, the exercise allows the learner to reflect on what may cause difficulties or, on the contrary, help them move forward with their learning journey..

Visual representation of the Speed Boat →





ACTIVITY 2 - THE LEARNER'S MAP

Time: 5-10 minutes (or as much time as the learner needs, this depends on the learner)

Target group: learners of every age group, individual and after in a group

Aim: Allow the learner to reflect on their needs, strengths, and goals in order to create a visual tool of their learning journey.

Skills: Reflection, learning how to learn based on our own needs and goals.

Note: The map is based on a crucial question: the definition we give to language in general, and more specifically to a language that we want to learn, understand, and integrate into ourselves. It could be important to share in a group and have eventually a discussion.

Steps of the activity:

1. Explain to the learner what a mind map is and how it can help organize ideas and goals. Showing the visual example of the mind map to the learner to provide a visual reference, so they can have an idea about the activity.
2. It is time for the learner to create their own map - Personal Reflection. The learner takes time to reflect and honestly answer each bubble on the map. This is firstly a personal activity, as each individual sets their own goals and priorities.

They can also use phrases like:

I think that...

I give space for...

I consider that

What if...

I wonder if...

I want to learn more about...

Visual representation of the map:



ACTIVITY 3 - DISCOVERING A LANGUAGE

Time: 30 minutes (depends on the communicative situation)

Target group: learners who can already hold basic everyday conversation, can produce short sentences, or they want to experiment, identify, observe the gestures...

Aim: reducing/overcoming social anxiety, build the learner's self confidence, affirmation, learning how not to be afraid of speaking a different language even if we do mistakes, learn how to be positive after doing mistakes that look bigger to us than they are in reality, take part of an everyday event, identify and listen the sounds, observe the gestures.

Note: This is an on-site experience, based on a bottom-up learning approach. We visit public spaces and try to identify words, sounds, and recurring patterns. We then return with a mediator or a friend, giving us the opportunity to comment, discuss, and ask questions for better understanding. The mediators are able to repeat, speak more clearly, and revisit typical expressions.

Activity: Pair learning activity. Practicing speaking, pronunciation of the target language, while stepping out of our comfort zone with using the language in real life situations like: going to a caffè and ordering a coffee in the language of other people, going to the train station and buying a ticket etc.

Let's Imagine: The learner and her friend are going for a coffee. Let's imagine that the learner feels stressed or unsettled; they can turn to their mentor. They can then imitate their mentor, ask for help, or pose questions about what they find difficult. Together, they can discuss the key points of the chosen topic. They can motivate each other, list the things the learner already knows, and what they need to improve.

ACTIVITY 4 - CHECKING OUR SKILLS AND HELPING MY LEARNING

Time: approximately 25/30 minutes

Target group: learners with new learning material, mostly beginners

Aim: strengthening all your skills while combining all learning styles, the learner sees what is working personally for them.

Activity: There are four rounds in which the learner uses different skills, while learning the same vocabulary in each of them. Every 5 minutes learners switch to a different learning style.

Example: 10 words related to different topics: food, travel, education, etc.

1. First round: reading the different words silently
2. Second round: listening/hearing the words - a teacher can say the words, or someone else, it can be also an audio recording if one is accessible
3. Third round: speaking/ saying the words out loud - repeating them loudly, they can also create short; simple sentences
4. Fourth round: drawing the words and writing the word next to them, using a symbol to associate with the learnt words - for example drawing an apple and writing the word next to it

After the activity the learner can see what method worked for them the best way, it helps them understand their learning styles more without choosing between them.

The best working method can be used for more minutes (instead of 5 minutes it can be 15) every day, if it's the most effective way of learning for the student.

The Pie Chart of My Four Language Skills



8. ACTIVITIES ADAPTED FOR DYSLEXIA & ADHD

(See full list in previous sections: pronunciation, vocabulary, phrases, focus, and movement-based activities.)

These include: - sound + gesture practice - walk-and-talk sessions - object-based vocabulary 'timer' sessions - emotion-based memory drawing + phrases - puzzle sentences - quick choice dialogues - movement-based attention techniques - multi-sensory reinforcement

8.1 CORE PRINCIPLES FOR DYSLEXIA & ADHD LEARNING

- Use multiple senses (visual + auditory + kinesthetic).
- Keep activities short (3–5 minutes) to maintain focus.
- Use movement to sustain attention.
- Provide clear goals and predictable structure.
- Allow freedom of choice to reduce overwhelm.
- Reduce text-heavy activities; use icons, colors, drawings, gestures.
- Build confidence through immediate success.

8.2 ACTIVITIES

A) Activities to Reduce Fear of Speaking

1. Mistake Celebration Round

Each student intentionally makes a mistake; the group applauds. This rewires the brain's fear response.

2. Wrong Answer Only

Ask simple questions. Students must answer incorrectly or humorously. Reduces perfectionism.

3. 10-Second Monologues

Speak for only 10 seconds. Ultra-short = low anxiety.

4. Dialogue With Objects

Each student speaks to a random object ("Hello banana, how are you today?"). Playful language use.

5. Emotional Switch

Say the same sentence using different emotions (angry, bored, delighted). Focus moves away from fear.

7. 20-Second Micro Presentations

Short, doable, successful.

8. The Compliment Circle

Students exchange compliments in L2. Builds safety and positivity.

B) Activities for Language Learning Anxiety

1. 3-2-1 Grounding

In a language they feel confident (also their mother tongue) or they say their name, + 3 things they see, 2 they hear, 1 physical sensation. Calms the nervous system.

2. Breath + Speak Rhythm

Inhale 4 seconds → speak one sentence → exhale. Controls pace and anxiety.

3. Slow-Motion Conversation

Students speak extremely slowly. Removes pressure and allows time to think.

4. Positive Self-Talk Cards

Cards with affirmations. Students read one aloud before speaking.

5. Anxiety Body Map

Students draw where they feel anxiety; share with their partner. Reduces emotional tension.

6. 1-2-3 Discomfort Scale

Rate anxiety before and after speaking. Makes progress visible.

7. "I Don't Know Yet" Phrase Training

Students practice avoiding panic by saying: "I don't know the word yet, but I can describe it."

8. Micro Fear-Exposure Ladder

Speak 1 word → 1 sentence → 1 partner → small group → full group. Gradual desensitisation.

9. Safe-Partner Dialogues

Pair learners with someone from the same mother tongue to warm up.

10. Neutral-Voice Technique

Students speak like robots to reduce emotional load.

C) Activities for Dyslexia & ADHD

1. Colour-Coded Vocabulary

Use colors for categories: verbs = red, nouns = blue, adjectives = green. Helps dyslexic learners identify structure visually.

2. Walk-and-Talk Practice

Learners walk around the room or outside while practicing phrases. Movement increases focus.

3. Big-Paper Mind Maps

Vocabulary is written in clusters on very large paper sheets on the walls. Reduces overwhelm and supports visual learners.

4. Texture Memory Objects

Assign textures to word types (soft object = adjective, metal = verb). Kinesthetic anchoring boosts recall.

5. Movement Grammar

Each tense corresponds to a movement (past = step back, future = step forward). Links grammar to physical memory.

6. Comic Strip Storyboards

Students draw simple stick-figure comics and add speech bubbles. Great for dyslexic learners and visual sequencing.

7. The Timer Method

5 minutes (or so) focused work + 2 minutes break. Ideal for ADHD learning.

8. Multisensory Dictation

Students listen to a sentence, draw what they understand, THEN write it. Meaning first → writing second (and IF necessary)

9. Choose-Your-Own-Order Tasks

Give 5 tasks on cards; ADHD learners choose the order. Reduces resistance.

10. Chunked Dialogue Cards

Break dialogues into 2–4 word pieces. Students reconstruct like puzzles.

8.3 ADDITIONAL MOVEMENT-BASED ACTIONS

These activities support attention, memory, and speaking through movement and play:

- Command Chain – Students repeat and add to a chain of action commands.
- Boss & Robots – Teacher gives commands; students exaggerate movements.
- Freeze & Act – Students freeze, then act a new command.
- Impossible Commands – Students follow absurd commands → reduces fear.
- Human Sculpture – Students sculpt each other with commands.
- Object Hunt – Students find objects by color/shape/texture.
- Action Cards – Cards with verbs; students perform + say commands.
- Follow-the-Voice – Walking blindfolded guided by commands.

9. LANGUAGE GAMES

GAME 1: COMMANDO

TARGET GROUP: Children aged 8–10 years old (but it can be adapted for any age).

GOAL: To be able to make simple sentences and introduce yourself.

ACTIVITY: Commando

PARTICIPANTS: Minimum 6 children, maximum 20.

SKILLS/ATTITUDES/KNOWLEDGE: Learning, memorisation, creativity

DURATION: About one hour

1. Introduction

The facilitator or teacher introduces themselves as a traveller who speaks English (or another target language). Before starting the adventure, they need to check whether they can share their knowledge with the children.

2. Learning the Basics

The facilitator uses flashcards to teach the children simple questions and answers for self-introduction (any topic can be used). Each time a card is shown, the facilitator reads the sentence aloud and the children repeat it.

3. The Commando Mission Begins!

The objective of the game is to complete your grid as quickly as possible without making any mistakes. Form teams of 2 or 3 children. Give each team:

- one empty grid
- one pen
- one blank sheet (for the final part of the activity)

Once the teams are ready, explain the rules:

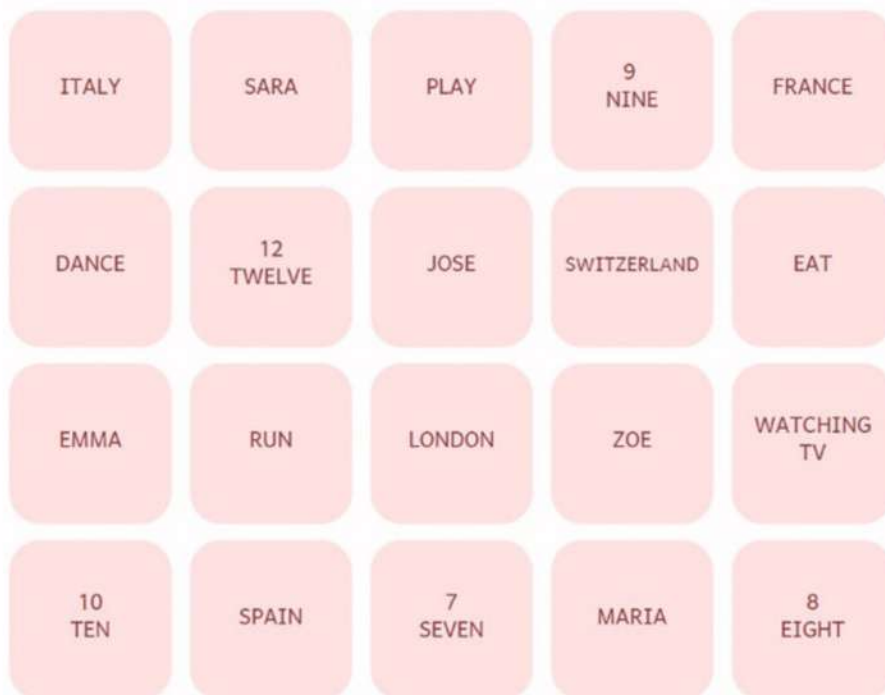
- The teacher has the same grid as the children, but the teacher's grid is already filled in.
- Each team chooses a "camp" — a spot far from the other teams.
- Every 2 minutes, music plays and all teams must gather at the teacher's camp.
- When everyone is there, the teacher shows their completed grid. The children must memorise as many words as possible to fill in their own empty grid.
- The teacher shows the grid for 45 seconds.
- After that, children return to their camps to complete their grids.
- The teacher repeats the cycle — play music, gather, show the grid — as many times as needed, adjusting the pace based on how well the groups memorise.
- The game ends when all teams have completed their grids.

4. Final Challenge

Once all teams have filled in their grids, they return to their camps. Each team must now create sentences using the words from their grid. They must write the same types of sentences they learned at the beginning:

- *My name is ...*
- *I'm ... years old.*
- *I live in ...*
- *I like to ...*

The teacher gives them **10 minutes** to complete this task. Afterwards, each group reads their sentences aloud.



GAME 2: PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITY: LEARNING WORDS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

This activity was originally created to help learners memorise the numbers from 1 to 9, but it can easily be adapted.

You can use the same structure to learn any vocabulary in a foreign language (for example: colours, animals, food, etc.).

TARGET GROUP: Anyone interested in learning languages

GOAL: To recognise, pronounce, and memorise a word in two different languages

ACTIVITY: *This activity helps learners memorise the numbers from one to nine in one or two languages using gestures, repetition, and fun mini-games.*

PARTICIPANTS: 5 to 25 people (group work possible)

SKILLS / ATTITUDE / KNOWLEDGE: Recognition, learning, memorisation

TIME: 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes, depending on the time available and the activities selected.

This activity teaches the numbers from 1 to 9 to a full group of participants, regardless of their age or language level—even absolute beginners.

The objective is not only to repeat the words, but to be able to:

- recognise a number
- associate it with a quantity
- pronounce it
- recognise it in a second language

Learning Process (Progressive Steps)

Phase 1 — Whole Group

Gather all participants in a circle or seated so that everyone can clearly see the visual materials.

1. Visual Presentation of the Numbers

The instructor writes or displays the numbers from 1 to 9:

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9

2. Learning in the First Language

The instructor shows each number one by one and pronounces its name in the chosen language (example: English). Participants repeat several times as a group to memorise the sounds. Repetition should be slow, clearly articulated, and spaced out enough for everyone to reproduce the pronunciation correctly.

3. Adding a Second Language

Once participants feel confident with the first language, the instructor introduces a second language (for example: Spanish). The written number remains visible while both pronunciations are introduced to help create a mental association.

Example:

3 → *three* → *tres*

5 → *five* → *cinco*

4. Group Repetition

The whole group repeats the numbers several times in both languages. This strengthens both auditory and visual memory.

5. Visual Support

If the activity is challenging, the numbers stay displayed at all times to reassure participants and help memorisation.

Phase 2 – Mini-Games to Check and Reinforce Memorisation

After the group learning phase, several mini-games are introduced.

These games assess understanding without creating pressure or fear of failure.

Play improves memorisation because it involves attention, emotion, and movement.

Mini-Game Ideas

1. “Touch the Number”

Numbers are displayed on the wall or placed on the floor. The instructor calls out a number in one of the languages:

- “Seven!”
- “Tres!”

Participants must run and touch the correct number.

Skills Practised:

- sound recognition
- sound–symbol association
- active memorisation

2. The Quantity Basket

A box filled with objects (caps, balls, pencils, etc.) is placed in the centre.

The instructor says:

- “Give me five.”
- “Give me *cuatro*.”

The participant must bring the exact quantity. This helps learners understand that a number corresponds to a real quantity.

3. Dice Throw

A participant throws a dice. They must:

- say the number
- say it in the foreign language
- perform an action many times (jump, clap, walk, etc.)

Movement strongly supports memorisation.

4. Number Hunt

Numbers are hidden around the room. When a participant finds one, they must:

- say the number
- say it in the foreign language

This creates active engagement and reinforces memory.

5. Team Race

Create two teams. The instructor says a number in the foreign language. One player from each team races to grab the corresponding card. This encourages attention and fast recognition.

6. Matching Numbers and Gestures

Assign a gesture to each number:

- 1 → raise one arm
- 2 → clap twice
- 3 → spin around
- etc.

The gesture becomes a memory anchor through body movement and kinaesthetic learning.

LANGUAGE GAMES

Name: Association game

Target: Beginners / medium

Number of players: 4

Rules: A person says a word and the other players have to say an adjective, a verb and a sentence related to the word.

Example: Tea - Hot - Drink - I usually drink tea in the morning

Goals: Learn how to create sentences, practice vocabulary, understand grammar rules.

Name: Word chain

Target: Medium

Number of players: Any number

Rules: Each player has to say a word that starts with the last letter of the previous word. You can also limit it to a topic.

Example: Banana - Apricot - Tomato

Goals: Practice vocabulary

Name: Taboo

Target: Advanced

Number of players: 4 per group

Rules: Each player chooses 3 people and forms a group in which one player explains a word without using 3 or 5 forbidden words and the rest of the group has to guess the word.

Example: The chosen word is pen. The forbidden words are write, ink and paper.

Goals: Practice vocabulary

Name: I pack my backpack

Target: Beginners

Number of players: Any number

Rules: Each player has to list as many words as possible in 60 seconds related to a specific topic.

Example: The topic is "Things you can find in the kitchen", you can say food, fridge, microwave, etc.

Goals: practice vocabulary

Name: 2 truths and a lie

Target: Advanced

Number of players: Any number

Rules: Each player says 3 sentences about themselves or their own country and other players try to guess which one is the lie.

Goals: Icebreaker, get to know each others, learn how to create sentences, practice grammar rules

Name: Cigarette game revisited

Target: Medium / advanced

Number of players: 6

Rules: All players stay in a circle and one coordinator stays in the centre and chooses a person that has to start the game answering the question "who?". The person next to them has to answer the question "what?". The other questions are in order "how?", "where?", "when?" and "why?".

Example: Who? A cat. What? Meows. How? Desperately. Where? In front of the door. When? During a storm. Why? Because it wants to enter the house.

Goals: Learn how to be more creative, practice vocabulary, understand grammar rules.

Name: Guessing words

Target: medium

Number of players: any number

Rules: There are 2 groups with 2 leaders. Leaders try to explain 10 words in 60 seconds and the groups try to guess them. Description, then (2nd level) just one word, then gestures and then only one noise allowed. Then leaders and their tasks change. Groups go for high scores. The first to guess all words exactly in each round is the winning team. One level could be to draw.

Goals: Competition, icebreaker, learn how to be more creative

Name: The winning trio

Target: Beginners / medium

Number of players: 3

Rules: 2 people come up with a word. The third person does not hear the word. The two alternate in saying words that form a sentence which should make the third person guess the word.

Example: The chosen word is “coffee”. The player can say “What - do - you - drink - in - the - morning?”

Goals: Practice vocabulary, learn how to create sentences, learn how to work in teams.

10. ENERGISERS

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

“I Pack My Bag” (10–20 minutes), (children, teenagers, and adults; 5–20 participants):

Participants stand in a circle. Each participant says their name and adds a specific movement. Every following participant has to repeat all previous names and movements, then add their own name and movement. This builds up into a long list of names with their respective movements.

Tip: As an “L” game, you can play a variation using newly learned thematic vocabulary.

Example: “I pack my bag and I put in a towel.” The next person repeats this sentence and adds a new item. Adjust the activity to the participants’ language level.

“My Name Is” (10–20 minutes), (teenagers and adults; at least 10 participants)

Each participant writes their name on a piece of paper and folds it so the name is not visible. Then everyone moves around the classroom to find a partner and introduce themselves (in the “L” version, in the target language).

The first person says, “Hi, my name is...”, and the other responds the same way. Then they exchange the pieces of paper. Now, each participant must introduce themselves to another partner using the name written on the paper they received. The goal is to remember the current name on the paper. Later, in a group session, the names are revealed to see who remembered correctly.

“Two Truths and One Lie” (10–20 minutes), (teenagers and adults; at least 10 participants)

Each participant writes two truths and one lie about themselves (or about the country they are from) on a piece of paper. They then move around the classroom and present these statements to a partner. The partner has to guess which statement is the lie.

“Storytelling” (30–40 minutes), (teenagers and adults; max. 20 participants)

Participants work in pairs. Each partner tells the other things about themselves (whatever they like). Afterwards, back in the classroom, participants present their partner’s story, giving as many details as possible.

“Bingo” (10–20 minutes), (teenagers and adults; at least 10 participants; minimum A2 level)

Prepare a 5x5 bingo grid and print one copy for each participant. Make sure everyone has a pen. In each bingo field, write a different fact (e.g. “I do sports every day”). Participants move around and try to find someone who matches each bingo field. When one row is filled with names (vertical, horizontal, or diagonal), the participant shouts “Bingo!” and wins the game.

Important: One person may not be used for more than one bingo field.

Find an example below:

...is very shy.	...is scared of heights.	...whose birthday is in winter.	...likes cats more than dogs.	...does not like Broccoli.
...does sports regularly.	...does not eat meat.	...is an extrovert.	...prefers Pizza over Pasts.	...speaks a non-European language.
...plays an instrument.	...likes dogs more than cats.	...prefers coffee over tea.	...has travelled to more than ten countries.	...is scared of spiders.
...speaks more than three languages.	...does not drink alkohol.	...prefers mountains over the sea.	...whose birthday is in summer.	...has never broken a bone.
...has at least one brother or sister.	...prefers tea over coffee.	...likes reading.	...is a good dancer.	...likes horror movies.

Go about the group and speak to one person at a time:

- If the person fits one of the descriptions, write his/ her name in the respective square.
- Use only one person for each square on your card. Only if you have asked everyone in the group, may you approach someone a second time.
- When you have five squares in a row covered, horizontally, vertically or diagonally, raise your hand and loudly say “Bingo”.

“Hangman” (10–20 minutes), *(teenagers and adults; at least 10 participants)*

Each participant writes as many underscores as there are letters in their name. Then participants walk around and ask others for the letters they need to complete their name. You may ask only one letter per person. If the person has the letter you asked for, it is added to the corresponding underscore in your name. If the person does not have the letter, you move on to another participant. The game ends when everyone has completed their name.

Funny version: Every time you guess a wrong letter, you draw one part of the hangman.

“L” version: Instead of names, participants choose a word from the target language.

WAKE-UP GAMES

“Order Game” (10 minutes), *(children, teenagers, and adults; at least 2 participants)*

One instructor gives orders to the group, such as “Walk” and “Stop,” and the group follows the instructions accordingly. Then the instructor changes the meanings to their opposites, and the group has to adapt. Later, the instructor introduces more pairs of orders such as “Jump” & “Sit,” “Clap your hands” & “Dance,” or “Say your first name” & “Silence.” Gradually, the instructor switches the meanings of each pair to confuse the participants more and more. The orders can be adapted to the needs of the group (for example, for participants with limited mobility). In the “L” version, the orders are given in the target language.

“Wedding Dance Game” (10 minutes), *(teenagers and adults; at least 10 participants)*

Participants form two circles: one inner circle and one outer circle. Participants in the outer circle invent movements to the music, and participants in the inner circle mirror those movements. After some time, the participants in the outer circle move one position to the right so that partners change.

“Fruit Salad” (5–10 minutes), *(children, teenagers, and adults; at least 10 participants)*

The group sits in a circle, with one person standing in the middle because there is one chair fewer than participants. Each participant is assigned a fruit, such as banana, kiwi, or peach. The person in the middle calls out a fruit name, and all participants assigned to that fruit must change seats. One person will not find a chair and remains in the middle. The person in the middle can then call another fruit or try to find a seat themselves. If the person in the middle says “Fruit Salad,” everyone changes seats at once.

“L” version: Use vocabulary from the target language instead of fruit names.

“Medusa” (5–10 minutes), (*children, teenagers, and adults; at least 10 participants*)

All participants form a circle and close their eyes. The instructor counts to three, and everyone immediately opens their eyes and looks randomly at one specific person. If two people are looking at each other, they shout “Medusa!” and leave the circle.

11. INSIGHTS FROM OUR PARLO II ACTIVITIES

11.1 You Don't Need to Understand Everything to Respond

Learners only need to catch key words to respond effectively. Examples:

- The teacher says a long sentence; students must identify 1–2 essential words and answer.
- Play audio with background noise; students guess meaning from the few words they catch.

11.2 Gestures Support Memory and Pronunciation

- Gestures anchor vocabulary, sounds, and even letters.
- Sound Imitation Motions: each sound gets a gesture (round hands for rounded vowels, sharp hands for plosives).
- Gesture Vocabulary: assign a gesture to each verb; learners perform the gesture while saying the word.

11.3 Vocabulary Must Be Personally Relevant

Learn language like an onion—layer by layer:

- Personal Priority List: Learners list 15 words they need for THEIR life.
- Life-Circle Vocabulary: Vocabulary grouped by personal categories: work, family, hobbies.

11.4 Connect New Knowledge to a Language You Already Know

Use linguistic bridges:

- Cross-Language Pairing: Write new words + similar words in known languages.
- False-Friend Hunt: Find 5 false friends and explain why they help or confuse.

11.5 Repeating Structures Across Languages

Teach easy, universal patterns. Examples, write in your languages or languages you teach

- "I want to..." + action (eat, sleep)
- "I like..." → English, Italian, Spanish, French.
- "Where is...?" - train with different things you need to find (restaurants, objects, etc.)

11.6 Learning Must Be Interactive and Emotional

These activities work both in groups and 1:1.

Partner Switch Dialogues

Students speak with a partner for two minutes, then switch to a new partner and repeat the same mini-dialogue.

Example:

A: "Hi, what's your name?"

B: "My name is Ana. And you?"

A: "I'm Carlo. Nice to meet you."

Switch partner → repeat the dialogue with someone new.

Why this works:

Repeating the same dialogue with different people builds automaticity, improves pronunciation, reduces fear of speaking, and helps the phrases move into long-term memory.

Emotion Acting Mini-Dialogues

Learners say the same sentence several times but with different emotions. Example:

Say "I live in Barcelona" as if you are:

- excited
- tired
- angry
- shy
- surprised

Why this works:

Acting with emotions creates a strong memory link because the brain remembers movement, facial expression, and feelings. It makes repetition fun, lowers anxiety, and helps learners use phrases more naturally in real conversations.

11.7 Integrate New Knowledge by Constantly Adding Layers - Growing Sentences

Start with a simple sentence, then add **details, context, or variations** to expand it. This method helps learners memorise vocabulary, grammar structures, and phrases naturally.

Example 1: Asking about languages

- Step 1: "Do you speak Italian?"
- Step 2: "Do you often speak Italian?"
- Step 3: "Do you often speak Italian at home?"
- Step 4: "Do you often speak Italian at home with your family?"
- Step 5: "Do you often speak Italian at home with your family in the evening?"

Example 2: Talking about daily routines

- Step 1: "I eat breakfast."
- Step 2: "I usually eat breakfast at 7 a.m."
- Step 3: "I usually eat breakfast at 7 a.m. in the kitchen."
- Step 4: "I usually eat breakfast at 7 a.m. in the kitchen while listening to music."

Example 3: Describing hobbies

- Step 1: "I like to read."
- Step 2: "I like to read books."
- Step 3: "I like to read books about history."
- Step 4: "I like to read books about history in the park on weekends."

Why this works:

- Memory: Repetition with variation strengthens retention.
- Context: Learners see how words and grammar fit together naturally.
- Confidence: Small, manageable steps make speaking less intimidating.
- Creativity: Learners can personalise sentences and use them in real life.

Tip: Encourage learners to swap words or phrases for more practice:

- "Do you often speak Italian in the morning?"
- "Do you often speak Spanish at work?"

11.8 Visualization Makes Language Less Abstract

- Visual Culture Maps: Students draw a simple map or symbol of the country. Do something that connects you to the language and to the country of which you are learning the language.
- Picture-Based Vocabulary: Use photos to anchor new words (see chapter 5).

11.9 Pronunciation Through Melody, Rhythm & Hands

Rhythm Sentences (The "Stress-Timed" Beat)

- *Goal:* To help students master the "beat" of English, which is a stress-timed language.
- *The Technique:* Instead of just saying a sentence, students clap, tap their desk, or use a "conducting" motion specifically on the stressed syllables (the important words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives).
- *How to do it:*
 - Model the sentence first: "Do you **LIVE** in **LON**-don?"
 - Students clap only on the bolded beats while "sliding" over the smaller, unstressed words (do, you, in).

The Rising Intonation Gesture (Visual Pitch)

- *Goal:* To overcome monotone speech and clearly signal a "Yes/No" question.
- *The Technique:* Use a physical "sweep" of the hand to visualize the music of the sentence.
- *How to do it:*
 - Start with the hand at chest level for the beginning of the sentence.
 - As the student reaches the final word of a Yes/No question, they move their hand upward in a smooth arc (like a plane taking off).
 - Example: "Do you speak I-ta-lian? "
- *Why it works:* Physicalizing the pitch makes the abstract concept of intonation "visible" and easier for the brain to replicate.

11.10 Use Words Connected to Known Words

Examples:

- *ballare* → *ballet*
- *dormire* → *dormitory*
- *cucinare* → *culinary*

Activity: Cognate Match-Up: Students find similar words in their languages.
See similar activity in chapter 5.

11.11 Say Words Out Loud & Use the Body

Voice + Motion Practice (Kinesthetic Anchoring)

- *Goal:* To deepen memory retention by engaging multiple senses simultaneously (Total Physical Response).
- *The Technique:* Assigning a specific, meaningful physical movement to a new word or grammatical structure to "anchor" it in the student's physical memory.
- *How to do it:*
 - Identify the Anchor: For a verb like "expand," have students move their arms outward. For a concept like "urgent," have them tap their wrist.
 - Simultaneous Execution: The student must perform the movement *at the exact moment* they speak the word.
 - Contextual Practice: Transition from single words to full sentences. For example, when saying "I traveled to Rome," the student might mimic a walking motion.

Mirror Speaking (Visual Articulation Feedback)

- *Goal:* To develop muscle memory and precision in mouth positioning for difficult phonemes.
- *The Technique:* Using a mirror to provide immediate visual feedback on the physical shape of the mouth, tongue, and lips.
- *How to do it:*
 - Side-by-Side Comparison: Have the student look at your mouth (or a video/diagram) and then at their own in the mirror.
 - Target Specific Sounds: Focus on sounds that require specific positioning, such as the "th" (tongue between teeth) or the English "r" (tongue curled back, not touching the roof).
 - Silent Practice: Ask students to form the shape of the sound without making any noise first, ensuring the muscles are correctly positioned before adding the voice.

11.12 Grammar for Beginners: Small, Clear Details

Teach micro-details like verb endings so that grammar can start becoming clearer also for absolute beginners. Teach the main rule first without exceptions.

- Italian: parlo, parli for verbs in the present tense. Or -o, -i for endings of nouns (libro, libri)
- Turkish: vowel harmony endings
- Spanish: -o, -as, -a patterns

You can highlight the verb endings.

11.13 Teacher's Energy & Encouragement Matter

High-Energy Start Rituals do start with energy. From time to time do an energizer or a game. Encourage and praise students' attempts to speak even when it's not perfect, especially with beginners.

11.14 Role Plays, Acting & Emotions (Especially for Kinesthetic Types)

Scenario Acting for emotions and better retaining. Students act out as if at café, airports, and doctors.

11.15 Watching Films With or Without Subtitles

Benefits of Subtitles in Target Language:

- Improves reading + listening consistency.
- Helps dyslexic learners connect sound to text.

Benefits of No Subtitles:

- Boosts listening strength.
- Forces attention on tone and rhythm.

Techniques: 5-Minute Scene Re-watch; Watch once with subtitles, once without; Chunk Listening; Pause every 5–10 seconds and repeat what you understood.

11.16 Using Cartoons (For Kids)

For example:

→ For Russian:

- Смешарики

→ For English:

- Dora the explorer

Cartoon Replay: Kids reenact a scene using simple phrases.

11.17 Music for Language Learning

Music helps motivation but has complex grammar. Easy-Lyrics Songs. Choose songs with slow, clear pronunciation. Chorus Repetition. Repeat only the chorus to avoid overload.

11.18 Reducing Stress While Learning

Stress-Release Breathing

Before speaking: inhale 4, exhale 6.

Grounding Walk

Walk + say simple phrases → reduces anxiety.

Safety Phrase Practice

Teach: "I need a moment", "Can you repeat, please?"

General Stress-Release Techniques

For everyone; no age restrictions and no minimum or maximum number of participants:

- **Butterfly**: Cross your arms over your chest and gently tap your palms on your chest in a slow rhythm, like the movement of butterfly wings.
- **Ear Pulling**: Place your index fingers in your ears and gently pull downward for about 30 seconds.
- **Breathing**: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 2 seconds, and exhale for 3 seconds. Repeat several times.
- **Squeezing**: Squeeze your arms and legs several times, focusing on the physical sensation.
- **Muscle Contraction**: Repeatedly contract and release your hands and feet.

Individual Techniques:

- **Sensory Distraction**: Use relaxing music, listen to ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) sounds (available on Spotify or YouTube), or try aromatherapy.
- **Counting**: Count each heartbeat or each breath. If you lose count, start again from one. This technique helps improve focus.

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