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Sometimes being a good test taker isn't beneficial.

Tuesday, August 06, 2013

Today we were assigned to our Slovak language classes according to our performance on the placement test.

After studying sporadically for several months on my own with a Slovak textbook purchased on the Internet, I was assigned to intermediate level 2 – the 6th of 12 levels of proficiency.

Note:

This is my first classroom experience in Slovak.

Since 1976 I haven't heard Slovak spoken by anyone in the USA.

My language skills are fine for an American traveling in the country to order food, get a room, see the sites, buy necessities and have simple conversations with the locals.

After the first hour of class, I knew I was in way over my head. I managed my introduction OK and my plan for the future. Then we began to discuss genres of TV shows.

When I have time to read questions and consider how to answer, like on a test, I do quite well. When I had to think quickly and respond in this new language, I sounded positively illiterate.

It didn't help that I was summoned out of class for ten minutes to do an interview with Bratislava Radio. Did I mention DH and I are kind of curiosities? The radio host and program director looked happy so I guess I did OK there.

Back in class I tried hard, but my head hurt from the effort to keep up and during the break that's what I told the teacher - IN SLOVAK.

After lunch we both agreed that I needed an easier level. This was supposed to be a learning vacation, but I also want it to be enjoyable. It turns out that I'm not the only one in this situation and it was to be expected. There will be some reshuffling of the groups tomorrow.

I'm doing fine around the town. I can read all the signs, billboards, directions etc. and so far no one has asked my opinion of reality TV vs. documentaries.

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SARAWALKS

I know that feeling! I am a good test taker too, and with languages it really betrays me because on paper I always do better. Good for you for making them re-evaluate. Much better to feel more at ease and grow gradually...
I look forward to following your discoveries!
2867 days ago



PHEBESS

You'll be the star of the beginner class! (Don't you wish they had something like beginner and a half? Somewhere between beginner and intermediate?)
2867 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Very sensible decision: you'll feel less pressured and learn more AND have a better time!!
2867 days ago



EGRAMMY



Enjoy. So happy for you.

2867 days ago



BOOKAPHILE

I love your updates. I'm glad you're going for challenging vs. headache-inducing instruction. Enjoy!
2868 days ago



MERRYMARY42

how neat, so happy for you and your experience, keep sharing
2868 days ago



MARYJEANSL

That's so funny! I'm not sure I could give a coherent opinion of reality TV versus documentaries in English, let alone another language. You are amazing, whatever level you end up in. :-)
2868 days ago



WILSONWR

Again, what an experience! And a local celebrity too! Hope the new class is more enjoyable.
2868 days ago



DR1939

According to my friends in the Foreign Language, Math, and English Departments this is a common problem with placement tests. The other side is when the student deliberately does poorly on the test and then is bored in the class. They often end giving the professor a poor review because the class was too easy. I had this happen with a woman who was a Master's level student in Literature taking a freshman level Women's Studies Course. I had warned her that it would not hold her interest, but she insisted on taking it.
2868 days ago



GINIEMIE

Oh you are so right, being a good test taker is not all that beneficial. You have to be able to apply, and with a foreign language that means speaking off the cuff about a variety of topics. Glad you were able to get moved down a little. I think you probably would have made it, but I don't think you would have enjoyed it. To make it stick you have to enjoy it too.
Hugs my dear friend. How do you say/write that in slovak?
Ginie



2868 days ago



SLENDERELLA61

Very brave of you to pursue what you truly need. I'm sure you'll have a much better experience because of your initiative. Good for you!!
2868 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

Good call to step it down. The point is not JUST to learn, but to have a good time, too. I'm





SURE you'll learn, just not quite as much stress in the process.
2868 days ago



DESERTJULZ
You're back again? I thought you'd gone & come home. :D
2868 days ago



HELEN_BRU
This sounds absolutely marvellous! What an adventure. I happened to tell my niece what you were doing so they went on the Internet and arranged for a class in Tuscany to learn Italian. they just didn't get enough out of their classes at home and soon forgot what they learned. Takes practise.



Good for you! You are doing just fine.
2868 days ago



BELLACUDDLES
Sounds like you are doing great, and I'm so happy for you!!!
2868 days ago



SUSANNAH31
What a great adventure you are having -- living in another country to study a new language. Enjoy every minute!



After the class placement gets sorted out - you will surely shine!

2868 days ago



TRAVELGRRL
You are doing GREAT! When I joined the 5K running program I tested at "intermediate", meaning I could run 3 minutes at a time. At the first session we were expected to RUN A MILE! Needless to say, I dropped back.



Having fun is soooooo much better than feeling "behind" the entire experience. You will have such a better experience in the right group.

Press and Spark On!
2868 days ago



LINDAKAY228
Wow, glad they are going to adjust your level! Hope you're having a great time. Enjoy the new class that hopefully will be at your level.
2868 days ago



CD13834395
You are so my inspiration!! I play with learning French and want to find native speakers to practice, but then when I do, I won't even open my mouth! Here's to hoping you find the right level to facilitate your learning. Go for it!!
2868 days ago



SYLPHINPROGRESS
Interviewed for radio? What fun! I can't imagine why you're curiosities, though. Immersion programs are for less than fluent speakers and rank beginners. What's odd to me is that the program is in Vienna rather than Slovakia. There must be a good reason. Vienna isn't the worse place for anything by far.



Many people must find themselves being reassigned after the first class session. Written language and spoken language are two animals not necessarily commensurate.



2868 days ago



CD14034154
Brooklyn,
We have a celebrity in our midst!!! Are you going to put on the shades and strike a pose? LOL!!!



I'm curious to hear how they shuffle the classes tomorrow. I would be looking for an easier class too. Let me start at the bottom and work my way up. Then I'll know that I have what it takes, to communicate with the locals!!!

Be blessed,

- Nancy Jean -
2868 days ago

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