

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IS A

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SUPERPOWER

A 20-YEAR CAREER IN THE SKIES

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- A man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and an orange tie with small dark spots, is smiling broadly. He is sitting in an airplane cabin, with a grey overhead storage bin behind him. A sign on the bin reads "Open" and "Abrir".
- **RENAUD FENSTER'S CHILDHOOD IN FRANCE**
 - **HOW SPEAKING FRENCH IMPACTS HIS LIFE**
 - **EARNING COLLEGE CREDITS AS A JETBLUE SCHOLAR**
 - ***AND SO MUCH MORE!***

Life's circumstances can sometimes present unexpected outcomes that can impact you in a positive way. Such is the case of Renaud Fenster veteran flight attendant with JetBlue Airways who moved to France at the age of nine upon his parents' divorce.

After 10 years of going to school overseas and learning the basics of French, Renaud commanded his language superpower. When he left France and returned to the United States as a young adult, he was armed with multilingual skills that have served him well during his 20-year successful career in the travel industry.

However, when Renaud first came back to the U.S., he felt he was falling behind on commanding the language he had dedicated himself to learning during his decade's long studies in France. He shares, "I had lived in France for ten years and moved back to the United States after high school. I didn't have much opportunity to practice my French on a continuous basis, then came LTI." Language Testing International® is an exclusive licensee of ACTFL, a leader in the development of proficiency-based language assessments. Through LTI, individuals can test their proficiency in more than 120 languages. An official certification issued by ACTFL allows professionals across all industries to demonstrate their level of proficiency in speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

Different levels of proficiency offer value in different situations. Renaud says he speaks 2.5 languages. "English is my native language. I speak fluent French, but learned the language when I was nine. And I consider Spanish my half language as I speak just enough to get by." His command of French allows him to communicate with his family in France. His bilingual skills even helped him save a man's life while Renaud was on vacation in France. While shopping in a store, he witnessed a man collapse: "While people panicked, I was able to call for help, assess the medical condition, and pass the information to the emergency services that were on the way," he recalls.

As a flight attendant at JetBlue Airways, Renaud has used his language superpowers in a variety of ways. On occasion he will encounter a customer who needs assistance in French, and he is also part of an emergency response team dedicated to assisting employees, passengers, and local communities



during a disaster. When in 2010 Haiti was struck by a devastating earthquake, Renaud was asked to support the team as a translator. "I was able to use my language skills and help JetBlue during the company's emergency response efforts to help employees and Haitian citizens seek help," he shares.

JetBlue also invests in the academic and professional growth of its crew members. They are encouraged to participate in the JetBlue Scholars Program, which offers them the opportunity to earn a fully accredited associate or bachelor's degree with the company covering most of the cost. As JetBlue Scholars' language testing provider, LTI is helping JetBlue's crew members who are native or expert speakers, like Renaud, obtain language certificates that earn them college credits. "As a JetBlue Scholars student, I had an opportunity to earn additional college credit by getting tested in my secondary language. I knew my proficiency in French was acceptable, but I wasn't sure how good I was, so I wanted to be tested. LTI allowed me to test my proficiency and get an official certification. I took two tests - one for reading and one for speaking - and I received 3 credits", he stated.

As JetBlue seeks recognition and expansion in Europe with their new service to London, Renaud anticipates that additional countries in Europe will be served soon. He weighs-in, "I do believe speaking a different language provides a competitive advantage. I can communicate casually or professionally. My clear proficiency in French instills confidence that I can provide proper instructions and directions." Should France become one of the countries to be served by JetBlue, it will be another unexpected life circumstance that he feels will further his career using his language superpower.