

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IS A

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SUPERPOWER

TEACHING A NEW LANGUAGE

- JULIE ROSA'S DEDICATION TO HER IMMIGRANT STUDENTS
- HOW SPANISH PROFICIENCY FAST-TRACKED HER CAREER
- STUDY HACKS TO GET READY FOR LANGUAGE TESTING
- *AND SO MUCH MORE!*

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There is a general sense that being bilingual gives people a competitive edge in many careers. Knowing another language can open up a wider client base, or exponentially expand the network in which a person can engage. This is true whether the individual is a teacher, lawyer, or business owner.

The reality is that many people in the U.S. speak more than one language, and their language proficiency skills have served them well, fast-tracking their careers into more marketable and higher-paying employment opportunities. This is the case of Julie Rosa, a Spanish and English bilingual teacher who teaches students from kindergarten to fifth grade in an urban district in Connecticut.



"I was hired in my position on what is called a DSAP. It stands for Durational Shortage Area Permit. I was able to find a teaching job in a well-paying school district because I have these language skills," Julie states. "Not everyone possesses these skills, and it makes you more marketable," she added. Transitioning into the position helped Julie significantly, financially and professionally. The district that she works for helped her get into a fast-track program to become certified for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and to receive a bilingual cross-endorsement on her teaching certification.

Julie needed to take language proficiency assessments in order to receive the bilingual cross-endorsement on her teaching certificate. She obtained the ACTFL Proficiency Certificate through Language Testing International (LTI). English is her first language, and she studied Spanish, French, and Italian in school. She is no longer as proficient in Italian; however, she can speak both Spanish and French and she received the ACTFL Proficiency Certificate and digital badges for the Advanced Spanish Speaking Proficiency and Advanced Spanish Writing Proficiency.

"There is some aspect to 'testing' that feels clinical, especially in the context of something as seemingly intangible as language. But I found the experience to be the opposite of clinical. At first, I thought of approaching studying in a very clinical or methodical way but after some thinking, I realized that studying just meant engaging with the language as much as I could", Julie shares. She explains that to prepare for language testing she would think out loud in Spanish, watched Spanish television shows, listened to Spanish in the car and wrote in her journal about her day all in Spanish. When it came to taking the tests, Julie felt confident that she had performed well because she had immersed herself in this language that she loves and as a result, the experience didn't feel "clinical" at all for her.

Julie also feels that speaking Spanish has allowed her the opportunity to contribute to her community in a way that is deeply aligned with her values as a person. "It is important to me to be a support in my school community, and having an adult who speaks Spanish is a vital bridge for students who have just arrived in this country. I am able to do work that is fulfilling and makes me feel good," she highlights.



Additionally, because she speaks both Spanish and French, she has been able to befriend and date people that speak those languages, giving her more access to their perspectives, their cultures, their food and traditions. Julie attributes her robust life experiences to her language proficiency, "Living in France and being able to actively interact with people in French taught me so much more about Paris and French culture than I could have ever learned. Being able to read and understand another language opens you up to more content. Some of my favorite books, television shows and movies are in another language."