

Education – Getting ready for university

I think writing is really important. Comprehensibility in writing, in speaking and a good level of listening and reading. If there are problems with vocabulary or grammar, these are things which can be developed during the course of the first year. You don't have to be a perfect speaker of English to study at a university. Your language will develop through the years that you are there, and it still will not be perfect. When you finish, you will continue developing it. And that goes for the so-called native speaker as well.

One of the problems is often confidence, feeling that I'm at a university with a lot of people that speak the language a lot better than I do; it's going to slow me down. What can I do about that? I think one important thing is socialising, with as many different people as possible, exchanging experiences, which also gives us the opportunity to practise our language!

Make full use of the university facilities. Universities provide a lot of study skills opportunities and a lot of language learning opportunities; make full use of those. Don't be discouraged. If you put the work in, your language will improve, and at the same time you will be learning about your subject and reaching the level of competence that you need to reach in order to complete your degree successfully.

I would add that, use every opportunity to develop your skills. Read a lot, particularly prior to the course. The more you read, the more you will develop your language skills. This is something that... reading can be reading anything. It can be something that you enjoy- novels! Something that you get into. If you read academic books all the time it can be a bit, I don't know what the word is, a little bit boring, let's say. So, read as much as you can; that will really help you develop... it will help you to develop your speaking ability, it will help you to develop your vocabulary, it will help you to develop your writing.

