

Great news from neuroscience!

In this article find out how knowledge gained from neuroscientific research can help you become an even better teacher and has helped make language teaching materials even more effective.

Great news! Developments in neuroscience in recent years have proven beyond doubt that people of all ages are indeed capable of learning a new language.

Not only age, but also, amongst other things, a person's individual language learning history and their life-long experience of learning in general play a major role in their ability to become proficient in a new language. Unfortunately, of course, as a teacher you generally have no way of influencing these particular factors. Students in your classes are not only likely to be of all different ages, they will also have a wide range of backgrounds in terms of the other languages they have learnt and the amount of time they have devoted to continuing their education since leaving school.

However, success in learning is not only dependent on personal, historical or age factors, many other immediate factors also play a major role. And this is where teachers and teaching materials make all the difference.

Personal relevance

Things that are of personal relevance to us are easier for us to remember and we feel more motivated to learn them. The key here is to make teaching materials as personally relevant to our students as possible. With this in mind, in all volumes of *Great!*, from A1 to B1, tasks are personalized wherever possible.

Here's an example: You are teaching students how to ask and answer questions in the past so that they can talk about things they did at the weekend or other times in the past. Having introduced new items in a lively and realistic context, in *Great!* this is via a recorded and printed dialogue, students create their own questions within a defined framework and then talk to each other using these (Fig. 1). In this way, both the questions and the answers are personally relevant to the students, increasing motivation as well as memorability. It's simple – and now we know for sure: it works!

Learning in chunks

Learning items as single words is less effective than learning language in meaningful chunks in context. By learning coherent strings of words, networks in the brain are developed and strengthened. A string of words can then be more easily recalled and new items can be stored more effectively making use of existing pathways. The Survival English sections at the end of each unit in all levels of *Great!* are perfect examples of how this can be put into practice in the classroom. Students learn and practise language in context within complete dialogues. Essential phrases, in phrasebook style, are provided on the double page to help students make a smooth transition between the two languages whilst avoiding single (and largely wasteful) word for word translations (Fig. 2).

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3a What did you do last weekend? Make questions. (Your questions can be funny or serious!)

1. (100%)	Did you <u>have roast squirrel</u>	for dinner last Sunday?
2. (100%)	Did you <u>visit</u>	last Saturday?
3. (100%)	Did you	for breakfast on Sunday?
4. (100%)	Did you	last Friday?
5. (100%)	Did you	at the weekend?
6. (100%)	Did you	on TV?
7. (100%)	Did you	?
8. (100%)	Did you	?

3b In pairs. Take turns. Ask your questions. Answer your partner's questions.

Did you ... ?
 — Yes, I did.
 — No, I didn't.
 Did you ... ?

Fig. 1: *Great! A1*, p. 104



Having fun

Last but not least, neuroscience has confirmed that we learn more easily and more sustainably if we are having fun. It's all to do with the endorphins that the brain releases! So creating a relaxed, friendly classroom environment is very important. And material and activities that make your students smile, will help them learn better. This doesn't only mean including jokes or cartoons in your lessons, of course. Think of quizzes, games, humorous content in texts and audios, songs, etc.

In *Great!* we've taken fun seriously! You'll find a huge number of humorous and fun activities – all with clear language learning goals – in all the *Great!* course books (Fig. 3).

So, why not start your next lesson with a smile? You can be sure of really great results! «

Great to teach!

Great!
Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch + 2 Audio-CDs
978-3-12-501480-0 (A1)
978-3-12-501482-4 (A2)
978-3-12-501484-8 (B1)

Survival English
978-3-12-501495-4 (A1-B1)

Mehr Informationen unter
www.klett.de/great

Essential phrases

Patient	Patient
I'm / My husband's not feeling well.	Mir / Meinem Ehemann geht es nicht gut.
I need to see a doctor.	Ich muss zum Arzt.
I need antibiotics.	Ich brauche Antibiotika.
Is there a doctor's / a pharmacy nearby?	Gibt es einen Arzt / eine Apotheke in der Nähe?
Can you give me something for ... ?	Können Sie mir etwas gegen ... geben?
Have you got anything for ... ?	Haben Sie etwas gegen ... ?
Can I get ... here (without a prescription)?	Kann ich hier ... (ohne Rezept) bekommen?
Have you got anything that's not on prescription?	Haben Sie etwas, das nicht rezeptpflichtig ist?
How long will I have to wait?	Wie lange muss ich warten?
I usually take antibiotics for it.	Normalerweise nehme ich Antibiotika dagegen.
It / They started yesterday.	Es / Sie begann(en) gestern.
I think so. / I don't think so.	Ich glaube. / Ich glaube nicht.

Fig. 2: *Great!* A2, p. 30/31

7 In pairs. Play Noughts & crosses.

Aim of the game: To win 3 squares in a straight line by completing a row of 3 sentences. The line can be in any direction. → ↘ ↙ ↓

How to play: One player is noughts (O), the other is crosses (X). Take turns to complete a sentence. Write O or X in the box when you complete a sentence. Each sentence can only be completed once! The sentences are not only about buildings!

... was built more than 25 years ago.	... is made of is named after ...
...
... was written by was built in was born in ...
...
... was invented by is situated / located in was designed by ...
...

Fig. 3: *Great!* B1, p. 35