

## Skill Module: Use Your 2nd Language Before You Forget It

UT is a very international campus and you can't help but hear native speakers of Chinese, French, German, and Spanish as you walk to class every day. And the languages get more exotic than that, you just have to look for them. There are more than 20 Kazakh speakers on campus! (Yes, as in Kazakhstan, like in the movie *Borat*)

Those you who came to UT with a bunch of credits may never set foot in a foreign language class again. Though you may not remember much from Madame's high school French class, you'd be surprised how much you start to recall after the first few Bonjours and Ça va's. Fortunately, many culture clubs host language speaking meets on campus, where anybody can go and practice.

There's no reason why you can't become conversationally fluent in your second language. There are plenty of ways to keep up with it outside of the classroom.

### Assignment:

1. Find a language meet, or even better, find a friendly native speaker. Some language meet-ups are harder to find than others. You may have to contact a faculty member and ask if anything has been organized, or with whom you can practice. Sometimes professors invite you to practice with them! The language must be one other than your first (and cannot be English). Lots of the language clubs are on facebook nowadays.

For Spanish, look here: <http://utexas.new.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2202449415>

German-- Here's a language practice meet-up group in Austin:

<http://www.meetup.com/austin-german/>

French:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=55497907446&v=wall&ref=search>

Also, try PALS through the Study Abroad Office. It's an opportunity to meet international students, talk to them about their countries and cultures, and practice your languages: <http://www.utexas.edu/international/iss/intercultural/pals/>

I will also organize some meets myself for German, French, and Chinese, depending on the interest levels. Watch for sign-up lists in class or emails.

2. Cram a little at home before you go. Do some remedial work if need be. And don't feel intimidated. There are lots of bumbling beginners at meets.

3. Go to the meet, or rendezvous with your native speaker, and converse for at least 30 minutes. Write a 300-500 word summary of your experience at the meet and in what ways your language facility expanded. Turn it into your UGTA.