

IOLANDA'S TOP TIPS FOR IMPROVING CONFIDENCE IN ENGLISH

Improving confidence in any language is gained through a combination of formal and informal learning.

Iolanda Pedrosa is employed at Whittington NHS Trust in North London as a nurse and is currently studying on a level 7 business management apprenticeship (MBA). She has also completed small university courses at level 6 and 7. Iolanda's first language is Portuguese and she arrived in the UK in 2014 as a newly qualified nurse. When Iolanda arrived in London she didn't feel fully confident in her English language skills so developed strategies to help. Iolanda says that despite her high confidence and competence in speaking English now, expressing herself academically at level 7 is a new challenge and that she is still learning.

Here are her Top Tips!

1. Always carry a notebook (either paper or digital or both) and write down every new word and/or term you have not come across before at the time and look them up later. Ask someone whose first language is English to read this out loud so you know how it's pronounced in Britain.
2. Read a lot in English, rather than your first language. Highlight unfamiliar words. Check pronunciation as above.
3. Watch TV with subtitles on to catch words you're not familiar with/don't understand.
4. Use things you love. I love musicals! So I went to see lots of live musicals (and watched recordings of musicals) I was familiar with in my first language so it was easier and quicker to understand the stories and learn the new words... and fun!
5. As your confidence grows – adapt topics. I started reading love stories because they were simpler. As I study for my MBA I need to be able to use and understand more complex language for essay writing so I have started reading, in English, about finance and political activism.
6. Listen to lots of British podcasts – great to get pronunciation right.
7. Use captioning for online meetings – In Microsoft Teams, you access this by clicking on the 'three dots'.