# Transcript of Class time and study (12:36 min)

[Music playing]

**Melissa Park** – Pleased to meet you. My name is Melissa. I am studying Medicine at university. Pleased to meet you.

**Luca Butterworth** – Hello. My name is Luca and I studied German at school.

**Lily Parsons** – Hello my name is Lily and I studied Spanish in Year 12.

**Jerry Zhang** – Good afternoon. My name is Jerry and I have studied Indonesian this past year.

**Anika Popovik** – So what activities work best for you in class time and why?

**Melissa Park** – I think for me a combination of visual stimuli, so videos, things that the teacher would put on the smartboard, and then a mix of interactive learning.

**Ilha Jung** – Class discussions, every time the teacher would get us in small groups and small circles and get us to talk in Japanese.

**Thomas Elibank-Murray** – I'd have to say activities where I was able to receive feedback fairly immediately from my teacher and just be able to gauge what I was doing, particularly when I was writing.

**Jerry Zhang** – What was the most effective technique you found for learning new vocab or grammar?

**Lily Parsons** – Definitely just lots of repetition, finding new ways to use it, whether that be speaking, writing, reading, whatever I was doing, just trying to use it, even just when I'm thinking to myself, trying to use the new vocab, just really get familiar with it, get used to it.

**Luca Butterworth** – For vocab, to learn a lot of vocab quickly is to do flashcards. I mean, they're kind of a classic language learning technique. But you can use online. You don't even need to make physical flashcards.

**Chiara Bicanic** – I think that reading texts and reading books such as children's books was really helpful for learning new vocab and grammar.

**Scarlett Elliott** – With grammar, I would obviously annotate the structure, and then I'd try and write a bunch of different sentences using that same grammatical structure so I could just get a really holistic sort of understanding of what contexts that grammatical structure is used in, which helped a lot with speaking and writing, especially being more spontaneous with language use.

**Thomas Elibank-Murray** – How did you build up skills and speaking? Funnily enough, the way that I developed skills in speaking was by speaking my target language with someone else, someone else who was also capable of speaking my target language. It doesn't have to necessarily be a native speaker. It can be someone from your class that you can talk to in your target language and practice with. It may also be your teacher.

But by trying to find ways in which you can use your target language and speak it as often as possible, you will be able to speak more fluently, to speak better, and think on the fly a bit faster.

**Anika Popovik** – Yeah, I think what I liked best when I was in class at Serbian school was class discussion. Because Serbian was a language that we could all discuss freely in. And we all shared, I guess, a similar thought process to each other because we were from the same background of being migrants and just having this idea of togetherness.

So how did you build your skills in listening, Melissa?

**Melissa Park** – Listening, once again, I think podcasts, movies, music, listening to our high school teachers talk in the language, listening to our peers. Immersion was key for us.

**Anika Popovik** – But then again, listening to someone have a conversation is very different to listening on the actual recording for the HSC. I feel like that was a big jump for me when I got into stage 6. So, what I tended to do was I would turn off the video on movies, and I would just listen to them speak because usually, they're speaking a lot faster than a HSC recording, for example. And then the more you speak in the language, the better you get at listening. Because you're not going to have a one-sided conversation with someone. You need to listen to their answer and build upon that.

**Melissa Park** – And the other thing we mentioned was recording yourself speaking and then playing that back and then listening and thinking about how you could have changed certain phrases, or even giving that to your teacher to say like, oh, was my pronunciation correct on that one?

**Lily Parsons** – How did you build skills in reading?

**Jerry Zhang** – Well, reading, I think the most important thing about reading is knowing your vocabulary. But also, being able to use the dictionary really fast. Because for reading, all the words are in front of you. And if you don't know it, you can quickly flick through the dictionary and find it. So, I think reading, of course practicing is important, but also getting familiar with your vocabulary as well as getting familiar with the dictionary.

**Chiara Bicanic** – Reading was my favourite. So, I tried to read as much as I could. I would read a lot outside of class time, children's books, stories online.

**Anika Popovik** – Yeah, and you can use your skills from English to understand readings in languages. Because depending at which level you are, sometimes you might be asked to analyse, to evaluate. And that's what you need to do in English. So, use those skills and just translate them into another language. That is really, really helpful.

**Ilha Jung** – How do you think you improved your writing?

**Luca Butterworth** – I think, yeah, the main way to improve your writing is just to do it as much as possible, to write as much as possible. And also, to read. Because when you read different things, you can kind of see different phrases, different expressions, different kind of ways of saying things. And that makes your own writing feel much more natural. Yeah, well, how did you improve your writing?

**Ilha Jung** – For me, yeah. I'd say the same thing. They were like lists of questions, lists of topics that we could choose from and write about. And I did as much writing as I could. Yeah, and definitely get feedback from the teacher. I think that's critical.

**Luca Butterworth** – I think a big thing in staying motivated with writing is to kind of write about something that you find vaguely interesting. When you write a response to someone, like a letter, you don't have to write it as yourself. You can come up with a character or something.

**Ilha Jung** – Write in the perspective of a character.

**Luca Butterworth** – Yeah. Yeah.

**Anika Popovik** – How often did you seek feedback on your work? Feedback always helps. And whether it's constructive criticism, or just a general comment on how well you wrote a sentence, it gives people motivation. And yeah, just always apply the feedback that you get. Because there's never a time when it won't be useful. They give it to you with the best of intentions. So, do listen to it. I think that's the most important aspect of learning a language. It's feedback that you get from your teacher and from your friends.

**Melissa Park** – Yeah.

**Scarlett Elliott** – For German, I definitely needed to seek a lot more feedback, being accelerated. I... the pressure was definitely on with that. But I only had a phone call with my teacher once a week, just because I was doing rural distance ed. So, when I did eventually have that phone call, I'd definitely take the time to touch base on all the things that I wasn't really familiar with, or any questions and concerns that I had with just general language use and whatnot. But for the Japanese, it was a lot better because I obviously had access to class.

**Chiara Bicanic** – Was speaking or studying a second language for the HSC common in your school? Because I went to a regional school, there were barely any choices for languages, only one. And it wasn't a language that I wanted to do. So, when I had the opportunity to do distance education, I was a little bit concerned at first. But it turned out really great. And I had an excellent teacher.

**Melissa Park** – I studied high school in Sydney. And we had lots of options to pick a language. So, our school offered Japanese, Mandarin, German, Latin even, French. So, it was quite common for the majority of our cohort to pick usually one language as a second language to study.

**Thomas Elibank-Murray** – Was there anything you didn't like? That's a good question. That's a good question.

**Chiara Bicanic** – I didn't like listening because it was very hard because the recordings that we used in our lessons, the people spoke very, very quickly. And I just found that quite difficult, personally. But then it was also good because it gave a more accurate depiction of what life, speaking another language, would actually be like.

**Lily Parsons** – The only thing I didn't really like was with the distance learning, I didn't get to experience a lot of the class activities, especially with COVID. We were meant to learn how to salsa, and we never got to do that, which was a disappointment. So, we missed out on a lot of the cultural experiences that come with language learning. But other than that, it was a really enjoyable experience.

**Melissa Park** – Something that I wished I had more of was practising how to think on the spot, or think in an impromptu manner, in that particular language. Because that helps with sort of the problem-solving skills and then the conversational skills as well.

**Thomas Elibank-Murray** – I wish the target language was used a little bit more in the classroom. Just by maybe writing questions out in that target language, maybe using that target language a little bit more in explanation, not necessarily giving explanations entirely in that target language, but maybe saying a sentence in that target language, which explains something, and then following that up with the language of normal instruction in the classroom.

**Lily Parsons** – Did you spend a similar amount of time on language study as you did your other subjects? I think I definitely spent more time on my Spanish study than I did my other subjects, purely because I enjoyed it so much. Also, the way that all my subjects worked out, I actually had, I think, it was 10 free periods a cycle. So, I would just spend all of my free periods doing my Spanish study. And I just [pause] I loved it so much. It didn't even feel like a study.

**Jerry Zhang** – Yeah, right. And I had a similar experience as well. I spent a lot of time writing in Indonesian and listening to podcasts in Indonesian. But also, I feel like once you get quite familiar with your vocabulary, before exams, you don't really have to spend that much time memorising it. You can just quickly revise it. And you'll have more time to prepare for maybe more content-heavy subjects.

**Scarlett Elliott** – No. I didn't because I was a little bit cocky back in the day. And I thought that I was kind of good at language. So, I definitely channelled a lot of the effort that I could have put into language into other subjects like maths.

**Ilha Jung** – For me, I had lots of workload. I was taking some intense mathematics courses. So, I think a lot of my time went to math and physics. But other than that, I definitely did put in effort.

**Luca Butterworth** – Yeah, I feel like learning languages is much more slow burn. You got to put in consistent effort. And it's exhausting in one way. But then, there's no frantic rush that you can really do like for other subjects to make up for lost time.

**Chiara Bicanic** – Has learning a language had an impact on your life beyond school? It definitely has. When I went overseas with my dad earlier in the year, we got to speak with the family and use our language skills, which I wouldn't have had if I didn't do Italian in the HSC.

**Lily Parsons** – I think definitely. It's opened up a lot of opportunities for me. And it's definitely expanded my worldview.

**Jerry Zhang** – I haven't travelled much. So, I guess learning about different cultures, especially the Indonesian culture, it really opened my eyes.

**Scarlett Elliott** – Yeah, honestly, it's just sort of allowed me to become a lot more culturally aware and care about issues outside of Australia.

**Anika Popovik** – Meeting someone who doesn't understand English and being able to confidently say, I can help you out, is something that really helps in daily life. The entire feeling of having that ability after so many years of learning a language, just to have that ability to make someone's life easier is beautiful.

**Thomas Elibank-Murray** – I've gone on to continue studying my target language at university. And I hope to graduate with that language and be able to take it into my future work.

**Melissa Park** – I'd just like to say: Good luck with things from now on.

**Lily Parsons** – Good luck and enjoy.

**Ilha Jung** – Good luck everyone!

**Scarlett Elliott** – Good luck and I hope you continue to learn languages beyond the HSC and I also hope that you have fun. Good luck. Bye.

**Luca Butterworth** – I had fun.

**Ilha Jung** – Yeah, you were just the perfect model student, right?

[Laughter]

[Music playing]

[End of transcript]