



All Ears English Episode 152:

Are People Who Study or Work Abroad Smarter?

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 152: “Are People Who Study or Work Abroad Smarter?”

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel’, from Boston, USA.

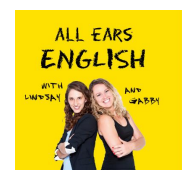
[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. Are you busy these days?

Gabby: (Ugh), I’m always busy. And I think our listeners are always busy too. That’s the kind of world we live in.

Lindsay: Yeah, that’s right. So if our listeners are busy, it would make sense for them to actually focus just on the key phrases that they need to know to speak with natives, right?

Gabby: Yeah, absolutely. That’s why we made an e-book with the 100 most common phrases in English, so that you can get the most out of your time studying English. You can find that at AllEarsEnglish.com/100. That’s the number 1-0-0.



[Instrumental]

Lindsay: In this episode, find out why engaging with a new culture in your country or abroad will help you become smarter.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. How are you?

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. Feeling good today and you?

Gabby: Awesome. Doing great.

Lindsay: It's summer time.

Gabby: It is summer time. It's beautiful day, nice and sunny.

Lindsay: I know, it's amazing.

Gabby: So, today we wanna (want to) talk a little bit about this, this article we just read and about the topic of studying or working abroad, and how according to Time Magazine it makes you smarter.

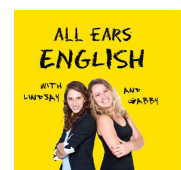
Lindsay: Ooh, I wanna (want to) be smarter.

Gabby: Yeah. I think we all wanna (want to) be smarter, right? So we're gonna (going to) discuss this a little bit, share our experience, and share a caution, a word of caution about this idea. So we have a lot to talk about. (Um), study abroad or work abroad, could be either one – the idea is you're going to an English-speaking country. Let's say that you're coming to the US, we're gonna (going to) talk about that. We're also gonna (going to) talk about what to do if you can't come to the US or an English-speaking country. How can you get these benefits, how can you become smarter without even leaving your home...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...country?

Lindsay: And these are super cool benefits. I mean...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...these are benefits that can change your life.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Right? So what are those benefits? What did Time Magazine find?

Gabby: Well I didn't get – what I got out of the article is that your thinking changes.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Your, your thinking...

Lindsay: In what way?

Gabby: Well, the way you think becomes more creative...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: ...more flexible and more complex.

Lindsay: Ooh, the term they used I think was 'integratively complex.'

Gabby: Ooh, interesting.

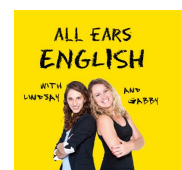
Lindsay: Whoa.

Gabby: So I think this comes from being exposed to different ways of life, different ways of doing things, different behaviors. All of a sudden when you go to another country, your normal is not normal anymore.

Lindsay: Right. It's your new normal.

Gabby: Yeah. Yeah, right. Normal is – yeah the new normal it's what you make it. (Uh, it's what your host country makes it.

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).



Gabby: So, what you experience each day will be slightly different than what you experience in your home country. You're going to eat different foods, you may wake up at a different time, you may have a different daily schedule.

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: (Uh), you may interact differently with people, greet people differently.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: (Uh), there's so many differences, (you know) transportation or, oh gosh...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...it's just so many differences

Lindsay: Yeah, and you're just forced to think about life on a new level.

Gabby: (Mm hm).

Lindsay: Right? 'Cause (because) you're examining the way you used to do it and the way that it's done in its new place.

Gabby: Absolutely.

Lindsay: And automatically, that helps you drop down into deeper levels of, of being, right...

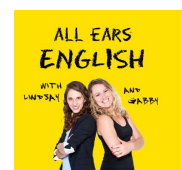
Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...of living, which is so cool.

Gabby: Right. And then, when you're faced with a question or a problem, you have different experiences that you can draw from to solve your problem, to troubleshoot. And your thinking becomes more creative because you see there are different ways in doing things.

Lindsay: Yeah, you're able to make – as Time Magazine has said, you're able to make unexpected links between different concepts.

Gabby: (Mm-hm).



Lindsay: And how can this actually help you in your life, well it's not just about having a higher IQ, right?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: It's about maybe, being able to create a business when you go back home because you've...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...seen connections between things that you didn't see before.

Gabby: Well, that was one thing that the article mentioned...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: ...is that, (uh), a higher percentage of, (uh), people who study or work abroad actually do create their own businesses. So that must come from some of their creativity, but also being inspired by things that they've seen and experienced abroad.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: (Um), so Lindsay, have you worked or studied abroad?

Lindsay: I have actually.

Gabby: Oh.

Lindsay: Thanks for asking.

Gabby: Yeah, yeah. I wanna (want to) find out about your experience and maybe I'll share mine a little bit too. (Um). can you share a little bit about, (you know), I don't know if there were any, (um), (you know), new experiences or different – did you, did you feel yourself starting to think differently? (Uh), when you...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...or when you were after you worked abroad?



Lindsay: Yeah, (I mean), I think definitely learning Spanish and traveling through Latin America. I was living in, in Buenos Aires...

Gabby: (Mm-hm).

Lindsay: ...the capital of Argentina, for about three months there...

Gabby: Wow.

Lindsay: ...and in Latin America for a year. And definitely, (I mean), learning that second language and living in this international house, where the language of the house was Spanish – (um), even though there were French people, there were Americans we had to speak Spanish – that actually allowed me to think on a deeper level and doing...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...things like learning tango, that's a new way of thinking, right?

Gabby: Nice.

Lindsay: Sure.

Gabby: Yeah...

Lindsay: Yeah.

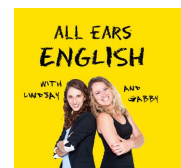
Gabby: ...that's great. (Uh), I think for me, just seeing the way that life is so different in different countries. (I mean), I've, I've traveled both in Latin America and in Asia, (uh), quite a bit and life is just so different. (Um), gosh that's, that's such a general statement, but (I mean) things like, (you know), in Japan you get on this high speed train to go to work, whereas in the Dominican Republic I would just walk to school.

Lindsay: So different.

Gabby: And, yeah.

Lindsay: Wow! Two extremes.

Gabby: Yeah, yeah right.



Lindsay: Cool.

Gabby: So, and also something interesting about the Dominican Republic that (kind of) opened my eyes about transportation, is that they have a system of (um) – it's (sort of) like a cross between a bus and a taxi where it's a, a car, (um), that just drives around on the same loop all over the city, and if you wanna (want to) get on or in, I guess on the bus in the car, (uh), you just stick out your hand. If you're anywhere along this road, (uh), the car will stop, you get in, and it will take you around this loop and you get out wherever you want. You pay, (you know), whatever the fee is.

Lindsay: Cool.

Gabby: (Um), and it's really interesting. We don't have anything like that and I (kind of) wish we did, (I mean)...

Lindsay: Maybe you should start one.

Gabby: (Uh), yeah, thanks. (I mean) there must be some legal issues with that.

Lindsay: Probably. In the US there would be.

Gabby: I think – (you know), (I mean) that's the kind of thing – that's where businesses get started right?

Lindsay: Definitely.

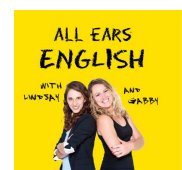
Gabby: Maybe I, I shouldn't be afraid of the, the legal aspect. I should just start this (uh)...

Lindsay: Yeah, yeah.

Gabby: ...this transportation company. Well there you go.

Lindsay: And, and one of the thing that comes to mind, (I mean), I love this quote. This is a quote from one of my Dharma teachers, they say that “In, in this world we have defined intelligence, unintelligently.”

Gabby: Whoa.



Lindsay: So, to me, this is not just about conceptual intelligence...

Gabby: (Mm).

Lindsay: ...or conceptual intelligence, for me, is not the thing that I aspire to necessarily. It's more about being able to connect, like empathy.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: It's – and so, here we, we are talking about – this article is about conceptual intelligence, how you can become conceptually more smart, but an (a-) – another benefit that I think is more important about going abroad is empathy.

Gabby: Ooh, interesting.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Yeah...

Lindsay: So when you put yourself into other people's shoes in the Dominican Republic...

Gabby: (Mm).

Lindsay: ...you know what it's like to stand out there and hail that cab or...

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: ...take that train in the morning. So that's a skill that I think could actually take you further than conceptual...

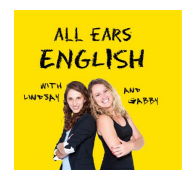
Gabby: Oh...

Lindsay: ...intelligence.

Gabby: ...right because...

Lindsay: Right?

Gabby: ...you know what life is like for people from other countries, from other...



Lindsay: Sure.

Gabby: ...situations...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...from other cultures. Absolutely.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Gabby: And just being open to different ways of doing things can give you new ideas, new business ideas...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: ...or new ideas for when you have a problem that you need to solve. (Uh), yeah it's, it's not about increasing your IQ...

Lindsay: Yeah.

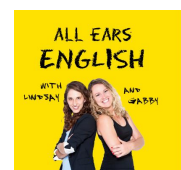
Gabby: ...as Lindsay said, it's more about being open, being aware, being accepting...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: It will change you to study abroad, but what I wanna (want to) talk about next is actually what if you cannot go abroad to study or work. What if you, (you know), maybe you're happy with your life in your country, you already have a job, you're studying, or for some other reason you can't leave your country, but you wanna (want to) learn English. How can you do that?

Lindsay: Good question.

Gabby: So I – well, I wanna (want to) share, (um), my own experience and (um) – well, I think the main idea is to figure out how to immerse yourself in the culture and the language wherever you are, and actually if we back up a minute we wanted to talk about that. That's, (you know), one of the, the, the caveats or, or word of caution...



Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Gabby: ...if you do go study or work abroad, (right), you can't just go, for example, to New York...

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: ...and then hang out with people from your country...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...and expect to have these changes.

Lindsay: [inaudible 09:20]

Gabby: It doesn't work like that. The transformation or the change happens when you put yourself in uncomfortable situations with new people and a new culture, and it can be scary but that's where change happens. Right?

Lindsay: Absolutely. So that's one thing you keep in mind. You won't get any...

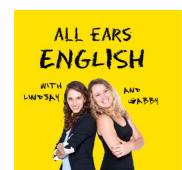
Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...of these benefits if you don't immerse yourself.

Gabby: Yeah. If I hadn't taken the local transportation in the Dominican Republic, if I had just taken private taxis...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...I would've never learned this. So – okay, so now what to do if you are in your home country and you're not planning to go study or work abroad anytime soon – you can also immerse yourself. My experience about ten years ago, I was, (uh), I was just finishing up university or, (uh), college and we, we had a program where students from Japan, from Tokyo would come to my city, which was at that time Portland, Maine. And they would stay for a month in the dormitories, which is student housing and this program required a group of locals, (uh), students from the US to host the Japanese students.



Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: So we became roommates, one American and one Japanese student. We would live together in the dorms as roommates for a month.

Lindsay: (Mm).

Gabby: Okay. That was a great way to become immersed in Japanese culture and language, without even leaving my own city. So, I was able to talk everyday with my Japanese roommate. Ten years later we're still in touch. (You know), this, this...

Lindsay: Oh cool. Cool.

Gabby: Yeah. This was a really great experience for me, and I even started learning some Japanese...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...even though at that time I wasn't really even studying Japanese seriously, I definitely started learning a lot of, (um), (you know), simple phrases.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Right.

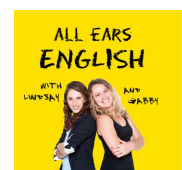
Lindsay: That must've inspired you to go to Japan later.

Gabby: Absolutely, it did.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: That was my first experience with immersion in Japanese culture and, and after that I ended up going to Japan to work a couple of times. So it was a really transformative experience and I encourage you to look for programs like that at your local university, in your local community. There may be an exchange program where students need local hosts...

Lindsay: Yeah.



Gabby: ...or maybe you can be a homestay family.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's an option. Most universities have international dorms.

Gabby: (Mm-hm), (mm-hm).

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: Or, (um), I know in Boston there's an international house that's (uh), a private place you can rent from. (Uh), what else? You could look for a group of people who, (you know), meet up to practice English language together.

Lindsay: (Mm-hm).

Gabby: And, (you know), if you, if you want other ways to immerse yourself just think about your daily activities, right?

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: What music are you listening to, what TV shows are you watching, when you wash the dishes are you talking to yourself in English?

Lindsay: Talking to yourself in a new language really helps...

Gabby: Absolutely.

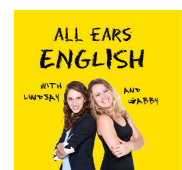
Lindsay: ...really helps.

Gabby: Absolutely. So there are a lot of ways that you can immerse yourself in the language and culture, even without leaving your home country. And, of course, if you do leave your home country there's even more opportunity but you have to push yourself.

Lindsay: For sure. Absolutely. So just keep this in mind guys and push yourself a little bit further. (You know), sometimes it feels uncomfortable, but when we're in a, in a space of discomfort that's where the growth happens.

Gabby: That's absolutely right. I completely agree.

Lindsay: Absolutely. Thank you for your example. That was a good one.



Gabby: No problem. My pleasure. All right, thanks guys.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

