

I have attended the Spanish beginner class at the International house Newcastle from the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 to the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. The class was one day a week for 2 hours from 6pm to 8pm. The teacher of the class was (Raul Poncela). It was suitable for people who have to work or study during the day, as they can finish work and attend the class at the evening. Generally, the school was fully equipped with learning materials and the availability of computers and internet for all students was really useful. In addition, the availability of a common room that allows us to interact with other international students, and learn new cultures and make new friends.

I am a Kuwaiti student lives in the UK and speaks two languages fluently, Arabic and English, I wanted to learn basic Spanish as a start; therefore the class was really useful, and suitable for my situation. Raul Poncela was the teacher for the class, and his effort, and learning techniques were really enjoyable, suitable, and motivating to teach beginners. Learning the language from a native speaker was a very beneficial and practical. The examples and exercises were refreshing and energising that made learning the language more interesting, and memorable. In addition, the class was small that allowed Raul to concentrate more on teaching as a group and individually, where he focused on our weak area and improve them. In addition to the exercises during the class, Raul also gave us home works exercises, including writing paragraph, conversation exercises, and reading that also helped in revising and reviewing every week class. He also allowed us to contact him by email during the week, to ask any questions about the material or to explain any misunderstanding subject. Raul also reviewed each previous week topic at the beginning of each class to make sure that we learned and understood the material. Raul rule in speaking only Spanish during the class, was challenging at the beginning, however it forced me to try to speak Spanish even with mistakes (where he correct them), and this allowed me to learn the accent more, and to understand the Spanish as a conversation as well. What is also interesting, whenever we came across a word that have different Spanish ways to say in different countries, Raul always explained and mention these ways to allow us to become more aware of the language. The materials that were presented by Raul were interesting and increased my knowledge to the cities of Spain, Spanish culture, Music, Art, and society and other Spanish spoken countries. In addition to the class, Raul also organised every Friday a Spanish film club, where all student from all level come together and watched and subtitled Spanish movie. This type of exercise allowed me to learn the way to pronounce the word correctly as well, and taught me to learn how to understand a conversation in more enjoyable technique. It was difficult for me as a beginner, however I think it was another appropriate way to learn the language.

Finally in addition to the learning techniques, the class atmosphere was encouraging in a way that I always looked forward to it every Monday. Raul as a teacher made the class and learning Spanish exciting, and pleasure. As for the students, we were cooperative in helping each other and correct each other without any shame, or embarrassment. Preforming the exercise in different groups was also practical and effective in learning. I made few friends as well.

It was a really nice experience, and because of the class and the teacher I would recommend the class to other people as I did learned a lot during this small period of time, and I will be carry on in continuing to learning Spanish in the future.

Haya H. AL-Balool

20<sup>th</sup> January 2013