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How to Improve Speaking English in Class

By Lawyer Luis Córdoba



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722 890 5442

www.elac.com.mx

luis.cordoba@elac.com.mx

Mexico City

Licenciado Luis Córdoba

Instructor Certificado

**Competente por Secretaría de
Educación Pública SEP Conocer,**

estandar EC0217.01

**ENGLISH LAW
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How to Improve

Speaking English in Class



Speaking is often the most intimidating part of learning English. Students may master vocabulary and grammar yet freeze when asked to speak in class. Improving spoken English takes more than knowledge, it requires practice, the right mindset, and a supportive environment. This essay explores practical strategies to make classroom speaking more effective and less stressful.



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2. Why is speaking often the most intimidating part of learning English?



Building Confidence Through Practice

The single most important factor in improving spoken English is regular practice. Language is a skill, not just a body of knowledge, and skills develop through repetition. Students who wait until they feel “ready” to speak often wait forever, because confidence comes after practice, not before it.

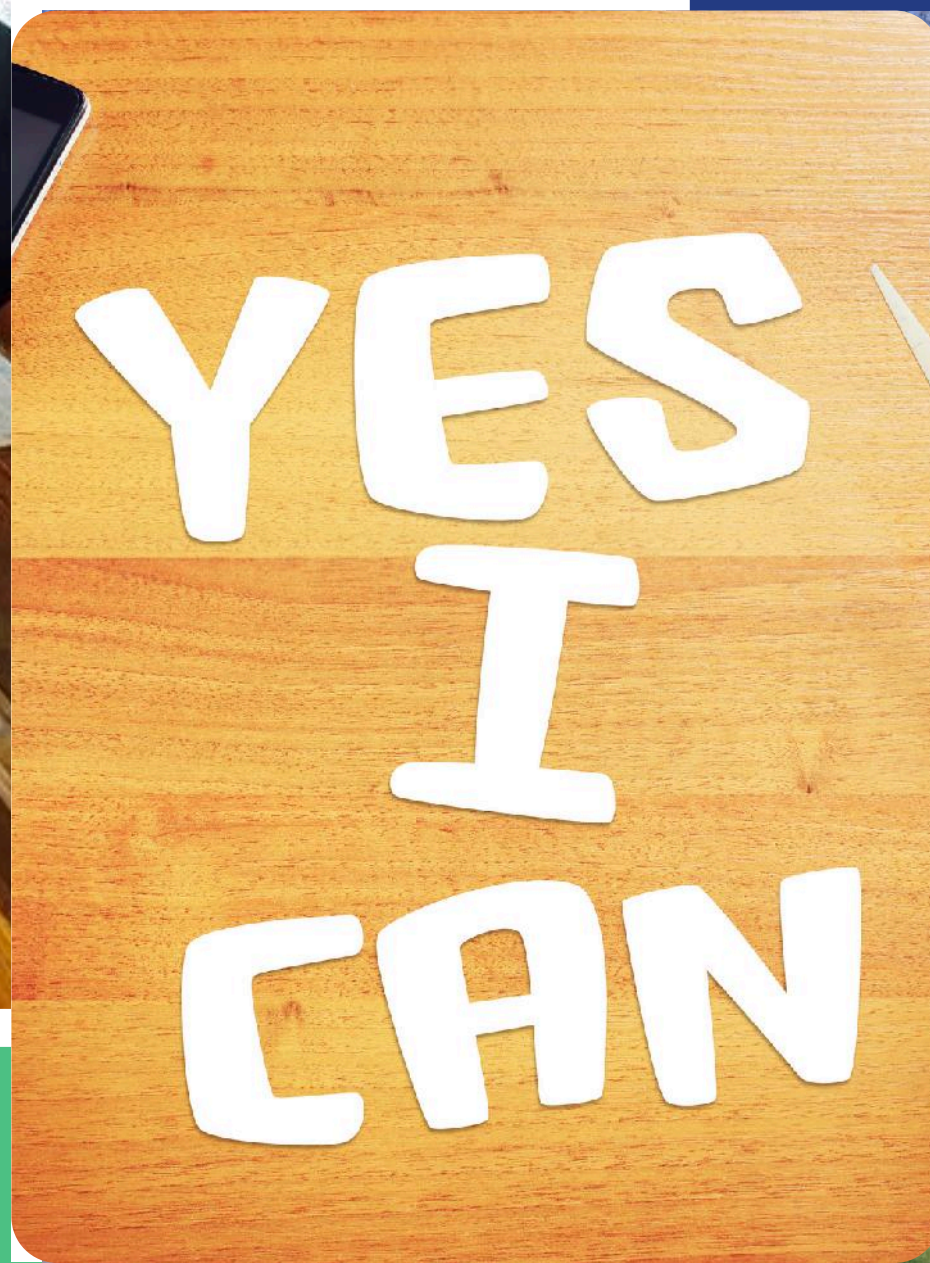


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1. According to the text, when does confidence come before practice or after practice?



2. Why is regular practice considered the single most important factor in improving spoken English?



Simple daily habits, such as answering questions in complete sentences, participating in short discussions, or reading aloud, help students become accustomed to hearing their own voice in English. Over time, this repeated exposure reduces anxiety and makes speaking feel more natural.



A photograph of a person's hands holding an open book, reading it. The book is resting on a wooden desk. In the background, there is a white mug and a blurred view of a window with greenery outside. The scene is warmly lit, suggesting a cozy indoor environment.

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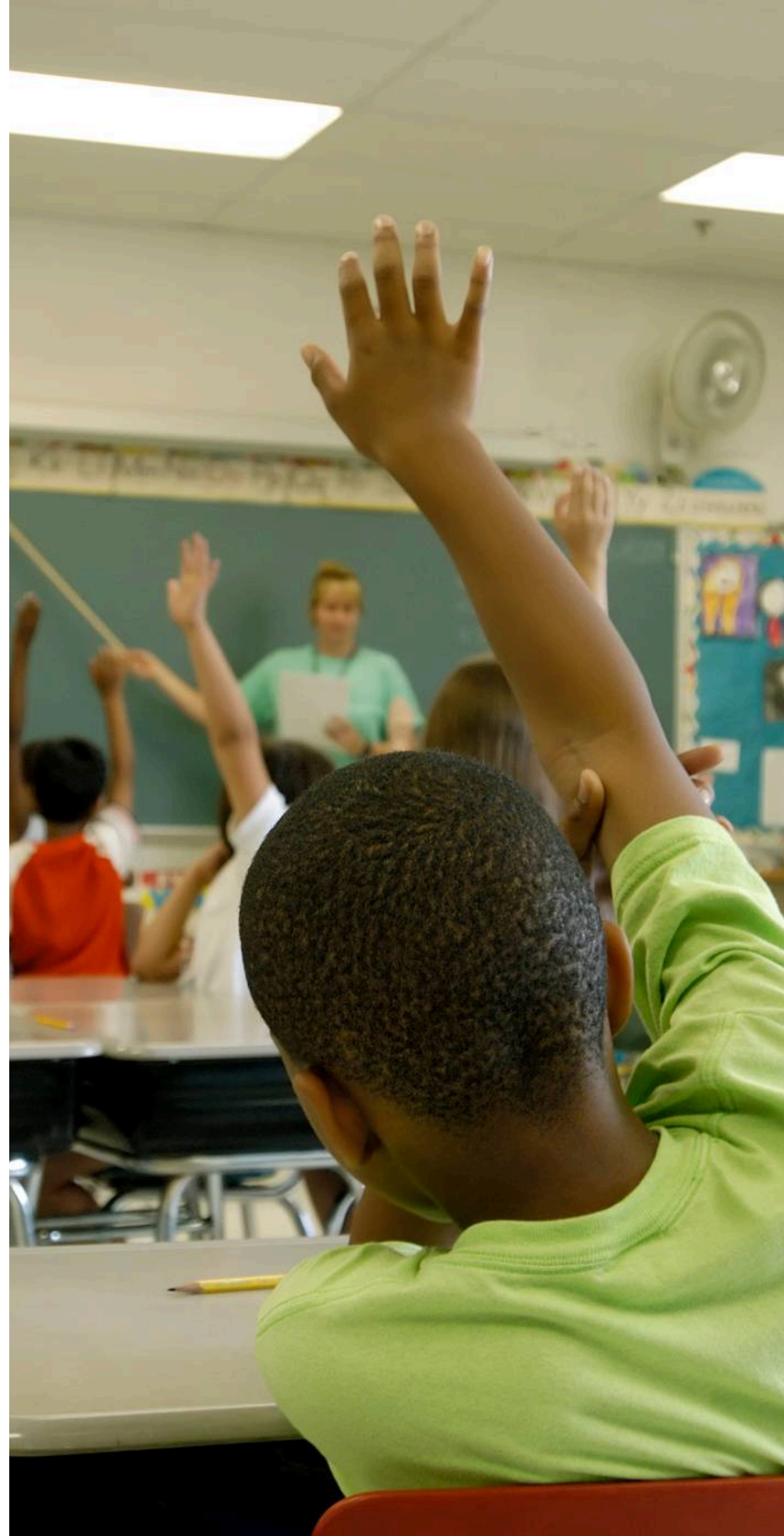
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- 1. What are three simple daily habits mentioned in the text that help students improve their speaking?**
- 2. How does repeated exposure to speaking help students over time?**

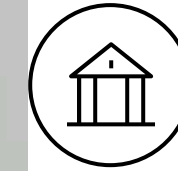
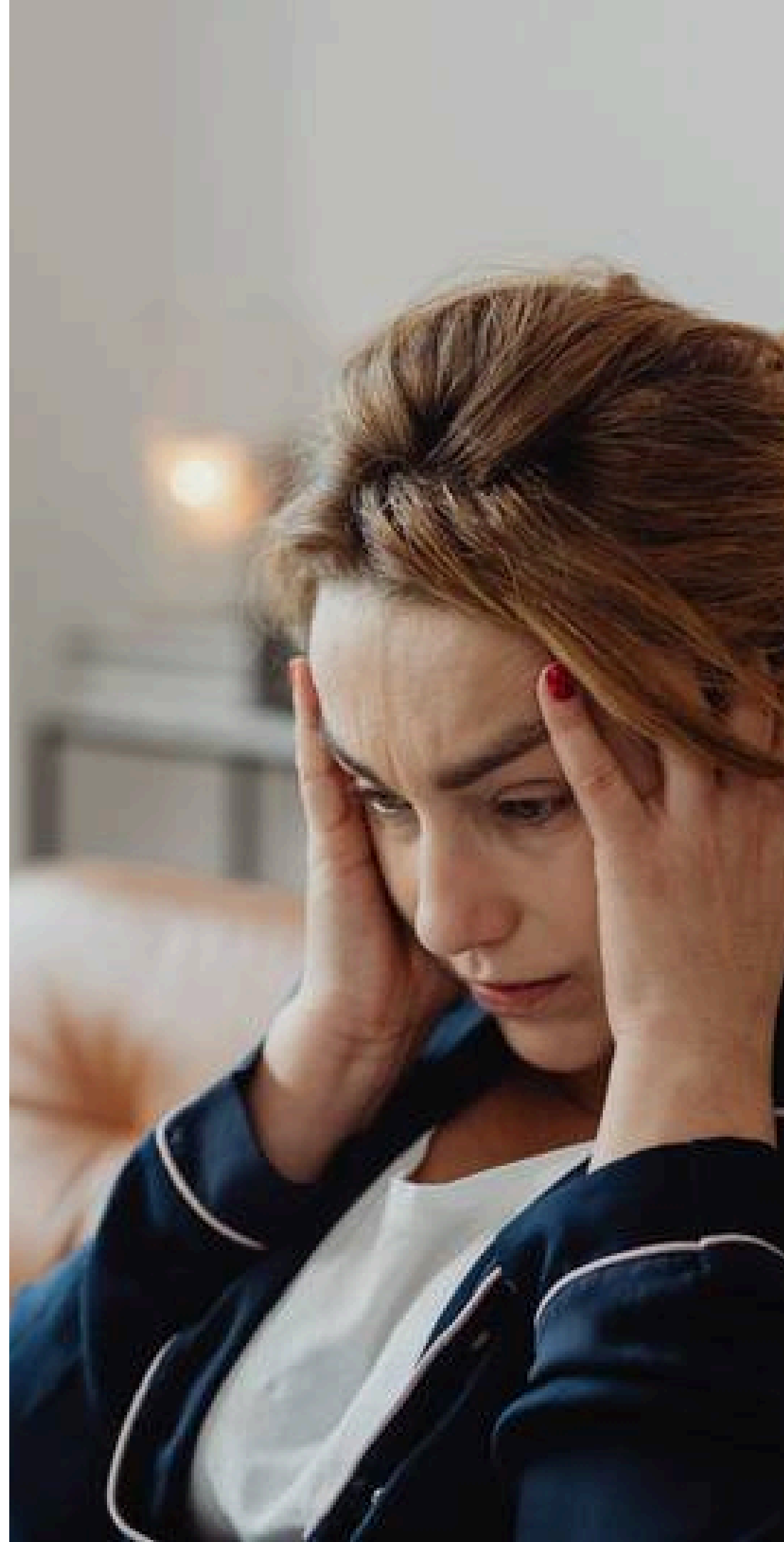
Creating a Low-Pressure Environment

Fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest barriers to speaking. Many students stay silent because they worry about being laughed at or judged. Teachers can address this by creating a classroom culture where mistakes are treated as a normal and necessary part of learning, not as failures.



Creating a Low-Pressure Environment

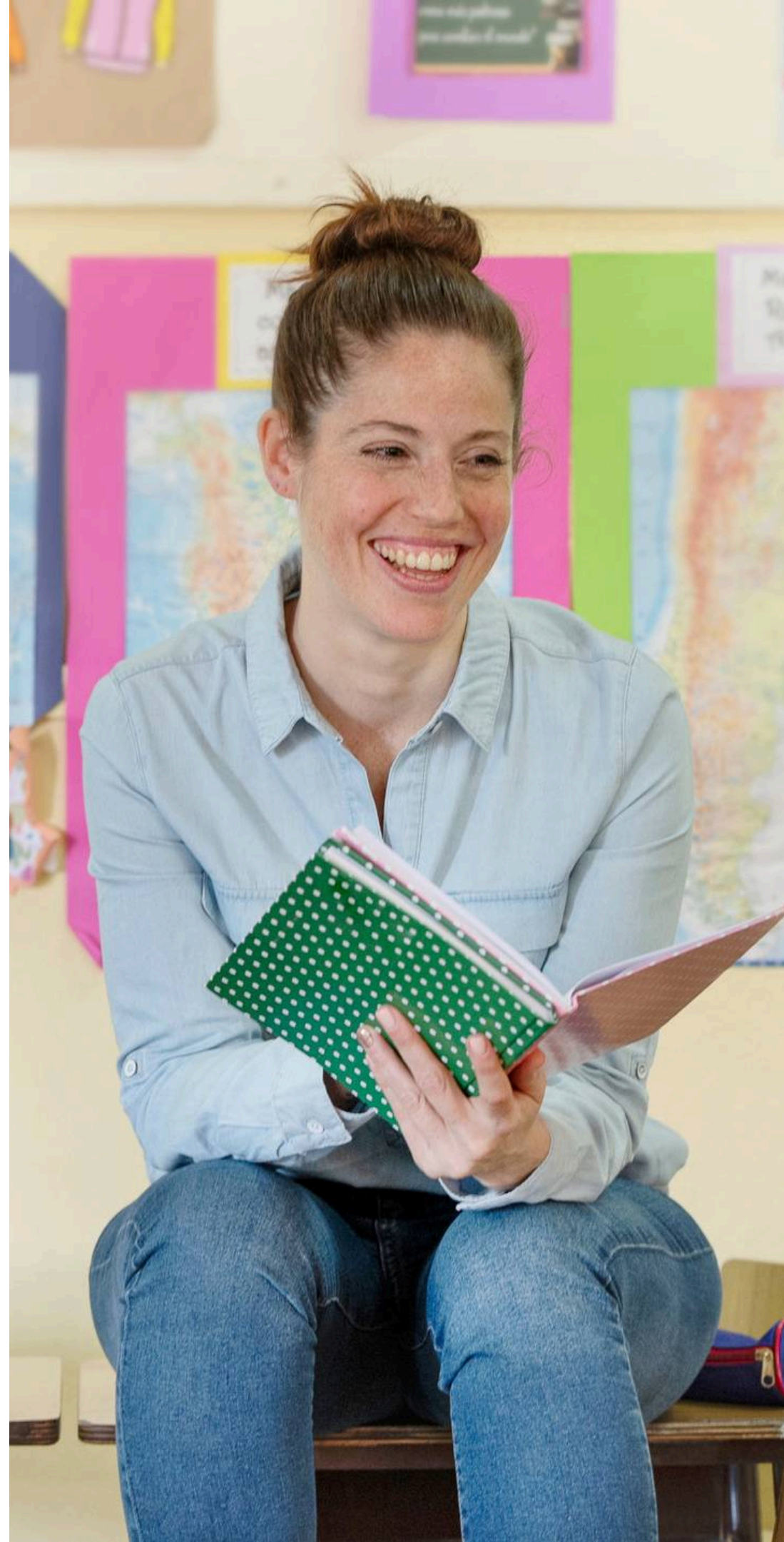
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1. Why do many students stay silent during speaking activities?



2. How can teachers help reduce students' fear of making mistakes?

Activities like pair work, small group discussions, and role-play exercises allow students to practice speaking without the pressure of addressing the entire class at once. When students feel safe, they take more risks, and taking risks is essential for language growth.



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2. Why is taking risks essential for language growth, according to the text?



Using Structured Speaking Activities

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- Debates and discussions on topics that genuinely interest students, which naturally generate motivation to speak.
- Presentations and storytelling, which build long-form speaking skills and organizational thinking.
- Role-plays and simulations, which mimic real-life conversations such as ordering food or making a complaint.

These activities give students something concrete to say, which is often the missing piece for those who understand English but don't know how to start speaking.



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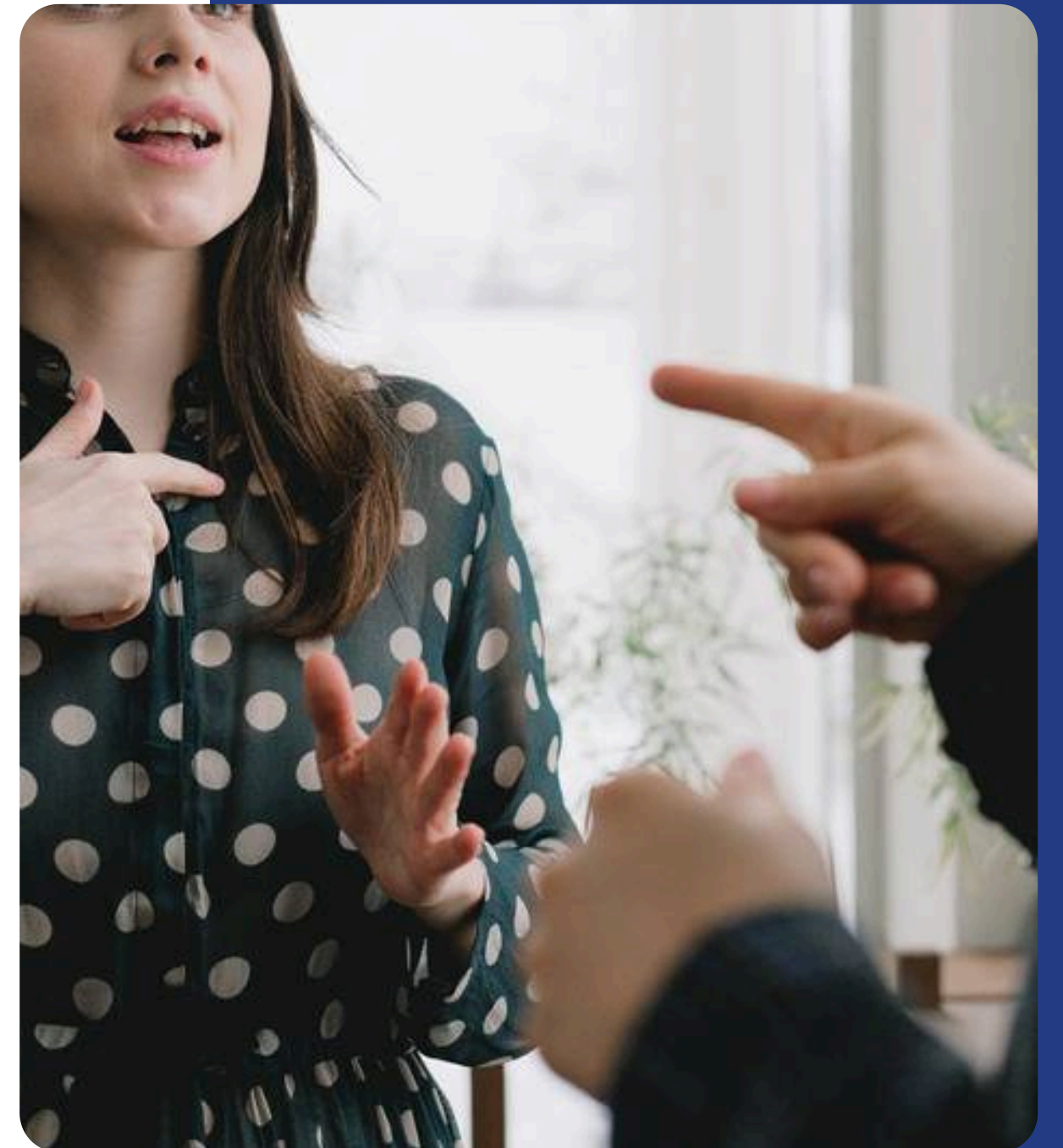
1. What are four effective structured activities mentioned in the text?

2. Why are structured activities better than unstructured "just talk" instructions, especially for beginners?



Focusing on Fluency Before Accuracy

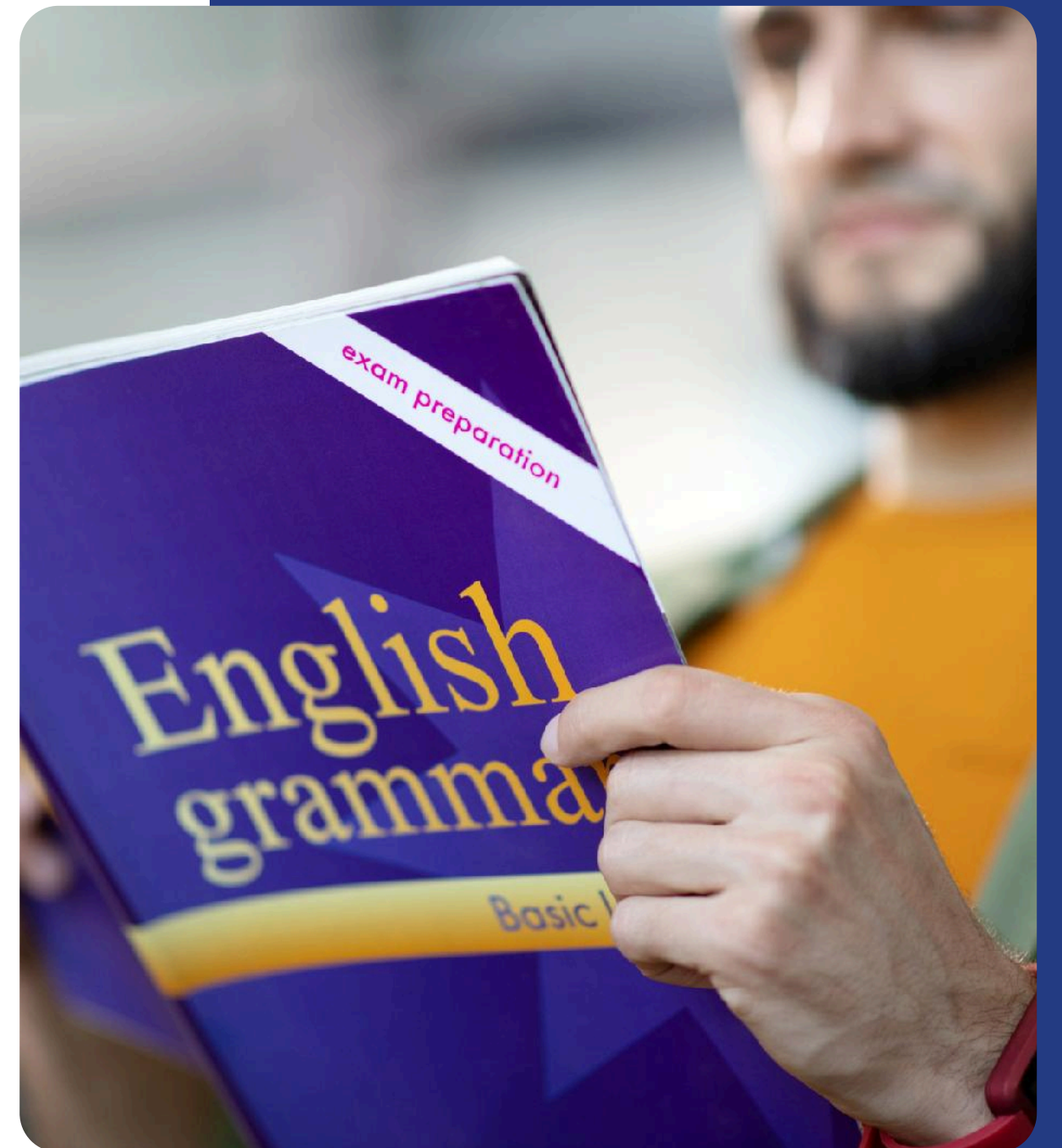
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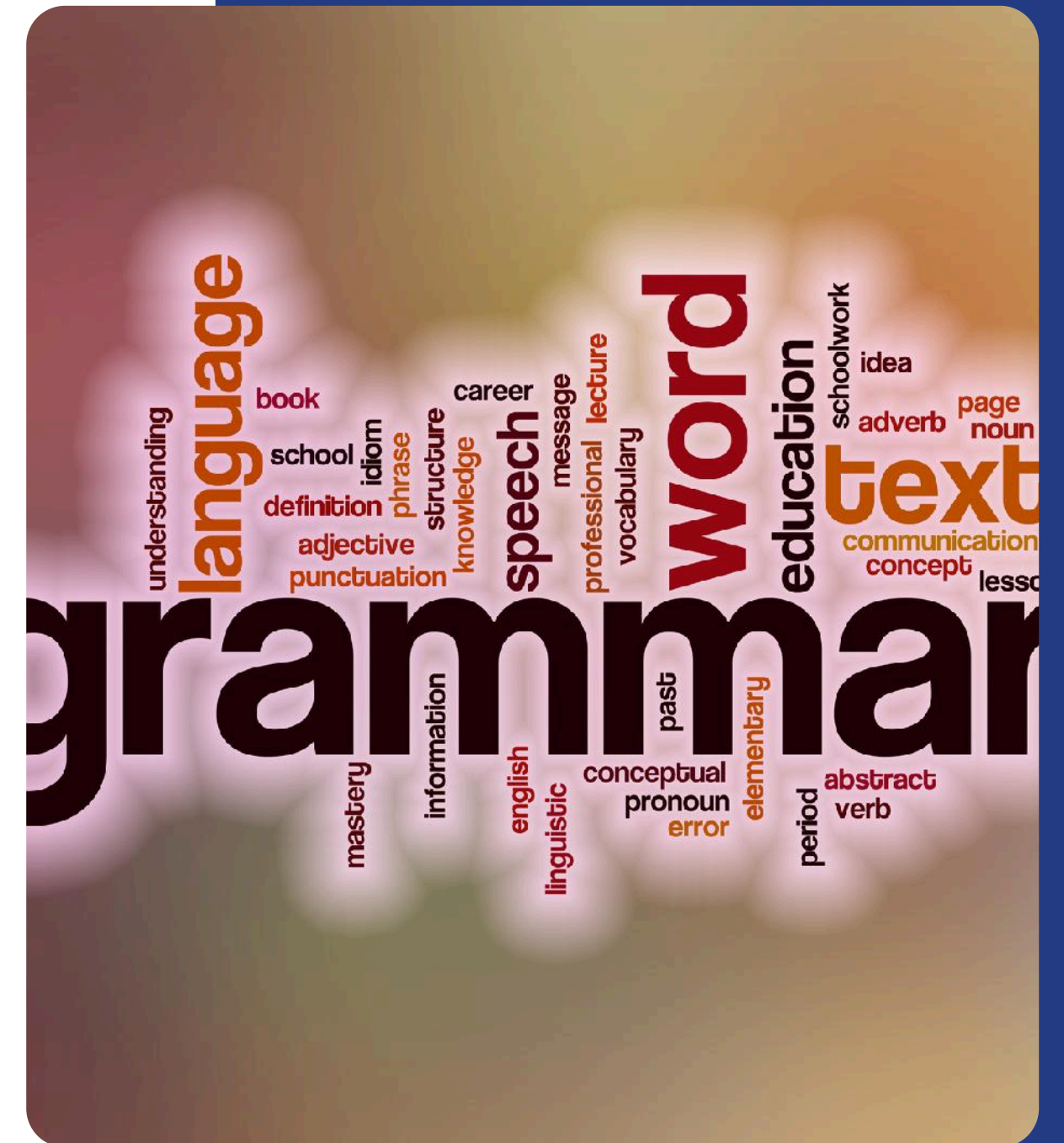
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1. Why might focusing too much on perfect grammar actually hurt your speaking progress?
2. What could students do to worry less about making grammar mistakes when they speak?



It's often better to prioritize fluency first, letting students keep talking and express their ideas, and address grammar separately, through gentle correction or follow-up exercises. This builds the confidence to communicate, which matters more than momentary grammatical perfection.





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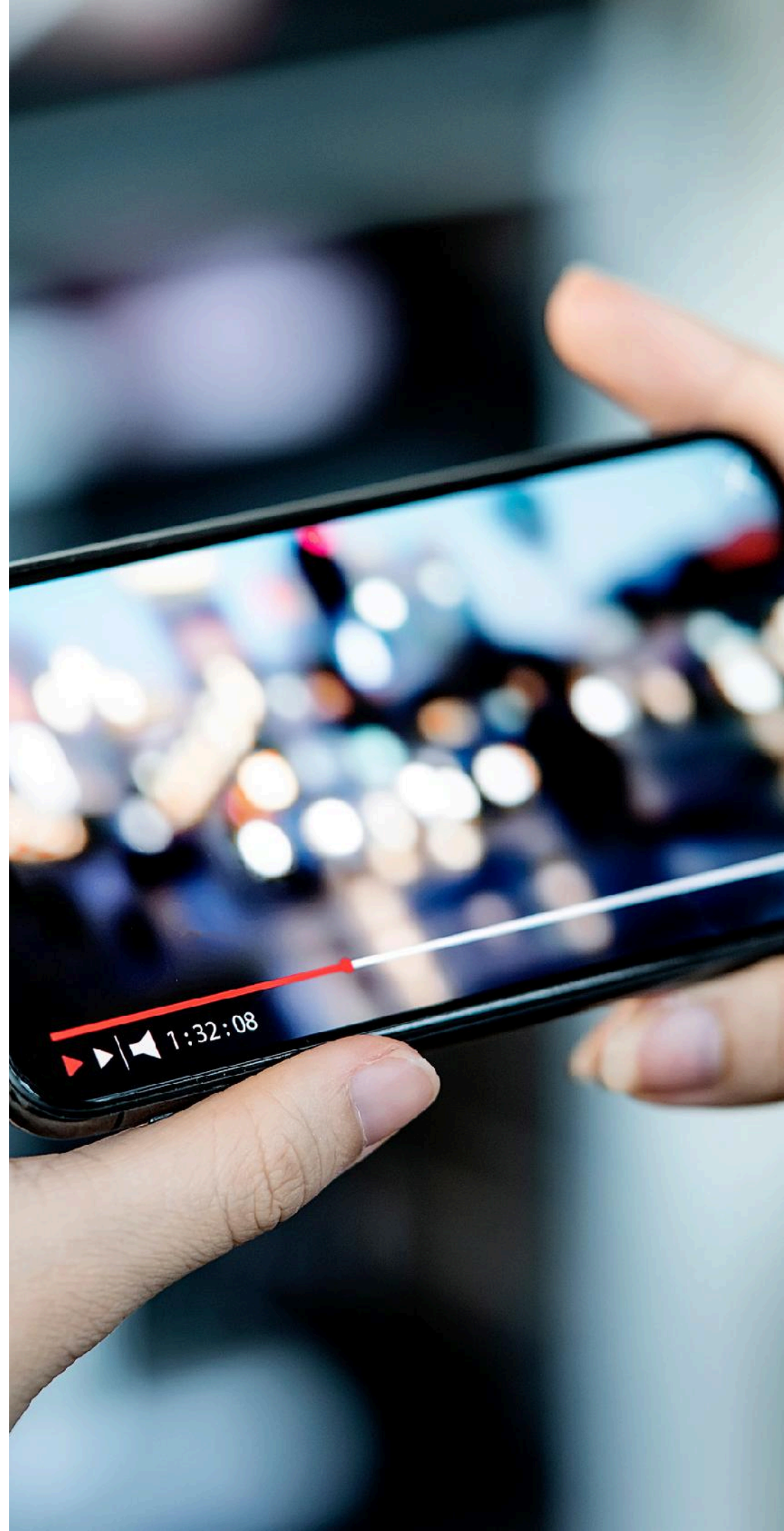
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1. What is the benefit of letting students keep talking even if they make grammar mistakes?
2. How can teachers correct grammar without interrupting a student's flow of speaking?

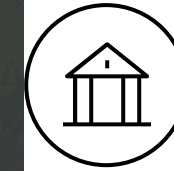
Incorporating Authentic Materials and Real-Life Contexts

Speaking practice becomes more engaging when it connects to real situations. Using authentic materials, such as short videos, songs, or everyday dialogues, exposes students to natural rhythms, intonation, and vocabulary that textbooks sometimes lack.



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1. Why might constant correction during speaking activities discourage students?



2. What is one way teachers can give feedback without interrupting or embarrassing individual students?

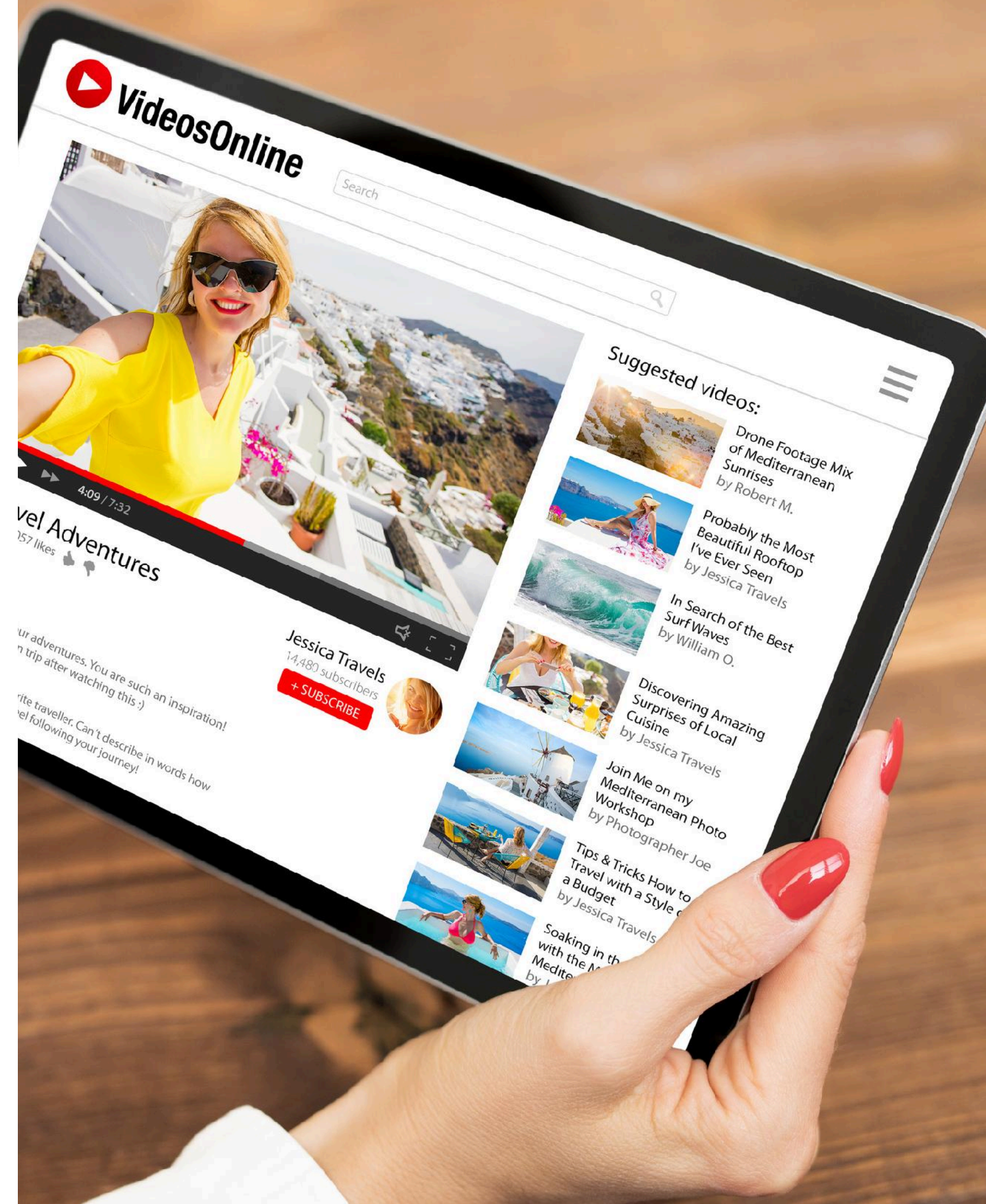
Classroom activities that simulate real-world scenarios, like job interviews or travel situations, help students see the practical value of speaking English, which in turn increases their motivation to participate.



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2. What might textbooks miss that real-life dialogues and media provide?



Providing Constructive Feedback

Feedback plays a crucial role in improvement, but the way it is delivered matters greatly. Constant interruption for correction can discourage students and break their flow of thought. Instead, teachers can note common errors during an activity and address them afterward as a group, without singling out individual students.



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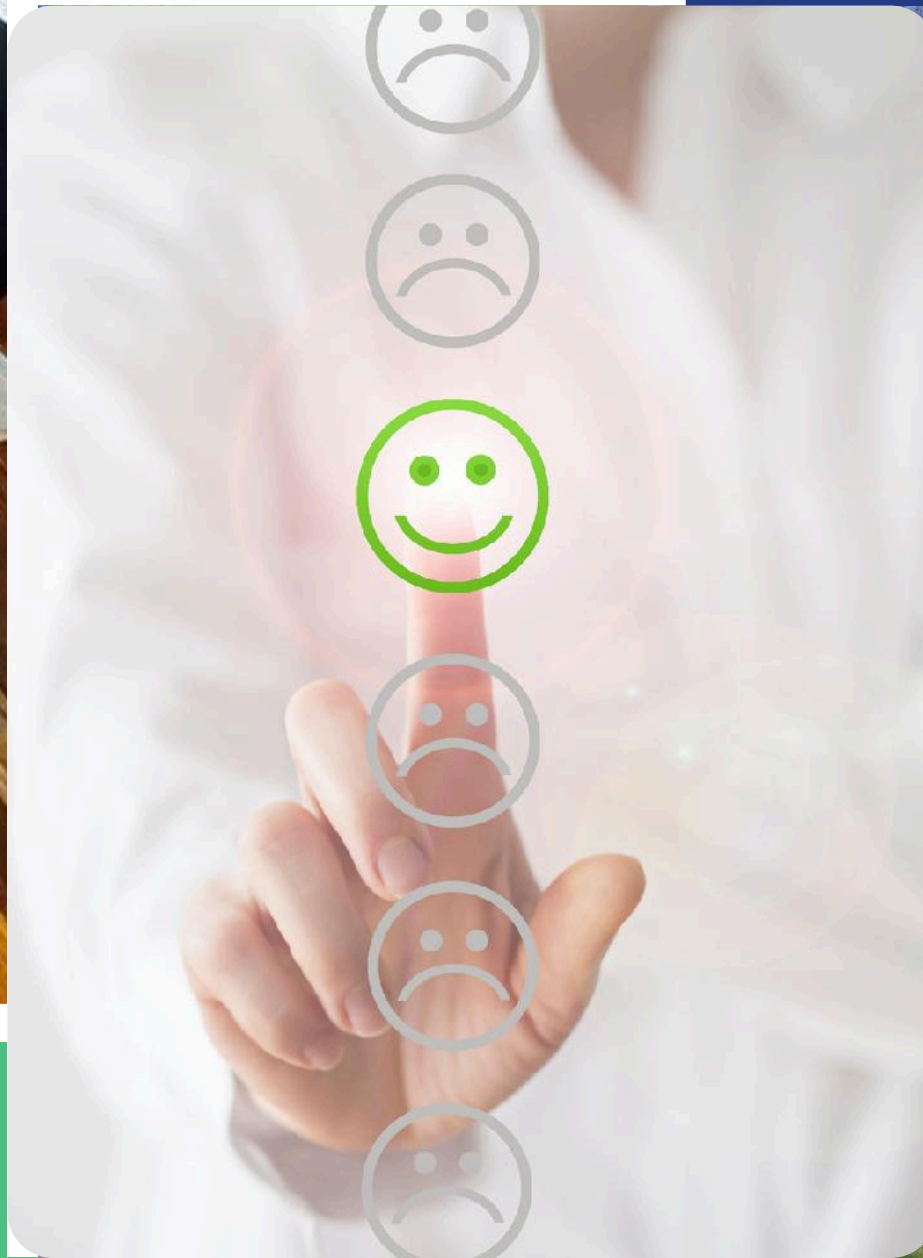
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Positive reinforcement, acknowledging what a student did well before pointing out areas for improvement, helps maintain motivation and encourages continued participation.

A close-up photograph of a person's thumb holding a small, rectangular piece of light-colored, textured paper. The paper has the words "I can do it" written on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

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do it

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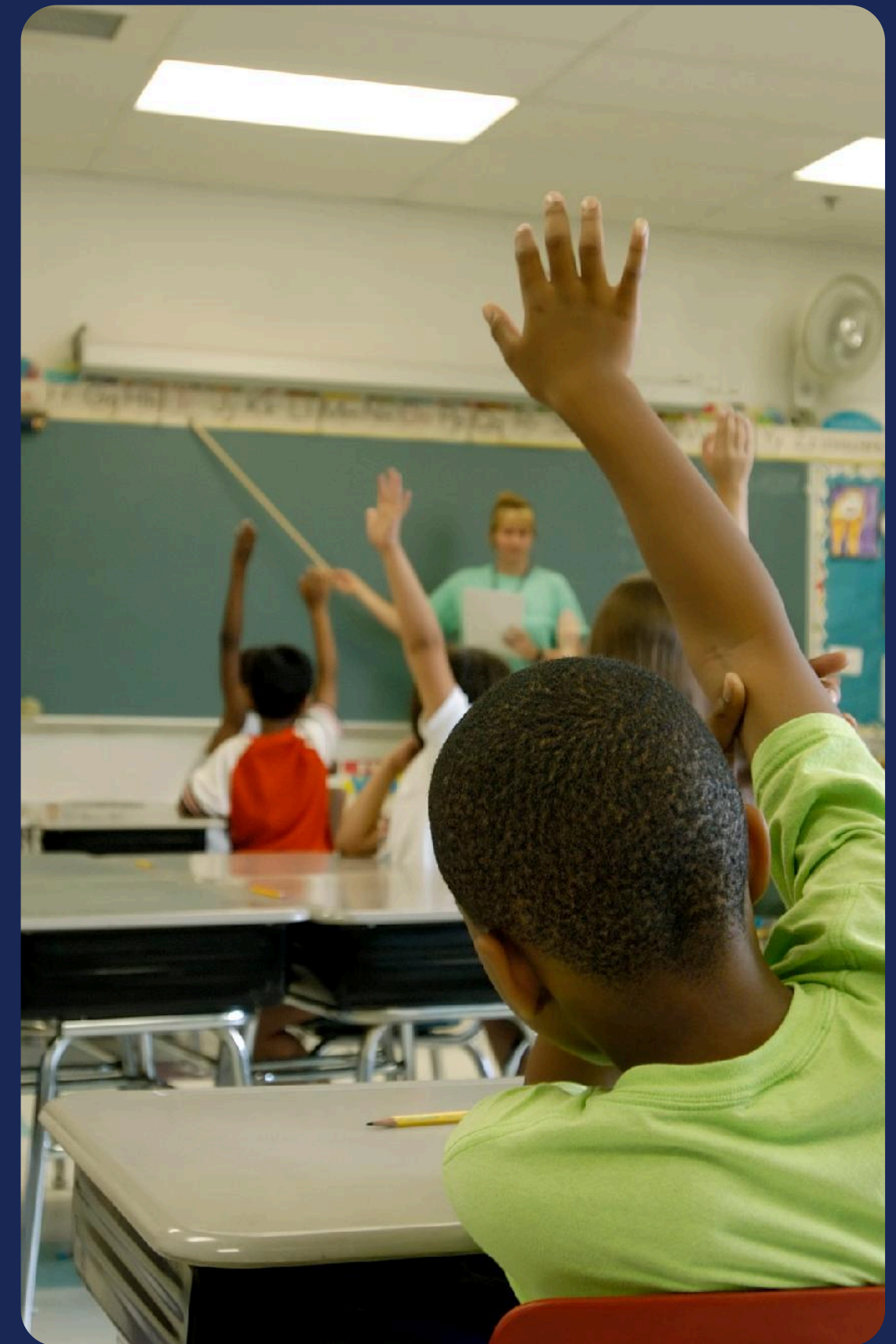
2. How can positive feedback encourage students to keep participating in speaking activities?



Encouraging Consistent Exposure Beyond the Classroom

While classroom practice is essential, speaking skills improve fastest when reinforced outside of class. Teachers can encourage students to watch English-language shows, listen to podcasts, or find conversation partners.

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1. Why is it important for students to practice speaking outside of the classroom as well?
2. What are some activities teachers can suggest for students to do outside of class to improve their speaking skills?





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1. Why can just a few minutes of daily practice make a big difference in progress?
2. How does daily practice help keep the language active in a student's mind between lessons?

Conclusion

Improving spoken English in class is not about eliminating mistakes or achieving instant fluency, it is about building consistent habits, reducing fear, and creating opportunities for authentic communication.



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NEXT

PREVIOUS



When teachers foster a supportive environment and use structured, engaging activities, and when students commit to regular practice both in and out of the classroom, speaking English becomes less of an obstacle and more of an achievable, even enjoyable, skill. Ultimately, the path to fluent speaking is paved not by perfection, but by persistence.



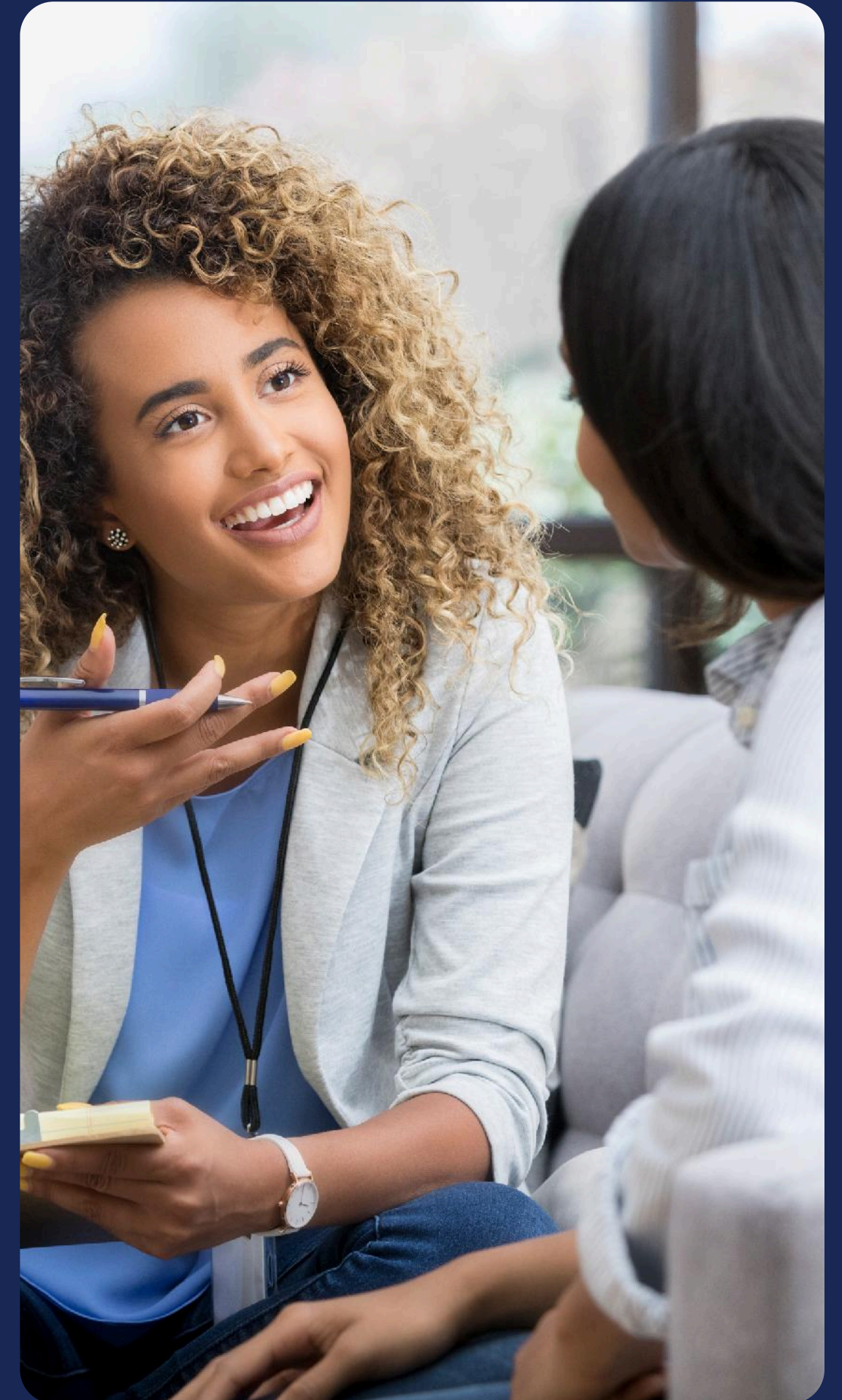
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1. What role do both teachers and students play in helping speaking English become an enjoyable skill?
2. According to the text, what is the real key to becoming a fluent speaker, perfection or persistence?





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