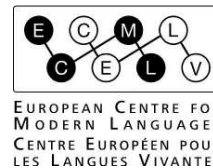


Press Release

European Centre for Modern Languages
Centre européen pour les langues vivantes

Tel. +43-316-323 554-0
Fax +43-316-323 554-4
Internet: www.ecml.at
e-mail: anna.kehl@ecml.at



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Multilinguals have a competitive edge!

'Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity' uncovers groundbreaking data

Graz, 22 October 2009 - "All in all, it is increasingly looking as if monolinguals are at a distinct disadvantage in the modern age, and that if we want to really build a strong and prosperous Europe which can compete with the newly emerging economic giants in Asia and elsewhere, then we need to ensure broad access to successful language learning" says European Centre for Modern Languages¹ project co-ordinator María Jesús Frigols Martin.

The recent study published by the European Commission² on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity identifies six main benefits of knowing more than one language. These benefits are linked to learning in general, complex thinking and creativity, mental flexibility, interpersonal and communication skills, and even a possible delay in the onset of age-related mental diminishment later in life.

Although the neurosciences are only beginning to uncover the impact of multilingualism on the brain, available evidence shows that knowledge of another language is likely to improve an individual's capacity to think. In particular, knowledge of languages can lead to superior memory function, superior performance in problem-solving that is cognitively demanding, improved ability to ignore irrelevant information, and help people to become more skilled communicators by better understanding other people's perspectives.

Languages are rapidly being recognised as a major competence-builder for an increasingly complex and information-rich world. This reality, when combined with the evidence from the study, has bearing on when and how we teach languages. Learning a language as a separate subject does not work as effectively for a broad range of young people as embedding language learning into other subjects such as maths and science – a form of education that is often called CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). CLIL is a major innovation in European education.

In this context, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) is supporting the development of a teacher training framework for multilingual CLIL education. Experts from 39 countries are meeting in Graz on 23-24 October at the ECML to launch a CLIL teacher training framework which reflects the insights from the neurosciences about the impact of languages on the brain.

[Extended press release](#)
[Study - Science Report](#)

Press contact at the ECML:

For interviews with experts please contact Anna Kehl, Tel +43 316 323 554 12,
E-mail: anna.kehl@ecml.at

¹ The European Centre for Modern Languages is a specialised unit of the Council of Europe, (Strasbourg), in Graz, Austria.

² Both the Council of Europe and the European Commission support linguistic diversity in Europe with the Council of Europe's specialised unit supporting the implementation of these language policies.