



More than words: Real Life Stories

1. What is your name and what is your course of study?

Elliott Williams, French and Spanish.

2. What languages do you speak, are interested in, or that you relate to in any way?

I speak English, Spanish and French. I am the only person in my family who speaks a second language. My mum really wanted me to take Spanish GCSE, I wasn't so keen, but a good teacher changed my attitude and showed me how exciting languages are to learn, how fun it feels when you can communicate in another language and all the opportunities other languages can bring. By the time I was choosing my A level options, taking Spanish was my main priority. I then commenced French at University, as I thought it would be the best way to motivate myself to learn another.

3. At what point in your life did you realise how important and how valuable knowing multiple languages was?

When I was about 15 years old, I started to realise how important languages are and also how much I enjoyed them. Before then, I think I did see value in them, but I didn't think it was something I was capable of achieving, and that held me back.

4. How has being able to speak more than one language helped you in your personal life?

Speaking more than one language allows me to connect with lots of people and it's made me a very patient person as I understand the difficulties of speaking in a second language. I still remember my first long interaction with someone who spoke no English in France. It was so cool because we would never have spoken had I not been learning French.

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5. How do you think knowing more than one language has helped you, or will help you, in your professional life?

I have managed to work abroad in a school. I have also done interviews in both French and Spanish too.

6. What career/s do you hope to go into in the future?

Teaching and education.

7. What has been the most impactful thing about learning a language on your life to date?

I can explore myself through languages, I almost feel like you can have different personalities in other languages. It has also improved my confidence massively and put me out of my comfort zone more times than I can count. Also, I lived abroad, which was pretty cool. It's so much fun to experience different cultures.

8. What has been the most unexpected benefit of learning languages during your life?

The number of transferrable skills I have developed and in general, the different opportunities being able to speak different languages has brought me.

9. What has been the most challenging aspect of learning languages during your life?

Learning the languages! It has never really been easy for me, but it is so worth it. I find it frustrating as some days it feels natural and then the next it may be difficult to get a word out, but it is all part of the process.

10. Are there any other languages you wish you could speak?

German! I'd like to live in Germany for a bit, so I'd love to speak the language.

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11. How has being an MFL Mentor supported your journey with languages?

It has changed my viewpoint massively and made me appreciate my language level as it is, rather than putting fluency as the end goal. I just appreciate being plurilingual and being able to communicate with lots of people now.

12. Has anyone or any one particular moment or thing, inspired you on your language learning journey?

My GCSE teacher showed me all the reasons why languages are amazing.

13. If you could give one piece of advice to students thinking about learning another language, what would it be?

Do it! And, you don't have to be amazing at it. Just enjoy it and have fun!

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