

MFL Assessment Task Stimulus 2 - Transcript

Reflecting on my language learning experience

These students have been learning Irish, Spanish since first year and doing Korean and Russian as modules in Transition Year.

Note:

Student 1 = on the left hand side of the screen

Student 2 = in the middle

Student 3 = on the right hand side of the screen

QUESTION Why do you want to learn languages?

Student 2: Language teaches you a whole new different set of skills. I think it also helps because although you mightn't use it on a daily basis but when meeting new people or going on holidays or that sort of stuff, it's really cool to be able to communicate with different people and I think it helps your communication skills, even in your first language.

QUESTION Tell me when you're managed to use a language?

Student 3: I felt excited because I'd learned that putting the work in I was able to have a conversation and do in the end. And it was a good thing to be able to finally communicate in a different language that wasn't English, so it was good.

QUESTION Have you ever used something from another language to help you?

Student 1: We have things called cognates where the word will sound like English and be spelt like English but pronounced a different way. I think it's a big help especially when you're starting out and you realise the links and you realise that you actually can figure it out and you can do it when you think about it.

Student 2: At the end of the day language learning is a skill. A lot of us start in junior infants and learn Irish and once you've learned one language it becomes easier to learn a third, a fourth, a fifth... Something I really like about the way that we learn languages is the teachers, a lot of the time, will point out "that's the same as what you learned in French or that's what you learned in Spanish". I think when those links are made, it makes it a lot easier – it's less like I'm learning a whole new language, it's more like I'm developing it more and I'm learning it in a different way, which makes it a lot easier and a lot more approachable.

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QUESTION What do you do when you're listening to something and you don't understand everything?

Student 3: If I was watching something, I'd just look to see what actions or movements they're doing so that I would be able to understand maybe what they're saying or the context of what they're doing at the time.

Student 1: Say if you're listening to a song in Spanish, you can listen for the words you know from the teacher speaking in class, from you learning them, seeing them. Then you can piece it together. You might not know everything, but you recognise the words and as well, let's say if the teacher's giving you instructions, you'll notice words that you know. You don't have to understand the whole sentence, like the small little words but you'll understand a lot of them, and you'll put it together because you know what it is

QUESTION Describe piece of feedback that helped you

Student 2: One specific bit of feedback that I always remember I got in first year that I really liked, that gave me a lot of confidence in Spanish. We had a little... it wasn't really a test, it was a class test. At the end of the exam I remembered something I learned in duo lingo the day before that was a thing a verb to get and we hadn't learned it in class yet, I'd learned it in Duo Lingo the day before that was basically a thing – the verb "to get" and we hadn't learned it in class yet, I learned it in Duo Lingo. And I was really nervous to use it because I hadn't properly learned the tenses, but I went and I gave it a go. I think that gave me a lot of confidence, just to give it a go. Even if I didn't know it perfectly it makes more sense rather than leaving it blank..."

QUESTION: What advice would you give to students who are learning languages?

Student 1: Don't stop trying, keep at it and don't be scared to make mistakes because that's the worst thing – you'll never learn if you don't make mistakes.

Student 2: I'd say Little and often is very important. If you say 'I want to do Spanish two hours a week', it's not going to be productive if you sit down on a Sunday and try to do two hours. I think little and often is really important. So let's say you even do ten minutes a day, it's manageable, it's easy and it'll be very easily become a habit

QUESTION - If you could choose a new language to learn, what would it be and why?

Student 3: I'd like to learn German as my friend speaks German, so I'd just like to be able to have a chat with him or if I moved somewhere like to Germany to work or something, I'd like to be able to use it.

Ed: Thank you to our three students for this interview