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7. REASONS **WHY**

Your Child *Should* be Bilingual



“Learning a language should be

A lifestyle

And not (just) a school subject”

Nathalie Danon

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WHY...



Many parents have noble aspirations for their children to become fluent in another language and will have their own motivations – and we have heard them all at the VICI Language Academy in Newbury.

For example:

- ✓ You are bilingual (or have always aspired to be) and want the same for your children
- ✓ You have a home abroad...
- ✓ You know there are benefits to learning another language
- ✓ You want the very best opportunities for your children
- ✓ You struggled to learn a language at school and want better for your children
- ✓ You are worried your children are not thriving with languages at school

Whatever your motivation the simple fact is **children will flourish in so many aspects of their lives and the sooner they begin their bilingual journey the easier it is and the faster and greater the results will be.**

It should be said that we are lucky that many of our local schools are truly excellent at teaching other languages and only fall down when you realise children are taught to pass an exam, rather than love the language, understand its culture and yearn to use their bilingual skills.

So thank you for downloading *'Seven Reasons Why Your Child Should Be Bilingual'* in which we take a professional look at some powerful reasons why learning another language will benefit your children and whatever your motivation, I hope you find this e-book helpful.

There is also an **exciting offer** at the end of this book if you have imagined your child becoming bilingual and are ready to take the next step with the VICI Language Academy.

Until next time,

Nathalie Danon

Bilingual kids **ARE SMARTER**

#1

There are no two ways about it; kids who can speak more than one language are hands down smarter than their monolingual peers.

Simply explained the challenge of learning another language means the brain works in a different way. This allows the child to improve their intellectual capacity and develop a greater analytical mind.

There have been plenty of studies to prove this. One of the most recent in the United States saw scientists put two groups of children – half monolingual and the other half bilingual - together to complete a series of general IQ tests.

Now as you probably know IQ does not change much during your life so the results were predictable, both sets of children scored the same range of results. So no discernible difference.

Powerful evidence and such approaches have proven time and again that bilingual children have got a **much greater analytical mind.**



Aneta, our Language Co-ordinator and German & Polish Coach LOVES data, surveys & analysis...!

Another study showed bilingual children were better at solving mathematical problems and results showed they were more creative in their problem solving than their monolingual peers.

A suggested explanation is that bilinguals have increased metalinguistic awareness, which creates a form of thinking that is more open and objective, resulting in increased awareness and flexibility.

It should also be noted that the added intellectual capacity is something all bilingual children experience regardless of where they started from. Simply put, when you can speak another language you are smarter in so many ways – *and who wouldn't want that for their children?*

"To have another language is to possess a second soul"
Charlemagne



Bilingual kids **REMEMBER**

#2

This is certainly true with children who learn a second or third language and the requirement to remember new words and language rules means **the brain works hard and becomes fitter** so bilingual children have *'enhanced working memory'* which spills out into other parts of their life and is part of the reason they perform better in exams across the curriculum.

Most recently this was proven by a study in Canada where in Quebec many people speak French and English; they discovered that bilingual people were able to recall lists, names and directions better than their monolingual counterparts.

This enhanced working memory has another quite distinctive proven fact, that bilingual children remember facts much better and are far more able to understand the difference between fact and fiction from a very early age (which can be quite tricky for children).

Ever heard it said that the brain is the biggest muscle?

Well, at VICI we are all about languages rather than biology so we will not challenge the literal accuracy of that metaphor, however the principle is true that the more you exercise the brain, the better it performs!

"I think when she'd been learning for about six months she was speaking in French and she was saying "Bonjour" in her sleep. I remember telling Nathalie the next morning: "She's now dreaming in French!"

*Jess Eaton,
Mum of Orlaith, 4*



Bilingual kids ARE HEALTHIER


#3

At the VICI Language Academy we have students of all ages learning 11 different languages and among the retired learners you hear time and time again that they are motivated to master another tongue because it is proven to deter dementia.

The most recent reputable study suggests that being bilingual can **push dementia away by up to four and a half years**, which is quite a lot. It showed that for monolingual adults, the mean age for the initial signs of dementia is 71.4. Whereas for adults speaking two or more languages, the mean age was 75.5. Studies considered factors such as education level, income level, gender, and physical health, but the results were consistent and prove the benefits of being bilingual stretch into old age.

More research is being carried out and it certainly is not a great leap to say that children who learn another language at a young age will enjoy health benefits in old age if adults are already achieving that benefit.

As an aside we have multiple generations for families learning at the VICI Language Academy which presumably means the grandchildren will be able to converse with their grandparents for much longer and potentially in another language!



Valérie, our Head of French thinks that is THE most valuable asset...



Bilingual kids ARE CONFIDENT

#4

When parents of prospective students take a tour of the VICI Language Academy, here in the heart of Newbury, they almost always comment on **the confidence of the children they see learning the different languages we offer.**

We see the difference learning a language can make to self-esteem and it boosts the confidence of every single student who learns with us.

This is no better evidence than the stories we hear from families who have just returned from holiday in France or other countries with their children and have witnessed first time how their fluency in French means they will happily chat with the locals and order in restaurants.

That confidence with a new language also transfers to all aspects of their life, from school to home and through to other activities. ***Social surroundings in particular become easy to deal with when you can speak a second language*** – even if you are not actually speaking it!

Speaking another language gives you an edge and truly boosts your confidence and for many parents becomes the main benefit of their children becoming bilingual.



"It's not who you are that holds you back, it's who you think you're not."

Hanoch McCarty

Bilingual kids ARE OPEN MINDED #5



"Josie is young, she is nine now - nearly 10, and we want her to learn somewhere she finds fun. We didn't want her saying 'oh no, I've got to learn French' and she doesn't! She is actually in the GCSE class and enjoys it. She has taken on everything that they have thrown at her!"

Maxine Owen, Josie's Mum

Certainly this is true for children born in to bilingual families as they will very often have access to different cultures, may visit other countries and get to enjoy the 'foreign' food from a young age and as such are more culturally aware of the differences between nations.

But even when they aren't born in a bilingual family, but come to VICI for example, they interact with people from all different walks of life and teachers talk to them about the culture of different countries, as well as the language as this is an excellent way to bring the language alive.

All children, but particularly the younger students at VICI will simply accept the different cultures they learn about and embrace difference in others without hesitation or prejudice, they will also appreciate these differences and are more sensitive than their monolingual counterparts.

So that's proven that these children will grow up with a greater open mind and would be far more sensitive to others.

More than just open-minded, bilingual kids are also sensitive to others thanks to the way they are exposed to other cultures and different ways of life.

Surely everyone wants that kind of skill set for their children?

Bilingual kids OWN THE FUTURE

#6

Almost daily we see evidence that the world is getting smaller and the global marketplace is ever becoming a powerful reality and guess what?

Speaking English no longer offers a competitive advantage.

The reason for kids becoming bilingual also reflects this crucial point - that speaking English no longer hold a competitive advantage. It is so widely spoken that in itself it does not differentiate you, whereas speaking another language will. **In the future those who are bilingual will thrive.**

You could argue if English is spoken so widely then why do you need another language?

A fair question, but stop and consider the wealth of business professionals and companies that approach our sister organisation VICI Language Dynamics – all want to speak another language or need help recruiting someone who does.

As widely spoken as English is, ***there is a growing demand for bilingual speakers.***

Not surprising when you consider it is estimated that £48 billion is being lost each year in the UK because we can't do business with a lot of countries throughout the world, because we can't speak the language.

"Recruitment companies at the moment are really, REALLY looking for candidates with language skills and they are willing to pay A LOT more and that demand is only going to grow as your children grow up..."

April Brown, All Seasons Recruit



Bilingual kids **EARN MORE**

#7



Our Manager,
Nicolas says:

Check out the
article in the **TIMES**
Money Magazine...

"Want to Boost
Your Salary? Try
Learning
languages"

(June 2014)

While many of the children who thrive at the VICI Language Academy will flatter their native speaking teachers with aspiration to teach language when they are older, the reality is very different.

Of course some of those with a second language will become teachers or interpreters or pursue careers that use their second language, the truth is the majority of *bilingual kids will not use their second language professionally... but will still earn more than monolingual peers.*

Much in the way a university degree will often demonstrate a level of learning rather than provide applicable skills in the workplace, when you can speak another language it sets you apart and as such survey after survey shows that bilingual speakers earn more than their counterparts – often for doing a similar job.

Again and again employers report that they will prefer to use bilingual candidates even if they do not need them to use their second language.

How would you like to give your children that edge?

Obviously if you have a job that actually uses your second language you will be earning a salary commensurate with your additional skill and besides, your monolingual peers cannot even complete the application form!



REASON WHY #7½



Meet: Max, 8
Bilingual in French & English

Okay, we said seven reasons and we've given you the **educational, health, wealth and happiness reasons** why a child should be bilingual, however I'd also like to offer you another viewpoint – that of the bilingual child and who better to ask than one of my sons!

So writing this e-book I asked Max why he likes being bilingual – he is perhaps not surprisingly fluent in French and naturally answered this question *'en Français'*, so allow me to translate:



"Well, it's really good because if, like me you to France every year, you can really speak to people." and I said "Yeah, that's great, anything else?" and he thought for a moment before offering a Gallic shrug and said: "No, not really. - It's just too cool to be bilingual!"

He nailed it though for overwhelmingly the children who become bilingual at the VICI Language Academy in Newbury are just like other children, with an exceptional, life changing talent; **they take in becoming bilingual in their stride as they learn, just as they will seize opportunities in their lives that would never have been possible if they had not learnt a second language**

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(and monolingual parents!)**



Max & Sacha

...se disputent!

Nathalie Danon-Kerr
Illustrated by Viv Harries

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