

Language Ambassadors

Profile



MARIA WEBER

Occupation: Student Advisor

Company: Bell Educational Trust

Degree/University: BA International Communication and Translation, Hildesheim University (Germany); MA Intercultural Communication, Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge

Languages spoken (native and learned): German (native), English, Spanish, and seven years of Latin...

“I’ve always experienced language learning as fun. At school filling in the gaps for your grammar exercise might not always be the most fulfilling experience (especially when there are cases nobody can tell you why the correct solution does not agree with the rules you just learned, languages are not necessarily always logical...). However, when you then get to the point where you can actually communicate in another language and find your way around in another country it is the most rewarding feeling.”

“My language studies have influenced the way my life has gone in a significant way and opened up incredible opportunities for me that I wouldn’t have had without them. I did an exchange to Ireland when I was in school, later I spent months in the amazing South Africa and went to Murcia in Spain for an exchange semester. All of these experiences did not only help me improve my language skills, but also let me meet so many interesting people and gain an insight into the countries’ cultures that you only get when you are in the country and speak the language.

“I’ve now got a job at a language school helping primarily German and Spanish speaking students come to Britain to have an experience similar to those ones that I myself benefitted from so much. It really couldn’t be any better!”

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DR. TANIA ORAM

Occupation: Head of PR and Ethics

Company: James Oram

Degree/University: Dentistry and Doctor medicinae dentaria, Humboldt University Berlin and Justus Liebig University Giessen

Languages spoken (native and learned): German (native), English (proficient), Farsi (advanced) and French (basic). I also studied 5 years Latin in school.

“Were you today to apply for a job in any European Institution it will nearly always say: Excellent knowledge of written and spoken English and French; knowledge of other European Union languages would be an advantage.

“On 19th January 2011 the European Parliament passed legislation which gives European patients from 2013 the choice to go to any doctor in any country within the European Union. The NHS is the world’s third biggest employer so imagine how big a European Health Service could be.

“This is just one of many examples. Do you really want to miss such opportunities?”

“I went to an international school and found it useful and fun to get a message, which was not meant to be for the teacher’s ears, across to other multilingual pupils by simply switching languages.

“Although I completed my thesis at a German university, I had to read many publications that were in different languages. I wouldn’t have a doctorate today without my language skills.

“Later when there were limited career opportunities in one country of the EU it gave me the option to move to another country.

“Today, speaking languages gives me a great sense of security when I travel. I know that should I get lost in whichever country in the world I am in, being multilingual makes it more likely that I have a common language with those people I have to speak to.”

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TONY MORGAN

Occupation: University Lecturer

Degree/University: BA Hons Spanish & French, Oxford University

Languages spoken (native and learned):
English, Spanish and French

“Learning languages takes you out of yourself and your limited world. It opens up other parts of the world which would otherwise remain closed.”

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“When I was a teenager in Liverpool I was an enthusiastic cyclist, and was a big fan of the Tour de France. In those days, the only way to get information about the Tour (in pre-TV days) was to wait for the special editions of Paris-Match (in sepia and colour) which arrived at Lime Street Station. To follow the excitement and romance of the Tour, you just had to be able to read French!

“Going on to specialise in Spanish led me to live and work in Spain and Mexico, and brought me friends, experiences and insights I would never otherwise have had.

“I research and report on the Spanish employment market for British and American companies who want to invest there, and through this I have made many friends and contacts who share their views and interests with me.”

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ZANETA MACKO

Occupation: Support Adviser

Company: Natural England (government office) and Cambridgeshire Police Authority (government office)

Degree/University: BA(Hons) English Language Teaching and English as a Foreign Language; MA in Applied Linguistics (TESOL), both Anglia Ruskin University

Languages spoken (native and learned): Polish (native), English (fluent), Spanish (beginner), Italian (beginner)

“Learning a new language is like moving into a new town, it is like learning a new way to think or a new way to sing and it takes time before you will be able to settle and feel comfortable using it.

“It takes time to understand different ways of saying stuff and to be understood by others.

“If you do not know the language that is spoken in that new town, you will be excluded from the culture.

“Knowing even a few phrases of the language makes a huge difference and definitely enhances your travel experience.”

“At the age of 15 I knew who I wanted to be. I knew that travelling and discovering different cultures was something that I wanted to dedicate my future to. I guess, I decided to study English, Italian and Spanish for the same reason: interest in the culture, future career and later on simply for the mind training.

“Two of my best friends are linguists. Sylwia is based in Paris and speaks French fluently and Anita lives in New York and works for a luxury hotel in the heart of New York. I live in Cambridge and together with my English speaking boyfriend I am planning to move to South Korea to teach English, however this may change as we keep receiving numerous interesting offers of employment.

“Learning foreign languages helps you to become a more open-minded person and also access your imagination. Studying new words is a great training for your mind as when learning new words the brain makes associations with what you already know, the established knowledge. Learning foreign languages has helped my career. I became an English Language Teacher and Polish – English interpreter and if everything goes well I may be living in South Korea next year...”

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WILLIAM EDWARD WATERFIELD

Occupation: Student; retired from Royal Air Force

Degree/University: MA ILC from University of Westminster

Languages spoken (native and learned):
Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Polish and German

“I really enjoy learning languages and have found a real sense of achievement when communicating with native speakers in their own languages. It is hard work but I feel it helps in so many other ways in the learning process. Language learning calls for discipline, perseverance and commitment and all of these qualities help an individual throughout his life.”

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“My own introduction to language learning was not a successful one. Indeed I was unceremoniously thrown out of the French class when I was 12 for not having any aptitude for learning languages! Looking back I was a disruptive child and the best option was for me to leave. I left school after underachieving for the entire time I was there and after a year at work I joined the Royal Air Force. I took some language aptitude tests and was selected to undergo Russian language training. I successfully passed this course and then in the years that followed I completed further courses in Polish, Spanish and Arabic. My knowledge of languages has seen me in many surprising roles, interpreting for a Defence Attaché in Chile and interpreting and translating for UN Inspection teams in Iraq.”