

05/10/14

Dear Department of Education

I have 10 years experience of learning languages and am currently working for a consulting firm. Here is my suggestion as to how to improve language take-up in this country:

In brief, the idea is that the Leaving Certificate will have extra oral language examinations available which students can take to earn extra points (10-20 as an initial consideration).

This is based on the assumption that someone who earns 450 points who can speak 3 foreign languages is more employable than someone with no extra languages. The points system should reflect this.

Under the suggestion I have mentioned students will be able to boost their points total by taking up extra languages. This would mean that for example, students who pick 7 non-linguistic languages could do extra hours outside of class so that they could prepare themselves for an extra oral examination at the end of the year to boost their points tally (which would be technically an 8th exam). This could potentially range from 10-20 extra points.

Likewise, someone already studying one language in school could take up another language to try out for the oral examination. Giving students such an incentive would mean that learning the language would take place out of normal school hours. This would mean that language learning would not be restricted to the resources available at the school (i.e. if they only offer French & German classes).

It could also serve as a way of parents/family members passing down any languages they possess so that their children/siblings could earn extra points.

This could be continued to third level, where universities could offer certain credits/incentives for language courses, no matter what the discipline being studied.

If there is anything unclear about my proposal or if you would like to talk to be more, please feel free to contact me.

Yours Faithfully
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