Benefits of Multilingualism

There are multiple benefits to being multilingual, multiliterate, and multicultural in today’s global society. Knowing more than one language from birth, acquiring a new language through school, or learning languages later in life, can provide tangible advantages in many areas. From delaying cognitive signs of aging, to earning college credits, and getting a better job offer, multilingualism is an asset that can benefit English learners as well as native English speakers in a variety of ways.

- **COGNITIVE**
  - Executive function
    - Attentional control
    - Task switching (mental flexibility)
  - May delay the onset of age-related cognitive decline and the onset of illnesses such as Alzheimer’s disease
  - Increased intellectual flexibility

- **SOCIOCULTURAL**
  - Understanding of other world cultures
  - Increased empathy development
  - Enhanced connections to heritage cultures
  - Promotes global awareness, reduced discrimination, improved self-esteem, and stronger cross-group relationships

- **EDUCATIONAL**
  - Comparable or higher academic achievement of students in dual language programs as compared to students in English-only programs
  - Improved learning outcomes in various subjects
  - Bilingualism associated with increased high school graduation rates among children of immigrants
  - Leads to increased levels of creativity
  - Promotes higher levels of abstract thought and reasoning
  - Engenders enhanced metalinguistic awareness to support the learning of languages in the future

- **ECONOMIC**
  - Greater job opportunities in multiple public and private sectors
  - Greater business opportunities
  - Bilingualism raises occupational status and earning potential
  - Language skills are in high demand for employment with the Federal Government

- **Critical Languages**
  - Arabic • Hausa • Kurdish
  - Mandarin • Pashto • Farsi
  - Russian • Somali • Tajik
  - Turkish • Urdu
References:


EHLS Professional English New Opportunities Website. Ehlsprogram.org


