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Luke - MOMD Advanced German

A video interview with a Chemical Engineering student on the study of German as a Module Outside the Main Discipline.

Title **Luke - MOMD Advanced German at the Centre for Modern Languages (/facilities/cml/videos/index.aspx)**
Duration 7:04 mins

I'm studying Advanced German MOMD* alongside my Chemical Engineering course in my second year and I decided to do German before I arrived at any University just because I thought it would be a great addition to my degree. I knew that most degrees offered MOMDs in a lot of different Universities when I was applying, so I was always looking for that option to do German, and I'm simply doing it because I think it adds more to my degree than anything else could possibly add, aside from all the core material that I've got to study.

I started German MOMD last year with an AS in German from my school years and there were quite a few of us that had AS German and quite a few people that didn't have any A level at all, as they came from speaking in German countries for a year, or they'd been learning German abroad, so there was quite a wide range of backgrounds

anyway, which meant that nothing was really noticeable, there was nothing particularly obviously different between the A level students and the AS level students, and the people who had been living in Austria for a year. We all came in to it with quite a similar ability. Most of the differences were reflected in how much effort people put in and how much time they spent on the actual work rather than what they came in with at the beginning. Above anything else everyone still had quite a long summer off without doing any German so we were all quite rusty.

To succeed in this kind of way of learning you have to match it with a similar sort of week by week effort which you don't have to do in other courses. I feel that in order to really get the most out of a CML course you have to do the homework that they set. They help you, the teachers help you by giving you extra work to do if you want it, and depending on how much of that you do, or how much you go and seek out yourself, will reflect in how well you do in the end.

The German MOMD that I'm doing is completely different to what I learn in my Engineering degree. It's a completely different way of learning and a completely different content as you'd expect, but in terms of how we learn it's more about small classes and little discussions, progressive learning as opposed to trying to learn in like Chemical Engineering, trying to learn everything sitting in lectures and reading over notes. You never really know where you're at until you get to revision whereas in German MOMD you have continuous assessments which aren't worth a great deal which is good because you want to be marked on your German at the end when you're better. But nevertheless they are there to encourage you to learn week after week progressively, because I know that if I didn't have things to work towards, these continuous assessments to work towards, I might slack off during the term-time, so the classes are good, and engineered towards this model, the whole thing is set up so that people can learn progressively throughout the year, rather than basically sitting back and then waiting and learning it all through Easter.

I'm in my second year studying Advanced German MOMD and the second year and the first year differ quite a lot, largely because of the classes. The class sizes are a lot smaller in the second year. There's quite a lot of different abilities in the first year and as we are all coming in from having breaks in German or not, or having done different levels of German so that's the main difference between the two in terms of the atmosphere but also the content is geared differently. In the first year it's more foundational, we'd have a separate grammar class every week so that we can make sure our grammar is up to scratch, but in the second year we're expected to have our grammar largely sussed and if we don't then there's plenty of resources to go away and learn independently. The second year is geared more towards practice, I feel that you're given plenty of opportunities to practise reading, writing, listening, speaking, as opposed to learning sentences' structure and things like that, because we're doing Advanced German in our second year, we're supposed to be able to have effectively finished with the learning and be more practising and engaging more with the language and the culture so that we can perfect what we've learnt, because most of us have been studying German for seven or eight years so the first year is just getting everyone up to that level which is appropriate for us to then carry on with the practising in these kinds of settings, so the lessons involve a lot more speaking practise than they would do in the first year and a lot less strict grammar lessons because we can still do grammar lessons, we can still ask for them and if we request them they normally give them to us at the end of the week or something. In order to progress in a language I notice that you really need to spend time actually doing it, actually writing it and reading it and speaking it and that's what the course provides.

I feel like my language MOMD skills that I gained from this course will definitely take me further in my professional life than I would normally get without doing it simply because I will have this advantage over anyone else who is studying the same degree as me. There are other options obviously for doing an MOMD and I have looked at these and at other people doing them, but I can't see anything that comes near to the transferable skills that you get from studying a language. Employers love them, the skills you get, they actually love the fact that you have the ability to speak in a different language, however competently. If you come in to your degree at one level and leave at a better level you're definitely more ready for the workplace. That's a fact. The other MOMDs on offer may not give you the same sort of edge, particularly if they're within your own home department. What stands out? I want to stand out and that's why I'm doing it and I think that's why it will help me later on in life.

I would definitely recommend students to take a language MOMD for the reasons I've already outlined. You get such an advantage from doing it I think because other people won't have got that skill that you will then take to the workplace when you've finished. Not only that but I enjoy it as a break from my normal degree, it's definitely a different way of learning which I enjoy, it breaks up the monotony perhaps of doing similar things week in week out, and it's a more effective way of socialising with people while still talking about learning, because we're in a group of people, all focussed on discussion in a different language, nevertheless that's also getting to know people in a different way and I'm enjoying that too.

*MOMD – Undergraduate students can sometimes take language courses as a 'module outside the main discipline' if they have sufficient credits and their home departments allow it.

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