

The Double Whammy of Uselessness

While promoting my new book, I've repeatedly argued that foreign language requirements in U.S. schools are absurd and should be abolished. For two distinct reasons.

Reason #1: Americans almost never use their knowledge of foreign languages (unless they speak it in the home).

Reason #2: Americans almost never learn to speak a foreign language very well in school, even though a two- or even three-year high school requirement is standard.

This double whammy is easily generalized. If studying X for years yields minimal knowledge, *and* you wouldn't use X even if you knew it, you could defend X as an elective. But how could anyone defend X as a requirement?

Yet plenty of people I've met can and do stand by such requirements. Indeed, they think *I'm* the crazy one.