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## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

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### **CURRENT NEWS 14 SEPTEMBER 2010**

#### **Rosetta Stone Survey Finds Americans Fear Lack of Multilingual Skills May Cost Them High-Paying U.S. Jobs**

In a May 2010 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "An issue that affects our ability to compete and collaborate on the world stage (is) the need to increase the foreign-language fluency and cultural awareness of all our students." According to a national survey conducted by Wakefield Research and commissioned by Rosetta Stone Inc. (**RST 19.71**, +0.77, +4.07%), a leading provider of technology-based language-learning solutions, Americans share Secretary Duncan's concern. More than half (58 percent) of Americans fear that high-paying U.S. jobs will be filled by workers from abroad in the next two decades because of the country's lack of foreign-language skills.

#### **Raising the Bar**

Leah Gilman's "job" this summer was to learn Arabic. A multimedia journalism major at the University of Texas at Austin, she took Arabic from 9:30 to 3:30 every day, for 10 weeks. She took time out for an interview during her lunch break midway through week 10. "Aside from one day out of the week, my whole days are spent on Arabic," said Gilman, a junior who started Arabic the fall of her sophomore year. "From when I get up in the morning to when I go to bed on the weekdays I'm completely immersed in Arabic, and at least one day on the weekend is spent completely at the coffee shop doing my homework. They give you about 10 hours of homework during the weekend and then it's about four during the weekdays."

#### **Immersion Program Teaches Students Everything in Spanish**

Research has shown the best time to teach a foreign language is within a child's first 10 years of life. That's because the brain is still flexible, making the ability to retain information easier. Covenant Christian School, located on Fir Road in Mishawaka, is giving [parents](#) the choice to send their child through school on a regular school plan or through their new immersion program. The immersion program teaches children all subjects in Spanish, and begins in pre-kindergarten. "I think it's a great program and it's good for them to know and respect diversity," says immersion teacher, Migdalia Tamlin.

#### **The culture of speech**

Does a person who grows up speaking Tamil or Occitan or Quechua see the world differently than a native English speaker? Or, as linguist Guy Deutscher puts it: "Does our mother tongue influence the way we think?" Among those who study language, this question has generated centuries of debate. Aristotle, for one, believed we all share concepts — say, the color blue — whose names change according to culture. But, as Deutscher notes in "Through the Language Glass," linguists have observed that concepts and categories do vary by language; for example, ancient Japanese used one word, *ao*, to cover the blue-green spectrum, while English employs two. So do we all see the same colors? More broadly, do distinctive languages reflect distinctive cognition rather than overlying universal ways of thinking?

#### **OU student uses scholarship to travel, learn 5th language**

For Ohio University junior Michael Lupsa, new languages and cultures are more than just classroom lessons. Lupsa's interest in languages brought him to spend this summer in Jordan studying Arabic as part of the Critical Language Scholarship Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State. The department awarded 575 scholarships in 13 languages this year, including Lupsa's choice of Arabic, according to the department's website. Lupsa learned modern standard Arabic in school before the program but arrived to find that most natives spoke different dialects. "Without knowing the dialect, I couldn't get around," he said. "It was like knowing two Arabic languages - the one I learned in class, and

the one everyone else spoke." The program involved a 12-hour class schedule with a three-hour break - equal to about 20 credit hours - and about four to five hours of homework, all in Arabic. But his lessons were still taught in modern standard Arabic. Luckily, Lupsa made friends with non-English-speaking people.

### **Gathang dictionary hoped to lead a revival of the language**

In the 1960s, when a young Swedish linguist, Nils Holmer, was researching Australian Aboriginal languages he was lucky enough to meet Biripi elder Eddie Lobban, the last known fully fluent speaker of Taree's local native tongue. Quite a few other Biripi people were, and still are, conversant in single words and phrases but the language was largely unspoken by the time the academic and the elder sat down to record it. Today in Purfleet, a very special event is taking place with the launch of a dictionary of the Gathang language, which comprises the dialects of a large group of Aboriginal people from Port Stephens to Port Macquarie, including Biripi and Worimi.

### **Superintendent wants to grade Georgia high schools on overall performance**

Georgia soon could join other states that grade schools on their overall performance. An idea floated last week by state Superintendent Brad Bryant at a Georgia Board of Education meeting opened the door for discussion on the strategy, which would be piloted in high schools first. Bryant said a performance index could be used to give schools a numerical grade that looks beyond traditional accountability measures of success to [SAT](#) scores and other factors such as whether students completed two or more years of a foreign language, took Advanced Placement courses and how they fared on AP exams.

## **PREVIOUS NEWS**

### **Exclusive: Whistleblower Claims Many U.S. Interpreters Can't Speak Afghan Languages**

More than one quarter of the translators working alongside American soldiers in Afghanistan failed language proficiency exams but were sent onto the battlefield anyway, according to a former employee of the company that holds contracts worth up to \$1.4 billion to supply interpreters to the U.S. Army. "I determined that someone -- and I didn't know [who] at that time -- was changing the grades from blanks or zeros to passing grades," said Paul Funk, who used to oversee the screening of Afghan linguists for the Columbus, Ohio-based contractor, Mission Essential Personnel. "Many who failed were marked as being passed."

### **DOD, DHS earn failing grades in foreign language**

Do you speak Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto or Urdu? No? Neither do an alarmingly high percentage of troops deployed to the Middle East and southwest Asia, home to languages that local residents but few U.S. warfighters speak. Far too few, according to the Government Accountability Office, which recently released a report that underscores the woeful foreign-language capabilities of the Defense and Homeland Security departments.

### **How do you say "we have no idea what we're doing" in Pushtu?**

[A DEPRESSING tale](#) from ABC News's investigative unit: a former employee of a contractor that provides translators for America's army in Afghanistan says that the forces are being had by fraudulently incompetent workers. The contractor, Mission Essential Personnel, strongly denies the accusations and says that the whistleblower is trying to influence an ongoing court case. The whistleblower claims that translators are hiring stand-ins to pass over-the-phone exams in Pushtu, the main language of the Taliban and Afghanistan's south. (Dari, a variety of Persian, is also spoken in Afghanistan and mentioned in the ABC report, but the real critical need is for Pushtu.) The follow-up written exams are similarly described as "bull". The motivation is money: over \$200,000 a year for a "skilled" interpreter.

### **California arts educators bristle over new bill**

A bill that seeks to reduce dropout rates by changing high school graduation requirements statewide has arts education advocates bristling. Assembly Bill 2446 would allow students to pick from a myriad of

arts and career technical education or vocational classes instead of requiring them to take yearlong classes in arts or a foreign language. "We feel it's bad educational policy as it sets one education area against another," said Joe Laddon, policy director of the California Arts Education Alliance. Approved by the Legislature, the bill is on the desk of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has until Sept. 30 to sign or veto it.

### [Alaska Native Language Center linguist helps document dialects](#)

Village elders have worked with researchers for years to document the slate of native languages found across the state. Many of those languages, including Lower Tanana, are extremely endangered. Only a handful of native speakers of Lower Tanana, often referred to as Tanana, are still alive. Different dialects of the language, one of 11 in the Alaska Athabascan family, were originally spoken across the Chena River drainage, from Minto and Nenana east toward Salcha, the Goodpaster River and Big Delta.

### [Lost In Translation](#)

(ABC)...Brian Ross

"World News Investigates" segment on allegations that the private contractor Mission Essential Personnel is faking the competence of some translators in Afghanistan. U.S. soldiers there rely heavily on such private translators, who can earn as much as \$210,000 a year.

### [Virtual high school opens 'doors' to learning](#)

The Defense Department's newest high school is devoid of walls or windows, but yet has opened its "doors" this year to students throughout the world. The DOD Education Activity's virtual high school is an accredited distance learning program for military students, whether they're geographically separated, transitioning between schools or just dealing with a scheduling conflict. "It's a wonderful opportunity to close gaps and enhance students' educational experience in a 21st century environment," said Marilee Fitzgerald, the activity's acting director. "I think it opens up possibilities for learning that we have yet to understand, yet to explore." The virtual school offers students 48 online courses in a wide range of disciplinary areas, including foreign language, math, science, social studies, language arts and physical education, as well as 15 advanced placement courses.

### [Language classes shift to conversation, culture](#)

Sioux Falls public schools are tweaking their curriculum to give students a greater understanding of the world's people and help them communicate in real-life situations. In foreign language classes, the focus is turning to conversational instruction, rather than memorizing vocabulary words. Teachers also are being asked to spend more time describing the way of life in foreign countries, not only teaching the language. "A big part of the language is understanding culture," assistant superintendent Fred Aderhold said.

### [Kids' Study Habit Myths Debunked](#)

As 68.5 million students start their studies this year, according to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#), scientists now say that the common wisdom on information-retention may not be the most successful. **MYTH: FOCUS ON ONE SKILL:** If you are studying a foreign language, for example, you may want to study vocabulary, read and speak the language, all within one sitting. Participating in multi-modal learning (reading, speaking, listening) leaves a deeper impression of the material on the brain.

### [Warning over university's rethink of its modern languages provision](#)

Professor Mary Bryden, president of the Association of University Professors and Heads of French (AUPHF), said any move to cut resources would be detrimental to employers. Professor Carol Tully teaches German at Bangor University and is an active member of the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML). She said: "In scaling down their provision in modern languages to the extent proposed, Swansea University will find itself at odds with the key message emerging from policy documents such as the Welsh Assembly Government's Making Languages Count. "Modern languages are an important and vital subject area which contribute in the regional, national and global context. Consequently, excellent provision of the kind provided by Swansea should be fostered, not reduced."

### [Just 1 in 10 Brits attempt foreign language whilst on holiday](#)

A new poll by the UK's fastest growing online independent travel agent has revealed that just 11% of holidaymakers from Britain attempt to speak the foreign language when they are on holiday abroad.

### **Language Tables**

Each semester, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures holds language tables in specific rooms in Sharples dining hall for each of the seven languages taught in our department. Students who speak a foreign language are encouraged to attend whether enrolled in a language course or not and have lunch/dinner with faculty members and other students. The language tables start the week of September 6, 2010.

### **Lend Me Your Ears: US Military Turns to Contractor Linguists**

The US military has come to rely more and more on contractors to provide linguist services to function effectively in non-English speaking regions. The need for these services is particularly acute in the Middle East and Central Asia where US troops are actively engaged.

### **FAU wins \$200,000 grant to expand Asian studies, language training**

Florida Atlantic University recently received an Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language grant from the U.S. Department of Education to enhance the university's Asian studies curriculum. The grant, consisting of \$200,000 over two years, will strengthen FAU's Asian studies certificate program and increase faculty in Asian studies. FAU's Asian studies program encompasses East, South and West Asia, and the Middle East.

### **Foreign Language Courses, Brushing Up or Immersion**

These days, online programs and CDs like [Rosetta Stone](#) and [Pimsleur](#) are grabbing the interest of people attracted by their convenience and relatively low cost. But more schools are offering their own online-only language courses as part of extension programs. At the [University of California, Los Angeles](#), traditional, three-month language classes cost \$480, and online classes cost \$550. The online courses include video lectures, readings, exercises and assignments, which the instructors can correct and return to the student via e-mail. Students can practice with one another via chatrooms, and instructors and students can also talk on the phone to work on pronunciation, said Krista K. Loretto, program manager for [U.C.L.A. Extension](#).

### **Two Language and Culture Centers Receive \$3 Million in Federal Grants**

The [Center for European Studies](#) (CES) and the [Texas Language Technology Center](#) (TLTC) at The University of Texas at Austin have been awarded federal grants totaling more than \$3 million to establish new language and culture centers that will allow them to strengthen their role as national leaders in their fields. The Center for European Studies received a more than \$1.6 million Title VI Fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education for 2010-2014 and has been designated a National Resource Center. CES works to promote studies of Europe across disciplines through courses on culture, history, economics, politics and foreign languages. Douglas Biow, CES director and professor of Italian in the Department of French and Italian, said the funding will help the center broaden its connections with schools and colleges throughout the university, as well as international academic institutions.