
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 13 OCTOBER 2010

In Their Own Words: Lessons Learned in Today's Military (Af-Pak Hand)

Lt. Col. Diana Staneszewski is a Western woman who communicates with Afghans in their native tongue, bridging the language barrier and gaining the trust of the locals she encounters on patrol. As an AFGPAK hand I have language familiarization in Pashto and Cultural Awareness training. My job is to engage the people of Afghanistan in line with the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force's Counter Insurgency (COIN) Strategy.

Japan wants U.S. to train English teachers

A program to improve the language skills of Japan's English teachers is being considered by the United States and Japan, sources told The Yomiuri Shimbun. The sources have told the Japanese newspaper that the program involves sending young Japanese teachers to the United States in order to improve their English. The English-language teachers would be trained at primary, middle and high schools in the United States for a period of one to two years. The program is part of an expansion of cultural, intellectual and human exchanges that Prime Minister Naoto Kan is seeking in order to deepen the U.S.-Japanese alliance.

Better French results than the French

Over the last four years, children at Wix primary have been taught in French by French teachers for half the week and in English for the other half. This year, the "guinea pig" children – who were the first to start French at the age of four – sat the French national tests for eight-year-olds under strict examination conditions and performed as well or better than the national average for children in France. The 250-pupil primary shares a site with the prep school for the Lycée Charles de Gaulle, a private school that follows the French national curriculum. Both [schools](#) provide 14 pupils in each year group who make up the bilingual stream based in the Wix classrooms. They follow a curriculum designed by the two schools, which is a combination of the English and French curriculums. The French and English teachers liaise with each other to avoid duplication. On the French language papers, 11 of the 14 English speakers and 10 of the 14 French speakers reached France's 50% benchmark. Of those, six of the English and five of the French scored in the highest category, denoting a "very good understanding". The English children were an average five months older than the French when they took the tests last May.

For Young Brains, Teaching Technologies Are Hit-or-Miss

Many parents plop down their babies in front of Mozart, TV and educational video games every day in hopes of raising a smart, well-adjusted human being (or just giving mom and dad a break). That mass exposure of young brains to technology, some researchers say, is one of the greatest natural experiments ever conducted outside of labs — and yet the end results remain complex or unknown. "It is not clear that babies are equipped to learn from audio-visual worlds; the research suggests they need social interactions and direct feedback," she said. "Touch is very important." Still, studies found that educational TV shows such as "Dora the Explorer," "Blue's Clues" and "Clifford the Big Red Dog" gave boosts to the vocabulary and language skills of children between the ages of 9 months and 30 months. TV also showed promise for children through the rest of their preschool years (up to age 5). But some shows produced mixed or negative results. The [TV show](#) "Teletubbies" actually had a negative effect on vocabulary and language.

Ruling opens door for retesting of language skills

A HIGH Court victory by Brazilian student Marcos Berenguel is increasing the already considerable pressure on Australia's skilled migration policy. It allows graduates to overturn the refusal of skilled

migration visas on the basis that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship failed to take into account up-to-date English test results. "It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say there could be thousands [of former foreign students] to take advantage of it," Sydney immigration lawyer Peter Bollard said.

Teaching of Spanish Intensified

The Department of Education (DepEd), through its Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE), will conduct Professional Development Course on Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL). In collaboration with Instituto Cervantes, Manila and Universidad D Salamanca, Spain, a total of 102 teachers from pilot and expansion schools will undergo simultaneous training in Manila and in Cebu from Oct. 25 to 29. Education Secretary Br. Armin Luistro said that the training aims to capacitate the Spanish teachers on linguistic command of Spanish in grammar and vocabulary aspects from a functional and communicative approach as well as in available resources to integrate on culture in SFL class.

Babbel Learning System: Pronunciation Training Goes Mobile

The online foreign language learning system Babbel brings its speech recognition feature to the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. With the Babbel Mobile vocabulary trainer app, users can test and practice their pronunciation. This new audio feature includes analysis of pronunciation in real time and evaluates all facets of speech. The seven Babbel language apps, as well as the entire Basic and Advanced Vocabulary of 3000 words with accompanying images and example sentences, are now available for free download in the App Store. Already surpassing the 200,000 download mark, the app's previous and current versions were created in collaboration with iPhone developers from the Berlin company Aspirement.

Arts council speaks out to save Indigenous languages

Gulf of Carpentaria community leaders' fears traditional Indigenous languages could be lost unless more is done to revive Indigenous history. The Queensland Arts Council (QAC) is in Normanton, in the state's north-west, to develop a program which will rejuvenate ancient Indigenous languages of the area. A linguist is working with elders and local schools on how to bring tribal history alive through art, music or film.

McLoughlin of Arabia: memoirs of an interpreter

Natural discretion and the Official Secrets Act have prevented McLoughlin from spilling many beans about his 20 years as an interpreter for British ministers and Arab VIPs. (The titillating "confessions" in the title of his book is thus a tad misleading.) It would have been fascinating to hear a fly on the wall account of talks between Margaret Thatcher and the Saudi royals about the massive al-Yamamah arms deal; or a frank report on what happened when Saddam Hussein's deputy came to Downing Street to negotiate UK export credits during the war with Iran. Still, this engaging autobiography is fascinating and fun for anyone who has grappled with the mysteries and beauties of Arabic and wants to hear from an expert practitioner how teaching methods have evolved in recent years.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Ectaco SpeechGuard® Assists Military Linguists

The Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Training Center, based in Fort Huachuca, Arizona is providing students of their arduous linguistic programs with SpeechGuard® units. The Ectaco SpeechGuard® continues to grow in response to the resounding language translation needs of local, state, and federal agencies. The handheld speech-to-speech device was initially requested by the Department of Defense to be developed for translation use by the military. It has subsequently become used by many, including law enforcement and Homeland Security divisions throughout the United States. SpeechGuard® not only has speech-to-speech, text-to-speech, and text-to-text capabilities, but also a plethora of educational applications such as Cultural Notes, Language Teacher, Audio Phrasebook, and CIA World Factbook.

Program Bolsters Department's Language Capabilities

"Language and culture are essential to the fight," she [Ms. Nancy Weaver] said during a recent interview. All servicemembers deploying to the Centcom area of operations should receive at least an introduction to language and culture in their training, she said, noting that language is key to understanding a culture.

Middle East Studies receives federal grant

This fall, Portland State will be one of 20 schools nationwide to be designated as a National Resource Center for Middle East studies. The accompanying \$1.6 million federal grant will expand the Middle East Studies Center and make possible the appointment of three new professors, provide Foreign Language and Area Studies [FLAS] fellowships to undergraduate students and enhance resources for K-12 teachers statewide. Part of Title VI of the Higher Education Act, the four-year grant is awarded to universities with outstanding international studies programs distinguished by public outreach and relevant curriculum.

Study Shows Japanese Infants Hear Foreign Words According to Japanese Language Rules by 14 Months

A new study on Japanese and French infants by researchers at the [RIKEN Brain Science Institute](#) and their collaborators has provided first-ever clues on the development of mechanisms governing how people perceive the words of a foreign language. The findings show that by only 14 months old, Japanese infants are unable to distinguish between words with sound sequences foreign to the Japanese ear, suggesting they have tuned their perception to how sounds are sequenced in their native language before even learning its words or grammar.

Hunting One Language, Stumbling Upon Another

Two years ago, a team of linguists plunged into the remote hill country of northeastern [India](#) to study little-known languages, many of them unwritten and in danger of falling out of use. On average, every two weeks one of the world's recorded 7,000 languages becomes extinct, and the expedition was seeking to document and help preserve the endangered ones in these isolated villages. At a rushing mountain river, the linguists crossed on a bamboo raft and entered the tiny village of Kichang. They expected to hear the people speaking Aka, a fairly common tongue in that district. Instead, they heard a language, the linguists said, that sounded as different from Aka as English does from Japanese.

Language learning creates global opportunities

Saskova-Pierce stresses the importance of learning a foreign language. Students fluent in multiple languages may have opportunities that others do not, she said. For instance, a former student of hers went on to become a Fulbright scholar who spent a year studying the voting process in Russia, partly owing to the knowledge he gained from Saskova-Pierce's class. Throughout the year, students work on a project that they present to the class at the end of the year. This project allows students to develop their own hothouse and to work through difficulties that arise in trying to express themselves in another language.

Music Helps Students Grow from Learners to Leaders

Research bares that out: Studies have shown that students involved in music do better on standardized tests, have higher SAT scores and have better verbal, math and language skills than students not involved in music.

Mentoring of foreign-trained workers a success

The mandate of the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC) is to help Edmonton's business community strengthen its business bottom line by maximizing employment opportunities for new, skilled immigrants. We are achieving very positive results. ERIEC's mentorship program conducted its initial pilot program in 2009, pairing a Canadian professional with an internationally trained professional to share job search advice and give the new resident a better sense of Canadian workplace culture.

For Female Marines, Tea Comes With Bullets

Six months ago, Lance Corporal Robertson arrived in Afghanistan with 39 other female Marines from Camp Pendleton, Calif., as part of an unusual experiment of the American military: sending full-time "female engagement teams" out with all-male infantry patrols in Helmand Province to try to win over the rural Afghan women who are culturally off limits to outside men. As new faces in an American counterinsurgency campaign, the female Marines, who volunteered for the job, were to meet with Pashtun women over tea in their homes, assess their need for aid, gather intelligence, and help open schools and clinics.

New initial enlistment bonuses announced

The three AFSCs with smaller initial enlistment bonuses are airborne linguist, crypto linguist and tactical air control party. The decreases, each \$1,000 less than last year's amounts, apply to six-year enlistments.

Local students impressive in Foreign Language Program

Five of the island's top high school students enrolled in the Ministry of Tourism's 2010 Foreign Language Cadet Program are set to graduate tonight in an elaborate closeout ceremony at Treasure Bay Casino. The program, an initiative to promote the study of foreign languages among high school students, was launch-ed in Grand Bahama in January 2009 and in the capital in February 2004. The long range goal of this award language enhancement program is to generate a talent pool of bilingual, young professionals to service the country's tourism industry, in particular, and its economy, in general.

More Poles still speak Russian than English

While almost the whole of Europe speaks English as their second language, in Poland, the best known foreign language remains Russian, although mostly among the older generations. According to a new Europe-wide survey by the EU's Eurostat statistical service, English is the most widely studied foreign language at schools and universities all over Europe, followed by French, German, Spanish and Russian. In Poland, though the younger generations demonstrate proficiency in English - 87 percent of Polish students learn English, older generations would still rather speak Russian.

No language GCSE means no sixth-form place, say top schools

Two of the top-performing state schools in the country have declared their sixth-forms a "no go" area for pupils without a top grade GCSE pass in a modern foreign language. Chelmsford County High School for Girls and neighbouring King Edward Grammar School in Essex have said that, from September 2013, they will not accept pupils into their sixth forms unless they have at least one C grade GCSE in a modern foreign language. Both specialist language schools, which have regularly topped exam performance league tables for state schools, say they have taken the unprecedented decision in an effort to halt the "deepening crisis" in language teaching in the UK.

FMU students, kindergarteners learn from each other during Spanish lessons

A group of Francis Marion University Spanish students are using what they've learned in the classroom to expose kindergarteners to a new culture and language. FMU encourages its faculty to seek ways to take the classroom experience to the real world with experiential learning, and this semester, Dr. Wendy Caldwell Richardson and several of her students are doing just that at the Gail and Terry Richardson Center for the Child.

McGraw-Hill Education Congratulates California School District for Reading and Language Arts Achievement

Baldwin Park elementary school students continue to make substantial progress in reading and language arts and their scores on California Standards Tests reflect those gains. *California Treasures*, a research-based, K-6 comprehensive reading language arts program, couples high-quality literature with guided instruction, ample practice, writing support and classroom management resources. The program was developed to meet California state standards, and reflects extensive input from California teachers. Baldwin Park had been looking for a curriculum to support its special dual-language program, which enables students of all backgrounds to opt into a bilingual (English and Spanish) speaking environment regardless of their skill level.

Language Center Seeks Hosts for International Students

The **Interlink Language Center** at **Valparaiso University** is searching for families to host international students enrolled in the intensive English program. Most Interlink students are 18-27 years old – though some business persons above that age range are enrolled – and come from all over the world to improve their English language skills. Many are university students planning to continue their education in the U.S.; others are professionals in various fields, particularly law and business.

Speak to me: Google launches voice command service in Korea

Now the US Company is hoping that its first foreign language voice-command service can help turn things around: this week it launched a Korean-language tool that allows users to speak into their smartphones to execute tasks such as sending text messages and e-mails. The service is available for smartphones running on Google's latest version of the Android operating system, and Google hopes it will bring more users to its search engine.

Afghan Air Force learn English in Kandahar

Afghanistan air force airmen at the Kandahar Air Wing are taking part in a program to improve their English as part of their training to better communicate with coalition forces. The Department of Defense Education Activity is a civilian agency that provides education to more than 84,000 eligible military and civilians in 194 schools around the world. Tom Wiglesworth, an English teacher from the DoDEA, teaches English to Afghan airmen of the Kandahar Air Wing. Wiglesworth said he has been teaching since 1982. He is here with four other teachers to assist the U.S. Air Force stand up the Kandahar Air Wing. "We are teachers of the soldiers; we are teachers of your children," Wiglesworth said proudly, "We came from Germany and Japan. I came in from Guam."

Equal Justice for Non-English Speakers

Is the inability to speak English preventing "equal justice" for some Tennesseans? Many experts say "yes". But, it would appear that money and the law are butting heads over the issue. A federal law, Title Six, says interpreters have to be provided for non-English speakers in court. But, there's still the question of how to find enough of them—and how to pay them. Memphis lawyer, Rehim Babaoglu, told Eyewitness News, "If the individual can't understand the consequences of his guilty plea—let's say it's a criminal matter, then I don't see how they can take a plea from an individual who doesn't speak English and understand our concepts of law."

Language barrier keeps some Tennesseans from getting justice

The families luckily found an attorney to help, and that puts them among the fortunate few in a state where the civil legal needs of non-English speakers and other vulnerable populations are vastly underserved, in violation of federal law. The Tennessee Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission, which is working to fix inequities in the civil courts, has created a committee tasked with improving the system for people with language barriers and people with disabilities.