
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 29 OCTOBER 2010

Teaching for a Shared Future: Think Global

American students' lack of knowledge about the world is unsettling. According to surveys by the National Geographic Society and the Asia Society, young Americans are next to last in their knowledge of geography and current affairs compared with peers in eight other countries, and an overwhelming majority of college-bound seniors cannot find Afghanistan, Iraq, or Israel on a world map. Fewer than half our high school students study a foreign language, and while a million U.S. students may study French, a language spoken by some 80 million people worldwide, fewer than 75,000 study Chinese, a language spoken by some 1.3 billion.

American female troops engage Afghan women

Across Afghanistan, "Female Engagement Teams" of U.S. military women are working to [strengthen relationships with rural Afghan women](#). It's something that their male counterparts aren't able to do given the cultural roles of women in the country. "Very rarely are [women] allowed to go outside the compounds without a male escort, so it's imperative that we get the female Marines to go to them," said 1st Lt. Quincy Washa, a Female Engagement Team platoon commander.

Woman to Woman in Afghanistan

In February 2009 Marine Capt. Matt Pottinger set out to do something about that. He helped organize and train a team of women Marines to meet with Afghan women, just as male soldiers had been meeting with Afghan men for years to drink tea and discuss those ill-conceived "infrastructure" projects. A handful of female Marines and a civilian linguist, led by Second Lt. Johanna Shaffer, formed that first Female Engagement Team (FET). Its mission was a "cordon and search" operation in Farah province that included "engaging with" Pashtun women and giving them some "humanitarian supplies"—known in COIN jargon as PSPs, or Population Support Packages, which might contain anything from a crank radio to a teddy bear—to earn their "goodwill." That's the point of protecting the populace—to win them over to our side so the forsaken insurgents will shrivel up and die. These tactics failed miserably in Vietnam, and they appear to be failing in Afghanistan, but with counterinsurgency as our avowed "strategy," Pottinger's idea of engaging the hidden half of the populace was way, way overdue.

A language barrier of our own making

When it comes to foreign language instruction in America, there is a lot we don't seem to understand. Nationally, the share of elementary schools offering language classes fell from 31 percent to 25 percent in the 11 years ending in 2008; the share of middle schools dropped from 75 percent to 58 percent. The percentage of high schools offering language classes was about the same. The numbers come from a survey published this year by the Center for applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C.

Call for Students to Take Up Many Languages

Students should be encouraged to learn many languages to help motivate them in their careers, Deputy Higher Education Minister Dr. Hou Kok Chung said Friday.

Big powers "imposing" their culture on others

"If Arabs were in a position of power and strength we would not have seen this big engagement in learning the English language....moreover, learning the Arabic language serves the interests of the students, irrespective of the consequences of imposing a foreign language." But she stressed the need to become proficient in foreign language in order to be open to other cultures.

The English-only movement in America

A conversation about making English the only official language in the United States. Tim Schultz, lobbyist with Washington-based [US English](#) makes the case for this, ahead of an English-only vote in Oklahoma. This is not the usual fare on The World in Words: we don't often offer the microphone to people who discourage the use of other languages. But Schultz argues that English is what keeps America — a land of immigrants and therefore of many languages — intact.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Science Grows on Acquiring New Language

Recent studies on how language learning occurs are beginning to chip away at some long-held notions about second-language acquisition and point to potential learning benefits for students who speak more than one language. "We have this national psyche that we're not good at languages," said Marty Abbott, the director of education for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Alexandria, Va. "It's still perceived as something only smart people can do, and it's not true; we all learned our first language and we can learn a second one."

Teachers train for bilingual program

The curriculum is the same; Cristina Ortega's kindergarten class at McCormick Elementary only sounds different. Ortega constantly switches between English and Spanish. She tells the students the lesson in English, and when a student asks her "Por qué?" she clarifies in Spanish. At their desks the 5- and 6-year-olds sometimes pause from their coloring books to translate their teacher's English to each other.

Rockford's language programs excelling

In 2007, Rockford Public Schools was awarded \$550,000 in federal grant money to start up its Mandarin Chinese and Spanish Immersion programs. The district is now reaping the rewards of these programs as its students have begun to excel - matching or surpassing native speakers at various grade levels. The funding has now run dry for these programs. The district had three years to use the money to get the courses up and running, which included financing books, teachers' salaries and assessment costs. The Spanish Immersion program has grown from 143 pupils in 2007-2008 to 246 pupils this year, while the number of students enrolled in Chinese 1 grew from 54 to 96 students during that same time period. A recent study shows, 95 percent of Rockford's first-year Spanish Immersion students have oral fluency and listening comprehension skills consistent with other immersion programs around the country.

A Chinese immersion school may become a first in Boston

Language immersion programs have become increasingly popular in cities and towns across the country. If approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Boston Chinese Immersion Charter School (BCICS) will launch in the Fall of 2011 and become Boston's first Chinese immersion school program.

At Sugarland Elementary, language lessons are key to all learning

On its surface, it might have seemed like the start of a typical fourth-grade lesson, but the key elements of the activity -- focusing on vocabulary, hands-on interaction and working with partners -- are components of a teaching method known as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol. SIOP emphasizes language and interactive activities and encourages teachers to build a contextual background before delving into a lesson's content, said Angela Robinson, 46, Sugarland's principal. The model was developed as a national research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education from 1996 through 2003 to help nonnative English-speaking students succeed in school, according to the Center for Applied Linguistics [Web site](#).

Language immersion school expands

The International School of Louisiana is expanding to the West Bank, becoming the first language immersion school in an area known for its Vietnamese and Hispanic enclaves. The new campus will also

be the first in the state to offer a Mandarin Chinese immersion program. Beginning next fall, the West Bank campus will open for as many as 92 kindergarten students, adding a grade level each year until it is the same size as the original kindergarten-through-eighth-grade Lower Garden District location. The waiting list for kindergarten spots is typically three times longer than capacity, so an eventual doubling of the school's size should go a long way toward meeting demand, said Pamela Stewart, the school's director of institutional advancement.

Preschool announces grant from ALCOA

Dover's El Primer Paso, Ltd. has announced a partnership with ALCOA which includes a grant of \$20,000 for the school's Preschool Initiative for English Language Learners. The grant funds will support El Primer Paso's program to build school readiness and English language skills in at-risk children from the local Latino community.

AMC announces nominee for 2010 Air Force Language Professional of the Year

Tech. Sgt. Ahmad M. Adi, from the 62nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., is AMC's nominee for the award. Adi is versed in two languages and was "pivotal" in supporting his unit on a recent deployment. "His outstanding enthusiasm for the mission and unrivaled professionalism led to his selection as the linguist department non-commissioned officer in charge," stated the announcement for his nomination from Headquarters AMC. Managing a 41-member team, he coordinated "around-the-clock" manning support for 2,400 linguist support requests and translated 700 high-priority documents while maintaining 100 percent department coverage with five less personnel assigned than previous deployments, the announcement stated.

A Comprehensive Approach to Local Engagement in Afghanistan

Currently there are three successful bottom-up local engagement programs from which to conduct further research and analysis: 1) the former Special Forces Local Defense Initiative program and the current Village Stability Operations program, along with the Afghan Local Police program; 2) the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Female Engagement Teams (FETs); and 3) the Non-Government Organization (NGO) Central Asia Institute's methodology.

NHLRC is renewed for four more years

We are happy to inform you that the National Heritage Language Resource Center was re-funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Language Resource Center Title VI grant. This means that we are funded for another 4 years, 2010-2014! Our Heritage Language Summer Institutes, Workshops, Conference, High School Classes, the Heritage Language Journal and research will continue.

Cabinet to Review School Reforms

The cabinet on Wednesday will be looking at a controversial package of proposed changes in the curriculum in the nation's comprehensive schools. The most divisive issue is expected to be the question of expanded language teaching. "Instruction in the first required foreign language would start in the second grade, and an elective language would be offered in the fourth or fifth grade. These measures are key to diversifying and strengthening language skills," notes the Education Minister. She also points out that currently 20 percent of schoolchildren already start studying a foreign language in the first or second grade.

Murray State professor assisting in Iraq

Murray State University education professor Michael Basile is serving on the first board of trustees at a new university in the Kurdish region of Iraq. Basile, who is former director of Murray State's Institute for International Studies, has worked for about 15 years with the university's first president, Salah Aziz, to help develop civil society institutions in Iraqi Kurdistan. When Aziz established the new Kurdistan University of Science and Technology, he asked Basile to serve as a trustee. Basile has worked to try to establish a new English language acquisition program similar to the English as a second language program at Murray State.

Superintendent promises to return foreign languages

Superintendent Marc Kerble is making a bold promise to parents of the district this week that a return of Nock Middle School's foreign language program is imminent and will be in place by next school year. "What I want to do is really take a hard look at foreign language and what is the best thing for our students, whether it's bringing back the courses the way they used to be, or whether it's online courses, or maybe there's something else," Kerble said.

Google Magnify concept is like a translating magnifying glass

We like a good concept around here and the Google Magnify has caught our attention. When we are online surfing the web and run across something we can't read because it is written in a foreign language we just hit the Google translate button and read away. The concept is a small hand held unit that has a handle that flips down like the magnifying glass my grandmother uses sometimes. The difference is that the concept device would have some tech inside that would put the text on the screen, presumably using a front mounted camera, and then automatically run Google Translation on the text so the user could read it. I could see this being a great product for people who travel a lot.

Michigan's tribal language bill allows uncertified Native speakers to teach

The Michigan legislature has taken a commonsense approach to the teaching of Native languages in the state's public schools. As of Sept. 30, public school students will get foreign language credits for succeeding in Native American language and culture classes taught by tribal elders and other Native language speakers who are not state-certified teachers. The new law, Public Act 168 of 2010, was introduced in December 2009 by Sen. Mike Prusi, who represents the state's 38th District, which includes most of the Upper Peninsula.

Communication is crucial

The Rotherham based firm regularly hosts visits by students to promote the use of foreign language learning and recognise its importance in business. Gordon Bridge, managing director of AESSEAL, said: "The students really benefit from seeing how foreign languages are used within a modern, innovative business and via positive feedback from both students and teachers alike, the visits are deemed to be a resounding success. The visits are part of the International Business Communication (IBC) scheme through which students study for NVQ qualifications instead of GCSE.

SDL Language Technology Showcase – Houston

To succeed in the ever-changing global marketplace, analyst research and our customers continue to prove that timely and accurate information, delivered in multiple languages, is the key to improving the customer experience and increasing global revenues. So how can you adjust your translation process to better compete on a global scale? Join us on Wednesday, November 17 in Houston to understand the role language technology can play in a global content strategy. Over a roundtable discussion and luncheon, localization experts and guest speakers, from top global brands, share their experiences in driving a global content strategy within their organization.

Study reveals common gaffes when using a foreign language

The Greek word for "good morning" – "kalimera" – bears a resemblance to "calimari", while "Je suis plein" means "I am full" in French, but when mispronounced as "pleine", translates as "I am pregnant". The study also revealed that 95 per cent of Britons would attempt to speak the local language on holiday, particularly those travelling to Spain or France. The most commonly used words and phrases were "hello", "please", "thank you", "goodnight", "where are the toilets?" and "a bottle of house red".

Female Engagement Team builds bridges into Afghan society

As the Female Engagement Team of Regimental Combat Team 1 patrols the fields, canals and villages of Helmand, they are bridging the cultural gap that is sometimes at the forefront of the counterinsurgency here. In Afghanistan's culture, a woman's modesty is a sanctity closely guarded by everyone. But, this specially trained team is able to reach across those boundaries, enabling them to go where male Marines often cannot. "Afghanistan's society is much more conservative [than that of the U.S.] when it comes to women," said 1st Lt. Quincy Washa, FET platoon commander for RCT-1. "Very rarely are they allowed to

go outside the compounds without a male escort, so it's imperative that we get the female Marines to go to them."

Female engagement team makes strides in Kunar

In Asadabad, a city located near the Pakistan border in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province, women are seldom seen outside their homes. But that changed on Oct. 20, as a foot patrol predominately made up of females worked its way through the crowded streets headed to a women's shura. The patrol included 18 females and a few males, most of them members of female engagement teams at the district and provincial levels from Task Force No Slack. "I think women's affairs are probably the highest priority out here," said U.S. Army Maj. Mary Parmenter, the Iowa National Guard's 734th Agribusiness Development Team operations officer and a member of the Forward Operating Base Wright FET. "Education of women and children is what's going to change the future of Afghanistan."

Small University Uses Fulbright Program to Bolster Foreign-Language Teaching

Lincoln University, in southeastern Pennsylvania, has long had a global outlook. The historically black institution notes, for example, that its graduates include the first presidents of Nigeria and Ghana. But in recent years, international interest among its students has flagged. Lincoln has been forced to drop two-thirds of its language offerings over the past seven years; only about 40 of its 2,000 undergraduates studied abroad last year. Now Lincoln is hoping that four participants in the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program on the campus this year can help jump-start its ambitious plan to restore students' global perspective. Among the university's new priorities are increasing foreign-language enrollments and more than doubling its study-abroad numbers.

YLE Poll: Many Municipalities Want to Scrap Mandatory School Swedish

Over half of municipal leaders want to see changes to language education in schools. Many feel that Russian should take priority over Swedish, particularly in eastern Finland. Year after year, English continues to be highly popular among students, thanks largely to pop music, games and films. The same cannot be said for Swedish. A YLE poll of municipal leaders finds that municipalities want more freedom designing language instruction. This is especially the case in eastern Finland, which is home to hundreds of Russian immigrants.