
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 8 DECEMBER 2010

Foreign language courses growing on US college campuses despite threats of budget cuts

The latest figures from the Modern Language Association, released Wednesday, show that enrolment in foreign language courses grew 6.6 per cent between 2006 and 2009, achieving a high mark since the study began in 1960. While advocates of language study say any growth is good, things have slowed down since the group's previous report, which showed 12.9 per cent growth between 2002 and 2006. "This is a vulnerable time for language study," said Rosemary Feal, the association's executive director and a Spanish professor at the University of Buffalo. "While interest in language study remains strong and students are increasingly interested in studying a wide range of languages, opportunities to study languages may be threatened by program cuts at many colleges and universities."

More Oregon college students study foreign language; more choose non-European tongues

More American college students, including those in Oregon, are studying foreign languages, especially non-European tongues such as Arabic, Chinese and Japanese, according to a national survey released Wednesday. The number of college students nationwide enrolled in non-English language courses climbed to a record 1,682,627 in the fall of 2009, up 20 percent from 2002, the [Modern Language Association](#) reported Wednesday. The association's report was based on a survey of 2,514 public and private colleges and universities, about a third of them two-year colleges. The survey, which included 99 percent of U.S. higher education institutions offering foreign languages, found the number of students on Oregon campuses studying languages other than English jumped 35 percent to 31,595, outpacing overall enrollment increases between 2002 and 2009.

Sign language No. 4 most studied foreign language

American Sign Language is close to surpassing German as the third-most-studied foreign language at America's colleges and universities. Only 4,500 more students study German than study ASL, and enrollment in classes for the gesture-based language used by the deaf increased 16% since the last survey three years ago. The top language studied in U.S. colleges in 2009 was Spanish, followed by French. Arabic saw the biggest increase, up 46%, but is still studied by just 2% of all students enrolled in language courses.

Costs of language training for federal bureaucrats spike

The cost of training federal bureaucrats to improve their language skills is spiking at the central department that is leading the charge in the Harper government's efforts to restrain spending, internal records reveal. Language-training expenses have jumped nearly five-fold at the Treasury Board Secretariat in the last five years, from \$428,490 to \$2.1 million in the 2009-10 fiscal year, according to documents obtained by Postmedia News. In that same time period, the department spent slightly less than \$6 million total on language training.

Delightful New Speech Therapy App Released for the iPhone/iPad: "Speech With Milo- Verbs"

Created by a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist, Speech with Milo: Verbs offers a versatile and entertaining speech therapy tool for children. The app is for speech therapists working with children or parents who want to teach language skills to their children. Milo offers an enjoyable tool that is used in therapy at an affordable price. Speech with Milo: Verbs is centered on an adorable and energetic mouse named Milo. Milo performs various actions, which provide an engaging way to build up an action word vocabulary. Flash cards are typically used for this type of exercise, but the animation that comes with Milo will keep any child focused and attentive. And most important- it is fun!

[DLIFLC's Afghan Languages Portal Survival Level Language Materials](#)

Provides Dari, Pashto, and Urdu language instruction through various exercises.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Improved Marine Corps Language Training

Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C. and Camp Pendleton, Calif., now have the option of pursuing intermediate and advanced language study before deploying to Afghanistan. The bases recently added two new courses in Pashto and Dari which are Afghanistan's main languages. The new courses were added in answer to demand from operational forces, most now working to tame Helmand province in the country's south. The basic language course is unchanged. Marines will still complete about 40 hours of live instruction and 100 hours of computer-based self-study which will help them master about 50 words and phrases. But motivated Marines who have a knack for languages can now boost their communication skills with intermediate and advanced options.

Foreign language skills come first: survey

The Eurobarometer survey Employers' perception of graduate employability released last Thursday reveals that foreign language skills come first among post-secondary graduate employers across Europe when it comes to the next generation of recruits. Although the graduate employers polled (from workplaces with 50 or more employees) were less likely to highlight the importance of foreign language skills with regard to current recruits (33% rated these skills as "very important" and 34% as "rather important"), 30% said that foreign language skills are the most important skills with regard to the future. In Hungary 59% said it was very important while 36% found it rather important. Overall this means that foreign language skills were ranked as a higher requirement for future graduates than the ability to adapt to new situations (27%) and planning and organisational skills (23%).

Budget-Cutting Colleges Bid Some Languages Adieu

THE bad news was not unexpected: sweeping cutbacks at the [State University of New York at Albany](#), prompted by sweeping cutbacks in state aid. The reactions, too, had a whiff of the familiar: student rallies, faculty resolutions, an online petition. But then came an op-ed article in the French newspaper [Le Monde](#), calling the cuts Orwellian. And an open letter from the French philosopher [Jean-Luc Nancy](#), sarcastically suggesting that universities give up teaching the humanities altogether. The university announced this fall that it would stop letting new students major in French, Italian, Russian and the classics.

America's Chinese Problem

Cutting-edge programs like those at the immersion charter school Yu Ying in Washington, D.C., and reports of Chinese-language courses popping up in heartland America would all seem to suggest that Americans are on the fast track to learning Chinese—and ultimately understanding China. But the sad fact is that Americans are not learning Mandarin, the main tongue spoken in mainland China, in droves. Just take a look at the numbers. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, in 2008 only 4 percent of middle and high schools that offer foreign-language instruction included Mandarin. That's up from 1 percent in 1997. While that initially seems like respectable growth, the same survey reveals that 13 percent of schools still offer Latin and a full 10-fold more schools offer French than Mandarin. How is it that one a dead language and the other a language primarily used to impress your dinner companion can trounce one spoken by 1.3 billion natives and many millions more expats and immigrants abroad?

Students of Estonian Language Showing More Interest

As more non-Estonian speakers show interest to learn the national tongue, the Ministry of Education promises to allocate extra money for compensating language tuition to those who successfully complete their exams. "The Estonian language is needed everywhere in all affairs [in Estonia]," said Minister of Education Tõnis Lukas. "This attitude has been confirmed by data from the last few years showing rising interest among people to improve their Estonian language skills. This year, to our delight, there is a large number of people taking and passing exams. To preserve interest, the state will continue compensating language courses for those who successfully complete the exams."

Port superintendent ready to fight for return of school programs

Saying it's time for a turnaround, Superintendent Marc Kerble told the community last night that he's ready to fight for the return of foreign language at the middle school, a school chorale and band program, and numerous other lost programs he views as vital to creating an excellent school system.

Female Marines prepare for deployment, mission

A dozen women sit huddled on the floor of a narrow carpeted room. Half are Afghans, their faces half-shrouded by scarves as they speak through an interpreter. Half are female Marines, who have shed their Kevlar helmets but remain armed with flak jackets and rifles. What had taken place wasn't a shura in an Afghan village, but it was just about as close as you can get without leaving North Carolina. This week, the Marine female engagement team attached to Regimental Combat Team 8 trained aboard Camp Lejeune in a military operations in urban terrain town, a simulated environment complete with native Afghan roleplayers, realistic city layout, and the threat of hidden explosive devices at every street corner.

Turning pain into progress: Kunar women's rights movement gains momentum, support

What amount of suffering would a person have to endure to commit suicide by lighting themselves on fire? This was the question that came to mind as Nasima Shafiq Sadat, Kunar Province Director of Women's Affairs, recounted the tales of sorrow of Afghanistan's women to two U.S. servicemembers from the Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team's Female Engagement Team. It was a day with two purposes, said Dr. Rafiullah Bidar, Jalalabad regional program manager for the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "First, we want to achieve awareness, especially about the law protecting women from abuse. Second, we want to discuss better implementation of the law in Kunar."

Technology and Foreign Language

Series of slides regarding the use of technology in foreign language acquisition.

Russian Language Skills of Immigrant Workers from CIS Countries Falling Every Year

Every year since the end of the Soviet Union, the share of migrant workers coming to the Russian Federation from CIS countries who have a minimal competence in the Russian language has declined, according to surveys conducted by the Moscow Center for Migration Research. Part of the reason behind this reflects a shift in the source of such migrants – in the 1990s, most gastarbeiters in the Russian Federation came from Ukraine and Belarus while now the overwhelming majority comes from Central Asian states – but another part is the general decline in Russian language competence in these countries.

School Administrators Work To Develop Foreign Language Exams

With New York State no longer developing final exams for select foreign languages and threatening to eliminate more due to budget restrictions, a group of Long Island school administrators has met in an effort to develop proficiency tests for middle school and high school students. The Foreign Language Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors ([FLACS](#)), which includes representatives from 60 school districts across Nassau and Suffolk counties, held a public meeting Wednesday at Half Hollow Hills East High School in Dix Hills. FLACS officials said the group is working to fill the void created by the state. Districts that do not join the consortium will have to create these exams for themselves, since the state is no longer providing them.

Gates Approves COIN Standards For Afghanistan

*(DefenseNews.com)...*Kate Brannen

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has approved a list of essential counterinsurgency (COIN) skills that troops need to be successful in Afghanistan.

First US trained Afghan chopper pilots return to Kabul

Afghan 1st Lt. Abdul Saboor Amin and 1st Lt. Ahmad Fawad Haidari became the first two Afghan Air Force helicopter pilots to successfully complete language and pilot training in the United States, recently returning to begin Mi-17 conversion training at the Afghan Air Force Base in Kabul, Afghanistan. The first stop on their American tour took them to San Antonio, Texas and the Defense Language Institute English Language, where the pilots were given an intensive six month language course. Since English is the international language of aviation, it was crucial for the two to be proficient. This importance was underscored by the fact that many of the 62 pilot candidates who were dropped from the program saw their dreams dashed during this phase due to a lack of English comprehension, said Amin and Haidari.