

---

---

## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

---

---

### **CURRENT NEWS 16 DECEMBER 2010**

#### **Representative Rush Holt: Why Foreign Language Education Matters**

Even as we consider strategies to create jobs right now, it's vital that we ensure that the next generation of workers is prepared to compete in the global economy. To compete, American students must possess, but far too often lack, a knowledge of other languages and cultures. Unfortunately, the United States, as former Senator Paul Simon once said, is a "linguistically malnourished" nation. Only 44 percent of high school students are enrolled in foreign language courses, while only 31 percent of elementary schools offer foreign language instruction. As I discussed at a [summit on foreign language](#) organized by the CIA, we need to alter dramatically how our children learn languages. Already Congress has established, [by my legislation, upfront grants and loan forgiveness](#), up to \$16,000, for individuals who become foreign language teachers. Congress also must pass [my legislation](#) to establish structures for language training that starts in kindergarten and never truly stops. We also must better utilize the language talents of native speakers who have much to offer our still malnourished nation.

#### **Culture and language center to expand production of field guides**

The Air Force Language, Region and Culture Program Office will increase field guide production to provide Airmen an understanding of the cultural concepts necessary to meet mission requirements in the region to which they are deployed, officials said here Dec. 15. The framework of the field guides consists of a culture-general introduction, followed by 12 culture-specific categories meant to create awareness and understanding of different cultural domains, according to the Air Force Culture and Language Center officials. The field guides connect cross-cultural competence with the specific regional or country information and are communicated in a style that resonates with Airmen," Mr. Finn said. "All they need is a pocket to put them in."

#### **China welcomes India's decision to introduce Chinese as foreign language**

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Thursday welcomed a decision by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) of India to introduce Chinese as a foreign language in the curriculum of schools in India from the next academic session.

#### **Survey shows more than half of Czechs speak no foreign language**

Fifty-four percent of Czechs are not capable of making themselves understood in any foreign language and 27 percent of Czechs manage one foreign language, according to a survey CVVM conducted for the Social and Economy Analyses Institute (ISEA) released Wednesday. The biggest number of people know English, followed by German. Foreign firms with offices in the Czech Republic say the knowledge of languages is of key importance in employing Czechs.

#### **Language professor shares teaching tips in Thailand**

An Indiana State professor challenged foreign language educators throughout the world to examine their teaching methods and think of ways to strengthen student learning. Lisa Calvin, associate professor of Spanish, was selected as keynote speaker at the first International Conference on the Dynamics in Second/Foreign Language Teaching in the 21st Century, which was held Nov. 25-26 at Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University in Pitsanulok, Thailand, a partnership institution with ISU.

#### **English is increasingly the international language of business**

It's the year 2012. Your employer, a major global firm, announces that within two years all meetings and written communication within the company will be based on or conducted in Mandarin, the primary language of China. Imagine our shock — our anger — our displeasure — at the need to suddenly learn an extremely difficult language, all in the name of keeping our job. Welcome to the global community in

2011! English has increasingly become the international language of business. More and more nations are demanding that their business executives become fluent in English. English learning courses are popular around the globe. While perhaps one quarter of the world's population can now converse to an extent in English, that share could rise to one-half by 2015, according to [businessreviewusa.com](http://businessreviewusa.com).

### **2010 Sponsored Research Funding at UChicago Increases**

James Nye, interim director of the South Asia Language Resource Center, Director South Asia Language and Area Center and Bibliographer Southern Asia, received \$332,000 from the Department of Education for the South Asia Language Resource Center to further South Asian language pedagogy in American universities.

### **A STEEP CURVE**

Although it's midway through the school year, Jackson Elementary teacher Jodi Salinas has nine new students with limited English skills she must test in order to determine their language skills and to place them in the appropriate English-as-a-Second-Language program. Those nine give a hint of the high mobility rate at the west Medford school, where by the sixth grade just 15 percent of pupils will have remained since kindergarten, says Principal Tom Ettl. Oregon students, including those in Jackson County, who are learning English as another language, continue to struggle to reach the state's goal of achieving language proficiency within five years, according to a state report released Tuesday.

### **Minister of Education wants to improve Finns' Swedish language skills**

Minister of Education [Henna Virkkunen](#) (Nat. Coalition Party) says that the level of knowledge of the Swedish language needs to be improved in Finland. She says that increasing Swedish language courses at the upper secondary school level should be considered. According to a fresh report by the Matriculation Examination Board and the Ministry of Education and Culture, Swedish is being taught less and less in Finnish-language upper secondary schools with each successive year. Now only 67 per cent of pupils at that level pick Swedish for their matriculation exams.

## **PREVIOUS NEWS**

### **Can't learn a foreign language? Not true, say scientists**

The brain can learn a new word in less than 15 minutes, according to scientists, whose finding will rob many of the excuse that they can't learn a foreign language. Dr Yury Shtyrov and his team made the discovery after placing electrodes on the heads of 16 healthy volunteers to monitor their brain activity. First they recorded the pulses generated when they listened to a familiar word. Then the volunteers were made to listen to a made-up word, over and over again. Initially the brain had to work hard to recognise the new word. But after 160 repetitions over 14 minutes, the new memory traces were "virtually indistinguishable" from those of the already familiar word, said Dr Shtyrov.

### **Squad Designated Linguist**

[VIDEO] When Spc. Kevin Chalkley of the 7-10 Calvary Scout Regiment, 4th Infantry Division began learning Dari at the Defense Language Institute's Fort Carson Language Training Detachment, he never realized how much his language skills would mean to his mission of security stabilization in the remote small village of Yaka-Tut.

### **Female Marines in Afghanistan**

YouTube video clip by First Lieutenant Quincy Washa, platoon commander for the Female Engagement Team with Regimental Combat Team 1, speaks about the challenges, triumphs, and goals for her team in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. The FET comprises female Marines from California-based units, and travels throughout the province to interact with Afghan men, women, and children. These Marines are responsible for gathering information related to security, development, and governance for their assigned area, while respecting Afghan cultural norms. The FET attaches to an infantry unit, and works as a go-

between for male Marines and the local female population. Washa's team deployed in September, and is scheduled to stay through early next year.

### **South St. Paul considers English-Spanish immersion**

School leaders in South St. Paul are in the early stages of considering a new language immersion program in which elementary students would learn both English and Spanish. Most metro-area immersion programs, in which students are taught core academic subjects in a foreign language, are one-way programs in which students learn a language other than English. South St. Paul envisions a less common model called dual language or two-way immersion, in which native speakers of English and Spanish learn each other's languages in the same classroom.

### **Kindergartners to get first taste of Chinese**

Barrington School District 220 will begin a Mandarin Chinese immersion program for tots through teens next fall, now that the board of education has voted to accept a \$1.5 million federal matching grant for the program for five years. School board members had been mulling over whether to take on the financial and logistical obligations posed by the grant, which was awarded in the summer. They voted 6-1 to proceed at a meeting Tuesday night. The district will be on its way to becoming the only one in the state to offer Chinese immersion from kindergarten through high school, said Todd Bowen, chairman of the world language department, who secured the grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

### **Air Force pilot encourages Iraqi women to aim high**

I volunteered to deploy to Iraq. It had been seven years since I first entered basic training in 2003, the same year we entered Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom, now [Operation New Dawn](#). While I knew my primary mission was to fly, I couldn't forget all the lessons I learned about Middle Eastern culture and language. I'd been to the region three times before with the Air Force and still remembered the many conversations I had in the region with women there. It made me deeply appreciate my freedoms as an American, including my ability to fly. I had a million ways I wanted to help the women of Iraq. Then I realized I should encourage them in the field I know best – aviation. Even the concept of women in aviation in the U.S. is still rather new. In my initial stage of training, for several months I was the only woman in a building of 200 people. It was only in 1993 that women were allowed to fly combat missions. Now we have women who have served as members of the [Thunderbirds](#).

### **Early Foreign Language Ed Could End**

An interim legislative committee is considering a proposal to end state-mandated early foreign language instruction in Wyoming elementary schools. Some lawmakers want to repeal a 1999 statute that requires Wyoming schools to teach foreign language in kindergarten through second grade. The Legislature's Joint Education Committee will discuss the measure when it meets on Thursday in Casper. The Casper Star-Tribune reports that school administrators say many schools lack the financial and human resources necessary for quality instruction. In addition, knowledge is lost between second grade and middle school. Republican Rep. Matt Teeters, of Lingle, says the requirement should be dropped until a complete foreign language program can be established through elementary school.

### **U.S. falls behind in foreign languages**

Americans are not, in general, proficient in foreign languages. That situation, according to experts, is not good for the nation, not good for humanity, and not good for the individual monolingualist. "For the United States to get to where it needs to be will require a national commitment to strengthening America's foreign language proficiency." "Sadly, many Americans don't see the point of studying foreign languages at all, since the world seems to have learned English," Grafton said. "I wish everyone could speak, as I have, with a veteran of the Iraq war who has done house-to-house searches at night without the benefit of a competent interpreter."

### **Early foreign-language education could end**

State-mandated early foreign-language instruction could end next year because facilitating the instruction has become a burden on school districts throughout the state. Lawmakers want to repeal a 1999 statute that requires Wyoming schools to teach foreign language in kindergarten through second grade. The Legislature's Joint Education Committee will discuss the measure when it meets on Thursday in Casper.

The current law went into effect in 2002. The Wyoming Department of Education launched several pilot programs in 50 classrooms around the state to determine the most effective method of instruction. A bill to extend the program through sixth grade and provide funding failed to pass in 2004, and the effort has since fizzled.

### **Arabic, Korean, Chinese courses see gains at U.S. colleges**

Student enrollment in Arabic, Korean and Chinese classes is showing the fastest growth among foreign language courses at U.S. colleges, even though Spanish remains the most popular by a huge margin, a new study shows. The survey of more than 2,500 colleges and universities by the Modern Language Association, or MLA, found that enrollment in Arabic surged by 46 percent between 2006 and 2009. More U.S. college students are studying Arabic than Russian, a change that officials say reflects a shift of interest from Cold War concerns to current issues involving the Middle East and terrorism.

### **Taking care of our words**

At birth the brain can absorb all sorts of sounds. As we grow our brains become wired to certain tones and less open to new accents or languages. Children as young as 12 months can learn multiple languages. At that age they are absorbed in the same way as a native tongue. "Your ability to reproduce sounds and accents starts to decline from three years of age," notes linguist and founder of Babylangues Caroline Benoit Levy. Giving classes to toddlers and providing a foreign language nanny service, Ms Benoit Levy says that before our tenth birthday our brains have become hardwired to certain sounds, and find it hard to retain or reproduce new ones. Adults may struggle to perfect a foreign language but more frustrating still is when you start to speak your native tongue with a foreign accent. 'Foreign language syndrome' is a rare condition with currently 60 known sufferers in the world.

### **Study: Every foreign language has its niche**

A new and definitive [survey](#) of foreign language instruction in U.S. colleges finds that every major language has found its audience, and each is showing some measure of growth, however modest. That hasn't always been so. French, German, Italian, Latin, Russian and Japanese all have had ups and downs in enrollment in past surveys by the Modern Language Association of America. But enrollments are rising in each of those languages at a fairly steady clip since at least 2000, according to the new survey, which was taken in 2009 and was last conducted in 2006.

### **Study of Sign Language on the Rise in U.S. Colleges**

A recent article in [USA Today](#) reports that American Sign Language (ASL) is now the fourth most studied foreign language in the United States. Enrollment in college ASL classes is up 16 percent over the last three years, according to a survey by the [Modern Language Association](#). Spanish and French are in the lead, with German beating ASL by just 0.3 percent. Although some in the deaf and hard of hearing communities may take issue with the term "foreign" when referring to ASL (as the language does not come from any foreign country), it is certainly a language in its own right. ASL is not simply a translation of English into a gestural language. ASL has a specific syntax, with regional variations and slang. And, like other languages, ASL evolves with time especially to incorporate signs for new technologies.