
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 27 JANUARY 2011

CSAF cites importance of joint approach to enhancing language skills

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz speaks at the Department of Defense Language and Culture Summit on Jan. 26, 2011, in Alexandria, Va. General Schwartz told the audience that the best way the U.S. armed forces will achieve the necessary level of language skills and cultural competencies is through a holistic joint and interagency approach.

Ala. Leads the Effort to Train Generals in Culture and Language

As the responsibilities of the United States military change, so do those of the many officers responsible for operations overseas. The Air Force Culture and Language Center at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery is leading this change in training. Alabama Public Radio's Ryan Vasquez tells us how a program in Alabama is helping generals become more culturally aware before they deploy.

It's not about vocabulary: A foreign language helps people live another culture

Though many people repeat the misconception that learning a language in adolescence is easier, it might simply be a different style of learning, said Kara Morgan-Short, professor of Spanish and linguistics at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Morgan-Short said that language learning mechanisms are currently being debated. Scientists are studying whether adults learn languages in the same way as children, or if adults must learn language as they learn other general skills, such as riding a bike.

More on Foreign Language Decline in Schools

Despite budget cuts to foreign language programs at many U.S. schools, the study of Mandarin has jumped by almost 200 percent in three years, according to a recent study funded by the [U.S. Department of Education](#). Still, the study also found that just 32 percent of students in grades 6 to 12 nationwide are enrolled in a foreign language program, leaving the U.S. behind many countries. (In the [European Union](#), for example, 94 percent of secondary level students study a language other than their native tongue.)

BBC World Service Foreign Language Services Slashed

The BBC World Service will cut five full foreign language services and seven foreign language radio services to meet the tough settlement received in the UK Government Spending Review. In a statement today (January 26, 2011), the BBC confirmed the loss of more than 480 jobs at BBC World Service. The cuts will produce net savings of £46m by April 2014.

Do baby DVDs help babies learn?

A recent study says that young children do not actually learn from baby DVDs that market themselves as educational tools. The researchers also found that parents who liked the DVD tended to overestimate how much their children learned from it. The study was published recently in the journal *Psychological Science*. "We found that young children seem to learn not very much from being exposed to baby media," said Judy DeLoache, University of Virginia psychologist and study co-author.

Native Language In Public School

Learning a second language is not always about learning *foreign* language. It can also be about preserving what's been right here for generations, language at risk of being lost. In addition to offerings, such as French or Spanish, more northern Michigan public schools and colleges are offering students the chance to learn Anishinaabemowin, or Ojibwa. Suttons Bay lies just south of reservation land of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. "I think it is important for us to recognize those elements and to make sure they're really firmly implanted in our local culture. We can't forget what gave rise to this area."

PREVIOUS NEWS

First Lady Michelle Obama: "When You Study Abroad, You're Helping to Make America Stronger"

She focused on the importance of studying abroad in support of the President's "[100,000 Strong Initiative](#)" – a program that aims to increase the number of Americans who have the opportunity to study in China. Mrs. Obama stated, "The fact is, with every friendship you make, and every bond of trust you establish, you are shaping the image of America projected to the rest of the world. That is so important. So when you study abroad, you're actually helping to make America stronger. And these experiences also set the stage for young people all over the world to come together and work together to make our world stronger, because make no mistake about it, whether it's climate change or terrorism, economic recovery or the spread of nuclear weapons, for the U.S. and China, the defining challenges of our time are shared challenges. Neither of our countries can confront these alone. The only way forward, the only way to solve these problems, is by working together."

Sasha Obama speaking Mandarin to Chinese President

Brief video with MSNBC's Brian Williams discussing Sasha Obama's discussions in Mandarin with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Beijing Helps US Students Learn Chinese

A visit to a Chicago high school was on the agenda as Chinese President Hu Jintao wrapped up his visit to the United States. Walter Payton College Preparatory High School is one of dozens in the U.S. that offers Chinese language and cultural instruction through a program called "Confucius Classrooms," which is partially funded by the Beijing government.

'Equip the children with language skills that will give them an edge'

In China, party hosts still have about two weeks to prepare for New Year celebrations, but students 9,000 miles across the globe in Eugene are already celebrating by singing a traditional New Year song in Mandarin. Oak Hill School in Eugene offers Mandarin immersion courses beginning in Kindergarten and ending in 8th grade. By the fifth grade, students like 10-year-old Maya Ordway can understand the building blocks of writing and speaking that will eventually allow them to become fluent.

Foreign language skills provide sharp edge in the job market

Job seekers with bilingual skills could look forward to a profusion of opportunities in the coming year, according to various reports and company hiring plans. With the globalization of businesses and populations growing increasingly cosmopolitan, the need for transactional knowledge of languages has become very important in both private and government sectors. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the employment of translators and interpreters in the country is expected to increase by 22 percent between 2008 and 2018. Another book on the employment scenario, *Closing America's Job Gap (W Business Books, January 2011)*, predicts that For those completely bilingual in Spanish and English, these highly marketable language skills open doors to new careers.

U.S. DOD Language Summit to Set Future Strategy

After a five-year effort to institute processes needed to gauge service members' foreign-language skills, the U.S. Defense Department will hold a summit this month to help in forging a systematic path forward, the director of the Defense Language Office said on Wednesday. The DOD Language and Culture Summit will occur on January 25-26. The 250 to 300 participants will include officials from DOD and other federal agencies, experts from academia, scientists, and people such as combatant commanders who have an interest in the topic.

Female Engagement Team breaks for training

Lance Cpl. Kathryn Mannion speaks to an Afghan woman while assigned to the Female Engagement team with Regimental Combat Team 7 in Marjah, Afghanistan, July 7, 2010. Mannion, originally a military policeman, volunteered to participate in the Marine Corps' newest program, designed to engage with Afghan women.

Foreign-language students at Susan Wagner HS pass on their knowledge to younger students

It's a bit like being given a lesson from your older brother or sister. That's the thought of Susan Wagner High School students involved in the Foreign Language Institute's student-teacher program, which enables about 65 dedicated foreign-language students to visit and teach language classes at a handful of Staten Island elementary schools.

TPS teams up with UT to teach students Chinese

From world leaders to 5 year olds, some bright young students are learning a new language. Kindergarten students at Old Orchard elementary school are learning Chinese. TPS has teamed up with Confucius Institute at the University of Toledo. The program sends teachers trained in teaching Chinese as a foreign language to schools. Xiaoping Tan is from China. Today, the students were learning how to count and how to say "I love you mommy" in Chinese. Ms. Tan admits Chinese is a hard language to learn, but says the children are quick learners. This is the second year for the program. All the students in the school are taught 20 minutes of Chinese once a week. The principal calls it a smart investment.

Fair gives opportunity to learn about prospective foreign-language jobs

Students at West Virginia University will have an opportunity to learn how their major's foreign language requirement could someday assist in finding a job at a foreign language career fair today. WVU's Foreign Language Department will be hosting the fair, "Putting Your Language Skills to Work," today in the Mountainlair Rhododendron Room from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Cynthia Chalupa, associate professor of German studies at WVU, said the career fair is intended to provide students with important tips on finding career opportunities in the language field.

Babylon a Leader in Fostering Foreign Language Programs

Babylon Junior Senior High School is doing exactly what a foreign language association believes every school district should be doing: expanding foreign language learning opportunities despite New York State Education officials' recent action to eliminate all middle school language exams and several Regents language exams.

Challenging the limits of learning: Human mind vs. yardstick of a machine

Although we're convinced that baby is brilliant when she mutters her first words, cognitive scientists have been conducting a decades-long debate about whether or not human beings actually "learn" language. Most theoretical linguists, including the noted researcher Noam Chomsky, argue that people have little more than a "language organ" -- an inherent capacity for language that's activated during early childhood. On the other hand, researchers like Dr. Roni Katzir of Tel Aviv University's Department of Linguistics insist that what humans can actually learn is still an open question -- and he has built a computer program to try and find an answer.

Teaching Chinese in America

More and more, Americans are learning a second language and Chinese is emerging as a language of choice. Terry McCarthy explores the latest linguistic trend.

AFOSI Airman selected Language Professional of the Year

An agent with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations was recently selected as the Air Force Language Professional of the Year. Special Agent Slava is being recognized by the LPOY program for his linguist work with Department of Defense missions overseas, where he advised senior DOD officials, supported force-protection efforts and conducted liaison activities with foreign officials. He is fluent in Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and English. Due to the nature of his work as an AFOSI agent, a pseudonym is being used for his name. SA Slava was inspired to join the Air Force by his grandfather, who was a World War II pilot. SA Slava joined in 1998 and began exploring opportunities as a linguist in 2002.