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## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

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### **CURRENT NEWS 01 MARCH 2011**

#### **Foreign Language Pains**

Foreign language courses are a colossal waste of time. Need to understand why Americans don't speak foreign languages? Just read this article by a student from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. "I can understand foreign language being a necessity if it's something you will need to use directly with your degree. Say, if you're majoring in a foreign language or something like that. Otherwise, a foreign language course is a waste of time, money and energy."

#### **Foreign Language Education Caught in Silly War of Words**

Like the article above? The Johnson County Republican Party executive committee adopted a resolution Tuesday condemning the Bush-era Arabic language and cultural studies lessons planned for a few schools in south Arlington and Mansfield. One blogger wrote, "One Nation, One Language, One Culture."

#### **In one of final addresses to Army, Gates describes vision for military's future**

The Secretary of Defense Robert Gates urged West Point cadets to take career risks by taking assignments that in the past might have been seen by their peers as career dead-ends. "I would encourage you to become a master of other languages and cultures, a priority of mine since taking this post," he said.

#### **Changes to Wyoming Hathaway scholarship in trouble**

The battle over foreign language requirements for scholarship eligibility continues in the state of Wyoming. The House wants to make foreign language optional in high school for all four levels of the state-funded Hathaway scholarship, while the Senate wants to keep foreign language mandatory for the top two scholarship levels that award the most money.

#### **Baylor Sophomore Receives Critical Language Scholarship to China**

A Baylor University sophomore has received the Critical Language Scholarship provided by the U.S. State Department to study in an immersion program in China this summer.

#### **English in Schools Too Easy for Pupils**

Young people in Finland speak English so well that many schools have decided to step up the level of teaching. According to the Finnish National Board of Education, a change in curriculum might be on the cards. Many Finnish pupils find that their English language curriculum has few challenges to offer. They encounter a lot of English outside of school, because it has gained an important place in the Finnish youth culture and on the internet.

#### **Simple Guide to Speaking Foreign Languages**

1. Have the right learning approach. 2. Stop learning the language, and start speaking it! 3. Don't wait to finish the course – take matters into your own hands! 4. You don't need to travel to speak the language. 5. A positive attitude is key.

### **PREVIOUS NEWS**

#### **Experiencing a revolution: West Point cadets witness history in Egypt**

West Point cadets went to Egypt to study language but unwittingly became witnesses to history in the making. Eight members of the Class of 2012, Cadets Brett Schuck, Brendan Mahoney, Brendan Lopez, Patrick O'Shaughnessy, Matthew McGoffin, Kalan Snyder, Jason Steimelm and Bennett Holcomb, along with two U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen, arrived in Egypt Jan. 25, for a semester-long Study Abroad

program at the American University in Cairo. "From the first day we flew into Cairo, despite the unpredictable situation, we all wanted to stay," Snyder said via e-mail. "It was electric. It wasn't the civil war we watched on the news. It was just an exciting time for the Egyptian people and we felt it was a rare privilege to be there, even when most Western reporters and others were afraid to come in."

### **ROTC Language Courses**

Pentagon Channel clip focusing on the ROTC skill proficiency bonus with interviews from Ms. Nancy Weaver, DoD Senior Language Authority, and two Georgetown University cadets.

### **More officers headed for foreign liaison jobs**

The Air Force is more than doubling its number of international jobs while at the same time ratcheting up standards for the career field. More than 1,050 officers will have foreign liaison assignments after the service adds 619 slots to its international affairs specialist program. Today, 531 officers serve abroad in outreach roles. "If we underestimate the significance of language, region and culture in our global endeavors, we do so at our own risk and to the detriment of our effectiveness," Schwartz told an audience last month at a Defense Department language and culture summit.

### **Reaching Afghanistan's hidden war widows in Helmand**

After decades of conflict in Afghanistan, there are almost two million widows leading secluded, poverty-stricken lives. But now all-female army units are going into remote villages in an effort to integrate these women into wider society.

### **FETs communicate with Afghan women**

"The female engagement team ... has been around for the past nine years, we are just starting to put a name on it now," said Lt. Col. Teresa Wolfgang, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion commander. "Fifty percent of the Afghan people are women; if you ignore 50 percent of the population, you're not going to get that much information. This is Afghan culture and we have to respect it, that's where the female engagement team comes into play."

### **Another "New Afghan Eagle" leaves for the United States**

First Lt. Hamidullah Amin, a pilot candidate in the Afghan Air Force and student at the Afghan Air Force English immersion lab known as the "Thunder Lab" in here, flew from the Kabul International Airport to a partner nation in the Middle East to start pilot training Wednesday. Amin is also one of the last of the original flight to leave. He will head to Defense Language Institute where will receive advance English training. "Amin has to pass two English comprehension language tests covering information he learned at Thunder Lab. After a couple of refreshers and an exam, he will be admitted to flight school," said White.

### **Department adds three language majors**

Binghamton University's Department of Asian and Asian American Studies is offering three new language majors beginning this semester — Japanese, Korean and Chinese — at a time when language programs are facing cuts across the SUNY system. "Creating a new major takes a long time," Nieman said. "We have to generate resources, recruit faculty, develop courses and make proposals for the majors to SUNY and the State Department of Education. So, in reality, creation of the new majors began several years ago and is coming to fruition now."

### **Speaking in cultural tongues**

This week could be a pivotal one for thousands of Lafayette Parish students as they attend lotteries and learn whether they will attend a School of Choice. Among the choices is the program that showed parents they could have a choice in public education. French Immersion has grown ninefold in two decades. French Immersion has served as more than a foreign language program. It has been a way to preserve culture in Louisiana, said Elaine Clément, community outreach coordinator for the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, or CODOFIL.

### **Application Is The Key To Learning A New Language, Fast**

No, it's not the Rosetta Stone. Like most skills, the key to really acquiring a foreign language is to actually apply it. "Language hacker" Benny the Irish Polyglot (who learned to speak eight languages fluently within seven years) shares his best [zenhabits strategy](#) for learning a new language: start speaking it with other people *right now*.

### **The Forgotten Half: Female Engagement Teams**

Half way around the world and 5 months into the de-ployment has drastically changed my preconceived ideas of what my role would be as the provincial re-construction team's female medical officer. If you told me last June that I would be in Afghanistan meeting with provincial leaders from the Department of Public Health or Department of Women's Affairs to assist and mentor the development of the Afghan health system and improve the lives of families through women's empowerment; I would have looked around trying to figure out who you were talking to.

### **What Happens in Vagueness Stays in Vagueness: The decline and fall of American English, and stuff**

I recently watched a television program in which a woman described a baby squirrel that she had found in her yard. "And he was like, you know, 'Helloooo, what are you looking at?' and stuff, and I'm like, you know, 'Can I, like, pick you up?,' and he goes, like, 'Brrrp brrrp brrrp,' and I'm like, you know, 'Whoa, that is so wow!'" She rambled on, speaking in self-quotations, sound effects, and other vocabulary substitutes, punctuating her sentences with facial tics and lateral eye shifts. All the while, however, she never said anything specific about her encounter with the squirrel. Uh-oh. It was a classic case of Vagueness, the linguistic virus that infected spoken language in the late twentieth century.

### **Foreign Languages Avoid Budget Cuts**

At least one subject has remained off the chopping block despite multimillion-dollar budget cuts at Long Beach Unified School District. Student demand for foreign language programs, especially at the middle school level, continues to increase, said curriculum director Pamela Seki. Additionally, a minimum two years of foreign language is a typical college admission requirement that high schools must meet. "We are in a difficult time, but when schools have enough students interested in learning a language, then we find a way to make that happen," Seki said.