
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

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Wisconsin National Guard members selected for all-female Special Forces team

Four Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers have been selected for the Female Engagement Team, an all female supporting Army Special Combat forces by interacting with local women in combat zones. "It took a lot of resilience, solid work ethic and teamwork," Elegeert said, adding that these same principles will be needed to prepare for the upcoming mission. "Gaining maximum mental awareness and physical strength is a must," she said. It was the most difficult and challenging thing I have done in my entire 25-plus years in the military," Dumke said. "I believe it was basically an abbreviated version of what the males must go through in order to be selected to enter the Special Forces." Army Sgt. Sonia Buchanan of the Wisconsin Joint Force Headquarters, said there was no feedback during the assessment process until the final day.

UK Female Engagement Teams prepare for deployment to Afghanistan

Last week twenty-two female soldiers received training from the Military Stabilisation Support Group (MSSG) and the Stabilisation Unit in preparation for their deployment as part of a Female Engagement Team (FET). Five civilian experts also attended, two of whom will deploy to Helmand as Stabilisation Advisors in a couple of weeks time. FETs are made up of female soldiers and have been developed to enable the military to better engage with communities in Afghanistan.

Chinese score low in English proficiency test

Chinese have poor English skills despite their huge efforts in language training, according to a study released today. China ranks only the 29th in the English Proficiency Index, a lower range, and behind Asian rivals such as Malaysia, Japan and South Korea. Test-oriented, rote learning habits did not give Chinese students the real language skills, education experts said. The EPI report was based on a free online English test participated by 2 million adults from 44 countries and regions where English is not the native language.

Language Bowl puts students' knowledge of French, German, Latin and Spanish to the test

Teams of students from 18 area high schools put their knowledge of French, German, Latin and Spanish to the test in an academic competition, followed by a more irreverent song contest. Participation in the language bowl was up this year, which pleased Sylvia Rode, who chairs the USI Department of Modern and Classical Languages. USI has worked with local schools on training events for language teachers and also on a college credit opportunities for students. Under the latter program, high school students can receive college credit in language courses taught by masters-level instructors, Rode said.

OPINION

Fuzzy thinking on multiculturalism

"Multiculturalism" is similar. Some things that are reasonably labeled "multiculturalism" are mostly bad, and others are mostly good. We can all imagine bad versions of multiculturalism — ones that dramatically undermine the social cohesion necessary to maintain order or defend the nation in war; ones in which many people in a modern economy speak mutually unintelligible languages; ones in which members of some subcultures feel comfortable violently attacking people, whether of their own culture or of others; and so on. But America is also founded on its own sort of multiculturalism, which has usually (though not always) stood us in good stead. Here are four constitutional manifestations of this multiculturalism.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Examples of the Interagency Language Roundtable Scale

The following descriptions of proficiency levels 0+, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 characterize spoken-language use. Each higher level implies control of the previous levels' functions and accuracy. The designation 1+, 2+, etc. will be assigned when proficiency substantially exceeds one skill level and does not fully meet the criteria for the next level.

Foreign etiquette for Americans: A guide to dos and don'ts abroad

On a trade mission in Brazil in 1974, McKain's mouth was full at a welcome dinner when a local mayor asked whether he was enjoying his first Brazilian meal. McKain made an okay gesture with his thumb and index finger — a gesture akin to extending a middle finger in the USA. "The mayor literally dropped his jaw and his fork," recalls McKain, an author and professional speaker in Fishers, Ind. "Fortunately, my age and inexperience allowed the more seasoned members of our delegation to prevent any lasting damage from my mistake — and we all ended up in laughter minutes later. But it taught me a lesson I have never forgotten."

Technology helping students with language lessons

Vilaranda, a languages teacher at UCC, demonstrated the benefits of XpressLab, a computer software system designed by teachers in Windsor. The program uses interactive audio and video technology to help students learn second languages. Students at UCC are using it for their lessons in French and Spanish. Among other things, the program allows teachers to record lesson plans on the system. Vilaranda said this means students can gain a better understanding by playing back the lessons as many times as they wish without holding up the rest of the class. Students can also record their voices and listen back to compare their pronunciation with their teacher's examples as well as with samples from their peers. The Internet-based system also means that students can access XpressLab from home.

Area Students Learn, Compete at Cultural Bowl

A total of 110 area high school students participated in the annual Spanish Cultural Bowl at Penn State DuBois this year. Those students came from DuBois, Brookville, and Johnsonburg high schools. Organized by Associate Professor of Spanish Deborah Gill, students test their proficiency with the Spanish language by competing through various activities, including written and oral exercises. A talent portion is also held, in which students can perform songs or dance routines. All signing must also be done in Spanish. Gill said the bowl is intended to be a fun way for young people to use and practice their language skills, and to fuel their interest.

Speaking foreign language opens many doors

A young man of about 21 sat down directly across from me, a book in his hand. I just had to find out what he was reading. Mon dieu, quelle bonne surprise. (My goodness, what a nice surprise.) It was a book of old French short stories, "Contes Populaires" ("Popular Stories"). Seeing him holding that book, written in my favorite language, I felt a second wind start to kick in. Without saying a word, I pointed out to him a copy of "Nous Deux," the magazine I was carrying. He smiled and we started to speak in French. Our conversation continued until the plane touched down in Phoenix, about an hour and a half later. As I waited out a flight delay in the Phoenix airport, it occurred to me that it doesn't matter which foreign language you speak and not even how fluently you speak it. Learning a foreign language opens doors to many interesting things, but especially to people.

Less than half of students accepted to international summer programs

Acceptance numbers for the Princeton in Spain and Princeton in Bermuda summer programs were released this week. Of the 90 students who applied to Princeton in Spain, 35 were accepted. Of the 35 who applied to Princeton in Bermuda, 16 were chosen, with an additional three students placed on a waitlist. Now in its fourth year, Princeton in Spain is a four-week program held in Toledo, Spain, and open to current freshmen and sophomores. While in Toledo, students are divided into two levels and take either SPA 207S: Studies in Spanish Language and Culture or SPA 310S: Spanish Art and Culture.

Breaking Language Barriers

Recruiting workers with strong foreign language skills, especially in national security roles, is an ongoing struggle for federal agencies. But the National Security Education Program is providing some relief. Designed to build a broader and more qualified pool of candidates with foreign language and international skills, NSEP focuses on the cultures of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. The program is administered by the Defense Department and a 13-member advisory board chaired by Samuel D. Kleinman, deputy assistant secretary for readiness. Other members include senior officials from the Commerce, Education, Energy, Homeland Security and State departments.

At Albany, Half a Loaf or Crumbs?

Late in the day on Thursday, the university announced that French and Russian would survive as minors, and that some instruction would continue in Italian. The French program currently extends to the doctoral level and the other language programs slated for elimination offer bachelor's degrees. Thursday's statement from the university said that "[t]hese actions will ensure that these program areas have a strong presence and expertise within the university," and that students would be able to study French and Russian as "focused secondary subjects." But faculty leaders said that they had little information on how the language programs would evolve.

John Hartmann: Citizen of the world

In 1975, John Hartmann, a young professor of Thai language and culture at NIU, received his first research grant to conduct linguistic fieldwork in, of all places, Iowa. With leftover grant money, he hired a graduate student to write a computer program converting the alpha-numeric field data into printable Tai Dam script, which previously could only be reproduced by hand with Chinese brush and ink. It wasn't long before the National Security Agency, which was trying to develop its own computer-aided instruction programs, contacted the young researchers, asking them to produce a much-needed font for standard Thai — an historic first.

Chinese students enrolling in U.S. colleges in record numbers

Of the 691,000 foreign students who enrolled in American universities in the 2009-2010 academic year, nearly 128,000 — or 18 percent — were Chinese. China exported more students to the United States than any other country last academic year and 30 percent more Chinese students than the previous year, according to the Institute for International Education's Open Doors 2010 report, published with support from the State Department.

Area students 'living' in foreign language at Austin College

Educators say the best way to learn the language of another country is to spend time among its people and culture. Austin College offers its language students the next best thing. Students of German, French, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese may live in the college's language residence hall where they speak and learn languages day-to-day. The residents are exposed to daily, intensive practice in speaking the designated language and must speak it in all common areas of the residence.

Fighting the Propaganda War in Afghanistan with New and Old Media

The war of words or an Information War is on in Afghanistan. In a nation where people get their news via old media outlets — tv and radio — the U.S. is turning up its mixed approach to fighting the Taliban.