
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 14 APRIL 2011

Official Swedish in Danger in Finland: Report

According to a report on minority languages, the position of Swedish is threatened by officials' poor language skills and the lack of opportunities to study the language. The report commends Finnish legislation on minority languages, but asks for corrections to deficiencies in its implementation. Despite the legal position, speakers of Swedish and the three indigenous Sami dialects of Lapland find it difficult to get services in their own languages in public services, police or health care.

Language degree opens international doors

As students enter Washburn looking to earn a bachelor's of arts, they will eventually need to take at least one course in a foreign language. The thought of attempting a new language can be very daunting, but there are numerous students who attack the languages with vigor, deciding to complete a major emphasizing on a foreign language.

Va family helps others bridge language gap

Baraka Kasongo remembers the day in 2001 his family arrived in Roanoke from Zambia wearing their USRP-stamped clothes — to distinguish them as participants of the U.S. Refugee Program. In just 10 years, the 25-year-old has more than shed his outsider status by filling that language gap — for himself and many other immigrants. With the help of his parents and his older brother, Amour, the Congolese man launched a Roanoke County-based interpreting business called Volatia that employs the services of 75 interpreters locally, many of them freelance part-timers.

Some 100 kindergarten spots open at South Bay Language Academy

Those interested in enrolling their [kindergarten students](#) in the expanding Nestor Language Academy must attend an informational [meeting](#) in the coming weeks. Some 100 openings will be available in kindergarten. [Middle school](#) meetings, for 60 spaces in an expanded [eighth grade](#), were held earlier this month. The two-way Spanish immersion school, in which 90 percent of educational time is in Spanish and 10 percent in English, began 15 years ago as a program within a school. The South Bay Union School District campus became a full-fledged [charter school](#) this year and currently serves 787 students.

Teaching English overseas: Graduates with a foreign language have a huge edge in the job market

There are pros and cons about being a native speaker of English. One advantage, of course, is the ease with which English speakers can move around the world, on holiday or on business. But a disadvantage is that it breeds laziness. Far too many of us Brits, either consciously or unconsciously, don't really bother with learning a foreign language. "Languages give you so much more flexibility in terms of where you work and how quickly you get promotion," says Teresa Tinsley, director of communications at CILT, the Government-funded National Centre for Languages, which, among other things, provides support and career guidance to anyone who uses languages in their work. "Language graduates need to show that through learning a language they have gained international awareness and international business awareness," she argues. "[Language learning](#) gives you such a broad range of skills."

LANGUAGE OPENS WORLD

Azama, 42, was selected the Regional Foreign Language Teacher of the Year in a competition at the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching last weekend in Fort Worth, Texas. He represented California in the competition, and will go on to the national competition in November. It's not the first time Azama was recognized for his skills. Last year, he was one of five language teachers in California to receive an Outstanding Teacher Award from the California Language Teachers' Association.

[PREVIOUS NEWS](#)

[Language under fire](#)

Schools across the nation have been cutting traditional foreign language programs, while enrollment of students studying those languages has been climbing, according to two recent studies on the subject. Arabic, Chinese, Korean and American Sign Language have displayed a significantly increasing presence in higher education curricula, according to a report by the Modern Language Association. Despite growing numbers of interested students, the economic recession, which has left many institutions faced with budget concerns, might explain why many universities have decided to cut funding toward foreign language programs with lower student interest and fewer faculty, according to a study conducted by Steven Brint, sociology professor and associate dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of California at Riverside.

[Mayor Daley Announces Grants For Chinese Language, Culture Programs \(VIDEO\)](#)

At a visit to a prominent architecture firm in downtown Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley announced Monday nearly half a million dollars in grants to support the school system's Chinese language and culture programs. "The world is getting smaller," the mayor said at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. "We have to prepare our students for this global community. We cannot allow them to be left behind."

[Law promoting American Sign Language okayed](#)

Public high schools, colleges and universities in Virginia must accept American Sign Language toward fulfillment of foreign language requirements under a bill that received final approval by the General Assembly last week. House Bill 1435 says high schools must "count completion of an American Sign Language course toward the fulfillment of any foreign language requirement for graduation." Moreover, such courses "shall be counted toward satisfaction of the foreign language entrance requirements of a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth."

[Foreign Language Axed at NC A&T](#)

The [North Carolina A&T State University](#) Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Goldie Byrd, announced that the foreign language Bachelor of Arts degree programs would no longer be offered in Spanish and French, and that the department would be completely phased out in two years.

[Ready for English?](#)

Fifth- and sixth-grade teachers will have one new worry starting this month — teaching English. All elementary schools must introduce compulsory foreign language lessons. Despite the difficulties of implementing this national strategy for English education, it is high time Japan took its English level more seriously. Only North Korea scores lower than Japan on the TOEFL exam in the Asian region.

[Mandarin squeezed in tight school curriculum](#)

Prime Minister John Key last year complained that the number of secondary school students learning Mandarin had only just overtaken the number learning Latin. Mr Key urged young New Zealanders to improve their general understanding of Chinese culture and suggested a campaign was needed to have Mandarin taught in schools. Only 101 of the country's 2500 schools offer Chinese language classes, many after school hours. While the number learning Mandarin has quadrupled in the past decade, to 10,230, progress has come from a very low base.

[Students fight McGill language course changes](#)

As Michael Beauvais was scanning McGill's course catalogue last week deciding what courses to take next year, he made a troubling discovery. "The classes I needed to complete my Russian translation program were no longer being offered," said Beauvais, who is winding up the second year of a joint honours in Russian and Italian studies. "I find it absolutely disturbing that the administration can just pull funding away and force students to change their programs."

More Pupils Are Learning Online, Fueling Debate on Quality

Mr. Hamilton, 18, is among the expanding ranks of students in kindergarten through Grade 12 — more than one million in the United States, by one estimate — taking online courses. Advocates of such courses say they allow schools to offer not only makeup courses, the fastest-growing area, but also a richer menu of electives and [Advanced Placement classes](#) when there are not enough students to fill a classroom. But critics say online education is really driven by a desire to spend less on teachers and buildings, especially as state and local budget crises force deep cuts to education. They note that there is no sound research showing that online courses at the K-12 level are comparable to face-to-face learning.

Finding Top Talent in China, India, Brazil

U.S. and European multinational corporations are raising their bets on booming emerging markets. The trick is finding the right executives to play their hands. In rapidly growing countries such as Brazil, China and India, tapping expatriates is becoming obsolete. Instead, global businesses are looking for leaders who have the ability to move easily between different cultures and have deep local roots as well as international operational experience.

IARPA Babel program seeks to provide translation and intelligence analysis for any known language

Officials of the U.S. Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA) in Washington are asking companies and universities for help in a project to transcribe and [translate any language](#) quickly for further analysis. The IARPA Incisive Analysis Office issued a broad agency announcement (IARPA-BAA-11-02) last week for the [Babel program](#), which seeks to develop [speech-recognition technology](#) for any human language that will help U.S. intelligence analysts search and process massive amounts of recorded speech.

Language translation apps for Smartphones make traveling lighter

Translation apps have recently taken over, dramatically improving the experience and lightening the suitcase a little. More words and phrases have been packed into the new generation of apps, which can translate even complicated sentences saddled with one or more dependent clauses. Thanks to advances in speech-recognition technology, several apps let you skip typing and instead dictate a sentence to have the translation spoken back to you immediately -- or to the person to whom you're talking -- in a natural human voice. Best of all, many are free.

Local schools get a buzz from Foreign Language Spelling Bee

Twelve talented young students have won a place in a national final after demonstrating their language skills at the Routes into Languages East Foreign Languages Spelling Bee. The competition has captured the imagination of over 40 schools across the East of England, with around 4,800 Year 7 pupils battling it out to spell the highest number of words in French, German or Spanish.

RCSD Budget Deeply Cuts Art, Music, Foreign Language

A school board analysis of the Rochester City School District's proposed [budget](#) provides specifics that confirm information principals gave staff and parents weeks ago: the budget will deeply cut into art, music, foreign language, and physical [education](#). The district released a 300-page budget proposal two weeks ago that called for 908 job cuts, but the document did not specify subject areas or programs that would be affected.