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## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

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### **CURRENT NEWS 30 NOVEMBER 2011**

#### **'Language Gene' May Influence Learning Too**

*(Discovery News)*...Marianne English

The [FOXP2 gene](#), a front-runner to explain the evolution of language in humans, may have rewired the brain to allow more advanced learning, according to [preliminary research](#) presented at the Society for Neuroscience annual meeting this month. Science writer [Ed Yong points out](#) that FOXP2's place in human evolution may have more to do with building basic neural connections in the brain rather than regulating language alone. Overall, it seems that FOXP2 acts as one piece to the larger puzzle of language development. In fact, the gene is thought to control other genes that shape an organism's ability to learn certain motor skills.

#### **Labour backs English baccalaureate to boost languages study**

*(Guardian)*...Jeevan Vasagar & Jessica Shepherd

Stephen Twigg, who was appointed shadow education secretary last month, gave qualified praise to the measure, which he said might reverse the decline in children studying languages. In 2003 the Labour government decided to make languages optional after 14, a change that was introduced from September 2004. Language study has waned steadily since then. This year there were 154,000 entries for GCSE French, compared with more than 300,000 in 2004.

#### **Degrees of separation: UNC's foreign language consortium needs a classroom environment**

*(Daily Tarheel)*...Editorial Board

At first glance, offering popular language courses such as French, German and Spanish online may sound like just another desperate attempt to cut back on expenses. But executive committee chairwoman of the UNC Faculty Assembly Sandie Gravett, who works closely with the UNC Foreign Language Assembly, said the move to online courses is about "enhancing language instruction throughout the UNC system," not finding another way to save money.

#### **Bilingual education key to Australia's future in Asian century**

*(Radio Australia)*

The learning of foreign languages has been an issue of much debate in Australia.

Some people argue that Australia in the Asian century may be disadvantaged because future generations are not picking up regional languages, particularly Mandarin and Indonesian. Now it seems that more and more Australian parents are placing importance on their children speaking a second language. And bilingual immersion programs could be the key.

#### **Bilingual Ed Starts Early in St. Louis**

*(CBS St. Louis)*...Stephanie Ebbs

Almost every aspect of these students' school day is in Spanish. Only one flight of stairs away, another class is doing the same thing in French. Everything from class work to art class is in a foreign language to completely immerse children in a bilingual environment. Interest in charter schools has gone up in recent years because of the poor quality of public schools in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas.

### **PREVIOUS NEWS**

#### **Translating Afghanistan**

*(Wall Street Journal)*...Anne Jolis

On Friday night, about 12 miles west of Kandahar City, roughly 40 men sit facing each other in a low-ceilinged hall on the Afghan side of the military base. Meet the interpreters of the U.S. Third Infantry

Brigade Combat Team of the 10th Mountain Division. All are Afghan natives, though some are now U.S. citizens as well. For the moment, they all call the base home. And in the past month, three of them have gotten engaged—an occasion to celebrate. Once business started to dwindle in California in 2008, Sharif—now a U.S. citizen—went to work as a military interpreter. "The salary is good, a lot of my friends are doing it," he tells me outside over cigarettes and cola. But the country is "not safe," he adds, "even this place we're sitting now." In the past year the base has been the target of semi-regular rocket attacks.

### **Will English kill off India's languages?**

(BBC)...Mark Tully

English is one of the advantages India has which are said to be propelling it to economic superpower status. There are all those Indians who speak excellent English. It's the mother tongue of the elite and effectively the official language of the central government. Then there is the growing number of parents who now aspire to give their children an education through the medium of that language. But is the craze for English an unmixed blessing?

### **Raising bilingual children**

(Bangkok Post)

It all began five years ago when Pongrapee Tachapahapong, Peipei's father, found an inspiring passage in a Japanese book authored by Masaru Ibuka and translated into Thai under the title *Kwa Ja Ruu Kor Sai Sia Laew*, or "kindergarten is too late". The book completely changed his perspective towards learning English as a second language. In the book the author had noted the most suitable period for linguistic and cognitive development of a child were from the time they were nine months to three years old. And Pongrapee set himself the goal to raise Peipei to be bilingual in Thai and English. The family chose the One Parent One Language (OPOL) system, one of the most practical and well-recognised strategies for raising bilingual children in which each parent speaks one language to their child - Pongrapee speaks English to Peipei, while his wife speaks Thai to her at all times.

### **Be bicultural, not just bilingual**

(AsiaOne Business)...Reico Wong

Singapore needs to step up its efforts to groom more bicultural individuals - not just bilingual ones - to ensure that it has a real advantage when engaging with China, said Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean yesterday. "Yet, while being bilingual opens doors to new opportunities, it is by being bicultural that we can reach deeper inside China to fully understand its growth story and ride on its tremendous potential."

### **Celebrities fluent in a foreign language**

(TheCelebrityCafe.com)...Jacklyn Rose

Bradley Cooper's fluency in French helped him become the 2011 "Sexiest Man Alive" in *People* but he is not the only one with bilingual talents. Many Hollywood stars are just as hot speaking in German or Russian as they are in English. Here are a few: Sandra Bullock, Michael Fassbender, Mila Kunis, Viggo Mortensen, Charlize Theron, and others.

### **Report: Fix Corps' foreign language program**

(Marine Corps Times)...Gidget Fuentes & Joe Gould

The Marine Corps and Army do a poor job tracking how much language and cultural training troops have received, leaving commanders in the dark when it comes time to assign troops with these skills, according to a congressional watchdog agency. The two services also spend millions during pre-deployment training to teach troops to speak foreign languages, but they lack plans to sustain these skills and use them for ongoing operations, the Government Accountability Office found. Without programs to ensure these skills don't lapse, the "Army and Marine Corps may not fully maximize the return on investment already made for pre-deployment language training for current operations," GAO analysts wrote.

### **Female Engagement Teams foil insurgent tactics**

(dvids)...Chief Petty Officer Michael Ard

In Afghan culture, men do not enter a woman's room or search a female, even during an official action. Insurgents took advantage of forces who respected the customs and culture of Afghans by simply

handing their weapons to the women and children of the household or even dressing themselves in burkas to avoid being searched or discovered by members of the security forces. "Having women in the platoon specially trained to search women and children, as well as protect themselves, turns the tables on insurgents," said Jennifer, who serves as a Task Force 82 female mentor. "No longer are illegal weapons and substances going to be missed because of cultural respect. These special police females can not only safely clear a room, they can then search the women and children in it for contraband."

### **With Blocks, Educators Go Back to Basics**

*(New York Times)*...Kyle Spencer

Studies dating to the 1940s indicate that blocks help children absorb basic math concepts. [One published in 2001](#) tracked 37 preschoolers and found that those who had more sophisticated block play got better math grades and standardized test scores in high school. And a [2007 study by Dimitri Christakis](#), director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Hospital, found that those with block experience scored significantly better on language acquisition tests.

### **Libyan Berbers protest outside PM's office**

*(Reuters)*...Francois Murphy

Several hundred people from one of Libya's biggest ethnic minority groups pushed their way to the doors of the prime minister's office on Sunday to press their demands for greater representation. The Amazigh, or Berber, people are seeking recognition of their language and culture now that Muammar Gaddafi's repressive rule is over, and their demands are causing tensions with the Arab majority.

### **Language opens cultural windows: City native Nick Miller puts linguistic skills to work in Saigon school**

*(The Times-Tribune)*

"The limits of my language means the limits of my world," wrote Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Scranton native Nick Miller seems to agree. The 23-year-old is proficient in a half-dozen languages, but he also knows words and phrases from almost 50 languages, literally ranging from A (Albanian) to Z (Zulu). He's putting his skills to good use and is teaching Mandarin Chinese at an international school to mostly American, Vietnamese, and Japanese students in Ho Chih Minh City, Vietnam.

### **Two GA Colleges Win Language Grants**

*(GPB News)*

North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega and Atlanta's Georgia Institute of Technology are among three American colleges to receive \$720,000 from the U.S. Department of Defense to spend on teaching Chinese. North Georgia is on pace to double the size of its Chinese teaching staff in just five years. Only three schools nationwide got the grant this year, including a second in Georgia, the Georgia Institute of Technology. Participants will spend a year in China, and then take a national test to demonstrate their proficiency in Chinese.