

A collection of information and links to websites concerning Early Language Learning

January 2010

NNELL Events at ACTFL

NNELL Business Meeting

Advocacy was the theme of the business meeting. Below are ideas shared on how to advocate for programs:

- Get parents involved!
- Contact students who have participated in the program and use this positive feedback as proof and encouragement for programs to continue.
- Use Skype meetings to reach out to others in the community to gain support for programs.
- Visit www.fairfaxflags.org for more ideas.
- Available on the NNELL website are materials Amanda Seewald has created to help turn parents into advocates.

Click here to log in to the NNELL website and access the [advocacy resources](#) shared in the meeting.

State representatives' news:

- Pattie Davis-Wiley (TN) held a TN-NELL network luncheon. Pre-conferences workshops are held and the money collected is used towards scholarships/conferences.
- Kathy Olson-Studler (MN) holds a swapshop breakfast sponsored by EMC. There are networking sessions available, as well as the list serv.
- Beatrix Preusse-Burr (VA) had a workshop, in which Marjorie Hall Haley presented on Multiple Intelligences. FLAVA funds a table for NNELL at the state conference.
- Joanne Jones (IN) shared that Helena Curtain presented at the IN-NELL. Superintendents from the area were invited to a meeting before the conference. IN-NELL has its own website and Facebook page. INFLTA and Teachers of Spanish and French have been trying to find a voice for early language learning.
- Christie Moraga (CT) uses her network and journals as a way to connect with members. CT-COLT continues to celebrate the Rhyme Celebration. These contests have been posted on Youtube.com. This year's theme is "Discover Friendship."
- Michele Hallot (AR) had a networking workshop focused on ELL. Teachers of grade 9-12 also

attended. AR is an English only state and they are having difficulty starting an immersion program because of the English only status.

- Marcella Summerville (PA) shared that there are many programs in PA, however, it is difficult to keep these EL programs going. Meetings are being held with parents, but programs are still cut. PA does not have FL standards.
- Amanda Seewald (NJ) reported that there are no FL cuts at this time, since FL is part of the state standards and would violate the law. The parents are the most important voices to press for FL programs.

NNELL Swapshop Breakfast

The keynote speaker was **Marty Abbott** and her address focused on advocacy. Click here to log in to the NNELL website and access Marty Abbott's [advocacy presentation](#).

State Senator Patrick Steadman of District 31 in CO spoke to the attendees of the Swapshop Breakfast. He focused on how to educate your senators and representatives on the issues that are important to you. His thoughts included:

- Plan for a short meeting.
- Have talking points and be brief.
- Leave voicemail messages explaining your requests.

NNELL Sessions

Handouts from the NNELL sponsored sessions are available in the members-only pages of the NNELL website.

- Let's Make Music: The Power of Many Voices
- Starting a State Early Language Learning Network
- Increasing Student's Communication Through Partner Gap Activities

Click here to log in to the NNELL website and access the [presentation handouts](#).

Languages in the News

Language input and semantic categories: A relation between cognition and early word learning¹

In this study, Borovsky and Elman explore how language input influences the development of category knowledge

¹ Link submitted by Meriem Bousaidi.

(e.g., colors, ball sports, and presidents of the United States), and how category knowledge influences the learning of vocabulary (p. 760).

In their review of the literature, Borovsky and Elman demonstrate that though the debate on the interaction between language and categorization is not entirely conclusive, it is clear that the role of input has some effect on a child's ability to acquire vocabulary. Their findings bear this out to some extent. For example, disadvantage arises in the case of children who grow up in impoverished linguistic environments. These children lack a sufficient amount of language input associated with the development of category knowledge. It could therefore be helpful to provide focused training on category development to improve learning vocabulary in these kinds of children, and thus help make up for the deficiencies in their prior linguistic experience. But they offer a caveat about the findings of their research, namely that the input they relied on in their computational simulations was simplified and excluded other forms of perceptual input which may also contribute to developing category awareness. Still, their findings support the idea that there exists a relationship between the development of category knowledge and vocabulary learning.

Click here to read [Language input and semantic categories: A relation between cognition and early word learning](#) by Borovsky and Elman.

*Do Bilingual Persons Have Distinct Language Areas In The Brain?*²

This is a press announcement recently released by a study conducted at the University of Haifa which indicates evidence that 2nd language acquisition may be represented in a different part of the brain than primary or native language acquisition - the findings of the study were not conclusive. The full article was originally published in the *Behavioral and Brain Functions* journal, as written by Dr. Raphiq Ibrahim.

Click here to read [Do Bilingual Persons Have Distinct Language Areas In The Brain?](#)

International Children's Digital Library³

The International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) Foundation, a non-profit organization, recognizes that due to increased intercontinental migration, families moving from, for example, Kenya to Finland have little to no access to children's literature in their first language (L1) which comes from their homeland. With this in mind, the ICDL makes available online selections of the best children's literature from around the globe. In doing so, the ICDL seeks to address the needs and interests of families who move among and across continents who want their children to grow up with knowledge of their family's heritage and L1, in addition to the majority language and heritage in their new home. Among the goals of the ICDL foundation are:

- To collect 10,000 books in at least 100 languages and make them available digitally for free.
- To collaborate with children as design partners to create technologies which promote the research, reading, and sharing of information about children's literature from around the world.

Click here to access the [International Children's Digital Library Foundation](#).

When Teachers Aren't Around: Confessions of a Language Student⁴

The video was a podcast of Glastonbury, Connecticut students talking about their experience in language class and the importance of studying another language. It was part of the ACTFL podcast contest.

Click here to watch [When Teachers Aren't Around: Confessions of a Language Student.](#)

Send information, comments, or questions for Newsworthy to Tammy Dann at trdann@q.com

Thank you to Robert Raymond, Leslie Zimring, and Alexandra Migoya for their help in preparing Newsworthy for publication.

² Link submitted by Meriem Bousaidi.

³ Link submitted by Bonnie Corretjer.

⁴ Link submitted by Heather Hendry.