

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

November 2010

LANGUAGES IN THE NEWS

*UCR Study Finds that DVDs Don't Help
Babies Learn Language*

In a recent report on a study examining the influence of videos designed with the goal of teaching language to very young children, researchers from the University of California Riverside (UCR), found no evidence that children between the ages of 12 and 24 months learned words from such videos. Research team leader, Rebekah Richert said, "Children have never learned language that way, and that hasn't changed with these types of videos." What is more, the social interaction between the parent, or an adult, and the child is a significant factor in child language development, for which a video alone is no adequate substitute.

The results of this study upholds findings of a study conducted last year at Children's Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School which indicate that TV viewing before the age of 2 does not improve a child's language and visual motor skills. These studies complement the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that babies under the age of 2 not be exposed to television. The UCR study indicates that the experimental group in the study – i.e., the children who were exposed to the videos, did not learn more words than the children in the control group – i.e., the group which was not exposed to the videos.

Click here to read [*UCR Study Finds that DVDs Don't Help Babies Learn Language*](#).

*How Global Language Learning Gives
Students the Edge*

In this report, author Dan Fost cautions that we must "shed our reluctance to speak any language other than English." Fost believes more [monolingual, English-speaking] students need to travel to other countries, citing as a central reason, "that kind of firsthand experience provides critical incentive to learn -- [that is, when] students make friends in other countries, they want to improve their language skills. The financial cost for overseas, interscholastic exchange can be expensive. Still, as Fost describes, there are a number of ways, by means of which intercultural exchange and language study can be deepened, without going abroad.

- First, there are a variety of electronic communications platforms available at little cost to schools which can be used to connect students in classrooms all over the globe.
- Second, there are government sponsored programs such as the National Security Language Initiative, through which scholarships are offered to students to spend part of, or a full, year studying abroad.
- Third, despite the recent backlash to bilingual education suffered in states like California and the anti-immigration sentiment, with which the discourse on immigration reform is imbued, immersion and dual-language immersion schools, in the places where they have successfully emerged, are often oversubscribed.

Though Fost describes the current landscape of language education in the US as littered with challenges, he remains optimistic. Due to the shift in the locus of economic and political power from the west to the east and the increased focus on security issues raised since 9/11, the scenario, claims Fost, is changing. Language education has moved from an emphasis on grammar to an emphasis today on communication skills and cultural competencies. What is more, we have begun to recognize that economics, public health, police work, and climate change among other issues all have international dimensions to them.

Click here to read [How Global Language Learning Gives Students the Edge](#).

**TIPS AND TOOLS FOR EARLY
LANGUAGE LEARNING**

**CLTA Foreign Language Advocacy
Committee**

This site links to the advocacy resources gathered by the California Language Teacher Association (CLTA). Some of the resources include:

- information shared from the College Board on the relationship between long sequences of language study and high scores on SATs and AP foreign language exams
- a summary of current legislation shared by the JNCL (Joint National Committee on Languages)
- ways to use cultural celebrations to communicate the benefits of learning foreign languages to the school community
- a list of facts and informative scenarios that show the benefits of multilingualism.– e.g. “According to

statistics released in 2004, 1 out of every 6 jobs created in the world is an international job.” And “Each year, nearly 200,000 Americans lose out on jobs with business because they do not know another language.”

These facts plus many others on the site are great concrete examples for advocating learning foreign language to students, parents, and administrators.

Click here to access the [CLTA Foreign Language Advocacy Committee](#).

Foreign Language News and Newspapers

Included in the library services provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is a page of Foreign Language news and newspapers. This page connects visitors to electronic journals, magazines, and newspapers in French, Spanish, Chinese, German, Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, and Russian.

Click here to access [Foreign Language News and Newspapers](#).

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