

Newsworthy

August 2011

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

Languages in the News

Being Bilingual May Boost Your Brain Power

A researcher from Toronto has helped to pinpoint some of the basic brain benefits that bilinguals enjoy. Studies show that the brain of a bilingual person keeps both languages active even if they are only speaking one. This means that the brain is always working to distinguish which language should be used in a given situation, providing a sort of mental exercise that helps keep cognitive pathways strong and healthy. These brain benefits help bilinguals perform better on certain cognitive tasks that required focusing on important information and avoiding distractions. Finally, researchers believe this kind of mental exercise may help delay the onset of dementia in older bilingual adults.

Click here to read [*Being Bilingual May Boost Your Brain Power.*](#)

Technology Cannot Replace Human Interaction

This blog from Little River School comments on a study done by brain researcher Patricia Kuhl. Her research shows that babies who were exposed to language learning videos only failed to have any measurable gain in ability to distinguish languages, but babies who were exposed to new languages through interactions with humans made remarkable progress. The study has implications for teachers who are deciding how much technology to incorporate into their classrooms.

Click here to read [*Technology Cannot Replace Human Interaction.*](#)

Benefits of Learning a Foreign Language at the Elementary Level

A recent article, *Benefits of Learning a Foreign Language at the Elementary Level*, published on the Web site *Bright Hub*, reinforces what those in the profession have been advocating for years: early language learning. The author, Audrey Alleyne, cites research studies that provide evidence of the benefits of early language learning. These benefits include: developing high levels of language proficiency, a boost in cognitive and creative abilities, achieving native-like pronunciation and intonation, and the transfer of literacy skills from the first language to the second. The article also discusses the critical period for learning languages and the effectiveness of using a thematic curriculum. It concludes by suggesting that legislatures in the U.S. are ignoring current brain research that has proved the cognitive benefits of learning foreign languages.

Click here to read [*Benefits of Learning a Foreign Language at the Elementary Level.*](#)

This issue of *Newsworthy* was compiled by Tammy Dann. Send any comments, questions, or information for future issues of *Newsworthy* to Tammy Dann at trdann@q.com.

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Tips and Tools for Early Language Learning

Storybird

This website allows students to select a variety of artwork and write about it. The artwork allows students to create stories using the amount of language they know and examples are given of possible stories. Many unique pieces are included in the samples.

Click here to access [Storybird](#).

Text 2 Mindmap

Visitors to the Text 2 Mind map site can change the outline on the left side of the screen to create a mind map using their own vocabulary and concepts to introduce. Once the text has been created, the font, text box and line color can be changed.

Teachers can use this resource to introduce or review concepts and vocabulary for a unit. It could also be used in presentational form, to make a large visual aid to group things and cluster items to show connections. Students can organize vocabulary and connect ideas learned in class.

This site is easy to use and personalize to meet the teaching or presentational needs of the language classroom.

Click here to access [Text 2 Mind map](#).

Audacity

Audacity is software where sounds and sound files can be manipulated. Language teachers can use this program to record their students speaking, as well and splice conversations together. Interviews and presentations can be recorded and manipulated to be used in a variety of ways, including podcasts.

Click here to access [Audacity](#).

National Capitol Language Resource Center: Feature Articles

The National Capital Language Resource Center provides a teaching topic link that features articles related to language teaching trends and innovations. Articles are divided among several topics including:

- Learner Diversity
- Language Learning Strategies, Teacher Training
- Assessment

Each topic includes an index and links to the full articles. The feature article for April addresses the work of the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy, describing current projects as they relate to ACTFL standards. Other recent articles address millennial learners and teaching in the target language.

Click here to read [National Capitol Language Resource Center: Feature Articles](#).