

Languages in the News

An Early Start: Young Learners and Modern Languages in Europe and Beyond

This site links readers to a compilation of articles from around the world that address the topic of an early start to foreign language learning. The compilation provides insight into the way in which early language learning is addressed internationally. Although different models are shared from various countries, Curtain and Nikolov conclude that simply an early start is not only what we should advocate, we should also consider the variables that can influence a successful early start to learning a foreign language. These variables include continuity and articulation, methodologies that may or may not be developmentally appropriate, and the need for research on outcomes reflecting expectations that are developmentally appropriate and in alignment with the way in which language is taught at an early age.

Click here to read [*An Early Start: Young Learners and Modern Languages in Europe and Beyond*](#).

Bilingualism appears to boost young children's mental abilities, study reports

A recent study at Cornell found that children who begin learning a second language early in life, strengthen their executive attention, or ability to attend to important input, dismiss unimportant input, and decide what actions to take as a result of the important input. The study was conducted on 56 four-year-olds,

children from middle-class neighborhoods whose parents were college-educated. The study compared U.S. native English-only speaking children, U.S. bilingual children (Korean-English), U.S. Korean-only speaking children and Korean-only speaking children in Korea. The Korean and Korean-English speaking children from the United States had first generation native Korean parents; the bilingual children had about 11 months of formal exposure to English through a bilingual daycare program. The study used a computer game to assess components of executive attention.

The U.S. bilingual children were the most successful out of the four groups. The study also was able to separate out the effects of bilingualism from the effects of culture. According to the article, in Korea children are raised with more behavioral control and taught to be more reserved than children in the U.S. The study showed that the children raised in Korea were more accurate with the game than the U.S. raised monolingual children. The researchers now want to discover how bilingualism improves executive function so that this may be capitalized on in the classroom.

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Tips and Tools for Early Language

CIA World Fact Book

The World Fact Book is published by the Central Intelligence Agency and is now only available online. It features reference maps, flags of the world, and country profiles. The information is updated bi-weekly to reflect current geography, resources, and economies.

Click here to access the [CIA World Fact Book](#).

Map of the Middle East

Test your knowledge of the Middle East with a new interactive map. Drag and drop the country name onto the correct country in the map. There is no time limit and no limit to the number of incorrect guesses. This challenge was created by *Rethinking Schools Online*.

Click here to access this interactive [Map of the Middle East](#).

Virtual Tour of Machu Picchu

Take a virtual tour in English, French or Spanish of Machu Picchu. Included in the site is an introduction to Machu Picchu, a map of the city, a virtual tour, and additional links about traveling, foods, birds, and Peru. Visitors can click different points on the map to begin the tour or click the "virtual tour" tab.

Click here to visit [Machu Picchu](#).

Mr. Picasso Head

Here's a way to combine art, technology, and language when teaching body parts. This site is similar to an online Mr. Potato Head but it uses body parts from Picasso's paintings.

Click on the "gallery" to see other heads that have been created or click "play" to create your own. The website includes face, eyes, nose, lips, ears, eyebrows, hair, abstract shapes, and a signature in Picasso's style. Though the site is in English, second language teachers could use it to practice body parts in other languages.

Click here to check out the [Mr. Picasso Head](#) website.

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

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