

Languages in the News

Stephen Krashen on Language Acquisition

This recorded television presentation from the 1980s, *Language Acquisition*, features Stephen Krashen, renowned Second Language Acquisition research scholar and now Emeritus Professor at the University of Southern California. Krashen discusses in the video clip two of the five hypotheses which comprise his Monitor Model of how second languages (L2s) are acquired, namely, The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis. According to Krashen, we acquire an L2 when the input we receive is comprehensible. A second condition of L2 acquisition is the learner's experience of low anxiety levels. Most optimal is zero anxiety, claims Krashen. He agrees that low levels of anxiety can serve intrinsic motivation in some learners. He insists, however, that L2 acquisition is best supported, when the learner experiences no anxiety.

Though this presentation will serve as a review for NNELL members, Krashen's delivery is clear, sometimes humorous, and easily accessible to a broad audience, including parents, school administrators, and adolescent language learners alike.

Click here to watch [Stephen Krashen on Language Acquisition](#).

Why Bilinguals are Smarter

This article reviews several studies that increasingly suggests the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. The author explains that current research on bilingualism shows that the "interference" of learning another language promotes a strengthening of brain function that results in heightened skills and improved learning in a variety of situations. The author states that a number of studies have shown that speaking more than one language improves the brain's executive functioning that advance's one's ability to ignore distractions in order to stay focused, switch attention willfully from one thing to another, and hold information in the mind for longer periods of time.

Researchers are discovering that inhibition, or the ability to suppress one language while using another, is not the primary reason for improved cognition among bilinguals, as once thought. Instead, researchers believe that bilinguals have a stronger ability to monitor the environment. One study of German-Italian bilinguals and Italian monolinguals revealed that the bilinguals were more successful at monitoring tasks than the monolinguals. Research has also shown that learning other languages as an adult has cognitive advantages, such as the lessening of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Further, the more proficiency one has in another language, the stronger the resistance to ailments that cause a loss of memory.

Click here to read [Why Bilinguals are Smarter](#) in *the New York Times Sunday Review*.

Tips and Tools for Early Language

23 Ways to Use Wordle in the MFL Classroom

Wordle invites users to play with words, making a visual product out of them. This tool can be helpful in differentiating instruction for visual learners, providing another way to take in and practice vocabulary and culture.

This site provides a list with the many uses for Wordle-- a tool which gathers words and then makes a word collage out of them, emphasizing the words which are mentioned the most, giving a visual picture of all the words that come out of a discussion or project. It can also serve as a pre-reading organizer for older learners and can help with vocabulary development by providing a visual of frequently used words in a text.

Click here to access [23 Ways to Use Wordle in the MFL Classroom](#).

Symbaloo

Symbaloo is a service that allows you to organize your favorite websites using colorful tiles. After signing up for a free account, you can create a webmix that represents your most frequently visited webpages or websites. The visual nature of the tile board is attractive and easy to navigate as tiles are grouped by category for the sites you add (i.e. news, music, shopping).

You can search for webmixes that others have created and include their favorite sites on your webmix. You can also set Symbaloo as your homepage and share your webmixes with others. Visit the FAQ page of Symbaloo to learn more about this useful service.

Click here to access [Symbaloo](#).

Wordle

Wordle is used to generate "word clouds" from text the visitor provides. The words that appear more frequently in the source text are given greater prominence. You can change the fonts, layouts, and color schemes of the clouds.

Click here to access [Wordle](#).

Story Place

Story Place is a digital library targeting preschool-age and early elementary-school-age children. Designed and launched in 2000 by a team of librarians to offer a virtual experience of going to the library, and Story Place offers sample, interactive, illustrated stories. Each online-available story includes a printable follow-up activity, thematically related to the content of the story, and a list of recommended books for further, content-similar reading available for purchase. Story Place is presented in English and Spanish.

Click here to access [Story Place](#).

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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