

Languages in the News

Changing Brains: Language

This short video, "Changing Brains: Language," is one segment in a 12-chapter presentation about the brain and how it works. It was produced by students, faculty and staff in the University of Oregon's Brain Development Lab (Dec. 2009). The target audience for this series is "non-scientists." As is the case with every segment of the series, this chapter, "Changing Brains: Language," is presented in accessible language and supported by evidence of brain-based research.

With respect to brain plasticity (the ability of the brain to change with experience, and language acquisition and language learning), brain-based research findings support the encouragement of starting second language learning early. In fact, the more complex language *and* the more diverse uses of language in interaction with adults to which children are exposed from birth, the more likely they are to develop good language skills for life. Early second language learning is one among other factors (see below) that exert a positive influence on brain plasticity and language skill. Thus, it is recommended to parents and other adults in a child's life to:

- encourage the learning of a second language
- talk a lot to your child
- use complex language
- give full explanations
- ask questions of your own
- read books every day
- seek out resources for language exposure

Click here to watch "[Changing Brains: Language](#)".

Kentucky Education Network Video on Language Learning Initiatives

This 56-minute video brings together language teachers and administrators from Kentucky (including NNELL president Dr. Jacqueline Van Houten) in a talk show style presentation of the importance of language learning among students today. The discussion confronts some of the misunderstandings surrounding language-learning--from the idea that the rest of the world speaks English to concerns about learning methods and testing--and provides valuable insight into the way in which forward-thinking school systems in Kentucky are preparing students to be part of the global economy.

The presenters discuss how a sustained program of language learning leads to an increased ability to communicate and understand world culture, enabling students to be more competitive for college entrance and the job market. The discussion is interspersed with interviews from additional language teachers and videos of early language learning classes.

Click here to access the [Kentucky Education Network Video on Language Learning Initiatives](#).

Tips and Tools for Early Language

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines have been revised for 2012 with updated descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. The Guidelines website is a new feature that supports the text of the 2012 Guidelines with glossed terminology and annotated, multimedia samples of performance at each level for Speaking and Writing, and examples of oral and written texts and tasks associated with each level for Reading and Listening.

Click here to view the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012](#).

Click here to read the [press release](#) for full details.

Are You Smarter Than a Language Teacher?

This 10-question quiz focuses on languages around the world. The quiz and an answer key are located in the "Discover Languages ... Discover the World" portion of the ACTFL website.

Click here to play "[Are You Smarter Than a Language Teacher?](#)"

Traditional Children's Songs in Spanish

This site allows visitors to hear three songs: *Los Elefantes*, *Pimpon* and *Naranja Dulce*. The music plays and the words are on the screen for students to follow along.

Click here to listen to the [Traditional Children's Songs in Spanish](#).

Poducate Me

This website has a step-by-step guide to podcasting. In this guide you will learn how to:

- find and download podcasts
- select appropriate podcasting equipment and software
- record, edit and polish your podcast
- create an "enhanced" podcast
- upload your podcast to the Internet
- create a podcast blog
- share podcasts with your students

Click here to read the [podcasting guide](#).

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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