

Languages in the News

[Preparing Students for the Flat World](#)

In his commentary, *Preparing Students for the Flat World* (Education Week, 2008), Fernando Reimers, Ford Foundation Professor of International Education, Director of Global Education, and Director of the International Education Policy Program at Harvard, presents a framework for K-12 education, which he believes is central to preparing students in the USA to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. It is a blueprint for teaching for global competency, defined as having knowledge of the world, the skills to put that knowledge to use, and the attitudinal and ethical dispositions necessary to interact peacefully, respectfully, and productively with people of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to solve problems and challenges affecting people worldwide. Reimers views the three dimensions of the framework designed to accomplish these interdependent goals and calls for educators to emphasize the development of ethical dispositions toward cultural differences, foreign language skills, and the expertise necessary to live cross-culturally.

Click here to read [Preparing Students for a Flat World](#) by Fernando Feimers.

[Rhode Island Crafts Road Map to Learning Languages](#)

Earlier this summer, Rhode Island became the sixth state to release a Road Map to Language Excellence. It outlines steps the state can make to promote languages and ensure proficiency among its students. The road map encompasses recommendations for pre-kindergarten through college level, calling on educational institutions and state and federal leaders to collaborate and bring the plans to fruition. The state began dual-immersion pilot programs at several elementary schools this fall with a plan to expand the programs by 2016-17. The state hopes to attract multinational businesses with its focus on creating a multilingual workforce in the state.

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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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Tips and Tools for Early Language

WEBSITES

Smithsonian Global Sound Tools for Teaching

This website provides ideas and resources for educators to inspire their use of music from around the world. Included in the "Tools for Teaching" pages are activities, lesson plans, videos, and folk life education kits.

The videos feature music performances, instrument demonstrations and interviews with artists on Global Sound Live. The musical groups in the videos are from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Canada, The Caribbean, Europe, Mexico/ Central America /South America, the Middle East, and the United States of America.

Click here to learn more about the [Smithsonian Global Sound Tools for Teaching](#).

Cyberkidz

Cyberkidz is a website with a variety of games to support learning in four different languages. It offers games for children ages 4 to 11, in subjects such as math, reading and writing, geography, music and art, and science. The tasks in this website are timed.

Click here to access [Cyberkidz](#).

Digital Dialects

This site offers online games for 60 languages. Click on a language and then listen to native speakers' recordings of frequently used words and phrases. Games focus on different themes that include numbers, colors, foods, animals, the calendar, time, greetings and clothing.

Click here to access [Digital Dialects](#).

APPS for iPads, iPods and iPhones

Talking Friends Apps

Out Fit 7 Ltd. has developed a variety of talking friend apps such as Tom's Messenger, Talking Ben the Dog, and Talking Pierre the Parrot. In Tom's Messenger, users are able to pick from the lower-pitched Ben the dog or the higher-pitched Tom the cat to animate the voice recording. Tap the red record button and start speaking into an iPad, then tap the same button again to stop recording. The recordings are limited to about thirty seconds, but come with unlimited opportunities to share and play the videos or create more. There are four different backgrounds provided in addition to the photos users have on their iPads.

This is a great way to incorporate a classroom mascot that can travel around the world and talk about each place visited. Older students can record the videos to be shown to younger students.

Currency

Currency, by Jeff Grossman, is a quick and easy way for students to convert and compare money from hundreds of countries around the world. Users can select as many countries as desired for the currency viewing list. The conversions are up-to-date and the list can be quickly edited to delete or reorganize the countries. Once an amount is typed for the base country, all other chosen countries immediately update to show the currency equivalents. World maps are also included in this free app.