

Languages in the News

Gutan Tag, Kinder!

This article reports on a German immersion preschool, called Kinderstube, based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Kinderstube offers a year-round, full-day program for children ages 3 to 5 in classrooms in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. In an immersion program, children hear and speak another language most or all of the school day. According to the author, Minnesota is recognized for its extensive immersion programs, and that they are rapidly expanding. She states that many Parents understand the benefits of exposing their children, as young as one year old, to another language so they grow up bilingual.

Kathryn Kohnert, an assistant professor in the Department of Speech Language Hearing Sciences at the University of Minnesota, advocates for early language learning, stating that except for children with language delays or disabilities, immersion programs are suitable for preschoolers. Kohnert emphasizes that adults are also more than capable of learning second languages, but children have fewer inhibitions and are more willing to take risks with the language, and, thus, they learn languages easier.

Kohnert stresses that the characteristics of an effective preschool bilingual program include the quality of care, well-trained teachers, staff longevity, school readiness activities, and low student-teacher ratios. Kohnert also asserts that if the children do not have fun, they will not learn the language!

Click here to read [Gutan Tag, Kinder!](#)

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

Lizard Point Map Quizzes

This site is an extensive on-line resource of geography supplements. It offers interactive and self-scoring maps. The name of a country or other geographic area is given and you click a spot on the map. After three tries, you can use the site's suggestions and support or continue guessing without help. The site focuses on various areas of the world, on countries, capital cities, major cities, counties, republics, prefectures, and provinces.

Click here to access [Lizard Point Map Quizzes](#).

MFL Sunderland

This site has a large repository of resources for languages teachers. It boasts of having over 4000 resources for teachers of Spanish, French, Italian and German. In each part of the website one finds a variety of leveled activities and resources such as Key Stages 1-4, Starters and Plenaries, A level, Thinking Skills, Sound Files, Displays, Puzzles and Games, Christmas and links.

The categories vary in amount of resources (with Spanish offering the most and Italian the least amount). Unfortunately, some of the links are broken. Materials available include interactive sites and sites with PowerPoint or Word documents to print out for the foreign language classroom.

Click here to access [MFL Sunderland](#).

APPS for iPads, iPods and iPhones

iFunFace

iFunFace is a free app that allows you to voice animate a person's photograph with a few clicks of a button! You may choose from existing pictures in your album or take a new picture within iFunFace. Once you decide on a photo, various prompts help you identify the face and mouth to allow for a realistic animation. The last step is to record your voice and share. Four different voice filters are included to help you pick the voice that sounds best. For future viewing, each video can be sent as an email or saved to your camera album. Even though this app is free, you are not limited with recording time like many others. This is an exciting way for students to practice the target language and still hold them accountable for their learning.

Music Top 100 Hits

The free music app Top 100 Hits is a quick way to discover the 100 most popular songs in over thirty different countries. With just one tap, a preview will play for each song. To save any of the songs to a favorites list, just tap the star button for easy future playback. The top 100 lists are updated often as new artists and songs emerge.

Since some popular music may not always be suitable for students this app lends itself best as a whole class activity where the teacher can pick and choose the songs to play aloud. This is a great way to hear new songs and compare popular music in target cultures. Students may be surprised by the results!