

Languages in the News

Educators Once Opposed Raising Bilingual Children. Experts Now Say It's Beneficial.

Recent technological developments in neuroscience are providing interesting findings related to the benefits of learning languages. Cognitive neuroscientist Laura Ann Petitto of Gallaudet University and her colleagues discovered a profound difference between babies brought up speaking one language and those who spoke two. Their study debunked the theory that babies are able to discriminate the sounds of any language only before the age of one. Petitto's study found that bilingual children showed increased neural activity in response to completely unfamiliar languages even at the end of their first year.

Other researchers, such as Rubio-Fernandez and Glucksberg, psychologists at Princeton University, have found that bilinguals are better at putting themselves in other people's shoes to understand their side of a situation. This is because they can more easily block out what they already know and focus on the other viewpoint. Besides providing a brain boost, speaking a second language may have a profound effect on behavior. Neuroscientists and psychologists accept that language is deeply entwined with thought and reasoning, leading some to wonder whether bilingual people act differently depending on which language they are speaking.

The article concludes with a lingering question regarding whether an older, monolingual person could benefit from studying a second language. Ellen Bialystok, a psychologist at York University in Toronto, is convinced the answer is yes, even if the performance boost is less pronounced than for those who grew up bilingual. "Learn a language at any age, not to become bilingual, but just to remain mentally stimulated," she says. "That's the source of cognitive reserve."

Click here to read [*Educators once opposed raising bilingual children. Experts now say it's beneficial.*](#)

The Best Resources for Learning: The Advantages to Being Bilingual

In this blog, Larry Ferlazzo, an ESOL teacher in California, provides a variety of resources that highlight the advantages of bilingualism. Ferlazzo lists the resources with hyperlinks so readers may quickly jump to articles that feature recent research that reveal benefits of learning other languages. The studies' findings include, increased mental agility, enhanced attention, effective decision-making, better physical health, boosted brain power, delay in Alzheimer's disease, and increased financial income. Ferlazzo suggests sharing these findings with students who are studying other languages in order to increase their motivation for studying them for longer periods of time.

Click here to read [*The Best Resources For Learning: The Advantages To Being Bilingual*](#) by Larry Ferlazzo.

Tips and Tools for Early Language

Educación: [Canal Encuentro](#), [Canal Pakapaka](#)

Canal Encuentro is a website in Spanish produced by the Ministry of Education in Argentina. It includes links to news, geography, sports, art and weather in the country. Visitors can take virtual trips through important buildings and museums in the country, explore links to digital stories and play games.

Canal Pakapaka is a site for younger children. It has games, short videos and other activities.

Click here to access [Argentina](#).

[The World Speaks French: The French Language Initiative](#)

This wiki is maintained by the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), but is open to anyone interested in advocating for, starting, or improving French programs. The wiki is broken down into 9 parts:

- Overview of Kit
- Advancing Arguments for Learning French
- Cultivating Allies for French Programs
- Advocating Trilingualism for Spanish-Language Students
- Responding to Program Threats
- Advocating at College and University Levels
- Using Technology for Promotion and Advocacy
- Finding Resources
- Acknowledgements

Click here to access [The World Speaks French: The French Language Initiative](#).

[APPS for iPads, iPods and iPhones](#)

[Lola's Alphabet Train HD Lite](#), [Lola's Math Train Lite](#), [Lola's Fruit Shop Sudoku HD Lite](#)

These three Lola apps were developed for young learners ages 3-8. To change the language from English, adults must tap the parent's button then answer a simple multiplication problem. The language can be changed to Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Russian, Chinese, Finnish, French, German, Spanish, English, Italian, Japanese, and Korean, depending on the Lola app chosen. Children help earn friends and presents for Lola's train or fruits for a fruit stand by answering questions and completing games correctly. The variety and levels provided in these free versions may satisfy most learners; however there are full versions available for purchase as well.

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

Thank you to Heather Hendry, Shanon Shreffler, Josh Hem Lee and Andrea Suarez for providing the links and Amy Murphy for the apps used in this issue.

Thank you to Amy Murphy, Kennedy Shultz, Sally Hood, and Veronica Guevara for their work writing summaries.