

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS (ACSSO)

The national voice of parents of children in Australia's public schools and their school communities

## LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Volume Two, Number Ten: 17 July 2008

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### AUSTRALIAN YEAR OF LANGUAGES 2009

#### National Parent Groups Call for Declaration

#### Australia's Year of Languages & Intercultural Dialogue

In linked proposals to Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Hon Julia Gillard MP, the national parent groups, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC), have called for the declaration and resourcing of 2009 as the Australian Year of Languages and Intercultural Dialogue.

This would provide the national unifying context for the implementation of the government's proposed National Asian Languages & Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

This would also build on the impetus of the International Year of Languages 2008.

Internationally we observe the positive ways in which the European Year of Languages 2001 and the US Year of Languages 2005 operated to raise the profile of languages education and support a variety of significant initiatives whose benefits continue.

These same positive benefits and leveraging of new initiatives are also evident in the current European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

The Statement and Plan for Languages in Australian Schools 2005-2008 adopted by MCEETYA envisaged an Australian Year of Languages, potentially to take place in 2008 - but this initiative has not so far eventuated.

The declaration - and appropriate resourcing - of 2009 as the Australian Year of Languages and Intercultural Dialogue would be of immense benefit (both symbolic and practical - and both within Australia and in terms of our international standing) to create the appropriate context to support and sustain the implementation of the NALSSP.

Read the ACSSO Submission at <http://www.languageseducation.com/acssso080602.pdf>

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## CALL TO ACTION

### Asia literacy for every young Australian

Australia's Asia Literacy Alliance, an initiative of the Asia Education Foundation that networks 24 peak organisations representing parents, teachers and principals, has issued a 10 point **Call to Action** to the Rudd Government to embed Asia literacy in the Australian school curriculum.

Download the Call to Action at <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/>

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## LANGUAGES MATTER ON LIFE MATTERS

### *Forum, ABC Radio National "Life Matters" Program Friday 18 July 9.00 am*

The ABC Radio National's, Life Matters show, hosted by Richard Aedy and recorded at the National Forum on Asian Languages and Learning held recently in Adelaide, will be aired Friday July 18 from 9.00 am EST.

The show will be available as a podcast shortly thereafter from the "Life Matters" website at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/>

With special thanks to Andrew Blair, Kathy Kiting, Malcolm Norris and Prof Robin Jeffrey.

Pod and vodcasts of the keynote presentations from the National Forum in Adelaide will be put on the Asia Education Foundation's website in the next two weeks: <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au>

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## RHETORIC VS REALITY

### Too few keen to speak in tongues

#### *Jill Rowbotham, The Australian, June 25, 2008*

THERE is a lot of talk about language programs in Australia, but the conversation does not appear to be going anywhere. Decades after it began, we remain solidly, some would say stolidly, monolingual.

Worse for the tertiary sector, say language experts, is that students who sign on to study a language in first year university mostly arrive with no previous experience.

This is bad for two reasons.

The first is they have not studied a language at school in case it drags down the final marks, which they need to maximise university entrance scores; the second is that without experience in learning a language at school, tertiary study is much tougher.

Kevin Rudd sparked hope with the budget which fulfilled Labor's election promise to allocate \$62.4 million over the next three years to the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools program, which focuses on Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean. But we have been here before.

In 1987, the Hawke government adopted Joe Lo Bianco's National Policy on Languages. It was a comprehensive plan for teaching English, indigenous and foreign languages, at all levels, from pre-school to university and beyond.

In 1992, the Keating government introduced the Australian Language and Literacy Policy. In 1994, there followed the \$220million Council of Australian Government's National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy. This was based on a report, *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future*, by Rudd, then a public servant. The four languages identified above were selected by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Howard government cut the NALSAS funding in 2002, only to introduce its own National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools 2005-08 in 2005.

Lo Bianco, professor in language and literacy education at the University of Melbourne, warns that although Rudd's most recent commitment is a good sign, it is not enough to depend on the education system, whether it be primary, secondary or tertiary level, to produce a mass of second or third language speakers.

"People always reinvent the wheel in this area," Lo Bianco says resignedly. "There were programs in Indonesian in the 1960s and the University of Sydney was teaching Japanese in 1907. The interest in Asian languages did not start in the past couple of years."

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23916285-27702,00.html>

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## OPINION

### Monolingual Aussies left behind in international business

*Roly Sussex, Courier Mail, June 28, 2008*

THE secretariat of the Go8 - the group of eight old sandstone universities in Australia, including the University of Queensland as the only member in this state - has announced that all its members will now support what is informally called the "LOTE bonus".

A "LOTE" - the word was invented in Australia - means Language Other Than English.

Depending on the university, students who complete a "foreign" language at Year 11 or 12 receive an automatic percentage bonus on their Year 12 completion score. The LOTE bonus is not yet in operation in Queensland, but the University of Queensland is working on it. I hope other universities will follow suit.

The LOTE bonus acts as a powerful incentive to students to study a second language through to years 11 and 12, and to continue with their LOTE studies when they enter university. This system has been in successful operation in Victoria for several years.

We need the LOTE bonus to stimulate LOTE study because Australia has scandalously neglected its language resources.

English-speaking countries are famous for pathetic performance in second languages. England recently came bottom of the EU countries in a survey of second language competence. It is no coincidence that a major international on-line store moved its English-language-based European operation from England to Ireland, since the language skills there were more developed.

In the 21st century English on its own will not be enough.

British linguist David Graddol, in an important study for the British Council, estimates that within a generation so many countries will have such high levels of English that possession of English will no longer be much of an advantage. Monolinguals like most Australians will be isolated. Others will know more about Australian English speakers than Australian English speakers know about them.

Read more at <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,23919379-5003424,00.html>

Download the Go8 LOTE statement at

<http://www.go8.edu.au/news/2008/Go8%20LOTE%20Incentive%20Schemes.pdf>

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## **Languages: Our Primary Failing**

***Matthew Absalom***

If we start with some statistics we find that in 2007 Australian 9-11 year-olds spent a meagre 1 per cent of school instruction time on modern languages (OECD Education at a Glance 2007). This was the lowest percentage for the OECD countries listed. Luxembourg rated the highest percentage (21 per cent), with many other countries dedicating more than 10 per cent to modern languages (13 per cent - Czech Republic and Spain; 12 per cent - Sweden; 11 per cent - Israel, Portugal and Slovenia; 10 per cent - France, Germany and Greece).

The OECD average is 7 per cent and the EU19 average is 9 per cent. Notably, the other predominantly anglophone countries represented either had no data (England), data that weren't relevant (New Zealand and Scotland) or unavailable data (United States). Clearly, my daughter had no chance of getting far with languages occupying 1 per cent of instructional time.

Another stunning fact that the OECD Education at a Glance data for 2007 revealed was that Australia dedicates 41 per cent of instructional time (for 9-11 year-olds) to the compulsory core curriculum while the OECD average is 92 per cent. In Australia the majority of children's time is spent on "compulsory flexible curriculum". Whatever this "compulsory flexible curriculum" may be, it seems clear that this is causing the oft-invoked crowding of the primary curriculum (viz. the Australian Primary Principals' Association Charter on Primary Schooling).

These data clearly show that our performance in languages in (upper) primary school is appalling but, more significantly, that the core curriculum in primary school is overshadowed by other activities.

Read more at: <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=7451&page=0>

*Matthew Absalom lectures in the Italian Studies program at The University of Melbourne.*

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## **Accessing Other Worlds of Thought..... via digitized portals**

***Lorraine Thornquist, December 2007***

'The most important thing about Technology Enhanced Language Learning is that it is about learning not about technology.' (Andrew Lian, 2006, April)

The way we communicate is changing, at every level of thought and action. Communication now appears in increasingly diverse forms. Marshall McLuhan's observation that the medium is the message has never been so apt.

In this first decade of the twenty-first century we recognise that our student clientele has been born into the digital age. For this generation of learners, technology is not merely a tool but an integral part of their social and communication landscape. Our students are 'native speakers' of digital technology and their learning characteristics and instructional preferences demand more eclectic approaches to the learning process and attendant activities.

It would be therefore both foolish and negligent of language educators to marginalize Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) - which includes social software such as blogs and podcasts - as they can be part of a dynamic pedagogy to offer sources and resources for enriched authentic language experiences for student learning.

The excitement of learning another language is the unlocking of another world of thought and entering into an extended communication realm.

Learning another language also brings us face to face with the reality that language communication is a complex process and an intensely personal, culturally laden and social activity in an ever increasingly complicated environment.

Past language teaching strategies have often been premised on explaining language constructs to learners and then inviting students to practise these patterns. Teachers can not provide or model every situation and interaction. No single methodology can address the complications of language learning.

A resource-rich learning environment is paramount to permitting learners to explore the challenges of such learning in a more neutral, independent and autonomous zone as well as in a busy context of social interaction. ICT and CMC are able to promote language understanding and use, including the complexities of culture in language, via different and more dynamic ways.

Read more at <http://www.languageseducation.com/opinion.htm>

*Lorraine Thornquist is Director, International Studies at Brisbane Girls Grammar School*

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## **RESOURCES**

### **Online Forums IYL 2008**

#### ***Phillip Mahnken & University of Sunshine Coast***

Phillip Mahnken at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, is hosting unique series of Online Forums on aspects (strategic & critical or quirky & quizzical) of languages education in Australia and elsewhere.

For example, a future program currently at the research phase here is Canberra, is tentatively titled "What do they speak on Mars". More on this when our intergalactic team touches down.

Recent presenters of programs in this series include Jo Lo Bianco, Lia Tedesco and Lesley Harbon among others.

Speakers in the balance of the year include: Wendy Maxwell (founder of the Canadian AIM system), Angela Scarino, Denis Cunningham and Lia Tedesco (in another hat, talking about Schools of Languages in Australia), Erika Pazzoli on Process Drama - and much, much more.

Previous programs are archived so you can listen online.

Read more at <http://iyl2008.blogspot.com/>

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### **Ngapartji Ngapartji**

#### ***Pitjantjatjara performance & online language learning project***

Ngapartji Ngapartji is a Pitjantjatjara performance/online language learning project being running out of Alice Springs. It has been very successful at the last two Melbourne International Arts Festivals, the Sydney Arts Festival, and the Perth Arts Festival.

Conceived in 2004 based on research undertaken since 1999 the project has been running on Arrernte country in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) since early 2005.

Ngapartji Ngapartji has many layers involving language learning, teaching and maintenance, community development, crime prevention, cross cultural collaboration, creating new literacy training models as well as film, art and theatre making.

Languages transmit complex understandings of a person's culture, identities and connections with country. They are a source of pride and strength. In Australia languages carry with them an intimate understanding of the ecological systems and the land with which they are associated. Before European invasion Australia was home to over 250 distinct languages. Indigenous people were typically multilingual and were likely to speak as many as half a dozen languages in addition to their own. Tragically, in the last 218 years Australia has suffered the largest and most rapid loss of languages known.

Today, only 17 languages are spoken 'right through' and transmitted between older and younger generations; approximately 100 are still alive but are highly endangered, perhaps claiming only a handful of older speakers each; the remainder are either no longer used or remain active as strong markers of country and identity in local Aboriginal Englishes. All face uncertain futures and require ongoing action and support.

"Indigenous activists argue that if our languages were like animals under threat of extinction there would be global outcry" - Lester Irabinna Rigney (FATSIL Newsletter, March 2002, p. 9).

A number of Australian languages which were critically endangered have been brought back to life and the rates of decline of other languages have been slowed. In Adelaide, the main language group is Kurna (pronounced Garna). Kurna was considered a dead, or 'sleeping', language, and is now used increasingly by more people in the Kurna and school community in particular. Broader awareness of the language, particularly through policies of dual, Kurna-English place-naming, has been significantly increased in the non-Indigenous community. With a mix of community involvement and strategic government and other support, Indigenous Australians can continue to reclaim their languages and with them, cultural and ecological knowledge of value to all Australians.

Read more at <http://www.ngapartji.org/>

Go to the online language learning website at <http://ninti.ngapartji.org/>

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## **Balai Bahasa Indonesia Perth**

The meeting place to learn about Indonesian language and culture

The mission of the Balai Bahasa Indonesia Perth is to provide Indonesian language and culture education to enable Australians to interact effectively with Indonesians.

Balai Bahasa Indonesia is a cultural non-profit institute promoting the teaching of Indonesian language and fostering cultural links between Australia and Indonesia at all levels of society.

This unique concept was initiated through the Westralian Indonesian Language Teachers' Association (WILTA) in conjunction with

- the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia, Perth; and
- the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Canberra

The Institute will increase activities and facilitate bonds between individuals, businesses, communities and institutions in order to develop a more effective and interactive Indonesia-Australia relationship based upon a mutually informed understanding, and foster a positive attitude and awareness amongst Australian society towards Indonesia and its people.

This will be achieved through:

- promoting the teaching and learning of Indonesian throughout Western Australia and across Australia generally;
- providing access to language classes in Indonesian as a second language at a range of levels;
- hosting or co-ordinating Indonesian cultural/language events throughout WA, both in city and regional areas;
- supporting a range of activities which foster cross-cultural links amongst individuals, groups and associations in Indonesia and Australia.

Read more at <http://www.balaibahasaperth.org>

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## **Mandarin Stars - Fun Mandarin for Kids 1-5 (Sydney)**

### ***Dawn Leung***

Mandarin Stars offer Mandarin classes for kids age 1 to 5 years in a structured language learning playgroup, currently operating in Pymble and Chatswood, northern Sydney, NSW.

I set up Mandarin Stars as a mum to two half Chinese boys, who was dissatisfied with the current (and limited) offering by providers of Mandarin education for pre-schoolers.

In combination with this, I also recognized from own experience of learning 5 languages that the key to success is motivation and inspiration to learn. If we can cultivate and nurture that interest and motivation in the pre-school years, we will be building the blocks for future learning, pronunciation and fluency.

The Mandarin Stars program teaches Mandarin through a child-centric program.

Our approach is not academic or intensive. Instead, we offer activities that build vocabulary and conversational skills in Mandarin in a fun, interactive, learning environment.

Our program has been developed so that children will enjoy learning and playing in Mandarin and as a result, be inspired to learn Mandarin in the future.

The response has been fantastic and there is a clear demand for Mandarin classes for pre-schoolers as parents recognize that sowing the seeds for 2nd language skills can beneficially (and should preferably) start at an early age (under 5).

Read more at <http://www.mandarinstars.com.au/>

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## **Kimmba Bi-lingual Learning Playgroup (Melbourne)**

Kimmba is a not-for-profit community playgroup association which focuses on helping pre-school age (0-6 years of age) children learn a foreign language early in their lives with the aim of building their self-esteem and confidence.

Kimmba is located in Doncaster East, Melbourne.

The program developed by the Association will also help participant children and their families understand other cultures and thus promote community cohesion and harmony.

Kimmba is the first playgroup association in Australia that is aimed at the acceptance of families and children who come from different nationalities and backgrounds and who speak different languages - because the Association believes that a society that accepts its peoples' colours, races, languages, and even religions, is a successful, well-functioning society and one in which we would like our children to live and grow.

As migrants, we would like to see multiculturalism in Australia continue to succeed and in doing so promote the diversities of the world's cultures without any language barriers.

The Association has started playgroups in the following languages: Mandarin, Cantonese and Spanish. And a new group in German has recently been formed.

Responding to public requests a new class for babies (0-12 months) in Mandarin is planned to commence in Term 3.

Read more at <http://www.kimmba.com.au/>

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## **Scullin ESL Playgroup, Canberra**

### ***Mandy Scott***

A microcosm of Australia's multicultural society at its best - the families came from Bangladesh, Russia, Pakistan and Japan, plus two Australian mums happy to help and eager for their children to meet new friends.

This special type of playgroup is designed to give parents the opportunity to hear and speak English in a supportive environment and to talk to others who have gone through, or still going through, the settlement process in Australia.

While the Scullin ESL Playgroup emphasises its English speaking environment, it is important that home languages are not ignored. Families are invited to bring along a song or story in their own languages to share with the group.

Examples of German language around the room show that many Canberra parents value bi-lingualism and are encouraging their children to grow up with two languages.

Parents need not worry if they are not speaking English at home. The imperative is to communicate with others and the immense language learning abilities of young brains will mean children generally take learning English in their stride. As Suzanne Dopke, an expert in bilingualism and a practising speech pathologist in Melbourne said about speech development: "It is not the more English that is better, but the richer the language input the better."

There was the fascination of seeing so many little linguists - far more fluent in a language other than English than I shall ever be - and all so ready to soak up the English language which surrounds them outside their homes.

For further information contact Debra, Development Officer, Playgroups ACT on 1800 171 882

*Dr Mandy Scott is an Adjunct Lecturer at University of Canberra and active promoter of languages education. This article was purloined, misappropriated and edited from an article published in "PlayACT", the newsletter of Playgroups ACT in June 2008 - as was the article by Mandy Scott which appeared in our previous edition.*

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## **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING**

### ***Dr Fraser Mustard***

We know that the sounds that an infant is exposed to when very young influence how the auditory neurons develop and function (Kuhl et al, 1992, 1993a, 1993b).

For example, infants exposed to two languages (for example, Japanese and English) in the first seven to eight months of life will have little difficulty in setting the base for easily mastering the two languages and they will not have an accent (Mechelli, 2004; Maye et al, 2002; Kuhl, 1992, 1993a).

Individuals who develop understanding of two languages early in life have a larger left hemisphere of the brain than individuals with monolingual backgrounds. Proficiency in the second language is directly related to the size of this part of the brain. The increased gray matter density in the left inferior parietal region was also found to be related to the age of acquisition of the second language (Mechelli, 2004).

Since acquisition of a second language is best achieved in very early life, this indicates that there is a sensitive period for brain development and function for optimum language acquisition, literacy and the associated understanding.

It is interesting that the other findings from these studies are that individuals who acquire a second language very early in life find it easier to learn third and fourth languages later in life.

Read more at [http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/wallaradistrict/files/links/Mustard\\_2006.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/wallaradistrict/files/links/Mustard_2006.pdf)

Read Dr Fraser Mustard's 2007 address in Adelaide as Thinker in Residence, "*Early Childhood Development the Building Blocks for Successful Societies*"  
<http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/pdf/mustard070317.pdf>

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## **FROM HERE AND THERE**

### **Hong Kong: Education Chief Urges English Emphasis**

*News.gov.hk, June 23, 2008*

Michael Suen, Hong Kong's Secretary for Education, spoke Monday on the importance of English skills for today's students living in an interconnected global world.

Speaking at the Heung Hoi Ching Kok Lin Association's Secondary and Primary Schools and Kindergartens, Secretary Suen emphasized the role of English in the global economy.

"As Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city our young generation should possess a good command of English to contribute to the development of our nation."

The Secretary's remarks echoed his words at the fourth APEC Education Ministerial Meeting earlier this month.

Suen also focused on the need to attract and train qualified teachers, and especially native English speaking teachers.

"We aim to further strengthen training of teachers and encourage English language teachers to further their studies to achieve higher standards."

Read more at <http://www.news.gov.hk/en/category/atschool/080623/html/080623en02002.htm>

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### **UK: More primary schools teaching languages**

*BBC*

Language learning should start early, experts say

More primary school children in England are learning a foreign language, research for the government suggests. The proportion of primary schools teaching a language has risen from 70% in 2006 to 84% last year. In 2002, the figure was just 44%.

Schools Minister Jim Knight says the government should meet its target of giving all primary pupils the chance to learn a language by 2010.

The number of pupils taking GCSEs in foreign languages is falling. It is no longer compulsory for secondary pupils to study a language after the age of 14.

The new figures - from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) show that traditional languages dominate, with French being most popular (89% of primary schools which teach languages) followed by Spanish (23%) and German (9%) A small number (under 3%) offer Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Urdu.

The survey suggests that 84% of schools are offering pupils in KS2 (ages seven to 11) the opportunity to learn a language within class time - a rise of 14 percentage points from 2006. And 54% of schools are fully meeting the entitlement for all year groups - a rise of 20 percentage points from 2006.

Read more at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7475422.stm>

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## **Taiwan: Kaohsiung County Opens First 'English village' Program**

*Taipei Times, June 29, 2008*

Kaohsiung County opened its first "English village" yesterday, with facilities allowing students to practice "real life" English in the immersion style of teaching.

Kaohsiung County Commissioner Yang Chiu-hsing (???) said at the opening ceremony he hoped students and teachers would make good use of the village to learn and teach English effectively.

The village provides various simulated English-language scenarios, including a hospital, a bank, a hotel, an airport, a library and classrooms.

Students and instructors are obliged to speak English in the village, which purports to offer an "overseas experience" for students.

Students can learn how to use English to order food in restaurants, speak to a doctor in a hospital, mail a letter at the post office and shop for groceries in a supermarket, Yang said, adding that the village's facilities and learning materials will continue to grow.

Read more at <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2008/06/29/2003416068>

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## **South Korea: All Seoul Schools to Have Native English Speakers**

*Kang Shin-who, The Korea Times June 29, 2008*

All elementary and middle schools in Seoul will have at least one native English-speaking teacher from next fall semester.

The Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education has recently hired 235 foreign teachers, resulting in a total of 489 native English speakers currently teaching at 446 schools across the city.

Approximately 41 percent of elementary schools and 54 percent of middle schools in the city now have assistant foreign English teachers.

The education authority plans to field an additional 280 foreign teachers for next semester, resulting in more than 70 percent of elementary and middle schools having foreign teachers.

The education office has allotted an extra 24 billion won (\$ 23 million) this year for the plans because of parents growing demand for native English speakers at schools.

Read more at [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/06/117\\_26704.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/06/117_26704.html)

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## **South Korea: 'TaLK' Program Two Times Oversubscribed**

*Kang Shin-who, The Korea Times June 17, 2008*

The government's plan to field ethnic Korean and foreign university students in the country's rural elementary schools as English teachers has been given the green light.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology recently launched the "Teach Learn in Korea (TaLK) program" and the scheme drew positive reaction from students in foreign countries. In contrast to initial concerns that the program might draw a lukewarm response from potential applicants, interest was high.

The ministry has stopped accepting applications and announced Tuesday that a total of 836 people applied for the program. Approximately 400 will be selected for English teaching positions at elementary schools in rural areas. Among the applicants, some 73 percent are ethnic Koreans.

The largest group of applicants was from the U.S. with 588, followed by Canada with 145, Australia with 40 and the U.K with 17. Regarding age, 679 were younger than 25, while 103 were aged between 26 and 30 and the rest older than 30.

The ministry will announce the successful candidates next month. They will attend a four-week training session from August before being sent to schools in September.

The TaLK program aims to provide children at relatively underprivileged schools the opportunity to learn English. TaLK program participants will be named "President's Scholars", and receive benefits such as round-trip airfare and allowances of about 1.5 million won (\$ 1,500) per month, as well as a monthly accommodation allowance of 400,000 won.

Read more at [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/06/117\\_26072.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2008/06/117_26072.html)

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## **Canada: A reading session at Chez Nous**

*Colin Dewar, The Moose Jaw Times Herald*

ESL (English as a Second Language) students from Central Collegiate have been practising their English skills by reading to seniors at Chez Nous.

As part of a class project, the students who come from Thailand, Sudan, Liberia, Hong Kong, Ethiopia and the Congo have "adopted" residents at the facility.

The students, who have been sponsored by the government to stay and study in Canada, are aiming to become more proficient in English.

The goal is that by reading to the residents, their confidence grows and it helps them grow accustomed to living in a new country.

"Some of these kids have had some serious hardships in their lives and don't have a complete family anymore. Both the students and the seniors have accepted each other and have a great respect for one another," said Michele Smith, the students' teacher.

Read more at <http://mjtimes.sk.ca/index.cfm?sid=144512&sc=8>

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## **UK: Polish Lessons for Fire and Police in Burnley**

*Burnley Citizen, June 16, 2008*

FIREFIGHTERS, police and council officers are taking an intensive 10-week course in Polish to help them communicate with migrant workers. And they are also being joined by members of the Polish community who are learning English.

Geoff Hudson, Burnley fire station's community fire safety officer, said: "The idea came from a meeting with an officer at the police station about the Polish community and from that came the course.

"During the course, the Polish do an hour of English, then we do half an hour together and finally the English learn Polish for an hour. We thought it would be a good idea because fire officers are having a problem communicating with the Polish community so they are learning basic phrases to get round it.

"It has been an interesting course and has been going pretty well. The Poles are really grateful and there's been an excellent response."

Read more at

[http://www.burnleycitizen.co.uk/news/2342466.polish\\_lessons\\_for\\_fire\\_and\\_police\\_in\\_burnley/](http://www.burnleycitizen.co.uk/news/2342466.polish_lessons_for_fire_and_police_in_burnley/)

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## **USA: Students to get bigger dose of global culture in the classroom**

*Megan Hawkins, Des Moines Register, 9 July 2008*

Des Moines students will soon see more focus in the classroom on global issues.

Possibilities brainstormed at a school board meeting Tuesday include foreign languages and geography at an earlier age and ways to incorporate culture lessons into subjects like art. Other ideas ranged from more attention to current events to more foreign exchange opportunities.

The Des Moines school board hosted a panel discussion to delve into how it will transfer lofty goals and expectations for graduates to the classroom level. The goals are the result of community surveys and forums nearly two years ago. The focus Tuesday was on one of the five goals: global awareness.

Katie Taylor, a recent Hoover High School graduate who was also an intern in India through the World Food Prize program, urged the district to expand cultural lessons.

"For most people here, which is people who have been in America for generations, it's pretty appalling how small their world is. In America, it's extremely easy to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world, and usually that's what happens," Taylor said. "We need to know more about our community that we live in because it's growing more and more diverse. Also, job opportunities are globalizing, and we need to know how to prepare ourselves for those opportunities."

Vinh Nguyen, the district's English Language Learner program director, said students can also teach one another about their cultures. More than 4,000 students, or 13 percent, in the district are learning English.

The panel also stressed the need to involve parents so that lessons are reinforced at home.

Read more at

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080709/NEWS02/807090410/1001/NEWS>

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## REMINDERS

21-25 July - FIPF World Congress - Quebec City, Canada - <http://www.fipf.org/>

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7-9 August - Modern Language Teachers Assoc of Tasmania State Conference - Hobart - <mailto:suzette.holmes@education.tas.gov.au>

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10 August - Toowoomba Languages & Cultural Festival - Toowoomba - <http://www.mltaq.asn.au/mltaq/branch%20stuff/darlingdowns.htm>

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1-2 October - Modern Language Teachers Association of Queensland Biennial Conference - Gold Coast - <http://www.mltaq.asn.au/conference2008.htm>

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3-5 October - Japan Studies Association of Canada 2008 Annual Conference - Waterloo, Canada - <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/asian/jsaa/JSAC.pdf>

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16-18 October - Immersion Education: Pathways to Bilingualism & Beyond - St Paul, USA - <http://www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/immersion2008/call.html>

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25-27 September - XIIth Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference 2008 - Leeuwarden, Netherlands - <http://www.ogmios.org/home.htm>

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8-9 November - International Symposium on Japanese Studies and Japanese Language - Hong Kong - <http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/asian/jsaa/hk-j.pdf>

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4-7 December 2008, Media in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, Singapore - <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/cls/clasic2008/>

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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

- **Australian Education Digest** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/aed.htm> (weekly)
- **International News Roundup** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/roundup.htm> (monthly)
- **Values Education** : <http://www.valuesineducation.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Languages Education** : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Ensemble - Music Education** : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
- **Public Education Voice** : <http://www.acsso.org.au/pev.htm> (quarterly)

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