

# LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

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Read this on the web at <http://www.languageseducation.com/news1081016.pdf>

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## LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

### Minding our language

*Tom Hyland, The Age, October 12, 2008*

Despite government efforts to bolster foreign languages, Australians remain staunchly monolingual.

ONE October night two years ago, when the Howard government was at its peak and Alexander Downer was in his prime, the then-foreign minister stood in a dining room at the Windsor Hotel and spoke about opportunities created for Australia by the rise of China.

Australia, he said, had the skills - including an increasingly multilingual workforce - that China needed as it moved into a more advanced phase. His words struck a discordant note among some of his listeners, members of the Australia China Business Council, and one of them challenged Downer about Australia's poor record in teaching foreign languages, especially Chinese.

His reply, in essence, was this: learning foreign languages is a good thing, but English is the language of the world. Foreign political and business leaders increasingly speak our language and we're privileged because of that.

The implication drawn by some in the audience was this: Downer's view was that languages were useful but not necessary, and we could get by without them.

It's a widely held view that has created a crisis in Australian schools and universities, where foreign language study and teaching are in steep decline.

Three decades ago, 40% of year 12 students studied a foreign language. Now it's about 13%, of whom less than 6% are studying Asian languages. Fewer than half of primary and secondary students study a foreign language.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/minding-our-language-20081011-4ysu.html?page=-1>

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## **ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA**

### **Demand for Asia study overhaul**

*Tom Hyland, The Age, October 12, 2008*

While Prime Minister Kevin Rudd aims to make Australians Asia-literate, a new report reveals that the study of Chinese in Australian high schools "is overwhelmingly a matter of Chinese teaching Chinese to Chinese".

The report calls for action to stop the massive drop-out rate from Chinese language classes by students who can't compete with classmates who are native speakers or of Chinese descent.

It casts doubt on Mr. Rudd's target of 8000 year 12 students studying Chinese by 2020, and proposes a revamped curriculum to accommodate different levels of language proficiency.

The draft report, prepared for a national conference backed by the Federal Government later this month, highlights the difficulties confronting Mr. Rudd's ambition for Australia "to be the most Asian-literate nation in the Western world".

It finds that 94% of students who learn Chinese at some stage during their education drop out before year 12.

Of the 4% still studying the language at year 12, 94% are "first language" speakers - Chinese-born or of Chinese descent.

The report was written by Dr Jane Orton of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at Melbourne University.

Dr Orton's report will be presented to a national forum on Chinese language education in Melbourne on October 27 and 28

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/demand-for-asia-study-overhaul-20081011-4ysm.html?page=-1>

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### **Most of Australia's envoys can't speak Asian languages**

*Cameron Stewart, The Australian, October 13, 2008*

THREE out of four heads of Australian diplomatic missions in Asia cannot speak the language of the country they are posted to, despite the Rudd Government's call for closer ties and understanding with the region.

The shortage of diplomats with Asian languages is likely to continue, with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recruiting two new trainees with European language skills for every one with Asian languages.

In the past two years, DFAT recruited only 30 trainees with Asian languages compared with 58 who had European languages, 24 of whom spoke French. The trend raises questions about Mandarin-speaking Kevin Rudd's pledge last year to "foster a generation of Asia-literate Australians increasingly comfortable with the languages and cultures of our region".

Figures provided by DFAT to The Australian show that while the number of Asian-speaking diplomats has risen gradually over the past 14 years, it has not kept pace with Australia's expanding interests in the region.

Of DFAT's 13 missions in Southeast Asia, only two heads of mission -- in Kuala Lumpur and Dili -- are proficient in the local language. Similarly, of the seven DFAT posts in north Asia, only three heads of missions -- in Guangzhou, Shanghai and Taipei -- can speak the local language.

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24485921-2702,00.html>

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## **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

### **Demand grows for teaching indigenous languages**

More teachers have been trained to meet the growing demand for the teaching of Aboriginal languages in Government schools across Western Australia.

Education Minister Liz Constable today announced that another eight educators had successfully graduated from a two-year Aboriginal languages teacher training course.

Dr Constable said more Government school students were learning Aboriginal languages than ever before. "In 1995, we only had eight schools across the State where Aboriginal languages were offered as a study option - that number has now grown to 75," she said.

"The teacher training course is a vital component in preserving these traditional languages and boosting students' cultural pride. It is also creating more employment opportunities for indigenous Australians in education."

During their training, all graduates spend at least one hour each week teaching a language class. They also undertake four weeks of theoretical training in resource development, planning, teaching and assessment.

Read more at <http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Lists/Statements/DispForm.aspx?ID=130730>

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## **GLOBAL LANGUAGE**

### **UNESCO to recognise Esperanto as a living language**

Correspondent Brian Barker reports that "UNESCO will meet in Paris on 15th December to acknowledge Esperanto, as a living language. It is also intended to bring attention to the Year of International Languages."

Brian also notes that those wanting to know more about Esperanto can access a very interesting and informative video at: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-8837438938991452670>

The Universala Esperanto-Asocio (UEA) supports linguistic diversity, democracy, human emancipation, and a global culture for peace.

UEA maintains a comprehensive web portal on matters Esperanto at <http://www.esperanto.net/>

The Australian Esperanto Association Inc. is a non-profit organisation, incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory, aiming to:

- promote the use of the international language, Esperanto
- increase, among its members, a strong sense of solidarity
- to develop in its members understanding and esteem for peoples of other countries
- foster co-operation between Esperanto organisations
- organise nation-wide congresses, as well as other conferences and gatherings

The site also contains contact details for local associations based in each State and Territory

Read more at <http://aea.esperanto.org.au/>

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## Spreading the word: Observations on Esperanto

*Claire Provost. New Statesman, 22 May 2008*

It is unlikely that George Soros, Japanese anarchists and William Shatner have much in common - except, perhaps, for their shared study of Esperanto, the "international auxiliary language" now more than 120 years old and being heavily promoted by activists in Hokkaido, Japan in advance of this summer's G8 summit.

Invented in 1887 by Dr Ludovic Lazarus Zamenhof, Esperanto is a constructed language with Romanic and Germanic roots, Belarussian phonology, and Slavic semantics. The young ophthalmologist wanted an intermediary language to break through the language barriers that pervaded his home region in Poland, where different ethnic and linguistic groups lived in relative isolation from one another - an isolation that bred fear, suspicion and occasional violence.

There have been many attempts to spread the word (or vorto in Esperanto), but the latest spurt of enthusiasm comes from among contemporary anti-capitalist organisers hoping to use it to facilitate international action.

The Esperanto League for Freedom in Hokkaido (Libera Esperanto-Asocio en Hokkajdo), one of the many Japanese groups co-ordinating the anti-G8 summit protests, explains that it sees Esperanto as a "symbol of equality and internationalism".

Its goals are twofold: first, to see Esperanto used to aid communication between Japanese and foreign activists; and second, for the anti-G8ers movement to stimulate study of the language.

Many of the documents produced by the Japanese anti-G8 groups have online translations in English and Esperanto, and the Hokkaido-based Esperantists have put out international calls for groups to study and practise the language in the days leading up to the 7-9 July summit.

The calls echo those from a growing number of Esperanto study groups around the world from Brazil to South Korea.

Read more at <http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2008/05/esperanto-language-anti-world>

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## **IMMERSION LEARNING**

### **Victorian immersion school drops textbook methods**

*Liza Power, The Age, October 12, 2008*

FIFTEEN bright-eyed, smiling-faced prep students are singing a song. It's about the sun shining, the wind blowing, owls hooting, and the fact that it's a beautiful morning. Or a guten morgen, to be precise. The students are singing in German, you see, but this isn't your average primary school language class.

Before being charmed by the song of six-year-olds, I've attended a year 6 science class on the seasons and an assembly of dancing, clapping year 4 students - with barely a word of English spoken in either.

Another day, I might have taken a class in social studies, technology, music, art or even physical education, each taught in German.

This is called immersion learning, and for the teachers and students of Bayswater South Primary School - one of 13 schools in Victoria to offer language immersion programs - learning German isn't about one class a week with a musty set of textbooks. Rather, it's about integrating a foreign language into everything you study, learning it as you would your mother tongue, and in the process understanding how it functions on a practical, day-to-day level.

For principal Mary-Ann Williams, the benefits of speaking a second language (many of her students actually speak three or four) are many and varied.

"Through language, children begin to understand the working of another culture. They start by learning there's a different word in German for, say, a window. Then, later, they start to understand there might be a different way of looking and thinking because of that different word."

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/national/immersion-school-drops-textbook-methods-20081011-4ysv.html>

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## **MEDIA**

### **SBS needs more funds to maintain programs**

*Michael Bodey, The Australian, October 13, 2008*

SBS is at a "serious crossroads". It warns that a reduction in services is "inevitable" unless it receives a boost in federal support in the coming triennial funding phase.

In its submission to the Government, a summary of which will be issued today, the public broadcaster states that "in a world of technological change and rising costs, SBS has been chronically underfunded to meet the requirements of its charter".

Detailed costings have been submitted to the Government but will not be issued publicly.

Managing director Shaun Brown has indicated previously that he will ask for a 40 per cent increase in funding, about \$70 million a year, from the present level of \$191 million.

The ABC receives about \$880 million a year.

SBS has flagged a number of projects it will undertake if funding is increased, including at least 100 more hours a year of original Australian multicultural programming by 2012, a second digital channel (SBS World) and nine new digital radio channels.

But the tone of the SBS submission may surprise the Government, which plays strongly to the broadcaster's multicultural charter, one that some critics allege it has abandoned in the quest for ratings and advertising.

Among the new services SBS would produce, if funded, are an English language tuition service broadcast nationally on television and online, a digital television service broadcasting predominantly in languages other than English to meet the needs of underserved communities, seven digital radio channels for new and emerging ethnic communities, subtitled in-language children's programming, and online community language hubs.

Noting the Government's "social inclusion" rhetoric, SBS pitches itself as a potent social force and an educator that can help "assist new arrivals to adjust to their new home and participate more fully as citizens".

Read more at <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,24484919-30540,00.html>

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## **OPINION**

### **Australia must affirm its commitment to multiculturalism**

*Petro Georgiou, The Age, 10 October 2008*

THIRTY years ago, when I was director of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, people asked me whether I had a vision of a multicultural Australia in 2000. I said that I hoped it would be a society where, within a framework of key shared values, people had the opportunity to choose who they wanted to be.

If they wanted to maintain elements of the culture of their origins that did not violate Australian laws, they should be able to do so.

If they wanted to speak and read the language of their origin, as well as learning English, they should be able to do so. And if they wanted to adopt everything iconically Aussie, and forget about everything else, that was fine too. This is the logic of the policy of multiculturalism.

In the past decade, at the national political level, we regressed in our acceptance of social diversity. Successive Howard governments were at best ambivalent. After the terrorist attacks on Western targets, strong concerns were voiced that multiculturalism allowed the propagation of radical Islamist ideas and

undermined social cohesion. More effort was seen to be needed to promote commitment to Australian values and institutions.

One response was to erase multiculturalism from the official lexicon. Another was to introduce a new citizenship test with a tougher English language standard and a quiz on Australian facts. I opposed the test because it imposes unnecessary and unreasonable barriers to citizenship and seeks to impose a template of national identity.

It is unclear what the Rudd Government's attitude to the content of the test is.

The Rudd Government's position on multiculturalism is also opaque and the Opposition has yet to define its policy.

This is my perspective on where we are at and where we are going. The reality of our diversity is as inescapable now as it has ever been. While significant religious and racial prejudice and discrimination are evident and must be dealt with, there is much interaction between people of different backgrounds and mostly these interactions are harmonious.

Read more at <http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/australia-must-affirm-its-commitment-to-multiculturalism-20081009-4xis.html?page=-1>

Petro Georgiou is the federal MP for Kooyong. This is a version of the Marion Adams Memorial Lecture he delivered at the University of Melbourne.

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## **RESOURCES**

### **Lingo - and the Languages Action Alliance**

The Languages Action Alliance is a coalition of like-minded individuals who not only believe in the importance of establishing bilingualism as an Australian way of life but actively seek ways to make that a reality, both individually in their various day-to-day working lives - and also working together on projects such as the Lingo website.

Lingo is set up as a blog: an online diary, or weblog, pointing out events, resources, opinions, experiences and research related to languages education for children in Australia, including in early childhood and pre-school years.

The focus is on "providing positive reinforcement to the belief that Australian children can and should grow up knowing at least two languages, and providing practical support to parents, other family members, carers, teachers, principals and other professionals seeking ways to put that belief into action".

Lingo is currently running a unique Online Survey "for parents / guardians / care givers of children and/or parents-to-be to identify their attitudes, experiences and needs relevant to the support of language learning".

The Survey is anonymous and no individuals or schools can be identified. The results will be published - and will help members of the Alliance to shape strategies and information that will be of benefit to parents and families - and to service providers.

Please use your school and personal networks to encourage maximum participation in the survey.

Read more at <http://www.lingo.org.au/>

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## Leaflet "It is important to keep your first language" now available in more languages

ACSSO and APC jointly launched the original English language version of their leaflet "It is important to keep your first language" - about the benefits of maintaining your home or original family language and raising your children bilingually - on International Mother Language Day in February 2007.

On International Mother Language Day 2008 (the launch date for the UN's International Year of Languages 2008) we made this leaflet available in a further five community languages.

Continuing this process as a national contribution to the International Year of Languages 2008, we can now advise you that the leaflet is currently available in a total of fourteen languages:

- Arabic
- English
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hindi
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mandarin
- Punjabi
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

Information on this and other ACSSO-APC resources is currently being posted out to schools Progressively, state by state, together with an Order Form.

You can also order supplies of these free leaflets for distribution to families in your school community by emailing us at <mailto:info@languageseducation.com> and indicating the numbers you require in which languages - plus a suitable mailing address so we can send them to you.

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## FROM HERE AND THERE

### UK: Learn languages or lose out on a job

*Liz Lightfoot, The Observer, 21 September 2008*

Britons are missing out on jobs at home and abroad because of their inability to speak languages other than English, the European Union commissioner for languages has warned.

Leonard Orban, the EU commissioner for multilingualism, says that small- to medium-sized companies in the UK are increasingly turning to foreign nationals to fill jobs that call for more than one language.

His comments came as it emerged that the European Commission is facing such a severe shortage of native English-speaking interpreters that meetings are being cancelled. The commission also warns that it may have to cut the number of documents it translates because of the dwindling number of British students with degrees in French and German.

Since 2002, member states have been committed to a policy of working towards all citizens speaking their mother tongue plus two other languages. A league table to be in place by 2010 will show the competence of students in different EU countries at the end of compulsory schooling. It is widely accepted that Britain will be near the bottom .

'British graduates are missing out on some of the best jobs at home and abroad because they are on the whole monolingual,' said Orban, a Romanian who speaks English, French and Italian. 'An English mother-tongue candidate with additional languages has an even more competitive edge, but let's not forget that only about 25 per cent of the world's population speaks English. If you know the local language and culture, you are more likely to clinch that lucrative business deal, so it is an economic problem for Britain as well,' he said.

Read more at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/sep/21/languages.eu>

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## **UK: A new goal for football stars: to spread love of languages**

*Richard Garner, The Independent, 8 October 2008*

It may be hard to imagine but the 20 or so pupils in the French lesson are bursting to ask their teacher a question. After all, languages are boring and that is why so many pupils have given them up. Their keenness could have something to do with the identity of the teacher - the French international footballer Bacary Sagna.

The Arsenal right-back is taking part in an innovative project to liven up language teaching for thousands of children: pupils spend 45 minutes in the classroom, followed by 45 minutes trying to outfox Sagna on the football field. It would be hard to imagine any circumstances in which the phrase "it's a game of two halves" could be more apt.

Welcome to the world of Arsenal's "double club". Arsenal has among the largest array of international talent of any club in the league - with its first-team squad speaking about 16 different languages between them. Their striker Cesc Fabregas is helping pupils with their Spanish and the manager, Arsene Wenger, is producing a DVD on learning German.

Julie Stoker, a language teacher working full-time with Arsenal developing the materials to be used in the classroom, says the scheme offers one of the best chances of halting the decline in languages take-up at GCSE. In 2000, 83 per cent of pupils took a GCSE in a modern foreign language. Last year, largely as a result of the Government's decision to make the subject voluntary for 14 to 16-year-olds, only 47 per cent did.

"That's a huge problem at the moment," she said. "Here we can harness their love of the game of football to develop a love of languages."

Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/a-new-goal-for-football-stars-to-spread-love-of-languages-954593.html>

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## **UK: Head teacher uses sign language at school of 24 nationalities**

*Martin Beckford, Telegraph, 1 October 2008*

Of the 311 children at Fairlight Primary School in Brighton, East Sussex, 55 are from overseas, originating from a total of 24 countries. Between them, they speak 26 languages ranging from Spanish and Polish to Arabic and Mandarin Chinese.

The school's new head teacher, Damien Jordan, realised he and the other teachers would struggle unless they found a way to communicate with all of the pupils, but it would be impossible for them to learn all the different languages. So he and his staff have learned how to use the basics of Makaton, a form of signing that involves speech and facial expressions as well as gestures, and are now using it in classes with children as well.

Recent figures show one in seven primary school pupils in England now speaks English as a second language, up from one in 10 in 2004, and more than 50 languages are spoken in some schools.

Mr. Jordan, who at 36 is one of the youngest head teachers in the area, said: "I need to be able to communicate in some form with all of the pupils and their families so I have been learning the basics in several different tongues and have been training in a sign language called Makaton, which has been designed for use in schools. It means that at times when children might get frustrated that they can't make themselves understood, you can still communicate with them."

He added: "We are submerged in English but we are also learning to sign because language is so important. Because Makaton is new to all of us, we are learning together and that creates a sense of community. It's early days but everyone is involved and it is something that we are genuinely proud of doing."

Read more at

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/education/primaryeducation/3117340/Head-teacher-forced-to-use-sign-language-at-school-of-24-nationalities.html>

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## **UK: Keep languages courses optional, urges head of national centre**

*Richard Garner, Independent, 26 September 2008*

Compulsory language lessons for teenagers are counterproductive and should not be brought back, the new head of Britain's national languages centre says today.

In an interview with The Independent, her first since taking office, Kate Broad said 14- to 16-year-olds should only learn languages if they are interested in the subject. "I don't think we can go back," said Ms Broad, chief executive of CILT - the body tasked with promoting foreign languages in Britain.

"At the end of the day, when it was compulsory, were they learning or were they just sitting in the classroom? If you stick everybody in the classroom, are they really learning French or are they just sitting in there, getting bored and disruptive?"

The Government's decision to end compulsory language lessons for 14- to 16-year-olds, taken five years ago, caused outrage at the time and is widely blamed for a dramatic slump in the take-up of languages at GCSE in recent years. In particular, Sir Trevor McDonald, the ITN newscaster, called for languages to be a compulsory element up to degree level in a report for the Nuffield Foundation.

Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/keep-languages-courses-optional-urges-head-of-national-centre-942818.html>

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## **UK: Our language skills are a national embarrassment**

*Editorial Comment, The Observer, August 3 2008*

If you ask schoolchildren why they prefer not to study a foreign language, they will generally answer that the subject is too difficult or pointless, perhaps adding the perennial juvenile complaint that it is 'boring'.

Astonishingly, the entire education system in England and Wales agrees. In 2002, secondary schools were relieved of the obligation to make students take at least one foreign language at GCSE. As a direct consequence, as a report in The Observer today shows, language learning is in crisis. The numbers of children sitting French and German GCSE are in freefall. That means fewer A-level candidates, fewer students taking language degrees and so fewer competent language teachers. Such declines are hard to reverse.

There is a utilitarian argument for dropping languages. It is that, since most global business is done in English, students would be better off - and suffer no competitive disadvantage in the jobs market - if they devoted their time to other things. But following that logic, there is no need to teach arithmetic as long as children have calculators and no virtue in science classes when few modern jobs are based in laboratories.

There must be room in education for the idea that subjects are worth studying for benefits other than future earning potential. Learning languages broadens horizons.

Read more at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/aug/03/languages.schools>

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## **USA: Give Latin (and Potential Dropouts) a Chance**

*Baynard Woods, Education Week, 22 September 2008*

Last year, I was lucky enough to teach Latin to a group of African-American and Latino juniors and seniors at a charter high school in Washington. The school had just, for the first time, made "adequate yearly progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. But it had barely passed, and we knew we still had a long way to go. Many experts may believe that AYP is a poor measure of quality, but in this case it was an accurate indicator of a problem: Many of our students could not read well.

The school, and the literacy consultants it hired, had tried everything to bring students to understanding and independence through texts-and to help them pass the District of Columbia's annual Comprehensive Assessment System, or CAS, test. On a schoolwide level, we were doing many things right, but the reading problem remained vast. So last year, after working as a literacy coach and a mentor teacher, I was able to try an elective in Latin, which I had taught before in other settings.

Because of budgetary constraints, I was only able to teach the course for one year, and I know I did not do it perfectly. Yet the experience convinced me that there may be compelling reasons to think that Latin might play a role in eliminating the achievement gap between disadvantaged and affluent students. It holds the power, I found, to bridge a subtle but perhaps more insidious prestige gap.

Read more at [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/09/22/05woods-com\\_web.h28.html?tmp=536031889](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/09/22/05woods-com_web.h28.html?tmp=536031889)

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## **USA: Finding Our Way with Words**

*Amanda Litvino, National Education Association, October 2008*

Adapting to the global age means having a voice in it. Can America's schools break the language barrier?

What does it say about America that we are the only industrialized nation that routinely graduates high school students who speak only one language? Frankly, it says that if you want to talk to us-to do business with us, negotiate peace with us, learn from or teach us, or even just pal around with us-you'd better speak English. The fact that we're woefully behind in world language skills has long registered somewhere between, "Hmmm," and "Yeah, so?" on the national priority gauge. (Compare that to our panicky responses to indicators that we're not on top in math and science.)

"The norm is still either no foreign language or two years in high school," says Marty Abbott, director of Education at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. The Council's most recent estimates show enrollment in foreign language programs in the United States at about 30 percent for grades 7-12, and just 5 percent for elementary students.

But the English-only-is-OK attitude may be on the way out. A series of wake-up calls relating to national security, diplomacy, and economics-for example, the scramble to find Arabic translators after 9/11 and the struggle federal agencies faced aiding the Gulf Coast's sizable Vietnamese community post-Katrina-elicited voices of concern from the business community, the Department of Defense, educators, and families, all dismayed by our collective ignorance of world languages and cultures.

These new allies join a long-standing contingent of educators and advocates who say it's high time we change our monolingual ways. They point to dozens of programs and ideas, some new and some not, that show America has not only the capacity to produce multilingual, globally aware kids, but also the responsibility. Their ideas seem to be gaining ground, especially in the past five years, according to Abbott.

That's not to say there isn't resistance.

Read more at <http://www.nea.org/neatoday/0810/worldlanguages.html>

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## **US: County's Early Language Program Pays Off**

*Michael Birnbaum, Washington Post, October 2, 2008*

A spiky rubber porcupine flies through the air, passed between Spanish teacher Elizabeth Gueits and her seventh-graders as they go back and forth with questions and answers in Spanish. One student tiene hambre - is hungry; another está cansado - is tired.

Although it's just the fifth week of class, some roll their R's like pros, and Señora Gueits doesn't have to utter a word of English. Many of these Seneca Ridge Middle School students have studied Spanish since

they were 6 as part of an unusual program in which all children in the Loudon school system take Spanish classes in grades 1 through 6.

The first students to be exposed to the elementary classes are now in ninth grade, and foreign language participation rates in middle school show the effects of the program. Spanish, long the most popular foreign language, hasn't grown in dominance over other languages, but total enrollment in language classes at the middle school level has surged, said Suzette F. Wyhs, who oversees foreign language instruction for the school district.

Two years ago, before any of the students with elementary school Spanish had reached eighth grade, 16 percent of Loudoun eighth-graders did not take a foreign language. That number has plummeted.

Wyhs said the figures suggest that students who have been through the elementary program are less intimidated about pursuing foreign language studies -- and with good reason, she said, pointing to research that shows that learning one nonnative language makes it easier to learn another.

Read more at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/01/AR2008100100091.html?nav=rss\\_education](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/01/AR2008100100091.html?nav=rss_education)

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## **CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

### **AFMLTA Biennial National Conference 2009**

#### **Dialogue, Discourse, Diversity**

*9-12 July 2009, Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW*

The MLTA of NSW is pleased to be hosting the AFMLTA's 17th Biennial Conference 2009 at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Darling Harbour, Sydney.

The theme for the Conference is Dialogue Discourse Diversity and the conference committee would like to invite teachers, linguists and scholars from all relevant fields to participate and present about their research or professional practice.

Invited Plenary Speakers: Professor Miles Turnbull; Professor Ofelia Garcia; Professor Joseph Lo Bianco

The Conference will begin with the Welcome Reception on Thursday 9th July.

Conference sessions commence at 9.00am on Friday 10th July, and conclude at 1.00pm on Sunday 12th July.

Further details at: <http://www.mltansw.asn.au/afmltadetails.htm>

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### **Australian Society of Indonesian Language Educators (ASILE) 2009 Conference**

#### **Working together to build Australia's Indonesian language potential**

## 14-15 July 2009 at St Catherine's School Waverley NSW

The theme for the conference is Maju bersama - Working together to build Australia's Indonesian language potential.

The conference committee invites teachers, linguists and scholars involved in Indonesian language education to participate and present their research or professional practice.

For details: <http://mltansw.asn.au/asiletheme.htm>

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## REMINDERS

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

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

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

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

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>

20-23 November - American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages Annual Convention and World Languages Expo - Orlando, USA - <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4730>

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

7-11 December - World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education - Melbourne - <http://www.wipce2008.com/>

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## ACSSO EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

Subscription is available free to ACSSO's current range of 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)
- **Family School Partners** : [http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page\\_id=6](http://www.familyschool.org.au/?page_id=6) (quarterly)

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