

# LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Volume Two, Number 15: 13 November 2008

Read this on the web at <http://www.languageseducation.com/news1081113.pdf>

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## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

### Saving endangered languages

*Shaunnagh O'Loughlin*

Australia's Indigenous languages are disappearing at an alarming rate, taking with them enormous amounts of knowledge and culture. Unique stories and songs are being lost as community elders die, but Monash University researchers are working with one community to preserve ancient traditions.

Thirty years ago almost 260 people spoke their traditional language in the community of Yanyuwa at Borroloola, 970kms south-east of Darwin. Today, only a handful of community members remain fluent -- the last custodians of ancient songs, stories, customs and land ownership that are bound up in the vocabulary of the endangered language.

Dr John Bradley and Dr Amanda Kearney from Monash University's Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies, have worked with the community for much of that time and are working with Monash digital animators Tom Chandler, Brent McKee and Chandara Ung to digitally capture the community's oral traditions. Most of the remaining Yanyuwa speakers are elderly -- making the need to capture the language urgent.

"When you lose a language, you lose a lot more than words. You lose spirituality, concepts of spirituality and cultural values, as well as particular views of ethics and morality," Dr Bradley said.

Read more at <http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/monmag/issue22-2008/research/song-title.html>

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## Indigenous Languages Petition

*Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages*

Over the last few years a number of language speakers, linguists and language workers have identified the urgency of the issue of supporting indigenous languages. In response a petition to the Federal government has been put together,

Please follow the link below to either print out a hard copy or sign this petition online in support of indigenous languages.

[http://www.fatsil.org.au/component/option,com\\_joomlapetition/Itemid,/catid,1/func,viewcategory/](http://www.fatsil.org.au/component/option,com_joomlapetition/Itemid,/catid,1/func,viewcategory/)

For more information regarding the status of indigenous languages please head to the Ngapartji Ngapartji website; <http://www.ngapartji.org/content/view/19/79/> or to the Transient Languages and Cultures blog; <http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/> and here is a great essay that was on Radio National recently <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2410952.htm>.

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## **Northern Territory Education Union says bi-lingual education boosts performance**

*ABC News Mon Oct 27, 2008*

The Northern Territory Education Union says the NT Government is ignoring international evidence that bi-lingual education improves academic performance of students.

The Education Minister Marion Scrymgour has announced all schools would have to teach in english for the first four hours of the day starting next year.

She says it does not spell the end to bi-lingual education as students can still study culture and language in the afternoons.

But the union's Olga Wrzesinska says making english compulsory for the first four hours of school everyday will be disastrous for indigenous education outcomes.

Ms Wrzesinska says international research shows students enrolled in bi-lingual schools consistently out-perform those in non bi-lingual schools.

Read more at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/10/27/2401913.htm>

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## **Aboriginal prodigy steals the night at Australia music awards**

*Rob Taylor, Reuters, Oct 20, 2008*

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, a blind Aboriginal man hailed as the greatest voice Australia has ever recorded, carried the night at the country's top music awards, despite most awards going to a 17-year-old schoolgirl.

Blind since birth, Gurrumul, 37, speaks almost no English, but has become a sensation in his homeland, with a haunting, lilting voice and lyrics sung in three indigenous languages which few Australians understand.

"He captures a very particular feeling that is part of Yolngu culture, about pining but at the same time feeling happy, about longing for your land but not worrying about it," spokesman Michael Hohnen told Australian media.

The acutely shy Gurrumul, a self-taught outback guitarist who plays his instrument upside down, stunned crowds at the annual Australian Record Industry Awards night on Sunday, winning best independent release. Critics have described his voice as having "transcendental beauty." Others compare it to "slow rain."

Read more at <http://www.reuters.com/article/musicNews/idUSTRE49J05P20081020?sp=true>

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## Teachers urged to bridge culture gap

*The Age, October 22, 2008 (AAP)*

Teachers need to understand indigenous culture to help raise the education levels of Aboriginal children, according to leading indigenous educators.

Jirribal tribe elder and educator Ernie Grant, of far north Queensland, said some teachers misinterpreted certain behaviour by indigenous students because they lacked important cultural insight.

"It can be simple things such as not looking at the teacher," Mr Grant said. "Some avoid eye contact because in their culture it's rude to look an adult in the eye ... but that's a basic example. There are far more complex cultural differences than that."

Mr Grant said English was a second language for most indigenous students, and teachers should give explanations more than once and in different ways.

As a cultural officer in the Tully region, Mr Grant holds workshops educating teachers on the land, language, culture and the part family play in the lives of indigenous students.

Former school principal and Australian Principals Associations program coordinator Peter O'Beirne agreed there was a cultural gap between teachers and indigenous students.

Read more at <http://news.theage.com.au/national/teachers-urged-to-bridge-culture-gap-20081022-569x.html>

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## Native American tribe focuses on the young to keep language alive

*Dan Frosch, International Herald Tribune, 17 October 2008*

At 69, her eyes soft and creased with age, Alvena Oldman remembers how the teachers at St. Stephens boarding school on the Wind River Reservation would strike students with rulers if they dared to talk in their native Arapaho language. "We were afraid to speak it," she said. "We knew we would be punished."

More than a half-century later, only about 200 Arapaho speakers are still alive, and tribal leaders at Wind River, Wyoming's only Indian reservation, fear their language will not survive. As part of an intensifying effort to save that language, this tribe of 8,791, known as the Northern Arapaho, recently opened a new

school where students will be taught in Arapaho. Elders and educators say they hope it will create a new generation of native speakers.

"This is a race against the clock, and we're in the 59th minute of the last hour," said a National Indian Education Association board member, Ryan Wilson, whom the tribe hired as a consultant to help get the school off the ground. Like other tribes, the Northern Arapaho have suffered from the legacy of Indian boarding institutions, established by the federal government in the late 1800s to "Americanize" Native American children. It was at such schools that teachers instilled the "kill the Indian, save the man" philosophy, young boys had their traditional braids shorn, and students were forbidden to speak tribal languages.

Read entire article at: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/10/17/america/17arapaho.php>

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### re: Demand for Asia study overhaul (16-10-08)

*Dr Lijian Hong, Convenor, Chinese Incountry Program, Monash University*

As a lecturer teaching Chinese at Monash for more than 16 years, I have great interest in Chinese teaching at schools for obvious reason: any changes at our school level will eventually impact Chinese teaching at tertiary level.

The landscape changes in Australian educational market since the 1990s have presented both opportunities and challenges to all Chinese teaching programs in schools and universities.

Luckily the Monash Chinese Studies Program has not only survived, it has grown from a debt-bearing teaching unit 8 years ago into arguably the largest and most internationalised teaching Chinese teaching units in all Victorian, if not in Australian, universities with sound financial position.

But when I read Jane's interview in the Age, I found it very confusing. What is this notion of "Chinese teaching Chinese"?

As a Chinese Australian, am I regarded as a Chinese or Australian? When we talk about "Chinese" students, are we talking about Chinese international students from China, from Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia of ethnic Chinese Australians?

As we all understand, they are quite different. Also, as Chinese becomes increasingly not only a foreign language to Australian, it is also one of community languages of Australian society, is there anything wrong to offer Chinese Australian kids (heritage language learners) to learn Chinese as a community language? Even for background Chinese students (students from China), why can't we offer them Chinese to improve their language capacity while they staying overseas?

As Australian schools and universities are increasingly internationalised, at least in terms of student enrolment, don't we have the obligation to provide these Chinese school kids a language maintenance program for them while they study in our country so that they will be able to compete with their domestically trained counterparts when they complete their education here and return home?

More importantly with huge research resources in Chinese studies overseas (definitely much more than China), isn't it a good opportunity for us to provide these schools kids different views about China and its history, culture, society, politics, economics, etc and help them to build up a critical approach both to target and home culture, their own "third place"?

As for the drop rate, any one who have taught Chinese in the past ten years or so should understand that this is normal. As Chinese is one of the difficult languages to learn, you never expect a high retention rate as students climb to the higher levels of learning. What we actually see is a dramatic increase of background into our Chinese studies stream.

The key here is not to provide teaching program that tries to maintain a high at rate all levels, but a program that will target different levels and different backgrounds of Chinese students and guarantees that survivals get the best possible education in Chinese language and culture.

There are many issues that are closely linked with Chinese teaching in Victoria and in Australia as well. What we really need is to have a "paradigm shift" in Chinese teaching rather than "service pack" solution. It would be very interesting to see more people to be involved in discussions and debating issues of Chinese teaching in Australia.

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## **DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION**

### **SA school uses mobile phones as learning tool**

*Helene Sobolewski, The Advertiser, October 23, 2008*

ONCE a teacher's nightmare in the classroom, mobile phones are now resurfacing as a legitimate learning aid. While many schools maintain strict classroom bans, St Johns Grammar is encouraging mobiles as part of an Australian-first trial to promote the benefits of mobile technology in increasing fluency in foreign languages.

The Year 10 students, studying Indonesian, are given a mobile each which they use to call up an automated service that guides them through a menu. They choose from conversations about booking a hotel to a menu and are prompted to go through the details in Indonesian.

Their answers are uploaded on to a website and get marked on their use of the language.

The class is among 250 students and teachers throughout South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania taking part in the unique trial by the the Government's [Le@rning](#) Federation's Mobile Applications for Language Learning project.

St Johns Grammar Indonesian teacher Sally Letcher said her students were gaining extra confidence in their language skills during the trial.

"It takes away the fear of talking to a real person and builds up their confidence and extends their vocab," she said.

Students can also call each other in the classroom, but the phones cannot call normal mobile phones.

Year 10 student Miranda Daughtry, 15, said the program had helped her vocabulary and she was building confidence in putting her language skills to use.

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,24538923-2682,00.html>

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## OUR SCHOOL

### Sunshine Coast Grammar School

#### Peace Pole

"The limits of my language are the limits of my world." - Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1922.

At a very special whole school assembly by the lakes at the School's entrance, Headmaster Nigel Fairbairn has unveiled Grammar's new Peace Pole. The Peace Pole bears the phrase "May Peace Prevail on Earth" written in English, French, Mandarin/Chinese and Japanese... the four languages studied at Sunshine Coast Grammar School.

During the 20-minute ceremony, the flag of each country was raised as the phrase was read in each language by students.

Katini, a Year 12 Australian student, Leanna, a Chinese International student, Marie, a French exchange student and Yuko, a student from a visiting sister school in Japan each addressed the crowd to speak about their very different experiences.

2008 is the International Year of Languages. The study of other languages and cultures has long been championed as a way to promote understanding and pave the way to world peace. This week, in particular, people all over the world are reminded of the importance of peace, with the anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb.

Grammar's Peace Pole project, spearheaded by Head of International Studies, Ms Sue Walduck, was made possible with funding from Independent Schools Queensland.

*Article: Natasha Koch.*

Read more at [http://www.scgs.qld.edu.au/news/school\\_news/detail.php?ID=7838&phrase\\_id=62699](http://www.scgs.qld.edu.au/news/school_news/detail.php?ID=7838&phrase_id=62699)

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## OPINION

### Australia must affirm its commitment to multiculturalism

*Petro Georgiou, 9 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.

Read more at <http://www.languageseducation.com/georgiou081009.pdf>

*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 9 October, published in The Age on 10 October 2008.*

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## RESOURCES

### Link up with the Languages Action Alliance – and Lingo

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 but also working together on projects such as the Lingo website and a national online Survey - <http://www.lingo.org.au>

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's currently-running Online Survey is "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".

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 - and
- a suitable mailing address so we can send them to you.

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## **FROM HERE AND THERE**

### **USA: Sharing languages, students gain an edge: English, Spanish speakers learn from one another at Brockton school**

*L.E. Crowley, Boston Globe October 23, 2008*

Parents, students, and officials of Brockton's Arnone Elementary School say that nearly 200 students have made a winning decision by enrolling in the class.

The school offers an innovative bilingual language-immersion program called Two-Way Spanish, which is in its seventh year. The program integrates native Spanish-speaking students with native English-speaking students so that each can learn the languages, not only from teachers, but from each other.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., five other districts in Massachusetts have two-way programs: Framingham, Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, and Roxbury.

Four districts - Milton, Holliston, Mendon-Upton Regional, and Millis - offer foreign-language immersion, but nearly all the students are English speakers and aren't integrated with students who speak another language. Fall River is discussing launching a Spanish and Portuguese two-way immersion program.

According to parents and educators, two-way foreign-language immersion is giving students a rare opportunity to break down social barriers. And although test scores are likely to lag in the early grades as students grapple with grammar, vocabulary, and math in two languages, they are more likely to outperform other students on high-stakes tests in middle and high school, educators say.

Read more at

[http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2008/10/23/sharing\\_languages\\_students\\_gain\\_an\\_edge/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2008/10/23/sharing_languages_students_gain_an_edge/)

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## **USA: A Dead Language That's Very Much Alive**

*Winnie Hu, New York Times, October 6, 2008*

Enrollment in Latin classes here in this Westchester County suburb has increased by nearly one-third since 2006, to 187 of the district's 10,500 students, and the two middle schools in town are starting an ancient-cultures club in which students will explore the lives of Romans, Greeks and others.

The number of students in the United States taking the National Latin Exam has risen steadily to more than 134,000 students in each of the past two years, from 124,000 in 2003 and 101,000 in 1998, with large increases in remote parts of the country like New Mexico, Alaska and Vermont.

The number of students taking the Advanced Placement test in Latin, meanwhile, has nearly doubled over the past 10 years, to 8,654 in 2007.

While Spanish and French still dominate student schedules — and Chinese and Arabic are trendier choices — Latin has quietly flourished in many high-performing suburbs, like New Rochelle, where Latin's virtues are sung by superintendents and principals who took it in their day.

Read more at

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/07/nyregion/07latin.html?\\_r=2&ref=education&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/07/nyregion/07latin.html?_r=2&ref=education&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)

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## **USA: Latin students want to keep alive their "dead" language?**

*Lee T. Percy, Education Weekly, 5 November 2008*

Last month, The New York Times reported something that Latin teachers everywhere already know: This supposedly "dead language" is attracting increasing numbers of students who recognize the good things it does to their minds.

The National Latin Exam has drawn the participation of more than 130,000 students in each of the last two years, and the number of high school students taking Advanced Placement examinations in Virgil or Latin literature has almost doubled over the past decade: from 4,700 in 1997 to 8,654 in 2007.

To those who care about Latin in schools, it now seems as critical to attract, train, and keep qualified Latin teachers as it is to draw students to the subject. A recent decision by the College Board, however, may make it harder to extend the advantages of Latin to the students likely to gain the most from them.

Read more at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/11/05/11pearcy.h28.html?tmp=743079378>

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## **UK: Sound start: How one primary school got to grips with Spanish**

**The Government wants every seven-year-old to learn a language – but are our schools up to it?**

*Amy McLellan, The Independent, Thursday, 23 October 2008*

Anyone who has sweated over German grammar in high school or struggled to order lunch from a Parisian waiter knows that the older you are, the harder it can be to get to grips with a new language. Young children, however, have a natural curiosity and a lack of inhibition, which can make learning a new language pain-free – and even fun.

This at least is the experience of many primary schools as they gear up to deliver the languages entitlement of the National Languages Strategy which states that by 2009/10 all primary children should have the opportunity to learn a language from the age of seven.

Primary schools appear to have embraced this challenge. The latest statistics show that 84 per cent of primaries are now offering a language to seven-year-olds, up from 70 per cent in 2006.

The results can be impressive. Walk down the corridors of Park Royal Primary in Macclesfield, for example, and the children call out "bonjour monsieur" to language enthusiast and head teacher Nick Warren.

French isn't the only language that can be heard in this school of 400 pupils: on 26 September, the school's European Day of Languages celebration saw some 80 activities underway in 20 different languages with the children learning about Polish, Moldovan and even Tagalog, which is spoken in the Philippines, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the school body.

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/sound-start-how-one-primary-school-got-to-grips-with-spanish-969236.html>

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## **UK: It's good to talk: How being multi-lingual can boost your career**

**In the multilingual, globalised workplace, knowledge of another language can provide a wealth of opportunities – and boost your salary by as much as 20 per cent**

*Dominic Luddy, The Independent, 23 October 2008*

The world is more connected than ever. You see it in the media, on the internet, in sport, even in the turbulent world of finance.

Businesses are constantly looking for new countries to sell to. But are foreign language skills still essential in 21st century communications? Don't we all speak English? Will languages really bring you more opportunities?

Given that 75 per cent of the world's population doesn't speak our language, English is not enough. It's a multilingual world and UK businesses are now realising that they need foreign languages to compete when trading internationally.

It helps to speak languages over here as well. More than 300 languages are spoken in the UK, and millions of visitors come to our shores. Public services and the tourist industry need languages too.

This doesn't mean that you need to learn to speak the language fluently. There is room for all levels, and openings from the switchboard to the boardroom. Although fluency will give you more options, basic ability in languages is in demand as businesses look to break the ice with a few phrases in a meeting.

Speaking languages gives you the key to a whole new world. According to recruitment agencies, languages can even help you earn between 8 and 20 per cent more in your job. Jobs involving languages can be attractive. You might get to travel overseas or take on new responsibilities simply because you have the right patter.

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/career-planning/getting-job/its-good-to-talk-how-being-multilingual-can-boost-your-career-969235.html>

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## **UK: 'Language skills have given me focus and direction'**

*Dominic Luddy, The Independent, 23 October 2008*

'I really love the independence this work gives me' Zahara, 39, is a freelance interpreter working in London. (Her name has been changed to protect her identity.)

During a spell living and working in Kenya before moving to London in 1995, Zahara, a native Somalian, had learned Swahili in addition to her native Bravan (a dialect of Somali). Having devoted herself to her three young children for a number of years, she decided to learn how to interpret professionally – something she'd had a taste of when helping her family to access local services like hospitals and schools.

Zahara joined a London Development Agency-funded course delivered by Making Training Work, which enabled her to develop her customer service and professional interpreting techniques. The training gave her a huge boost in confidence. Since 2008, she has progressed to work through interpreting agencies in Romford, Dagenham and Newham.

Zahara has found she needs to react quickly to interpreting assignments in both Swahili and her native Bravan. Clients frequently need help the same day, and there may be little or no briefing before she gets there. Working across different parts of London, there's also a lot of travelling involved. But she has no regrets.

"I really love the independence this work gives me. I've learned new things about schools, housing and healthcare that have proved really useful, and it's nice to have such frequent contact with people from different backgrounds. It's been a huge change in my life."

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/career-planning/getting-job/language-skills-have-given-me-focus-and-direction-969233.html>

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## **UK: Familiar voices: Why the linguistic heritage of Britain's ethnic groups should be tapped**

*Kate Hilpern, The Independent, 23 October 2008*

When Harshad Kothari joined Metro Design Consultants as financial director, the last thing he expected was for his language skills to help win £650,000 of new business.

"I was at an initial client meeting with the Indian bank, Bank of Baroda, and when they discovered I spoke Gujarati, they decided they only wanted to deal with me," he says. "I think they felt they could express themselves better in their own language and that helped build trust. In the last two years, we've designed three of their branches."

While much is made of the need for people to learn new languages, the UK's rich diversity means that a strong linguistic talent already exists.

With more than 300 languages spoken in London alone, the potential is there for people such as Kothari – who are fluent in one or more of these languages as well as English – to make a significant contribution to our economy and society.

The problem is, says Teresa Tinsley, spokesperson for Cilt, the National Centre for Languages, that we tend to place less value on non-European languages. "If someone is bilingual in German and English, you think they're clever, but other languages that are just as commonly spoken in the world and have just as rich a culture and heritage often get overlooked or downgraded. If you take Bengali as an example, it's one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and yet it holds a low status in some people's minds."

Read more at <http://www.independent.co.uk/student/career-planning/getting-job/familiar-voices-why-the-linguistic-heritage-of-britains-ethnic-groups-should-be-tapped-969234.html>

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## **USA: Two-language program produces results: Dual Immersion students outperform English-only counterparts**

*Terry Smith, Idaho Mountain Express, 29 October 2008*

Test results show that students enrolled in the Blaine County School District's two-language program outperform their counterparts in English-only classes. Both Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in the district's Dual Immersion program continue to become more proficient at reading and math the longer they are enrolled in the program.

By the sixth grade, Hispanic students especially outperform other Hispanic students who do not have the benefit of a two-language program. In fact, 83.3 percent of the school district's Dual Immersion sixth-grade Hispanic students read at proficiency in the spring 2008 Idaho Standard Achievement Tests. That compared to a state average for sixth-grade Hispanic students of 39.4 percent.

Non-Hispanic sixth-grade Dual Immersion students also scored higher on the spring ISAT reading tests. A perfect 100 percent read at proficiency compared to a state average of 84 percent.

The higher test scores for the school district's Dual Immersion students were not a surprise to district administrators; in fact, they were expected.

"We're not surprised at all," said Matt Murray, director of curriculum and dual language learners. "The research clearly indicates that students would take several years but eventually would surpass their counterparts in English-only classes."

Read more at <http://mtexpress.com/index2.php?ID=2005123302>

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## FOOTNOTE

### English speech contest attracts millions of students in China

*China View, 9 October 2008*

The 14th National English Speech Contest has attracted two million college students in its online preliminary selection since opening three months ago.

Learning English became a fashion and even a fever since China adopted its reform and opening-up policy 30 years ago. Almost all college students in the country study English as a touching stone to apply for overseas studies. In recent years, English skill has become a necessary quality to get a good job.

For a long time, English teaching in China emphasized more on reading and writing instead of listening and speaking, therefore, students could easily get high exam scores despite poor spoken English. To improve the situation, China began to change the English teaching methods in 2002 by emphasizing the ability of communication.

Liu Xianghong, a Ministry of Education official, said the competition not only gives students a platform to showcase their language skill, but also encourages Chinese schools to improve communication-oriented teaching methods of English. The finals are expected to take place in April 2009.

Read more at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/09/content\\_10172373.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-10/09/content_10172373.htm)

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## CONFERENCES & EVENTS

### World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education 2008

*7-11 December 2008, Melbourne*

WIPC:E is a triennial conference of international significance that attracts peoples from around the globe to celebrate and share diverse cultures, traditions and knowledge with a focus on world Indigenous education.

The purpose of WIPC:E is to provide a forum to come together, share and learn and promote best practice in Indigenous education policies, programs and practice.

To be hosted by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation, Melbourne, Australia from 7th-11th December 2008, WIPC:E 2008 will be a celebration of our diverse cultures, traditions and knowledge.

It will provide us with the opportunity to showcase our efforts to provide educational experiences suitable to our individual and unique communities and will be a time to rejoice in our strengths and capacity to uphold our traditions and knowledge systems.

It will also be a chance to consider how we, as Indigenous people, would like to see education shaped into the future to meet our needs.

Read more at <http://www.wipce2008.com/>

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## **A Summer of Esperanto in Sydney**

*11-25 January, 2009, Sydney University*

### **A Two Week Intensive Course - Immerse Yourself in Esperanto!**

Enjoy two weeks of study, social activities, and Esperanto culture in beautiful Sydney.

Our courses are designed to help those who are new to Esperanto to discover the ease of learning this international language while immersing themselves in this beautiful language.

For those who have already started to learn we will help you to improve your language skills and to practice speaking and listening to others who are at the same level as you.

For advanced Esperanto speakers you will meet up with friends, make some new ones and be able to use your knowledge in a practical way.

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

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## **Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian Annual Congress**

*1 May 2009, Darebin Arts Centre, Preston, Victoria*

The Congress will take place on Friday 1 May 2009, at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, Corner of St Georges Road and Bell Street, Preston.

If you are interested in presenting, please contact Ferdinando Colarossi at [info@vati.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@vati.vic.edu.au).

Read more (shortly) at <http://www.vati.vic.edu.au/congress.html>

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## **International Association for Improvement of Mother Tongue Education (IAIMTE) International Conference**

*23-26 June 2009, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada*

The Association's 7th International Conference will bring together researchers, teachers and teacher educators to exchange experiences and learn from other educational cultures.

Read more at <http://www.ilo.uva.nl/Projecten/Gert/iaimte/default.html>

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## **AFMLTA Biennial National Conference 2009**

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

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

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.

Read more at <http://www.mltansw.asn.au/afmltadetails.htm>

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

*14-15 July 2009, St Catherine's School, Sydney, NSW*

### **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.

Read more at <http://mltansw.asn.au/asiletheme.htm>

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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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