

## **Position Paper on Early Second Language Aptitude Testing**

Many NNELL members have expressed concern about the use of various aptitude tests to evaluate early second language aptitude in the elementary grades. In response to this issue, NNELL has developed the following position paper:

### ***Language Aptitude Testing for Early Language (P-8) Learners (2006)***

All children are capable of learning other languages in the early grades when provided opportunities for quality instruction by teachers with *high expectations* for all students, including those with diverse needs. The belief of teachers, administrators and parents that there is a broad spectrum of talent and potential in the world language classroom and that students can and will succeed in learning a world language often makes it possible for students to succeed. This is further supported by second language acquisition research that justifies the inclusion of all students as language learners. As such, the need for aptitude testing of early language learners is not warranted within the context of these core beliefs. Equity of access to early language learning can no longer be denied to students solely based on the results of aptitude tests if we are to provide learners with the long sequences of instruction necessary to successfully interact with peoples of other cultures in the diverse communities in which we live and work.

Click here for additional [NNELL position statements in support of early language learning](#). Please feel free to share these statements with teachers, administrators and parents.

## **International Education**

*"More than ever, success in the world depends on what you know, not where you live. Technology has leveled the playing field and 'flattened' the world. It has showed the value of math, science and other subjects in high demand across the globe. And it has illustrated the importance of foreign languages in communicating and forming partnerships with citizens from other cultures and countries."*

*"Education teaches more than students. It teaches all of us to see beyond our borders and boundaries, both real and imagined. It teaches us to overcome stereotypes and appreciate cultures other than our own. In so doing, it gives us hope for a brighter future by advancing freedom, opportunity and understanding."*

—Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education

The seventh annual International Education Week, a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State, will take place on November 13-17 2006. Make sure to read Ms. Spellings opening statement: [International Education: Engaging in Global Partnerships and Opportunities](#).

A common thread in U.S. language forums over the past several years has been the importance of incorporating international education into the language learning curriculum. See the [spring 2006 issue of Learning Languages](#).

As part of a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant project, the New Jersey Department of Education in collaboration with Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ) has developed a [series of world languages thematic units for grades K-12 that focus on global issues](#). The topics range from human and animal migration to the importance of urban parks

### **Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth**

*Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners*, a report from the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth, is the result of 3 years of work by a panel of major scholars in second language learning and literacy. It analyzes existing evidence on teaching reading and writing to language minority students and identifies gaps in the available research.

Although geared toward English Second Language (ESL) students, the [Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners report](#) is enlightening for the entire language learning community. Available from CAL.

## **English-Plus**

NNELL applauds the TESOL organization (Teachers of English Speak to Teachers of Other Languages) for their position papers on the issues of language and immigration: [Position Paper on English-Only Legislation in the United States](#) and [Position Statement on Multilingualism](#).

We also invite you to read James Crawford's (Director of the Institute for Language and Education Policy) testimony before the House Subcommittee on Education Reform: [Official English Legislation: Bad for Civil Rights, Bad for America's Interests, and Even Bad for English](#)

Of additional interest, is a recent study conducted at Princeton University which concluded that current second and third generations of immigrants are losing their language abilities almost completely. [Study: Use of Spanish language dies quickly among generations of Hispanic immigrants](#)

## **Teaching Languages**

Co-author Julie Browett shared the news about this free downloadable PDF book on the ACTFL LLC SIG internet forum for early language educators. Although written for educators in Australia, we found [Teaching Languages](#) to be an excellent resource for all second language teachers.

Click here to learn about [ACTFL's Language Learning for Children Special Interest Group](#).

## **Assessment**

NNELL's 2006 Professional Development series focused on *LinguaFolio*, a language assessment tool developed by the [National Council of State Supervisors for Languages](#) (NCSSFL). Based on the European Language Portfolio, *LinguaFolio* is a document which provides a template for language learners to record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It is a tool that may accompany language learners throughout life and is suitable for documenting language abilities for various uses. The pilot states are Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky and Georgia.

### **That Difficult *Communities* Standard!**

If you are having difficulty creating opportunities for your students to practice language beyond the classroom, you may want to investigate digital worldwide pen-pal organizations such as [Creative Connections](#), [Global SchoolNet Foundation](#) and [ePALS](#).

This information was shared by teachers at the Ñandú forum. Click here to [learn more about the Ñandú forum for early language educators](#).

### **Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives**

The College Board invites schools and districts to [register for a FREE Chinese Language and Culture Presentation this fall](#). Guest presenters from China will be visiting U.S. schools from October 14 to November 10, 2006. This is an opportunity to introduce Chinese culture and language to students and to encourage them to study Chinese if it is (or will be) offered at your school. This program is made possible through a partnership with Hanban, the Office of Chinese Language Council International of the Ministry of Education in China.

The College Board also announced a new [Chinese Guest Teacher Program](#). The program will provide qualified language teachers from China to work in your school or district at minimal cost for up to three years. The final application deadline is September 25, 2006. For more information, please send an email to [k12chinese@collegeboard.org](mailto:k12chinese@collegeboard.org) or a fax to (212) 713-8036.

### **For Japanese Teachers**

The Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program provides U.S. primary and secondary school teachers and administrators with the opportunity to [participate in three-week study visits to Japan](#) and to return home with a follow-on plan designed to introduce Japanese culture to American students. Meetings with Japanese teachers and students and a homestay with a Japanese family are also key components of the program. Maximum Award: round-trip travel to Japan, local transportation in Japan, lodging and meals for three weeks. Eligibility: full-time teachers or administrators at primary or secondary levels (grades 1–12). Deadline: December 7, 2006.

## **NNELL's 2006 Summer Institute**

*"Uniting forces and maintaining a strong networking system is becoming NNELL's hallmark."*

—Institute Participant

As a grassroots network, NNELL's work is shaped by a powerful collaboration of dedicated, volunteer State and Regional Representatives who help model and disseminate best practices in early language learning.

During the past two years, NNELL Representatives have been invited to hold summer meetings at Iowa State University, through the generous sponsorship of the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center and its director, Dr. Marcia Rosenbuch. [Read more about the 2006 NNELL Institute](#). Also, click here to access [contact information for your State Representative](#). We'd love to hear from you!

### **Join NNELL!**

NNELL needs your support to further early language learning advocacy efforts. Please [become a member](#) today!

Send information/suggestions/comments for **Newsworthy** to [Ana Lomba](#).