Dear ReN members,

We bring you another chockfull newsletter, thanks to your many submissions. Find the latest research news from Mozambique to Nigeria, from our diverse range of language and literacy scholars based all over the world. Our list of members continues to grow, and you can browse new member profiles on our website’s Members’ page: www.renafrica.org/who-we-are-member-list

To keep you better informed in between newsletters as well as to get the latest news from the field, we are now on the social media website Twitter. If you use Twitter, please follow our tweets at: twitter.com/renafrica. We are keeping up with Twitter users like SocioLingo Africa, the Library of Congress, the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Xhosa Fundis, the Kamusi Project, the Linguist List and Room to Read, among many others.

Please do help us to get the word out about this network. If you’re attending a relevant conference in the next few months, please consider announcing the Network during the conference, circulating the link to our website to the conference listserv, or taking some ReN Africa flyers with you. Please email me if you would like a small batch of our flyers.

We wish you all the best in your research endeavours, and hope you will keep us posted with submissions for the newsletter (next deadline is September 1, 2011) and website (any time). We welcome your feedback and hope that you enjoy this issue, share it with others, and help to further expand this network.

Yours,

Lauryn Oates
Editor
News and Announcements From ReN Members

Publication Announcement
ReN member Olushola Bamidele Are has three new publications to share:

Invited Panel on Multilingualism in Africa, June 2011
ReN member Charlyn Dyers (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) will be the convenor of an invited panel called “Multilingualism in late-modern Africa - identity, mobility and multivocality,” at the forthcoming International Symposium on Bilingualism in Oslo this June (see details below in our conference listings). Panelists will include Felix Banda (University of the Western Cape), Feliciano Salvador Chimbutane (Eduardo Mondlane University), Omondi Oketch (Maseno University), and Charlyn Dyers, with Ana Deumert (University of Cape Town) serving as discussant. The four papers in this panel apply the notion of multilingualism with On whose terms? Considerations

April Member Profile: Justina Atemajong Njika
Justina is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at the Postgraduate Teacher Training College of the University of Yaounde in Cameroon. She was born in Mamfe, Cameroon, and earned a B.A., Master’s, DEA, Diploma and a PhD in Linguistics. She started a teaching career in 1995 teaching English at the secondary level; and has been a lecturer since 2000 in General and Applied Linguistics. Her teaching interests include discourse analysis, language awareness and teacher education, second language acquisition, linguistics and structure of English, African languages, L1, L2, TEFL, and TESL methodology. Justina has supervised more than 50 Master’s dissertations and has several publications in the domain. Her research interests include language studies and related teaching/learning strategies in multilingual contexts, language Acquisition, discourse analysis, error analysis, African linguistics (development, standardization and preservation of minority languages) and research methodology. Samples of Justina’s recent publications can be found here:

New Publication Announcement
ReN member Ailie Cleghorn, Professor in Educational Studies in the Department of Education at Concordia University, announces the following recent publications:

Upcoming Conferences
What: Focus on Africa – Africa and its Diasporas
Where: June 15-18, 2011
Where: Uppsala, Sweden
Summary: Conference theme - “African Engagements: On whose terms? Considerations”

Setswana Language Novel Published
Bodibeng jwa mathhomola is a new novel in the Setswana language written by ReN member Dr. Daniel Sekpe Matjila. Set in South Africa, the novel is described as “smart suspense novel, an ingenious mixture of paranoid thriller, history, culture and folk,” and uses local folk-tales, mythology and cultural history in the presentation of events. Learn more at: www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=25371
Contact Information:  
http://www.nai.uu.se/ecas-4/ECAS_brochure.pdf  
Organizers: The Nordic Africa Institute  
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: Passed (December 2010). Abstracts now available online.

What: EXPOLINGUA Berlin  
When: Oct 28 - 30, 2011  
Where: Berlin, Germany  
Summary: For over two decades, the international fair has provided exhibitors with the ideal platform to present a diverse range of products and services related to language learning and teaching, as well as cultures from around the globe. Visitors are given a unique opportunity to get an overview of the diverse programmes and services on offer, including the chance to get first-hand advice and feedback. Each year, approximately 200 exhibitors from over 30 countries and more than 12,000 visitors attend this multinational event.  
Contact Information: +49 (0)30 310 18 18-0 or info@icwe.net  
Organizers: International Conferences, Workshops and Exhibitions  
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: To be announced.

What: International Symposium on Bilingualism  
When: June 15-18, 2011  
Where: Oslo  
Summary: Keynote speakers to include Jannis Androutsopoulos, Ceil Lucas, Sari Pietikäinen, Annick De Houwer and Kees de Bot  
Contact Information: isb8-contact@iln.uio.no or www.hf.uio.no/isb8  
Organizers: Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo  
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: Closed.

What: 4th International Conference on Philology (Literature, Languages and Linguistics)  
When: July 11-14, 2011  
Where: Athens, Greece  
Summary: The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of languages, literatures and linguistics. Visit website for conference themes.  
Contact Information: www.atiner.gr/literature.htm  
Organizers: Athens Institute for Education and Research  
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: Passed (March 21, 2011).

What: F.L. Moloi International Conference  
When: April 25-27, 2012  
Where: National University of Lesotho  
Summary: Theme of this interdisciplinary and cross-cultural conference is Developing Language, Developing People: Memory, Acquisition and Imagination in Language and Literature. Contact organizers for full list of sub-themes.  
Contact Information: fm.internationalconference@gmail.com  
Organizers: Department of English of the National University of Lesotho  
Deadline for abstracts/proposals: Abstract of not more than 300 words bearing the title, name and surname, institutional affiliation/s and e-mail address of author(s).

FOCUS on... West Africa  
FEATURE ARTICLE  
Imagine Ìsoyà: A life transforming functional literacy project in Southwestern Nigeria  
Oluwatoyin Dare Kolawole, PhD, Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana

Introduction to Ìsoyà  
Historically, the Ìsoyà community, situated within the Southern zone of Ife Division in the rainforest belt of Southwestern Nigeria, derived its name from some historical warfare occurring around 100 years ago. The word is literally interpreted to mean Be a watchman over my wife. During the military-despotic era of rural societies with their attendant occupationist tendencies, the Yoruba people were often at war with one another. As a result, warriors in neighbouring communities would seek refuge for their wives from certain custodians in Ìsoyà for as long as the warriors would be away from home on their warring expeditions.

Possibly because of its strategic location, this village in the late 1960s became the headquarters of the University of Ife Rural Development Programme outreach, consisting of a conglomerate of about 19 villages situated within the rainforest and savanna belts. The Ìsoyà Rural Development Programme of the Department of Extension Education and Rural Sociology (now the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development) in the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) came into being in 1968. The programme was financed...
in its early stages by the University of Ife. In 1972, a cooperative relationship was established with the Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Centre, University of Reading, United Kingdom. Also, additional financial aid was obtained from the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) through the Inter-University Council.

Some issues addressed by the programme included agricultural production, technology and mechanization, adult literacy, health, and nutrition. The programme at the on-set recorded enormous successes, but as finances dwindled and the government destabilized, most of the projects including the adult literacy project were rendered inactive. The literacy aspect of the project became revived when the International Reading Association (IRA) in the United States decided to fund our proposals under its Developing Countries Support Fund, both in 2005 and in 2007. Based on our earlier research in 2003 and as a result of its accessibility, the Awo community was chosen as a pilot site for the literacy project. This project sought not only to teach reading and writing skills, but also to serve as an all-round functional education, which would help the learner access relevant socio-economic and political opportunities in his or her immediate environment. It is therefore considered a Content Area Literacy (CAL) Project.

**Project Execution and Lessons Learned**

About 40 adult learners, including both men and women, were enlisted with the help of the community leadership and members themselves through a series of consultations and participatory approaches between June and August 2005. Two adult facilitators, a man and a woman, were selected from within the community and thereafter given instructional training. The classes were then stratified into “Progressives” and “Beginners”. The Beginners Class comprised those participants who had never had any form of education, while the Progressives Class comprised of those who had a bit of either formal or non-formal education in the past.

There is an important learning experience I acquired during the implementation of the project. Rather than motivate us, government people from whom we sought support were swift to show their cynicism about past project failures. However, we were determined to educate them that the approach we planned to adopt was innovative and aimed to drive the morale of the participants. Eventually the local government officials reluctantly consented to our requests and gave us some moral support, witnessing our passion and desire to succeed. Their willingness to assist increased as the project results were achieved.

Buttressing the remarkable progress recorded in the performances of adult learners within the few months of project’s initiation, an older learner, during one of the monitoring activities, shared, “Personally, this literacy class is very important to me. As you can see for yourself, I am beginning to write my own name without much effort. At the end of this programme, I shall have learned how to read mails sent to me from relations outside the community.”

**Faith-based Community**

Of interest to us has been the role of the faith leaders in the community. Awo is predominantly Islamic. The community threw its full weight behind the project by mobilizing members to participate in the adult class. The Chief Imam of the community mosque would use his megaphone to announce the time of class and also sermonize on the importance of education. Through this, participants were effectively motivated to continue to attend classes.

The first phase of the project covered a period of 14 months. Participants who successfully completed the first phase of the class were awarded certificates. The success that the project enjoyed became a source of pride amongst participants. Not only that, community members who had not participated in the earlier phase realized how important it was to be identified with the project. Most of them eventually opted to participate in the second phase.

**Launch of the Second Phase**

The success stories from the first phase motivated us to continue with the project. Thus, the second phase of the project commenced in earnest in September 2007. Driven by the needs and demands of the learners (about 50 learners enlisted for the second phase), we paid particular attention to the development of reading materials and to the establishment of demonstration plots for farmers in the second phase of the project. The demonstration plots were established to teach basic agricultural/farming skills such as plant spacing, fertiliser and herbicide applications, etc. The locations and establishment of the plots were jointly agreed upon by the participants.
Tangible Success Stories
Participants who completed the adult classes passed along positive feedback about the project. Two of the participants secured paid employment with the Local Government Council as a result of the training they received in the adult class. Another participant formally registered in a Junior Secondary School after participating in the first phase of the literacy class. Participating farmers shared remarkable stories of doing improved farm activities. Also, women small business traders affirmed that their businesses performed better as a result of their learning experiences in the project. Convinced by what they had seen, people in surrounding communities urged us to implement the same project in their communities.

About the author: Dr. Toyin Kolawole was Senior Lecturer at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria and is now Senior Research Scholar at the Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana. Contact him at tkolawole@orc.ub.bw or toyin_kolawole@yahoo.com

Language Practices and Values Among Young People in Ghana
By: Dr. Jo Shoba, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of English, Edge Hill University
‘Language practices and values among young people in Ghana’ is the title of a collaborative research and teaching project between Edge Hill University (EHU) in the UK and in Ghana the University of Ghana (UG) and the University of Education Winneba (UEW). The project is funded under the British Academy UK-Africa Academic Partnership Scheme, and is now entering the second of three years. The project leaders are Dr. Jo Shoba (shobajo@edgehill.ac.uk) of EHU and Professor Kari Dako (karidako@gmail.com) of UG. We have been joined by three doctoral researchers in Ghana (with a fourth, to be recruited later this year based at EHU). The current researchers are: Charles Boachie (cbboachie@uew.edu. gh), of UEW, whose research focuses on the use of ‘student pidgin’ among male undergraduates; Elizabeth Quartery (lizzkwat@yahoo.com), of UG, whose research concerns the sociophonetics of the English used by undergraduate students from the north of Ghana; and, Millicent Quarcoo (akosquarcoo@yahoo.com), who is working on codeswitching between Twi and English in an undergraduate study group.

Based on experience gained during a semester spent at EHU in 2010, Millicent, Elizabeth and Charles have also designed a language research methods module for postgraduate students at UG and UEW. This is a ‘blended learning’ module, using a combination of face-to-face sessions and on-line activities.

We are all keen to establish contact with scholars who share our interests in emergent ways of language in African contexts. In November 2010, we held a seminar entitled ‘Language in Africa’ at EHU, as an opportunity to meet and share research findings with colleagues based in the UK. At the AILA 2011 World Congress in Beijing we will be represented by Millicent, who has won an AILA Solidarity Award to attend and present a paper on Twi-English code switching in informal talk among women. Project members will also be at the International Symposium on Bilingualism (IS88) in Oslo in June, presenting a paper on ‘Locally Acquired Foreign Accent in Ghana’.

We will be pleased to hear by email from readers of this newsletter. Watch out also for our project website, due to be launched in June 2011, with project updates, links to resources and opportunities for dialogue.

FOCUS on... Francophone Africa

Recommended Book: Peer Effects and Textbooks in Primary Education - Evidence from Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract: As opposed to many other school inputs, textbooks have frequently been demonstrated to significantly foster student achievement. Using the rich data set provided by the ‘Program on the Analysis of Education Systems’ (PASEC) for five francophone, sub-Saharan African countries, this paper goes beyond the estimation of direct effects of textbooks on students’ learning and focuses on peer effects resulting from textbooks owned by students’ classmates. Applying and extending nonparametric estimation methods from the treatment evaluation literature we separate the direct effect of textbooks from their peer effect. The latter clearly dominates but depends upon the initial level of textbook availability.

Annonce : Concours photo de eLearning Africa
Le deuxième concours photo de eLearning Africa a pour objectif de saisir par l’image la façon dont les Technologies de l’Information et de la Communication (TIC) peuvent nourrir les talents, les compétences et l’innovation à travers l’Afrique. Nous

Les contributions francophones nous ont fait vraiment plaisir. Veuillez soumettre votre contribution pour le prochain numéro, soit un rapport sur votre recherche ou une conférence, soit une critique d’une œuvre française. Veuillez aussi inviter des collègues francophones de joindre notre réseau. -- Votre coordinatrice régionale

FOCUS on... Southern Africa

Report on the Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission

In February 2011, ReN member Professor Daniel Sekpe Matjila of the University of South Africa reports that a meeting was held between the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN) Setswana Language Commission and the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) to consider introducing the Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission, among other issues. The meeting also introduced the Language Commission to PanSALB with a view to building a long term partnership, discussed hosting a harmonization workshop in Botswana, examined the possibilities of hosting joint celebrations of language events such as on Mother Language Day or Youth Day, and to build partnership with relevant stakeholders.

Thesis Announcement: Constructions of gender in the context of free primary education - A multi-site case study of three schools in Lesotho

Author: Pholoho Justice Morojele

Abstract: This thesis reports on a qualitative study of stakeholders’ constructions of gender in the context of the Free Primary Education policy in three primary schools in Lesotho. Through the lens of the social constructionist paradigm, the thesis examines how parents, teachers and children living in and around these primary schools think, act, and feel in relation to gender in their academic and social worlds. It looks at the ways in which these stakeholders engage with issues of gender in Lesotho communities ravaged by gender inequality. Based on parents’/teachers’ and children’s constructions of gender, the thesis suggests strategies that might help address inequitable gender relations in and around the primary schools. The thesis grounded my personal life experiences, as the researcher, as crucial in the development of methodological strategies and processes of this study. In a flexible and responsive manner, the study utilized informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires and document analysis, as methods of data collection. It found that, influenced by ‘discursive constructs’ of providence and God’s will, child-adult relations, naturalness of gender differences and attributes as well as the Basotho culture, parents and teachers constructed gender in ways that reinforced existing gender inequality in and around the primary schools. The structural and social organization of the schools that tended to allocate girls and boys into rigid social categories, and parents’ and teachers’ constructions of gender, which reinforced inequitable gender relations, were found to have significant impact on the regulation of children’s experiences and meanings of gender. The study found that children’s experiences of gender informed how they actively engaged with issues of gender and the meanings they attached to being girls and boys. The study traces how Basotho culture and religion have been fundamental to gender inequality and violence in Lesotho. These factors encouraged the schools to use structural/physical identities (such as having biological sex as a boy/girl), as the bases for allocation of girls and boys into rigid and inequitable social categories. The dominant discourses of gender that emanated from these factors, ascribed stereotypic attributes to males (boys and men) and females (girls and women) as means to ground inequitable gendered human aptitudes, which were used to justify gender inequality. The study also identifies ways in which girls defy the insistence on their subordination, and sees fault lines where gender inequality can be confronted without abandoning Basotho culture.

Download the full document here: http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/jspui/handle/10413/1137

New PhD Thesis About Mozambique

Title: Language Attitudes in a Primary School - A Bottom-Up Approach to Language Education in Mozambique. Author: Sarita Monjane Henriksen. Awarded by Roskilde University, Denmark, on November 24, 2010. Available at http://magenta.ruc.dk/cuid/phd_skole/forsvar
Focus on.... East Africa & the Horn of Africa

Sign up for Uganda’s Multilingual Education Network

The Multilingual Education Network (MLEN) meets regularly in Kampala. Please contact Craig Esbeck, Mango Tree Program Director, Lango Literacy Project, to subscribe to the Network’s mailing list: craigesbeck@yahoo.com

Tanzania Beyond Tomorrow: Video Clip

In four years, Tanzania has seen a 400% increase in secondary school enrollment. This is an impressive achievement, but one that comes with numerous challenges, namely a lack of teachers. The pace at which these challenges have emerged will require innovative solutions. Tanzania Beyond Tomorrow is a program of the Tanzania Education Trust, which is seeking to address these challenges with information communications technologies (ICT), to apply e-learning strategies to transform the quality of secondary school education. The program is described in the following video link: http://www.eastafricantube.com/media/30210/Tanzania_Beyond_Tomorrow_-_Education/

Did You Know?

In Sudan, only 52% of girls attend primary school with numbers dropping to 32% for girls’ attendance at secondary school level (source: UNHCR).

Research Corner

In Search of Quality: What the Data Tells Us

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) was launched in 1995 and is currently funded by the Dutch Government. There have been three research phases since its founding, and SACMEQ aims to “undertake integrated research and training activities that will expand opportunities for educational planners and researchers to: (a) receive training in the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education; and (b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan the quality of education.”

The International Institute for Educational Planning has issued a newsletter which reviews some findings from the data collected to date through the SACMEQ initiative, “In Search of Quality: What the Data Tells Us.” Some of the issues covered include the levels of reading and mathematics achievement of pupils, grade repetition, patterns in improvement and deterioration of education quality in different countries, access to textbooks, challenges posed by paid tuition, and assessing the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention programming to date. The initiative has also provided baseline data “on the knowledge that pupils and their teachers have about HIV and AIDS and the impact that this pandemic has had on the functioning of schools in Southern and Eastern Africa. Upcoming plans for this year include releasing national reports and a comprehensive international report. Request the newsletter here: e-newsletter@iiep.unesco.org. For additional information about SACMEQ, please visit www.sacmeq.org

Tell us about your research! Send us a short profile (one paragraph) of the research you are undertaking on language or literacy education in Africa by September 1st, 2011 for inclusion in our next issue.

In the Field

Introducing: The Uganda Literacy and Education Program

The Uganda Literacy and Education Program (ULEP), an initiative of the Canadian International Learning Foundation (CanILF) to support Uganda’s St. Paul’s Kabira Adult Attention and School of Orphans (KAASO), has released its first progress report, covering to June 30th, 2010. The project details the sponsorship of education in literacy, business, agriculture and artisan skills for 56 students in the Rakai District of Uganda. CanILF explains, “Most of the students are women, and many are raising large families that are struggling to overcome poverty and the impact of HIV / AIDS in the community. Not only does the Community Empowerment Program help improve the ability of students to earn a living, it also promotes HIV / AIDS awareness and prevention and environmental stewardship.” The report describes some success stories, such as that of Miss Nakayiki Cissy, 49, “who was forced from her home by her husband two years ago. Since joining the Community Empowerment Program, she was able to improve her skills and purchase a banana plantation worth more than one million Ugandan shillings.” More recently, the program introduced Internet access in their Uganda partner school, the Kabira Adult Attention and School of Orphans (KAASO), and will also be focused on expanding their library with the financial support of Terralog Technologies Inc. Learn more about the project here www.ulep.org and to request a copy of the report, contact staff@canilf.org.

Put Your Used Books to New Use

The International School of Art, Business and Technology is campaigning to collect new and gently used books for a project in Ghana. Find out where drop-off locations can be found and other information here: http://isabt.org/bookdrive.html
**What's New in Technology**

**Call for Submissions - Media, Technology, and Intercultural Education**

Intercultural Education will publish a Special Issue (vol. 24, 3, 2013) on "Media, Technology, and Intercultural Education" and is seeking submissions. Media and technology saturate many of the cultural environments in which we live and work today. In our new media cultures, educators encounter innovative opportunities for engaging students in multicultural learning experiences but also face challenges of integrating media and technology into their practice in critically responsive ways. In this special issue, Intercultural Education explores the impact of media and technology on teaching and learning about language and culture in a variety of settings (foreign/second language classrooms, bilingual and multicultural programs, social justice and human rights education). Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts that address the following themes, or related issues:

- **Media as an intercultural storyteller:** Media and technology not only increase our communication networks and accessibility to one another; they also tell powerful stories about culture, race, gender, religion, nationality, etc. and reinforce or challenge audiences' conceptions of the world around them. In particular, media representations may reflect racialized, gendered, and other socially constructed categories of difference, calling attention to “otherness” as a barrier to intercultural communication. How do teachers and students critically respond to mediated stories? Do new technologies offer greater opportunities for disrupting stereotypes and offering alternative portrayals of culture and intercultural relationships? How can the images and rhetoric of popular media be critically examined and used as pedagogical resources for teaching about language and culture?

- **Intercultural education in public media:** Stories of language learning, study abroad, multiculturalism, internationalization/globalization, and immigrant educational programs have entered public discussions of education. These issues are often framed in media by carefully selected images and rhetoric that relate to audiences in complex ways. How is public opinion toward intercultural and multicultural education in schools shaped by media, and how does such public opinion impact educational policy and practice? Do mediated images and stories reflect, create, or maintain dominant social attitudes toward intercultural education? How do schools, non-profit institutions, and other educational programs use media and technology to respond to public opinion about intercultural/multicultural/international education and initiatives?

- **Intercultural identity and participation in new media cultures:** New media and technologies continuously (re)define and (re)negotiate boundaries between individual and group identities. Fluid identities emerge as people participate in diverse social, educational, and professional communities, both real and virtual. How does technology change the nature of identity and participation in intercultural relationships and learning experiences? How do new forms of technology and social media define what it means to participate in multicultural and multilingual communities? How do new media cultures impact our theoretical conceptualizations of what it means to be interculturally competent and how we teach intercultural competency?

Intercultural Education publishes original qualitative and quantitative studies that have practical implications for intercultural teaching and learning in a variety of contexts. Commentaries on current theoretical perspectives and instructional practices are also welcome. Authors should electronically submit a 250 word abstract of the paper (Word or RTF attachment) to: Carla Chamberlin-Quinlisk, Penn State University, Abington College, USA at crc5@psu.edu by October 1, 2011. Selected authors will be invited (by November 1) to submit full manuscripts for review by March 1, 2012. All manuscripts must conform to the submission criteria for Intercultural Education found at http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/14675986.html. Abstract deadline: October 1, 2011; Manuscript deadline: March 1, 2012.

**eLearning Africa Scholarship Trust Launched**

eLearning Africa is raising funds to enable African education professionals to benefit from the networks and resources of the largest annual pan-African conference on ICT-supported learning, recently launching the Scholarship Trust EAST, a non-profit organization "designed to enhance knowledge sharing and to promote awareness of the benefits of technology-assisted learning and training across Africa." eLearning Africa is a pan-African conference on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Development, Education and Training. The next conference will be the sixth to date and is scheduled to take place May 25 - 27, 2011 in the Mlimani City Conference Centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The scholarships target low-income, disadvantaged education professionals to enable their participation in an eLearning Africa conference event. "With one of the largest populations of young people in the world, education is at the heart of Africa's future," says Rebecca Stromeyer, eLearning Africa organiser and founder of the EAST organization. "EAST will help to raise awareness of the benefits of technology-enhanced learning on the continent and contribute to the development of new initiatives. "To find out how to support EAST please visit www.easttrust.org or contact us via email at info@easttrust.org
The Right to Education of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Vernor Muñoz, has released its report, “The right to education of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers,” submitted at the 14th session of the UN Human Rights Council, pursuant to the Council’s Resolution 8/4. This latest annual report of the Special Rapporteur concerns those who have crossed national borders, who generally are at risk of marginalization and specifically to discrimination in the provision of education. The report aims “to inform and assist Governments and interested parties in their efforts to address these matters and develop best practices so as to ensure the enjoyment of the currently unfulfilled right to education for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.” Six core issues are covered including the legal and normative framework; social and cultural issues; language and curriculum; teachers; accreditation; and learning for life. Download the full report here: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?docid=4c075ddf8c

Educational Research Seeking Submissions

The Journal, Educational Research (ER), seeks manuscripts for publication. ER publishes high-quality solicited and unsolicited articles, in English, in all areas of educational research. Articles are peer-reviewed and following acceptance, a paper will normally be published in the next issue. Articles are open-access. Find the Author’s Guide and other details at: www.interesjournals.org/ER. Check out the December issue at: http://www.interesjournals.org/ER/Contents/2010%20content/December.htm Send manuscripts to: er@interesjournals.org or er.manuscripts@interesjournals.org ER is also seeking for energetic, dedicated and qualified researchers/reviewers as members of its editorial board. Please contact Dr. Terfort Ngwana, Acting Editor, if interested: support.eduresearch@gmail.com

New Report – Reflecting Language Diversity in Children’s Schooling

CBT and Save the Children UK have just published a new report, “Reflecting language diversity in children’s schooling: moving from ‘Why multilingual education’ to ‘How?’” The research examines how multilingual education in Africa, Asia and Latin America can be made possible. The research focuses on two well-developed multilingual education projects run by Save the Children with local partners in Vietnam and Bangladesh as well as material from government-led projects in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa in India. Key findings included a recurring theme of fear shared by government, school leaders and parents that by reducing second language use in schools young people would become less skilled in languages that may have special status nationally or internationally. The research demonstrates it is essential for key stakeholders to recognize that strong demands for national or international languages, such as English, will only be met through carefully introducing second languages to children as part of learning activities across all the thematic areas of the curriculum. This research paper offers advice on how to have the best chance of putting the right changes in place to help children learn in a way they understand. Recommendations are offered as to how to progressively shift school systems towards delivering effective learning across the curriculum and good language skills in key local, national and international languages. Download the report here: www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/.../Research%20Report%20FINAL.pdf

October Book Review


Book review by JeDene Reeder

The primary goal of this book is to encourage those who teach languages and literacy to think of themselves as development agents. It provides a theoretical framework in which to work and practical steps for orienting language lessons to promote the social, cultural, and economic development of African communities. Although the book sub-title implies that this is aimed strictly at countries where English is used in education, two chapters and four texts in the appendix are written in French. The authors are also careful to point out that their examples are equally valid for all international languages taught in Africa.

In the Introduction, Mutaka and Attia discuss various issues that arise when thinking about how languages can be used to promote development. They discuss the role of both European languages and African languages, and in doing so, encourage bilingual education.

Part One, containing two chapters, is a practical section for teaching English as a foreign language, although as indicated earlier, the exercises and suggested classroom activities and discussions are just as useful for teaching French. The main point Mutaka makes is that classroom learning should be participatory, providing pupils with ample opportunity to read, speak, and, at the upper levels, write.

Part Two discusses African languages and literacy. In chapter 5, Tadadjeu clarifies how he defines development before discussing the relationship between African languages and development.
The appendices comprise the final section of the book, containing ten functional literacy texts. Three relate to health topics, the remainder to various agricultural topics, mostly on raising different animals.

A strength of this book is its numerous practical propositions for teaching languages and for using African languages in development. The differences in language use found in rural and urban schools are addressed, with suggestions as to how an urban teacher might deal with this situation. However, Mutaka, the editor and author or co-author of many of the chapters seems to be ambivalent about the value of written African languages. He explicitly states that teaching young students or adult literacy students is unnecessary, and that researchers should cease trying to engineer African languages. However, in his coursework proposals, he includes such activities for secondary and tertiary students as orthography and dictionary development, translation of works originally written in English or French, and creation of original or transcribed works in the mother tongue.

His proposal to focus on oral language acquisition and maintenance has two major weaknesses. First, he seems not to be aware that pedagogically, reading and writing are mutually reinforcing skills; and in the case of learners with certain learning disabilities it is essential to teach literacy using motor skills. Second, the acquisition of writing skills, specifically to write letters, is often a major motivator for adults to become involved in a literacy class.

Nevertheless, this book is a useful tool for those involved in the teaching and promotion of languages, whether European or African. It is also thought provoking as Mutaka and the other authors seek to convince readers of the importance of using African languages to achieve cultural, social, and economic development. While Mutaka promotes such activities primarily through the oral channel, he also encourages the use of ICT and other electronic devices. The proposals for an authentically African school curriculum are a good starting point for discussion for educators and linguists seeking to improve education in their country.

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