The state directly to the west of us - the one so aptly represented with an exclamation point on its license plate – is winning. That’s the takeaway from the Jeffery Kluger-penned, July 29th story in Time magazine about Bilingual Brains. According to Kluger, Utah is winning because fully 20% of its elementary schools are participating in the most ambitious total-immersion language education ever attempted in the US, and 95% of its school districts up through grade 12 are involved in the language education mini-revolution in some way. Utah even has a language-immersion specialist in the state office of education who utters sentences such as, “Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the 21st century.”

According to Kluger, Utah’s motivation is not exactly explained by the push for competing with China in a globalized world nor by the fact that intense missionary work conducted by the dominating church in Utah – the Morman Church – creates a high demand for bilinguals. It’s also because Utah parents understand the cognitive health benefits that accrue to bilinguals. While bilinguals are not necessarily smarter, their brains are more nimble. Bilinguals “are better at reasoning, at multitasking, at grasping and reconciling conflicting ideas. They work faster and expend less energy doing so, and as they age, they retain their cognitive faculties longer, delaying the onset of dementia and even full-blown Alzheimer’s disease.” Studies done at the Swedish Armed Forces Interpreter Academy comparing brain growth in language students to the brain growth of students in equally rigorous programs of medicine or cognitive science demonstrate detectable growth in the language students’ hippocampus and three areas of the cerebral cortex. But there were no visible changes in the non-language students’ brains.

One of the most interesting parts of the Time article had to do with what happens when 8th graders move on to high school where immersion no longer is offered. Does this cause their bilingual river to dry up in the sands of a traditional school curriculum? Certainly with their amazing fluency at this stage, they won’t fit into beginning level French, Spanish, or Mandarin classes (if their high schools even offered those languages). This, by the way, is also a big issue the burgeoning Colorado immersion school movement is facing. Utah’s solution? Advanced placement courses in 9th grade, and college-level courses in 10th through 12th, in cooperation with the University of Utah and Brigham Young University. If the professors in language departments in those two universities are walking around in a state of crazed euphoria and trepidation these days, it might have something to do with the future prospect of attending to the demands of 20,000 additional students from 100 schools. All this in a period when third and fourth year language courses have been experiencing significant enrollment declines.
Staff Update

• Edwige was recently elected Programs Director of the International Alliance for Language Learning Technology (IALLT) and will help plan IALLT’s 2015 conference hosted by Harvard University.

• Courtney Fell’s position at ALTEC has been renewed for an additional year. Courtney has been instrumental in continuing the tradition of our Foreign Language Technology Program and we’re thrilled to have her around for another year!

• After completing her practicum this past spring, Isla will be completing her Master’s degree from the ATLAS ICTD program during the fall semester, with an intended graduation date of December of this year.

New Technology at ALTEC

ALTEC recently purchased 4 iPads to be used in CU’s first French Hybrid Course. A hybrid course (also called a blended course) is a class where some of the face-to-face meetings are replaced with online or other activities conducted outside of the classroom. The iPads will facilitate individualized internet research, group projects and increased student involvement in the classroom. Also added to our equipment inventory are a Macbook Pro and Macbook Air, which are now available for checkout from our multi-media library in Hellem 159.

FLTP Completions

Congratulations to Jorge Martinez Guillem (http://jorgeguillem.wordpress.com), Sangbok Kim (http://sangbokkim.wordpress.com) and Saleh Alharthi (http://salehmalharthi.wordpress.com) on completing the FLTP over the summer.

FLTmag

This summer, ALTEC partnered up with several other language technology professionals to launch the FLTmag, an online magazine dedicated to technology integration in the language classroom. Check it out at http://www.fltmag.com, bookmark it and consider submitting an article!

LSP Conference

The Second International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), to be held at CU-Boulder this coming spring on April 17-19, will feature rich discussions about the pedagogy and the curricular implications of LSP. The conference is entitled, “LSP Studies: Theory, Methodology, and Content Development, and the Call for Papers can be found at http://altec.colorado.edu/lsp/papercall.shtml, with a deadline of October 31. The symposium is sponsored by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, ALTEC, the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, the Program on International Affairs and Leeds Global Initiatives at the University of Colorado Boulder along with the University of Colorado Denver CIBER.

The symposium will feature two keynote speakers. Gwendolyn Barnes-Karol, Professor of Spanish at St. Olaf College, may be best known for her work with St. Olaf’s Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum Program, collaborating with colleagues from anthropology, history, political science, and religion to add Spanish-language components into courses taught in English. John Grandin is a Professor of German and Director of the International Engineering Program at the University of Rhode Island, through which students complete simultaneous degrees (BA and BS) in German, French, Spanish, or Chinese, and in an engineering discipline. More information about the conference, including how to submit a proposal and how to register, can be found on the seminar’s website at http://altec.colorado.edu/lsp/.
News came to us on August 2nd that former student employee Michael DeSantis tragically died at the age of 46 in Lafayette. DeSantis worked at ALTEC for several years before he graduated with an English degree in May 2011. Many Media Library patrons will remember Michael and his faithful service dog Anya, a rust and black colored German Shepherd. Born and raised in New York City, DeSantis was a McNair scholar who brought his first-generation college student perspectives to bear on his research about literacy acquisition. Michael had planned on pursuing further scholarship at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley. Brian Carpenter, DeSantis’ co-worker, expressed his gratitude for Michael's guidance at ALTEC. “Michael was such a great co-worker and a really good friend to me when we were working together. He was such a unique individual and was influential in more ways than one to me. Conversations with him were never dull and were sometimes even the highlight of my days. I will surely miss him.” All of us at ALTEC will surely miss Michael as well.

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Senior Instructor Tina Pugliese Receives Teaching with Technology Award

Tina Pugliese, Senior Italian Instructor in the French and Italian department received an Award of Excellence as Outstanding Teacher for Technology in Teaching from ASSETT. This award is based upon student evaluations. Tina routinely incorporates a wide-range of technology in her classes through films, Yabla, and screencasts. Since 2005, Tina has attended 60+ Foreign Language Technology events, including hands-on workshops, presentations, guest speaker talks and share-fairs.

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French & Italian Online and Hybrid Courses

This summer, the French and Italian department offered French and Italian 1010 in a hybrid and online format for the very first time. Pat Mosele taught the French courses and Giorgio Corda and Judy McDonald co-taught the Italian courses. Listen to them discuss their experience in an interview on the ALTEC website http://altec.colorado.edu/speakers/index.shtml.

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Language Classes

The ALTEC Fall Non-Credit Language Classes are underway. This semester faculty, staff, and graduate students, as well as Boulder community members, can take classes in French, Spanish, and Swedish. We look forward to also introducing some less commonly taught languages to the campus in the future. The ALTEC Non-Credit Language Classes are offered over the summer as well (check our website for updates). Many thanks to the dedicated students and instructors who make this program possible! The full course list is at http://altec.colorado.edu/languageclasses.

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Badge Program

Badges offer an easy way to reward non-credit work and offer micro-credentials. You may now receive a badge for completing the FLTP or a language refresher course. ALTEC uses the Purdue OpenPassport infrastructure that allows badge issuers like us to attach meta-data to each badge, such as a description of the nature and amount of work completed by the badge receiver. We will retroactively award badges to all FLTP graduates so keep an eye out for it in your email.

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Farewell Michael DeSantis

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In 2013, for the second year in a row, the Center for Asian Studies (CAS) and ALTEC received a $75,000 grant to raise awareness and interest for the Hindi Urdu languages and culture among high schoolers. This year again, ALTEC helped host this summer language program. A total of 15 students attended the program from June 7th through 28th. The curriculum mixed formal language instruction all delivered in the target language by several experienced instructors, lectures on special topics by subject matter experts, field trips, and hands-on activities. Check out the Facebook page for more information and pictures: https://www.facebook.com/HindiUrduLanguageProgram.

**K-12 FLTP**

In fall of 2012, ALTEC launched a series of 8 full-day technology workshops for secondary language teachers. Over 80 language teachers from all over Colorado attended the 8 Saturday events and three graduated from the program. Attending teachers were able to get recertification credit or graduate credits from the School of Continuing Education. Check out some of the portfolios the teachers created:

www.hilaryanthamatten.wordpress.com
www.rachelsabre.wordpress.com

The 2013-2014 program is now ready and the workshops are filling up quickly! This year, we will feature 5 guest speakers, including Noah Geisel, 2012 ACTFL teacher of the year, and Toni Theisen, 2009 ACTFL teacher of the year and current ACTFL President. Learn more about the program at http://altec.colorado.edu/ftlp/K12.shtml.

**FLTP Schedule**

Interested in technology integration in the language classroom? Consider attending one or all Foreign Language Technology Program workshops this fall. The FLTP has something to offer to all teachers, regardless of their technical skills! New this year is a revamped introduction to the program. We conducted Open Houses with individual language departments instead of the usual 90 minute Introduction to the FLTP. Our guest speaker this fall is Felix Kronenberg, Assistant Professor and Director of the Language Learning Center at Rhodes College, TN. Dr. Kronenberg will discuss language learners identities and gaming strategies. Check out the schedule at http://altec.colorado.edu/ftlp/program_overview.shtml and sign up today!

**SLA Reading Group**

The ALTEC Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Reading Group meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 3:15 in Hellems 152 to discuss one or two chapters on compelling topics in SLA. The articles are mostly relevant to hands-on teaching, and always serve to expand upon our ideas about what it is we do as language educators. During the 2013-2014 academic year, we will be especially concerned with the most burning issues for the group itself. Each group participant will chose an article to present and will lead a discussion on that article. While the group’s numbers are growing, we welcome anyone with a keen interest in SLA! For more information, contact Mark Knowles at Mark.Knowles@Colorado.EDU.