

Everything I learned, I learned in the crib

Teaching foreign languages to children at a young age is beneficial later in life and in career



ELIZABETH KOHL

er cultures simply have more of this small world at their fingertips.

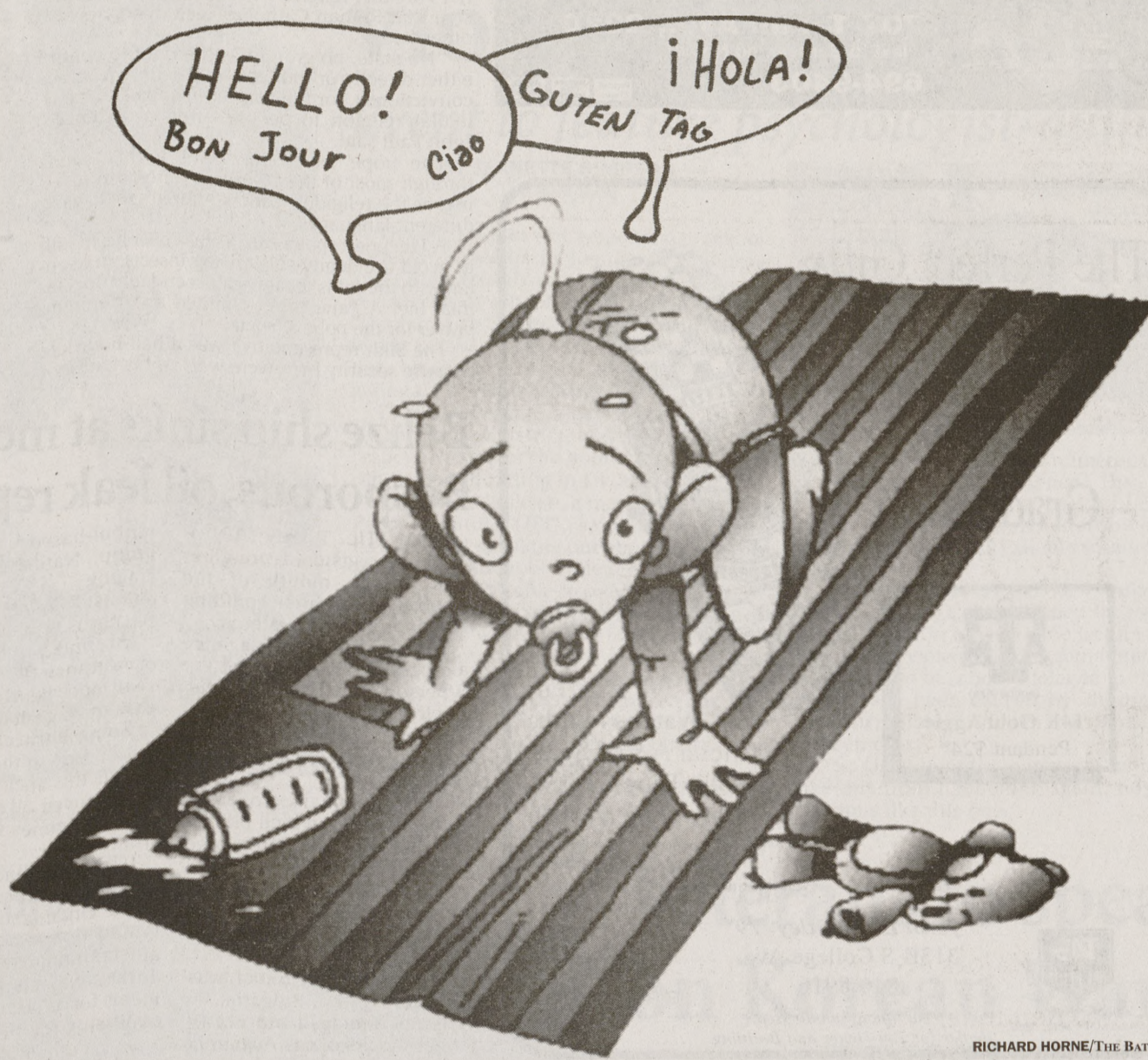
It is time for Americans to expand their linguistic horizons. At the global level, the United States is falling far behind other internationally competitive countries. In Germany, for example, fifth-graders are singing songs and reading nursery rhymes in English. And compared to most of the Swiss, whose children speak at least English, French, German and Swiss German, Americans are linguistically incompetent.

Because young children have a better ability to grasp languages, learning them quicker than adults, foreign languages need to be incorporated as priorities in the American education system. Serious efforts should be made to offer language in classes or after-school programs at an early age. And Americans should be encouraged to pass on their linguistic skills to their children, bringing second languages into the home.

Some schools have already recognized the need to integrate more languages into their students' curriculum. Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, in Houston teaches French from first through sixth grades. At such a young age, it is easy to use games as teaching tools and to maintain the interest level of children, making it simpler for them to be educated with a skill they may eventually put to practical use.

For an individual, mastering another language opens doors and windows that previously were closed. There are new books to read or poorly translated books to reread. There are new places to travel to and different walks of life to experience. There are international mergers to negotiate, and children in foreign countries in need of medical attention. Even if one never puts their linguistic skills to professional or personal use, there are always children to teach.

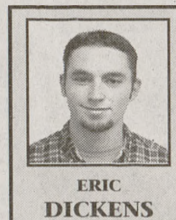
Elizabeth Kohl is a junior accounting major.



RICHARD HORNE/THE BATTALION

Supplements allow students to side step academic responsibility

Typical college students have a long history of shirking responsibility when it comes to their schoolwork and classes.



ERIC DICKENS

It started in high school when Cliffs Notes became a viable alternative to actually reading a particularly boring book one was to be tested on in class.

The trend continues today in college, when after a feeble attempt to get out of bed, the older and wiser student remembers he can just go and buy the notes from today's lecture later on in the day.

After this epiphany, the student's feeble attempt to wake up and go to class becomes a complete failure.

Universities are supposed to be places to learn and achieve by overcoming academic challenges.

However, many of the benefits of meeting those challenges are lost when students opt to take the easy way out and misuse supplemental notes. Note-taking services and other academic resources are designed to help students with their studies, not to relieve them of their obligations.

But too many times, students abuse the system to compensate for their own mistakes and personal laziness. Companies that provide class notes have justified places in academia.

They provide useful supplemental support to a student's own note-taking and class attendance and are excellent places to turn when a student misses a class and needs that day's lecture notes.

But students have to draw the

line on how much they rely on these services. If one only used note-services but did not go to class, they would be neglecting the obligations of higher education.

By going to those note-providing businesses rather than going to class, students may save some time for sleeping or playing Mario Kart, but they forgo many benefits of attending class.

Besides the risk of being absent for pop quizzes, lazy students also miss useful class discussion and valuable time with their professors — two factors that can help a student succeed in the class and in college.

miss the point of a somewhat expensive higher education.

Students will continue to see the benefits of going to class even after graduation.

In the real world, if somebody misses a meeting or an interview, they cannot run over to a co-worker that was at the meeting for them and find out what the boss said.

A college student learns about time management, punctuality and other necessary skills for the work place by going to class and doing their own work.

If students want to make the most of their limited time at this University, they should take their own notes rather than the easy way out.

A student's first responsibility is to his or her grades. At A&M, there is a lot of talk about "the other education" of leisure and extracurricular activities. But there is a reason it is called "the other education;" a student's main education will always be in the classroom.

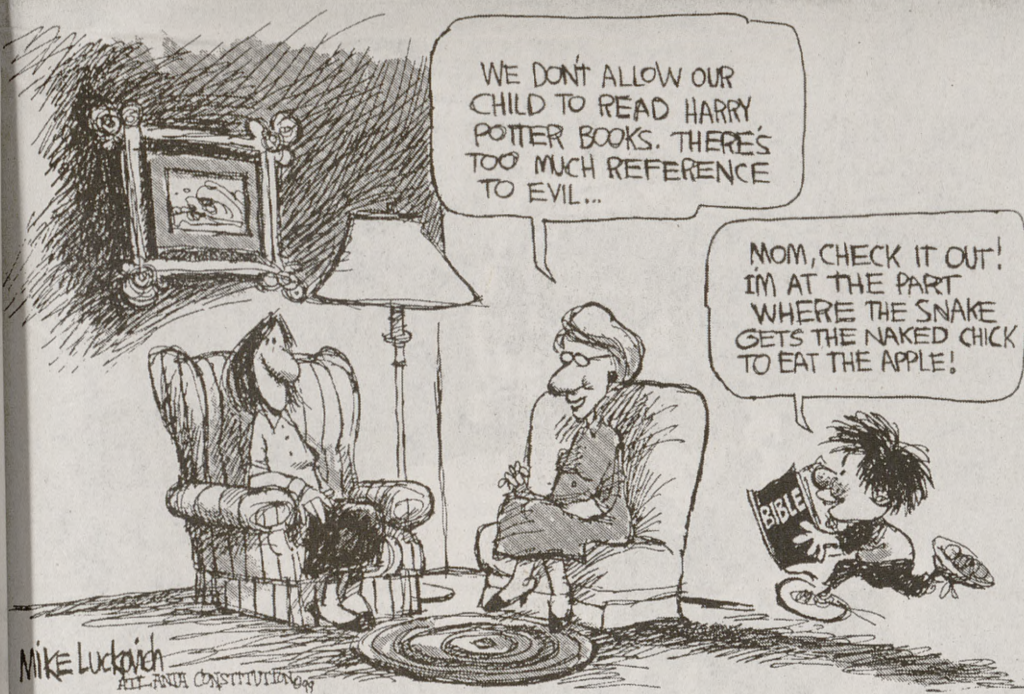
The lessons learned in the classroom do not end when the class is over or even with graduation. Students who take their attendance seriously will continue to benefit from a better sense of real-world responsibilities.

The chance to go to college and study at an institute of higher education is one that all students should be thankful for and take full advantage of.

Students forsake this great opportunity by skipping class and skipping over to note-providing businesses.

Students should take on all their responsibilities, including going to class and taking their own notes. Otherwise they are wasting another valuable opportunity and undermining the purpose of education.

Eric Dickens is a junior English major.



Mike Luckovich

MAIL CALL

Christian efforts to convert intolerant

In response to Chris Huffines' 2 column.

After attending school here for four years and reading *The Battalion* almost everyday, I would like to say that I have never been as uninvolved over an article as I was after reading Huffines' view of the Southern Baptist Coalition and the ADL. He never realized the arrogance showing by stating the "critical that the Messiah has come." I never in my life been attacked by a Jew, Muslim or Buddhist telling me that I am wrong for what I believe and that their religion is the only true way to God.

However, I could not count the number of times I have had Christians try to convert me right there he spot and tell me that I am going to hell for what I do or do not believe. Of course, every religion says they are right, but Christians are the only ones I've seen claiming at the top of their lungs everyone else is wrong. That religious intolerance.

Clay Stanfield
Class of '99

received no small amount of hate and intolerance in the process. Every Jew I know can speak of being insulted by Christians who, in the same breath, profess to love everyone. These are not the actions of the vast majority of Christians, but it is a fact of Jewish life. In Huffines' column, a Jewish man stands up and (to paraphrase) says, "Leave us alone, we deserve respect for our own beliefs", and you accuse him of intolerance? I stand amazed, now let us reason together.

To share "the good news... (To Jews) especially during (Jewish) holy days, when awareness of God and religion is heightened..." is not an expression of love and respect toward us — regardless of your intent. Would you appreciate the return from another religion as you walked into church for Easter services? Unlikely.

Please do not decide for us, what is an affront to the Jewish people. That is not your decision, nor is it yours to decide how "sufficiently outraged" we should be by these recent statements or the Holocaust. We are not "in need" of anything save for the same forbearance and respect that we show toward you. Judaism strenuously disapproves of pushing our own beliefs on others, all we are asking is for that courtesy to be returned.

Wayne White
Class of '99

"Working for aid" a bipartisan ideology

In response to Beverly Mireles' Nov. 2 column.

I suspect FDR would be surprised to know that the concept of working in exchange for aid is a strictly Republican idea. Our constitution enumerates certain inalienable rights, the right to a free bed and the right to save money are not among those rights.

I do agree that this is clearly a political stunt, most likely impossible to enact.

It was too bad that you chose to open your argument against a proposed policy by using confrontational partisan politics rather than dealing directly with the issue.

Michael McDowell
Graduate student

The *Battalion* encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

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