Taos Institute for Language Teachers (TILT)

Thirty-eight secondary school teachers from 15 states participated in a teacher education program from July 20–Aug. 1. The Taos Institute for Language Teachers, sponsored by CLEAR and co-sponsored by the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) at Michigan State University (MSU) and San Diego State University (SDSU) and by the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC) at SDSU, was held at the Thunderbird Lodge in Taos Ski Valley, N.M.

This is a secluded, secluded site that allowed for full concentration on the institute’s purpose, which was to combine intensive work on the Standards for Foreign Language Learning with an immersion experience in either Spanish, French, or German. Participants were provided financial support by MSU’s CLEAR and CIBER and from SDSU’s CIBER and LARC.

Morning sessions were devoted to presentations, group work, and reports dealing with curricular revision based on the “Five Cs” (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities) of the National Standards. In the afternoon, participants worked on methodological and cultural topics in their respective target languages.

Multicultural events and an international film festival contributed to the evening program, excursions to Taos and Santa Fe, hikes in the surrounding mountains, and a visit to the Santa Fe Opera were high points of the extracurricular program.

June Phillips (Weber State University) was the primary presenter on the National Standards in foreign languages in the morning sessions. She was joined by Susan Gass, Patricia Paulsell, George Peters (all MSU), Ben Christensen (SDSU), and Bernhard Martin (Tufts University) for the methodology workshops. Marisol Fernandez (MSU) and Marta Anton (Indiana-Purdue University) in Spanish, Patricia Mosele (MSU) and Robert Lafayette (Louisiana State University) in French, and Peters and Martin in German made up the afternoon language-specific teams. Martin also provided additional hands-on exposure to Internet technology to the different language groups. Teaching assistants Catherine Tammarelle, Cary Eimerger, Maria Dolores Bollo-Panadero (all MSU) and Heidi Kyser-Genoist (University of New Mexico) served as language resource persons and contributed to methodology portions of the institute.

Participants at TILT developed teaching modules and units that incorporate principles of the National Standards and weave together the “Five Cs” in accordance with suggestions in the standards document. Many of the participants plan to refine and expand their projects during the course of the school year; they will remain in contact through a LISTSERV set up by CLEAR. CLEAR also has plans to disseminate projects to secondary teachers around the country, both electronically and on paper. Selected TILT participants will continue their work on curriculum development in-country next summer with fellowship support from CLEAR and MSU’s CIBER.

One participant described the combination of methodology and immersion at TILT as “the best of both worlds, something we rarely get the opportunity to do.” Some further comments from the evaluation sheets: “Very valuable. It helped me re-think my teaching methodology.” “Superb experience overall; high quality organization, presenters and attendees.” “All sessions were well-planned, well-timed...and filled with useful materials.” “The atmosphere, the people, the classes, and the activities all combined together to make an outstanding learning experience.” “I feel very privileged to have been able to participate in this program. I found everyone to be very friendly and supportive. The work was taken seriously but without any stress...I have benefited from every aspect of the program.” “I have worked with a number of programs in Latin America, and I have never been with a group of teachers so dedicated to using the target language.” “I have never gotten so many good ideas at one workshop.”

Material/Technology Development Workshop for Less Commonly Taught Languages

From June 15-20, 22 instructors of less commonly taught languages gathered in East Lansing for CLEAR’s Materials/Technology Development Workshop. The participants were instructors of the following languages: Amharic, Cameroon Pidgin English, Chinese, Dutch, Hindi, Indonesian,
Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Russian, Tagalog, and Yoruba. The workshop was led by project coordinators David Dwyer and George Peters and taught by Claire Bradin.

Webmaster Dennie Hoopingarner chronicled all activities, which can be viewed on line at: http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu/clear/cti/summerworkshop.html

After a day of reviewing basic computer skills, guests were greeted at an evening reception. The next day the participants attended an introduction to CALL (computer-assisted language learning) and then tackled the basics of HyperCard. Through the use of HyperCard templates designed for language learning, participants began developing materials for the various target languages early in the workshop. Nina Garrett, director of the CTW Mellon Project, gave the keynote address titled ‘‘Does Less Commonly Taught Have to Mean Harder?’’

During subsequent days, participants incorporated prepared graphics and audio into their materials and were introduced to more advanced templates and the rudiments of scripting. At evening sessions, topics such as design, integrating culture into language learning, and materials dissemination were discussed. On the final day, many demonstrated their projects to the group. Plans were made for the follow-up workshop to be held in June 1998. During the year, participants will keep in touch via e-mail and a web-based discussion board.

According to the evaluations, response to the workshop was enthusiastic. Participants indicated that they benefited from the hands-on experience and would have liked the workshop to extend a few more days. (Based on these suggestions, CLEAR’s Introductory Techniques Technology Institutes have been increased to 10 days. See page 4.) Some typical comments were: “Having this technical knowledge is really empowering for language teachers and more people should get to benefit from it.” “Thank you for the wonderful opportunity. It has certainly opened new doors for me! I look forward to next year’s training.”

Technology and the Internet Institute

From July 28-Aug. 1, foreign language teachers from seven states attended the Technology and the Internet Institute for Foreign Language Teachers in East Lansing. The target languages represented were Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. The workshop was organized by Claire Bradin and Eugene Gray and taught by Bradin. Facilitators with experience in the Internet assisted; they were Cindy Kendall, Daniel Park, Kim McDonough, and Carol Wilson-Duffy.

Dennie Hoopingarner served as webmaster and created an ongoing documentary of the sessions. In addition to photographs of the activities, the website includes links to related sites about the Internet, integrating the World Wide Web into foreign language teaching, creating web pages, multimedia, and pages produced by the participants themselves. The website associated with this institute can be found at: http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu/clear/institute/default.html

After becoming comfortable with various user options in Netscape, participants used search engines to find information and then evaluated websites for suitable content. In addition to exploring other aspects of the Internet, such as e-mail, listservs, ftp, gopher, and MOOs, participants learned the basics of making web pages and of incorporating graphics and sound into their pages. Using the handbook of materials provided at the institute, participants will conduct their own technology workshops in their schools or districts. The Internet ’97 group will continue to exchange teaching ideas via e-mail during the coming school years.

Content-based Instruction Materials Development Project

CLEARponsored the Content-Based Instruction (CBI) Workshop at the campus of Michigan State University on June 27-28. Workshop leaders Carol Bishop, Patricia Paulsell, and Amy Tickle provided training in the development of content-based language materials. Seven participants from four states are currently developing content-based units to be...
piloted in their fourth-year high school language classrooms during the 1997-98 school year. This workshop was co-sponsored by MSU’s CIBER, which supported two teachers interested in developing materials related to business language. The workshop focused on theoretical aspects of CBI, the connection between foreign language across the curriculum and CBI, and on practical issues in developing and using content-based materials in the classroom. The specific topics were: choosing an appropriate theme for one’s audience, determining selection criteria in choosing authentic materials and tasks, and developing materials from authentic text. Participants then evaluated content-based materials from English as a second language texts, which were used to illustrate the concepts of the workshop.

Participants drafted a syllabus for a content-based theme unit, searched the World Wide Web for supporting authentic materials, and then developed tentative lesson plans. Presentations of the materials and lessons concluded the workshop.

Evaluations indicated that the participants wanted more time to develop materials together and that they appreciated the opportunity to bring more sophisticated, content-based activities into their teaching. Specific comments were: “I liked the hands-on, practical nature of the workshop.” “It was...effective and smoothly organized.” “Collaboration with other educators is a great resource.”

Distance Learning Fellowship Program

Susan MacDonald from Negaunee High School in Negaunee, Mich., and Paula Sanders from Rockford High School in Rockford, Mich., were awarded fellowships to participate in CLEAR’s Foreign Language Initiative for Distance Learning (DL) Project. MacDonald and Sanders, who contributed the piece below, are currently working with MSU faculty and research assistants in the development of DL courses in Spanish and German for their home institutions.

As part of the Fellowship in Distance Education awarded us by CLEAR, we attended a two-week institute in July titled Tools and Techniques for Interactive Television-Based (ITV) Instruction. Dennie Hoopingarner, CLEAR’s assistant director for technology implementation, attended the program with us at the National Foreign Language Resource Center, University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

Our primary instructor was Stephen Flemming who has been teaching Chinese via ITV to neighboring islands for two years. As part of our training, we participated in his Chinese classes in order to directly experience ITV as language learners. The activities we later developed as ITV teachers integrated this technology with pedagogical strategies that were based on our experiences as learners.

The variety of sessions promoted collaboration among the 20 participants. We pooled knowledge and experiences as we explored effective instruction via ITV. Topics included e-mail as a method of instructional communication, the World Wide Web as a target language resource, PowerPoint as a presentation tool, and communication with technicians to facilitate smooth transitions between media. We then gave a final presentation of a unit that we will include in the curriculum at our home institutions.

The diversity of the group was astounding, ranging from elementary school teachers to university instructors. Some had years of experience while others were preparing for new programs. The languages at the institute represented the more commonly taught, such as German and Spanish, as well as the less commonly taught, such as Tagalog and Ilokano.

The workshop was exhausting but inspiring, and we were excited to share our new lesson plans, which were packed full of ideas and tools. We feel very fortunate to have been chosen for this CLEAR fellowship, which made it possible to attend this workshop. Our experiences in Hawai’i will be reflected in our work on the CLEAR project as well as at our home schools. Thanks to all instructional and support staff, as well as fellow participants.
MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN 1998

Please contact the CLEAR office for information on how to order our materials.

MODULES FOR ASSESSING INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE USE

This project team is designing computer modules for promoting communicative language use. This project evolved from two observations about foreign language teaching and materials: Many introductory college textbooks for French, German, and Spanish do not include explicit information about the communicative use of language, and most classroom foreign language learners experience instances of miscommunication and misunderstanding when they visit the target culture.

The Interactive Language Use Project provides potential solutions through culture-oriented computer modules for French, German, and Spanish. There are two parts to these materials. Part 1 is a tutorial that teaches students how to achieve specific goals in high-frequency authentic situations. Part 2 assesses how well students have learned the communicative functions of language as presented in the computer activities. Communicative functions include greetings and farewells, forms of address, requests, invitations, and making suggestions. Despite the apparent simplicity of these communicative functions, they are nonetheless common causes of misunderstanding for students in the target country.

Tom Lovik and graduate assistant Olaf Bohlke have completed the first phase of the German module. It includes 12 scenarios (to be expanded to 24), shot-on-location in Germany, with approximately 25 questions for teaching students about functional language. This software simulates authentic scenarios through the use of still photos and recorded dialogues.

Preliminary piloting of the materials with first-year German students in August 1997 revealed that students found the program enjoyable as well as educational. The Module for Assessing Interactive Language Use for German on CD ROM will be available in the summer of 1998.

Work on the French portion of the project began in August 1997, and the Spanish portion of the project will begin in August 1998. The French and Spanish modules will follow the model established by the German project. Scenarios and communicative functions will be identified, authentic photographs will be obtained, and a prototype will be developed and tested.

VIDEO TRAINING MODULE ON IN-HOUSE TEST DEVELOPMENT

Gary Cook and graduate assistants Peyina Lin, Christy Dunsmore, and Sophia Tan have completed filming of the first of three videotapes in The Language Testing Video Series and writing of the companion workbook. The first video, “Test Development,” and accompanying workbook have been designed to assist both experienced and inexperienced test writers at both the high school and university levels.

A solid introduction to the issues and concepts involved in testing is followed by an extensive selection of test items. The interactive video introduces topics involved in language test development; the workbook then expands on these topics. Topics include determining test purposes (proficiency, placement, achievement, diagnostic), creating tests to meet those purposes, and designing specific items to test the major language skills. “Test Development” and the companion workbook will be available in November 1997.

Filming of the second video in the series is currently under way. The second video will address the development of subjective grading techniques, performance assessments, and portfolios. Again, there will be a companion workbook to be used as a resource and catalyst in the creation of more holistic measurement devices and scoring instruments.

PRONUNCIACIÓN Y FONÉTICA

Pat Lunn has authored and is currently piloting a series of CALL lessons, Pronunciación y Fonética. These lessons can be used by Spanish teachers to learn how to teach pronunciation or by advanced students working on their own. No knowledge of linguistics is necessary in order to utilize and benefit from these CALL lessons. Developed in Hypercard, the materials include basic text in Spanish (additional information can be called up by more advanced learners) and exercises for ear training and oral practice.

Lessons on syllabication, stress, accentuation, vowels, and consonants progress toward an overview of dialectology in which phonetic concepts are used to describe the major modalities of Spanish. An interactive screenshot will be available on CLEAR's website in early 1998, and the complete package will be available on CD ROM in the spring of 1998.

WRITING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The writing project that began in 1996 has two components. The first component involved the creation of a bibliography of more than 300 articles dealing with the teaching of foreign language writing that were published during the period 1980–1996. Each article is classified into one of two categories: empirical research or descriptions of pedagogic activities and techniques. The bibliography is organized according to topic and target language. It can be found at: (http://polyglot.cal.msu.edu/clear/home.html). Charlene Polio, Patricia Mosele, and research assistant Kristen Danek are currently reviewing articles in order to summarize the focus and findings of empirical research on the teaching and learning of foreign language writing.

The second component of the writing project consists of a technical report containing the results of 25 interviews with foreign language teachers. The goal of these interviews was to determine the teachers' perceptions of and practices in the teaching of writing. A technical report summarizing the results will be available in January 1998.

TASK-BASED COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES

Alison Mackey and graduate assistant Kim McDonough began this project, which is part of the Materials and
Methods Project Series, in the Summer of 1997. The aim of this project is to develop communicative task-based activities that target particular grammatical structures. The languages of focus are the less commonly taught languages of Thai, Japanese, and Italian. The first set of materials, intended for beginning and intermediate students of Thai, is nearing completion.

Although many foreign language instructors would agree that it is important for grammatical structures to play some role in their language courses, there are many different ways to realize this role. Therefore, these materials fit into a variety of foreign language teaching approaches. They involve students working in pairs or small groups to carry out communicative tasks, such as describing and drawing pictures. The tasks provide various contexts that encourage particular structures. Through conversational interaction and the cooperative goal of completing the task, students have opportunities to use and hear the targeted grammatical structures while carrying out authentic communicative acts.

Tasks have been designed that specifically target question forms and noun classifiers. A review of Thai texts and a small-scale survey of current teachers of Thai as a second language within the United States revealed that these grammatical structures were particularly problematic for learners, in addition to being well-suited for instruction through communicative-based activities. These materials are currently being empirically tested, first with native speakers of Thai and then with non-native speakers, to determine if they are effective at eliciting the targeted structures. Monthapat Brown at the University of Michigan is collaborating with CLEAR by piloting these materials in her beginning and intermediate classes.

These materials will be available in spring 1998 in the form of a manual that describes the targeted structures, provides instructions for the teacher, and includes student materials.

**SUMMER 1998 INSTITUTES**

During the summer of 1998, CLEAR is offering six professional development institutes at Michigan State University. Two of the institutes focus on materials and methods development and four of the institutes focus on integrating technology into the foreign language classroom. The catalogue of descriptions, requirements, and procedures for applying to each of the institutes will be available mid-November.

**Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom • June 17–20**

**Content-based Instruction and Business Language Materials Development (co-sponsored by MSU’s Center for International Business Education and Research) • June 24–27**

**Computer Assisted Language Learning Materials Development for Less Commonly Taught Languages: Advanced Techniques • June 15–19**

**The Internet in Foreign Language Instruction: Advanced Techniques • June 22–26**

**Computer Assisted Language Learning Materials Development for Less Commonly Taught Languages: Introductory Techniques • July 13–22**

**The Internet in Foreign Language Instruction: Introductory Techniques • August 3–12**

**THE WEB**

**WEBSITES FOR K-12 TEACHERS**

A Language Professionals Guide to the World Wide Web by Carolyn G. Fidelman

Northeastern University and Agora Language Marketplace

This on-line article introduces the World Wide Web for language professionals. Information presented includes basics of how to use Internet client software and links to other resources. This site is a good source of information for those beginning to explore the applications of the WWW in foreign-language education.

The Human Languages Page

This site is a starting point for language-related resources. Choosing the "Languages and Literature" link takes the user to a list of language-specific sub-headings. For any given language, there are links to resources ranging from corpora, literature, and cultural material to information and resources for language-specific computing.

Dictionaries are inescapable in foreign language classrooms and may, in fact, be one of the first and most basic tools for learning a foreign language. Despite many years of experience using dictionaries, English as a foreign language (EFL) students who took part in this study made a significant number of mistakes using looked-up words. Since dictionary usage is, presumably, for avoiding mistakes, questions arise concerning the effectiveness of students’ dictionary strategies, the types of mistakes made using dictionaries, and dictionary design.

Over the course of one academic year, 51 Japanese university students wrote 12 timed, in-class English compositions in which they circled all looked-up words. The resulting corpus of 41,024 words, including the 674 identified “dictionary words,” was analyzed to determine if the looked-up words were used correctly. Of those 674 words, 42 percent were used incorrectly. The mistakes are categorized here with the percentage of the total number of dictionary-word mistakes in that category indicated.

After tabulating the number and types of mistakes, students were divided into two groups: those who made more mistakes than average and those who made fewer mistakes than average. Four students from the extreme end of each group were interviewed. In order to better understand why these students had performed as well or as poorly as they had, they were asked to describe their dictionary usage. The information from the corpus and interviews was used to re-address a number of previously raised questions about dictionary usage.

Do bilingual dictionaries "provoke" errors?

Several authors on the subject of bilingual vs. monolingual dictionary use have made this claim. Based on the data and interviews from this study, it would seem to be a difficult one to prove. Students made mistakes far more often than they used their dictionaries, so even if it were true, it would be insignificant in the context of a student's overall written performance. More importantly, none of the interviewed students demonstrated or claimed they had intended to use the correct word (or word form), but then had been misdirected by the information in a bilingual dictionary.

Do grammatical information and example sentences really help users avoid errors?

Yes. Users who regularly consulted the example sentences consistently made fewer mistakes. Even advanced students made mistakes using dictionaries that lacked example sentences or grammatical information.

Can one predict which errors could be avoided by using a specific dictionary “skillfully”??

In the present study, it is important to note that students with a higher than average rate of dictionary word errors used one or both of the same dictionaries as a student who committed no errors at all, suggesting that accurate production relies more on the user than on the dictionary.

Hopefully, the methodology used in this study can assist classroom teachers in teaching the strengths and weaknesses of dictionaries in general and in designing specific strategies for more effective dictionary usage.

(See sample activity, page 7).
**WHAT IS CLEAR?**

The Center for Language Education and Research, a National Foreign Language Resource Center, was established at Michigan State University in 1996 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Title VI Language Resource Centers program to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the United States. CLEAR is a multidisciplinary unit facilitating integrated research, instruction, and training programs. The primary objective is to promote collaboration in foreign language research and teacher education across college, departmental, and institutional boundaries. CLEAR’s activities and projects integrate the various constituencies involved in foreign language teaching and learning. Projects are divided into five major groupings:

- Research on Learning and Teaching
- Second Language Assessment
- Collaboration with College of Education
- Linking to Teachers and Schools
- Methods and Materials

In addition to conducting conferences and institutes for foreign language educators from secondary through post-secondary levels both on and off the MSU campus, CLEAR publishes and disseminates findings and materials from its projects.

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**ADVANCING LANGUAGE IMMERSION EDUCATION**

**University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa**
National Foreign Language Resource Center
1998 Summer Institute

Tentative Dates: July 6–24, 1998

For information contact:
1998 NFLRC Summer Institute
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
1850 East-West Rd. #106
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-9424; fax: (808) 956-5983
http://www.nil.hawaii.edu/nflrc
e-mail: nflrc@hawaii.edu

Partial financial support available.
Application deadline: February 20, 1998

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**A SAMPLE ACTIVITY**

In foreign language writing classes, dictionary exercises can be designed to develop students’ skills in dictionary use. The following exercise focuses on finding and then using different parts of speech, synonyms, and compound words.

**Materials**

Copy one or two dictionary pages/entries for in-class use.

*Example:*

**like**, adj., 1. having almost or exactly the same qualities, characteristics, etc.;

**similar**, equal: as, a cup of sugar and a like amount of flour. 2. [Rare], alike.

3. [Dial.], likely adv. 1. in the manner of one that is: as, he works like mad.

2. [Colloq.], likely: as, like as not, he is already there. prep. 1. similar to; somewhat resembling as, she is like a bird.

2. in a manner characteristic of; similarly to: as, she sings like a bird.

**like**, vi. 1. [Obs.], to please: be agreeable to: with the dative, as it likes me not.

2. to be so inclined; choose: as, you may leave whenever you like. vi. 1. to have a taste or fondness for; be pleased with; have a preference for; enjoy. 2. to wish: as, I should like to go there. n. pl. preferences, tastes, or affections: as, we know nothing of his likes and dislikes.

**likeliness**, n. 1. the state of being likely or probable; probability. 2. a probability or chance of something; as, There is a strong likeliness of his succeeding. 3. [Arch.] indication of a favorable end; promise.

**likeness**, n. 1. a representation, picture, or image, esp. a portrait; as, to draw a good likeness of someone. 2. the semblance or appearance of something, guise: as to assume the likeness of a swan. 3. the state or fact of being like; as, I can’t get over your likeness to my friend.

**likewise**, adv. 1. moreover; in addition; also, too: as, She is likewise our social chair. 2. in like manner; in the same way; similarly: as, I’m tempted to do likewise.

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**Preparation**

Develop a few exercises, starting with synonym location and progressing to the more difficult tasks of sentence completion or choosing between appropriate compound words.

**Example exercises:**

1. For each italicized word, identify the part of speech from the following group: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition. Then give a synonym for that word.

   a) He likes her.
   b) A chair is like a stool.

2. Find a synonym for ‘like’ as it is used in the following sentence.
   I would like to be at home.

3. According to the definition, a likeness can be:

   a) a picture or a portrait
   b) a portrait or a swan
   c) an image or an appearance

4. Choose the word that best finishes the sentence.
   I visited Hawaii and my friend is tempted to do _______.

   a) likelihood
   b) likewise
   c) likeness

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**Implementation**

Assign the exercises as homework.

The next day, have students report their answers. As a class, build synonym lists for vocabulary development.

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