BUSINESS LANGUAGE: WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Business language courses have become a part of foreign language programs at many colleges and universities since the early 1970s. In the more recent past, business language instruction has been introduced in numerous foreign language curricula in secondary schools. Despite its spread and rising popularity, however, basic issues are currently being raised by many colleagues who are interested in business language instruction but are dealing with administrative constraints, professional obstacles, and personal reservations for which they seek collegial support and guidance.

At professional conferences and workshops, we witness a resurgence of discussion over fundamental questions such as: Why offer business language courses? What is understood by “business language”? Which topics should be covered in a business language course? What materials are available? What vocabulary is relevant? Which grammatical areas should be emphasized? What cultural knowledge should be conveyed? At what level should such a course be taught? And last but not least: Am I competent as a language teacher to teach such a course? In most cases, the question regarding the why has primarily administrative reasons in that we are under constant pressure to justify our course offerings and are, therefore, in search for ever better arguments. The questions regarding the what (i.e., the content of business language courses) have been addressed by many of our colleagues who have published business language textbooks. However, especially at the beginning college and high school levels, business language textbooks are either not available or we feel that despite their selection of appropriate topics they are overall not a satisfactory option for adoption. The purpose of this article is to address these fundamental issues within business language instruction.

WHY OFFER BUSINESS LANGUAGE COURSES?

In today’s global economy, it is perceived that there is no need for business language courses or programs because of the dominance of English as the language of international business. However, this widespread usage of English does not solve all communication problems of international business people. First, while English might be the lingua franca in multinational companies such as DaimlerChrysler, this is certainly not the case in mid-sized and small companies doing business abroad. In these cases, the language and culture of the customer plays a vital role. Second, even in cases where official business meetings in China, Germany, or France are conducted in English because people are present who do not speak the language of the country, it is during official and seemingly unimportant side-bar conversations in meetings, over a drink, or during a game of golf where business matters are brought up and important business decisions might be swayed one way or another. In these situations, English speakers without foreign language skills put themselves and their company’s interests at a definite disadvantage. Foreign language skills in general, business language skills in particular, familiarity with foreign cultures, and cross-cultural sensitivities become key factors in putting one at a competitive advantage.

WHAT IS A BUSINESS LANGUAGE COURSE?

Most second language educators would agree that context plays a crucial role in the comprehension and learning of a foreign language. To be more precise, it is the meaningfulness of the context provided and the familiarity of second language materials that are important as learners develop their second language skills. The concept of meaningful context is intertwined with the relevance of topics to all learners. What, then, is meaningful and relevant in a business language course? Students in our classes, by their secondary or post-secondary level, are young people with little, if any, practical work experience and knowledge of the corporate world. This is the reason why the selection of topics and materials is crucial. Meaningfulness and relevance have to be established by forcing students into the subject matter through cross-cultural comparisons based on their general knowledge of the world.

Topics in business language courses typically include an introduction to the country’s economic geography, a close look at a nation’s industrial composition, major trades and companies, the banking system, tourism, or the integration of Europe. Which topics are chosen and the extent or depth to which they are covered (Continued on page 6)

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MAILINGLISTS AND FREE E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

E-mail can be a rich environment for language learning. Applications of e-mail for language learning activities range from one-on-one exchanges between students within the class or with "keypals" in another country, to whole-class to whole-class activities such as surveys and opinion polls. In the past, it has been difficult to transmit the necessary accent characters and pronunciation over e-mail, but that can be overcome by using a free Web-based e-mail account. Several organizations offer free e-mail accounts. Provided you have your own Internet account, you can sign up for a free account, which is available from Hotmail (www.hotmail.com), Yahoo! (mail.yahoo.com), and many other sources.

Once you have an e-mail account, you can also create and maintain your own private "mailing lists," which make it easier to communicate with a large number of people. A few organizations that offer free mailing lists are: OneList (www.onelist.com) and CoolList (www.coolist.com). You can set up your list, add subscribers, and control access to the list from their Web-based interface.

COMPUTER-TELEVISION CONVERGENCE

Foreign language teachers have two new resources for authentic language. SCOLA (www.scola.org), the consortium that provides international programming through cable television, now "webcasts" on the Internet. The same programming is available through "streaming" video and can be viewed even over a dial-up connection.

RealNetworks, the company that produces the RealAudio and RealVideo players, now maintains a central clearinghouse for streaming media sites on the Web. The site (realguide.real.com) can help find foreign language programming on the Internet.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SURVEY

Visit CLEAR's Web site (http://clear.msu.edu) and participate in the Foreign Language Surveys. The purpose of these informal surveys is to allow foreign language professionals to exchange ideas about foreign language learning and teaching and to allow everyone to get an idea about other teachers' attitudes and opinions. A new question is added at least once a month, so check back often. The surveys are anonymous, no records of identities of respondents are kept.

Q & A

Q. Are there any benefits to having students read aloud in a foreign language class room?

A. If the goal is the development of reading skills and strategies, reading aloud is not an appropriate activity; however, if the goal is the improvement of pronunciation and fluency, reading aloud can be effective. Importantly, if you have students read aloud, this should be done only after students have read and analyzed the passage. Reading aloud is analogous to reciting poetry; it requires the production of natural prosody and rhythm. To achieve this, a reader must be able to scan ahead while speaking, or have already read and rehearsed the passage. Just as a typist does not read for meaning but only encodes the visual message into a typed message, reading aloud encodes a visual message into a spoken one. A person who reads aloud may not remember what he or she has read. Hence, if one is teaching reading skills, reading aloud is not a good idea and may even frustrate students. When the goal is reading comprehension, reading out loud is a distraction from understanding meaning for the reader. On the other hand, reading aloud for pronunciation and fluency can be useful. For example, passages from textbooks, magazines, student-generated texts, dialogues, and larger dramatic works have been shown to be both effective and very motivating for students. However, if the primary goal is for students to improve communicative fluency, activities that focus on naturalistic conversational situations should be chosen.

Andrew S. McCullough is an ESL specialist at the English Language Center at MSU. His expertise is in teaching English for academic purposes.
"QUICK SURVEYS" A CONVERSATION ACTIVITY

I have found that surveys stimulate more interesting conversation than simple discussion questions, so I use them quite often in class. This is an activity that gets people talking. I have found that quiet groups and students who are normally reluctant to speak in the target language respond well to this activity. It provides students with the opportunity to get to know each other better and to become sensitive to each other's opinions. It is useful as a warm-up activity to later in-depth coverage of a particular topic.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS
- Students will comprehend and use key vocabulary from a topic.
- Students will solicit and give opinions on a topic.
- Students will practice informal debate discourse.

PREPARATION
Create a survey of approximately 10 questions that are related to a topic you wish to cover in class. I have included a sample; however, in order to make it really interesting to students, it is best to adapt the survey to your particular social environment. Be sure to create a mixture of questions or prompts that will produce a variety of answers and generate conversation. Additionally, survey topics should be of high interest to your students, and students should be able to draw on their experiences and background knowledge in order to complete the surveys. Make a copy for each student.

IMPLEMENTATION
- Ask students to do the survey quietly at their desks.
- Instruct students to find out how their classmates responded to each item on the survey. In order to get them started, I provide them with a model question on the blackboard: "What did you put for #3? Why?" Students move around the room talking about the various questions with 10 different people. Make sure students discuss with each other items on which they have different answers. I have found that this generates much more discussion. Encourage them to talk about the issue as much as they like, then to move on to another person. When students have finished interviewing each other, they report a summary of their findings to the class.

EVALUATION
As students are discussing the survey, the teacher should circulate around the room to monitor students and to observe the conversations generated by the students. Evaluation can be in terms of number of targeted vocabulary words used and amount and/or complexity of speech produced. More advanced students can be evaluated based on the persuasiveness of their explanations for their opinions.

POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES
- Ask students to form groups based on their similar responses to a particular item. The groups then debate each other. This gets lively, so you might want to close the door for this variation!
- Ask students to predict your answers to the questions; then, give your own answers, and see how many people were able to predict them. This "personalization" of the activity can be quite fun for students.

Bill Bonk has taught ESL in France, Italy, Ecuador, and Japan. He is currently an instructor and testing researcher at Kanda University in Chiba, Japan.

LYING SURVEY

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible by marking them "agree," "disagree," or "it depends."

1. We should always tell the truth.
2. Children lie more than adults.
3. We sometimes have to tell a lie to protect a friend.
4. People lie more often now than they did 50 years ago.
5. If someone lies to me, I lose respect for them.
6. If my boyfriend/girlfriend told a serious lie to me, I would break up with him/her.
7. I never lied to my parents when I was growing up.
8. There are occasions when lying is unavoidable.
9. It's OK to lie to people you don't know.
10. Lying is natural.
NUEVA GRAMÁTICA COMUNICATIVA: A COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR WORKTEXT WITH WRITTEN AND ORAL PRACTICE


Nueva gramática comunicativa provides intermediate and advanced college students with an extensive resource for grammar practice and review. Learners will find 48 chapters of concise explanations of Spanish syntax, morphology, and orthography presented in English with bilingual examples. The chapter topics include nouns, articles, and modifiers; finite and non-finite verb usage; prepositions; relative pronouns; clausal structures; and other aspects of the language that are difficult for native English speakers learning Spanish.

Each chapter contains numerous practice activities designed to elicit target structures through a variety of fill-in-the-blank exercises, cloze-deletions, sentence completions, information gap tasks, and open-ended conversations. Instructions and activities are primarily presented in Spanish. Exercises are both contextualized and generally contrastive, thereby challenging students to apply the grammar presented. For example, learners must decide between preterite and imperfect or among the five types of pronouns used in Spanish rather than simply provide each form in separate exercises. In addition, the variety of contexts and advanced vocabulary used in the activities encourages lexical development.

Teachers in need of a grammar book to supplement other course materials or to meet particular needs of individual students will want to consider this workbook. In either context, teachers may need to provide definitions of some technical terms used in the grammar explanations. Furthermore, teachers should plan to offer feedback to students since an answer key is not provided, likely due to the nature of many of the activities.

Catherine M. Barrette is an assistant professor of Spanish at Wayne State University. She also coordinates the Spanish basic courses and is an advisor and faculty member for the new Master of Arts in Language Learning program.

CREATIVE COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR THE FRENCH CLASS


Creative Communicative Activities for the French Class is a collection of communication-based activities for use in French classes at the beginning, intermediate, or advanced levels. It provides language educators with fully developed activities accompanied by directions and black-line masters ready for duplicating for distribution to students. The purpose of the activities is to supplement regular coursework in order to create variety and a change of pace in the classroom. The activities aim to facilitate communication, enhance oral expression, reinforce grammatical structures, and develop vocabulary. A few activities are not communication-based but are included because they reinforce knowledge of grammatical structures while creating a non-stressful atmosphere to encourage conversation.

In addition to a table of contents, the book provides a highly practical listing of “Activities by Topic” to assist instructors in choosing activities appropriate to their needs. Each activity is categorized according to what it emphasizes: vocabulary, grammar, verbs, culture, critical thinking, or writing. Preceding each activity the author has provided clear and helpful instructions. This introductory page lists the activity objective, the level targeted, and the number and configuration of students required for the exercise (entire class, groups of three or four, pairs). There is also a description of materials needed, precise and clear directions for how the activity is to be performed, and explanatory notes with suggestions for further development.

Some of the activities are familiar to instructors of languages, such as exercises in which students circulate in the classroom seeking someone with similar interests or possessions, or simply answering a questionnaire. The author of Creative Communication Activities, however, has enriched the tasks by requiring more information, providing illustrations, and introducing new techniques. Several activities are competitive and creative, requiring students to invent language and use their imagination, such as “C’est vrai?” a game in which students invent the definitions of new words. Other exercises enrich cultural knowledge such as the geography of France; managing currency; identifying famous individuals from French history, art, and literature; French cuisine; and so forth. The selection presents a great variety of approaches: task-oriented assignments such as “Un effort coopératif” and “Une famille intéressante,” humorous ones such as “Les extraterrestres,” peer-editing writing tasks, card games, and others.

The pages of the book can be easily
removed since they are perforated at the binding, ready for easy reproduction and/or laminating. The quality of the illustrations, photos, and maps is excellent and should result in clear, stimulating materials. In addition, the illustrations are culturally authentic and often represent French realia. The book assumes a base of knowledge of French grammar structures and vocabulary and, therefore, does not provide review of these items. French instructors will find that this book is very useful for developing language acquisition. Due to the clarity, thoroughness, and ease of use of these exercises, instructors will want to keep this rich resource close at hand for incorporating variety into their courses with a minimum of effort.

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RESOURCES

AVAILABLE SUMMER 1999

AFRICAN LANGUAGE TUTORIAL GUIDE

This manual is intended for tutors of African languages who work with individual students or small groups of students. Suitable for both novice and experienced language teachers, it can be used alone or in conjunction with a language textbook. The manual provides (1) guidelines for creating communicative task-based instruction and (2) cross-language templates that are readily adapted to any African language. The manual is organized as follows.

PART I includes an introduction to the manual and then provides guidelines for establishing course goals, increasing the use of the second language in the teaching sessions, and finding and adapting authentic materials for instructional purposes.

PART II contains 16 lesson plans to be used with beginning level students. The lessons are constructed to minimize the use of the learner’s first language and to provide the learner with structured communicative activities. Some of the focus of the various lessons include: classroom objects, colors, numbers, money, and food.

PART III presents actual tasks that the learner may have to perform in Africa. Because these tasks will vary from country to country, the lessons are structured so that the student first learns about the task in a specific country (e.g., crossing a border) and then, using the instructor as cultural informant, learns the conversational exchange.

PART IV provides suggestions for integrating form-focused (phonology, grammar, and vocabulary) instruction into the communicative classroom.

PART V expands learners’ knowledge by providing text to stimulate discussion on cultural issues.
depend on various factors, such as:

1. the schedule and overall time frame (e.g., block scheduling vs. a traditional class schedule; one-semester or two-semester sequence), the total number of contact hours (e.g., 30 or 45 hours), and meeting frequency (e.g., two to five times per week);
2. the purpose of the course within the foreign language curriculum (e.g., introduction of a few business-related topics in addition to general language topics or sole emphasis on business and economics topics);
3. the students' academic focus and background (e.g., students with general interest in the topic or majors in business);
4. the level of the students' language proficiency (e.g., elementary, intermediate, or advanced); and
5. the interests of the instructor.

Despite all of these individual circumstances and constraints, I would like to give concrete examples of two instructional units that can be covered in as few as two class periods or can be spread out over several weeks. A popular introductory topic in business language courses is the political and economic geography of a given country: states, provinces, districts, capitals, rivers, major industrial areas, industry sectors, natural resources, transportation systems, the composition of the industry, and major companies. In preparation for this unit, maps and relevant information are easily accessible either on the Web or in public libraries. Students of any proficiency level and academic background can be asked to do their own research focusing either on one geographical area or on a specific subtopic. Their assignment can include a compilation of their findings in a written or oral report, or both. To increase the level of meaningfulness and to widen the scope of the topic, relevance to the local industry should be sought by asking students to draw comparisons to the national economic geography or to provide an overview of the local industrial landscape. Questions for discussion include: Why do companies locate in a particular area? What makes a particular region more or less attractive for businesses? It should also be easy for students to locate foreign subsidiaries in their home states or cities. The instructor can arrange a company tour, and students can prepare interview questions for employees or executives. Again, all of this can be completed to a greater or lesser degree. However, what starts out as an introduction to economic geography can lead students to an understanding of various aspects of today's global economy.

Another example of an exciting instructional unit in a business language course of any level is advertising and the automotive industry. This topic is inviting because students can easily relate to it, they experience the foreign language from various angles, and many aspects of business and economics are covered. An additional advantage is the availability of a wide variety of materials in the form of advertisements in magazines and on television. Questions for discussion include: What kind of information is provided? What vocabulary is used and what grammatical structures are preferred? What kind of images are portrayed? This topic
also lends itself to cross-cultural comparisons. For example, can we detect a general difference in American vs. French vs. German car advertisements? Are there any differences in the way Ford represents itself in the United States, in Japan, and in Europe? How does Volkswagen present itself as a German company? What do we as consumers expect from a German vs. a Japanese car? How do stereotypes about a people and its products play into our perceptions and expectations regarding their products? Finally, students can be asked to engage in activities such as writing and designing their own ads involving linguistic skills and cultural sensitivity; or buying and selling a car as a role-play requiring persuasive skills. All activities can easily be adapted to the students’ proficiency levels, and additional advertisements announcing other products of international companies could be examined to widen the scope and to expand the range of vocabulary and structures.

In summary, these two examples illustrate that it is important to take the students’ perspective and knowledge of the world as vantage points, and to provide meaningful and relevant contexts. In addition, Fryer (1996) notes that one should consider the following three contexts in business language courses: (1) the physical context (geographic and demographic); (2) the professional, work-related context; and (3) the cultural context. While the level of language proficiency does not dictate the content of a business language course per se, it does, however, influence the choice and breadth of vocabulary as well as the selection of grammatical topics. Figure A illustrates the connection between the selection of technical content and materials, and the depth of treatment at the various stages of language learning.

As students progress in their language learning endeavor, the business language course increasingly emphasizes technical content and structures. While the general language component is prevalent in the first stage of language learning, it gradually decreases as the technical language component increases. From stage one to three, the business language course shifts from a broader, more general, and comprehensive treatment of business-related content, vocabulary and grammar to a narrower, more specific focus on core business topics and grammatical structures prevalent in the language of business and economics. As illustrated in the examples of instructional units given previously, however, any topic can be employed to varying degrees of breadth and intensity in all three phases.

**WHO IS COMPETENT TO TEACH A BUSINESS LANGUAGE COURSE?**

The hesitation and personal reservations felt by many foreign language instructors toward teaching a business language course are based on the ill-conceived notion that a business language course is a business course related to language instead of a foreign language course related to business. While it is true that most instructors in foreign languages have limited or no background in business, it is in fact not a vital requirement for teaching business languages. The basic requirement for instructors of business language courses is a willingness to become familiar with the usage of the particular foreign language in various business situations and contexts. Hong (1996) argues that business language courses, like other foreign language courses, require instructors who have been professionally trained for foreign language education. She dismisses the argument that business language courses should be taught by business faculty due to their professional expertise because they seldom meet the professional training requirement in foreign language education. Funk (1992) adds that a professional background in business can not be expected from a student or an instructor and that the main goal is educating in the foreign language based on topics and structures within the areas of business and economics.

**TO WHAT EXTENT WILL STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM A COURSE IN BUSINESS LANGUAGE?**

In times of growing interdependence of the global economy and the growing international nature of our national industries, it is highly likely that our students will be future employees of a multinational company. They will reap the benefits of their exposure to business language and culture, and we will realize that it is the focus on content that may have the most lasting impact on our students.

Karin U. H. Evans, Ph.D. is a visiting assistant professor of German Studies at Michigan State University and is currently teaching business German at the advanced level. She is a co-author of the second edition of the multi-media materials packet entitled German for Business and Economics (MSU Press, forthcoming Fall 1999, with Patricia R. Paulsell and Anne-Karin Gramberg). She also serves as a coordinator for special projects under the dean of the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State.

The following sources were consulted in writing this article:


AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

100 Center for International Programs East Lansing, MI 48824-1035
(517) 353-1700
FAX: (517) 432-1209
E-mail: africa@pilot.msu.edu
http://www.isp.msu.edu/AfricanStudies

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and Central Michigan University announce an NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers during summer 1999. "Writing Africa: Chinua Achebe, Joyce Cary, Joseph Conrad, and Wole Soyinka" will be held July 5-Aug. 6 at Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

For more information, contact:
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The NEH and the University of Arkansas at Monticello invite applications for the NEH Summer Institute "Islam in Africa" July 3-Aug. 6. The institute is designed for 30 educators in grades 7-12 who teach or supervise world history, American history, world geography, global studies, and related social studies subjects. The institute will concentrate on the historical and contemporary role of Islam in West Africa. The institute will be directed by three West Africanist historians: Professor Richard Corby (University of Arkansas-Monticello), Professor Augustine Konneh (Morehouse College), and Professor Dianne White Oyer (University of Fayetteville-North Carolina).

For more information, contact:
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CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CASID) MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The 1999 Summer Institute on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "Developing Cross-cultural Understanding and Foreign Language Proficiency," will be held June 23-26 in Parlor A, MSU Union, on the Michigan State University campus. This institute will look at culture and society in a broad, cross-disciplinary context to include basic information about Francophone and Hispanophone regions of the world; explore how cultural content in a class might be deepened to include information about some of the fundamental or international-development issues facing cultures, such as hunger/poverty or political reform; and examine the multiple identities that constitute the culture. The specific objectives are to:
- increase participants' knowledge of disciplinary and regional perspectives in language teaching, specifically Spanish and French from the perspective of non-western countries;
- increase participants' awareness of teaching resources (electronic and audiovisual materials); and
- establish a network for post-institute exchange among participants of course syllabi and resource materials.

For more information, contact:
Jean Brandon
CASID
(517) 353-5925
E-mail: lynchbra@pilot.msu.edu

SECOND LANGUAGE RESEARCH FORUM UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The Graduate Students at the University of Minnesota will host the 19th annual Second Language Research Forum, "The Interaction of Social and Cognitive Factors in SLA," Sept. 23-26, 1999, at the Earle Brown Conference Center, University of Minnesota. SLRF is an annual international conference that focuses on issues of second language acquisition (SLA). It is one of the few conferences in the world that concentrates specifically on this area. Each year it brings together many of the top researchers in the field of SLA. SLRF '99 will include publishers' exhibits, poster sessions, over 100 concurrent sessions, four colloquia, and plenaries by John Archibald, Merrill Swain, Bill Van Patten, and Dennis Preston.

For more information, contact:
Second Language Research Forum c/o Department of Spanish and Portuguese
34 Folwell Hall, 9 Pleasant Street S.E.
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(612) 625-5858
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http://languagecenter.cla.umn.edu/esl/slrf99
LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTERS' UPDATES

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)
University of Minnesota

1999 Summer Institutes for Language Teachers

This series of summer institutes offered for second language teachers by CARLA connects research with practice and is part of CARLA's ongoing mission to share what has been learned with language teachers and their second language learners. Each of the weeklong institutes is a highly interactive blend of theory and practical application taught by faculty and staff at the University of Minnesota on the Minneapolis campus. The cost of each institute is $300. Graduate-level credits are available at an additional cost.

- Meeting the Challenges of Immersion Education: Teachers as Resources
  June 14-18
  Instructor: Tara Fortune, University of Minnesota.
  Guest Presenter: Pat Barr-Harrison, Prince George's County Public Schools (MD)

- Using Technology in the Second Language Classroom
  June 15-19
  Instructors: Jenise Roweckamp and Marlene Johnhoy, University of Minnesota

- Culture as the Core: Integrating Culture into Second Language Classrooms
  June 21-25
  Instructors: Helen Jorstad and Francine Klein, University of Minnesota

- Developing Classroom Materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages
  June 21-25
  Instructors: Bill Johnston, Louis Janus, and Nancy Stenson, University of Minnesota
  Note: This summer institute is supported with special funding to encourage LCTL teachers to attend. For more information, contact Louis Janus at: lc1l@tc.umn.edu.

- Improving Language Learning: A Practical Course in Strategies-based Instruction
  July 12-16
  Instructors: Andrew D. Cohen and Susan J. Weaver, University of Minnesota
  Guest Presenter: Rebecca L. Oxford, University of Alabama

- Developing Proficiency-oriented Assessments for the Second Language Classroom
  July 19-23
  Instructors: Daniel J. Reed, Cheryl Alcaya, Melody Jacobs-Cassuto, Marcos Holzner, CARLA

For more information, contact:
The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition
(612) 626-8600
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CLEAR

Center for Language Education and Research at Michigan State University

1999 Summer Institutes

CLEAR is offering six professional development institutes on the MSU campus. Two of the institutes focus on teaching methods and materials development; four of the institutes focus on integrating technology into the foreign language classroom. Stipends are available to participants to help defray expenses.

- Teaching of African Languages
  May 14-16

- Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom
  June 16-20

- CALL Materials Development: Introductory Techniques
  June 21-30

- The Internet in Foreign Language Instruction: Introductory Techniques
  July 12-21

- CALL Materials Development: Advanced Techniques
  August 2-6

- The Internet in Foreign Language Instruction: Advanced Techniques
  Aug. 9-13

Computerized Placement Tests for Spanish and German

CLEAR has finished Computerized Placement Tests for students of Spanish and German. The tests are currently being piloted with Michigan State University students enrolled in Spanish 101 or German 101. The tests will be administered to incoming students summer 1999.

Materials for the Less Commonly Taught Languages

Final editorial revisions are being made to Tasks for Communication and Grammar: Japanese, Tasks for Communication and Grammar: Thai, and African Language Tutorial Guide. These materials will be available summer 1999.

For more information about institutes and materials, please contact the CLEAR office.

NFLRC

National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC)
University of Hawai`i

1999 NFLRC Summer Institute on Self-Directed Learning

Since 1991, the NFLRC at the University of Hawai`i has united foreign language professionals nationwide
LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTERS' UPDATES

language professionals nationwide through its summer institutes, which provide intensive training in effective foreign language pedagogy. The 1999 NFLRC Summer Institute, "Self-Directed Learning: Materials and Strategies," will feature a workshop (June 14-26) and a symposium (June 24-26) on methods, materials, and assessment techniques to promote learner autonomy via technology in the less commonly taught languages. The deadline for submitting online applications to participate in the workshop was Feb. 19. Registration for the three-day symposium began in mid-March. Information can be accessed via the NFLRC Summer Institute Web site: http://www.illinois.edu/nflrc/si99/

New Publications

Foreign Language Teaching and Language Minority Education by K. Davis (Ed.) is #18 in NFLRC's Technical Report Series. The volume examines the potential for building relationships among foreign language, bilingual, and ESL programs with the goal of fostering bilingualism. New in the area of proficiency testing is CATRC (Computer Adaptive Test for Reading Chinese) (Network #11), developed by Tao-Chung (Ted) Yao with assistance from Cynthia Ning. The level of the questions, based on authentic materials, is automatically adapted according to the pattern of right and wrong answers given by the test-taker. CATRC is available for downloading at: http://nts.illinois.edu/ed改革委/ctrc/.

Information about these and other publications as well as center institutes, projects, and activities is available at the Hawai'i NFLRC Web site: http://www.illinois.edu/nflrc/

National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC)

Iowa State University

New Visions

The NFLRC at Iowa State University and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) are sponsoring a series of activities focused on the future of the foreign language profession, entitled "New Visions in Foreign Language Education." These activities include an invitational planning meeting for 40 persons in 1999 followed by a national priorities conference in 2000 and the ACTFL conference in 2000. Each of these events will involve an increasingly broader scope of participants in the dialogue. Both the NFLRC and ACTFL will provide information about the series of conferences through newsletters and at the Delegate Assembly at the ACTFL annual meeting.

NFLRC Summer Institute 1999

The NFLRC will host a summer institute, "New Technologies in the Foreign Language Classroom," Aug. 7-15. This institute is open to K-12 foreign language teachers, methods professors, and district supervisors of foreign languages. Participants will learn to use new technologies to design innovative, student-centered activities, and to develop a multimedia lesson and a basic Web page. Experts in the field of distance learning will present the newest equipment and instructional trends in a high-tech distance learning classroom. Participants will develop a plan of action for collaborative projects that they will carry out during the ensuing school year and for training colleagues, locally and regionally.

For further information and an application, please contact:

National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center

N131 Lagomarcino Hall

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National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC)
The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University (OSU) NFLRC will have a busy spring and summer, putting the finishing touches on several book manuscripts, software items, and preparing for its third annual SPEAC summer institutes.

Among the projects that will wind their way to completion are volumes V and VI of the Pathways to Advanced Skills LCTL pedagogy series. Volume V is edited by Hiroshi Nara and entitled Advances in Japanese Pedagogy. This collection of essays takes a look at the developments of Japanese language pedagogy since the publication of the NFLC's Japanese framework in 1993 and will include a reprint of the original framework. Pathways volume VI, The Pedagogy of African Languages, is co-authored by Antonia Folarin Schlechter and Lioba Moshi and takes a comprehensive view of the issues and methods involved in teaching African languages in American contexts.

The SPEAC (Summer Program, East Asian Concentration) summer language and teacher training institutes produced jointly by the OSU Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures and the OSU NFLRC will be offered again during summer 1999. Consisting of two- to eight-week institutes for Japanese intensive language learning and teacher training and Chinese intensive language learning and teacher training, they will provide significant opportunities for their participants. Course credit and CEUs are available. For more information, visit the Web at: http://deall.ohio-state.edu/speac/

Other NFLRC materials that will be newly available or implemented in the spring and summer are Russian Audio Coaching Materials for Nachalo! (16 CDs; Ervin), Historia y cultura de España, version multimedia on CD (Cantaroni and Johnson), Hausa Audio Materials (CD and cassette), the Chinese Individualized Instruction Internet Scheduling System (Jim) and the Individualized Instruction Record Keeping Database System (Antonsen).

For more information about projects, materials, publications, and activities, visit the Web at http://flrc.ohio-state.edu or call (614) 292-4361.
SCOLT / AAFLT
JOINT CONFERENCE

February 24-26, 2000

The Wynfrey Hotel
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