BALANCING THE BOOKS
STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Because teaching demands a high level of responsibility, as teachers we tend to assume responsibility more easily than we delegate it. We do our utmost to ease the burden of learning for our students. Occasionally, though, we may err too far in that direction. As the saying goes, one learns by doing, so we also need to ensure that students are fully involved in all aspects of the learning process.

Two primary student responsibilities are participation in class and preparation beforehand. Clearly, we cannot do homework or volunteer for students. We can, however, make it a priority to factor in student accountability when planning activities and assignments. The suggestions offered below are geared toward helping students become better prepared and more active in class.

First, I focus on how to improve class interactions by promoting active listening. Second, I discuss ways to increase student accountability in preparing for class. Finally, I offer suggestions for soliciting student self-assessment of preparation and participation.

PROMOTING ACTIVE LISTENING

In general, students are used to listening to teachers, but tend to be less attentive to one another. As communicative, student-centered approaches are increasingly used in language classes, it is essential that students listen as carefully to their classmates as they listen to the teacher. Pair and small group activities facilitate active listening because a student needs to concentrate only on what is said by a limited number of speakers. In interactions with the class as a whole, however, students may fall into a more passive role—focusing primarily on the teacher's speech and "zoning out" contributions by other students. Several simple and easily implemented steps can be taken to promote active listening in whole-class interactions:

- Arrange seating in an optimum fashion for students to hear and see each other. Circular or semi-circular seating is ideal, but not practicable in all classrooms. Experiment with your seating arrangement and involve students in the process; explain why communication is important in your class, solicit their suggestions, and ask them to evaluate how well they can see and hear using a particular seating arrangement.
- Make students responsible for monitoring volume. Even when students listen attentively, they may not hear what others say, particularly when classmates speak softly. Tell students that you expect them to hear everything that is said and provide them early on with polite ways to request restatement in the target language.
- Resist automatically rephrasing or repeating student utterances. To offer encouragement, teachers often acknowledge what students say through rephrasing or repeating. For example, a teacher might respond to the statement "I play soccer" with "So, you're a soccer player. That's a fun sport." Although the response does provide validation of the student's statement, it can discourage other students from listening the first time—students come to depend on the teacher's restatement instead of focusing on what was said originally. A more effective response would be to open up the discussion by asking another student, "How about you?" or "What do you think of that?" By allowing student utterances to stand on their own, teachers encourage students to listen more carefully.
- Show students that you expect them to understand and evaluate what others say. For example, during the reporting back phase in activities, always include specific tasks that require students to listen to what is said. The tasks can range from very simple (e.g., tallying the number of affirmative and negative responses to a question) to more complex (e.g., choosing the most interesting answer and justifying the choice, preparing follow-up questions, or comparing/contrasting other answers with their own). By assigning such listening tasks consistently—and, of course, verifying that students are completing them successfully—teachers reinforce the habit of active listening.
- Insist that students know and use each others' names. Often, students learn everyone's name before we do, but this is not always the case. Knowing and using names increases the sense of community in the classroom; students can call on one another by name (rather than "Hey, you") and are more likely to listen attentively to the response. In classes where students do not know each other, consider adding a name quiz to your syllabus. A name quiz is best.

(Continued on page 6)
EDITOR’S MESSAGE

When asked, “Who are the ‘easiest’ students to teach?” most teachers would probably say motivated students who take responsibility for their learning. Developing these characteristics in our students frequently seems an impossible task. However, there are teaching strategies that we can use to help promote these learner characteristics. The two feature articles in this issue of CLEAR NEWS tackle these difficult issues.

In “Balancing the Books: Strategies for Increasing Student Accountability,” Anita Alkhus describes steps that teachers can take to encourage active listening in the classroom and to increase student preparation before class. Her suggestions can be applied at all levels of FL instruction.

In “Continuation of FL Studies,” Jaime Grant investigates one small piece of the complex motivation puzzle in asking what motivates students to continue their FL studies beyond that which is required of them. She offers possible implications of her findings, among them the selection of classroom materials and activities.

I hope that you find the information in this issue of CLEAR NEWS beneficial. As always, I ask for your feedback and encourage you to submit a contribution to this publication. Please contact me at the CLEAR office for specific submission guidelines.

Finally, I would like to thank those readers who took the time to send me their positive comments on past issues of CLEAR NEWS.

India Plough

Q & A:

Q. I use the target language in my FL classroom as much as possible. Occasionally, students will not respond when I ask them a question. Is it appropriate to use English when this happens?

A. There are a number of strategies that you can use before immediately switching to English. Initially, it’s necessary to determine the cause of the lack of response. Did the student actually hear the question? If not, repeating the question will solve this. Did the student understand the question and not know the answer? Explicitly asking the student if the question was understood would be useful. Finally, if the student did not understand the question, there may be a number of causes, such as vocabulary or syntactic structure. Using different vocabulary items may help. If the structure is the problem, a useful strategy is to break down the syntactic structure into a more manageable form. For example, a short answer question could be turned into a yes/no question, which the student may be able to answer. In this way, the student is still actively participating in the class, and English has not been used. (CLEAR is currently conducting a study on the use of the native language in the FL classroom to determine the effects of that use on comprehension and acquisition. Preliminary findings will be available summer 1999.)
CREATING AN AUDIENCE FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITERS

When beginning a writing assignment, the first consideration is audience.
Foreign language teachers often have to create fictitious audiences for their students or come up with innovative ideas for finding real audiences for their students' writings. The following activity, a variation on a penpal activity, is adapted from a lesson used by Ursula Hays, a German teacher for the South Euclid-Lyndhurst School District in Ohio, who participated in CLEAR'S 1998 Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom Institute.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will be able to write a letter introducing themselves.
- Students will be able to construct statements and questions using the present and past tense in a communicative situation.
- Students will be able to use appropriate letter salutations.
- Students will learn about the geography of a specific region in the target country.

MATERIALS

- A phone book from a town in the country where the foreign language is spoken, preferably from an area with which the teacher is familiar.
- Notepaper, envelopes, and air mail stamps.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TASK

The teacher brings in a phone book from a town where the language being taught is spoken. After talking about the region, the teacher explains that students will be sending letters to people randomly selected from the phone book.

Hays used a phone book from the city in Germany in which she grew up. She has the students specifically state in their letter that their German teacher is from that town. Hays suggests that if there are no contacts in the target country, the teacher should choose a phone book from a small city, because people there may be more curious than large city dwellers about students from other cultures.

At this point, if necessary, the teacher does a brief lesson on salutations and addresses, focusing, for example, on formal and informal addresses. The teacher and the class then brainstorm on the content of the students' letters. The students are required to write that they are doing the letter as a class assignment.

At this point, the teacher should focus on the audience. Despite the fact that little is known about specific addressees, students can speculate about the people from that town including their interests and hobbies and how familiar they might be with the students' region of the United States. Students then write questions to the addressees based on these speculations. The letter should end with a polite request for a reply.

After the students turn in their drafts, the teacher can give individual feedback; alternatively, the students can exchange letters with each other for feedback and further idea generation. At some point, however, the students should get feedback on sentence-level problems so the letters are relatively free of errors. The letters can then be mailed. The entire writing process should take no longer than one week.

EVALUATION

The teacher can grade the assignment at various points in the activity. One grade for content and organization can be given after the first draft and another grade can be given after the student has edited for grammatical errors.

FOLLOW-UP

Sometimes recipients have given their letters to neighbors or friends to respond. Hays' students have been surprised to receive responses from peers and from the mayor. Hays reports that her students receive a 30 percent response rate. Thus, if this activity is done with two classes of 20 students each, approximately 12 letters would be received from native speakers. These letters could be used for further activities. For example, the letters can be typed and used as authentic pieces of writing for reading and cultural lessons. Finally, if this activity is done at the beginning of the year, students then have the opportunity to continue the correspondence throughout the school year.

Ursula Hays is a high school teacher of German and a member of the Trainer Network in Ohio. She has participated in curriculum writing for the State Department of Education in Ohio.

Charlene Polio, associate professor of English at Michigan State University, is the coordinator for CLEAR'S Materials and Methods Projects.

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COLLABORATIONS: MEETING NEW GOALS, NEW REALITIES


The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' 1997 conference reports, Collaborations: Meeting New Goals, New Realities, is a practical and compelling collection of articles. The volume illustrates the positive impact of using the ACTFL standards to inform language learning and the various collaborative processes teachers can use to describe, assess, and improve their classroom work.

The reports begin with a chronicle of the national mathematics standards—a surprisingly relevant discussion. Subsequent chapters include a report from a pilot site for the ACTFL standards and articles on each of the five “Cs.” Each chapter discusses larger issues (e.g., language pedagogy or ACTFL proficiency guidelines) and specific classroom practices. Comprehensive notes and bibliographies follow each article. The text concludes with reflections from K-12 and university perspectives on foreign language educational reform.

In “Professional Collaboration: A Perspective from the Math Standards,” the authors discuss the role that standards have played in mathematics education and offer advice based upon that experience. Notably, they point out that identifying standards is the beginning of a process, one that demands input from diverse voices. Additionally, the article provides thoughtful suggestions for standards-based assessment.

“The Teacher’s Voice: A View from a National Standards Pilot Site” discusses the ACTFL standards from the point of view of K-12 teachers involved in their development. The educators explain how they used the standards as a vehicle for reform and a springboard for rethinking lesson planning and formally reflecting on their teaching.

“Communication Goal: Meaning Making Through a Whole Language Approach,” like all of the standards chapters, discusses the collaboration between a K-12 teacher and a university instructor. The educators discuss how they constructed equivalent whole language and non-whole language lessons to explore the impact of the PACE (Presentation Attention Co-construction Extension) model of instruction on communication in a high school French class. The discussion is compelling and provides thorough background information on whole language and the PACE model. (Classroom transcripts are in French, and only selected examples are translated. The chapter is nonetheless easy to follow.)

In “Addressing the Culture Goal with Authentic Video,” a K-12 teacher and a university instructor explain how they taught a cultural unit on Guatemala centering on video. The educators discuss their attempt to use this approach to better integrate language and culture education, and to give students an expanded sense of culture. They also address how this unit fit into their high school block schedule. Additionally, the authors provide a practical discussion of “action research,” a reflective teacher-driven process.

“Connections: A K-8/University Collaboration to Promote Interdisciplinary Teaching” is the result of a project that created K-8 standards for culture in French and Spanish curricula. These standards, which build upon standards of “core” curricula, are valuable in and of themselves. However, the most valuable aspect of this article may be the outstanding model it presents of a thoughtfully constructed, collaborative process to develop language teaching standards and strategies.

“Linguistic and Cultural Comparisons: Middle School African American Students Learn Arabic” is notable in many respects.

The authors directly address the intent of the ACTFL standards to include all students. To this end, they made content and instructional design choices specifically to support this group of African-American students. The educators viewed the learners as collaborators in their learning and encouraged the students to make observations about their own language learning in journals. The authors also review case study research and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

In “Communities of Learners: From New York to Chile,” the authors explain how they created a thematic unit on Chile. They describe a variety of rich activities that capitalized on local resources and used the Internet to connect with a larger community, a classroom in Chile. (E-mails are in Spanish and only selected examples are translated. The chapter is nonetheless easy to follow.)

“Reflections on the Collaborative Projects: Two Perspectives, Two Professionals” is the transcript of a moderated conversation between a university instructor and a K-12 educator. This dialogue highlights issues presented throughout the chapters. It outlines the potential of our work without glossing over the challenges that we face.

In sum, the conference reports present instructional strategies to implement ACTFL standards and collaborative research models viable for K-12 classrooms. Each chapter values the experience of classroom teachers and university faculty and illustrates the benefit of their collaboration. The diversity of contributors makes this volume useful for professionals steeped in implementing the ACTFL standards and those who have just begun this process; it provides a stepping stone for our diverse educational journeys.

Joanna Porvin is a Spanish teacher and computer consultant for Pierce Middle School, Grosse Pointe Park, Mich. She is a private consultant and maintains a website of language learning resources at: http://members.aol.com/jPorvin/casa.htm
PARLIAMO INSIEME:

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN ITALIAN


Parliamo Insieme is a collection of communicative tasks designed for beginner and intermediate levels of Italian as a foreign language. It can be used either as a supplement to a standard Italian textbook in a high school or college classroom or as the main text in a conversation course.

The 21 chapters each highlight a function (for example, using the telephone, giving compliments or suggestions, or talking about the past) and begin with a review of related grammatical structures and vocabulary. The activities are often real-world tasks that require students to exchange or seek information in order to accomplish a goal. The tasks require pair or group work and can be altered in order to better fit the level and interests of one’s students.

The tasks include information or opinion exchange and information gap activities, such as finding out where objects go in a kitchen after a party, filling out “lost object forms” in the Florentine train station (while role playing as tourists and “Office of Lost Objects” officials), accepting and refusing invitations while consulting one’s already full day planner, and role playing as a rich tourist with car trouble and a mechanic under strict orders to work on the boss’ cousin’s car unless a more lucrative offer comes along. The tasks are well-planned, culturally relevant, and often entertaining for both instructors and students.

The language structures and vocabulary that begin each chapter are intended to review what students have already learned, and the tasks themselves often include structures of varying difficulty so that instructors may choose what best fits their students’ level. This book does not teach the various grammatical structures presented, but rather gives students the opportunity to use what they’ve already learned meaningfully and in a well-structured activity. For example, the chapter entitled “Conversazioni al telefono” (Telephone conversations) reviews the future form as well as the system Italians use to spell a name or foreign word (“A” as in Ancona, “B” as in Bologna or Bar, etc.). The chapter’s tasks consist of 10 phone situations that the students must role play, including taking and leaving messages that require using future forms and spelling one’s name. This activity is useful not only for meaningful review of structures and vocabulary, but it also gives students practice with the real-world task of taking and leaving phone messages. As many know from experience, this is not an easy task for a beginning language learner.

In short, Parliamo Insieme not only gets students talking, but it also provides many opportunities for meaningful negotiation between learners. The chapters are structured for both beginning and intermediate-level students, while those new to Italian can find the necessary linguistic “scaffolding” for each activity, the more experienced students can skip over the “Strutture” and “Preparazione” sections and proceed to the task itself. While not intended to teach the structures and vocabulary presented, Parliamo Insieme promotes the negotiation of meaning that may, in turn, facilitate the process of second language acquisition. I only wish that I had known about this book when I taught Italian as a foreign language.

Sarah Riegel Lymel is completing her M.A. degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at Michigan State University. She holds an M.A. in Italian from Ohio State University and has taught Italian at colleges in Ohio and Michigan for five years.

RESOURCES

TEST DEVELOPMENT WORKBOOK AND VIDEO

This video and companion workbook are designed to assist language educators who are developing their own tests. Explanations of different possible test items are accompanied by a variety of examples. The video introduces basic concepts involved in language test development, while the workbook explains these concepts in more detail. This valuable resource supplies more than a thousand models for test items. For more information, contact the CLEAR office.
sensed early in the semester, but after students have had ample opportunity to
learn names, by the end of the second
week, for example. Tell students why you
think it is important that they know and
use each others' names. Encourage them
to spend a few minutes before class learning
names or offer in-class opportunities for
learning names such as milling activities
on the first class days. The name quiz
takes only a few minutes, and it will end
up saving class time as students will hesi-
tate less in addressing each other.
Although knowing names is rewarding in
itself, you may wish to offer modest
prizes (e.g., postcards or stickers in the
target language) to the students who are
able to list all of the names quickly and
accurately. Here's how to give the quiz:

1. Have students number the lines on a
   sheet of paper, one line for each stu-
   dent in class (including themselves).
2. Assign each student a number.
3. Set a time limit for students to write
down the names in order.
4. Have students exchange paper,
correct them, and tally the results. (To
allow students to correct the quiz,
you can either show the names in
order on a transparency or have stu-
ents call their names out.)

**IMPROVING STUDENT
PREPARATION**

Undoubtedly, the more students pre-
pare before class, the more effectively they
can participate in class. Often, however,
students do not see a clear connection
between the two. If students view assign-
ments as "busy work" rather than as tools
to help them achieve, it is more likely that
they will be tempted to do the strict mini-
num. By streamlining and justifying
assignments, teachers can increase student
motivation and accountability for class
preparation. Here are a few practical
guidelines for moving toward this goal:

- Assign homework well ahead of time.
  Planning is an essential skill in
  becoming an independent learner –
  the more complete information we
  offer students, the better they can take
  charge of organizing their time out of
class. The initial time investment may
  be heavy for the teacher, but it pays
  off, saving class time and energy
  throughout the rest of the term.

- Insist that students keep track of
  when all assignments are due once
  they have received due dates. As a
  courtesy, you may also wish to post
  your homework assignment sheet on
  your door or, if possible, on the
  Internet.

- Consider creating a point sheet to
  help students keep track of assign-
  ments they have completed and
  points they have received. A point
  sheet is a form divided into the dif-
  ferent components of the grading cri-
  teria: homework, exams, writing assign-
  ments, attendance, etc. Students circle
  the dates that they attend class, mark
down any tardiness or absence, and
  fill in the grades they receive during
  the semester. A point sheet can help
  students to understand assessment
  more clearly and to visualize how
  they can improve their performance.
  (Note: Students should be informed
  that the point sheet is an unofficial
  record for their benefit and that offi-
cial grades are assigned by the
  instructor based on official records
  only)

- Tell students that they are responsible
  for looking ahead at assignments and
  understanding what to do and how
to do it. By receiving assignments
  early, students not only have more
time to plan when they will prepare,
  but they also have more time to read
  directions and understand what is
  expected of them. If students have
  questions about assignments, they
  need to ask you before an assignment
  is due. Teachers can thus limit excuses
  and raise standards for homework
  in a fair manner.

- Inform students why they are doing
  an assignment. Students will be moti-
  vated to work more effectively if they
  understand the rationale behind a
  particular assignment; for example, if
  they are reviewing vocabulary for use
  in the next class day, give them the
  context in which they will be using it.

- Incorporate, whenever possible, pre-
  vious homework assignments into

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### SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PREPARATION/PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: ___________________________ (optional)</th>
<th>____________ (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: ________________________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1A** I prepared _________ (time spent) for
today's class by (check all that apply):
- ___ reading the assigned pages about
  (give topic): ____________________________
- ___ reviewing (give topic): ____________________________
- ___ doing the homework assignment(s)
- ___ practicing (check all that apply):
  ___________ reading aloud
  ___________ doing computer exercises
  ___________ listening to tapes
  ___________ using flash cards
  ___________ speaking with a friend/classmate
  ___________ attending a cultural activity
  (specify: ____________________________)
  _____ other (specify: ____________________________)  |

**1B** I did not prepare sufficiently for today's
class because

**2A** I participated in class today by (check all
that apply):
- ___ listening attentively to the other students in
class
- ___ listening attentively to the instructor
- ___ working in a focused manner in pair and
group activities

**2B** I spoke in the targeted language
during pair and group activities:
- ___ exclusively
- ___ almost all the time
- ___ without consistency

during whole class activities:
- ___ exclusively
- ___ almost all the time
- ___ without consistency

**2C** I am very satisfied / satisfied /somewhat satisfied / not satisfied with my level of
participation in class today because:

**3** Any comments/suggestions on today's class?

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MOTIVATION
CONTINUATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES

Many university students are required to take, at the most, two years (200 level) of a second language. Yet, many 300- and 400-level courses are often in high demand. What motivates students to continue their foreign language education beyond that which the university requires?

Gardner and Lambert (1959) identified two types of motivation: (1) integrative and (2) instrumental. Integrative motivation is defined as motivation that originates from the desire to learn about, understand, and become a part of the culture of the language being studied. Instrumentally motivated students, on the other hand, study second languages in order to get a good job or to meet university or departmental requirements.

Research on motivation in second language acquisition has mainly concentrated on the effects of motivation on learners’ achievement, proficiency, rate of learning, and study time; a positive correlation exists between level of integrative motivation and ultimate attainment of a second language. The study reported here shifts the focus of investigation to determine the relationship between motivation and continued foreign language study. Why do university students want to continue their foreign language education beyond university (or departmental) requirements?

In an attempt to answer this question, I administered a questionnaire (adapted from Wen, 1997) to 85 students enrolled in 300- and 400-level Spanish classes at Michigan State University. The portion of the questionnaire reported here was designed to assess the students’ type of motivation and consisted of eight statements that students rated using a 10-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 10=strongly agree). Three of the statements were classified as representing instrumental motivation and five statements were classified as representing integrative motivation.

A total of 51 students were Spanish majors/minors and the remaining 34 students were distributed among 34 different majors such as international relations, psychology, business, and journalism. Thirty-one percent of the students were male and 69 percent were female. Seven percent of the population was freshman, 27 percent sophomore, 25 percent junior, and 41 percent senior. Fifty-three percent of the students had traveled to a Spanish-speaking country. Eleven percent had foreign language experience with languages other than Spanish.

Figure 1 shows the overall average response when items are grouped by motivation type. The mean of the instrumental items was 5.80, and the mean of the integrative items was 7.33. There was no significant difference between these two motivation types.

In order to determine whether students’ academic major influenced type of motivation, the responses of Spanish majors/minors and non-Spanish majors/minors were separated. Figures 2a and 2b show the average item ratings of these two groups. Looking first at Figure 2a, Spanish majors/minors showed a higher average rating for integrative items than for instrumental items (7.49 vs. 6.18). Figure 2b illustrates that non-Spanish majors also showed a higher average rating for the integrative items than for the instrumental items (7.08 vs. 5.20). While the difference between the motivation types for Spanish majors/minors was not significant, the difference between the motivation types for non-Spanish majors/minors was significant (t=2.04, p<.05).

Anita Althaus, a Ph.D. candidate at Michigan State University, currently teaches French at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
In comparing the average response for the integrative items of Spanish majors/minors (7.49) to those of non-Spanish majors/minors (7.08), there is no statistical difference. Figure 2a shows that Spanish majors/minors’ response was slightly higher than that of non-Spanish majors/minors. Similarly, Figure 2b, which compares the average response for instrumental items of Spanish majors/minors (6.18) to those of non-Spanish majors/minors (5.20), shows that Spanish majors/minors have a higher instrumental average than non-Spanish majors/minors. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Results of this study indicate that the entire population had a high level of integrative motivation. Both groups’ level of integrative motivation was higher than their level of instrumental motivation. Students consistently agreed that they were studying Spanish because they planned to live in a Spanish-speaking community/country, wanted to be able to communicate with Spanish speaking people, and wanted to understand the world better.

When majors/minors and non-majors were separated, majors/minors showed higher levels of both types of motivation than non-majors. Because there was no statistical difference between the Spanish majors/minors average integrative item ratings and the non-Spanish major/minor average integrative item ratings, integrative motivation and major appear not to be related.

On the other hand, there was a statistical difference between the two groups’ instrumental motivation; Spanish majors/minors have a higher level of instrumental motivation than non-Spanish majors/minors.

Based on the results of this study, then, it appears that one factor that may determine whether students continue their foreign language education is their integrative motivation. However, a word of caution is in order. Recall that the students who completed these surveys were enrolled in 300- and 400-level Spanish courses. It is necessary to conduct the same study with students enrolled in 200-level Spanish courses. A comparison between 200-level and 300-level student profiles would then be performed. If one finds that 200-level students do not “score” high on a measure of integrative motivation, this would substantiate the speculation that integrative motivation indeed plays a role in determining whether students continue their studies of a foreign language.

If this turns out to be the case, it would be advantageous to use course material that responds to this motivation such as content or theme-based material that focuses on the culture, people, and country of the language being studied. Additionally, foreign language programs could attempt to create more opportunities for their students to interact with native speakers of the language they are studying. This type of program would give learners an oppor-

The following sources were used for this project:


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

CARLA offers many services and products to the language teaching community including:

1999 Summer Institutes for Language Professionals

- Meeting the Challenges of Immersion Education - June 14-18
- Second Language Teaching and Technology - June 15-19
- Integrating Culture into the Second Language Classroom - June 21-25
- A Practical Course in Strategies-Based Instruction - July 12-16
- Developing Proficiency-Oriented Assessments - July 19-23

Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments

The Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments certify Intermediate-Low level proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing on an ACTFL-based scale for secondary and postsecondary students in French, German, and Spanish. The reading and writing assessments are adapted for computer delivery and will feature on-line scoring to facilitate evaluation. For details, e-mail CARLA at: mlpa@tc.umn.edu.

Working Paper Series

The CARLA working paper series is designed to disseminate information and curricular materials based on CARLA's research and action initiatives. The lineup of titles includes the Minnesota Articulation Projects' "Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction and Assessment: A Curriculum Handbook for Teachers" and "Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teacher-Training Manual."

Language Teacher Education Conference

CARLA is pleased to announce an international conference focused on language teacher education to be held May 20-23, 1999, at the University of Minnesota. For details contact the CARLA office.

Website for Language Teachers

This extensive web-based resource center includes information on all of the research-based initiatives at CARLA and features a database of where Less Commonly Taught Languages are instructed at postsecondary institutions around the country. Visit the website at http://carla.acad.umn.edu

CARLA moved on Aug. 14, 1998. Please take note of the new address and contact numbers:

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THE WEB—ARE YOU CONNECTED?

"LEARN SPANISH: A FREE TUTORIAL"
HTTP://WWW.STUDYSSPANISH.COM

This site has cultural notes in English and Spanish with comprehension questions and links to other useful sites, including language schools. Perhaps the most useful and exciting part of this site is the interactive tutorials on various language points in Spanish. Students can review subject pronouns in Spanish, for example, and then apply the information to an interactive exercise, which gives feedback to the users. There is even an option to take a "test" and have the students' answers e-mailed to their teacher. Spanish teachers have reported using this as extra credit opportunities for students and as a review before exams.

FREE WEBSITE SPACE
HTTP://WWW.GEOCITIES.COM  HTTP://WWW.XOOM.COM  HTTP://WWW.TRIPOD.COM

All of these three sites offer several megabytes of free disk space on their web servers. Users can post their own websites on these companies' sites for free. This is a useful resource for teachers who want to post their own language learning materials on the web.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE WEB INDICES
HTTP://WWW.YAHOO.COM

The famous Yahoo web index also provides indices in several foreign languages: Spanish, German, French, Japanese, and Chinese. The links in the indices are to sites in the language: Spanish Yahoo (HTTP://ESPaNISH.yahoo.com), for example, links to websites in Spanish. This can be a good resource for finding authentic language material. The foreign language Yahoons are linked from the bottom of Yahoo's main page.
NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTERS (NFLRC) UPDATES

- The Development of a Lexical Tone Phonology in American Adult Learners of Mandarin Chinese (Technical Report #16)

Due out in early 1999 is Foreign Language Teaching & Language Minority Education (Technical Report #19).

To the collection of materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages UH NFLRC has added: Authentic Indonesian Video (text plus videotape), Authentic Tagalog Video (text plus videotape), and Intermediate Reader in Technical and Scientific Japanese.

The latest in the series of on-line publications (downloadables and websites) is Teaching Russian Reading in a Distance Classroom: A Report. Information about these and other publications as well as center institutes, projects, and activities is available at the Hawai'i NFLRC website: www.lll.hawaii.edu/nflrc/

National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC)
Georgetown University, The George Washington University, Center for Applied Linguistics

The NCLRC announces its summer institutes for 1999. The NCLRC will offer foreign language educators three institutes that emphasize practical classroom applications.

- Teaching Learning Strategies in the Foreign Language Classroom – tentatively scheduled for the week of June 21-25

Presenters lead participants in hands-on activities to identify student strategies, practice modeling strategies, and design strategies lessons. Participants learn to apply the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach to the foreign language classroom and integrate language and culture through learning strategies while working toward the National Standards.

- Portfolio Assessment in the Foreign Language Classroom – tentatively scheduled for the week of June 21-25

Presenters guide participants through the process of designing a portfolio assessment by discussing validity, reliability, setting criteria, and time management. Participants have the opportunity to design and evaluate portfolios for their classrooms within the framework of the National Standards. Participants receive the NCLRC's manual, "Portfolio Assessment in the Foreign Language Classroom."

- Teaching with Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom – tentatively scheduled for the week of June 21-25

Presenters assist foreign language educators in using innovative, technology-assisted instructional materials. This institute is designed to assist teachers in becoming knowledgeable and comfortable with technology applications and provides extensive hands-on activities for participants.

To receive more information about the institutes, contact the NCLRC, 2600 Virginia Ave., NW Suite 105, Washington, DC 20037-1905. Telephone: (202)739-0607 Fax: 202-739-0609 E-mail: nclrc@mecom.com Website: www.cal.org/nclrc

Accepting subscriptions to The Language Resource

The NCLRC invites foreign language educators to subscribe to the bimonthly electronic newsletter, The Language Resource. The newsletter provides practical teaching strategies and research tips and announces professional development opportunities for foreign language educators. To subscribe, send an e-mail to the NCLRC at nclrc@mecom.com

Business Language Materials Development

As spring semester was winding down at MSU, CLEAR welcomed high school students of Spanish and French to campus. Through collaborations with MSU's Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) and College of Business, Victoria Lewis, a French teacher at Suttons Bay High School (Michigan), and Melissa Strong, a Spanish teacher at Vermontville High School (Michigan), and their students engaged in capstone activities for their business language project. Lewis' students presented their small business plans (in French) in MSU's new Eli Broad College of Business Complex to an audience that included representatives from the College of Business in addition to native speakers of French. After mounting their Spanish web page "Marketing Michigan to Businesses" (http://clear.msu.edu/michigan/default.html), Strong's students discussed promoting investment in Michigan with a representative from the State of Michigan's Office of Business Development. CLEAR is supporting Lewis and Strong to attend ACTFL 98 in Chicago in order to present their business language projects.

EDS Sponsors Videoconference

CLEAR/S distance learning project (see CLEAR NEWS, Fall 1997) culminated in a videoconference, "Cultural Comparisons/Culturamas Comparadas," with American and Mexican students. In May, "classmates" from Negaunee High School (in Michigan's Upper Peninsula) and from Rockford High School (in Michigan's Lower Peninsula) traveled to MSU to participate in a videoconference with students from Centro de Desarrollo Arboleda, A.C. in Zapopan, Mexico. The sites for the videoconference were the EDS office in Lansing and the GM plant in Silao, Mexico. Pam Ballard of EDS Lansing, coordinator of the videoconference, welcomed American and Mexican students. Discussions on topics including the role of the family, modern technology, leisure activities, school, and careers were conducted in both Spanish and English.

Center for Language Education and Research at Michigan State University

CLEAR was involved in many outreach activities during spring and summer 1998.
giving all students practice communicating in the target language. The videoconference provided the students with the wonderful opportunity to interact "face-to-face" after having learned about each other through textbooks and the Internet.

1998 Summer Institutes Well-Received

Foreign language professionals gathered at Michigan State University to participate in CLEAR's summer 1998 Institutes. Four-, five-, and 10-day institutes were offered that focused on teaching methods, materials development, and incorporating technology into the FL classroom. The following languages were represented: Arabic, Aymara, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Turkish, Wolof, and Yoruba. Participants were partially or completely supported financially for their attendance.

Participants in the Introductory and Advanced CALL Development Institutes, co-sponsored by the Consortium for Inter-institutional Collaboration of African and Latin American Studies, authored CALL materials using programs such as Super MacLang and Director. A summary of one of the CALL Institutes - written by Ranee Cervantes, a Tagalog teacher from Hawai'i - can be found at CLEAR's website (follow the institutes link).

Educators attending the Introductory and Advanced Internet in FL Instruction Institutes located and applied existing Internet materials in addition to creating their own resources for classroom use. Many participants now have their language learning websites linked from this URL: http://clear.msu.edu/institutes/projects.html.

High school and university FL teachers from 12 states, Hong Kong, and Slovenia shared expertise on the writing process at the Writing in the FL Classroom Institute during the five hottest days of the summer in East Lansing. Teachers left the institute with innovative ideas for designing assignments, prewriting activities, and project work.

After discussing materials development and observing a content-based instruction (CBI) class at MSU's English Language Center, participants of the CBI/Business Language Materials Development Institute (co-sponsored by MSU's CIBER), began working on their projects. Units developed for French, Spanish, and German included ecotourism, labor and management, business ethics, cultural prejudices, water conservation and management, and Mexican cooking.

Please see the advertisement below for the dates of CLEAR's 1999 summer institutes. For detailed information about the 1999 institutes, visit CLEAR at ACTFL 98 in Chicago (booth 723) or contact the CLEAR office.

### 1999 Joint Conference SCOLT and FLAVA

March 11–13, 1999
The Cavalier Hotel
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Lynne McClendon, SCOLT
Executive Director
165 Lazy Laurel Chase
Roanoke, GA 30076
http://www.valdosta.edu/scolt/
lynnmcc@ mindspring.com
Office: 404-763-6796
Fax: 404-668-4958

Dr. Lynn McGovern Waite
FLAVA President
Department of Foreign Languages
Bridgewater College
Bridgewater, VA 22812
lgmce@bridgewater.edu
Office: 540-828-5373
Fax: 540-828-5479

### Summer Institutes 1999

**May**

14-16 Professional Development for African Language Tutors

**June**

16-20 Writing in the FL Classroom
21-30 CALL Materials Development - Beginning Techniques

**July**

12-21 The Internet in FL Instruction - Beginning Techniques

**August**

2-6 CALL Materials Development - Advanced Techniques
9-13 The Internet in FL Instruction - Advanced Techniques

For more information, please contact

CLEAR
Michigan State University
4212 Wells Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1027
Phone: 517-362-2286
Fax: 517-362-0473
E-mail: clear@pilot.msu.edu
Web: http://clear.msu.edu