

VOLUME 17  
ISSUE 2  
FALL 2013

## FEATURED THEME: TEACHER TRAINING VIDEOS

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MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## CLEAR's VAULTT: Video Assistance for Understanding Language Teaching Techniques

by Anne Baker, Yeon Heo, and Danielle Steider

Projects undertaken by Michigan State University's Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) generally span a four-year cycle. The website being introduced in this article, Video Assistance for Understanding Language Teaching Techniques (VAULTT), is one of CLEAR's professional development projects for the 2010-2014 grant funding cycle. VAULTT was based on a pilot program begun in 2009 with support from CLEAR and MSU's Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages, and the Center for Language Teaching Advancement.

### Background

The impetus for the VAULTT project was two of the authors' experiences mentoring novice language teachers while serving as coordinators of MSU's Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) program, and the need to be able to quickly illustrate a teaching technique when meeting with inexperienced teachers to discuss teaching observations or to suggest ideas and strategies. VAULTT was created to be an online reference of language teaching techniques (and pitfalls!) using short video examples with supporting materials written at a level that novice and untrained language teachers would understand. The initial videos were produced using English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. English was chosen for a number of reasons: it was universally understood in our context; it utilized the expertise of the project's lead faculty members (who are trained ESL instructors); and it allowed videos to be used in practicum classes with TESOL teachers-in-training, thus providing us with valuable feedback. As the project progressed, we added Turkish, Arabic, and Korean video clips. All were filmed with adult learners of the language in a university context.

One challenge related to producing students who speak a LCTL is the lack of trained language professionals. LCTL programs at all levels often depend on native-speaker teachers who may not have sufficient pedagogical training. VAULTT aims to provide teacher training materials that are tailored to this audience yet still broad enough to benefit a wide audience of teachers, from K-16 levels, and from academic courses to community programs or small group instructional settings.

(Continued on page 3)

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,


Autumn greetings from Michigan State University! I hope your school year is off to a good start, with more treats than tricks. CLEAR is now in the fourth year of our four-year funding cycle, and we are gearing up for a new grant competition in the spring. We certainly hope to be granted another cycle in which to continue our work in the field of language education.

This issue of *CLEAR News* features an article by three longtime CLEAR affiliates. Co-authors Anne Baker, Yeon Heo, and Danielle Steider describe a major CLEAR project in this piece. They have been working for four years on a teacher training resource called Video Assistance for Understanding Language Teaching Techniques (VAULTT). Initially conceived as a resource for novice teachers of less commonly taught languages, VAULTT can also serve as a tool for teacher trainers or newer teachers of any language.

In addition to introducing VAULTT in this issue, we are pleased to announce the redesign of our web store. Please visit <http://store.clear.msu.edu/> to see all of the materials and products available through CLEAR – most of which are free!

It was a great summer for our professional development workshops, with participants from all over the country joining one another on our campus to attend the workshops on teaching writing, teaching vocabulary, using technology in the language classroom, and creating appropriate assessments. Our summer 2014 lineup will be online soon. You'll see some new topics as well as some "encore performances."

We continue to visit regional and national conferences to give sessions and run exhibits about CLEAR's free and low-cost products for world language teachers. We hope to meet some of you at ACTFL in Orlando. Come visit us at Booth #1124 in the LRC Pavilion to say hello and learn more about CLEAR and our products in person. You can also always visit our website for the latest information about CLEAR and our projects: <http://clear.msu.edu>. If you haven't already, you can "like" us on Facebook as well!



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This publication was produced with support from a Department of Education grant (CFDA 84.229A and P229A100002). The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and one should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

### SUGGESTIONS WANTED!

We strive to publish *CLEAR News* articles that represent current topics in foreign language teaching, and we want to hear from you! If you have an idea for an article or would like to see a particular subject addressed, please let us know at [clear@msu.edu](mailto:clear@msu.edu). We will consider your idea for future issues of the newsletter.

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The US Department of Education awards grants through Title VI funding to a small number of institutions for the purpose of establishing, strengthening, and operating language resource and training centers to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages. There are currently fifteen Language Resource Centers nationwide: the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at the Pennsylvania State University; the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota; the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon; the Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University; the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona; the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University; the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language

Learning (COERLL) at the University of Texas at Austin; the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC) at San Diego State University; the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at Indiana University; the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC), a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the George Washington University; the National East Asian Languages Resource Center (NEALRC) at the Ohio State University; the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa; the National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), at the University of California-Los Angeles; the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMEALRC) at Brigham Young University; and the Slavic and Eurasian Language Resource Center (SEELRC) at Duke University.

Video provides immediate demonstration of language teaching techniques through showing instead of telling. Producing these materials in varied languages makes them more relevant and accessible for language teachers, while also demonstrating that good language teaching behaviors remain constant across teaching all languages, and that educators can learn from teachers of other languages. Instructors without training in second language acquisition sometimes assume that each language needs to be taught in a specific way; we strive to debunk that myth by showing that the majority of language teaching techniques are not language-specific. Emphasizing this point in a LCTL program also encourages LCTL teachers to share ideas and learn from one another, thereby reducing the isolation inherent in being the only teacher of one's language at an institution.

### LESSONS LEARNED: CREATING PEDAGOGICAL VIDEOS

#### Some of the valuable lessons we learned through this project:

- High quality filming requires a professional's touch. Technical knowledge and esthetic elements are required for quality films.
- Editing is very time consuming and requires familiarity with programs such as iMovie (which we used), Windows Movie Maker, or Final Cut Studio.
- Sharing iMovie project files between computers is problematic. Two people cannot work on the same project simultaneously on different computers, which slows down the collaborative editing process.
- You may want to investigate collaborative video-editing software such as WeVideo (<https://www.wevideo.com/>), which allows for online video editing. While you will not have as many editing options, the trade-off is that you can collaborate with ease and it is very easy to learn.

Most other currently available materials demonstrating language-teaching techniques using video are lengthy, frequently part of semester-long courses, and produced in English. They often involve longer video segments, and are not meant for quickly demonstrating a specific language teaching strategy. Quite often they focus more on “telling” than on “showing” the techniques. Other quality resources are available, but only as part of institution-specific credit-bearing courses. Such materials are not always appropriate in contexts where novice teachers need to be guided and mentored without either the luxury of sending them to formal language-teaching pedagogy classes or the expectation that they will complete extensive professional development activities independently. Our collection of short videos supports less formal professional development activities—such as one-on-one discussions between a novice teacher and a mentor or a follow-up meeting to a class observation—by providing quick references.

Throughout the development of this website, we sought regular feedback from teacher trainers, teacher education students, and novice LCTL teachers. We incorporated this feedback by adding various visual effects to enhance the effectiveness of annotations, designing various types of videos (such as high-speed videos for highlighting class development), expanding the PDFs, and adding space for feedback on each page of the website.

#### From Dialogue to Role-play (K 8:00)

In this video clip, the teacher extends a regular dialogue into a communicative role play activity focused on where to find various amenities in a multi-floor building. The class is Korean 102. For the beginners, the teacher provides pictorial information, well-planned linguistic input, contextual information, and specific roles for the following meaningful role play. How she facilitates learners' output by prompting them with structured input might be noteworthy.

PDF: Role-play





## Organization and navigation

The VAULTT website has six main categories, each with a number of separate pages:

- Vocabulary & Grammar (8 pages/video clips)
- Corrective Feedback (8 pages/video clips)
- Four Skills (7 pages/video clips)
- Facilitating Learning (8 pages/video clips)
- Class Management (3 pages/video clips)
- For Teacher Trainers (10 pages/video clips)

VAULTT pages present videos of three types: ① videos of typical language classes; ② sped-up videos to focus on class development; and ③ good vs. bad examples that repeat the same lesson content presented differently to highlight positive and negative teacher behaviors. Some of the videos are semi-scripted and some are unscripted (e.g., natural classroom speech). Videos begin with a critical question or questions to direct viewers' attention to the main point(s). They are annotated to highlight behaviors and strategies and/or to provide translations when necessary, and finally close with a suggested answer to the opening question(s). The "For Teacher Trainers" pages repeat the same videos, but without annotations, so teachers-in-training can watch and formulate their own ideas on what positive (or negative) language teaching techniques are depicted in the clip.

Each page on the website consists of ① an embedded video clip that contains issues to consider while watching the video, and ② an accompanying PDF file with research-related information. The PDF is written in straightforward language for novice teachers, and includes an expansion of the concepts covered in the videos.

The site contains video clips in four languages: English, the default language; Arabic (designated in clip titles with an A), Korean (K), and Turkish (T). A clip titled *Pre-Speaking (K 7:00)* will show a seven-minute video clip about pre-speaking activities in a Korean class. Similarly, one called *Vocabulary Review (A 4:00)* shows a four-minute clip on vocabulary from an Arabic class. If the page title does not specify a language, the video is in English.

## Ways to use VAULTT

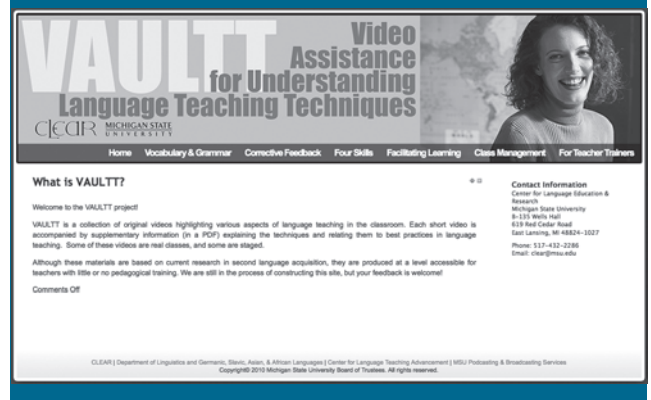
According to feedback from undergraduate teacher education students, TESOL faculty, and novice LCTL teachers, this project is on the right track. Most feedback received during piloting confirmed that there was a preference for more natural, less scripted videos. Many teacher education students also wanted more classroom management videos since they want to work in high schools and felt the need for strong skills in classroom management. Even though high school teachers were not the target audience for this project, the positive feedback from teacher education students indicated that VAULTT's content is flexible enough to also be used in K-12 settings.

In addition to using the video clips and PDFs in one-on-one mentoring sessions with novice teachers, many other uses are possible. The more you know about teaching, the more you can recycle the teaching videos.

- Novice or student teachers can explore the website and evaluate their teaching knowledge and skills first by previewing the titles of the video clips and listing their knowledge as well as their beliefs about the topic. Then they can watch the video clips and read the accompanying PDFs. Finally, they can compare what they knew before and what they learned through these video clips.
- Novice teachers or trainees can watch the raw unenhanced videos in the "For Teacher Trainers" section first to orient themselves using the topics presented by their teacher trainer or supervisor. Trainees can compare their interpretations of the teaching videos with the annotated ones on the website for better understanding of the teaching skills.

### VAULTT website

<http://clear.msu.edu/vaultt/>



- Teachers can film their own classes and analyze their own teaching behaviors in the context of what they have learned. The process below encourages novice teachers to be proactive and analytical about learning through video footage of their own and their peers' teaching.
  - The teachers or trainer choose a couple of specific topics they want to focus on or that need to be highlighted for improvement.
  - With a little technology training (see "Lessons Learned" sidebar, p. 3), the teachers add annotations to their own videos first, and then post them to a shared environment such as a WordPress blog.
  - Teachers watch their colleagues' annotated videos and share their own pedagogical or research-oriented ideas as well in the comments section.
  - Teachers watch their colleagues' unannotated videos and add their own annotations from various pedagogical and research-oriented perspectives. The same teaching video can be annotated many times for different topics such as vocabulary, grammar, the four skills, specific activities, and classroom management.
  - Teacher trainers add in-depth, research-based reading material for each video clip so that their supervisees can have more insightful and theory-based ideas.

### Future directions

Future directions for VAULTT include ① to integrate culture into lesson objectives; ② to provide sample video clips of theme-based language teaching; ③ to add more un-staged clips or abbreviations of full lessons to grasp the entire picture of the teaching process; ④ to provide teaching clips in more languages; ⑤ to provide accompanying lesson plans; and ⑥ to provide a hyperlinked index of various techniques.

We hope that VAULTT will prove a valuable resource for teacher trainers, novice teachers, and experienced educators who simply want a refresher. We invite you to visit the website and share your feedback, either in the comments section or by emailing CLEAR at [clear@msu.edu](mailto:clear@msu.edu).

*Anne Baker is the Associate Director of MSU's Center for Language Teaching Advancement, and the former coordinator for the Less Commonly Taught Languages program at MSU. Yeon Heo is a graduate student in MSU's Second Language Studies doctoral program, and has served as the graduate assistant for the VAULTT project for several years. Danielle Steider is the current coordinator for the Less Commonly Taught Languages program at MSU, supervising experienced and novice teachers in up to twelve languages.*

### MORE VIDEO RESOURCES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

#### **Annenburg:**

<http://www.learner.org/resources/series185.html>

#### **British Council/BBC:**

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-speaking>

#### **University of Wisconsin-Madison:**

<http://www.languageinstitute.wisc.edu/methods/>

#### **University of Texas at Austin:**

<http://coerll.utexas.edu/methods/>

## Summer Workshops Well-Attended

CLEAR hosted workshops this summer for the seventeenth consecutive year, drawing participants from all over the United States. Language educators from many backgrounds and levels gathered in East Lansing to gain hands-on experience in a variety of topics.

The first workshop, “Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom,” led by veteran CLEAR presenter Charlene Polio, was a great success. Participants appreciated the many practical examples, with one reporting, “The presenter did an excellent job of selecting appropriate materials for a varied audience. I liked the focus on language for writing and differences between speech and writing, and also the ideas for [giving] feedback.” Another participant planned to share the ideas: “I have to give several presentations over the next four months, and I expect that many ideas from this workshop will be incorporated in them!”

Guest presenter Susanne Rott, from the University of Illinois at Chicago, led the second workshop, on the learning and teaching of vocabulary. The best things about this workshop,

according to one teacher, were the “interactions between other instructors, helpful websites, recent research, [and the] focus on input activities then on output activities.” Another participant similarly enjoyed the “practical applications of theory, especially the sharing of input and output activities. I also really learned a lot from the introduction to online resources.”

Traditionally the largest workshop, this year’s introduction to Rich Internet Applications was no exception. Workshop leader Angelika Kraemer, according to one enthusiastic participant, “is awesome! She has a comprehensive knowledge that she can explain in a basic way for beginners like me! She never made me feel like a ‘kindergartener’ even though I am one!” Another teacher says, “I will apply everything [from this workshop] one way or another. I’m going to devote considerable time further explaining and creating materials from the RIA stable. I can’t wait for my students to start using and benefiting from these!” Others appreciated the hands-on time in our brand new lab: “[The best thing was] being able to apply RIAs immediately after learning

“CLEAR and this workshop blew me away – hands down the best summer program I’ve attended.”

(RIA workshop participant, 2013)





about each. That practice time was critical to my learning and using the RIAs.”

The fourth workshop, on assessing speaking in the language classroom, was led by Paula Winke, a CLEAR project leader. Teachers in this workshop appreciated her ability to present the basics of assessment in an accessible way, for example, “[The best thing was] finally learning how to use Excel—it was so hard to admit I couldn’t use it!” while another attendee says the best part was “getting the explanation of statistics as they relate to testing.” Participants planned to apply their new knowledge right away: “I will use the rubric for my classes this semester.” “We have yearly evaluations that are tied to student growth. I have a better idea of how to measure that growth.”

We are thrilled to be able to contribute to the growth of both language teachers and their students through these workshops. Workshops for summer 2014 are already posted on our website. Visit <http://clear.msu.edu> and click on “Professional Development.”



## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ***New RIA documentation***

There are new forms of documentation available for CLEAR’s Rich Internet Applications. We have created “quick start” guides for each application for both teachers and students, and are building a YouTube video library (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CLEARatMSU>) of screencasts demonstrating most applications. There is also a new FAQ area giving the answers to our most common troubleshooting questions. Visit <http://ria.clear.msu.edu/> to see these additions.

### ***Beta testers needed***

In the coming months, we plan to launch a newly designed RIA home page with an improved user interface and more documentation. If you are interested in helping us beta test the new environment and provide feedback, we would love to hear from you. Please email [clear@msu.edu](mailto:clear@msu.edu) and let us know if you’re willing to be a technology guinea pig!

### ***CLEAR web store redesigned***

We are very pleased to announce the launch of CLEAR’s redesigned web store! Please visit <http://store.clear.msu.edu/> to explore CLEAR’s products, download or purchase materials, and access many of our free resources.

### ***Summer workshops 2014***

Dates and descriptions of our upcoming CLEAR summer workshops have been posted on our website! Watch our website and Facebook page for announcements on these and other upcoming professional development opportunities. We will have several workshops, with topics as diverse as authentic materials, technology, and assessment.



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*CLEAR News is a publication of the Center for Language Education and Research and is intended to inform foreign language educators of the Center's ongoing research projects and professional development workshops, to report on current foreign language research and publications and their applicability to the classroom, and to provide a forum for educators to discuss foreign language teaching and learning topics.*

