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FEATURED THEME:
TECHNOLOGY

FAQs and Fictions about Computers and Language Teaching

by Dennie Hoopingarner

This is an interesting time for language teachers to be using computers. On the technology side, the continuing trend is for computers to get more powerful and cheaper, for software to do more—and do it better, and for our students to have access to more information. On the teaching side, the computer has largely ceased to be an add-on to the curriculum. It is no longer an extra that we include if time permits, or as a special treat for the students. For more and more of us, the computer is an essential part of our working day, and has become an integral part of how we teach.

Many teachers use the computer to keep grades, type lesson plans, tests, and homework assignments, and communicate with students and parents over email. As useful and practical as these functions are, the computer is not just a tool for managing instruction. For many years, teachers have shown that the computer can play an active role in language teaching and learning, and various professional organizations (e.g., CALICO, WorldCALL) and journals (e.g., *Language Learning & Technology*) have been established with the intent of establishing and promoting best practices. There is a large and growing base of literature documenting technology-enhanced language learning success stories.

In spite of this rich literature on effective and recommended uses of the computer, technology has been widely distributed among teachers with little formal training or instruction in effective uses. As a result, the wheel has been reinvented time and time again, and while the same good ideas were stumbled upon independently by teachers throughout the field, many of the same less-than-ideal implementations have found their way into the classroom as well. This may be why so many misconceptions about using technology in the language class still exist today.

These misconceptions often manifest themselves in the form of loaded questions. I would like to share some of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) that I have heard regarding technology and language teaching over the years. As a way of answering the questions, I will discuss the misconceptions that may underlie the FAQs, and try to dispel some of the myths that still linger.

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

EDITORS' MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Year of Languages! We hope this will be a fruitful and interesting year for all of us in the field of foreign language teaching.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to fill out our short survey on which themes in language teaching interest you most. If you missed the last issue or forgot to fill out the survey, you can still access it online at http://clear.msu.edu:16080/survey/. We do value your input!

In keeping with our new themed issues, the focus of this *CLEAR News* is technology and computer-assisted language learning (CALL), a topic that came up as "very interesting" to you, according to our survey. This is a timely topic, as CLEAR and Michigan State University will be hosting the 2005 conference of the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO).

This issue includes a "user-friendly" main article on technology in the language classroom, written by CLEAR's Dennie Hoopingarner, a frequent technology workshop leader. The idea corner by Anne Todd gives teachers a hands-on explanation of how to use an exciting new program called Audio Portfolios.

Our featured teacher is Joanna Porvin, who directs a private consulting project which focuses on technology use in the language classroom and teaches in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. We also have a feature spotlighting CALICO, and highlights on technology-related products and projects from CLEAR and some of the other Language Resource Centers around the country.

Don't miss the lineup of CLEAR summer workshops profiled on page 6 – you're sure to find one that fits your schedule and your professional interests, and we do have two new discount plans.

Happy reading!

Joy Campbell

Margo Glew

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SUBMISSIONS WANTED

CLEAR News is published twice a year and reaches more than 25,000 foreign language educators in both hard copy and on CLEAR's website with each issue. If you have an article, a teaching idea, or a materials review that you would like to submit for possible publication, send an electronic copy of your submission to CLEAR.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Main Article— an article related to current research and/or foreign language teaching issues. (1000—1500 words)

The Idea Corner— a unique activity or teaching idea for foreign language teachers. (500–600 words)

Book/Materials Profile— share your best finds with colleagues by telling us about a favorite text, website, CD-ROM or other teaching material. (100–200 words)

Featured Teacher – have you benefited in some way from a CLEAR workshop or product? Contact Joy Campbell for information on becoming our Featured Teacher in a future issue!

The deadline for submissions for the Fall 2005 *CLEAR News* is July 15, 2005. Submissions should be sent to Joy Campbell at:

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The U.S. 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 fourteen 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 Language Education And Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University; the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC) at San Diego State University; the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC), a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University; the National East Asian Languages National Resource Center (NEALRC) at The Ohio State University; the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa; the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University; the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) at Brigham Young University, the Slavic and East European Language Resource Center (SEELRC), a consortium of Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and the South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC) at the University of Chicago.

Language is a social phenomenon. How can the computer, a nonhuman, possibly assist the language learning process?

Language is very much a part of being human. Despite our best efforts over 50 years, we still can't teach the computer how to function in human language like a human being does. Despite amazing advances in artificial intelligence and computational linguistics, and promises of products that we see on the market, we will probably always be reliant on humans to negotiate language. This is good news for those of us involved in the language teaching business – our jobs as language teachers are certainly secure. No one who knows what he or she is talking about suggests that the computer can take the teacher's place.

The computer would be a failure as a language teacher. So would a textbook. But both the textbook and the computer have valuable contributions to make to the language learning process. It's hard to imagine teaching a language without the benefit of a textbook; for my part, I can't imagine teaching without the benefit of a computer.

Why should I use technology in my class?

No one is claiming that if teachers do not use technology in their classes, the students will not learn. Many generations of students learned quite contentedly and effectively before the advent of the computer, and continue to do so all over the world. So why is there such a strong push to use technology, especially computers, in the language class?

As a partial answer, we can look at the potential of the computer to do much more than any other technology to date. The theme of the book *How people learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Bransford et al, 1999) is that technology can enhance instruction:

> What has not yet been fully understood is that computer-based technologies can be powerful pedagogical tools—not just rich sources of information, but also extensions of human capabilities and contexts for social interactions supporting learning. The process of using technology to improve learning is never solely a technical matter, concerned only with properties of educational hardware and software. Like a textbook or any other cultural object, technology resources for education—whether a software science simulation or an interactive reading exercise—function in a social environment, mediated by learning conversations with peers and teachers.

The authors observe that computer technology can allow people to learn by doing, to receive feedback, to refine understanding and build new knowledge, to visualize difficult concepts through modeling and visualization software, and gain access to a vast array of information. In short, the computer can do many things that the textbook can't do, and research findings (Kern, 1995; Chun & Plass, 1997; Chun, 1998; and Jones, 2004) do show that technology-enhanced language learning achieves results.

In addition to its unique benefits to learning discussed above, another reason to use technology in your class is for the positive effect it can have on your students. The field of instructional design claims that getting students' attention is a necessary prerequisite to learning (e.g., Gagne, 1985), and the computer is a great attention-getter! Many years ago, in a class on educational technology, one of my students coined the word "cybertropism." He noticed that just as plants naturally turn to face a light source, a phenomenon known as phototropism, so students are drawn to the computer. Cybertropism is another reason to use the computer in your class. Simply placing the computer in your classroom will not result in higher student learning, but including the computer in your syllabus can certainly set the stage for learning.

Technology is unreliable. Doesn't that mean it isn't ready for prime time?

Many of us have experienced having to change or even scrap a lesson plan when a power or network outage occurs. Computer problems can cause major problems for lessons that incorporate technology. Not long ago, I was leading a workshop for high school teachers on CLEAR-developed web-based teaching tools. About an hour into the workshop, there was a major disruption in the Internet. I eventually had to postpone the rest of the workshop. It was an embarrassing situation indeed, and I would not like to repeat the experience. But does this mean that I made a mistake in relying on the reliability of the Internet?

It would be a mistake to assume that if something doesn't work on a given occasion, that it is unreliable. While progress has undoubtedly given rise to a batch of new problems, I'm glad that I live in this age, where technology has extended my life expectancy, and given my children more opportunities than even I enjoyed. I don't think that I made a mistake in counting on being able to use the Internet for my workshop. Rather, I am reminded of the lesson that all good teachers know: have a contingency plan.

Can the computer teach?

This is a loaded question, and one for which there is no simple answer. We can approach it by looking at some of the background.

The American psychologist B.F. Skinner (1954) made a strong case for using what he called "teaching machines" to replace the human teacher for some kinds of teaching. His goal was efficiency of the educational enterprise, specifically to address the growing teacher shortage in the 1950s. His position was that learning some kinds of content does not need to

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happen in a teacher-fronted situation – some kinds of learning could be automated. These materials that are conducive to programmed instruction are factual material such as the times tables in mathematics, or word definitions in language arts, and expositional material such as scientific concepts. By having students do some of their work independent of the teacher through programmed instruction, Skinner proposed, the teacher's time could be freed up to handle more students, devote more time to other subjects, or even shorten the school day.

Real-world experience with programmed instruction and teaching machines revealed some fundamental problems with this approach, and the approach has largely fallen out of favor. Nevertheless, the concept of somehow dividing the curriculum into independent work and teacher-fronted work endured, and is even showing a greater prominence with the advent of distance learning foreign language courses (McDonald et al, in press).

Skinner's position was that teaching can be reduced to a mechanized activity, but this is only part of the story. Even Skinner acknowledged that learning is much less predictable than teaching, and that the teacher is indispensable. Even proponents of self-instruction approach dismiss the idea that a teacher is unnecessary as "naïve" (Dickinson, 1987).

Maybe it would be more fruitful to approach the question from the student's perspective. Perhaps we should ask whether students can learn as a result of using a computer. I doubt anyone can dispute that students can learn from interacting with technology. As a parent, I limit what my children can view online, and watch on television, because I have real—and I believe justified—concerns about what they might learn. If computers offer the opportunity to learn something that we *don't* want students to learn, isn't it reasonable to assume that computers also carry the potential for them to learn something that we *do* want them to learn?

What's the best way to use computers?

This question has been posed in many different forms: what is the role of technology in foreign language teaching? How should we as language teachers be using computers to get the best use out of the technology? How can we make sure that we're getting the maximum return on the investment in technology? What techniques should we be employing so that our students will benefit from using computers? Behind this line of questioning is the mistaken assumption that there *is* a best application of technology.

One way of addressing the role of the computer in the class could be to ask what is the role of the textbook, or the blackboard. Most people would agree that the textbook and the blackboard do have valuable roles in teaching. In addition, there are certain established uses for them. However, it may be a futile effort to define most effective use of these elements of teaching. The conclusion that I draw is that the textbook, blackboard, and computer are all tools. Tools should be used to help do a job, not do the job for us.

So, what should I do with the computer?

Introducing the computer into the language class opens the door to a wide range of possibilities. A confusing aspect of computers is that they are so versatile. With so many options, how is a teacher to decide what to do?

One of the initiatives of the International Society for Technology in Education (http://www.iste.org) is a set of standards and rubrics for using technology to facilitate learning. Similar in scope and design to the standards for language learning that were established by ACTFL (http://www.actfl.org), ISTE's standards are meant to be part of a pre-service teacher education program. The goal of the standards is to establish benchmark competencies, and help teachers learn how to use technology to plan effective learning environments.

It is difficult to give a blanket recommendation for specific applications of technology to language teaching. However, we can explore some general principles:

1. *Don't think of the computer as a book.*
Reading on the computer is qualitatively different from reading a book. Of course, the computer can duplicate all of the functions of the book. Using the right software, students can access the same print information as in a book, take notes, make bookmarks, and jump directly to a random place in the text. Of course, the computer can do much more than merely mimic a book. Information access via the computer has exploded with the advent of the World Wide Web, and now we face the problem of information glut. It is difficult for us to isolate the information that we want from the irrelevant information that is available. We as educators now have a new skill set to teach students – critical assessment of information that is accessed online.

2. *Use the computer as a tool*
Rather than some sort of smart teacher's aid that can assume some of the teacher's duties, we should see the computer as one more tool at the teacher's disposal. This tool is multi-functional, and more applications are being added as the software gets better, the network gets faster, and the hardware gets cheaper. It might be useful to see the computer as a Swiss army knife that you can add blades to.

Many older technologies are converging

onto the computer platform. Where we used to need separate tape recorders, laser disk players, filmstrip projectors, typewriters, audio consoles, and calculators to do our jobs, now all of those tasks can be accomplished on the computer.

3. *Take advantage of the computer's strengths*
We have moved beyond the idea of the computer as some sort of substitute teacher, or a teacher's aid. The computer can do much more than present our students with multiple-choice quizzes. Students' time can be much better spent creating rich media presentations on the computer, recording and editing their own audio and video projects, and exploring the world through the target language online. Research done by Swain (1985, 1993) suggests that learner output is a critical factor in learning to use the language productively. The computer allows students to more easily create, revise, and share written texts, chat with fellow speakers and post ideas and comments to Internet bulletin boards – all of which allow learners to maximize their production of output. Additionally, Long and Porter's (1985) work on task-based learning suggests exciting possibilities for students to work on projects collaboratively on the computer. Thus, the computer is an added tool for the language teacher to use in providing learners with the best opportunities to use languages and "push" themselves to greater proficiency.

4. *Recognize that some students will benefit less than others*
It is commonly accepted that students today have taken to technology en masse, that they are completely comfortable with technology as part of their everyday lives. While it might be true that a greater percentage of students are computer literate than those of us in higher age brackets, we can't assume that all of our students are at the same comfort level with technology, and we can't assume that they will all be willing to be heavy users of technology in their language learning. Issues of the digital divide and differing learning styles should be taken into account when we are making the leap into technology-enhanced language teaching.

A disclaimer
While computer technology has tremendous promise for making foreign language classrooms more effective and stimulating, it is important to remember that technology is not a methodology. The computer is a powerful tool that can be used to support discredited, unfashionable teaching methods just as it can be used to support effective and engaging teaching methods. The onus is still on teachers to teach. Technology can combine with good ideas and creativity to create catalysts for increased student learning, motivation, and ultimate achievement.

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FEATURED TEACHER

My formal explorations in using technology to support language learning began as a graduate student at the University of Michigan. At the time, I was beginning to see French and Spanish software titles in the stores, but little was changing in the schools. As part of this exploration, I examined several projects, including Project FLAME (Foreign Language Applications in the Multimedia Environment) at Michigan. I joined FLAME part-time and, after finishing my MA in Education, worked there until I accepted my present position as a middle school language teacher in Grosse Pointe. I worked for several years as an instructional technology consultant for the school system and continue to do so independently. I completed an MA in Educational Technology at Michigan in August 1999.

My work at FLAME began with creating technical documentation and teacher support materials. Later, I worked on the software development team and worked with teachers in the pilot schools. For me, this was an excellent beginning. It afforded me the opportunity to see a working example of a new paradigm for using technology in the foreign language classroom, and to develop an appreciation for the day-to-day, nuts and bolts elements that are needed to make new technologies available and accessible in a realistic way to teachers in the schools. Exploring new ways of thinking about technologies and then making those tools available to working teachers continues to be a primary concern for me today.

I have participated in several CLEAR summer workshops over the years. In 1999, I worked with Charlene Polio in "Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom," and with Dennie Hoopingarner in "The Internet in Foreign Language Instruction." In the writing seminar, we explored everything from short writing warm-ups and activities to the

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	or	*and/or*	*and/or*
	Basic Web Immersion (2.5 full days)	Digital Video (5 half-days)	Writing (5 half-days)

bigger picture of writing in the classroom and formative assessment in the writing process. Our Internet work with Dennie focused on relevant tools and resources at that time but also conversations on technology implementation and language pedagogy that remain relevant today. The combination of these seminars helped shape the task-based writing activities based on authentic websites that form many of my students' learning experiences today. More recently, in the summer of 2003, I attended "Putting Flash into Your Course" and had the opportunity to stretch my own technical skills while discovering a new tool and what it might bring to my collection of teaching strategies.

I teach French and Spanish to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students at Brownell Middle School. As a teacher, I try to combine traditional media with newer technologies to enable my students to improve their communication skills in French and Spanish. As a consultant, I have developed and implemented teacher training workshops on a variety of computer applications and strategies across the curriculum and in-service workshops targeted specifically to a language learning environment.

I am grateful to the staff at CLEAR for continuing to provide educational opportunities that support and inform the teaching of both novice and experienced technology users and allow us to be part of a continuing dialogue on language education.

Joanna Porvin teaches at Brownell Middle School in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. She founded and administers "Casa de Joanna: Language Learning Resources" (http://www.casadejoanna.com), which was recently featured in "101 Best Web Sites for Secondary Teachers" by James Lerman. She is also the director of LinguisTech, a private consulting project which focuses on technology use in the language classroom.

THE IDEA CORNER

Audio Portfolios – An easier way to create and organize speaking assignments

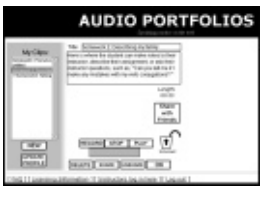
by Anne Todd

Often the initial investment of time and resources required of teachers and students to master technology make computer-assisted language learning (CALL) an unattractive prospect. When it comes to CALL, simple can be better–and the Audio Portfolios program is such an example.

The Audio Portfolios (http://distance-learning.llc.msu.edu/audioportfolio/) tool was developed at Michigan State University's Language Learning Center by Dennie Hoopingarner. It is a relatively simple, web-based audio or audio-video recording application that allows language learners to digitally record speaking assignments. The convenience of this application will appeal to teachers who want to assign speaking homework but do not relish the idea of toting around cassette tapes. To use this application, students and teachers need a computer, a fast Internet connection (not dial-up!), and a digital microphone. They may also use a webcam to capture audio and video.

Using Audio Portfolios, students log into a web-based application and digitally record themselves in response to an assignment developed by their teacher. They can then listen to their recordings, or "clips," and rerecord if desired. Once they are satisfied with their performance, they share their audio (or audio-video) clip with their teacher for feedback. When the teacher logs in, he or she pulls up the class list, and can then access all of the recordings that individual students in the class have shared.

The application is password protected, so only the teacher can hear students' recordings. However, if students want to share their recordings with others, they can use the "Share with Friends" function, which allows them to publish an audio or audio-video clip to a web page. Users can then copy the web page address and email it to friends. This same function can also be used by teachers to create audio or audio-video clips for listening assignments or demonstrations.



Student view of Audio Portfolios. Their assignments are listed on the left under "My Clips." Recordings that have been "shared" with the teacher are indicated by >>.

Practical & Pedagogical Benefits of Audio Portfolios:

- It eliminates the need to carry around bulky audio cassettes when assigning speaking homework. All students' speech samples are in one place, and can be accessed anywhere with a computer and fast Internet connection.
- The only software requirement is a web browser with the free Flash plugin, because the program uses Flash server technology. It works the same on Windows, Macintosh or Linux.
- Students can self-monitor their speech patterns and test hypotheses about their second language production in a protected environment. Because students can (and often do!) review and rerecord many times before submitting the recording to their teacher, it encourages this type of self-assessment.

Teacher view of Audio Portfolios. Teachers select a class, and then a specific student in the class, and can see all hear all of his or her recording clips in one organized place.

- Shy students are less inhibited by anxiety, since there is no immediate "live audience." Students normally overshadowed by others in class are given the opportunity to speak.
- Teachers are able to provide individualized feedback for speech samples.
- The video-recording function is a great tool if teachers want to elicit a spontaneous speech sample, since it discourages students from pre-scripting their answers and simply reading them off.
- The "Share with Friends" function allows teachers to create listening assignments for students. Students can then do the assignment at their own pace.

Ideas for Using Audio Portfolios

Traditional Speaking Assignments

Pronunciation can be addressed by having students read a paragraph (either a pre-written one, or one written by the student). Grammar can be focused on by giving students a prompt that will elicit the form, such as "Tell me what you did last weekend" to elicit the past tense. Global speaking assignments can also be used to assess not only pronunciation and grammar, but also fluency, word choice, etc. For global speaking assignments, teachers may want to ask students to stay within a given time frame.

Speaking Journals

A good way to encourage speaking fluency is to ask students to record a weekly speaking journal, addressed to the teacher. The teacher could provide some suggested topics, or students could talk about their week. By keeping the topics simple and open and not grading journals on speaking performance, (e.g., grading on a credit/no credit basis, not on specific criteria) students are given a low-anxiety forum for self-expression and speaking practice.

Teaching Speaking Self-Assessment

Have students record responses to a few different prompts that elicit spontaneous speech. Provide the students with some self-evaluation rubrics for fluency, pausing, intonation, pronunciation of individual sounds, grammar, word choice, etc. Have them rate themselves and make notes of a few mistakes that they think they made for each category. The teacher can use the same rating scale to give similar feedback. This way, students can practice identifying their own challenges, and they can see where their own self-perception differs from that of their teacher.

Using Share with Friends to communicate with "pen-pals"

Students can use the "Share with Friends" function to communicate with other language learners–or native speakers of the target language–around the world. If teachers can find another language class to participate, students can send each other "Audio postcards" using this function.

Use the "Share with Friends" feature to create audio / video clips for activities

Teachers create the student accounts for their own classes, entering in the names of their students and setting user IDs and passwords. They can add themselves to their class list as a "student" so they can also log in as a student. To create an audio or audio-video clip, teachers log in as a student and then use the "Share with Friends" function to create a web page. These clips can be used for several things:

Demonstrating Pronunciation

It often helps students to be able to hear and see someone pronouncing difficult sounds, especially if the lip shape or movement is helpful. Teachers can record a pronunciation video explanation / demonstration.

Giving Feedback

Instead of written feedback, teachers can provide oral feedback on a speaking assignment. This is especially helpful if teachers want to model the correct way of saying something for a student. For more advanced students, providing this feedback in the second language also provides listening practice.

Creating Listening Assignments

Teachers can create listening assignments (with or without video) using the "Share with Friends" function. Listening assignments can be used for schema building to help prepare students for speaking assignments; teachers can model an example response to a speaking prompt.

A subscription for Audio Portfolios costs only $50 a year for each teacher, and allows that teacher to use the application with all of his or her classes. To explore Audio Portfolios, go to http://distancelearning.llc.msu.edu/audioportfolio/. You can log in as a teacher using the username teacher, password teacher, and log in as a student using the username guest, password guest.

Anne Todd coordinates instruction in less commonly taught languages and teaches ESL at Michigan State University.

CALICO Comes to Michigan State University!

What is CALICO?

by Robert Fischer

The **C**omputer **A**ssisted **L**anguage **I**nstruction **Co**nsortium (CALICO) is an international association devoted to the support and dissemination of research and to the development of technology for foreign language teaching and learning. CALICO was founded almost 25 years ago at Brigham Young University, moved to Duke University in 1991, and has been housed at Texas State University since 1997. With almost 1,000 members and journal subscribers across 25 countries, CALICO unites teachers, researchers, administrators, publishers, software developers, lab directors, public officials, and other language professionals who have a common interest in computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

CALICO members' professional activities include: multimedia applications to help students acquire various aspects of a foreign language, natural language processing and intelligent answer processing to provide useful feedback to students while they are engaged in language-learning efforts, appropriate use of technological resources—in and out of the classroom—to support diverse language and culture projects, computer-adaptive testing to increase the effectiveness of evaluating students' language proficiency, and, of course, the use of the Internet for online language learning (e.g., web-based language learning and computer-mediated communication—email, chat, and conferencing). CALICO also has six special interest groups (SIGs), providing a forum that enables people with similar interests to meet and discuss those interests with their colleagues.

CALICO publishes the *CALICO Journal* three times a year. The *CALICO Journal* contains articles on the latest developments and practices in the field, in-depth research studies, and software reviews. Recent articles have investigated multimedia vocabulary acquisition, criteria for software selection and use, synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication, online teacher education, and many other questions of importance to the field. CALICO's software reviews have been recognized for their thoroughness and valuable insights. Each year, CALICO invites guest editors to publish a special issue of the *CALICO Journal* on a topic of current interest. Previous special issues have focused on: courseware development, technology and Latin and Greek, speech recognition, technology and Asian languages, natural language processing, and technology and Arabic and Hebrew.

CALICO provides multiple services to its members and to the CALL community at large. CALICO's website (calico.org) and listservs (calico-members@calico.org and calico-1@calico.org) facilitate communication among the organization's members as well as other professionals in the field. CALICO's annual conference features hands-on workshops, plenary speakers, individual presentations, commercial exhibits, and a courseware showcase. CALICO's conferences typically draw participants from many countries who come together to share information on advances in the field over a five-day period of time. CALICO's conferences offer excellent opportunities to discover the latest advances in technology and to interact with leaders in the field. CALICO warmly thanks the Center for Language Education And Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University for hosting CALICO in 2005.

In all of its various functions, CALICO exists to provide assistance to both experienced and inexperienced users of technology in foreign language teaching. As such, the organization serves as an open and friendly point of access to the diverse activities that make up the field of CALL.

Robert Fischer is Chair of the Department of Modern Languages at Texas State University, and the Executive Director of CALICO.

CALICO 2005: CALL in the Year of Languages

by Lee Forester

Throughout its 25-year history, CALICO has advocated more widespread and effective uses of computers in language learning. At first this was focused tutorial-type software deployed to mainframe and then personal computers. With the advent of the Internet, laptops, wireless communications and the World Wide Web, computing is becoming increasingly ubiquitous and it is imperative for all teachers to wrestle with the issues this raises in education.

What does this mean for language teachers in particular? Join us for the 2005 CALICO conference in East Lansing and find out! CALICO is the place to inform yourself both about research on using computers in language teaching as well as practical ideas for implementing new activities with your students. Whether you're new to teaching with computers on an old hand, you will find sessions and people to stimulate your thinking. Come join the conversation - it will be a rewarding time!

Lee Forester is Associate Professor of German at Hope College, and Program Chair for the 2005 CALICO Annual Symposium.

Pre-conference workshops:
May 17-18, 2005

Conference:
May 19-21, 2005

Visit CLEAR's website for a link to CALICO, or go directly to the CALICO web site for up-to-date information on workshops, sessions, speakers, and registration.

http://www.calico.org/conference/index.html

Register by April 18 for "early bird" discounts!

LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER UPDATES

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

CARLA will again offer the popular week-long summer institute entitled Using Technology in Second Language Teaching from July 18–22, 2005 at the University of Minnesota. Intended for experienced and new teachers alike, this institute will help participants examine, evaluate, and apply the use of technology in teaching second languages.

For more information about this and other CARLA summer institutes, see: http://www.carla.umn.edu/institutes/

For Language Teacher Educators

The conference Voice and Vision in Language Teacher Education to be held June 2–4, 2005 in Minneapolis, MN will feature two pre-conference workshops on technology. Using PowerPoint to Create Customized Language-Learning Software and Issues and Models for Technology and Teacher Development will give language teacher educators the knowledge and skills they need to improve the use of technology in their preservice and inservice language teacher education programs. Information about the conference and these pre-conference workshops can be found on the CARLA website at: http://www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/LTE2005/index.html

In addition, a free three-day workshop is being offered on CoBaLTT for Foreign Language Teacher Education (June 6-8, 2005). The workshop will provide language teacher educators an in-depth look at the CoBaLTT resources, which were designed to help foreign language and immersion teachers develop content-based instruction supported by effective use of technology. Instruction and all materials for this workshop are free, though participants will need to pay for their own travel, accommodations, and meals. Applications are available at http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobaltt and are due on March 1, 2005. Space is limited.

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Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS), University of Oregon

Pilot Sites Wanted for An Online Proficiency Test for Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Spanish, Turkish

Teachers across the country have identified proficiency assessment as a key issue in improving language programs. Most of us would like to measure our students' proficiency and real-world language ability, but existing tests are expensive and time-consuming. Few of us can manage to fit them in.

Now, you and your students can experience the future of proficiency assessment. CASLS has developed a Web-based assessment that measures true proficiency. This assessment, the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP), assesses proficiency with real-life tasks–making STAMP innovative both in terms of pedagogy and technology. STAMP assesses reading, writing, and speaking skills.

In addition to STAMP, CASLS is piloting an assessment to measure listening ability. The Assessment for Listening Proficiency (ALP) is the last installment of the four proficiency skills.

Results are available immediately through a password-protected site. Most of the assessments require little more than a recent browser. In cases where additional software is required, CASLS staff is on hand to assist teachers and schools in meeting STAMP and ALP requirements.

Teachers can pilot these state-of-the-art assessment tools in Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Spanish, and Turkish absolutely free of charge. Having your students participate in a pilot version of STAMP and ALP will assist the language profession in developing a better method of measuring student performance and will benefit your students by helping them understand the skills they need in order to be proficient.

For more information on the types of levels (novice or intermediate) and items (reading, writing, speaking, or listening) currently being piloted for each language, please email info@uoregon.edu

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Center for Language Education And Research (CLEAR), Michigan State University

New Products

If you haven't visited our website in a while, log on and check it out–we have some exciting new products to share!

SMILE (Server-Managed Interactive Learning Exercises) is a free, easy-to-use tool for creating interactive language-learning exercises. Teachers of any language can use these templates to create items and then share them with students. Your students can receive feedback on correct and incorrect answers. These activities are accessed through a unique URL generated by SMILE and stored on CLEAR's web server. You can even track your students' responses and progress through an online reporting system. You can create the following types of exercises using SMILE:

- Multiple Choice
- Drag/Drop Matching
- Paragraph Mix
- Multiple-Select
- True/False
- Sentence Mix
- Cloze

SMILE, and documentation about how to use it, can be accessed from http://clear.msu.edu:16080/teaching/online/mimea/smile/ .

We have also completed our Small Group Instruction Guide for Hindi, which is available as a free download. Similar to our African Language and Thai Instructional Guides, the Hindi Guide begins with an overview of strategies for creating a language course (i.e., establishing goals, using the L2, and finding and using materials). Following the general information, The Guide offers three different groupings of lesson plans: basic language-learning lesson plans for beginners, task-based lessons for intermediate learners, and cultural-based modules for advanced learners. You can download the Guide at: http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/hindiguide/index.html

Watch our website in the coming months for news about our Introductory Business German CD-ROM, which is in the final stages of production. This highly interactive introductory German self-instructional package uses Flash technology to make the lessons appealing and user-friendly. No previous knowledge of German is needed as users navigate their way through language and culture learning activities that apply to the German business environment. Four Americans from a state economic development agency set off on a promotional trip to Germany and encounter a multitude of situations that the average business traveler would need to negotiate. Along the way, they and the user learn language skills and acquire business and economics specific knowledge that will provide a solid introduction to Germany and its business environment.

2005 Summer Workshops

Further details about each workshop, and an online application, can be found on our web site at: http://clear.msu.edu/training/05workshops/index.html

Apply before May 2, 2005 for an early bird waiver of the application fee! The regular deadline for applications is June 1, 2005.

You Can Take the Language Out of the Culture, but You Can't Take the Culture Out of the Language
July 12-14

Creating Communicative Speaking Activities
July 15-17

Basic Web Immersion
July 15-17

Choosing and Using Authentic Materials
July 18-22

Digital Video Projects
July 18-22

Vocabulary – The Key to Language Fluency
July 25-29

Teaching Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom
July 25-29

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Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC), San Diego State University

Online Speech Testing with LARCStar

Languages instructors have for years hoped for a good way to author, administer, and grade online speech tests, with speech files and grades saved to a web server. LARC has completed work on a tool for online speech testing in foreign languages. The LARC Speech Test Authoring Resource (LARCStar) is free, remarkably easy to use, and in all tests made so far has been quite stable and user-friendly.

The testing tool has two parts: there is a speech recording script, and a database interface which allows easy authoring, editing, taking, and grading of tests. Both may be freely downloaded; the recording tool is offered as Open Source.

The software allows the faculty author to specify whether the student is permitted to retake the test or not. If the student is not allowed to retake the test, but has technical difficulties during the test, the teacher may easily reset the test so the student may try again.

With LARCStar, language teachers may:

- Easily author online tests, with or without text, audio files, video, or images.
- Easily create student accounts, with username and password giving a measure of security.
- Easily access student results and grade them, or edit grades.
- Easily administer a test in a lab, whether or not the computers in the lab have a Java library installed on them.

Student and faculty computers must be PCs with Windows 2000 or above, a microphone, a sound card, and sufficient memory for the requirements of the test. The browser used must be a later version of Internet Explorer, set to accept ActiveX downloads. LARCStar will run on a Windows NT/2000 Server, and has been adapted by some users for other servers. High speed Internet connections are strongly recommended.

To use LARCStar, you must have a Windows 2000 web server and staff support for it. No special knowledge is required of the faculty user or student test-taker; the program is straightforward, and full documentation is provided. There are no limits set on recording times, and consequently on sizes of voice recording files uploaded to the server. Interpreter trainers will find the program valuable, as it allows testing in simultaneous interpretation.

For further information on this software, or to download: please go to http://larctest.sdsu.edu/larcstar.htm

If you have questions not answered there, please email Dr. Wayne Stromberg, at wstrombe@mail.sdsu.edu

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National African Language Resource Center (NALRC), University of Wisconsin-Madison

African Language Vocabulary Flash Cards: The NALRC has been developing Vocabulary Flash Cards CD-ROMs for a wide variety of African languages since 2002. They provide the learners with audio data as well as visual images. This year, new vocabulary flash cards containing Kikuyu, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, and Chichewa came out.

Companion Audio Materials to African Language Textbooks: The NALRC has been producing companion CD-ROMs to the Let's Speak Series language textbooks. In October 2004, a companion audio CD-ROM was produced to supplement one of our best-selling textbooks, Tuseme Kiswahili (Let's Speak Swahili). Currently we are working on the recording of Tosolola Na Lingala (Let's Speak Lingala) and Dardasha (Let's Speak Egyptian Arabic).

Multimedia Language Materials: The NALRC has been developing multimedia materials for the learning of different African languages, particularly Yoruba. The First Year and the Second Year Yoruba online courses have been launched and a new CD-ROM to learn reading and listening skills is being developed. We also have First, Second, and Third Year Yoruba CD-ROMs as well as African Language Vocabulary Flash Cards in various African languages.

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National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC), Brigham Young University

The NMELRC completed its first series of online workshops on various aspects of language pedagogy for teachers of Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. The presentations were offered once a month and allowed language faculty in our four languages to listen to the presentations, post questions, and get answers via the web. Each presentation lasted between 90 and 100 minutes and featured a brief theoretical background to the issue(s) discussed as well as sample materials and classroom techniques. NMELRC also provides learner and classroom support materials on DVD with on-line related exercises.

Archived workshops can be accessed through nmelrc.org and include the following topics:

January–Reading Comprehension

February–Issues in teaching Vocabulary

March–How to create an Interactive Classroom

April–Listening Comprehension/Grammar

Next workshop: May 13, 2005, 1:00pm EDT–Integration of Technology and Pedagogy

Connection details for the May workshop will be posted on the NMELRC website.

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CLEAR News

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 on-going 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.

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