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FEATURED THEME: SERVICE-LEARNING

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MAIN ARTICLE

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MICHIGAN STATE
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Engaging World Language Students through Service-Learning

by Angelika Kraemer

Many language programs are struggling to maintain and grow their offerings. As language educators, we need to continuously show the value of our programs not only to administrators and the community, but also to our students. One possibility to do just that is to engage students in service-learning programs in the community. In order to motivate our students, we need to provide them with ways to apply what they are learning in real-world contexts and with opportunities to use the target language. Sharing their knowledge with others can allow students to practice their language abilities while also providing an important service to the community. Service-learning and civic engagement programs have been shown to advance students' attainment of academic learning outcomes (Gascoigne Lally, 2001) and, within the context of languages, can also increase participants' cultural awareness and intercultural competence (Reyes, 2009).

Definitions of Service-Learning

The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse defines service-learning as "a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities" (2012). Service-learning distinguishes itself from mere volunteering through its reciprocal nature. While volunteering usually focuses on service only and leaves learning behind, service-learning blends both service and learning goals in such a way that each occurs and is enriched by the other. The provider and recipient benefit equally from the service (Furco, 1996).

At Michigan State University, the Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement distinguishes three areas of curricular engagement: academic service-learning, curricular service-learning, and co-curricular service learning. Academic service-learning is tied directly to a specific course, curricular service-learning is broader and is attached to a field of study or discipline, and co-curricular service-learning falls under the above-mentioned category of volunteering where the service is unrelated to a course or major. I would add a fourth area, extra-curricular service-learning, where the service is not necessarily directly tied to a specific course or discipline but reinforces academic content. Such service-learning opportunities are provided through the Community Language School (CLS) at Michigan State University.

(Continued on page 3)

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

Spring greetings from Michigan State University! CLEAR has had a year of transitions, and they continue this spring; we welcomed a new programmer to our staff in January and will bid farewell to one of our founding Co-Directors in May.

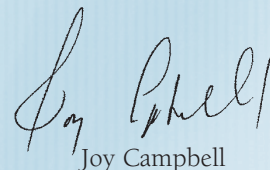
The main article in this issue of *CLEAR News* was written by Dr. Angelika Kraemer, a longtime CLEAR workshop presenter and dedicated ambassador for CLEAR's programs and products. In her article, Angelika discusses the success of service-learning programs and how they can be used to engage language students. Drawing from her experiences as director of MSU's Community Language School, she describes several programs and how they can foster motivation and learning while benefitting both the language student and the community.

We look forward to four workshops coming up this July and August, when we will be offering some new topics as well as some popular encore offerings for the same low prices as in the past. Please visit our website to learn more about the workshops on teaching writing, teaching

vocabulary, using technology in the language classroom, and creating appropriate assessments.

CLEAR will be exhibiting at upcoming regional and national conferences, specifically the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Columbus, OH in March and the annual conference of the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium in Honolulu, HI in May. We always enjoy meeting our constituents face-to-face, so please stop by to say hello! For those of you not on the conference circuit this spring, you can of course always find us at <http://clear.msu.edu>.

I wish you an enjoyable spring, and leave you with this quote I recently discovered from psycholinguist Frank Smith: "One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way."



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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. 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 the University of Wisconsin-Madison; 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.

Community Language School

CLS offers community-based language and culture programs for regional preK-12 schools, language activities on campus for children, adults, and teachers, as well as service-learning opportunities for high school students and undergraduates. We conduct academic language classes for preschoolers, children, and teens on campus, enrichment programs on campus and at elementary schools, professional development workshops for language educators, adult evening classes, and summer camps for children. A teaching internship program in Germany also takes place in the summer.

CLS programs are taught by native speakers or highly proficient non-native speakers, including faculty members, graduate students, and community members. All programs offer service-learning opportunities for a number of undergraduate and advanced high school students who serve as assistants and gain valuable teaching practice while applying their knowledge in the classroom. The responsibilities for the service-learning assistants differ with their personal expectations and experiences. Some help with general classroom management and act more as observers, while others assist with the preparation of worksheets, activities, or lesson plans, work one-on-one with a child needing more help, and co-teach classes. The assistants are supervised by the lead instructor and their participation is a vital part of CLS's success. Through the programs, the assistants gain more exposure to the foreign language and interact with a native speaker, deepen their knowledge of the target culture, and gain experience in classroom management and teaching. Many of the assistants return each semester and take on progressively more responsibility in the classroom.

Summer Camps

CLS's summer camps are language and culture day camps for children ages 6-12. They generally take place for one week (Monday-Friday) from 9:00am – 4:00pm. The goal for service-learning assistants is to improve their oral target language skills. As part of the service-learning project, assistants participate in an online orientation and training to learn new skills and approaches associated with working with younger learners. The service-learning placement is for up to 35 hours per week. Assistants work with the lead instructors on the implementation of the program. A supervisor conducts classroom observations and discusses

them with each assistant in an informal conversation at the end of the program. Assistants are also asked to complete a survey at the end to allow them to reflect on their experience and their own learning. High school students are encouraged to participate as assistants.

Enrichment Programs

One service-learning program that places the assistants at center stage is the enrichment program. Enrichment programs are offered free of charge at elementary/middle schools and introduce children to words and simple sentences from their immediate environment (such as family members, colors, food items, or animals) and also include culture components. The lessons build on each other and reinforce the school curriculum whenever possible. These programs usually take place once a week for three to ten weeks and are designed either as lunchtime enrichment or after-school programs. Participating children are split by grade-level and groups meet for approximately 20 minutes (lunch) to 60 minutes (after-school).

The goal of the service-learning experience for the assistants is to improve their lesson planning, classroom management, and teaching skills. A team of assistants plans weekly lessons under the supervision of a native speaker and implements them independently at the schools under the director's supervision. A supervisor conducts classroom observations and discusses them with each team in an informal conversation each week. Some assistants complete their service-learning project as part of a course and also turn in a reflective essay in addition to the reflective survey at the end of the program.

The programs create interest in language and culture learning in the community and groom future world language students. They generate interest in and excitement for different languages and cultures and many children continue with our programs throughout their K-12 experience. Some of our previous high school participants continued studying world languages at Michigan State University, partly because they had a positive learning experience on campus when they were younger.

Key Aspects in Planning

The first step in planning a service-learning project is to find a community partner. Campus Compact (<http://www.compact.org/>) provides lists of potential community partners by state in addition to research, online

tools, and other initiatives related to service-learning. Similarly, the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (<http://www.servicelearning.org>) also offers many resources for those new to the field. Contacting local schools and community centers is another way to identify community partners. The second step is determining how and where to train service-learning assistants. Many universities and colleges have service-learning centers that assist with training. Sometimes community partners train assistants themselves. We train our assistants in-house and communicate any specific rules set by the community partner.

Step three is to spell out expectations, which is closely tied to mentoring the assistants. Continuous communication is one of the hallmarks of a successful service-learning program. Given that service-learning projects generally involve a number of participants, an open cycle of communication is of utmost importance. Figure 1 illustrates the communication cycle at Community Language School.

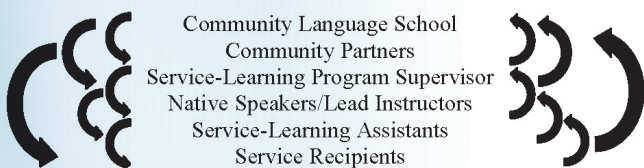


Figure 1. Communication cycle at Community Language School

Assistants need to be aware of attendance policies and the commitment required for a particular project; they also need to show respect for the community partner, be professional, and adhere to specific dress codes.

Another crucial characteristic of service-learning is reflection. Figure 2 shows the experiential learning cycle, adapted from David Kolb (1984). The experiencing phase is when a service-learning project is being implemented, which is followed on the one hand by sharing the experience, reactions, and observations with others. This sharing leads to further processing through discussions, which then leads to generalizations where the experience is analyzed and real-world principles are developed, and lastly to application where the effective use of learning is planned. On the other hand, experiencing can also lead to new, improved

applications once assistants have considered the future impact of the experience on themselves and the community. It is important that reflection be a continuous process that starts before the project, is continuous throughout, and is evaluated at the end.

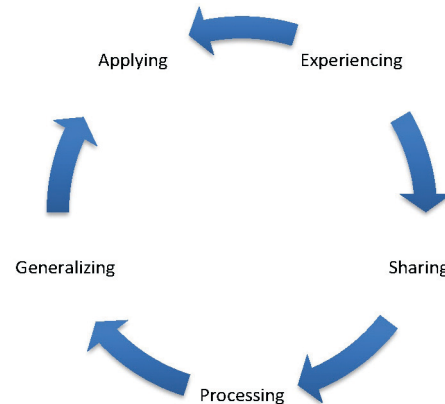


Figure 2. Experiential learning cycle (adapted from David Kolb)

Reflection can take many forms. Most common are reflective journals and essays but assistants can also write case studies, give multimedia presentations on their experience, analyze the impact of their involvement on the community, present to other community organizations, or discuss their experiences in groups, just to name a few.

Lessons Learned

Some of the challenges we have encountered at the Community Language School include the trickle-down effect, sustainability, transportation, recruitment, time, and training. The communication cycle in Figure 1 is a tiered system. If one link breaks, problems can arise. Continuous communication is crucial in the success of a service-learning project. A second challenge is sustainability of programs, which is closely tied to pushback from community partners. When working with area schools, it has been at times difficult to maintain communication with changing school administration and new teaching and support staff. Also, transportation to off campus locations can pose a problem. Some community partners cannot easily be reached with public transportation or on foot. In order to execute a program further away from campus, the community partners are asked to reimburse assistants for transportation costs.

For those programs, it has also been more difficult to find assistants because the time commitment is longer due to travel time. Adequate training can also pose challenges as individuals come with different backgrounds. When training was done online, it was convenient but fewer assistants completed all training modules.

These challenges are outweighed by the numerous successes of CLS's service-learning programs. All assistants reported gains in language, intercultural, and teaching skills and above all, they enjoy the experience. Ninety-nine percent of students who completed the post-project survey loved the experience and were more motivated to participate in their regular world language classrooms. Over 85% of the assistants continued the following semester. While the tiered communication cycle can be tricky from an administrative perspective, the inherent peer mentoring was seen as tremendously valuable by the assistants. The reflective components increased the assistants' self- and cultural awareness. An enrichment program participant stated, "This program is a great way for us to practice teaching and it's a wonderful opportunity for the kids to learn and bond." Another assistant reported, "I learned so many new words when I prepared the lessons that I can actually use on a daily basis! I can't believe we've never learned these words in class."

Living in the 21st century means living in a global society that requires of all individuals more diverse competencies and requires the educational system to focus on teaching students the skills necessary for successfully mastering the demands of our multicultural and increasingly interconnected world. Service-learning programs can serve as powerful advocacy tools both in the community and for language programs and provide all stakeholders with real-world learning experiences.

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- Angelika Kraemer is the Director of Michigan State University's Community Language School and has written and presented extensively on service learning. She is also a regular CLEAR workshop presenter and representative at conferences nationwide.



CLS service-learning assistant teaches Chinese calligraphy



Children learn about Nigeria from a CLS service-learning assistant

2013 Summer Workshops

This year marks CLEAR's seventeenth year of offering summer professional development workshops! Teachers of all levels and languages have come to Michigan State University's campus for these informative, hands-on courses. Visit our website for more information about the workshops, discounts, and registration. We hope to see you in July and August!

Writing in the Foreign Language Classroom **JULY 22-24, 2013**

Workshop Leader: Charlene Polio, Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics & Languages, MSU

This workshop will look at writing from two perspectives: writing to learn and learning to write. First, we will examine activities that facilitate the learning of grammar and vocabulary as well as activities that enhance speaking, listening, and reading. Second, we will examine activities that help students learn to write various genres, from simple to complex, in the target language. Participants will evaluate activities that can be modified for a wide range of levels.

Revisiting the Learning and Teaching of Vocabulary **JULY 25-27, 2013**

Workshop Leader: Susanne Rott, Associate Professor in the School of Literatures, Cultural Studies and Linguistics, University of Illinois at Chicago

Many students feel overwhelmed learning vocabulary in another language. The sheer number of words they need to learn, the necessity of long-term retention, the importance of pronunciation for aural comprehension, the significance of orthography for reading fluency, and the understanding of contextual factors are only some aspects students need to master. While most textbooks present new vocabulary in semantic sets, with pictures and practice activities, they lack a clear program that guides students from learning individual words to developing a functional lexicon. In this workshop we will explore how the different aspects of an advanced lexicon need to be addressed during the course of language study, from beginning to advanced stages. Based on the analysis of what textbooks are currently offering, workshop participants will learn how to develop supplemental vocabulary materials for all four skills. Additionally, we will make a distinction between vocabulary activities best used in class and outside the classroom. For vocabulary activities that can be completed outside the classroom, we will look at effective (and less-effective) computer-based materials available online and have a hands-on session on free, easy-to-use shareware.

Learn more about all of these workshops and find information about accommodations, costs, and discount plans by visiting our website. Go to <http://clear.msu.edu> and click on "Professional Development." You can apply right online! You can also print a PDF application from the website, or contact CLEAR to receive an application in the mail.

Early application deadline: May 17, 2013

Regular application deadline: June 3, 2013

Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning: Introductory Techniques

JULY 29-31, 2013

Workshop Leader: Angelika Kraemer, Associate Director of the Center for Language Teaching Advancement, MSU

This workshop is for language teachers who want to learn how to use CLEAR's free tools for creating interactive web-based multimedia language materials. The only computer skills that these tools require are point and click, copy and paste, and drag and drop. You get to concentrate on teaching, and don't have to worry about programming, uploading, downloading, or installing. The tools can be used with any language, any textbook, and any level. Learn how to make web pages where your students can record audio files that are automatically uploaded to your virtual dropbox. Make a "mashup" that combines your text, pictures, video, and interactive language exercises into one web page. Create virtual conversations for your students where they listen to questions, and the program captures their responses automatically. All of these functions are available to you from within a web browser, with no special hardware or software needed. Come and experience the next generation of web-based language teaching! This workshop is limited to 20 people.

Assessing Speaking: For Placement Testing, Classroom-based Assessment, and Midterm and End-of-term Proficiency Exams

AUGUST 1-3, 2013

Workshop Leader: Paula Winke, Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics & Languages, MSU

Advances in technology and developments in the field of oral skills assessment come together in this workshop, which is designed for teachers of all languages. The workshop has three goals. One is for teachers to learn CLEAR technology (*Audio Dropbox*, *Conversations*, and *Mashups*) for various types of online oral skills assessment. Second, teachers will learn how to assess sociocultural skills during peer-to-peer, group interaction during classroom-based tasks. Third, teachers will learn basic statistical concepts (no math prerequisite!) and learn step by step how to run the statistics on real test data using Excel. Special emphasis will be placed on aligning oral skills assessments with state and national standards. At the end of the workshop, teachers will be able to conduct online oral assessments and face-to-face group oral assessments so that their programs assess multiple components of oral communication skills. This workshop will be particularly helpful for any teachers involved in the creation or maintenance of placement tests for their schools or districts.

CLEAR Co-Director Retires

by Susan Gass

This spring CLEAR will bid farewell—with wishes for a happy retirement—to founding Co-Director Patricia Paulsell, my close friend and colleague of nearly 20 years. Pat arrived at Michigan State University (MSU) as an Assistant Professor of German in 1978. By the time Pat and I came to know one another, she had already single-handedly developed a strong business German program which continues to this day.

Pat is a nationally and internationally recognized expert on German and language for business. This background led MSU's Center for International Business Education and Research to ask her to serve as its Director for Business Language Initiatives, a position she has held since 1990. Her pedagogical background in languages for specific purposes and mine in second language acquisition (SLA) proved the basis for one of the most important conceptual foundations for CLEAR—the cross-fertilization that would emerge from bringing our SLA and foreign language faculty and graduate students together to work on common projects.

When the two of us sat down in 1995 to first conceptualize and then write our proposal for a US Department of Education grant to fund a Title VI National Foreign Language Resource Center (LRC) at MSU, little did we realize that the resulting center would still be going strong some seventeen years later.

I remember the day when Pat suggested that all LRCs should join forces and create a Council of Directors to advocate for all LRCs and their goal of promoting language teaching and learning in the US. It was her vision and energy that brought the Council to reality. She played a pivotal role in the Council, serving as the founding Chair and later Treasurer.

In addition to her role on the national Council of Directors, Pat has been an integral part of CLEAR, overseeing many of our projects over the last five funding cycles, including all of our business language initiatives. Under her guidance, CLEAR has made available two interactive business language CD-ROMs (German and Chinese), business language packets, a white paper on facilitating connections between international business and language educators, a series of online sourcebooks for business language in five

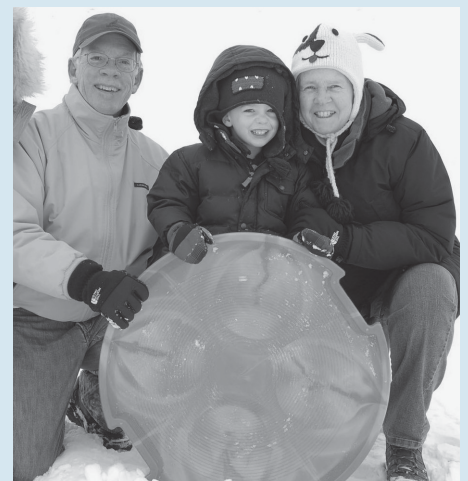
languages, and more. In addition, Pat has taught workshops, presented at professional conferences, and she oversaw one of CLEAR's most popular products, a video on the benefits of language learning.

Her role at MSU has certainly not been limited to CLEAR. She attained the rank of full Professor in 1989 and has taught dozens of courses ranging from business German and German civilization and culture to *The Theater of Bertolt Brecht* and *Female Utopian Ideas in German Literature*. Her extensive committee work and service to the University and broader academic community gained her wide recognition. Her talents were recognized by the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, who tapped Pat to serve as Associate Dean in the College from 1998-2006. Pat has widely published in respected journals and has sat on numerous editorial boards and review committees.

Over the course of her nearly 34-year career at MSU, Pat has been a respected colleague, partner in grant-writing, and friend; in recent years, we have enjoyed sharing stories and pictures of our grandsons.

She will continue to be affiliated with CLEAR as Professor Emerita, so we are not irrevocably parting ways. For the time being, however, along with the entire CLEAR team, I wish her the very best—and fun-filled days with friends and family—as she begins a new chapter in her life: retirement!

Retiring Co-Director Pat Paulsell and her husband Don look forward to planning more travel, fun with their grandson, and good eating!





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