

NASILP JOURNAL

Volume 25

1995



An Annual Journal of Learner-based Language Pedagogy

NASILP Journal

Volume 25, 1995

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The NASILP Journal is a publication of the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs, and is published annually by the Editor, with the support of the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Five Colleges, Incorporated. Contributions should conform to the guidelines for preparation of scholarly manuscripts set forth in the *MLA Style Manual* (1995), and should be submitted, preferably as an original and two copies, to: Elizabeth H.D. Mazzocco, Editor, *NASILP Journal*, Department of French and Italian, 323 Herter Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. Communication with the *NASILP* Editorial office may be made by telephone (413-545-3453), by fax (413-545-3840), or by e-mail (mazzocco@frital.umass.edu).

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NASILP Journal was designed by Heidi J. Holder

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Some Comments on Program Evaluation

John B. Means

I AM OCCASIONALLY ASKED to contribute to the evaluation of self-instructional programs at colleges and universities affiliated with NASILP and, in anticipation of such visits, the inviting school typically requests guidance in preparation for the curricular assessment. In other words, "what do I look for." There are, of course, several basic considerations which hardly need to be stated—e.g., the competence of the coordinator (or program director) to administer the program and the suitability of the physical space, equipment, and other resources assigned to the undertaking. Beyond the obvious basics, the following points are central to a comprehensive appraisal of a NASILP curriculum's strengths and weaknesses. Is the institution's financial commitment sufficient? NASILP programs are cost-effective even at modest enrollment levels, but there is a minimum level of institutional support required for the long-term survival of any program. The coordinator's responsibilities are numerous and time-consuming, justifying a teaching reduction commensurate with the magnitude of the task. While a self-instructional curriculum does not require state-of-the-art technology to provide students with ready access to the required A/V materials, all NASILP courses require the learner's daily use of audio, video, and occasionally computer-based components. Inadequate or obsolete A/V software (or hardware) deprives the learner of access to essential instructional resources. For very low-enrollment languages, the expense of an outside examiner may be the program's largest recurring cost—and underlies the required assessment of the program's effectiveness. In sum, a self-instructional curriculum, like all others, requires adequate budgetary support.

Do the students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them? There are NASILP video-tapes available to member schools for this pur-

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pose, but the primary responsibility rests with the coordinator. Ideally, prospective students are interviewed prior to registering for a self-managed language course, but if a school's registration procedures preclude that initial one-on-one contact, there should be an introductory meeting with new students at the start of the term (prior to the first tutorial session).

Have the tutors (native-speaker facilitators) been selected with care? Do they speak an acceptable (or the preferred) dialect of their native language? If, for example, the department intends to offer courses in *Brazilian* Portuguese, a native of Portugal would not be the ideal choice. Further, have the tutors received orientation in their assigned role? NASILP materials have been developed for this purpose, but the ongoing guidance and supervision of the coordinator is crucial.

Does the coordinator keep track of what occurs in the tutorial sessions, or are the tutors left to their own devices? It is not necessary for the coordinator to know the language being studied in order to ascertain the degree to which the tutorial sessions are fulfilling their assigned purpose. Left unmonitored, tutorial sessions may prove flawed in ways not apparent until the day of reckoning at the end of the term.

In addition to records maintained by the coordinator, does the tutor keep accurate and complete attendance records which include notation of the level of each student's preparedness? Although the tutors never assign grades, they are quite capable of identifying a student's level of effort.

Are there established procedures by which students comment on each week's (or month's) progress? Learning strategies may be highly idiosyncratic, despite instructions presented in the text or by the coordinator and tutor. A simple process for determining what students are doing (or think they're doing), perhaps a brief questionnaire collected periodically, establishes a very useful link between the coordinator and each student.

Which texts are used, and how were they selected? NASILP maintains an extensive computer-based index of recommended texts. Because it is continually updated, a print version would become rapidly obsolete. When in doubt, a phone call to the Association is suggested. A nearby program coordinator or a seasoned examiner also might be called upon for such information. However, materials should never be selected by the tutor or,

for that matter, by anyone unfamiliar with the special characteristics and academic structure of self-accessed language programs.

Was the pacing of instruction established in consultation with NASILP or the end-of-term examiner? Is the amount of material appropriate to the length of the term and the assigned credit? Attempting too much may be worse than moving too slowly — e.g., "covering" ten chapters rather than "mastering" seven. Experienced examiners are ideally suited to provide such guidance to coordinators, and may suggest modifications after students have been tested.

Was the examiner contacted prior to (or early in) the semester, or was testing hastily scheduled a week or two before the end of the semester? Has the examiner served any function other than the final exam (e.g., assistance with selection of tutors or texts, etc.)? Are the examiner's assigned grades reported to the Registrar without modification?

Regarding tutorials, is the number of students assigned to each group appropriate. (Three to five is an ideal size.) Do all students have at least two separate tutorial periods each week? In the event of a tutor's absence, what are the available alternatives?

Are students routinely encouraged to continue to the next course, or are weak students (those performing at inferior levels for whatever reason) discouraged from moving up to more advanced work? Is it feasible for students to repeat a course or return to the study of poorly learned material before undertaking the next level of study? In the NASILP format, it is extremely difficult for students with gaps in their mastery of the basics to "catch up" during the next semester.

Does the program coordinator provide NASILP with the information requested by the annual Program Inventory sent to all member schools each summer? The Association's networking capabilities are directly tied to the data thus collected. Indeed, it would be almost impossible to undertake a comprehensive program evaluation without a complete and current Inventory. (Some members voluntarily provide this information each semester, but the Association requests it only at the end of each academic year.)

The Uses and Abuses of a Romanized Transcription

Eleanor H. Jorden

MANY NASILP ADMINISTRATORS have already participated in the following kind of scenario, while others can look forward to the experience in the future: you know nothing about the Japanese language but are about to begin a class within a NASILP program. You have located a native speaker who seems to meet all the requirements for a good tutor. The day after you hand over a copy of the recommended textbook, he comes to your office, in an agitated state, to inform you that you have chosen a strange textbook. There is no Japanese in it! When you point out that the foreign language material in it is obviously not English and you assume, judging from the title of the book, that it is Japanese, you receive a long explanation of the Japanese writing system, without which, this tutor claims, Japanese can never be taught.

Of course, the textbook, appropriately named *Japanese: The Spoken Language (JSL)*, does contain a great deal of Japanese, but the Japanese is written in romanization, a systematic, auxiliary way of writing Japanese through the use of our very familiar Roman letters. This procedure does not surprise us. The Japanese, whose own writing system is not one that would ever be used as a regular orthography for anything but Japanese, don't have our experience of seeing our own familiar Roman letters used in even the official orthography of countless languages—from French and German and Spanish even to Vietnamese. The troubled Japanese tutor is undoubtedly being influenced by his native paradigm: he is remembering his own foreign language study of English in Japan, which placed heavy emphasis on reading and translation. He also remembers his first days in school: he began to learn to read Japanese, of course, but he ignores the fact that he was already fluent in the spoken language.

If we were teaching Spanish, for example, we would undoubtedly use not only these Roman letters but the actual spelling regularly used in rep-

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resenting the Spanish language — in other words, Spanish orthography. But for Japanese, we are using it as a replacement for the real thing. Why? The Japanese writing system is the most complex in the world. It is not too long ago that the language had no writing system; it existed only as a spoken language. Then, with the introduction of things Chinese, a writing system was added to the imports. It has been pointed out on a number of occasions that had the Japanese traveled the world over, they could not have found a writing system less well suited to the Japanese language, but such was the influence of geography. The match was so bad that an adjustment had to be made in the form of the addition of *kana*. These are two syllabaries of approximately 50 symbols each, all of which represent syllable-like units without reference to meaning. They contrast with *kanzi*, the Chinese characters that represent sound + meaning. To give an example of the procedure in terms of English, we would write 'see' and 'sea' in exactly the same way in *kana* (because they sound alike), but they would be written with different *kanzi* because these similar sounds have different meanings. Today the Japanese writing system consists of 1945 approved *kanzi* (although more creep into various writings, depending on who is writing and for what medium) plus two *kana* syllabaries, one (*hiragana*) used to represent inflectional endings and infixes, particles, words in certain categories and those for which there is no *kanzi*, and the other (*katakana*) mostly for words recently borrowed from other languages, particularly English. Actually all Japanese can be represented by *kana* alone, but from the time children enter school, they begin learning *kanzi*. To write a text in *kana* alone puts one back to the level of a preschooler.

The special complication of the Japanese use of *kanzi*, not shared by the Chinese, derives from the fact that virtually all have multiple readings, some originating as borrowings from the Chinese language and the others native Japanese. It is as if symbols in English might represent either readings of native Germanic origin or, depending on context, readings based on borrowings, especially from French or Latin or Greek. For example, imagine that we had a character written !#!, read either as 'big' or 'magn(i)'. How would we read !#! as an independent word? 'big'; !#! + ~y? 'magnify'; !#! + -er? 'bigger'; !#! + -um 'magnum'; !#! + -tude 'magnitude'; !#! + -est? 'biggest.' In the case of the countless *kanzi* com-

pounds, i.e., words which are written with two or more *kanzi*, the *kanzi* may all be read with their Chinese-style readings, or all with their native Japanese-style readings, or with a combination. Obviously our knowledge of the language plays an important role in determining the appropriate reading of each example.

We have ample evidence from all over the world of the primacy of any spoken language over its written representation (if it has a writing system at all). Nowhere do children (unless specially handicapped) learn how to read and write until they speak their native language with considerable fluency. It is crucially important that when starting to study a foreign language, the learner begin by gaining at least some limited competence in the spoken language. Speaking will later help with reading, but the reverse is not true.

At the initial stages of foreign language study, learners should be imitating native spoken models, observing not only how the language sounds but also lip movement, facial expressions, and gestures. After gaining some familiarity with the language's phonology and structure, they can then find out how the language is represented in the native orthography. By reading only familiar material during the early stages of reading instruction, it is possible indeed to gain some notion of what true reading is—i.e., the matching of written symbols to oral sounds + meaning, with no need to translate. Compare this with the painful decoding that so many students associate with the 'reading' of a foreign language: They jump directly from the written symbols to English equivalents— with constant dependance on bilingual dictionaries. Forget any hope of following trains of thought or developing arguments or reading between the lines. Reading for pleasure becomes almost a contradiction in terms.

Let's look now at our beginning class in Japanese. If we are to concentrate on the spoken language first, do we need any writing at all? If we are dealing with young children, the answer is probably no. They are accustomed to learning entirely through the ear, since they do not yet read easily, if at all, in any language. But adults are another matter. Virtually all their education emphasizes the written language and reading and writing. What then can we do when the language being studied has a totally foreign orthographic system like that of Japanese? Are we to begin with the same system we use for children—i.e. nothing written in any form? Most

adults do not seem too comfortable with this procedure, although it is used by some instructors. Or are about to begin with memorization tasks involving strange, unfamiliar symbols, when the learner has no idea what the symbols symbolize? In order to handle any new writing system with the ease required to verbalize smoothly and at normal speed, hours and hours of practice mastering those symbols are required. Note that this is true even if the Japanese material is written entirely in the *kana* syllabaries, as if for pre-school children. Those 100 *kana* symbols may seem very simple to the native Japanese instructor— just as our alphabet seems so very easy to an American who has been looking at it for many years— but to the foreigner just beginning Japanese, when everything from sounds to structures to culture are strange, it is a formidable task to gain enough control of *kana* to permit verbalizing at anything close to normal speed. You can guess what happens in the classroom. Students with their eyes on the written page concentrate on the new written symbols; oral imitation becomes secondary—and when the written and spoken languages don't seem to agree, the written takes over. Fluency is much more apt to match up with reading fluency (slow) than with normal, spoken fluency. And homework assignments? Without doubt, the emphasis will be on reading and writing practice. If there are any tape assignments at all, you know where the students will cut back when they don't have enough time (i.e., always) to do everything. The outcome can be predicted: the students' assumption is that they can fudge on speaking but that written homework must be handed in, and besides, surely exams will be written, so . . . It shouldn't be surprising that speaking ability, including pronunciation and delivery, and oral comprehension become not the emphasized but the neglected areas of the course.

If learners find it necessary always to have a text in front of them when they are speaking, this dependence becomes a crutch and they develop a frame of mind that makes them panicky whenever they try to talk. They must realize that speaking a language in no way depends on reading proficiency. As has been pointed out, while spoken competence does help with learning to read, the opposite is not true.

When the writing system is as alien as that of Japanese, the most effective solution for the beginning student is to use a linguistically valid romanization—not as a substitute for the native orthography but as a peda-

gological aid. For any students beyond middle school age, a written representation of this kind can be extremely helpful, as long as it is used appropriately.

But how should this romanization be used? It is in this area that there is serious misunderstanding on the part of so many instructors who object to its use. We must emphasize again and again that we do not use it as if it were a standard orthography, but rather as an authentic, reliable, pedagogical reference. Students should never be allowed to have their books open in class for the purpose of reading the romanization and following the oral conversation. They should not be asked to read romanization aloud in class. Neither homework nor exams nor classroom exercises should require writing it. Its purpose is to remind, to refer to what students have already heard countless times, in class and through the use of tapes. Since the symbols of romanization are thoroughly familiar to American students, they read in clusters—not letter by letter, as they do when handling an entirely new writing system. And for students having difficulty hearing Japanese accent and intonation, the detailed marking of these features in *JSL*—never in the native writing system—is often a help. Romanization, then, enables beginning students to concentrate, without distraction, on the spoken language. After at least familiarity with the sound system and basic structures have been gained, the native orthography can be introduced. But reading and writing are different skills—different from each other and different from speaking. They should be taught differently, and what is more, since written style is different from spoken style, those differences must also be recognized. Students should not be taught simply to write the spoken language nor speak the written.

What about homework for the beginning student working exclusively on the spoken language? Tapes, tapes, tapes + only reading of the miscellaneous and structural notes and preparation of *JSL*'s eavesdropping and utilization exercises and check-ups. And since a good course bases its tests specifically on what has been taught, the exams must be primarily oral, i.e., interviews and comprehension checks. A comprehension exam can be a written test as long as the answers are not to be written in romanization. Occasional written tests on structure can also be given; these may involve romanization at most to the extent of requiring recognition of familiar short sequences.

It is interesting that teachers who resist all use of romanization forget that romanization is in fact a system recognized by the Japanese as one that serves several very important uses. First, it is the most common way for looking up Japanese words in bilingual dictionaries. For example, if I were listening to a program on the Japanese radio or television and heard an unfamiliar vocabulary item, I would undoubtedly look it up in a Japanese-English dictionary in which the Japanese items are listed according to a romanized system. Native Japanese often use these same dictionaries to find English equivalents for Japanese vocabulary items..

A second important use of romanization, again by both Japanese and foreigners, is in Japanese word-processing. The most commonly used procedure is to type in romanization, using a QWERTY keyboard, and have the computer convert the output to *kanji* and/or *kana*. As the use of computers becomes more and more widespread, this is becoming an increasingly important reason for introducing romanization to students.

Next is the analysis of the Japanese language, particularly the verbal system. The fact that the Japanese writing system never divides below the level of the *kana* syllabaries complicates the analysis beyond the reality. With romanization, one can divide sequences in terms of single phonemes, represented by single letters, simplifying analytic rules significantly for foreign learners.

Last is the matter of reading and writing personal names and geographical terms within English language texts. It would indeed be wonderful if we could prevent at least those who have studied Japanese from talking about 'Kee-oto' (Kyoto). Clearly romanization is useful in its own right. For pedagogical purposes, since students can match its symbols to those of spoken Japanese with minimal effort, it makes sense to make this their first written representation of the language. Learning the real orthography will then come in its turn.

Native Japanese do not ordinarily handle romanization with sufficient ease to permit them to read it aloud at normal speed as they drill their students. For them we have published a supplement to *JSL* in regular Japanese orthography. Incidentally this supplement should never be used as an instructional textbook for foreign students. For them, there is *Japanese: The Written Language*, which introduces the writing system systematically and follows important pedagogical principles.

Several years ago I participated in a conference panel at which a professor of Japanese who was himself Japanese made a statement I have always admired: "I hate romanization," he said, "but I am Japanese, and I must always remember that my students are not." Teaching should be focused not on the personal likes of a teacher, but on the learners and how they learn most effectively. The study of a foreign language should begin with absolute concentration on the spoken language. When the native orthography is as foreign as the Japanese writing system, an effective solution is to use a romanization system, not as an official orthography but as a pedagogical aid that serves as a reminder of the spoken language.

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Teaching the Third-language Learner

David Weir

THE ISSUE OF TEACHING A THIRD LANGUAGE to students whose first language is not English is a topic that requires some clarification. The term "third-language learner" is used to describe students who have some language other than English as their first language. Native English-speaking third-language learners exist, certainly, but that type of learner does not pose the kinds of problems of language instruction that the non-native student does. Consider a hypothetical student whose native language is Mandarin, who has learned English prior to enrolling in college, and who now wants to learn German. Most language teachers would agree that such a student—the native Mandarin speaker—is likely to have greater difficulty mastering the pronunciation, syntax, grammar, and vocabulary of German than would the native English speaker, who has the advantage of knowing another Germanic language as a first language. Even though English is not as highly inflected as German, even though the two languages vary in syntax and in other important respects, those variations are as nothing compared to the outright differences between Mandarin and German. But the problem goes beyond the morphological mismatch of Mandarin and German, in contrast to the basic typological fit of English and German. If English is used at any point in the instructional process, as it almost always is, then the native Mandarin speaker has the further disadvantage of trying to understand the presentation of the target language in a second language, whereas the native-English speaker obviously faces no such handicap. Whether this double disadvantage is further complicated by the shift in the format of language instruction from traditional to self-instructional pedagogy depends on a number of things, as we shall see. But it seems to me that the problem of teaching any target language as a third language is one that has not been adequately addressed. The primary assumption in language pedagogy is that language learners are second-language learners, and that their first language is English. A secondary assumption seems to be that in the case of non-native English

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speakers, those learners nonetheless are near-native in their English language abilities. Both the primary and the secondary assumptions produce the same result: the target language is presented in the context of the English language, and framed by English in various ways. Vocabulary appears with English equivalents in most language texts, and grammatical explanations are, of course, presented in English. But most important, the student is asked to understand the new language in relation to English, to make certain inferences about the way the target language works based on a familiarity with the way the English language operates.

I should indicate at the outset that the best I can do is merely articulate the problem and suggest some approaches to it without really endorsing those approaches. I must also stress my limitations as a language pedagogue by indicating that I am not a language teacher and that my own communicative competence in languages other than English is limited. I do coordinate courses in language instruction in New York at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Since this is my frame of reference, you should know a few things about this institution and the place of language instruction in it. A few years ago, Cooper Union students took language courses at nearby New York University through a consortium arrangement. That arrangement ended, and Cooper Union began a program of language instruction in which *both* the less commonly taught languages, such as Japanese, *and* the commonly taught languages, such as French, were offered in the self-instructional format. The format has evolved somewhat, but the language program still follows the self-instructional model, even though some courses make use of language professors rather than native-speaking student tutors. Currently, students may take courses in Japanese, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. An appendix appearing at the end of this essay indicates the mix of language courses and language learners at Cooper Union in a typical semester. While native-English speakers form the largest single language group, they are in the minority overall in language courses. The second-year German course illustrates the issue at hand: six students, six different first languages. I submit that a class of this sort creates a different environment for learning the target language than a class of native English speakers. But there is more to the learning environment than the linguistic mix of students at Cooper Union (this mix is attributable to the fact that 40% of students are foreign-born, while an additional 10% are foreign nation-

als). The college is a professional school offering bachelor degrees in engineering, art, and architecture. Each school is well known and is quite prestigious. Cooper Union engineers, for example, developed the prototype of the microchip, and a Cooper Union alumnus was recently awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. The reputation of the art school is strengthened by the activities of faculty member Hans Haacke, whose "Germania" exhibit was the hit of the Venice biennale two years ago. The architecture school is also strong, boasting the triumvirate of world-renowned architects John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, and Raymond Abraham. Competition for admission to Cooper Union's three prestigious schools is intense because the college is fully endowed and does not charge tuition. Each school has its own admissions standards, but those standards do not necessarily include a high level of English language proficiency: students with verbal SAT scores as low as 200 have been admitted. Though this practice seems to be on the wane, it is still true that students are admitted to Cooper Union whose skills in English are well below what one would expect of a typical college student. Although Cooper Union has no language requirement, some of those students who are poorly prepared in English as a second language want to learn a third and enroll in the language courses I administer. To return to our hypothetical Mandarin student, that student at Cooper Union might literally be a rocket scientist—or a future Nobel Prize winner—but might not be able to read and understand basic grammatical explanations in the textbook used in her German course.

And so we return to the issue of language learning among non-native English speaking students where the target language is for them a third language. The first and most obvious solution to the problems that attend this situation might be addressed by "tracking" or segregating students into groups based on their native language, so that, for example, native English speaking students of German would not be mixed with native Mandarin speakers. Because of differences in the way Mandarin and German sounds are produced, such as the contrast of Mandarin aspiration and German voicing of certain consonants, not to mention the dominance of nasal sounds in Mandarin in contrast to the lower distribution of those sounds in German, Mandarin speakers have a hard time learning how to pronounce German. The third-language learners in this case might be put into a separate group that would spend more time on pronunciation exercises than the group of English-speaking students. The English-speaking

group would also probably understand such grammatical processes as inflection a bit more readily than the native-Mandarin group, who might therefore be required to spend a little extra time on that aspect of the language. Also, since the Mandarin speakers will not recognize German words on the basis of cognate forms, they might need to work a little harder on vocabulary. For all these reasons, the Mandarin group would almost certainly need to proceed at a slower pace, at least at first, than the native speaking English group, but their special problems would be addressed.

This hypothetical, homogeneous group of Mandarin speakers, segregated from students with other linguistic backgrounds, suggests the approach advocated by some teachers of English as a second language and prompts the larger question: can ESL pedagogy serve as a model for third-language instruction? On the surface, teaching a third language to a non-native English speaker would seem to have some things in common with instruction in English as a second language. In both cases, the degree of disjunction between the target language and the learner's native language must be taken into account. A homogeneous group of, say, native Russian speakers in an ESL class is preferable to a mixed group of Russian and Spanish speakers, at least from the point of view of the ESL instructor. Indeed, the homogeneous group of native Russian-speaking ESL students would appear to have something in common with the homogeneous group of native Mandarin-speaking GTL students (GTL is "German as a third language"). But ESL instruction is not really analogous to GTL instruction, for one obvious and substantial reason. In ESL classes, the target language and the language of presentation are identical, unless the instructor is bi-lingual and is fluent in both English and the first language of a linguistically homogenous group of learners (a situation, incidentally, that ESL teachers apparently do not recommend; total immersion seems to be the preferred ESL model). In GTL classes, the target language and the language of presentation are different. This difference appears even in immersion courses, because English almost always appears as the language of instruction in the textbook, or even on audio tapes. This is a crucial difference, indeed, because it limits the usefulness of ESL pedagogy to the problems that the third-language learner faces.

I should add that the situation of the third-language learner need not always be construed as a problem. The native Korean speaker should be able to make the cultural and grammatical adjustments needed to learn Japanese with greater facility than the native English speaker, unless, as sometimes happens, the Korean speaker makes too much of an assumed advantage and becomes overconfident, developing poor study habits. The chances of this happening, however, are mitigated if the student is cautioned against it. In general, the third-language learner who takes a course in a language cognate with his or her first language has an advantage. Native Spanish speakers are likely to become fluent in Italian, for example, more readily than native English speakers, and some of the best students of Japanese are, in fact, native Korean speakers. Once again, the logic of tracking or grouping students appears compelling; in theory, a group of native Korean speakers should be able to proceed at a faster pace than a group of students of mixed linguistic background.

At least two objections might be made to the practice of segregating native Korean speaking students into faster-paced Japanese classes, or of segregating native Mandarin speakers into slower-paced German classes. Since differences in language imply differences in ethnic and cultural background, the argument might be made that grouping students into homogeneous linguistic groups runs the risk of isolating those students from other types of students from other backgrounds. In this argument, language learning improves, but at the expense of social interaction. This objection to placing language learners into homogenous groups might carry some weight, but such an argument is not made on pedagogical grounds. However, there is at least one valid pedagogical argument for maintaining a mix of students with heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds: healthy academic competition can and should develop when some students do better than others. Obviously, the trick here is giving the disadvantaged student some additional opportunities to catch up. In the hypothetical situation described above, the pronunciation problems of native Mandarin speakers learning German could be addressed just as well by scheduling an occasional extra session devoted exclusively—or largely—to pronunciation exercises.

So far, I have addressed only part of the problem that the third-language learner presents, which, as we have seen, is not always a problem.

The issue above, in both the negative case of the disadvantaged Mandarin speaker learning German and the positive case of the Korean speaker learning Japanese, is fairly easy to articulate: if the student's first language is cognate with the target language, that student may have an advantage over the student whose first language is not cognate with the target language. In either case, the task of the teacher in a traditional language course or of the coordinator in a self-instructional course is to acknowledge particular advantages or disadvantages that the student may have as a result of the first language and to deal with them accordingly, either by linguistic counseling or by supplemental instruction.

The notion of supplemental instruction is easy enough to understand, but the nature of linguistic counseling needs some explanation. One should never assume that a student understands anything about his or her native language or its relationship to other languages. Linguistic fluency does not make one a linguist, and linguistically fluent students are definitely not linguists. I will give one example that sounds extreme, but is really quite typical of the way some students think about language. A couple of years ago a native Cantonese speaker started a course in Japanese with a high level of motivation to learn but became extremely lazy in her study habits and did poorly on oral examinations. Too late I learned that she thought Japanese was, in effect, a dialect of Chinese. "They got everything from us," she said, referring to the Japanese kanji characters borrowed from Chinese logograms. She remained quite cheerful in spite of the fact that she was doing poorly in tutorial sessions and on examinations because she was confident that she would be able to "catch up" once the course moved on to the "real" language, i.e., writing, i.e., *kanji*, i.e., Cantonese. This strange logic was clearly the logic the student was using. The assumption that language and script are the same thing, combined with the premise that the same script always maps the same or similar languages, led the student to conclude that Cantonese and Japanese were, if not the same language, at least sufficiently similar to preclude the need for regular study. Ever since this episode, I have been careful to counsel native Chinese speakers that Japanese is another language entirely, despite the incidental similarity of some of the script. This type of problem can be addressed, as indicated, by appropriate linguistic counseling, provided the teacher or language coordinator knows what a student's first

language is. At Cooper Union, I ask all students to indicate their native language on a questionnaire so I have the information to talk to them about the relationship between their first language and the third language they wish to learn. I also ask non-native students how old they were when they learned English. Obviously, the non-native student who learned English as a child and has continued to speak it will be fully capable of grasping the presentation of the target language in English; but the non-native student who has learned English as a teenager and who continues to speak his first language at home and in the neighborhood must be given special treatment.

Once misconceptions and assumptions are addressed and the student is enrolled in a course, a second type of problem may emerge. The student's command of English may not be adequate to a full understanding of the explanations of grammar and usage that appear in language textbooks. Further, since all translations that appear in texts are translations from the target language into English, the third-language learner's comprehension of the target language is likely to be flawed in relation to that of a native-English speaking classmate. Of course, the object of language learning is not translation, and I am not implying that it is. But translation is clearly part of the process whereby students develop their comprehension skills. Moreover, even in language courses where the target language is the sole language used—in texts, tapes, and class (such as the *French in Action* program designed by Pierre Capretz)—the implicit assumption is that the student is going to "get it" or comprehend certain words or expressions because they are cognate with English. Recently, the professor who examines French students at Cooper Union was flabbergasted when a Chinese student did not comprehend the meaning of the word "question" in French: "That's a total cognate," she said. "Not in Mandarin," I countered. One way around this problem in a traditional classroom is, again, supplemental instruction. The teacher might spend additional time with a student to convey key points about the machinery of the language. But in a self-instructional program, supplemental instruction is not an option (although supplemental practice may be). True, the self-instructional model places less emphasis on the text since it is to be used mainly as preparation for tape work, which is, in turn, preparation for practice in the target language with a native-speaking tutor. But the text

is still a key part of the overall learning strategy, and there seems to be no way short of completely recasting the English portion of the text into the native language of the third-language learner to get around the problem entirely.

A partial solution to the problems that I am now describing—that is, problems that the third-language learner may have either in comprehending vocabulary or in understanding the grammatical presentation of the language in the text—is to supplement the self-instructional learning strategy with videotaped instruction, or rather, to select materials that include a video component. Let me be clear about the types of tapes I have in mind. The video tapes that accompany Eleanor Jordan's and Mari Noda's *Japanese: The Spoken Language* provide documentary scenes of real-life language use, and they give the students an invaluable shortcut to cultural context: they can actually hear and see Japanese people using the language in socially appropriate ways. But these tapes do not provide the pedagogy; the pedagogy is in the text, and certainly, by no stretch of the imagination are the *JSL* video tapes intended as a substitute for the text. However, a few language programs involve video components that not only provide documentary scenes of socially appropriate usage but also include explanation and instruction. Such instruction may appear in many different forms, but I am familiar with three general types of pedagogical videos. The first is simply a staging of a classroom session captured on tape, in which a professor explains some aspect of the target language. The second type involves a combination of voice-over and video presentation that communicates points of grammar and usage. A third type involves animated sequences—cartoons—that either explain or illustrate points about the language that the student would ordinarily get through normal professorial or textual channels.

The first type of taped language instruction simply brings the camera into a conventional classroom and puts the professor on tape. For example, in a *French in Action* video sequence Pierre Capretz illustrates the meaning of the word "utile" by holding up a cigarette and throwing it away, in contrast to a pen, the utility of which is suggested when Capretz mimes the motion of writing. The performance conveys the meaning of "utile" without recourse to translation. Similarly, key grammatical points are made through visual rather than purely verbal means. In this type of presentation, the important grammatical concept that the gender of a noun

is not necessarily related to the sex of the person to whom it refers is conveyed by voice-over repetitions of the feminine phrase "une victime" while victims of both sexes are murdered in various *film noir* scenes. An example of the third format of video instruction is a German videotape that uses cartoons to convey the sense of common, everyday expressions: A smiling cartoon figure appears on a cartoon beach under a bright cartoon sun; a voice-over announces "Das Wetter ist schön" at the same time that the German expression appears on the screen. I must also mention an Italian video that features two people seated as if for a news broadcast, but the news in this case is the practice of ordering beverages in Italian. The visual instruction includes documentary scenes of people ordering beer, wine, tea, and coffee; professorial scenes of the two Italian hosts pouring each other wine; and video *realia* shots of glasses of wine and beer accompanied by text on the screen and voiceovers announcing "Un bicchiere di vino bianco, per favore," "Un amaro, per favore," "Una birra, grazie," and so on.

The examples I have cited are extremely simple, and the points about the language that the video presentation makes, in these cases, are quite uncomplicated. Concepts more abstract than "Una birra" are not as easy to convey through visual means alone. Nonetheless, this type of simple explanation in video format may help get the third-language learner off to a good start, but clearly the use of video-taped instruction is by no means a complete solution to the learning problems that the third-language learner may have. Videotaped instruction might even compound those problems in the case of students who focus on the video portion of the overall learning package at the expense of text and audio.

If visual instruction in various formats (including CD Rom) can make a difference in language learning in general, it might be one strategy for dealing with the special problems of the third-language learner. However, very few language programs incorporate visual pedagogy into the overall design of the learning package, and some of those that do are flawed in serious ways. The German program known as *Deutsch Direkt!*, for example, does not adequately coordinate the video component with the textual components, in part because text and video were not produced at the same time by the same people. Thus, video instruction as a substitute for textual instruction is not at present a viable option for helping the third-language learner in every case. But other things can be done. At the

very least, the language teacher or the language coordinator should know what the first language of each student is, so that each student can receive proper linguistic counseling. Students should know at the outset how their first language relates, in general, to the target language. They should be given some idea of what to expect. The native Korean speaker should be told to guard against overconfidence when she sees her native English speaking classmates stumble over Japanese syntax. The native Spanish speaker who takes French should be put on notice that all cognate nouns in the romance languages are not gendered alike. And so on. In addition, we need to be aware that the use of English to explain or to translate the target language may put the third-language learner at a disadvantage, and that such learners might need some kind of supplemental instruction or extra practice with the target language.

In many ways, the self-instructional format is well-suited to the special needs of the third-language learner. I can think of at least three advantages that self-instruction has over traditional instruction. One, in the self-instructional format language patterns are internalized through audio-lingual practice with tapes, thereby reducing the need for English-language explanations of grammar and syntax. Two, the use of *realia* in tutorial sessions can take the place of translation as an aid to comprehension. Three, the exclusive use of the target language in tutorial sessions means that all students are being asked to do the same things in the same language, whereas in a traditional classroom the third-language learner might sometimes be asked to process the target language in some way that involves English as second language. In other words, if using English to teach the target language is construed as bad, then using English as a second language to teach a third language is worse. And that worse-case scenario cannot possibly occur in a tutorial session that follows the NASILP format.

In NASILP promotional materials the point is made that NASILP-style language courses often develop into traditional classroom courses. But it seems to me that what is needed is a contrary pattern of development in which the traditional classroom course becomes more like the NASILP course. If by "classroom course" is meant a class with 20 or more students in which a teacher uses English to explain the language and assigns lessons in a textbook designed for the English-speaking student, then the third-language learner will not be well served. But in such a classroom

the native English speaking student may not be particularly well-served, either. The influx of third-language learners into the classroom will almost certainly have the beneficial effect of making language teachers look at what they do in fresh ways. At one time, in language courses in American colleges it was actually possible to teach any given language as a code of English because all of the students shared that common code. Not any more. At the very least, the third-language learner urges us to develop new instructional strategies, and to find creative ways around the absence of a common linguistic code. In other words, the third-language learner really belongs in a learning environment that we have scarcely begun to imagine, but one that may well be the future of language learning in America.

Appendix

Fall 1994 language enrollments by course and native language at
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art

All levels:	Spanish	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Total
English	5	10	5	5	6	31
Mandarin		1	3		6	10
Korean					7	7
Russian			1	2		3
Romanian		1		1		2
Spanish		1		1		2
Cantonese					1	1
Czech			1			1
Dutch			1			1
French					1	1
German		1				1
Hebrew	1					1
Portuguese		1				1
Serbo-Croatian			1			1
Totals:	6	15	12	9	21	63

First-year courses:	Spanish	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Total
English	5	5	4	4	2	20
Mandarin		1	2		4	7
Korean					4	4
Cantonese					1	1
French					1	1
German		1				1
Hebrew	1					1
Portuguese		1				1
Romanian				1		1
Spanish		1				1
Totals:	6	9	6	5	12	38

Second (+third) year courses	French	German	Italian	Japanese	Total
English	5	1	1	3(+1)	11
Mandarin		1		2	3
Korean				2(+1)	3
Russian		1	2		3
Czech		1			1
Dutch		1			1
Romanian	1				1
Serbo-Croatian		1			1
Spanish			1		1
Totals:	6	6	4	7(+2)	25

The NASILP Alternative from the Lab Director's Viewpoint

Mary Beth Barth

THE CRITICAL LANGUAGES PROGRAM at Hamilton College was established in 1973 and follows the general recommendations of the National Association of Self-Instructional Programs. This paper discusses the CLP student's approach to technology and learning in a self-instructional format.

For nearly twenty years Hamilton College has offered from five to eight languages each semester in the Critical Languages Program. It is basically a self-instructional program in which students meet three times a week with a student native speaker of the language. The students in the program are tested twice a semester by an outside examiner. The program follows the general recommendations of The National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP) at Temple University. The Program has enabled many of our students to begin the study of languages which would otherwise not have been available to them. Many continue their study of the language through programs abroad and graduate school. The fact that the opportunity exists at all has made the difference to a number of students.

Several years ago, as our enrollments in Japanese and Chinese increased, these languages "graduated" from the Critical Languages Program and are now taught as formal classes. I view the Program as a springboard for languages to become more mainstreamed and enrollments to increase, thereby justifying the hiring of a professor, rather than as a possible prescription for reducing the cost of language instruction at an institution.

Although there's much talk of moving from a "teacher-centered" environment to a "learner-centered" one, and of the importance of different learning strategies (of empowering the students etc.), I think in practice this is a long way off. Many students have developed passive learning

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styles as a result of the traditional teacher-centered classroom, and until teachers become more "guide by the side than sage on the stage," I think we will be underestimating our students and failing as teachers. The true nature of teaching is helping students to become independent learners and under the present system I wonder if students are becoming more dependent than independent.

I had occasion recently to discuss the value of the self-instructional format when an inquiry concerning how one might expand the number of languages supported by an institution, in this case a university, was posted on a listserver. The administration at this particular university felt that it could be done through the language lab with tutors and technology. This prompted a posting expressing concern that a university would feel that some languages could be taught by tutors and supporting technologies and others by full professors, thereby compromising the quality of instruction and running the risk that the institution might move to implement a similar system for the commonly taught languages as a money-saving measure.

Below is the basic text of my listserver reply which will serve in the context of this paper as a brief look at what has been a very positive addition to the curriculum at Hamilton College.

I believe the benefits of being able to offer students the opportunity to study additional languages outweigh the possible negative aspects. I think the key to the discussion is the fact that we are referring to "low enrollment" languages, in which case it simply is not feasible to hire as one would for the more commonly taught languages. While anything less than a fully-trained professional to teach language is a compromise to some extent, I think exploring other avenues in order to introduce new languages to a language curriculum can be very beneficial. As far as depending on technology goes, the qualified human instructor is, of course, far superior to the most sophisticated machinery. The need for human interaction in the learning process—especially in language learning—is fundamental to the endeavor! However, what is so encouraging about technology is that it is making the learner-centered paradigm possible

and centering our attention where it should be—more on the learner's abilities than on the professor's.

Self-Instruction and Shifting Paradigms

There is something new, exciting, and perhaps a little disturbing in the air. In a word: change. Some say that the only person who welcomes change is a baby in a wet diaper. There is probably much truth to that. Change means rethinking and reassessing. Skepticism of a paradigm shift is understandable: after all, we're accustomed to a teacher-centered environment. Skepticism of the role technology will play is also understandable. It seems, however, that the increased responsibility placed on the learner and the increased role of instructional and informational technology are both necessary and inevitable. In both of these areas NASILP is experienced and well-established.

Students in the Critical Languages Program, like many language students at Hamilton College, come to the language lab to use audiotapes. Unlike most language students, however, they actually practice with the tapes; they even record and playback with the tapes. There is a significant difference in the use of the lab by students in the self-instructional language program and those in the traditional language programs. These different lab-use scenarios, observed many years ago and remaining essentially unchanged today, illustrate not only the students' attitudes toward working in the lab, but their attitudes concerning their role as learner as well. Perhaps, in the not-too-distant future, this scene will fade as the importance of the role of the learner in the learning process, and the potential and benefits of effective technology use become more recognized.

Traditional vs. Self-Instructional Student Use of the Language Lab

A typical day in the life of a typical language student: Student walks in, requests tape, finds a carrel, rummages around for workbook and pencil, begins tape, begins writing. Occasional groans of exasperation as the student hits the repeat button several times for that hard-to-fill-in blank. Between fill-ins the student begins methodically twisting the headphone cord around his or her fingers while staring "blankly" at the ceiling or

glancing around the room to check out who else is there. Often day-dreaming ensues and only upon realizing that crucial information has been missed for a fill-in, does the student sit up, get untangled, and return to the task. With the assignment completed, the student ceremoniously tears the sheets from the workbook, returns the tape to the attendant, staples the papers together, and with a look of satisfaction and work well-done—or perhaps it's relief that the work is done—asks for the assignment to be placed in the "French 120 bin please," and walks out of the lab having uttered not a single word of the language he or she is studying.

In contrast, when the students in the Critical Languages Program are in the lab, sounds are heard—music to the ears of a lab director! Rather than the bored, distracted student whose sole purpose in coming to the lab is to complete a workbook assignment, the Critical Languages students are involved and engaged in real practice. They take the tape work very seriously and, as the NASILP literature recommends, the tapes are for them a fundamental—not an optional—tool in the language learning process. The NASILP literature, which stresses the importance of tape practice and emphasizes ACT as well as FACT,¹ motivates the student to work actively with the tapes. Although aware of the students' practice in the lab, and the excellent results of this practice in the classroom, I do not think even I understood how seriously the Critical Languages students were taking the tapes until a student's damaged Arabic tape was brought to my attention while I was away at a conference a few years ago. I received a message from the language department secretary explaining that the lab attendant was unable to find the master for a tape a student was desperately in need of. To be honest, my first reaction was one of bewilderment that a student would be in a panic over a broken audiotape. My second reaction, though, was very different as I began to realize what this meant: the student truly felt the audiotape was necessary and essential. So, with a sudden sense of urgency myself, I called the department

¹In the February 1987 NASILP Journal, Ronald Walton discusses FACT and ACT in his article entitled "Understanding the Language Learning Process." FACT refers to "knowledge of" a language and ACT refers to "knowledge of how to." While FACT is more intellectual, ACT is the acquisition of a skill and is largely physical.

secretary, she located the master, and the student got her tape. Back on campus a few days later I saw the student, who quickly apologized for disturbing me at a conference, and then began to explain that the only way she felt she could study for the course was with the tapes—she felt that she could not prepare for class without them. I told her that there was no need to apologize and that some day I might even use her story to illustrate a point!

I think it is safe to say that the above anecdote is not illustrative of the average student enrolled in the traditional language course. Few students consider the audiotape important and necessary in their class preparation. Many if not most students prepare for class without giving a thought to the audiotape component. Most foreign language students, even with the proficiency goals, still rely far more on the text than on the tapes, and those who do use the tapes usually do so ineffectively. This is almost entirely due to the fact that most language teachers pay little attention to whether or how students have used the "ancillary" tapes. Until students—and teachers—recognize tape use as an integral part of the learning process, the scenario I described in the lab will in all probability remain unchanged.

By actively working with the tapes, the CLP students improve, not only their listening comprehension abilities and their pronunciation and fluency, but their confidence in using the language as well. They lower their anxiety level and increase their self-confidence by practicing the language in a low-anxiety situation where errors are tolerated and input can be repeated without embarrassment until it becomes comprehensible. They pass through the "affective filter"² which Stephen Krashen discusses, before getting to class, ensuring a far more productive session. Although a humble technology by today's standards, even the audiotape can be a very powerful learning tool if used effectively and well-integrated into the curriculum.

²According to Stephen Krashen all input to students must pass through an "affective filter." The ambiance which optimizes the language acquisition process is one where anxiety is low and motivation is high.

Learner-Centered Pedagogical Approach

Beyond the rather unique use of the lab by students in the CLP and beyond the increased confidence with the language due to tape practice—there is another measure of confidence apparent in the students—it is a confidence in themselves, and in their ability to learn. It is exciting to see students actively engaged in the lab; it is even more exciting watching students become more involved in their learning. By encouraging students in the Critical Languages Program to take a greater share of responsibility, students become more responsible learners. This pedagogical approach, which recognizes the central role of the learner, puts the NASILP format years ahead of most traditionally-taught classes. The focus of NASILP has always been on the learner, in contrast with the traditional class where the focus has typically been on the instructor.

So here is a humble self-instructional language program sitting quite comfortably amidst today's call for a paradigm shift from the instructor-centered to the student-centered. The traditional class, still very much an instructor-centered environment is not so well-poised to navigate such a transition. Questions such as "does learning occur more in a teaching environment or a learning environment?" and "has the emphasis been too long on the teaching part of the teaching/learning dichotomy?" need, however, to be asked, heard, and contemplated.

Although the Program isn't perfect, there are few regularly taught classes which are perfect. Having full professors teaching language is no guarantee of quality. Although it may seem a terrible compromise to accept less than "the real McCoy" to teach a language, it may not be such a compromise after all. While it is true that the native speakers in a self-instructional program are untrained as teachers, they are trained as tutors. How many traditional teachers have had any classroom training at all? How many full professors have any interest or training in second-language acquisition, pedagogy, educational technology, or will in the future?

While at first glance students in a "self-instructional" language course may seem at a distinct disadvantage, there are many positive aspects to working in such an environment. In fact, one of my examiners once pointed out that students in the Program are at an advantage because they recognize right from the start that it is they who are responsible for learn-

ing the material. They, therefore, take the initiative right from the beginning (as he put it, they're not sitting around passively waiting for the magical handout which is going to make everything clear). The students benefit from the small classes (usually five students per session). They actually practice with the tapes and participate in class (the students are the first to say that without the practice they are not prepared)! They feel comfortable working with their student tutor and, although they're nervous, taking an exam with an outside examiner is an excellent experience.³ It is often after students return from study abroad that they stop by to tell me how much they benefited from the Program—they went abroad feeling confident with their language skills and, perhaps even more important, their learning skills.

"Text, Tape, Tutor"—NASILP'S mantra. Of these three resources, the Tape has always been the most emphasized. It is because of technology, first reel-to-reel then cassette, that NASILP has been so successful in placing emphasis on the acquisition of a practical command of the target language. Achieving this learning objective was due in large part to students' use of this technological tool. In fact, it may well not have been possible without technology. Technology has played a vital role and made a significant contribution to the NASILP format, and the organization was ahead of its time in recognizing technology as central, not optional or peripheral to the learning process. New computer and interactive technologies offer additional learning tools with greater potential to appeal to individual and diverse learning styles. The potential and promise of instructional technology, no secret to NASILP, will continue to be an essential product and process in the learning endeavor.

"Students taking responsibility for their own learning"—NASILP's other mantra. Due to sheer necessity, NASILP created a learning infrastructure. Under the auspices of this organization, students set about the task of learning new languages in self-instructional programs scattered across

³The NASILP exams test achievement (i.e., the exam is curriculum-orientated and text specific; it covers only material students have been exposed to). The examiner tests the degree of proficiency in controlling only the material the student is held responsible for in the course.

the country. In the course of doing so, they also improve the skill of learning . . . of learning to learn. This may be the best benefit of all.

For a number of years there has been much dissatisfaction voiced concerning the general state of education, and calls abound for the reassessment and possibly the restructuring of higher education. More recently, there has been much discussion of the need for a more student-centered, learner-centered environment as opposed to the teacher-centered one. As I began seeing articles discussing the need for a paradigm shift in education I kept thinking, "gee .. this sounds very familiar—let's see: encouraging students to take more responsibility for their own learning, encouraging active learning . . . hmmm—sounds very much like NASILP." It was much the same feeling I had when I began hearing with increasing urgency of the need to implement proficiency guidelines in language curricula and about the importance of language use. It too sounded familiar—and that too was because it was so similar to what NASILP had established years before with "prochievement"³

In the preface of his book, *The Children's Machine: Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer*, Seymour Papert writes "It is often said that we are entering the information age. This coming period could equally be called the age of learning: The sheer quantity of learning taking place in the world is already many times greater than in the past....The most important skill determining a person's life pattern has already become the ability to learn new skills, to take in new concepts, to assess new situations, to deal with the unexpected. This will be increasingly true in the future: The competitive ability is the ability to learn."

In the Johnson Foundation, Inc., report of the Wingspread Group on Higher Education entitled *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education* two of the central issues were "Putting Student Learning First" and "Creating a Nation of Learners." Likewise, an article in *Educom Review* entitled "The Need for a National Learning Infrastructure," discusses the shortcomings of the current system, the focus of which is on teaching. This teaching infrastructure, a pedagogical model where lecture is the primary teaching paradigm "prohibits student involvement and active learning" and is a process where the students are "often little more than passive recipients of the outcomes of the faculty's decision-making process." This system where the teacher and the classroom are

considered the essential means available to deliver information and knowledge is an "outmoded delivery system" based on the assumption that students must be in a certain place in order to be taught. The article contrasts that idea with its opposite expression—that students must travel to a place in order to learn and points out that clearly this is not required: learning can occur anytime, anyplace, anywhere and it is in a learner-centered environment where the focus is on the learner, not the instructor, that initiatives on the part of the student will occur. In tandem with a shift in focus to the learner is an increased recognition of the potential of instructional and informational technologies. These technologies, long viewed as peripheral, are moving into the mainstream consciousness as organizations such as the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the American Council on Education give their stamps of approval through their own efforts to explore and integrate technology.

Conclusion

So the million dollar question: Would I look a gift horse in the mouth if I were presented with a professor of, say, Arabic for my students? Well, of course not and . . . yes. Certainly I would be delighted to be able to offer Arabic as a regular course, but only if the instructor were skillful enough to reinforce, not deflate, what the students have become capable of as a result of participating in the Critical Languages Program. These are students with the mechanisms well in place to embrace the role of the learner, and of educational and informational technologies in the 21st century—a century already dubbed the "Information Age." They are already in step with what is new, exciting, and perhaps a little disturbing: change.

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*A Consortium Discovers NASILP:
The Five College Self-Instructional Language
Program*

Elizabeth H.D. Mazzocco

THE FIVE COLLEGE CONSORTIUM, which consists of Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts, first came into contact with NASILP in 1990. The Five College Deans were in a quandry because the Korean Student Association had presented them with a petition carrying over 150 signatures from students wanting Korean to be added to the long list of languages already offered at one or more of the institutions. The Deans formed a committee to investigate the options available which would allow Five Colleges to expand its language offerings without (initially, at least) permanently altering its language/literature faculty. Both faculty and administrators alike saw a twofold purpose in the task at hand. First of all, a method of language study had to be found which would allow students to study languages not taught in the classroom at the same time allowing administrators to evaluate student interest and determination; if, after a period of time, student enrollment continued steadily, then documented student interest in a certain language could be parlayed into job descriptions for new faculty. Secondly, a method had to be adopted that was stable and rigorous enough to stand on its own because some languages, while frequently requested by students, would never support full-time faculty appointments, and yet, these languages needed to have been offered. After much research and speculation, the committee brought John Means, NASILP's Executive Director, to the Amherst community in the spring of 1991, and soon afterward, decided to affiliate with NASILP.

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As a Five College professor and director of the Mellon-financed Five College Foreign Language Resource Center (the research and development facility for Five College foreign language and literature faculty), I was to create and then direct this new program which was christened the Five College Self-Instructional Language Program. Over the next few years, I designed, redesigned and refined it with the assistance of faculty and administrators from all five campuses. Now beginning our fifth academic year, the program is well established and continues to be popular with the students. On the following pages, I will outline some key strategies that I believe have contributed to the program's success.

Administration

The self-instructional language program is housed in the Five College Foreign Language Resource Center which is located on the campus of the University of Massachusetts. This center was established almost a decade ago to serve as the research and development facility for Five College foreign language and literature faculty and as such is well equipped with technological hardware, software and consultants who know how to make the equipment user-friendly to faculty. Because the center was already the focal point for Five College foreign language curriculum development, it made sense to house the new self-instructional language program there. As both a professor and the director, I teach one course per semester and devote the rest of my time to administering the center. My being a 3/5 administrator is absolutely essential because running the self-instructional language program is a time-consuming process. More importantly, I have a staff of four in the office with me, so someone is always there to handle a crisis even if I am on another campus. During registration and exam periods, it takes all of us to maintain order. Because of the unique construct of the consortium, we are essentially running five different programs at the same time that we consider it to be one program. Each institution retains its individual regulations which we then incorporate into our own. This is the nature of our cooperative program. Supporting our office is Five Colleges Incorporated, the administrative body which facilitates consortial cooperation. It has its own director, who meets with the deans and presidents, and its own treasurer, who issues

our payroll, as well as an additional staff of associates and coordinators who number around 15. Without this body behind our office, the administrative process would be even more complex than it already is.

Languages Offered

We currently offer Modern Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Korean, Norwegian, Serbo-Croatian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu and are hoping to be able to add Armenian, Czech, and Thai by this printing. Each language has four levels, so we essentially offer 40 courses. All institutions agreed that the Five College Self-Instructional Language Program's purpose was to enrich the language offerings in the consortium; therefore, no languages are offered self-instructionally that are offered on any of the five campuses. The recent exception to this policy is Korean which was so strongly enrolled in the early years of our program that Smith College did indeed engage a full-time Korean professor in the fall of 1993. The two courses of study (classroom Korean and self-instructional Korean) continue to compliment each other, attracting very different bodies of students.

The Initial Interview

An essential element in the program's success is the fact that I control enrollment. I set an arbitrary cap of 100 students per semester in the program because that is essentially the number that we can handle well. Because of the enrollment cap, admission into the program is competitive and each student must obtain my signature before s/he can register for any of our courses. Each interested student must arrange a personal interview with me, either during pre-registration or add-drop. At that time I meet the student and discuss language study in general as well as the specifics of our program. First semester freshmen are not allowed to enroll; neither are students with no foreign language background. If the student has had prior experience with the desired language—be it actual study or merely growing up with a native-speaking relative—the student must take a placement test with the examining professor. An absolute beginner will be placed in the first level.

The "Typical" Student

My subheading is misleading because there is no "typical" student. The program attracts a wide variety of students for a myriad of reasons. There is always a significant percentage of students who have some sort of ethnic background interest in a language—be it their own heritage or that of a partner. There are students who enroll in the program because one of the languages has a direct bearing on a major or on junior-year abroad plans—the Asian Studies major who has already studied Chinese and Japanese and wants to add a little Korean, the archaeology major who will be participating in a dig in Greece or Turkey, the African Studies major who wants to spend junior year in Kenya. Then there are the students who simply enjoy languages and who enroll in the program "for fun." We do make an attempt to keep up with our students after they have finished the program to see if they do indeed end up using the language, and the most unexpected coincidences seem to occur in these students' careers. Just recently, an economics major found out that he had gotten his dream job with an international banking firm because of his familiarity with Greek (which he had taken "for fun"). If one thing unites these students, it is their dedication to the hard work this program demands.

Credit and the Language Requirement

I should note right away that another reason our program is successful is that students fulfill no requirement by enrolling in it. Our language courses do not satisfy the language requirement on any campus; indeed, they carry only one-half of the credit carried by a traditional, in-class language course. The credit issue was an administrative nightmare at the beginning of the program because the academic planning committee of each institution had to meet, review the course curriculum, interview me, and then decide what, if any, credit to grant to the courses. The result, which was two very long years in coming, was surprisingly similar at all institutions. The self-instructional courses carry one-half of the credit of a language course on the course's home campus. This means that, for example, at Amherst College, elementary French is worth 1 credit, so self-instructional Swahili is worth 1/2 credit; at Mount Holyoke College where elementary French is worth 4 credits, self-instructional Swahili is worth 2 credits; and at the University of Massachusetts, elementary French is worth 3 credits and self-instructional Swahili is worth 1 1/2 credits. At

Smith College, a student must successfully complete all four levels before she receives any credit and a Mount Holyoke College student must complete at least two levels. Fortunately for me and my staff, the individual registrars keep up with the credits, I just okay the grades. But the end result is that a student has to be really interested in one of our languages to enroll in it.

Placement Testing

An interested student who has had prior experience with a language must take a placement exam. This is not as daunting as it sounds. We schedule placement exams at the same time that our examiners are on campus to give exams in December or May and we encourage students to sign up, meet the professor in person, and complete the placement exam then. Invariably there are a few students who, for whatever reason, are unable to meet with the examining professor when s/he is on campus. Those students use e-mail to set up a phone time, then call the professor and talk for a while; the professor then e-mails the results to me. The second method is less precise than the first and I would encourage one-on-one placement exams whenever feasible. We do not allow students to look through the text material and self-place themselves and I will not arbitrarily place a student. This discourages students who are fluent from signing up for easy credit; the examining professor is always able to spot such a person.

Completing the Registration Process

Before the student can complete registration, s/he must sign a contract with our office:

*Five College Self-Instructional Language Program
Student Contract*

— I have discussed the requirements of and regulations governing the Five College Self-Instructional Language Program with a staff member and I understand that my course grade will be based on my final oral exam administered by a professor of the target language.

— I understand that I must keep in touch with the Five College Foreign Language Resource Center, keeping them updated if I change my phone number, campus box, and, above all, my e-mail address.

— I will report all problems and questions directly to the Five College Foreign Language Resource Center

— I understand that my registration in this course will result in a conversation partner's being hired to work with me and that a professor of the target language will be hired to examine me. If I fail to follow add-drop procedures specified in the Five College Self-Instructional Language Program Guide, I may be billed by my home campus for the cost of my program.

Signed _____

Date _____

We instigated the use of the contract several years ago in order to underscore the special nature of the program. The contract copy in the student's handbook serves as a reminder of the uniqueness of the program and the fact that its success is dependent on the commitment of the student.

Add-drop and Incompletes

One of the features that we stress at the time of registration is the fact that, once enrolled, it is quite difficult to drop our courses. We allow the students a few weeks at the beginning of the semester to decide if they can handle the self-instructional nature of the course. After that "settling in" time, they are in definitively. We simply do not let them drop; if they try to do so without our permission, they not only fail the course, but are barred from ever enrolling in the program again, and they may be barred

from the Five College interchange (the system by which students take courses at any of the five campuses). If a student needs an incomplete (I did, for example, have one who ended up in a body cast in a hospital on the day of her exam), then we insist that the student register for the next level of the course at the same time s/he receives the incomplete. In this way, I can guarantee the presence of the examiner on campus the next semester. We do not let students take exams on the phone—it has to be a personal interview.

Examiners

We are fortunate to be in a fairly central location in the East, so getting examiners to fly in or drive over takes planning but is not the Herculean task it could be. One of the conditions to credit's being granted for these courses is that the examiner must a professor of the language to be examined. We do not hire native-speaking spouses or native-speaking professors of chemistry, for example, to conduct exams. This results in our bringing our examiners from other institutions across the US. Whenever possible, we contract the textbook author to be the examining professor. S/he not only comes to campus at the end of the semester to administer exams, but also serves as our specialist throughout the semester, assisting with the hiring of native speakers and with grammar problems that the students may encounter. The amount of the stipend depends on the number of students enrolled and the number of levels being tested. Our average stipend is around \$500 in addition to travel, meals and lodging; usually the examiner is able to arrive in the morning, give the exams, spend the night and return home the next day. Since we are juggling the schedules of 5 institutions (which do not have perfectly synchronized exam schedules), we elect to hold our self-instructional language exams right before the end of classes. Because of the Saturday-night stayover requirement for airline tickets, we have found that designating a particular weekend for exams works quite well. We can be certain that we aren't going to encounter class conflicts (I would not want the students to have to miss a last class in order to take our exam), we do get the lowest airfare, and we have free run of the building so that we can have numerous exams going on simultaneously in different rooms.

Conversation Partners (training)

Of equal importance to the examining professors in the success of the program are the conversation partners (so named to emphasize their role as purveyors of the oral language). Again we are fortunate to have a large and fairly mobile international student population. I never encounter problems finding suitable native speakers to hire. In fact, the job of conversation partner has become a competitive position. We pay very well—\$20.00 a session (an hour with the students plus the preparation time); because the job is coveted and the pay high, the international students understand from the beginning that they are an intrinsic part of the program. The compensation is somewhat equal to the responsibility carried by the conversation partner, who, we explain, is the living liason between the student and the language.

I have been most impressed with the creativity and dedication of these international students. They end up putting in a lot more time and effort than they are paid for because they are so excited that someone is truly interested in their culture, their country, and their language. The students frequently end up visiting their conversation partners in their native countries and then returning the favor in this country by bringing the conversation partner to their homes for breaks and holidays. The net result is that both students are enlightened culturally—the student with the culture of the studied language and the conversation partner with the host American culture.

Because of the popularity of the self-instructional language program, we frequently have as many interested native speakers as students, so making a final selection can be quite difficult. If there is any question about a native-speakers fluency or native dialect, they speak directly with the examining professor. Occasionally we have had to eliminate foreign students from consideration because of their lack of familiarity with the standard spoken language. After we have compiled a short list of potential conversation partners, we try to choose equally from among the five institutions, always trying to keep a balance of lower and upperclasspersons in the language groups. I have found that it is helpful to have a returning, experienced conversation partner in each language who can help the newer people.

After we hire the conversation partners, they come to our office for their training session. This is usually held on an evening or a weekend, and it is at this time that we explain the self-instructional program to the conversation partners. We emphasize that they are not tutors or teachers but that they are exactly what their title suggests — someone to facilitate conversations. We encourage them to direct their own and the students' grammatical questions to the examining professor. Using returning partners, we hold mock conversation sessions, illustrating the do's and don'ts of a good session. Ultimately, we give them the names and e-mail addresses of the students in their groups and tell them to get the groups together for initial meetings. We also give them text material and copies of the student assignment sheets.

The conversation groups themselves are quite small. Our limit is 5 to a group, but in reality, there are generally around 3 to a group. The group may consist of students on a single campus or be composed of students from several campuses. It is the responsibility of the conversation partner to get the group together at a mutually convenient time and at a mutually acceptable place. Before leaving our training session, the conversation partners all sign contracts with me stating that they understand the duties of their jobs and that failure to make weekly reports to me is grounds for dismissal.

These weekly reports are the way I keep up with the students. Each week the conversation partner e-mails me the following information about the session: who was present, who was absent, and whether each student present was well prepared, adequately prepared, or poorly prepared. This then allows me and my staff to track student progress. If students don't show up or were unprepared, we get in touch with them. We've found that one missed week can mean the difference between success and failure.

On the whole, the conversation partners have been reliable and trustworthy. They are proud of their position and willing to work hard to keep it. They also truly enjoy working with the students.

Texts and Materials

While we provide texts for the conversation partners, students must buy their own texts and workbooks. We use one centrally located book-

store for our texts, and students from all five campuses go there to purchase their supplies. The audio, video, and computer materials are available in each of the home campus' language resource labs. This generally means that I have to purchase a site license for that material in order to distribute it to each language lab. The labs have an agreement among themselves that any student enrolled in the self-instructional program may use material at any lab; the flexibility is most useful.

In addition to the material that can be purchased for the various languages, we are in the midst of developing a new series of laserdiscs with accompanying interactive Hypercard programs for the languages that we offer. Because of the technological nature of the center, it has been the natural track for us to follow. Eventually this material will be available not only locally but nationally as well.

E-Mail

Electronic mail is literally the fiber that keeps this program running. I can't imagine trying to keep in touch with 100 students and 30 conversation partners, not to mention the examining professors, without it. Each student has an e-mail account (provided free at the four colleges and for a \$20 fee at the University); we provide e-mail accounts for conversation partners, and my office has several accounts designated for self-instructional language program business. Using mailing lists, we can send messages to all 100 students quickly and efficiently. Best of all, no student or conversation partner ever has an excuse for not being able to get in touch with me!

Conclusion

The Five College Self-Instructional Language Program is now in its fifth year of existence, and its success has been the result of many offices and individuals coming together in cooperation. Like all Five College endeavors, the Self-Instructional Language Program is a consortial project, home-based on one campus while interacting with all campuses. Its most important contribution thus far is that it has afforded students opportunities to study languages that would otherwise have remained inaccessible.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER

Internship Program: Interns are selected from around the nation to participate in on-going Center projects and to expand their knowledge of foreign language acquisition and pedagogy. Internships are for language teachers, prospective teachers, and researchers in pedagogy and psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and cross-cultural pragmatics, materials and methods development, language testing, and technology and communications. *Interns work at the Center* for one semester, where they are employed as half-time Junior Researchers. They also take graduate courses in language, second language acquisition, foreign language teaching methodology, and other related fields. *Interns receive a monthly stipend* plus a tuition waiver. For those interns based on the mainland, round-trip airfare is provided. You may obtain applications or more information about upcoming Internship projects by writing to: NFLRC, University of Hawaii, East-West Building 1, Room 6A, Honolulu, HI, 96822.

CALICO SYMPOSIUM

The 1996 CALICO Annual Symposium will convene May 27th-June 1st in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The event is hosted by the University of New Mexico. The theme of the conference is "Distance Learning." The deadline for proposals is Friday, November 10th 1995. The CALICO 1996 Annual Symposium will bring together educators, administrators, materials developers, researchers, government representatives, vendors of hardware and software, and many others who are interested in the field of computer assisted language learning.

Presentation proposals should, if possible, address distance learning, satellite, internet, World Wide Web, Computer Mediated Communication, or telephony. Presentation for all levels of expertise—from newcomers to experts—will be considered. Proposals for preconference workshops should follow the same format as conference presentations and include a schedule of activities planned for the session.

For participation forms and information, contact CALICO, Duke University, 014 Language Center, Box 90267, Durham, NC, 22708-0267; phone: (919) 660-3180; Fax: (919) 660-3183; E-mail: calico@acpub.duke.edu

AUDIO-FORUM announces a new and enlarged *Whole World Language Catalogue*, offering materials in 79 languages, and featuring special sections of audio-cassette self-study courses in *Native American Languages* and *Eastern European Languages*. Native American languages include Cherokee, Choctaw, Kiowa, Lakota, Lenape, Navajo, and Passamaquoddy. The Navajo course is offered at beginning and intermediate levels; Passamaquoddy materials are comprehensive, including a Passamaquoddy-English and English-Passamaquoddy Dictionary. Eastern European Languages include Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Czech, and Slovak. The catalogue also includes a list of Foreign-Language Feature films available on video. *For a free catalogue*, please write to: Audio-Forum, Dept. A, On-the-Green, Guilford, CT 06437; or call toll-free 1-800-243-1234.