

Illinois Wesleyan University

Language Resource Center Report and Proposal

(May, 2008)

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Language Resource Center Report and Proposal

(APRIL, 2008)

Introduction

There is no doubt that technology has become an integral part of our young students' lives. The way they communicate and, ultimately, the way they learn about the world around them has been shaped by technology and the usage of electronic gadgets like iPods and cell phones. In the last few years, the field of second language acquisition has taken advantage of this new situation by researching and developing technologies for students to practice language skills and cultural competency on-line, in real-time, with native speakers of the target language.

Bringing the world to our students, one of the goals of IWU General Education program in the category of Second Language, is now more feasible than 10 years ago thanks to the development of instructional technology. We have come a long way since 1989 when Buck Memorial Library was completely renovated and the ILC¹ was created as a state of the art Language Lab. In 1990, Buck 108 was furnished with 16 *Tandberg system 600*² student listening stations, and later on 4 more listening stations were added. As instructional technology developed through the nineties and the world wide web became central, these now *traditional* Tandberg listening stations did not meet the necessities of our faculty and students. The stations were removed, and Buck 108 became one of the first *smart classrooms* on campus as it remains today. 20 computers were installed in Buck 101, then a big lecture hall/viewing room, with a teaching purpose. Soon we realized that the space and the layout of Buck 101 were not ideal to teaching. The big classroom was divided into two smaller spaces, now occupied by the Writing Center and the Titan calling center, and the computers removed from that space. The room adjacent to Buck 108, has remained the same since first renovated in 1989.

About the current LRC

Located in Buck Memorial Library, Room 107, the Language Resource Center (formerly the ILC, Interactive Learning Center) at Illinois Wesleyan University was designed to provide language students with facilities for computer-based activities as well as traditional language laboratory work. In addition to its use as a computer lab, the LRC also functions as a tutoring center serving the Departments of Hispanic Studies, and Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures. Buck 108 (the Buck Weems Room) is one of the most beautiful rooms on the Illinois Wesleyan campus, and serves as the LRC multimedia classroom.

¹ ILC, Interactive Learning Center, was the first name of the lab.

² The *Tandberg* company has changed its name to *Sanako* www.sanako-us.com

Current Equipment

Buck 107

20 Windows workstations.
4 Macintosh workstations.
2 VHS viewing stations.
Laser printer and color scanning.

Buck 108

Multi-standard VCR with access to IWU cable and Scola.
DVD player
Videodisc player.
Windows/Mac workstation.
Data projector
ELMO system, amplifier, wall-mounted speakers, and dimmable lighting.

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday Closed

Sunday 1:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Key Personnel

A.- Student Workers

Like other computer labs on campus, the LRC depends heavily on student workers for its daily operation. We have 3 different kinds of student jobs with different responsibilities:

- *Language tutors*: tutor students in all Modern languages we currently offer at IWU: French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.
- *LRC Monitors*: work at desk; check out materials behind desk; troubleshoot problems with computers in LRC and Buck classrooms and maintain LRC equipment.
- *Technology assistants*: assist with computer problems in LRC and Buck classrooms; install software; maintain LRC equipment; develop web pages for faculty; and help train LRC monitors.

B.- LRC Student Supervisor: Gayle Sauer

Office Coordinator II (HS and MCLL departments; reports to the Chair of MCLL and HS on a 2 year rotation basis)

Responsible for logistics and everyday managing of all student workers at LRC.

- Time cards for all student workers
- Daily supervision of all student workers (about 50 student per semester)
- Hiring and scheduling of LRC Monitors and Technology Assistants

- Hiring and scheduling of tutors for all languages
- Scheduling of *¡Háblame!* Tutor program for all students taking Spanish 201
- Assigning daily tasks for LRC Monitors and Technology Assistants.
- Budget: she signs off on every day LRC operational costs (paper, office supplies, ink cartridges for printer, etc)

C.- LRC Coordinator: Jaime Orrego

Spanish Language coordinator/LRC coordinator (He reports to the Chair of Hispanic Studies)

This position was created and approved in 2006. His basic responsibilities are with the coordination of Spanish basic and intermediate language courses (Span 101, 102 and 201) and training Spanish tutors. As **coordinator of the LRC**, Jaime serves as the LRC *liaison* for HS and MCLL faculty, IT and LRC student supervisor.

- HS and MCLL faculty: Jaime is expected to develop a comprehensive vision of how to assist and advise MCLL and HS faculty in the implementation of technology as a means to improve both instruction and learning. He is expected to participate in technology conferences (CALICO, IALLT, ACTFL for example) and report back to MCLL and HS faculty on new approaches to teaching with technology. He will also recommend software and instructional materials to purchase for the LRC.
- IT: organize technology training for LRC Monitors and Technology Assistants; he is part of IWU's TLTR committee.
- LRC student supervisor: meet regularly with her; assist in hiring student workers (writing job descriptions and interviewing process, for example)

Budget

The LRC has its own operating budget that is managed by the chairs of Hispanic Studies and MCLL. In its current form, the budget covers the cost of student workers (language tutors, LRC monitors, technology assistants), LRC office supplies/materials, audio/visual-hardware/software as necessary for foreign language learning, and any other teaching materials needed for the LRC. The computers themselves are supplied by IT. The money designated for audio/visual, supplementary hardware/software, and other teaching materials is budgeted as a discretionary fund that is split between Hispanic Studies and MCLL. Hispanic Studies and MCLL are currently working with Jaime Orrego to draw up a policy regarding the LRC budget that is in line with the recommendations of language lab directors nationwide in the International Association for Language Learning Technology (IALLT). We hope to have this policy in place by the end of the 2008-2009 academic year.

Summer 2008 updates ³

MCLL and HS faculty met several times throughout the 2007-08 academic year, twice with Roger Schnaitter, and also with IT to discuss the future of the LRC. The Departments made some recommendations to the Associate Provost to better use the space we have in Buck 107. Also, we requested the purchase of 10 laptops to be used in Buck 108 with a locked cabinet for storage. All these were approved to do before classes begin in the fall.

Current instructional technology used by MCLL and HS faculty

As we learn more about the potential of instructional technology in second language acquisition, and start *playing* with new programs, faculty and students are getting motivated and enthusiastic about new technologies. As a result of his work with Jaime Orrego, Jim Matthews is now using **blogs** as an integral portion of his instruction for French 302 course during Spring 2008 semester. He has been very happy with this process and intends to use it in future semesters. Jaime has worked with Sonja Fritzsche to help her develop a **wiki** for her Ger 417 course in the fall 2007. She intends to continue to work with him to develop computer-related materials for the new German 1st year textbook as well as her upper division courses (**Youtube, blog, SCOLA, podcasts**, etc.) Jaime has worked with Hiroko Furo to help her develop **Internet** resources for her Japanese classes. In short, Jaime's position has been integral to the growing faculty interest and success in incorporating Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) techniques into our foreign language classroom in Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures (MCLL). This adaptation is absolutely necessary for our pedagogical techniques to remain innovative and effectively reach our students. Faculty interest is demonstrated also by several conferences that our faculty have attended this year. Sonja Fritzsche recently attended the joint CALICO/IALLT conference during Spring Break 2008 in San Francisco. These two organizations are the premiere organizations for CALL pedagogy. This summer, Hiroko Furo will attend the WorldCALL conference in Japan. Jaime Orrego will be attending the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, which has a significant portion of it devoted to CALL.⁴ Each of these people will be giving a presentation to Hispanic Studies and MCLL faculty on their findings. Jaime also maintains a blog on recent innovations in CALL that he has become familiar with.

Hispanic Studies has launched the DIGITAL TITAN⁵ pilot program to integrate **podcasting** technology into Spanish 201 and start a data base of grammar podcasting units.⁶ In the Spring of 2007 with the help of a funded Group

³ For a complete list of updates, please see Memo on Appendix 1

⁴ Please see appendix 2 and 3

⁵ Digital Titan is expanding to a bigger project of digitalizing instructional materials for all our Spanish language courses. For a more complete description of the program, please see appendix 4

⁶ We had support from the Provost's Office for this project. The university bought 20 iPods for student use, and also we now have our own space in iTunes University. As of today, we have 3 grammar podcasts published and we will be working on 7 more during May 08.

Curriculum Grant, HS started a total revision of their basic language sequence⁷ in accordance with the latest technology-savvy textbooks in the market. What we have learned after examining the leading textbooks is that instructional technology in the study of Spanish as a second language has become an integral part of all these basic and intermediate language programs. The use of a reliable course management systems (**WebCT, Quia, MySpanishLab**⁸) for these courses opens up the possibility of customizing the program to the special needs of our student body and gives us the capability of maximizing in-class-time in ways such as assigning **on-line homework** and **self-graded quizzes**. We are now beginning to see the pedagogical potential of technology. For example, Carmela Ferradáns, with the great help of Jaime Orrego, is currently experimenting with **wikis** and **Photo-Story** with her intermediate language students as they learn different ways of telling a story and how the point of view shapes the story to be told.

These are other ways in which we currently use technology in second language acquisition:

A. Use of Internet/software outside of the classroom

- Assignment of activities that use authentic Websites (e.g. U. of Freiburg Website) or also Web 2.0 sites such as Skype
- Assignments that ask students to view/listen to podcasts, vodcasts, streaming video outside of class
- Assignment of exercises in on-line textbooks (e.g. Quia based and MySpanishLab)
- Assignment of extra on-line exercises associated with textbook Websites
- Use of language specific spellcheckers for essay writing/language specific keyboards with special characters
- Some language require special character sets that not all students have – (Japanese, Russian, Greek)
- Assignment of creation of podcasts or digital video projects

B. Use of Internet/software in the classroom

- In-class on-line exercises whether with textbook or otherwise
- In-class Website exercises
- In-class use of podcasts, vodcasts, streaming video (need headphones/cameras, mics)
- In-class use of special software or resources

⁷ The Spanish Basic Language Sequence comprises three courses: Spanish 101, 102 and 201. Spanish 201 meets the General Education Requirement in Second Language.

⁸ MySpanishLab is a new course management program launched by the publishing company Pearson Prentice Hall . This is the best I have seen so far. I am currently learning how to use it and planning a workshop for HS faculty and adjunct faculty this summer.

Our needs for the future

We strongly believe that the LRC needs to be updated to fit current instructional needs. Currently it doubles as a material and technology resource center as well as the center for all student tutoring. We are looking to create a strategic plan for it over the next five years. We hope to use grant sources as well as university funding to meet the goals of this plan. The plan will be developed jointly between Hispanic Studies and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, since both of these departments equally use this space to support the majority of classes at a variety of levels in their respective departments.

Student Tutoring⁹

Currently, student tutoring is the major use of the LRC. The room in the LRC as now arranged is currently not adequate to support student tutoring in Spanish, Russian, German, French, Japanese, Greek, Latin, and Chinese. HS has one table and MCLL has another table. Often both tables are full of students and there is no overflow room. Spanish and German require their students to practice conversation with tutors once a week, so this creates extra demand on tutoring space. Other languages might follow suit, thus creating a greater space need. If IWU were to consider adding the NASLIP program, which is a self-study program for LICTLS (less commonly taught languages), we would need a space for the conversation portion and the testing portion. This is still in planning and debate stages.

All these needs are being addressed this summer with the approved updates.

The proposed LRC: The Pomona model

Language learning is much more than memorizing a set of grammar rules. As the web site of Pomona's brand new Foreign Language Resource Center say, language learning "It's about communication, exchange, human contact, creativity and intercultural understanding." The LRC of the future should be not only a physical space for student tutoring and library, but also, and most important, a space that provides professional development and instructional language technology for faculty teaching a second language. *A place for exchange, human contact, creativity and intercultural understanding.*

It is our plan to further investigate models for Language Resource Center across the country. We particularly like the Pomona FLRC and would like to visit the site at some point during the academic year 2008-09.

The welcome page at Pomona FLRC website

Welcome!

Welcome to the web site of the Foreign Language Resource Center (FLRC) at Pomona College, a special facility made possible by a generous grant from the [Arthur Vining](#)

⁹ Please see appendix 5, 6, and 7

[Davis Foundations](#). Please explore our pages and find out what the FLRC is all about. You could start with some [photos of the FLRC](#). We are not only a physical space for students and faculty but also a unit that provides professional development, research, and instructional language technology support.

Please come to our grand opening:

Wednesday, September 10, 2008, from 3.30 to 5 p.m.

Stay informed with our [news blog](#). We recommend that you subscribe to the RSS feed. Just copy *http://flrc.pomona.edu/feed/* into your favorite news reader.

We are always open for suggestions and comments. And please note that this web site is regularly updated, so please come back for more.

<http://flrc.pomona.edu/center/>

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A copy of this report and proposal will be posted in the LRC web page
<http://www2.iwu.edu/lrc/index.shtml>