

LANGUAGE LINKS

A Newsletter of the Language Center (R-205)

Rosenberg Library & Learning Resource Center

City College of San Francisco



The Digital Language Center has Landed!

The Digital Language Lab is now up and running. The majority of audio materials previously available on cassette tapes (i.e. analog) are now available in digital form, delivered via the powerful 38 iMacs now installed in the Language Center. How can these computers be used by students? Looking ahead to the longer-term development of the iMacs' capabilities, one of the applications being considered will be the new version of Wimba Voice Tools, which, just to give one example, would enable instructors to assign pronunciation activities to their students for practice, review or assessment. Students could use their lab time to record these activities and e-mail the finished product to the instructor through a learning management system shell. Other user-friendly technology applications (again, assigned by instructors) could include making simple comics (see makebeliefscomix.com) or listening to language-specific podcasts, subscribed to

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The Challenge Ahead: 2008-2009 by Tom Blair

The upcoming academic year will be one filled with challenges. The cloud overshadowing all will be a difficult budget. Thus, all small classes will be under scrutiny. At the moment we are aware that there will be problems with enrollments under ten, but should the budget picture worsen, classes above that number, too, may fall under consideration.

Our best defense then is good enrollment. Please take a few minutes in the last few sessions of your spring and summer classes to talk with students about the next course they will take. The office will be sending out copies of the summer and fall schedules to you soon. Ask your students to post a copy of the fall schedule at their work place if possible.

In addition we have new potential in the Language Center. If you have materials to be used with the new digital lab, please talk with Christina Yee and LC staff to see how to best make use of this equipment. I also encourage each class to have a session in the electronic classroom so that students may learn about all the useful

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through iTunes and delivered to language-specific folders. Language-specific content would be identified by instructors or LC staff

Further down the line, given that instructors have or are ready to acquire the technical knowledge to integrate these and other tech tools into their curriculum, students could work on PowerPoint presentations for class as assigned by their instructor. ESL instructor Ana Wu has assigned these for her ESL classes, but these are certainly translatable, so to speak, into the foreign language context (see her website for examples at: fog.ccsf.edu/awu). Yes, there's a brave new world of technology out there, and the Language Center is going to be a citizen of that world!

If you're not already familiar with the Technology Learning Center in Batmale (the training lab is in R-210), now is a good time to get acquainted with this great resource for learning new software programs, including the Wimba Voice Tools, as well as the upcoming, user-friendly learning management system that will be adopted for the Fall semester 2008.

The Language Center, too, is looking at ways to develop workshops for instructors desiring a language-specific technology "intervention." Let's leave no useful technology behind! We will keep you updated regarding the ongoing development of the digital language lab, new Language Center acquisitions, instructor outreach, and workshops, so stay tuned.

Got LangMedia?

LangMedia is a website that provides authentic materials depicting differences in regional dialects and language-usage among speakers of the more commonly taught languages worldwide. The Five College Center for the Study of World Languages develops materials representing all CCSF credit languages, except Chinese. Students can access culture modules that include video and scripts in both the target language and English. Categories cover basic communications, culture and social life, necessities, shopping and services, and transportation, each with cultural information specific to a language and country or countries. So check out langmdia.fivecolleges.edu and recommend it to your students to fill out the culture content of your course!

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materials available for use there.

Our selection of a new textbook for first year Spanish, *Plazas: Lugar de Encuentros*, as well as a new edition of *Dicho y Hecho* for the Spanish 10 series means that we have the chance to make our largest single program, Spanish, even better. I have asked that the publisher of *Plazas* make another presentation of the materials as part of the August flex Spanish meeting in the electronic classroom, and Cengage has accepted. In addition to the lab book and text activities on the online language lab, there will be podcasts and, hopefully in time, even streaming video in conjunction with the book.

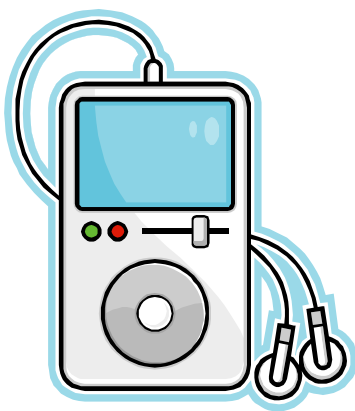
New faculty will also be with us next year. As I write this during our selection process, I don't know a lot of details yet, but it is sure to say that over the next five to ten years, many new faculty—both full and part-time—will join us. Let's use their energy, creativity and new skills to make them members of the team for all our benefit!

Finally, save the date: Sunday, May 18th at 9:30 a.m. to join us for the Foreign Language Department's breakfast at the Cafe Majestic, (Sutter at Gough). Cost: \$20. RSVP by 5/5.

There Will Be Podcasts!

By Leslie A. Pahl

It's not quite a "pod" invasion, but podcasting as a tool for foreign language learning and instruction is here, there, and everywhere. I took the opportunity last semester to take the *Using Podcasting for Teaching* online course through @ONE (Improving Education through Technology) and took a plunge into the world of podcasting.

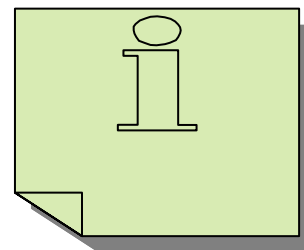


While the class started out with about 40 participants, it was quickly whittled down to ca. 10 stalwarts who saw the 4-week course through. Under the very expert instruction of CCSF's own Donna Eyestone, using our at-home computers and Audacity (a free software used for sound recording and editing), we learned how to create our audio content and then record, edit and package the final product for broadcast.

Students would then be able to listen to and/or download the audio files to their MP3 players (whether an iPod or some other player) or listen to them directly from their computers. Participants came from various walks of academic life as instructors, counselors, or staffers. For my course project, I chose to record an interview with Spanish instructor, Ed Sterling, for which I prepared a Q & A on the topic of his experiences with the summer 07 Chinese language immersion program in Beijing, directed by instructor *Sue (Xue) Lian*, and administered through the CCSF Study Abroad department. You can hear the podcast on the Language Center website, at: langlab/chilinks.

Since a four-week course might not be every person's "glass of beer" (as the Germans would say), the new Wimba Voice tools referenced on page 1 will have a nifty feature for podcast creation called WVT Podcaster, a one-click podcasting feature integrated with a course management system. Did I say CMS? OK, so there's no way around boarding the technology train, but instructors can choose at which stop they want to get off, whether they go two stops or three or to the end of the line!

A one-stop option would be a great new application from CLEAR, called Broadcasts. For those unfamiliar with CLEAR, it is the Center for Language Education and Research, a U.S. Department of Education Title VI language resource center. The Broadcasts application is part of a suite of programs for recording, mixing, uploading and interacting. The podcasting for teaching tool is promising: you create your channel and episode with a click of the mouse, a small recording box pops up and you record, save, and then publish. Publishing means that the episode sounds files are converted to the mp3 format which subscribers can then download. Students can subscribe to your podcasts in iTunes or simply download them into any mp3 player. It's that easy! One caveat, the application is still being rolled out so you could encounter a bug or two. Check out the various programs offered (most are free) by CLEAR, go to:



clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria/index.php

Audio Dropboxes? A Clear Choice!

With all this talk of podcasts, rich internet applications, Wimba voice tools, and CMS's, instructors might understandably be uncertain about how to begin to integrate technology into their curriculum.

Many have contributed websites, and most have e-mail accounts, both essential components of the wired campus to which we are all attached. One very user friendly application of special interest for foreign language instructors is the audio dropbox application, again from CLEAR. It is a bare bones application, to be sure, but could serve very well those instructors looking for a way to assess students' pronunciation skills, perhaps as a component of a mid-term or final. Here's how it works: the instructor creates an account with CLEAR and clicks on "Audio Drop Box". CLEAR gives you a code which must be embedded in a web page. A small voice recorder comes up, the student types in his/her name, records, and saves. The instructor can then retrieve the saved audio in the "drop box" under his/her CLEAR account. Click and listen. It's that easy. Leslie Pahl has set up a web page for German instructor Susanne

Hoelscher, who is trying the dropbox out with her students' participation. This could be an excellent alternative to investing time in setting up a CMS (course management system) with Wimba voice tools. If you're interested to see how this looks and works, at least on the student side, type in to your browser: www.ccsf.edu/langlab/audiodropboxtest.htm. You can access the recorder, experiment your recording, hear yourself in playback and access a .pdf for instructions. Of course, you must have a USB headset with microphone, but there are instructions included with this and the other applications. If you're interested in setting up a webpage for your own classes and students, please contact Leslie Pahl in the Language Center.



Got Blogs?

And now come the blogs! French instructor Isabelle Motamedi has set up a blog to accompany the Club de lecture novel *La vie de Marcel Aymé*. On her blog "Un chapitre par jour" she writes about the text chapter-by-chapter, with the opportunity for students to post their comments. The blog, which is free to set up and maintain, is at unchapitreparjour.blogspot.com. Check it out and see if a blog might be useful for your class.

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CCSF Chinese Language Students Win Again!

The 33rd annual Chinese Speech Contest of California was held on April 26, 2008 with ca. 700 contestants participating in various categories. Once again, CCSF students enrolled in Chinese language courses showed their considerable linguistic talents, with 4 students placing in their respective categories, which was determined by year and semester. The winners were: Mike Redus, 1st place (Sue Lian), Brian Souza 1st place, (Doris Chun), Sandy Chow, and Dai Yunshi. Congratulations to the winners and to their instructors!



Mission Campus LC

A language center with 17 computer stations in the new Mission Campus library is now open for student use.