Highlights of the CARLA Summer Institute: Using Technology in the Second Language Classroom

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CARLA Summer Institute: 第二言語学習者における テクノロジー使用に関する重要な論点

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Abstract

This paper presents a summary of the CARLA Summer Institute: Using Technology in the Second Language Classroom. This report points out some of the recent trends and thinking concerning the use of hardware and software technology with second language learners.

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このレポートは CARLA Summer Institute: Using Technology in the Second Language Classroom の要約である。第二言語学習者におけるハードウェアとソフトウェア技術の使用に関する最近の傾向、そして考えることのいくつかを指摘する。

The sixth annual series of summer institutes offered by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) was held at the University of Minnesota. These institutes link research and theory with practical applications for the classroom, through "discussion, theory-building, hands-on activities, and networking with colleagues."

"These institutes have been developed and are supported, in part, by the U. S. Department of Education's Title VI Language Resource Center program and by the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development and College of Liberal Arts, as well as other national and state funding sources." (CARLA Summer)

The institute that I attended, "Using Technology in the Second Language Classroom," was held for five days from August 12−16, 2002. The purpose of the institute was to provide the opportunity to become aware of and use various types of technological hardware along with commonly used and recently developed software resources including audio, video, computer software, and web sites available for use in language teaching. This Institute was designed for K-16 ESL and Foreign Language teachers, curriculum coordinators, teacher educators, and language lab staff. The B section which I attended was set up for those participants who had some experience with web browsing and had done some web-based activities with students. The institute was led by eight instructors from the University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts.

After an overview of the institute agenda, the sessions began with an introduction of the reason for using authentic audio and video in the classroom. This was followed with an explanation of how to record and edit various exercises on the computer from either personal audio and video materials or parts of commercial materials using software programs such as Sound Studio and Quick Time Pro for the Mac or PC. We were given a video of a Chinese festival to practice editing the sound track and removing extraneous scenes from the video.

Other audio and video items mentioned for classroom use included the audio CD player, the VCR, and the laserdisc player. While laserdisc players are considered old, almost obsolete, technology, they have a special advantage for classroom use because sections of the movie or exercise can be selected and printed as bar codes on a paper. By selecting a certain bar code, that individual section can be immediately accessed when the laser disc is used for a presentation in class. Bar codes can also be produced for some DVDs (digital video disk). However, one problem mentioned is that world wide standards for videos and DVDs mean that special equipment is often needed to play them in a zone that is on a different standard. Also computers often set themselves to a certain standard after a few plays of a DVD and then refuse to play a DVD from any other zone.

It was suggested that audio and video materials are most successful when they are 2 minutes or less in length and contain "authentic" target language material. The example

used to demonstrate a French listening exercise was two customers shopping for bread in an actual French bakery.

The next section of technology covered was the use of computer software to create language exercises for use on individual computers or on the Internet. This section included using programs and web sites such as Hot Potatoes, Quia, TrackStar, WebQuests, Composer, DreamWeaver, and others.

Hot Potatoes is a site where educators share exercises; in particular, multiple choice, matching, jumbled sentences, gap-fill, short-answer, and crossword exercises. Quia is a very similar site with a slightly different approach. TrackStar allows a series of web sites to be connected so the students can be guided from one exercise to another. WebQuests is similar, but allows the creation of web tasks; for example, mystery tasks, design tasks, or scientific tasks. Usually a question is posed that can be answered by connecting to the recommend links. Other interactive exercise makers such as ClozeMaker, MatchMaker, and PlaceMaker, which are used to make cloze, matching, and true/false exercises, can found at the Swarthmore website.

Composer is the free web page composer that is included with the Netscape browser, while DreamWeaver is a commercial program. DreamWeaver was perhaps the most complex program that we tried at the institute as evidenced by the 5 hours of class time out of 30 devoted to it. It does allow for the creation of elaborate web pages with special fonts, photos, animated graphics, audio and video files, and links all of which can be modified using the program's tools.

In conclusion, while most of the hardware and much of the software can be used during class time, most of the programs seemed to be geared to producing materials that the students can use for homework or self study outside of the classroom. Most of the software programs or sites can be used with a Mac or PC though there may be an occasional exercise within the groups that is computer specific. Perhaps more important than the actual brand of computer is ease of use and amount of room space used. For example, I was continually bumping my knees on a tower that was placed on the floor below a desk in one language lab while the keyboard which was on a movable pull out shelf kept me from getting close enough to read the unmovable display screen or use the desktop workspace. On the other hand in another room, a computer with a very easily adjustable flat screen and no tower fits very easily on the desktop while still allowing a good amount of desktop work space.

Information on the programs mentioned above can be found at the Tech Institute Web Resource site at **<http://LanguageCenter.cla.umn.edu/CARLA/tech-institute/resources. html>.**

Works Consulted

CARLA 2002 Summer Institutes <http://carla.acad.umn.edu/summerinst.html>

CARLA Summer Institutes: Technology <http://carla.acad.umn.edu/si2002/technology.html>

Swarthmore <http://lang.swarthmore.edu/makers>

Tech Institute Web Resource site <http://LanguageCenter.cla.umn.edu/CARLA/tech-institute/resources.
html>