By: Mark Knowles, Ph.D  
Director, Anderson Language Technology Center  
239 UCB  
303-492-2355  

We in the humanities place rare books in a supreme position for source materials, and that is as it should be. As an undergraduate, my love of French literature took a bump up the day I was able to don special gloves and do research with a 16th century dictionary from the rare book collection at my university. In the recent past, I’ve also joined in (albeit mostly vicariously) with the enthusiasts who chase “lost and found sound and images,” either by recovering reel-to-reel tapes in Goodwill Stores, bin diving in old record shops, or searching through dusty attics for old Super 8 movie film in the family home (one of the more visible manifestations of this type of sleuthing for the past can be found at http://www.npr.org/programs/lnfsound/stories/index.html). Universities, and university libraries are obviously great places to track down rare books. Universities may also be the overlooked repositories of another kind of treasure – recorded sounds. Some of these are not necessarily high art, but they can nevertheless provide us with an astonishing look upon our past. Upon the news from Ann Schmiesing of the availability of a collection of old East German recordings of Berthold Brecht plays, I asked Santé Jonker and Jonathan Nickerson to look into a decent turntable that could patch into the mixer of our recording studio. I’m happy to say, they’ve come up with a great solution and with the help of Dave Nicoll, we now have our very own small but respectable vinyl-to-digital conversion factory.

My own personal found sound project began after my father died recently and I was charged with sorting through his affairs in the family home. It was then that I discovered a set of old vinyl records lurking in one of his chests. I choose the anthropomorphically-charged word “lurking” judiciously, because for the first test of our new system, we spun a couple of those records and what awaited me was a surprise and a provocation worthy of a minor passage in À la recherche du temps perdu. These turned out to be homemade records made in what may have been a USO recording studio in the 1940s. They featured my father, at once a lonely sailor at Great Lakes Naval Base near the end of the war awaiting my mother, or, when the two newlyweds finally did link up, there were the two of them, enthused about the recent ballroom singer they had just danced to or the spaghetti they had just eaten at Henrici’s.

These records revealed many subtle, unknown details about my parents and I was confused and amazed that the voices on this vinyl were even theirs. Not only were those remarkable, but the full spectrum of their linguistic expression – the cadence, the diction, the syntax, the phonology – all sounded eerily unfamiliar. If the claim were made that actors’ were paid to play my parents’ roles, I might have been forced to agree, and it was perhaps only my mother’s unique laugh that provided the counter evidence to what was at once a believable and preposterous assertion. Clearly, these recordings provided good evidence that language changes over time. The question raised in my mind, perhaps as readily speculated upon by sociolinguists as by Proust, is about the phenomenon of the incremental process my parents’ underwent to shift their speech style from that of a working-class rural vernacular to the more middle-class midwestern model I grew up with. That is the sort of thing that intrigues me (and believe me, I see congruencies with certain questions in Second Language Acquisition).

But beyond my somewhat parochial concerns, I believe all of us will have some occasion to take advantage of this small but important addition to ALTEC’s resources. I encourage everyone to come and turn, record, seek, find, and preserve. And add source materials to the knowledge base.

Oh, yes, Happy Academic Year 2009-2010! In this newsletter you’ll see that we’ve been busy over the summer, and the fall has gotten off to a great start as well. I’m sure that your needs and concerns will not be a cause for us to slow down!
Course (Re)Design Awards are part of ALTEC’s Stimulation Package

By Mark Knowles
Director

Anne Becher of Spanish and Portuguese and Laura Brueck of Asian Languages and Civilizations were the winners in our first annual Course (Re)Design competition. Competition was so strong that four faculty members, Amber Navarre (ALC), Helga Hladgerdur Luthers (GSLL), Minor Murata (ALC), and Tina Pugliese (FRIT) received seed money to continue the development of their proposals. The competition was meant to promote a (re)design for a language course and for a literature/culture course. While the bulk of the work occurs in the summer months, piloting of the projects extends into the academic year, with further iterations subsequent to that.

Besides the pedagogical innovation, another outcome is to prepare language teachers for even bigger grants. Applicants of the ALTEC grant must set up one meeting with ALTEC Director Mark Knowles and Language Technology Specialist Edwige Simon to discuss the process of grant writing.

This year’s priorities were for designs which responded to pressing pedagogical needs, had an eye towards language learning within an intensely cultural and content-based curriculum, promoted active (and collaborative) learning among students and attended to a variety of learning styles. Technology use was not a prerequisite in these proposals, but all applicants did make use of it in various and interesting ways. Becher’s course, on slate for this spring, features online activities for her students, including forums and blogging, in a significant (re)design of a third-year writing course. A primary feature of Brueck’s course is a wiki whose content will be provided by the students. Her ultimate goal is for the website to become recognized as an online resource of reference for South Asia.

Fall Language Classes

The ALTEC fall language classes are underway. This semester faculty, staff, and graduate students from many departments are taking classes in Spanish, Russian, Polish, French, Italian and Chinese. A few classes were cancelled due to low enrollment but we are determined to get Portuguese going again, and also introduce some of the less commonly taught languages to the campus. The ALTEC language program offers summer classes too (check our website for updates). Many thanks to the dedicated students and instructors who make this program possible year after year!

Cost: $75

Classes Start September 14th

Contact: david.nicoll@colorado.edu
303-492-8224

Brave the World

ALTEC is offering 8 week non-credit language courses available ONLY to CU retirees, faculty, staff, graduate students and their spouses.
Congratulations to Courtney Fell, Nancy Bocanegra, Claudia Hendricks and Kathleen Colwell who have successfully completed their multimedia portfolios. As recipient of this year’s Best Portfolio Award, Courtney Fell (Spanish and Portuguese department) received a complimentary copy of the Adobe Web Design Suite. Special thanks to Anne Becher (first year coordinator in the Spanish and Portuguese department) for her workshop on how to write a teaching philosophy.

K-12 Outreach

ALTEC offered a two day Summer Institute on Language Technology in July 2009. Foreign language teachers came from all across the Front Range area to receive training on how to use Voicethread and the Youtube annotations to develop instructional projects. Participants were able to receive recertification credit for attending the event. ALTEC is planning on expanding its outreach efforts in the years to come.
ALTEC holds first Workshop on Second Language Acquisition

By Mark Knowles
Director

Occurring over a two week period, ALTEC’s first annual Workshop on Second Language Acquisition was held in late May.

Readings for the workshop were from three texts, and the editor of one of them, Sandra Savignon (Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching), was the surprise guest lecturer on the final day of the course. The workshop was designed as a global simulation where the students’ role played experts for a federal commission to address critical language-related issues. The design was meant to help students tie together the threads of the intensive two-week experience and to give them an opportunity to ask questions face-to-face and informally to an expert of international renown.

A representative sample of the answers on the course evaluation is the following:

“Personally, I would be interested in more of a “real-world application” focus - with discussions of how to apply some of these theories in a language classroom. With that said, overall, I thought the class was great, I learned a lot, and I think it will influence my teaching in very positive ways. Getting to meet and listen to Sandra Savignon was a delightful and unexpected surprise!”

Look for an updated version of the SLA workshop in May 2010, one which will take into account the great feedback we received from those who attended.

ATLS 7800 participants:
Maggie McCullar, PhD candidate, Spanish & Portuguese
Skyler Artes, PhD candidate, French & Italian
Petra Landfester, PhD candidate, Comparative Literature
Yoshie Arima, MA candidate, East Asian Languages & Literature
Helen Chen, PhD candidate, Linguistics.

ALTEC/ATLAS Course Project

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

ALTEC/ATLAS Course Project

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator

In the spring 09, ALTEC offered a graduate seminar on Online Course Design for the Foreign Languages (ATLS 7800).

As a capstone project, each of the five graduate students enrolled in the course developed a three-week online review course for their language of expertise. The courses were offered through ALTEC over the summer. This project was part of a case study investigating ways to prepare future foreign language faculty to teach online. As a separate project, Juliette Bourdier (French/Italian) also developed a three week online French course that she taught in August. ALTEC is planning on offering online language refresher courses in the summer on a regular basis. Please, let us know if you are interested in helping us develop and/or teach these courses.

By Edwige Simon
FLTP Coordinator