

Newsletter

Director's Note



Spring 2010 Issue

Director's Note.....1
 Spring Language Classes.....2
 Polish/Tibetan.....2
 3 Brown Bags.....3
 Share Fair/ Open House.....3
 Video Contest.....4
 Course ReDesign.....4



By: **Mark Knowles, Ph.D.**
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A feature story in the January 21 *New York Times* recently caught my eye: “Foreign Languages Fade in Class – Except Chinese.” Despite an abiding respect for the Times’ for bringing this story to light, I am dismayed that it is only through the simplified lens of journalism that the general public has an opportunity to grapple with the complex language education issues facing the US. Give the Times credit for the factual information it did include, especially its few dozen words on the Chinese Hanban, a language council affiliated with the Chinese Education Ministry, and on making comparisons of the trends

in our schools’ language policies to the recent real estate bubble and decline (remember that schools invested in Japanese in the 80s and early 90s but are now, as if in crisis mode, shutting down programs as the Japanese economy slips to the pitifully low number three spot of the G20). It is what the article fails to mention –the suppressed text – that worries me most. In the week subsequent to the Haitian earthquake, no mention is made at all of how this country’s present and future language needs relate to what is happening in our schools and universities (and whether learning Haitian Creole just took on new urgency). Two weeks following the discovery that a spelling error was partly responsible for allowing Mr. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab onto a plane he intended to bring down, we receive very little reminder about how the lack of language skills in our nation’s intelligence system has led to our inability to connect the dots in planned terrorist attacks. Nowhere does it inform us that the European Union spends \$1 billion annually on multilingualism, nor does it ask how much monolingualism taxes our economy. Nowhere is there mention that according to the most recent MLA survey, enrolments in higher education language courses increased by 13% over a four year period, which includes a 31.2% increase for the less commonly taught languages (those below the top 15 languages). Nowhere does it speak to the time, preparation, and tremendous commitment that go into building successful language programs, nor about the lives of those that are affected by the elimination of those programs. Nowhere does it inform us that to attain advanced levels of linguistic competency, we need to do more than rely on the caprices of educational fads or investments from flush authoritarian governments. Along with more Chinese programs in our elementary and middle schools, we need more Japanese, Spanish, French, German, Arabic, ASL, Korean, Russian, Indonesian, Portuguese, Hindi, Farsi, Hebrew, and Italian programs, not fewer. And throw in a few Vietnamese, Thai, Kiswahili, Czech, Polish, Navajo, and Zulu courses while we are at it.

30 years after the publication of the late Senator Paul Simon’s *The Tongue-Tied American*, I was under the impression that bright changes were happening on the language learning playing field. Overall, parents of our school children have a higher level of formal education and more experience with language learning than when Simon wrote his scathing exposé. Many parents I meet feel that the most fruitful moment to learn a language is sometime between exiting the womb and entering kindergarten (incidentally, the jury is still out on this topic amongst Second Language Acquisition researchers), and this common sentiment may translate into pressure for more language programs in our elementary and middle schools. What the *Times* article does imply – and quite correctly – is that since the recession of 2008 and its attendant declines in tax revenues, what progress may have been made in building programs for early language learning is seemingly now in full retreat. A reissue of Simon’s *TT-T American* might not be a bad move for an ambitious publishing company.

As for ALTEC language courses, things are at an all-time high. We have a total of 135 enrollees over four languages, with five different Spanish courses going forward, including a course on East Campus. I am especially happy to say that two new languages – Polish and ASL – have garnered enough attention to be added to our growing catalogue of languages taught at ALTEC. For more information contact David Nicoll at 492-8224.

Polish/Tibetan

Last fall, Colloquial Tibetan and beginning level Polish were offered under ALTEC's first true pilot of its Directed Independent Language Study (DILS) program.



Mark Knowles, ALTEC's director, borrowed the DILS concept from the Yale Center for Language Study where he was the Associate Director. At this time the program selects for highly committed graduate students who need languages not taught at CU.

Lhoppon Rechung teaches Tibetan at Naropa University, Mipham Shedra and CU Boulder (ALTEC DILS program)

152 Renovations

If You Could Design Your Classroom, What Would You Change?

Last fall, ALTEC began drawing up plans to expand the capabilities of the PC Classroom - Hellems 152. We hope to address the evolving needs of our language students and faculty. We welcome your comments and any input that you wish to offer concerning the redevelopment of this technology-equipped classroom. In addition to increasing the number of computers available to students, Hellems 152 will also have large high-definition displays, reconfigurable desks, and we are aiming to support video conferencing.



Please email comments to altec@colorado.edu.

Spring Language Classes



Contact:
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303-492-8224

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

Brave the World

ALTEC is offering 8 week non-credit language courses available **ONLY** to CU retirees, faculty, staff, graduate students and their spouses.

Full Course List: altec.colorado.edu/languageclasses

3 Brown Bags

Mark Your Calendar

Film Streaming Service: February 10th, 12pm-1pm
ALTEC is partnering with the Norlin Library and ASSETT in bringing streaming video to University Language Courses. This brown bag will provide information on how to place film streaming requests so that your students can watch movies from anywhere at anytime on campus.

Mango, Babble and Spanish Pod: March 10th, 12 pm-1 pm
Mark Knowles will provide a brief demo of these language learning services and lead a discussion on their instructional potential.

Assistive Technology for Language Learners: April 21st, 12pm-1:30pm
Cath Stager-Kilcommons from Disability Services will give a presentation on the technologies and services available at CU Boulder for language students with disabilities.

Open House/Share Fair

Open House: Thursday, April 15th, 12-4pm

ALTEC will showcase its facility and services and offer 20 minute language class demos in Hellem's 152 for undergraduate students curious to explore other languages. If you wish to advertise your language program and/or offer a language demo class, please e-mail Dave at david.nicoll@colorado.edu.

The Open House will conclude with a projection of the video clips of the winners of this year's video contest and a reception.

Language Technology Share Fair: Friday, April 16th

Share with other graduate students ideas and tips on how you use technology to create fun and innovative teaching activities.

Possible topics: PhotoStory, Digital Video, Wikis, blogs, podcasting, Voicethread, etc.

Send a paragraph on what you'd like to present (in a 15 min time slot, including questions) to Edwige Simon by **April 1st, 2010**.

This year's keynote speaker is Senta Goertler, Assistant Professor of German at Michigan State University.



By Edwige Simon

FLTP Coordinator

Spring 2010

WORKSHOPS

January



Instructional Design and Technology

January 27th, Wed. 9:00-10:30
2:30-4:00

February



To Play or Not to Play: Digital Games in Language Learning

With Julie Sykes, Assistant Professor of Spanish, University of New Mexico

February 3rd, Wed. 12:00-1:30
Room 145



Technology Sampler

Skype, Tag Galaxy, Mobile Technology, Jing and Jott

February 17th, Wed. 9:00-10:30
2:30-4:00

March



GoogleDocs

March 3rd, Wed. 9:00-10:30
2:30-4:00



Webquests

With Courtney Fell

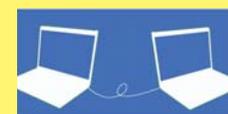
March 31st, Wed. 9:00-10:30
2:30-4:00

April



Hot Potatoes

April 7th, Wed. 9:00-10:30
2:30-4:00



Technology Share Fair

With Senta Goertler, Assistant Professor of Second Language Studies and German,

Michigan State University
April 16th, Frid. 9:00-3:00

Room 145

Note: All events take place in Hellem's 152 unless noted otherwise

Video Contest

ALTEC Video Shorts Contest is “Learn a Language”.

We are seeking short films in Quicktime format, no longer than 90 seconds, on this theme. (Credits may exceed the 90 second time limit). The content of your clip should be family-friendly, free of explicit or offensive content, and culturally sensitive.



First Place
\$250 Amazon Gift Certificate



Second Place
\$100 Amazon Gift Certificate



Third Place
ALTEC Hoodie

Any CU undergraduate or graduate student is eligible to participate in the contest.

Films must be saved to CD or DVD and submitted with the registration form and any releases necessary to ALTEC no later than **April 1st**.

For more information go to <http://altec.colorado.edu/videoshorts>



Spanish/Catalan Course for Study Abroad Students

ALTEC is set to help prepare a faculty-led study abroad seminar in Barcelona. This Maymester, CU students will be exploring Barcelona’s fabulous architecture, museums and historical sites with Professor Tom Zeiler. And in a first for us, part of the preparation will be an ALTEC Spanish course that will also include two lessons of Catalan, the local language of the Barcelona region.



Additional information:

<http://studyabroad.colorado.edu?go3DBarcelonaHCGlobalSeminar>

Course Re-Design

ALTEC is now accepting proposals for two course (re)design projects which we will support with our human and technological resources and for which the winners will receive a \$2500 grant. One grant will be awarded for a language course

(re)design, and the other for a literature/culture course redesign. The work for these grants will occur mainly in the summer months, although we are willing to support projects which happen to



extend into the academic year, should that be necessary. The deadline for these proposals will be **Monday, April 20th** and final results will be announced **Friday, May 1st**.

To be eligible, applicants must set up at least one meeting with ALTEC Director Mark Knowles and Language Technology Specialist Edwige Simon no later than **April 1st**. to discuss both the goals of the work and the writing of the proposal. Proposal narratives, which will include a timeline and budget overviews, should be no longer than five pages. Applicants may, however, include appendices of sample work which could increase the total length of the proposal.

Last year’s winner of the course redesign contest were Anne Becher (Spanish and Portuguese) and Laura Brueck (East Asian Languages Literature and Culture). Anne Becher redesigned her SPAN 4010 course into a hybrid course that combined face-to-face and online meetings. Professor Brueck redesigned her Asia 1000 class to incorporate a wiki-based project in which students collaboratively built a portal of information on Asia (see project at <http://www.asia1000.net/>).