



# The Word on Language

Language Learning Center  
Newsletter

Vol. 1 November 2003

Digital Language Learning **for** the next generation...

## LLC Reopens

After six months of demolition and renovation work, BGSU reopened its Language Learning Center in May. The project combined a \$90,000 grant from the Ohio Board of Regents, and approximately \$150,000 in facilities improvements from Capital Planning. The old Language Lab featured cassette tape decks from the 60's and 70's, and 14 inch TV/VCR sets, and allowed little diversity in how the language instructors could bring new aspects to their instruction. The new setup features three main areas: the CMC, Computerized Multimedia Classroom; the LC, Listening Center; and the VVA, Video Viewing Areas. Both the CMC and the LC are based on the new 15-inch flat-screened iMac computers.

### The CMC

The Computerized Multimedia Classroom is an historical innovation at BG. For the first time in the school's history students studying non-Roman font languages such as Chinese, Japanese, or Russian, can listen to, read, view on the internet, and write on a computer in their respective subject languages

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## Innovation in BGSU Language Education

Numerous instructors from the three major using language departments —German, Russian, and East-Asian Languages, Romance Languages, and ESL (English as a Second Language), have seized the new technology and have begun run with it.

### Dr. Robin Berg

Dr. Berg was one of the early users of the CMC, even back in the temporary location days of Moseley Hall. Two of the courses that he has taught, Business French and Contemporary French Culture, have relied heavily on using the internet to enhance, support, and give life to what contemporary France has to offer in these two areas. He also makes extensive use of the Apple Remote Desktop software for detailed internet or print work that are better viewed on the students' screens than on the 8' x 8' square screen. Dr. berg also uses the main VVA for "breakout" sessions, and a more intimate setting for French language discussions.

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## LLC Staff

You would like to think that a language learning center with ties to 10 different languages would have a staff that was diverse in languages studied, majors at BGSU, and personal backgrounds. You would be right..

**Jill Greiwe**—a second-year staff member with German language background.

**Anne Henry**—a second-year staff member with French language background.

**Kenechukwu Oguejiofor**—a second-year staff member with an African languages background.

**Shui-Tsin Leung**—a returning staff member from Hong Kong, China., and speaks Cantonese (Chinese), French, and Japanese.

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**LLC Fall Hours are: 8:30 – 5:30 Monday – Thursday  
8:30 – 3:00 Friday**

### LLC Reopens (continued from p.1)

Prior to the new OS X and iMac combination, this simple but necessary ability was not present in any computerized lab setting on campus.

The iMacs can play video movies/clips using Quicktime, Real Player, and Windows Media Player, and can burn CD's of their voice recordings, or other digital works. But the CMC is not only computers. It is also equipped with a DVD/VCR deck, and a Set-top Box connecting WBGU's streaming video TV in German, Chinese, Japanese, and French. Also, a Zone-Free DVD player, for DVD's originating outside the western hemisphere, is available for use by instructor.



**Dr. Lynn Pearson in the CMC**

### The LC

The Listening Center is the heir to the old Language Lab. Instead of using cassette tapes of the analog workbook tracks, the new LC uses digitized sound files, hosted on the Language Learning Centers Server. Using a computerized interface, they retrieve the mp3 audio tracks for use with their workbooks.

Faculty have also put foreign language DVDs on reserve in the LC for their students for "cultural enhancement." In the LC, students can also make mp3 quality voice recordings for reviewing and grading by faculty.

### The VVA

The final area of the LLC is really a set of areas. The main Video Viewing Area, is located at the northern-most part of the LLC, adjacent to the CMC. It is equipped with an LCD projector, a VCR deck and a Set-top Box, like the CMC. It also contains a special multiformat TV/VCR setup, which allows students to view VCR tapes from international sources that cannot be viewed on standard American format VCRs or TVs. While there are no computers organica to the VVA, hookups for both internet and LCD connections are available. The individual stations of the VVA are located at the south end of the LLC, and consist of three 24-inch TV/VCR combo sets. Like the main VVA and the CMC, these stations are equipped with Set-top Boxes for streaming video feeds from WBGU. They can also play standard American VCR tapes. ♦

*Can you name the ten languages of Bowling Green State University's language departments?*

### LLC Staff

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She began working at the LLC in the fall of 2002.

**Ted Federle**—is a 2003 hire of the LLC, and via his majoring in voice, is familiar with the languages of the opera.

**James Bragg**—is a returning member of the LLC staff, and specializes in computer support activities.

**Brian Schmitz**—is a 2003 hire to the LLC, with a Japanese language background.

The final student worker for the LLC is its VCT Specialist, **Sam Parks**. Sam operates the two websites of the LLC—the Support Website, where students retrieve their audio tracks for workbook assignments, and the Information Website, that is part of the BGSU website.

**Dr. Ron Skulas**—the Language Learning Center Coordinator. Dr. Skulas (BG 95) inherited the old Language Lab, and with input from the language faculties, designed and now runs BG's LLC. Dr. Skulas was raised in a Greek-American household, and took Spanish as his foreign language in high school. While a member of the U S Army, he attended the Defense language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey, California, for German language training. He lived for over seven years in Germany with his family. ♦





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**The CMC has 24 student iMacs, the LC has 16 student iMacs, and server is a PowerMac.**

## Innovation

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### Dr. Kristie Foell

Dr. Foell also uses the internet to enhance her German grammar class. She does so by using multiple online German newspaper or magazine sites. By doing this she can not only review the grammar in “real world” settings, but also weaves cultural and background information into the classroom sessions.



**A student doing a listening exercise**

### Dr. Lynn Pearson

Dr. Pearson finds the technology of the CMC allows her to expose her Spanish undergraduate and graduate students the opportunities to not only view the many differing Hispanic cultures, but also allow them hear the various dialects, and learn of the indigenous influences on the local version of Spanish. Dr. Pearson draws on university internet Spanish language sites for examples, as well as drawing upon the assets of commercial sites to enrich her presentation. She also relies on the foreign exchange students' interplay with their peers when their respective countries

and their websites are on the “big screen” in the CMC.

### Dr. Tim Pogacar

Dr. Pogacar's Russian classes present a different set of opportunities for classroom enrichment. The textbook used has an accompanying website with both audio and video presentations included. He also makes available computerized writing exercises for the students, using the inherent multilingual writing capabilities of the iMacs. Realizing that it was a bit of a stretch to have his 101 students learn how to touch type on a Russian format (non-QWERTY style) keyboard, Dr. Pogacar found a set of Russian phonetic keyboard programs, and extra fonts for the iMacs. Dr. Pogacar also extensively uses the LLC's capabilities to have students make mp3 quality voice recordings both in and out of class.

### Akiko Jones

Akiko's Japanese classes are weekly users of the CMC. She is a firm believer in using multimedia presentations to her students. She will switch with ease from overhead slides, to PowerPoint presentations, to audio recordings, to traditional pronunciation repetition exercises in a single class. WBGU's streaming audio feed of Japanese TV almost always greets her students as they enter the LLC, to not only help set the mood for the class, but to also allow her commentary on the program, and to speak about any related cultural items pertinent to the current assignment or the TV program.

### Dr. Irina Stakhanova

Dr. Stakhanova has been a firm believer and user of the LLC since it was converted from the old Language Lab. As a native Russian, she is able to personally draw upon many first-hand experiences, as well as a plethora of Russian web site materials to bring significant support and life to her classes. Like Dr. Pogacar, she uses the textbook's accompanying website, as well as the LC's sound files. Occasionally while the students are working independently on assignments, she will have one of the great Russian composers' works playing as background music. ♦



## DID YOU KNOW?

**The LLC is adding two new features:**

- **Language faculty have begun using the LLC as a clearing house for foreign language VCR tapes and DVDs as supplementary materials for required or optional outside learning activities.**
- **The LLC will soon have a portable digital recording system for use by language faculty and students.**



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Through 1 November, the LLC was averaging  
500+ students per full week attended.

### *iMacs the Key to BG's Language Digital Revolution*

Since arriving at BG's Language Learning Center in June of 2002, Apple's new flat screen iMacs have made quite a splash on how languages are being taught on campus. Amidst the growing pains of transitioning from analog tapes to computers, there have also been two major, and several minor upgrades to the computer's Operating System (starting with OS 10.1.4, and leading to the latest 10.3 upgrade). The computers have also gone through a series of imaging software (starting with RADMIND, and currently using iHook) to protect the iMac's software from pranks or worse. Through it all, the iMac and its software have been very forgiving and flexible, and fortunately for those of us who were not born with an A+ Certificate in our hands, easy to use and maintain. It is this ease of use that the language community of BGSU is relying upon as several major projects come into being:

1. The language community will be joining in with the initiative from the Provost's Office to create e-Portfolios for our students. The technical advantages offered by the LLC's hardware and software will be a major asset in enabling students to highlight their audio, video, and graphic presentations as evidence of their scholarly achievements in their fields of study.
2. A push is already underway to create a foreign language media "Clearinghouse" for language art software. Both faculty and Teaching Assistants have put "on reserve" VCR tapes and DVDs for student viewing outside of class time. Other media, such as Dr. Richardson's CDs of 400+ slides of art and architecture from Spain have also been made into CDs of PowerPoint presentations for students to view. Other supplemental media such as CDs of Spanish dialects (Dr. Pearson) and interviews in French (Heather Morano) are seen as a starting point for the third item.
3. Learning Community Initiative is forecast to begin in the Spring-Summer 2004. Under the supervision and coordination of the Center for Teaching Learning and Technology (CTLT) the faculties will form these communities both intra-campus and inter-campus to increase the awareness and cooperation between faculty members of like languages on media, internet, or other assets that would assist them in presenting the highest quality product to the language students of BGSU. ♦

### *CTLT Makes Tech Happen*

Throughout all of the preparation, execution, maintenance, and follow-up the people of BGSU's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology have been absolutely indispensable in making technology happen for the LLC and thereby, the faculty and students of BGSU. Here is a short list of the projects that CTLT personnel have created or worked on:

1. Creating the LLC's Support web Site. It was designed and its infrastructure were all created by CTLT student technician **Meredith Griffin**
2. Troubleshooting of the Support Shop, and lots of help in digitizing analog sound files, and general computer help came from then-student tech **Dan Nitecki**.
3. **Brandon Suman** was constantly helping on a "jack-of-all-trades" basis on anything digital.
4. **Dan Madigan** and **Connie Molnar** were always available for feedback and advice on how to work on integration of technology and instruction.
5. Finally, **Michael Thompson** has answered more dumb questions, and given more help than any three people should have. He has on occasion even made me find the answers on my own. ♦