“A man who does not know a foreign language is ignorant of his own.”
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)
Proficiency in foreign languages is a critical need in the United States today

Globalization is a 21st century reality. Advances in technology and communications, new ways of doing business, political shifts and instabilities, and a growing multicultural population at home challenge the United States to develop the capacity to engage effectively with people from around the world. Health care, law enforcement, social services, business, national security, and the role of the U.S. as a world leader increasingly call for people who are proficient in foreign languages and who understand other cultures.

Substantial research over the past two decades documents the personal, cognitive, academic, and social benefits of learning another language, lending additional weight to the argument for making foreign language study a national priority.

Research shows that learning another language
- Strengthens communication skills
- Enhances intellectual and cognitive growth
- Broadens career and life opportunities
- Promotes understanding of other people and cultures, benefiting both individuals and the nation as a whole.

If the United States is to remain competitive as a political, economic, and social leader in the world today, it needs to tap into its greatest resource, the American people. It must help its citizens develop the skills and understanding required to prosper in this global age. Foreign language study opens doors to their future — and to America’s.

15 Language Resource Centers (LRCs) at U.S. universities are helping address that need

In 1990, the Department of Education established the first Language Resource Centers (LRCs) at U.S. universities in response to the growing national need for expertise and competence in foreign languages. Nearly twenty years later, there are fifteen LRCs, supported by grants under Title VI of the Higher Education Act, creating a national network of resources to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Led by nationally and internationally recognized language professionals, LRCs create language learning and teaching materials, offer professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors, and conduct research on foreign language learning.

While some centers concentrate on specific language areas and others on foreign languages in general, all share the common goal to develop resources that can be used broadly to improve foreign language education in the United States.
Today's students will soon be finding their place in a world that is interconnected as never before. The changing role of our nation in the international community, the changing face of American neighborhoods, the changing sources of everyday consumer products, the changing challenges confronting science, health, environmental and law enforcement experts—all must be understood and managed by a new generation of citizens, workers, and leaders. Dealing with these and future challenges will require an education system that, from kindergarten through post-secondary education, prepares future citizens and employees to act and lead in a global context. American educational institutions, from elementary schools to professional schools, must be strengthened to prepare students for the twenty-first century challenges to our economy, national security, and society.

– Education for Global Leadership, Committee for Economic Development, 2006

The highly competitive Title VI Department of Education grants are awarded to institutions that are nationally known for excellence and leadership in the field of foreign language studies. The fifteen LRCs, based at universities extending from Hawai‘i to the nation’s capital, include:

Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER) at the Pennsylvania State University
Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota
Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon
Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University
Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona
Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) at Michigan State University
Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC) at San Diego State University
National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC), a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University
National East Asian Languages Resource Center (NEALRC) at the Ohio State University
National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (K-12 NFLRC) at Iowa State University
National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), a partnership of the University of California, Los Angeles, and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching
National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) at Brigham Young University
South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC) at the University of Chicago

Each LRC has a unique story and mission within the common purpose to promote and improve foreign language instruction in the United States. Their work is organized around seven basic areas:

- Research
- Teaching materials
- Assessment
- Teacher development
- Less commonly taught languages initiatives
- K-12 initiatives
- Outreach and dissemination

This brochure discusses LRC contributions in each area and provides individual descriptions of the centers. All LRCs are engaged in exciting and substantive efforts that are changing the perception and practice of foreign language study, enabling the United States and its people to better work and serve and lead in the 21st century.
Research is a vital first step to making progress in any discipline. It guides and supports the development of new approaches and tools. Foreign language teachers, administrators, students, and parents can embrace new ways of teaching and learning when they know that they are substantiated by research and testing.

Research can tell us:
- What students learn from different foreign language teaching methods
- What happens when foreign language study begins at different ages
- How much time is needed to achieve various levels of proficiency in a foreign language
- What good language teaching and best practices look like
- How foreign language learning contributes to cognitive development and overall academic achievement

LRCs are currently engaged in numerous research projects. The projects range widely, addressing teaching methodology, the use of technology in assessment and distance learning, evaluation of curricula for less commonly taught languages, second language acquisition, and many other issues. The projects described below are representative of the LRC focus on sound research approaches with practical implications for foreign language teaching and learning.

When should foreign language instruction begin? Does it have an impact on learning in other areas? How does studying a language affect the ways students, teachers, administrators, and parents regard the culture of the language studied? K-12 NFLRC at Iowa State University is conducting two four-year studies — K-3 Programs in Chinese and Spanish Two-Way Immersion — that will contribute to the body of research addressing those questions and others. In one study, students from kindergarten through third grade (K-3) are receiving instruction in Chinese. The second study follows K-3 students in a two-way immersion program in Spanish. (Two-way immersion programs integrate native English speakers and speakers of another language, providing instruction in both languages.) Along the way, the projects are building interest and enthusiasm for learning — and teaching — foreign languages among the students, teachers, and school communities involved.

The 2000 U.S. Census tells us that over 46 million people in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home. Students growing up in those homes who are educated in English-speaking schools are considered heritage speakers of their home language. They represent a substantial resource in the area of foreign language studies.

A partnership between UCLA and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching, NHLRC was established to develop effective teaching methods for heritage language learners. Each summer, NHLRC brings linguists, applied linguists, faculty in education and foreign languages, and graduate students working in all areas of heritage languages and cultures together to share ideas and research. Through these Heritage Languages Research Institutes, NHLRC is developing a body of research to support national efforts to build on the foreign language skills and cultural knowledge that are already present in abundance in many U.S. schools and communities.

“The students will have probably more open minds. . . you learn about cultures, traditions, celebrations. . . It’s not only the language you learn, but everything behind the language.”

— Spanish two-way immersion teacher
Excellent teaching materials reflecting current research and best practices are crucial in efforts to improve foreign language instruction. The field of language studies is evolving rapidly. Instructional approaches are moving from more traditional methods to innovative techniques that equip students to use their second language skills beyond the classroom.

New technologies provide opportunities to create instructional materials that will engage students’ interests and varied abilities. Globalization calls for proficiency in foreign languages beyond the few that are generally taught, resulting in a fundamental need for:

- Resources and teaching materials that align with national standards for less commonly taught languages
- Materials designed for business and other specialized needs
- Materials in all languages for learners at advanced levels

The LRCs are addressing these needs and opportunities in dozens of projects during the 2006-2010 Title VI funding cycle. Their work helps fill in the gap between what is needed to support foreign language study in the U.S. and what commercial publishers are able to produce.

Materials for teachers

Like many of the LRCs, CLEAR at Michigan State University has taken advantage of Web 2.0 tools to provide creative, new ways for language teachers to use the Web. Here’s what 10,000 teachers logged onto CLEAR’s Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning can do online and at no cost to create interactive multimedia materials that promote learning and make foreign language study engaging for media-savvy students:

- Create language learning podcasts
- Upload videos, record live video, and add subtitles
- Combine video, audio, text, and interactive exercises
- Put an audio dropbox in any web page that automatically deposits students’ recordings into the teacher’s dropbox
- Create interactive language-practice exercises
- Record questions for students to answer outside the class period
- Create interactive worksheets to use with textbooks

CLEAR’s Rich Internet Applications suite is only one of many LRC projects designed to assist teachers by offering lesson planning tools, content-based lessons combining language and social studies, textbooks, and guides for new teachers working in small group or tutorial settings.

Materials for students

Online listening materials developed by CALPER at the Pennsylvania State University help students learning Japanese at advanced levels develop the ability to converse. Generally, advanced language instruction has focused more on increasing reading comprehension, but CALPER’s Learning Through Listening: Towards Advanced Japanese Proficiency offers video clips of actual conversations in Japanese along with teaching suggestions and activities designed to help students understand the content as well as the structure of the conversation. Like most LRC online materials, these listening materials are free and available to anyone.

A number of LRCs are working with distance-learning materials. NFLRC at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa is developing Online Certificate Courses in Chinese, Japanese and Korean that will enable students, government and civilian personnel anywhere, who have acquired basic proficiency in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean, to complete advanced studies online and earn a University of Hawai’i certificate (equal to an undergraduate minor) for the language.

Additional interactive materials developed by LRCs are available online and on CD-ROM for students learning more commonly taught languages as well as Arabic, Russian, Hindi, and Pashto, among others, and for heritage learners of Filipino, Japanese, and Samoan.

Materials for less commonly taught languages

More than fifty institutions in the United States have adopted the elementary-level textbook series Let’s Speak, developed for ten African languages by NALRC at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Textbooks through the intermediate level for Shona (Let’s Read) and the advanced level for Swahili (Let’s Communicate) are the most recent additions to the series, which also includes Amharic, Setswana, and Twi. NALRC aims to create teaching materials for all levels of the ten languages.

These and many other materials for teachers and students of less commonly taught languages developed by LRCs are bringing new ideas and energy to teaching and learning foreign languages in the U.S.
Assessment

Assessment is closely connected with all efforts to improve and expand foreign language study. Effective assessment lets teachers know how their methods and materials are working and where they need improvement. It gives students a chance to show what they are learning and lets them and their parents know where they need more study or help. Assessment provides important data for program planners, administrators, and funding sources.

The LRCs understand that teachers need to know how best to assess their students in an ongoing, meaningful way. During the 2006-2010 Title VI funding cycle, eleven LRCs are involved in developing or administering assessments in twenty-five different languages ranging from French and Japanese to Tamil and Yoruba. They are working individually and cooperatively to:

- Create assessment tools
- Train teachers to develop their own assessments
- Help teachers understand the way assessments work and how to interpret their results

Creating assessment tools

The focus on assessment across educational systems underscores the need for testing methods that make sense and provide useful information to both students and teachers. Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP), a web-based tool developed by CASLS at the University of Oregon, uses real-world language situations to measure and explain students’ proficiency with the language they are learning. Students and teachers receive feedback that can help students set goals and teachers evaluate curricula. The program measures reading, writing, and speaking proficiencies at levels ranging from novice to intermediate in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish, with advanced and superior levels under development. In partnership with NALRC at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, SALRC at the University of Chicago, and CeLCAR at Indiana University, CASLS is also creating assessments for Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and Yoruba.

Other online assessment programs include:

- **Online Proficiency-based Progress Tests**, developed by NMELRC at Brigham Young University, which provide affordable assessments for intermediate and advanced levels of Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish
- **Foreign Language Assessment Database (FLAD)**, compiled and maintained by NCLRC, a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University, which is a free, searchable directory of information of nearly two hundred tests in over eighty languages

Assessment tools can also be used to trace progress in learning a second language. Graphic Online Language Diagnostic (GOLD), created by staff and faculty at CALPER at the Pennsylvania State University, is a web-based program that enables teachers to analyze the written and spoken work of their students and assess their language development over time.

Training teachers to develop and interpret assessments

Professional development for teachers on all forms of assessment is critical to improving instruction at the classroom level and helping students develop proficiency in foreign languages. CARLA, at the University of Minnesota, has developed a series of web-based learning modules, **Virtual Assessment Center**, that offers background information, step-by-step guidance, and practical resources to help teachers develop assessments that are aligned with foreign language education standards and current methodology.

In the end, assessments show what is working and whether students are learning what the teacher intends for them to learn. Summer institutes, conferences, and workshops, as well as other LRC projects, help teachers understand the place and power of assessment in their teaching and the importance of standards-based assessment practices. In the projects described above and others, the LRCs are pioneering new strategies and techniques to improve the ability of foreign language programs in the United States to measure, diagnose, document, and ultimately, improve language learning.

The online testing is a wonderful idea. It gives all teachers an opportunity to see exactly where their students fall in comparison to other schools. It also lets us know what skills we need to add, review, stress, etc. It is also a wonderful challenge for the students.

— Teacher on using STAMP
Rising enrollment — especially for “critical” languages — and the growing national interest in foreign language education call for increasing numbers of qualified foreign language teachers now and for the future. Improved pre-service and in-service programs to help teachers remain up-to-date on research, instructional methods, and tools are also acutely needed. With their academic resources, professional networks, and track record for successful projects, the LRCs are well-positioned to contribute the basic research, practical guidance, and materials needed to prepare and support teachers of foreign languages.

Summer institutes, conferences, networks, and workshops

Summer institutes, conferences, networks, and workshops are touchstones in extensive efforts by the LRCs to provide teachers with opportunities to stay current with research on foreign language acquisition, explore issues and developments in their language area, and develop relationships with other teachers and experts. All fifteen LRCs offer summer institutes, often in collaboration with partner universities and schools across the country. In the summer of 2008, more than 1,700 teachers participated in eighty LRC institutes that addressed technology, immersion education, Middle Eastern languages, African languages, Central Asian languages, Chinese and Japanese, testing and program evaluation, and other topics. The 2008 institutes described below are representative of the varied and rich opportunities offered by LRCs.

- At the University of Oregon, CASLS brought novice language teachers from isolated areas together to work with colleagues, mentors, and experts to learn how to become more effective teachers and leaders at Western Initiative for Language Leadership.
- Proficiency in a second language takes more than the ability to shape words and construct sentences. At Building from the Ground Up: Global Simulation and Foreign Language Teaching/Learning, offered by Arizona State University’s CERCLL, teachers learned techniques for helping their students appreciate the cultural context and the ways in which meaning is transmitted in the language they are studying.
- A summer institute offered by K-12 NFLRC at Iowa State University, Mentoring and Leadership for K-12 Chinese Teachers, emphasized collaboration as teachers designed standards-based, thematically focused and culturally rich materials for the K-12 Chinese language classroom, experimented with new technologies, and learned leadership and mentoring skills.

Workshops lasting one to three days are another way LRCs inform teachers on current topics of concern and interest. In 2007-2008, thousands of teachers participated in hundreds of LRC workshops. Thirty language teachers in community, pre-college, and college programs from ten states learned about research on heritage speakers and approaches for understanding language communities in the U.S. at Connecting Your Classroom to the Heritage Language Community, offered by NHLRC at UCLA and the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching.

Sometimes a workshop travels instead of its participants. Like many LRCs, CLEAR at Michigan State University offers onsite workshops as part of its ongoing efforts to respond to national needs. CLEAR’s Onsite Teacher Development Workshops send language and technology trainers to work onsite with teachers on topics they have chosen, at minimal cost to their institutions.

Created by NCLRC, a consortium of Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University, the Arabic K-12 Network demonstrates the way well-supported networks can inform and build community. Aimed at serving the Arabic language teaching community in the U.S., the Network provides a way for teachers to share materials, methods, and discuss experiences. It is supported by a website that posts its newsletter, Arabic textbook reviews, job and funding announcements, helpful links, and more. The Network also organizes blogs for online discussion and institutes on teaching Arabic K-12.

Training and resources

The following are but a few of the many LRC efforts that provide training, resources, and other tools for foreign language teachers:

- Less Commonly Taught Languages Teacher Training, conducted by LARC at San Diego State University in collaboration with the California Foreign Language Project, helps teachers of Arabic, Persian, and other less commonly taught languages acquire the knowledge needed to plan and design their own standards-based instructional materials.
- Bringing the Standards to the Classroom: A Teacher’s Guide, published by K-12 NFLRC at Iowa State University, is available online to help teachers align their curricula with national standards. Teachers are the heart and soul of education. With the help of the LRCs, U.S. foreign language teachers are receiving the support they need to give their students the skills and encouragement that lead to proficiency in foreign languages.
Challenges to our national security, expanding business interests in all corners of the world, and an increasingly multicultural population have created a growing need for Americans who are proficient in languages well beyond the French, German, and Spanish programs generally offered. Some less commonly taught languages are the most widely spoken in the world. Chinese, for example, is thought by experts to have a billion speakers and Hindi, 680 million. Many are spoken in political “hot spots” — Arabic, Persian, Korean, and Urdu, for example.

Instruction for these languages is rarely available at the K-12 level. Qualified teachers are hard to find, and high-quality teaching materials are virtually non-existent for many languages identified as “critical” by the U.S. government. The national effort to develop and promote programs for less commonly taught languages falls mainly to universities. LRCs, with their strong university involvement, are playing a crucial role in the endeavor to develop curricula, assessments, standards, teaching materials, and qualified teachers for languages that were not taught in traditional educational settings in past decades.

While all fifteen centers are working on projects that impact instruction for less commonly taught languages, five are organized around particular regions and contributing significantly to U.S. efforts to develop effective instructional programs for the languages of their areas. They include:

- CeLCAR at Indiana University, which has produced complete first-year textbooks for instructor-led courses in Pashto, Uzbek, Uyghur, and Tajiki and free online multimedia modules used by more than 1,500 students of Central Asian languages;
- NALRC at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which is advancing U.S. instruction in African languages by researching enrollment in African language classes and developing textbooks, grammars and dictionaries, assessment tools, guidelines for curriculum development, standards, and certification programs;
- NEALRC at the Ohio State University, which is promoting instruction in East Asian Languages through online learning courses in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, online assessment tools for listening comprehension of Mandarin Chinese, and summer programs for teachers and students in Chinese and Japanese;
- NMELRC at Brigham Young University, which provides a variety of learning opportunities and resources for both teachers and students of Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish, including intensive summer programs with distance learning follow-up;
- SALRC at the University of Chicago, which is developing national standards for instruction in Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali, teaching materials for South Asian languages, and workshops on language teaching theory and methods for graduate students and instructors of South Asia’s languages.

Demand is growing for instruction in an increasing number of less commonly taught languages, and it is important to be able to find out what courses, languages, and levels of instruction are available and where they are offered. CARLA, at the University of Minnesota, has made that easy to do through their searchable, online Less Commonly Taught Languages Database. Continually updated, the database has over 12,000 listings for courses in less commonly taught languages throughout North America. More than a million pages were accessed in 2007.

These are just a few of the major initiatives that the LRCs are working on in the 2006-2010 funding cycle for this area. From the projects above to others providing advanced materials for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian and an independent study program introducing Chinese language and culture to Americans in business, LRC faculty and staff are bringing their expertise to promote and develop instructional programs for less commonly taught languages in the United States.
Many of the teaching strategies were totally new to me, and I have found many of the strategies to be extremely effective. It has changed my thinking about how to teach foreign language.

– K-12 NFLRC Teacher Partnership Institute participant

The bulk of foreign language education in the United States takes place in kindergarten through 12th grades. Effective K-12 programs for the commonly taught languages as well as those less commonly taught are crucial to developing competence in the diverse languages needed to work and serve effectively in the world today.

Clear, agreed-upon standards are key to improving K-12 language education. The LRCs are actively engaged in promoting the national standards published by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project — a collaborative effort of more than ten professional language teacher associations. Four LRCs have served on task forces developing such standards based on the goals and objectives outlined in “Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century” for:

- Swahili and Yoruba (NALRC at the University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- Arabic (NCLRC at Georgetown University, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University)
- Hindi (SALRC at the University of Chicago)
- Korean (CALPER at the Pennsylvania State University)

The steady demands of the classroom can make it difficult for teachers to remain current with research and developments in language education. Summer institutes, conferences, workshops, online resources, and publications offered by the LRCs serve as a bridge, connecting K-12 foreign language teachers with the most up-to-date information, methods and tools in the field of language teaching.

Immersion programs are the fastest growing and most effective foreign language programs currently available in U.S. schools. Most immersion students can be expected to reach higher levels of second language proficiency than students in other school-based language programs. Because there are few pre-service programs to prepare teachers for immersion teaching, in-service professional development offerings are particularly important.

Supporting immersion education through research and the development of a sustainable national network of immersion educators is a priority for CARLA at the University of Minnesota. In addition to offering a series of popular summer institutes for teachers and administrators working with immersion programs, CARLA maintains an extensive online archive of articles from its American Council on Immersion Education Newsletter and a website developed in collaboration with Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network that offers research and practitioner perspectives on a wide range of issues related to immersion education.

National efforts to develop programs for “critical” foreign languages are hampered by the shortage of teachers and programs. NMELRC at Brigham Young University’s Experiment in Building K-12 LCTL Capacity is testing models that can be replicated nationally to address those problems. The model employs intensive summer camps where high school students who have no access to instruction in Arabic can begin study. When the camp ends, they can continue their studies through the distance learning program Arabic Without Walls. The camp serves K-12 Arabic teachers as well, offering the opportunity for hands-on instruction from a master teacher.

Stimulating a student’s interest in other languages is another way to promote foreign language study. Introducing Children to the World, offered by CERCLL at the University of Arizona, is designed to help K-8 teachers create units that nurture children’s interest in foreign languages and cultures. The annual workshop provides background information on the language and its culture (Korean in 2007 and Arabic in 2008) along with handouts and resources that include children’s literature from the region. A follow-up study group supports teachers in creating integrated units for their classrooms.

It takes time to learn a language. Well-developed K-12 programs create a path to university programs and make it possible to truly master the language studied. The work of the LRCs in research, teaching materials, assessment, teacher development, and less commonly taught languages is helping K-12 teachers and programs throughout the United States do a better job of preparing students for the 21st century.

If you want the best overview of immersion education, its theory, issues and best practices, take CARLA’s Immersion 101! You will not only access tons of current research supporting immersion education, you will meet kindred spirits with the same passion and connect to their ideas, resources and classrooms.

– Immersion 101 summer institute participant
Outreach and dissemination are basic to the LRCs’ mission to promote and improve foreign language education in the United States. Networks, websites, journals, conferences, and special events are all important tools employed to promote foreign language education, inform teachers, encourage excellence and collaboration, and inspire students.

LRCs sponsor and strengthen existing conferences as well as initiating new ones to explore developments in the field of language teaching and learning. In 2007, more than three hundred language teacher educators from thirty-seven states and fifteen countries participated in the fifth International Conference on Language Teacher Education offered by CARLA at the University of Minnesota. Designed for educators and researchers involved in preparation and ongoing professional development of all teachers of foreign languages, the biennial conference gives teacher educators the opportunity to discuss research, theory and best practices, and to build dialogue across the many languages, levels, and settings they represent. Also in 2007, participants in education, government, and business from thirteen countries attended the 17th International Conference on Pragmatics & Language Learning organized by NFLRC at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Presentations addressed a broad range of topics in linguistics from a variety of perspectives in relation to their use in foreign language education.

In addition, LRC faculty give frequent presentations at prominent national and international conferences, sharing their expertise and knowledge of developments in the field of language studies.

For five years running, hundreds of high school students, teachers, administrators, and parents have come to Michigan State University to explore world languages and cultures at World Languages Day, organized by CLEAR. In 2008, sessions by MSU faculty and guest speakers on topics ranging from Japanese hip-hop and Swahili greetings to Bollywood and French slang helped participants see the richness of foreign languages and cultures and the opportunities to learn more about them through Michigan State University’s language and international study programs.

Journals and other publications serve the LRCs’ mission to keep language educators informed on topics of interest and concern. NFLRC at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa distributes a monograph series designed to support and share results of research on strategies for language learning and teaching. SALRC at the University of Chicago publishes South Asia Language Pedagogy and Technology Journal with articles on teaching methodology and the uses of technology. The online Language Resource Newsletter, published by NCLRC at Georgetown University, Center for Applied Linguistics, and George Washington University, brings feature articles, classroom materials, resources, practical guidance, announcements, and more in a lively format to more than 30,000 subscribers every month to inform and build community among K-12 foreign language teachers.

Websites are the LRCs’ most important outreach and dissemination tool. Every center maintains a website packed with resources and information reflecting its mission and available to teachers, students, administrators, government and business employees, and all who are interested in foreign languages.

I loved how enthusiastic the presenters were today. I realized today how much more there is to learn about the world and its cultures.

— World Languages Day participant

German

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The Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER), part of the College of the Liberal Arts at the Pennsylvania State University, was established in 2002. CALPER’s mission is to strengthen and promote language learning to advanced levels of proficiency through research, the development of innovative teaching and learning materials, and collaboration with teachers and educational institutions. CALPER projects and initiatives focus on:
- Corpus-based teaching and learning materials
- Language learning in study abroad
- Developmental assessment
- New technologies
- Teacher development

Research

Language Learning in Study Abroad: Case Histories of Americans in France is a monograph which explores the relationship between learning outcomes of study abroad and stories about the experience told by participants. The study reveals a complex interplay between the development of language ability, students’ actions and perceptions, and the resources made available in their host communities.

Narrative and Conceptual Proficiency in Russian is a monograph which explains the relevance of these two components for advanced levels of performance in Russian and describes five areas of language knowledge critical to the acquisition of narrative and conceptual proficiency.

Evaluation of Dynamic Assessment investigates the effectiveness of the Dynamic Assessment Guide in preparing teachers to implement Dynamic Assessment procedures in classroom settings. It documents, through video recordings, how teachers use the procedures in elementary school Spanish classes.

Teaching materials

Using Corpora in Language Teaching and Learning — Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian. CALPER emphasizes the use of language corpora (collections of text in electronic form) in developing teaching and learning materials, and has designed materials that enable teachers to explore and learn to use corpora in their teaching practices. Instructional materials are available for Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian to teachers online and in print.

Teacher development

Corpus Online Resources includes a tutorial on corpus studies, references to research and available corpora, and Corpus Community Reports from language educators using corpora in their teaching.

Assessment Webspace presents concise information on alternative assessment tools. Included is information on portfolios, interviews, self-assessment, observation, projects, group-based assessment, and dialogic assessment.

Technology Resources Webspace contains a Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) activity database with video examples showcasing teachers implementing CMC activities, working papers, and concise guides for teachers to learn about new technologies. It also offers a service to teachers to host CMC tools, such as blogs, wikis, and chats.

Project Work Webspace is for teachers interested in exploring ways of working with projects in language courses. It contains background information, samples, and narratives of language teachers experienced in conducting projects with their students.

Heritage Language Teachers Webspace offers multimedia instructional materials designed to help teachers of less commonly taught languages meet the instructional needs of both heritage and domestic language learners enrolled in post-secondary less commonly taught language courses.

Outreach

The LRC at the Pennsylvania State University maintains an extensive website that offers a wide range of resources to language educators. The site is recognized by Thomson Scientific’s ISI Web of Knowledge. CALPER’s outreach activities include a working papers series, professional development documents, podcasts, a news blog, an E-newsletter, a tri-annual conference, and workshops.

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University of Minnesota

As a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Language Resource Center, CARLA’s role is to improve the nation’s capacity to teach and learn foreign languages effectively. Launched in 1993, CARLA’s research and action initiatives have centered on several key areas:

- Articulation of second language instruction
- Technology in the second language classroom
- Assessment of second language proficiency
- Second language learning strategies
- Content-based language teaching
- Pragmatics information and learning support
- Immersion education and research
- Culture and language learning
- Less commonly taught languages
- Materials to maximize study abroad learning

Intergrating theory and practice

CARLA has always placed a major emphasis on linking research and theory with practical classroom application. To support the language teaching community, CARLA offers high-quality professional development for teachers, easily accessible materials for the classroom, and on-demand background information to enhance teachers’ ability and understanding of the language learning process.

Summer institutes for teachers

CARLA’s summer institute program for language teachers is designed to share research and developments in foreign language learning with language teachers. Since its inception in 1996 with a single institute, the program now regularly offers twelve or more week-long, intensive institutes per summer and to date has engaged over 2,800 participants from all over the world. Each institute highlights the connection between research and practice and includes discussion, theory-building, hands-on activities, and networking with colleagues.

Working papers

Since 1996 CARLA has published thirty-three working papers, many of which are now available online. The most popular publications include:

Maximizing Study Abroad Guidebooks, used by programs across the country to prepare students for their study abroad experience.

Developing Classroom Materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages provides both principles and practical guidelines to help teachers of all levels and languages transform authentic materials into activities for the language classroom.

Web resources for materials and professional development

Accessed by more than a million visitors per year, the CARLA website is a virtual treasure trove of information and practical information for language teachers and students. Specific resources include:

American Council on Immersion Education (ACIE) Archive, which features the best ACIE Newsletter articles of the past ten years.

Content-based Language Teaching through Technology Center, which helps teachers create content-based lessons/units using technology.

Dancing with Words, which offers learners and teachers strategies for learning pragmatics in Spanish through interactive modules that include background information, video clips, and activities.

Minnesota Language Proficiency Assessments, which measure proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening at two levels on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale in French, German, and Spanish.

Fostering collaboration and professional dialogue

CARLA actively seeks collaboration in all its projects and activities with an emphasis on creating partnerships for sustained professional dialogue. The following conferences sponsored by CARLA have created powerful connections in the field of language education:

The Language Teacher Education Biennial Conference brings together language teacher educators from around the world to discuss and share research, theory, and best practices and to initiate and sustain professional dialogue across languages, levels, and teaching contexts.

The Pathways to Bilingualism Conference, co-sponsored by the Center for Applied Linguistics, draws professionals from a variety of language immersion “pathways” to engage in dialogue and professional exchange across languages, levels, learner audiences, program models, and socio-political contexts. In 2008, 650 participants gathered in St. Paul, Minnesota for this unique conference.

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Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS)

University of Oregon

Established in 2001, the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) is a research department at the University of Oregon. CASLS improves the teaching and learning of world languages and serves as an international leader in developing global professionals through innovative language strategies, techniques, and tools.

Assessment

CASLS supports effective teaching and learning through the development of affordable and innovative foreign language assessment tools.

Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) is a web-based assessment tool tied to a set of benchmarks consistent with ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Delivered using computer adaptive technology, STAMP measures reading, writing, and speaking proficiencies in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish at levels ranging from novice-low to intermediate-mid.

National Online Early Language Learning Assessment (NOELLA), an elementary-school version of STAMP, will be the first affordable, universally accessible proficiency assessment for early language learners in Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish.

Teacher development

CASLS improves educational practice and student performance by providing teachers with long-term, collaborative processes of self-discovery.

Western Initiative for Language Leadership (WILL) offers novice foreign language teachers an opportunity to become more effective teachers and leaders. Focused on the unique challenges faced by new teachers in isolated areas, participants attend two summer institutes. As they conduct projects in their classrooms throughout the year, participants connect with each other, their mentors, leaders in the field, and CASLS staff on a regular basis.

InterCom, a free informational service, provides educators and administrators with customized, relevant information.

National Virtual Language Lab (ANVILL) provides students in rural high school language programs the opportunity to record speech and play listening passages at a fraction of the cost of traditional language labs.

Teaching materials

CASLS supports articulated language programs by creating and disseminating field-based and research-based knowledge and strategies.

Proficiency Efficiency Planning (PEP) Tool, an online curriculum planning tool, helps Spanish and Japanese teachers create thematic units, set objectives, and find activities.

Research

CASLS’ research provides empirical guidance and documentation for its projects and disseminates data and tools to researchers and educators.

Sponsored Research Partnering with the New Jersey Board of Education, CASLS is exploring relationships between language learning and a variety of student factors such as socioeconomic status and program model. In partnership with ACTFL and other professional organizations, CASLS is identifying and investigating educators’ “ten burning questions” about language learning and student proficiency. The results will be published in a variety of journals accessible to educators and academic researchers alike.

Less commonly taught languages initiatives

Less Commonly Taught Languages Assessment Partnering with other organizations, CASLS and its collaborators are currently developing assessments in Arabic, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and Yoruba.

MyChina Working with Avant Assessment and Centric, CASLS created MyChina to explore a third paradigm of language learning: virtual worlds. A virtual world in Second Life, MyChina increases students’ proficiency by allowing them to interact naturally with Chinese speakers.

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Founded in 2002, the Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University is dedicated to promoting the teaching and learning of the languages and cultures of Central Asia. CeLCAR develops textbooks, multimedia resources, and distance language learning courses and curricula for all Central Asian languages including Pashto, Tajiki, Uyghur, and Uzbek. CeLCAR fosters interest in and knowledge of these less commonly taught languages and their cultures while meeting strategic national needs.

Teaching materials

CeLCAR has developed many materials for students of Central Asian languages, including:

**Elementary-Level Textbooks** CeLCAR has produced elementary-level textbooks for Pashto, Uzbek, Uyghur, and Tajiki languages. All textbooks are designed according to the communicative approach to language learning and are intended as a complete first-year textbook for instructor-led courses. The textbooks include abundant authentic materials taken from CeLCAR’s digital database of authentic material, most of which was recorded in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. They are accompanied by two multimedia CDs containing additional audio and video material as well as multimedia exercises.

**Intermediate and Advanced-Level Reading and Listening Modules** A series of multimedia modules designed for students, the Central Asian Languages Reading/Listening Project includes Uzbek, Uyghur, Tajiki, Mongolian, Turkmen, Dari, Kazakh, Azeri, Kyrgyz, and Pashto languages. The modules provide multimedia exercises to help students build listening and reading skills, broaden vocabulary, enrich grammar appreciation, and deepen understanding of the region’s cultures. Each module features texts that present language structures in authentic cultural contexts.

**Assessment**

CeLCAR leads a consortium of twenty Title VI National Resource Centers (NRCs) to develop standards, guidelines, tests, and materials for Central Asian languages (Azeri, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uzbek, Pashto, Dari, Tajiki, and Uyghur) based on ACTFL and ILR proficiency guidelines, as well those in place at U.S. universities and government agencies. A key component of the project is the ongoing analysis of learner performance for these languages, all of which are taught at Indiana University’s Summer Workshop on Slavic, East European and Central Asian Languages or in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies.

**Research**

**Distance Education Teaching Methodologies** CeLCAR has developed curricula and pilot-tested the teaching of Kazakh, Pashto, and Uzbek by distance education using materials developed by CeLCAR.

**Research in Distributed Collaborative Network for Language Learning Support** CeLCAR works with numerous academic partners throughout the world to support its materials development projects. Building on existing partnerships, CeLCAR taps into the local knowledge of existing language instruction. CeLCAR has developed a powerful desktop authoring tool to enhance the creation of new materials.

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Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL)

University of Arizona

Established in 2006, the University of Arizona’s Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) is a relatively new LRC. The majority of CERCLL’s projects focus on the teaching and learning needs of less commonly taught languages, especially at intermediate and advanced levels. CERCLL aims for a broad approach to language education through projects addressing new technologies and the social and cultural contexts in which language is used as well as traditional, text-related concepts of language literacy.

Innovative teaching methods and materials

CERCLL projects bring new ways to incorporate technology into the language classroom, including technological approaches and software that are used for entertainment purposes and are therefore attractive to young people.

Game to Learn teaches instructors to inexpensively design and implement custom foreign language games using off-the-shelf computer game development tools. Examples include in-game foreign language dialogues between characters and players, texts, and puzzles.

The OLÉ (Online Language Environment) Board, created in collaboration with the University of Arizona’s Learning Technologies Center, is a web-based threaded discussion instructional tool that utilizes voice, video, and text to replicate the functions of a language lab. With oral, listening, reading, and writing applications, OLÉ can be used to supplement instruction in face-to-face classes as well as in distance situations.

Educating Global Citizens through Global Simulation introduces intermediate-level teachers to a systematic way of integrating authentic input in the target language and culture, allowing students to operate as if they were in the target culture. The technique engages students in critical thinking and prepares them to be global citizens.

Teacher development

CERCLL offers workshops and institutes that provide teachers with access to effective teaching strategies and new technologies. Many of these are related to CERCLL projects and are meant to share knowledge about the research being conducted with Title VI funding.

Developing Intercultural Competence in the Context of Foreign Language Instruction, a two-day workshop in October 2008, was aimed at understanding how the U.S. and other cultures view each other. Sessions examined perspectives displayed in media, art and literature, gender and identities, and traditions and religions. CERCLL worked closely with the University of Arizona’s Centers for Latin American, Middle Eastern Studies, and Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Program to create a pool of international resources for use in language and other courses.

K-16 Initiatives in Second Language Learning: Partnership Across Languages addresses the needs of K-16 language teachers in southern Arizona, providing data and assistance in planning programs for less commonly taught languages. It uses a new interactive website as well as a series of professional development workshops including the work of CERCLL projects and faculty.

Teaching materials and assessment

CERCLL projects are developing new teaching materials reflecting the results of research in effective teaching strategies, including performance assessments for use as a standard and comparable measurement of skill in all languages.

Heritage Languages: An Ethnographic Base for Assessment Tools uses ethnographic data to identify the cultural knowledge that separates heritage learners from second language learners so that effective assessment instruments can be created.

New Teaching Resources are being created in less commonly taught languages. In Persian, for example, an intermediate text exposes learners to an extended vocabulary and grammatical range in both spoken and written formats, while teaching all levels of formality and informality. An extensive Arabic learner corpus comprising written samples produced by second language students and heritage students, cross-referenced according to level, learner (second language vs. heritage), and genre (description, narration, instruction) will be available on the CERCLL website. The corpus will serve as a source of empirical data for hypothesis testing as well as a resource for developing materials for teaching Arabic.

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Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)

Michigan State University

Established in 1996, the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) is part of Michigan State University’s College of Arts & Letters. CLEAR’s primary objective is to promote collaboration in teacher education and foreign language research across college, departmental, and institutional boundaries. To meet this objective, CLEAR’s activities and projects integrate the various constituencies involved in foreign language teaching and learning. CLEAR’s projects are divided into five major categories:

- Materials development
- Teacher development
- Evaluation and assessment
- Collaborative projects
- Research

Teacher development

CLEAR provides two types of programs designed to meet the needs of foreign language educators:

Onsite Workshops  CLEAR staff members travel around the country to hold workshops requested by various institutions on topics of current interest to foreign language educators.

Summer Workshops  CLEAR hosts on-campus workshops each summer, attended by foreign language teachers from all over the United States. Past topics have included skills-based workshops on teaching listening and speaking, teaching writing, and teaching reading in the foreign language classroom, as well as technology-gared workshops such as Digital Video Projects, Putting Macromedia Flash in Your Course, and Basic Web Immersion for Foreign Language Teachers.

Teaching materials

CLEAR offers numerous free and low-cost materials and tools for foreign language teachers, including software, assessment tools, print materials, and online resources. Some of CLEAR’s most popular products include:

Rich Internet Applications for Language Learning  This suite of free online authoring tools provides templates for teachers of any language to create their own activities for students. Templates are available for audio and video activities, interactive worksheets, and much more. The collection supports all non-Roman fonts as well as right-to-left languages.

Introductory Business German  This CD-ROM provides a condensed, highly-focused set of activities intended for business professionals who wish to learn more about the German business and economics environment. The program provides information and activities specific to the business environment in a convenient self-instructional format that allows users to progress at their own pace and at their chosen level of difficulty.

Small Group Instruction Guides  These downloadable PDF guides are available for African languages, Hindi, Thai, and Vietnamese. They are written for native speakers teaching in a classroom or a tutorial setting who have no formal teacher training. Each guide begins with an overview of strategies for creating a language course (e.g., establishing goals, using the language, and finding and using materials). Following the general information, the guides offer groupings of lesson plans from beginner to high-intermediate.

Outreach

CLEAR produces a newsletter, hosts conferences and workshops, co-sponsors an online journal, and hosts a website.

CLEAR News  This is a free biannual newsletter with articles about the latest research, materials, and news affecting foreign language educators.

Language Learning & Technology  A refereed journal published online three times a year, LLT is a joint effort of CLEAR and the University of Hawai’i’s National Foreign Language Resource Center. Its purpose is to disseminate research to foreign language educators on issues related to technology and language education.

World Languages Day  One of CLEAR’s largest outreach events, World Languages Day is a conference for high school students, teachers, and parents to explore the many opportunities available to those who know a foreign language. CLEAR has also collaborated with other institutions to create a guide for other schools and universities to implement their own World Languages Day celebrations.

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San Diego State University

Established in 1990, the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC) at San Diego State University (SDSU) was among the first Language Resource Centers to be funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Named “Best Small Research University in America,” SDSU is a flagship campus of the California State University system. LARC’s mission is to:

- Increase the number of advanced-level foreign language speakers
- Offer intensive training to support teacher credentialing
- Improve assessments of language competency
- Collaborate in system-wide approaches to language learning

Research

Technology Projects LARC works with many graduate students in the Department of Computer Science and Mathematics, particularly on projects in the area of software localization and globalization that align with the center’s goals and objectives. Their projects have resulted in revamping the Digital Media Archive (DMA) structure, the center’s website, CAST, and assisted with other LARC efforts.

Assessment

Online Oral Proficiency Testing The Computer-Assisted Speech Tool (CAST), developed and tested by LARC, focuses on advanced level oral proficiency for Arabic, Persian, French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Iraqi Arabic, and Egyptian Arabic. Additional languages (German, Filipino, etc.) are being added.

Teaching materials

Women’s Voices, an ethnographic study based on interviews with women in Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru, explores and contrasts life styles, attitudes, and hopes. New entries include Persian, Arabic, and Iraqi. Videos are posted by language in LARC’s DMA, which allows teachers to create shared content stored on a database. New materials include Arabic, Filipino, Italian, Maya, Nahuatl, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Urdu, and Zapotec media and lesson plans.

Cross-cultural Teacher Training and Materials Development LARC is working with Arabic language teachers from the Bahrain Teacher’s College and other institutions in the Middle East that teach Modern Standard Arabic on this project.

Persian Curriculum for Grades 7-12 LARC trained teachers and supported the creation of curricular materials for Persian that were later used in a separately funded Persian summer language camp.

Materials for Intensive Language Courses LARC has created customized curricula, media, and textbooks for several less commonly taught languages (Arabic, Persian, Russian, Indonesian, and Filipino) and a commonly taught language (French), which are posted on the LARC website and available to all. LARC has also published a new textbook on intermediate conversational Arabic.

Teacher development

Teacher Training Workshops LARC has co-sponsored training sessions for regional language teachers hosted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Sessions illustrated how to prepare documentation and programs suitable for credentialing programs in less commonly taught languages and in commonly taught languages.

Online Technology and Methodology Courses for Language Teachers A hybrid class in language teaching and technology was created and piloted in summer 2008 with language teachers from Afghanistan. Emphasis was on Moodle, iPod pedagogy, the Auralog software package “Tell Me More,” and basic computer literacy. This course will migrate from a hybrid course to an online course that can potentially be used by teachers of less commonly taught languages in their credentialing programs.

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National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)

University of Wisconsin–Madison

The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) was established at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1999. Its mission is the advancement of African language teaching and learning in the U.S. The center achieves its mission by sponsoring a wide range of educational and professional activities designed to improve both the accessibility and the quality of African language instruction. NALRC projects include:

- Materials development and dissemination
- Professional development
- Program development and evaluation
- Research in African language pedagogy

Teaching materials

Developing and disseminating textbooks and other teaching materials for African languages is one of the NALRC’s most important projects. A major challenge in the field of African language teaching and learning is the shortage of current, pedagogically sound materials. Furthermore, while Africa is a discrete geographical entity, the continent is home to more than 2,000 languages in five different language families. The few materials that exist for some of these languages are often linguistically-oriented and influenced by outdated perceptions. NALRC publishes up-to-date textbooks, learners’ reference grammars, and multimedia materials based on the latest pedagogical theories and reflecting genuine realities of contemporary Africa. Materials include:

- Elementary textbooks for ten African languages
- Intermediate textbooks for two African languages
- Advanced textbooks for Swahili
- Learners’ reference grammars for seven African languages
- Bilingual dictionary for Wolof
- Multimedia CD-ROMs for fifteen African languages
- Informational brochures for forty-one African languages

While this seems like a large body of materials, more are needed, and many additional textbook, dictionary, and multimedia projects are underway at NALRC.

Teacher development

To promote and support the development of qualified teachers of African languages, the NALRC offers workshops and other opportunities for professional development, including on-site training workshops for African studies programs.

Second Language Acquisition Certificate Program for African Instructors is an annual, two-week institute in communicative language teaching held in Madison, Wisconsin. To date, the institute has trained 126 teaching assistants, lecturers, instructors, and professors of African languages in some of the most current, research-supported practices for language education.

Advanced Workshop in African Language Pedagogy is offered for experienced instructors prior to the annual certificate program. For the past few years, this forum has been used to train instructors in the creation and implementation of foreign language standards for their respective African languages. Standards for Swahili, Yoruba, Zulu, Wolof, Hausa, Twi, and Afrikaans have been developed.

Outreach and dissemination

The Secretariat for both the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) and the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA), NALRC organizes or supports an annual conference for the sharing of new ideas and best practices in African and in less commonly taught language learning and teaching. NALRC also publishes two journals: JALTA, on current research in African language teaching, and INCOLCTL, on the learning and teaching of less commonly taught languages in general.

Less commonly taught languages initiatives

NALRC engages in a variety of projects aimed at fostering African language programs in the U.S. including:

- Regular data gathering for an inventory of African language programs at American institutions
- Compiling a list of program trainers and evaluators who can travel to institutions to help build African language programs
- Publishing a guide to African language program development and administration.

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Established in 1990, NCLRC’s focus is on meeting the national need for the expansion and improvement of foreign language education. The NCLRC reaches out to all foreign language teachers and instructors across the U.S. Its faculty and staff are committed to providing teachers with the training, materials, assessments, information, and resources they need to shepherd their students into the global community, equipped for the challenges of this highly interconnected world.

Outreach

The Language Resource is an e-newsletter for foreign language teachers published ten times a year containing announcements, feature articles, lesson plans, assessment resources, information on new technologies and topics like teaching heritage learners and critical languages, helpful links, advice, and more. The Language Resource is free, and subscribers are urged to share and use its material. Direct subscribers number over 30,000 and are increasing, and indirect readership doubles the number of readers.

NCLRC Website The NCLRC Website hosts all the materials from The Language Resource and a great deal more. The website currently receives a monthly average of 20,000 page views, and these numbers are increasing exponentially each month.

Culture Club This site is a space to share multicultural and multi-language resources for teachers and students alike. Nine ‘rooms’ are filled with culture teaching information and materials.

Network and support for teachers of Arabic K-12

NCLRC is dedicated to helping teachers of Arabic K-12 develop a network for sharing information, ideas, materials, and curricula. The network encourages teachers to communicate with other foreign language teacher organizations and to benefit from becoming active participants in the larger teacher community. The NCLRC also spear-headed the development of National Standards for Learning for Arabic (2006), and conducts an annual survey, maintains a listserv and website, supports teachers presenting at national conferences, and provides summer workshops on teaching Arabic.

Teacher development

Summer Institutes Each summer NCLRC offers between fifteen and twenty summer institutes for foreign language teachers. They include collaborations with the embassies of France and Spain for immersion experiences for teachers of French and Spanish, methods institutes in Arabic for K-12 teachers, and institutes to bring new methods and technology to practicing teachers and teacher educators.


The Essentials of Language Teaching NCLRC’s site for college and university language instructors is popular with teacher educators and has been revised to include K-12-level language teaching. An Arabic version is now available.

Online Portfolio Assessment Guide This is a free, web-based tutorial that guides educators in creating and implementing a standards-based, foreign language portfolio assessment tied to their own curricula.

Conferences

NCLRC hosts the Annual Meeting of the East Coast Organization of Language Testers (ECOLT), a group of professionals, scholars, and students who are involved in language testing projects and research. The organization supports connections between academia, government, and not-for-profit testing organizations.

In 2009, NCLRC will host the 6th International Language Teacher Educators Conference,”Preparing Language Teachers for the 21st Century,” in collaboration with CARLA.

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I am forwarding your newsletter to two dozen teachers here in California. This is a valuable resource . . . I will be using the Culture Club for my classes for sure. My goal is to use more technology and use the Internet as much as possible to bring authentic material in the classroom.

– The Language Resource subscriber
The Ohio State University

The National East Asian Languages Resource Center (NEALRC) at the Ohio State University was founded in 1993. NEALRC’s mission is to contribute to the mainstreaming of Chinese language in American education and to expand access to the study of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean from K-12 through post-graduate education. NEALRC’s projects focus on four major areas of activity:

- Research on pedagogy
- Autonomous learning material development
- Assessment and evaluation
- Teacher development

Research on pedagogy

NEALRC has published eleven volumes in *Pathways to Advanced Skills*, a series dedicated to the teaching of less commonly taught languages. The goal of *Pathways* is to offer program builders and teachers conceptual and pedagogical resources for advancing their teaching and program-building missions. Some *Pathways* series works are: “The NFLC Guide for Basic Chinese Language Programs” (now in second edition) and “Performed Culture: An Approach to East Asian Language Pedagogy.”

Autonomous learning materials development

NEALRC focuses on developing multimedia-based learning materials that provide the autonomous learner with guided access to Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages. The projects in this category are:

- Chinese: Communicating in the Culture, printed materials with DVD and audio program
- Pathway to Beginning Spoken Korean, free online materials
- Tell It Like It Is, advanced-level Chinese, printed text with DVD
- At Home in Japan, free online materials

Assessment and evaluation

NEALRC collaborates with the University of Iowa, Cornell University, and Duke University on the following projects:

- **Chinese Computerized Adaptive Listening Test (CCALT)** is an online program which offers students and instructors the opportunity to measure listening skills in Mandarin Chinese.
- **Advanced Language Performance Portfolio System (ALPPS)** is an online management and assessment system to produce a general profile of a student’s performance and written work.

Standard Reporting System for East Asian Language Programs is a joint project to develop unified reporting procedures for institutions supporting extensive programs in East Asian languages. The goal is that program outcomes can be clearly stated and compared.

Teacher development

NEALRC conducts the following collaborative programs to enhance teachers’ training and to build infrastructure in the field of teaching of East Asian languages:

- **Summer Programs East Asian Concentration (SPEAC)** combines intensive teacher and language training. It strives to integrate the introduction of pedagogical and second language acquisition research and theory with practical content and immediate implementation. Trainees have the opportunity for hands-on classroom teaching as part of a closely supervised practicum.

- **CLASS Professional Standards for K-12 Chinese Language Teachers** is a joint project with the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS). It is a resource for Chinese teachers, foreign language specialists, school administrators, parents, and policy makers who recognize the importance of Chinese cultures taught by professional teachers of Chinese.

- **Teacher Training Videos** include a DVD program designed to train new teachers in effective teaching methods. The DVDs correspond with print manuals that allow teacher-trainees to understand successful strategies for teaching East Asian languages.

NEALRC is also the producer and distributor of two influential academic journals in the field of Chinese language and culture: *The Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association (JCLTA)* and *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture (MCLC)*.

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National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC)

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Drawing on institutional strengths in foreign language teaching, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition, the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) undertakes projects that focus primarily on the less commonly taught languages of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific, but have implications for the teaching and learning of all languages. NFLRC was established in 1990, the first year of the Language Resource Centers Program, as part of the College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Teaching materials

NFLRC helps develop and publish materials on the teaching of many languages of Asia and the Pacific, including Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Samoan, Thai, and Vietnamese.

Online Certificate Courses in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean In partnership with the University’s Title VI National Resource Center for East Asia, NFLRC is developing a full battery of courses to allow students anywhere who have developed basic proficiency through face-to-face courses to complete a certificate (equal to an undergraduate minor) in Chinese, Japanese, or Korean entirely online.

Online Cafés for Heritage Learners of Filipino, Japanese, and Samoan In the Filipino Community Café, Filipino language students at the University of Hawai‘i and in the University of California system gather for conversation and social interaction; in the Japanese Culture Café, Japanese language students at Moanalua High School in Honolulu meet English language students in Osaka, Japan; in the Samoan Pathways Café, advanced Samoan language students at University of Hawai‘i interact with students at American Samoa Community College in Pago Pago and Farrington High School in Honolulu.

Assessment

NFLRC has supported initiatives in foreign language assessment such as computer adaptive testing, task-based and performance assessment, placement testing, elicited imitation as a proficiency measure, and the assessment of pragmatic ability in a foreign language. In cooperation with the University of Hawai‘i Department of Second Language Studies, NFLRC is developing program evaluation strategies and resources for national use, including research reports, self-study modules, evaluation instrument templates, and a searchable database.

Research

NFLRC conducts research on many aspects of language teaching and learning, and disseminates results through monographs, online publications, and three refereed online journals: Reading in a Foreign Language, Language Learning and Technology (co-sponsored with CLEAR at Michigan State University), and Language Documentation and Conservation.

Pragmatics and Second Language Learning Pragmatics, a major focus of NFLRC research, is the study of the use of language in communication from the most mundane conversations to high-stakes negotiation. A forthcoming volume on the pragmatics of Vietnamese as a native and target language complements similar publications on Chinese and Japanese pragmatics. NFLRC has hosted international conferences on pragmatics and sponsors the monograph series Pragmatics and Language Learning.

Language Documentation Project Nearly half of the 7,000 languages spoken on earth are found in Asia and the Pacific. Most lack even rudimentary documentation. NFLRC supports workshops to train native speakers to document their own languages, publishes a new journal, Language Documentation and Conservation, and is preparing to host a conference on language documentation in 2009 and an international summer institute in 2010.

Teacher development

NFLRC offers regular workshops throughout the year such as the Teaching and Technology Workshops and OPI Tester Training Workshops for Southeast Asian Languages (in cooperation with ACTFL). NFLRC sponsors many summer institutes, symposia and conferences, including the Hawaii Association of Language Teachers, the Association of Departments of Foreign Language (ADFL) Summer Seminar, the First International Conference on Filipino as a Global Language, and the Second Language Research Forum (SLRF).

While I was fulfilling my obligations to the organization and teaching of the NFLRC distance learning workshop, it was really a success and I feel more confident to start my “new career” as a distance learning teacher.

— Workshop participant

I want to express my sincere thanks for all the efforts your team put into the organization and teaching of the NFLRC distance learning workshop.

— Workshop participant

Richard Schmidt | Director
I have been more focused on outcomes and the means to realize them. Also, I feel that I know how to make more effective plans to reach these outcomes and design lessons to reach them. I believe that I also design more effective assessments. Furthermore, I am more sensitive to the needs of individual students and more successful in meeting these needs.

— PK-12 Teacher Partnership Institute participant

National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center (K–12 NFLRC)

Iowa State University

The mission of the National K–12 Foreign Language Resource Center (K–12 NFLRC) at Iowa State University (ISU) is to improve the nation's capacity for teaching and learning languages at all levels by building a strong foundation in the nation’s elementary and secondary schools. Since 1994, the K–12 NFLRC and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC have worked together to address the language needs of American children.

Research

In response to a well-documented need for educational research that uses rigorous scientific methodology, the K-12 NFLRC is conducting research that uses assessment data to examine the effectiveness of two language instructional models at the elementary school level. This longitudinal research (2006-2010) focuses on two program models at the elementary school level: Chinese FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) and Spanish Two-way Immersion (TWI). The research design, which includes both treatment and control schools, examines:

- English-speaking students’ progress in developing Chinese or Spanish language proficiency;
- Attitudes toward languages and cultures of students, administrators, teachers, staff, and parents; and
- Student academic progress measured by standardized assessments in English language arts and mathematics (comparing the progress of treatment and control groups).

The K-12 NFLRC will disseminate the research results broadly at professional conferences and in appropriate high-impact scholarly publications. To encourage replication of this type of research in all of its stages, the research design, data sets, data analyses, results, and lessons learned will be made available on the K-12 NFLRC website in 2010.

Teaching materials

A key component of the K-12 NFLRC’s projects is the development of curriculum materials that enable students to see how learning other languages and learning about other cultures will help them communicate and work with people in this interconnected world. Project curriculum materials, which are available on the K-12 NFLRC website, are guided by national student standards and are thematic and concept-based.

Chinese Four conceptual documents were developed to serve as a foundation on which the grade-level thematic units and instructional materials for the Chinese FLES curriculum are being built: Conceptual Overview, which guides the project; Chinese K-5 Grade Level Expectations; Learner Profiles, which outline the proficiency levels students should attain at each grade level; Chinese Curriculum Scope and Sequence, which incorporates a Backward Design approach to the curriculum by identifying Enduring Understanding, Essential Questions, and Themes, as well as essential strategies used in implementing the curriculum.

Spanish The Spanish Two-way Immersion curriculum uses concept mapping as the basis for the multi-disciplinary, literacy-focused curriculum units. This design process facilitates teacher acceptance and use of the new curriculum and organizes the curriculum by instruction-oriented units. Each grade level has four thematic, concept-based units that address district standards and benchmarks for all core content areas and integrate language and children’s literature throughout.

Teacher development

The K-12 NFLRC and CAL provide extensive, sustained professional development opportunities for the foreign language educators participating in their projects, as well as opportunities for the profession through conference presentations at state, regional, and national levels, online training, and workshops.

Chinese Chinese FLES teachers in the project schools collaborate with Chinese specialists in language, curriculum, and early language learning to design the Chinese K-5 Conceptual Framework documents and write the grade level proficiency-based and standards-based curriculum.

Spanish All professional development initiatives in the TWI project are focused on the goal of improving the quality of curriculum and teaching in the classroom. The project provides workshops at state and national conferences, one-day workshops held at ISU and on-site in the TWI project schools; and collaborative meetings with the project coordinator and teachers to discuss curriculum and implementation strategies and issues.

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Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch | Director
The institute set the stage for a theoretical base for heritage language education... There were great theoretical debates and courageous efforts to break new ground... The institute offered a unique opportunity to discuss theoretical and practical heritage issues across different languages.

— Participants in the 2008 Summer Heritage Research Institute

National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC)

University of California, Los Angeles
University of California Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching

The center’s mission is to create a research base for the field of heritage language education, develop effective pedagogical approaches to teaching heritage language learners, and pursue curriculum design, materials development, and teacher education. Each area is fundamental to the center’s goal of promoting successful heritage language education. The research projects form the theoretical base for other projects and activities.

Research

Four multi-year research projects collect and analyze data about heritage languages and learners.

Building a Framework for Developing Heritage Language Materials (2006-2008) is collecting data about heritage learners of numerous languages via online surveys of college and pre-college students as well as parents. Based on the survey results, profiles of heritage language learners are being developed.

Baseline Data on Immigrant and Refugee Language Communities in the U.S. (2006-2010) is an exploration of intergenerational heritage language transmission and preservation among selected language minority communities in the United States.

Understanding the Needs of Heritage Language Learners: Experimental Methodologies (2006-2008) is a multi-year project gathering empirical data that will inform understanding of the grammar of heritage language learners and will consequently lead to the development of theory-based instructional materials. The relevant data come from systematic observations of heritage speakers and comprehension and production experiments.

Annual Summer Research Institutes bring together researchers who work in areas that may have an impact on heritage language research. To foster a new generation of scholars in the field, the center encourages graduate students to participate in these institutes.

Assessment

Heritage Learners and the Oral Proficiency Interview (2008-2010) explores the factors that contribute to the speaking proficiency of heritage learners with the goal of improving preparation of OPI testers.

Teaching materials

Based on the information obtained through the survey of heritage learners, the center is designing a generic framework for heritage materials and curricular design that provides a menu of approaches tailored to the needs of heritage learners. Survey-based curriculum templates for Spanish and Indonesian are being created as the first phase of the materials development effort.

Teacher development

The center is developing an assortment of tools to help teachers adapt existing materials and develop new ones that address the particular learning needs of heritage language students. All are downloadable from the website.

- Heritage language survey report
- Demographic tools for heritage language instructors
- Instructional and curricular guidelines
- Bibliography of heritage language resources

Outreach and dissemination

NHLRC hosts a website, organizes annual workshops for teachers K-16, conducts annual research institutes, and publishes the online Heritage Language Journal. The center will hold an international conference on heritage languages in October 2009.

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Olga E. Kagan and Robert J. Blake | Co-directors
National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC)

Brigham Young University

NMELRC works to increase and improve opportunities for Americans to learn the languages of the Middle East well. Established in 2002 and based at Brigham Young University, it brings together language experts from coast to coast to:

- Help teachers more effectively address students’ needs
- Provide online assessment tools that efficiently and reliably measure students’ language proficiency
- Encourage the development of key infrastructure, especially high quality advanced-level intensive study opportunities (abroad and domestic)

Professional development

NMELRC addresses the pressing need for professionalism in the following ways:

**Face-to-Face Training Opportunities**, which include inspiring summer workshops, have been held in every region of the country.

**Online Training Resources** offer teachers access to a library of best practice video clips, training presentations by top language professionals, and Persian curriculum development guidelines.

**Advocacy Efforts** on behalf of less commonly taught language teachers are a vital NMELRC function. The marginal status of language teaching in K-16 is a major obstacle to increasing quality learning opportunities. Research has shown that intervention is essential to attract and retain the caliber of language professionals needed to address the nation’s needs.

Assessment

Objective and affordable measures of student progress are fundamental to language program effectiveness and improvement.

Working with ACTFL, NMELRC has pioneered a model for less commonly taught language proficiency test development that yields valid and reliable tests for languages with limited resources and typically smaller numbers of students. Reading comprehension tests have been developed for Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish.

Middle East language professionals have received hands-on training in various types of language assessment.

Teaching materials

The acquisition of advanced-level proficiency requires a good deal of time, including extensive study in-country. Learners need reliable information in order to successfully negotiate the challenges they will encounter in the U.S. and abroad. NMELRC has created online student handbooks that provide critical advisement and strategies training to assist students in succeeding in their study of Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish.

Level-appropriate audio and video materials are rare and much needed by beginning and intermediate level learners of non-cognate less commonly taught languages. NMELRC has produced a variety of culturally rich, yet linguistically accessible materials for such learners, including **Sevgili Murat**, a feature-length movie for students of Turkish. For advanced-level learners, we have built on ArabiCorpus to develop an online Hebrew corpus and search engine and have secured funding for similar tools for Persian and Turkish.

K-12 initiatives

The more language a student can get under her belt in K-12, the greater her opportunity for attaining higher levels of proficiency.

**Arabic Without Walls**, a hybrid distance-learning program developed by NMELRC with the University of California Consortium on Language Learning and Teaching, enables students who have begun learning Arabic at intensive summer camps to build on the experience. NMELRC hopes to duplicate this model of intensive instruction combined with distance learning follow-up with other languages.

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South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC)

University of Chicago

South Asia Language Resource Center (SALRC) is a collaborative effort primarily focused on the needs of South Asian language pedagogy in American universities. South Asia is one of the most linguistically diverse areas of the world with four language families consisting of more than 650 individual languages comprising twenty-two percent of the world’s population. Because of this astounding linguistic diversity, no single U.S. university has the resources to address the demand for expertise. SALRC was created to assist in meeting this pressing need.

Teaching materials

One of the greatest challenges in teaching South Asian languages is the lack of pedagogical materials available to instructors. It has been one of SALRC’s primary goals to meet this challenge by supporting the development of new teaching tools and the restoration of important but out-of-date materials for use in contemporary classrooms. SALRC emphasizes digitization and the incorporation of technology as an integral part of the learning environment. From 2003-2008, SALRC supported over thirty different projects in thirteen South Asian languages. Many of these projects have resulted in new digital resources for students and teachers available on the Internet.

Teacher development

SALRC is actively engaged in building a theoretically informed, linguistically competent, and pedagogically excellent South Asian language instructor community in the United States. SALRC routinely hosts modular workshops in language pedagogy targeted at advanced graduate students interested in language instruction as well as current instructors of South Asia’s less commonly taught languages, many of whom have never had formal training in language pedagogy. A primary objective of this instruction is to reinvigorate language teaching as a serious career option for graduate students.

SALRC is also committed to introducing tools for Internet-based language programs as an integral component of pedagogy training. The goal will be to enable South Asian language instructors to develop materials using the new technologies, as well as to adapt older but still useful materials and integrate them into new formats. Recent workshops have addressed key issues in the discipline: Assessments That Matter; Teaching Language Through Other Disciplines: A Proficiency-Centered Approach; Keeping Students Talking in the Target Language; Foreign Language Lesson Design; and Teaching South Asian Heritage Students.

Assessment

SALRC has initiated efforts to develop assessment materials for South Asian languages. The center’s primary emphasis to date has been on developing materials for Hindi and Urdu. SALRC is joining with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon to develop online reading, writing, listening, and speaking assessment tools for Hindi and Urdu using Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP). SALRC supports faculty to develop and review these materials, by building on successful models developed by CASLS for both commonly and less commonly taught languages.

Research

In 2008 SALRC brought out a new online journal, South Asia Language Pedagogy and Technology (SALPAT). The journal provides a space for faculty teaching the languages of South Asia to discuss and analyze the latest theories and/or practices in the field of second language acquisition studies. SALPAT is the first academic journal in North America solely dedicated to improving the quality of research resources for instructors of South Asian languages. The journal is peer refereed, and its Editorial Board is comprised of experts in South Asian and other languages specializing in diverse fields.

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Learn more about what these Title VI Department of Education Language Resource Centers are doing to bring their expertise and creativity to the critical need in the United States for an education system that “prepares future citizens and employees to act and lead in a global context.” Foreign language studies — and the LRCs — are key to meeting that need.