

English as a Second Language

Vital Statistics

Courseware Name: English as a Second Language

Application: Second Language Learning

Instructional Method: Drill-and-Practice

Vendor: COMPress

Cost: \$995.00 for 30 diskettes and archival copies

Copy Policy: Copying not allowed

Equipment: IBM PC, PC jr., or compatible

PC Memory Required: 128K

Prerequisites: Single double-sided 5 1/4" disk drive, color graphics adapter and graphics monitor, RGB monitor recommended

General Description

The COMPress ESL grammar course is a complete software package, consisting of 30 copy-protected diskettes, back-up archival copies, and a 20-page support booklet which briefly describes the package and lists the contents on each diskette. Although pedagogical recommendations and suggestions are not included, the authors describe the interactive nature of the package and how students can be "in command" at all times.

This software grammar course was developed and tested by Frank Otto, Professor of Linguistics at Brigham Young University. The program's 228 instructional segments have been carefully divided into three distinct parts: Part A (13 diskettes) is targeted at advanced beginning and intermediate ESL students; Part B (11 diskettes) is targeted at intermediate ESL students; and, Part C (6 diskettes) is targeted at advanced ESL students. Each part can be purchased separately or together. The price of the entire program is \$995.00.

A Variety of Objectives

A complete software package, COMPress's

ESL can be used to achieve a variety of objectives: It can be used as a review program; it can be used as a diagnostic program of accepted standards of grammar and formal usage of the English language; and, it can be used as a preparatory program by students who wish to prepare for standardized tests.

One of the most useful features of this software program is that its content reflects the type of materials typically covered in ESL classes and textbooks. This gives teachers the option of assigning additional drills—even though they are not keyed to the text used in class—which are representative enough to make them suitable for reinforcement of work done in class.

Students can also profit from the comprehensive nature of this package which allows them to select areas which are particularly troublesome for them. This program provides the kind of self-paced individualized instruction which the classroom cannot provide. Due to the nature of the lessons, this software contains no editing portion because none is needed, and it has no printing capabilities.

Additionally, this reviewer was pleased to see that there are no gimmicks and unnecessary noises—such as beeps, music, and sound effects—which can be disturbing to students, not to mention their effect in the microcomputer laboratory when programs are running simultaneously.

TOEFL Preparation

The programs of COMPress's ESL were originally created as aids to students preparing for the TOEFL examination. This fact is readily apparent when one examines the content and design of the lessons. Using a highly interactive drill-and-practice format, this program gives students easy access to all instructional files, and, above all, this program keeps score and lets

students know when they have mastered a lesson. Students in need of an individualized program, with diagnostic and key area review capabilities, can count on COMPRESS's ESL to accomplish these instructional objectives as well as or better than any other program of its kind available today.

Excellent Drill-and-Practice Software

Students who have a basic foundation in English can use this software in a variety of ways. Since the program permits selection of topical study areas and the order in which they may be chosen, it, in effect, adjusts itself to the needs of the individual learner. The program can introduce material to the learner for the first time; just as effectively, it can reinforce work done in class. All explanations are clear and concise, and grammatical terminology is kept to a minimum. All lessons have an adequate number of examples to illustrate concepts, so that once the student understands the rule, there are numerous opportunities to practice examples of it.

During the practice portion of the program, the computer tracks the number of correct answers. As soon as the student achieves 80 per cent accuracy in his responses to questions in a particular section, the message "You have passed this lesson." appears on the screen. At this point, the student may elect to continue practicing, return to the main menu, or begin another lesson.

This program may also be used as a test. Incorrect answers prompt specific examples to appear on the screen, accompanied by grammatical explanations. Such explanations lead users toward the correction of their mistakes. Numerous unsuccessful attempts at answering the question on the part of users, however, prompt the often-hailed "patient" computer to become "impatient" and fill the screen with "You don't seem to be doing very well. Try looking at Help or Rule." Some students might find such a message discouraging. On the other hand, successful attempts at answering the question prompt exaggerated messages such as "You are a real genius." or "You're brilliant." to congratulate students for even the easiest answer. In our efforts to personalize computer-assisted instruction, we should not get carried away with overdoing the congratulatory or constructively

critical messages; they are not only unnecessary, but they also detract from valuable learning time. Besides, how many of us would use them in the classroom?

Limitations

Many teachers would agree that there are substantial drawbacks and limitations inherent in the use of drill-and-practice to promote communicative competence in second language acquisition. COMPRESS's ESL, although an excellent drill-and-practice program, is subject to these inherent limitations. This reviewer was disturbed and disappointed that nowhere in the program are students required to produce their own sentences. Throughout the program, students are simply asked to edit and mark sentences, or select a letter in a multiple choice question. Hence, the sentences are forever presented to the student in isolation, completely out of context, and with scant cultural relevance.

A User-Friendly Program

In this highly interactive program, designers have made good use of the capabilities of today's computer. Any student with minimal computer experience can learn to use it. At the beginning of each lesson, users are asked if they feel they need help. Ten screens of well thought-out directions introduce users to the program and how to use it effectively. They are very helpful to first-timer users; once familiar with the program, users can skip over these screens.

A menu-driven program, COMPRESS's ESL provides users with a window at the bottom of the monitor screen which lists the available options at all times. The options are easily accessible by typing a letter. It is possible for users to take a topic out of sequence and to return to Menu by pressing the ESCAPE key. Furthermore, the user can end the program prior to completion.

The content of each diskette has been categorized into groups of closely related items. All lessons follow the same format, varying in length from one to three diskettes.

Guided by pedagogical considerations, the designers of COMPRESS's ESL begin each lesson

with "Objective" and state what is to be accomplished in a particular lesson. The "Rule" section provides basic information which the user can amplify by further accessing "Rule Help." The "Rule Help" elaborates on the "rule" by giving more examples and explanations. The "Example" and "Example Help" show how the user can arrive at the answers to particular items. Additionally, a "Practice" file contains questions for users to answer. A "Practice Help" section applies the rule via examples.

The sequence of the material presented is determined by what is standard in English as a Second Language courses and textbooks. This facilitates integration of this program into a variety of courses.

Compatibility and Transferability Among Compatible Computers

This reviewer was particularly interested in the issue of compatibility and transferability among the IBM family of computers. The reviewer used the IBM PC with a color monitor—as specified—the Epson QX-16, and Equity 1, both with monochrome monitors. The use of three or four colors on the screen is not only attractive but also used effectively in the program to highlight grammatical points, directions, and explanations.

The program runs well on the Equity 1. What is designed in color, appears in inverse video on

the monochrome monitor. However, the QX-16 presented some problems. After booting up with our own copy of DOS (as is usually the case, DOS is not provided), we noticed that colored portions of the menu did not appear on the monochrome screen at all. Quite troublesome was the absence of the line that indicated the score; the lack of contrast in sentences or explanations where users have to perform a task on something that was highlighted in color by the programmer is a difference that makes a difference in how effective this program can be on a monochrome monitor.

Anyone planning on using this program with other than IBM microcomputers with color monitors should resolve the question of transferability before making a final selection.

Conclusion

Overall, this reviewer was impressed with COMPRESS's ESL, particularly with the comprehensive nature of this software program and its overall user-friendliness. It is obvious that a great deal of thought went into the preparation of the materials and their integration into a coherent and complete course.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Ada Ortuzar-Young is an Associate Professor of Spanish at Drew University. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Department of Spanish, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey 07940.

Rendez-vous

An Invitation to French

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Muyskens, Judith A., Omaggio, Alice C., & Chalmers, Claudine; Frederick Hodgson, Coordinating Editor

Copyright: 1986

Publisher: Random House, Inc.

No. of Pages: 618

Edition: Second

Title: *Rendez-vous—An Invitation to French*

Series: Other supportive materials with this text:

Workbook to Accompany Second Edition Rendez-vous by Patricia Westphal; *Laboratory Manual to Accompany Second Edition Rendez-vous* by Myra Bell Rochester; *Tapescript to Accompany Second Edition Rendez-vous* by Myrna Bell Rochester; *Testing Program to Accompany Second Edition Rendez-vous* by Michael Leruth and Kathleen Cook; *Instructor's Manual to Accompany Second Edition Rendez-vous* by Judith A. Muyskens and Alice C. Omaggio; *Teaching in a Proficiency-Oriented Classroom with Second Edition Rendez-vous* by Bette G. Hirsch; CAI programs available from CONDUIT, Oakdale Campus, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242; Videotape program available from Language Laboratory, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, G-70, Foreign Language Building, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Cost: Textbook—\$24.00 net
Workbook—\$ 9.00 net
Laboratory Manual—\$ 9.00

Improved Revision of First Edition

The authors of the second edition of *Rendez-vous: An Invitation to French* adopted the tenets of the 1986 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and kept them in mind when writing their texts. Those guidelines are mentioned prominently throughout their work and reproduced on the back cover of Hirsch's manual entitled "Teaching in a Proficiency-Oriented Classroom with Second Edition *Rendez-vous*." The authors are to be commended for providing teachers and students with an abundance of materials: a text, a workbook, a language laboratory manual, a tapescript, a testing program, an instructor's manual referring to specific lessons in the text, and a second manual explaining how to teach with *Rendez-vous* in the proficiency-oriented classroom.

The textbook is a considerably improved revision of the 1982 First Edition. The Second Edition retains the strengths of the first; it immediately immerses students into situations requiring the use of practical vocabulary and expressions, including greetings, numbers, telling time, telling the date and season, etc. A useful "plus" is the introduction and emphasis on the pronunciation. Readings have been updated and expanded to make them more relevant and pertinent. In addition, the authors have improved their explanations of grammar and the exercises corresponding to the various grammar points. Optional cultural readings—which the authors call Intermedes—have been included between chapters.

Excellent Cultural Commentaries

The Intermedes and the cultural commentaries within each chapter are excellent in their

descriptions of many sociological and cultural aspects of life in France such as the family, commerce and the technological revolution, French in world affairs, the art of conversation, housing, meals, vacations, family and national celebrations, transportation, the French post office, the Métro, Paris, the French woman in the 20th Century, the French educational system and degrees, leisure activities, civil servants and nationalized industries, etc.

Appendix

The appendix contains a brief chart on the International Phonetic Alphabet, a brief explanation of the passé simple, and charts on the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs.

Workbook and Laboratory Manual

Both workbook and lab manual contain excellent visuals; the written exercises are designed to test the students on their assimilation of the contents of the textbook chapters. Additionally, the laboratory manual contains oral comprehension exercises which require oral responses. Both the workbook and the lab manual have an answer section at the end.

Instructor's Manual, Tapescript, Testing Program, Proficiency

The four additional manuals that Random House makes available with the Second Edition of *Rendez-vous* offer the teacher of French using this text a wealth of options.

The *Instructor's Manual* gives helpful suggestions for adapting *Rendez-vous* to the needs of course and department. The *Tapescript* contains a transcription of the oral materials used in the laboratory manual. The extensive *Testing Program* (440 pages) offers instructors several tests for each chapter as well as several different quarter and semester examinations. Bette Hirsch's teaching proficiency manual suggests ways to use *Rendez-vous* effectively when incorporating the 1986 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

Audio Tape Program

It is this reviewer's understanding that reel-to-reel tapes are available free of charge—upon adoption of the text—for copying purposes. Cassettes will be given to schools that do not have reel-to-cassette copying facilities.

Limitations

It is difficult to find fault with the abundant materials that the authors of this text and its corollaries offer French teachers. Exercises are well-constructed and well-developed throughout the text; instructions are clear, and, above all, the text and its six manuals are well-coordinated.

On page 9, Exercise C of the text, the authors might want to mention in the next edition that all telephone numbers in Paris now are 8-digit, beginning with the number 4. The section about the French vocabulary for family relatives on pages 122-123 is a little long. The discussion on the 17 intransitive verbs conjugated with *être* on pages 251-252 should contain an explanation of the five verbs of that group that may also be conjugated with *avoir* when they take a direct object. Happily, the study of relative pronouns includes *dont* with *qui*, but the study of indefinite pronouns on pages 528-529, including *ce qui* and *ce que*, does not seem to include *ce dont*.

The only major criticism of the text should be directed at the publisher, not the authors: It would appear that the publisher chose to print the text on less-than-attractive paper stock which—in itself—makes the visuals less interesting and detracts from the overall visual impact and appeal of the book.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Stephen V. Dock teaches French at East Carolina University. Interested readers may write to him at the following address: Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina 27858-4353.

The Monograph Series

Calico in conjunction with IALL presents the first volume of its Monograph Series entitled:

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volume, edited by Jerry W Larson, will be: the role of CAI in language training; concerns and decisions involved in planning or remodeling a language learning center; how to incorporate satellite reception in your lab; how to cope with different TV standards; how to test the various language skills in your lab; and how to incorporate different technologies into your lab.

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Applications of Technology: Planning and Using Language Learning Centers

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Edited by Jerry W. Larson

Copyright: 1986

Publisher: CALICO

No. of Pages: 178

Edition: Monograph

Title: *Applications of Technology: Planning and Using Language Learning Centers*

Authors

This monograph is a collection of 12 papers written by professionals involved in the development of language learning centers and influential in helping to determine the direction in which such centers are going. The contributing authors cover a wide range of topics including converting television standards, the role of the language learning laboratory, the design of materials for laboratory use, and the selection of computer software.

The Learning Laboratory

The authors of this monograph share a belief in the value of the language learning center and describe dynamic laboratories where active participation—by both faculty and students—is not only encouraged but also practiced. In such active participatory laboratories exciting opportunities exist to practice all language skills at all levels of foreign and second language learning.

Leslie Bailey describes the language laboratory as “a natural junction point for both languages and technologies.” Bailey urges that the evolution

of the laboratory proceed from “a repository of equipment” to a “creative support service.” Roger Sánchez-Berroa demands that “what is done in the lab can and must be as interesting and challenging as what is done in class.” Jerry Larson in the chapter entitled “Testing in the Language Laboratory” maintains that Sánchez-Berroa’s dictum is equally applicable to the testing of aural/oral foreign language skills in the laboratory.

Given the current emphasis on culture in the teaching of target languages, readers of this monograph will be interested in the proposal by James Taylor which suggests that the laboratory can be used effectively for the teaching of culture. He suggests that the imaginative use of media can bring the target culture to the student and effectively demonstrate concepts of the “living” culture.

Practical and Realistic Exploitation

Throughout the monograph, the authors remain practical and realistic; they stress the importance of winning faculty support in implementing new ideas in the laboratory; they acknowledge the financial constraints that limit the investments in the existing and emerging information technologies which have useful, beneficial, and impressive applications in foreign and second language learning.

On a fantasy visit to the Language Learning Resource Center of Megabucks University, Junetta Gillespie admires the facilities which house the very latest in electronic wizardry:

satellite dishes, interactive video, booths with shortwave radio transmissions—all purchased with limitless megabucks. In this context, Gillespie makes an important distinction between effective use and possible use of technology in second and foreign language learning. Possible use is defined as the full exploitation of all available technology. Effective use is controlled by budgetary considerations and the efficient use of resources. For Gillespie, the latter is the real concern of education.

State-of-the-Art Laboratories

The monograph does not entirely shy away from the instruments of high technology. Victor Aulestia outlines procedures for installing satellite earth stations to receive international broadcasts. Cordell Jeppsen describes the factors that must be considered in converting television standards, using the experiences of the University of Iowa Video Center.

Useful

Since the contributors represent nine different institutions, the diversity of perspective constitutes this monograph's major strength. It can serve as a useful handbook for anyone planning a language center, managing a center, or teaching in a language center, be it on the high school or college level. Readers with extensive language learning center experience might be interested in papers dealing with specialized areas such as the development of speaking and listening materials, nonbehavioristic learning theory, and testing.

Most of the articles are written in a straightforward, readable style. In part, this readable style serves to "demystify" the language learning

center with its technologies. In addition, technical terms are explained and defined; the appendix includes a list of addresses for software and A-V materials. Included also is information about copyright laws, including a brief commentary by a copyright attorney about the implications of satellite transmissions. The comprehensive bibliographies at the end of each article are a starting point for further research.

Limitations

Although the term "language learning centers" appears in the title of this monograph, most of the authors discuss "language laboratories." Such an inconsistency should have been avoided; a definition of terms would have been appropriate.

While Frank Otto of CALICO has written a good introduction, he fails to explain the criteria for selecting both papers and contributors. Readers have a right to know why and how contributors and papers were selected.

Conclusion

In "Involving the Faculty Member in the Language Laboratory," Jacquelyn Tanner advises laboratory directors to keep a library of materials on the laboratory to stimulate discussions with faculty. *Applications of Technology: Planning and Using Language Learning Centers* would be a useful addition to such a library.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Suzanne Lord is a member of the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages and director of the language laboratory at California Polytechnic University. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Department of Foreign Languages, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, California 93407.

Culture Bound: Bridging the Culture Gap in Language Teaching

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Valdes, Joyce Merrill

Copyright: 1986

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

No. of Pages: xi, 222

Title: *Culture Bound: Bridging the Cultural Gap in Language Teaching*

Cost: \$10.95, paper

All new-comers as well as those interested in incorporating a cultural focus into their classrooms will benefit from this recent collection of writings. All but four of the 18 articles are excerpts from previously published works by well-known scholars and teachers who have developed sound methods for teaching culture in the classroom.

Culture Bound thus brings together a representation of theoretical as well as practical materials to serve as a guide in the teaching of culture in the foreign language and the second language classroom. This great breadth of articles—written for the most part in the last 10 to 15 years (although one dates from 1911)—is linked by a common theme and organized under three general categories: “Language, Thought and Culture,” “Cultural Differences and Similarities,” and “Classroom Applications.”

Language, Thought and Culture

The first section of *Culture Bound* contains four articles which, on the whole, serve as an overview of past and present theory about the relationship between language and the mind within a cultural framework.

Boas (1911) illustrates the mutual influences of language and thought on culture and the interaction among all three. These illustrations are based on an investigation of native American Indian cultures.

On a broader scale, Kaplan (1986) traces the connection between the culture of a society and the development of a unique written language.

In an article entitled “Acculturation and the Mind,” Acton (1986) examines cognitive and affective developments *vis à vis* culture.

A final overview of culture in foreign and second language teaching and its significance is provided by Brown (1986) in an article entitled “Learning a Second Culture.”

The four articles of the first section of *Culture Bound* are informative to the reader unacquainted with the work of the authors; more importantly, they define the necessary terms and theories which form the foundation for the teaching of culture as exemplified in subsequent chapters of the book.

Cultural Differences and Similarities

The second section of *Culture Bound* contains seven articles organized around the centerpiece of cross-cultural understanding. The scope and breadth of three specific selections is significant because, together, they form one logically related subgroup each limited to a particular culture, ranging from Condon’s 1980 article entitled “...So near the United States” to Parker’s 1976 article entitled “Cultural Clues to the Middle Eastern Student” to Maley’s 1983 article entitled “A Miracle of Rare Device: The Teaching of English in China.”

In addition to these three articles, the remaining four offer a more general framework and analytical strategies and focus discussion on several different cultures simultaneously.

The topic of divergence in the way developing and industrialized nations approach written texts involving argumentation and abstraction is the subject of Osterloh's 1980 work entitled "Intercultural Differences and Communicative Approaches to Foreign-Language Teaching in the Third World."

More in line with the stated theme of the section are Lado's 1957 article "How to Compare Two Cultures," Wolfson's 1981 work, "Compliments in Cross-Cultural Perspective," and Morain's 1978 article, "Kinesics and Cross-Cultural Understanding." Lado contends that no two individual behaviors through which a culture manifests itself are exactly alike—differing either in form, meaning, or distribution (defined temporally and spatially). Lado maintains that awareness of these aspects not only heightens cultural sensitivity but also makes more likely the potential for intercultural acceptance. Both Morain and Wolfson provide valuable methods and techniques useful in sensitizing students to culture, specifically in the areas of speech acts and kinesics or "body language."

Classroom Applications

Practical approaches to teaching and evaluating culture in the foreign and second language classroom abound in the seven articles of the last section of *Culture Bound*. The most cohesive in purpose, this section presents a wide range of ideas under the general heading of "Classroom Applications."

Although somewhat misleading, Dunnett, Dubin, and Lezberg's "English Language Teaching from an Intercultural Perspective," first published in 1981, offers challenging topics for role-playing, targeted at intermediate to advanced foreign and second language learners.

Blatchford's (1973) article, "Newspapers: Vehicles for Teaching ESOL with a Cultural Focus," Valdes' (1986) article, "Culture in Literature," and Vallette's (1977) article, "The Cultural Test," all share common practicality for the classroom teacher within the narrow scope

suggested by their titles.

It is Brooks, however, in his 1964 article, "Culture in the Classroom," who offers an impressive and useful list of topics and follow-up questions for cultural presentations.

Taken together, these five authors provide teachers with a host of practical ways to implement the theories and culture/language perspectives introduced in the earlier writings of *Culture Bound*.

Whereas Dunnett et al., Blatchford, Valdes, Vallette and Brooks give suggestions of what to do in the classroom, Archer (1986) in "Culture Bump and Beyond," discusses the dissonance which occurs when the actions of one cultural group do not meet the expectations of another cultural group, and how the bewilderment and irritation resulting from cultural dissonance can be reduced by pedagogical foresight.

On yet a different note, Hughes (1984) in "An Argument for Cultural Analysis in the Second Language Classroom," discusses current and classical theoretical models that center on psychological self-study as a way to sensitize students to their own cultural identity and to the cultural identities of others. Hughes' suggestions for teaching cultural awareness harbor risks for teachers without training and classroom environments without multi-cultural students.

Conclusion

Considered individually, the 18 articles in *Culture Bound* display a variety of colors on the language canvas. Each article has sufficient scope to introduce the novice teacher to the world of cross-cultural consciousness and to remind the veteran teacher of current cultural concepts and their applicability in the classroom. Readers who wish to pursue in-depth study of any one or more of the topics presented in *Culture Bound* can begin their quest by consulting the expansive bibliography of contemporary and classical works at the end of the book.

As a whole, *Culture Bound* confronts readers with what is an artificial and unnatural reality: the separation which all too often characterizes the teaching of language and the teaching of culture. By assembling this set of readings on

theory and classroom application, Valdes makes an important contribution toward the elimination of this artificial reality. In *Culture Bound*, future theoreticians and practitioners have a foundation on which to build a foreign and second language pedagogy that will eliminate the artificial

separation between language and culture once and for all.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

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