
□ THE J.E.T.T. FEATURE

Educators Review Pacesetting Print and Electronic Media from Heinle & Heinle

The Editors express their appreciation to both the reviewers and to Heinle & Heinle Publishers for their assistance and cooperation in the preparation of this *J.E.T.T.* Feature. Without the valuable service of the reviewers and the timely and generous provisions of information and materials from Heinle & Heinle, this feature would not have been possible in its present form.

It is our hope that this feature provides useful information for anyone charged with the responsibility of selecting and using effectively the products available to practitioners in today's language pedagogy.

The opinions expressed in the product reviews are those of the authors and do not constitute the implied or expressed endorsement of *J.E.T.T.* or The International Association for Learning Laboratories, IALL.

J.E.T.T. FEATURE TABLE OF CONTENTS

The <i>J.E.T.T.</i> Philosophy of Review	page 33
How Print and Electronic Media Are Selected	page 33
How Reviewers Are Chosen	page 34
Heinle & Heinle's French Print and Electronic Media	
<i>Du Tac au Tac</i> (Text and Audio Recordings)	page 35
<i>Tête à Tête</i> (Software)	page 38
<i>Système-D</i> (Software)	page 41
<i>France From Within</i> (Video)	page 44
<i>The French Way</i> (Video)	page 46
Heinle & Heinle's Spanish Print and Electronic Media	
<i>Cara a Cara</i> (Software)	page 49
<i>Entre Líneas</i> (Textbook)	page 51
Heinle & Heinle's German Print and Electronic Media	
<i>Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden</i>	page 53

Setting the Pace...

means teaming technology with pedagogy to create a new kind of language classroom. Our authors make this happen with their expertise and creativity. Authors like...

James S. Noblitt, Donald F. Solá and Willem J. A. Pet (Cornell University):

Système-D: Writing Assistant for French

Word processing software incorporating a bilingual dictionary, a reference grammar, complete verb conjugations, and notes on usage, vocabulary, and basic communicative functions. This innovative software encourages students at beginning and intermediate levels of French to find essential information about the language and explore creative options for composition and written expression without leaving the keyboard or interrupting the writing process. For IBM® PC-XT, AT (or compatibles) or PS/2 (hard disk drive required).

Robert Ariew
(University of Arizona):

Tête à Tête: Beginning French Software
Cara a Cara: Beginning Spanish Software
¡Vamos!: Usamos la computadora
Allons-y!: Utilisons l'ordinateur.

Software for the beginning Spanish or French student that bring animation, demonstration, innovative display features and graphics, as well as answer judging and correction into creative, pedagogically sound and stimulating activities to reinforce communicative language skills. For the Apple II® computers and compatibles.

Bernard Petit

(State University of New York College at Brockport):

French Alive!

The French Way!

Spanish Alive! (with Victor Rojas)

Videos for beginning French or Spanish that focus on basic communication skills while bringing culturally authentic scenes of daily living into your classroom.

France from Within Tape 1

France from Within Tape 2

Spanish from Within (with Victor Rojas)

For the intermediate level French or Spanish course, or for special courses on Conversation and Culture, present real people, their families, their jobs and aspects of their country's culture in authentic, stimulating programs.

All videos are filmed on location, in a variety of French and Spanish speaking countries, using native speakers (not actors). VHS format. Student Workbooks and a complete Tapescript for the instructor available.

We'll be pleased to tell you more, or to show you the creative work done by these innovators. Write or call:

Marketing Department
Heinle & Heinle Publishers
20 Park Plaza • Boston MA 02116
1-800-237-0053 • 617/451-1940

THE J.E.T.T. PHILOSOPHY OF REVIEW

In today's education market, rarely are textbooks the only item in language learning packages. Most often, textbooks are accompanied by supplemental or ancillary items such as audiotapes, workbooks, lab manuals, diskettes, audiovisuals, etc. At *J.E.T.T.*, we want our readers to know "all there is to know about all there is" in a particular textbook package. Consequently, we ask publishers to send us everything that accompanies a particular textbook or language learning program.

It is when we ask for everything that publishers often send us only what happens to be available at the time of our request; inevitably, most often it is the textbook (instructor's edition or student edition) that is on the market first. The supplemental materials trickle in after the textbook has already been out for some time. Why publishers work in this mysterious fashion their wonders to perform is a good question—one to which we have, as of yet, been unable to get an answer.

Because we want our readers to be informed about current offerings in the area of products for today's foreign, second, and native language learning, we ask the manufacturer of such products to send us their current or upcoming, complete product packages—print and/or electronic—for review. Producers of print and electronic media are often of the opinion that the more reviews, the better, and are cooperative in sending the materials in the package that are available. Although we could wait until the entire package is available, often times we will send to our reviewers those items on the market, and at a later time, review those items in a package that were unavailable at the time of our initial request.

Unprofessional Product Vendors. It is our policy at *J.E.T.T.* to ask producers of language learning products to send the products directly to our editorial offices rather than to reviewers directly. We do not reveal the identity of the reviewer to the producer or vendor of the product until the review appears in *J.E.T.T.* On occasion—in the interests of saving time and frustration—we have had vendors communicate

with reviewers directly in order to quickly resolve problems the reviewer is experiencing with a software program, for example. Without exception, the problems have been resolved. Most product vendors, like Heinle & Heinle, are professional and cooperative. Unfortunately, some vendors make the review process less than pleasant: When product vendors know who is reviewing their products, the temptation is great to badger, pressure, and otherwise influence the reviewer to write a "positive" review. We, at *J.E.T.T.*, find such badgering unprofessional and intolerable. Our reviewers are not influenced by such tactics: *J.E.T.T.* will not review products of vendors who try to influence our reviewers in any way.

HOW PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA ARE SELECTED

In general, we select print and electronic media on the basis of the complete, or nearly complete, product packages we have received from vendors we have contacted or the ones we receive from vendors who automatically send us their latest offerings.

Because our growing family of reviewers comes from every sector of the educational spectrum, we are very fortunate at *J.E.T.T.* to have access to professionals around the world who possess both the experience and the expertise to evaluate any language learning product that is sent to us. Being a reviewer for a journal such as *J.E.T.T.* is often said to be a thankless task: Products arrive, evaluations must be made, reviews have to be written, and everything has to be returned **as soon as possible**. At *J.E.T.T.* we are fortunate that most of our reviewers are professionals who review what we send them and return it to us promptly.

In the case of Heinle & Heinle, we asked them to send us their current offerings in language learning products, which, we are delighted to say, they did in a prompt and professional manner. Roger Hooper, Marketing Manager at Heinle & Heinle, deserves a special note of thanks for his help and follow-up. We are especially pleased that Heinle & Heinle sent us *systeme-D* even before it was officially on the market.

HOW REVIEWERS ARE CHOSEN

Reviewers are chosen on the basis of their experience and expertise and their willingness to review for *J.E.T.T.* All of our reviewers have volunteered to serve *J.E.T.T.* in the important capacity of reviewer. They are currently working as professionals in the areas of practices and products for today's language learning.

We send target language programs to reviewers who know the target language in question: We send computer programs to professionals who

have computer expertise, and if the software program is in a target language, who also know the target language.

We send review guidelines to all our reviewers which indicate the areas we would like them to explore and evaluate. Our reviewers are free, however, to use formats they find more suitable than the one suggested by our guidelines. What we ask of all our reviewers is the following: Review all items in the language learning package, and review it critically, honestly, and thoroughly.

Du Tac Au Tac — Text and Audio Recordings

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Jeannette Bragger & Donald Rice

Copyright: 1985

Publisher: Heinle & Heinle

No. of Pages: 220

Title: *Du Tac Au Tac*

Supplemental Materials: *Cassette for Student Use* included with each copy of text; *Instructor's Manual* and *Teacher's Cassette* available free upon adoption of text

Level: Intermediate

Cost: Net price is \$18.50 and includes prepackaged test and student cassette

CONCEPT OF *DU TAC AU TAC*

Function-Based. Currently using, *Du Tac au Tac*, this reviewer appreciates the function-based concept of the Heinle & Heinle intermediate French conversation text and audiotape program. The activities the text sets up and supports are interactional, that is, they show "how to initiate, maintain, and close conversations; how to communicate and respond to needs, problems, feelings, plans, and opinion; how to react appropriately in face-to-face interactions" (*Instructor's Manual*, p. 1).

Strategies. In this text designed to develop communication strengths, the authors try to eliminate a common, perhaps insufficiently recognized, communication barrier, namely, the absence of strategies which enable native speakers of the language to engage one another and pursue a conversation fully. Therefore, *Du Tac au Tac* begins every chapter with a strategy (in English!) in order to facilitate the matter at hand; be it a chapter based on telling stories, reacting to an opinion, or making plans.

Expressions/Vocabulary. Tapping students' listening skills as a point of departure, the text proceeds to offer expressions and vocabulary useful in a conversation function. Subsequently, this function is practiced, dramatized, and elaborated throughout the chapter.

In accordance with an oral-proficiency approach, students are offered skeletal materials designed to be "fleshed out" in small group practice with the instructor. The text does not incorporate grammar review or expanded vocabulary lists.

Audio Program. The audio cassette which accompanies the student text and the additional instructor's tape have something in common: They were conceived as unscripted recordings of native speakers improvising on a "bare bones" outline or situation.

Innovative and Authentic. Initially, the innovative nature of the audio recordings alone convinced this reviewer to try the *Du Tac au Tac* language learning package. The fast pace and naturalness of the vocabulary make this audio program a source of some of the most authentic listening exercises ever recorded.

Student as Listener. Given the multiple layers of verbal and non-verbal information conveyed in the taped conversations, the students' task as listeners is quite complex. For example, in the third chapter—where the conversation function is to be acquired—is the request of a service; the student, however, hears not only the request but also hesitation noises, evasive sounds, requests for more information, and categorical refusal as well as provisional acceptance. Based on this reviewer's use of *Du Tac au Tac*, there is no doubt

that such a listening exercise increases students' aural comprehension proficiency by "stretching" their linguistic abilities.

Listening as Axis of Communication. *Du Tac au Tac*'s strong aural component restores the often neglected listening axis of communication. The program supports the listening skill as half of language communication by formulating many exercises in such a way as to render a speaker powerless to continue if he or she has not gathered essential information as a listener.

INSTRUCTOR'S EXPERIENCE USING *DU TAC AU TAC*

Student Needs, Motivations, and Language Habits. In encouraging students to reproduce expressions and vocabulary in foreign language classes, the question, To what degree will students practice and imitate expressions and vocabulary heard on tape and in class? remains.

Inevitably, university foreign language conversation students differ in level of preparation and listening habits prior to taking the course. Using *Du Tac au Tac* with fifth-quarter, highly motivated Honors students with good language acquisition skills, this reviewer found that such students exhibited high levels of assimilation in their target language development over the span of the quarter. Less motivated students, however, are content to depend on their previously acquired language structures and use simpler vocabulary in their target language communication.

Instructor's Role. In the preface to the *Instructor's Manual*, the authors state that the materials are designed so as "to minimize the time spent on course preparation and concentrate on teaching" (p. 2). If by this the authors mean that dozens of handouts to supplement the text are unnecessary, this reviewer agrees. If, however, they mean that little preparation of any kind is required, then this statement is quite misleading.

Commitment to Method and Objectives. For example, without careful planning to implement clear objectives for each class hour, the integration of the audio program with the text simply does not occur. Paradoxically, this is not

a fault in the materials; it is their strength. The text and tapes demand that the instructor make a pedagogical commitment to method and objectives. Choices must be made such as where and how to integrate a support grammar text (the *Instructor's Manual* suggests options), and whether or not to add writing assignments as final skill or to consider the writing assignments necessary to the development of oral skills and, therefore, incorporate them from the beginning. ACTFL proficiency skill tests are included in the form of prepared cards with oral assignments for small group work. When using *Du Tac au Tac*, the instructor must come to terms with what he or she expects to achieve and how instructional methods can further those goals. Although the text supports many options, it is definitely not the choice of a grammar-translationist.

Limited Error Correction. One challenge to the instructor's function-based language pedagogy is limited error correction. With *Du Tac au Tac*, the instructor must have clear evaluation techniques and correction strategies in order to further develop confident student participation. For example, in the narration lesson, an instructor might accept gender and agreement errors, while insisting on accurate subject, verb, and tense. Further, with only one instructor listening to as many as five groups at least once during the hour, the possibilities for student errors are high. At first, it may seem like walking through a mine field. For this reason, if *Du Tac au Tac* is to function at all, class size cannot exceed 15 students, and the instructor must maximize his or her classroom management skills.

Another difficulty in evaluation and correction centers around the text's target expressions and constructions which are either not advanced or can be paraphrased in simpler French; this may encourage students to rely on the "tried and true." The text intentionally incorporates vocabulary and expressions already familiar to the student in an attempt to activate previously acquired, but perhaps passive, knowledge. The evaluation issue concerns itself not with the acquisition of difficult expressions and constructions, loaded with vocabulary, at all costs; rather, the issue is one of *appropriate* responses, interjections, and questions with the construction and vocabulary they require. Evaluation, therefore, must not be

limited to difficult expressions and vocabulary alone but must include appraisal of response effectiveness and appropriateness.

Text Adaptability. The text's adaptability is one of its most appealing qualities. The multiplicity of exercises and activities in each chapter allow the instructor to fit the text to his or her class's needs and preferences. Fortunately, this adaptability is not achieved at the cost of the lesson-plan format. Indeed, preparatory assignments for the next day's activities are set forth in a consistent order, maintaining the continuity so important to a conversation class's work habits.

The text's adaptability, however, does not extend to the instructor revising the order of the chapters: The text builds on itself with each new chapter based on the strategies and expressions of the previous ones. For example, the emphasis on giving advice and reacting to opinions in Chapter 9 provides the foundation for the more sophisticated task in Chapter 10, namely, "how to discuss."

Vocabulary. Vocabulary pertinent to the chapter is presented in shaded blocks. Additional blocks are included at the end of each chapter for the student's personalized entries ("Ce que je veux retenir"). Take for example the family tree project (p. 125); the vocabulary items such as "step-parent," "immigration quotas," or "welder" might be an integral part of one student's presentation but not another's: The empty blocks

allow the student to include and formalize the vocabulary essential to him or her.

Text Design. The text's unusual 8.5" x 11" workbook format is both inviting and practical. So that the text can be personalized, there is ample room for student responses throughout the text. To the uninitiated, the layout may appear busy, but the activities follow a definite, consistent organizational pattern. Black and white photographs supporting the intent of the chapters are generously interspersed: The photographs avoid stereotypes and sexism.

CONCLUSION

Is the text's self-proclaimed "innovativeness" an empty boast? No. The emphasis of *Du Tac au Tac* on the process of communication via the development of the conversational skeleton (strategies and functions) is extremely well-placed and its execution is well-done. In addition, the commitment it elicits from the instructor in terms of method and goals—together with its adaptability and promotion of individualized learning—renders this Heinle & Heinle text exceptional.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Barbara Welch teaches French in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Department of Romance Languages, Moore College Building, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602, U.S.A.

HEINLE & HEINLE'S FRENCH PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Tête à Tête — Software

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Robert Ariew

Courseware Name: *Tête à Tête*

Instructional Method: CAI/CALL

Vendor: Heinle & Heinle Publishers

Cost: \$150

Copy Policy: No copy permission; backup sets at \$65 each

Equipment: Apple II and compatibles (II, II+, IIe, IIGS or Franklin Ace)

Memory Required: 48K

Prerequisites: One disk drive and monochrome or color monitor

Grammar Review. At first glance, it would seem that *Tête à Tête* is topic-based. The title of each unit, e.g., *J'adore voyager* (4), *Amusons-nous!* (9), *Paris est un rêve!* (5), and the introductory screen to each unit suggest that the material will help the student perform in a communicative situation. Unit 2, for example, entitled *C'est moi!*, promises the following: "In this unit you will learn to describe yourself, what you do, your likes and dislikes." Unfortunately, this goal is quickly obscured by rigid grammar-based activities and the failure to emphasize the first person. Sadly, contextualization of activities and language is barely explored in any of the units.

OVERVIEW

Tête à Tête is a software package for the beginning student of French. It does not accompany a particular textbook, but it does treat the grammar covered in most first-year French courses at the college level. *Tête à Tête* can be used on the Apple II family of computers, and a color monitor is recommended. This reviewer used an Apple IIGS with an Apple color monitor. The software program consists of ten units stored on five floppy disks.

Each unit is independent and is divided into two sections, "Préparation" and "Activités." Altogether, there are about 20 minutes worth of activities per unit. The "Préparation" section consists of a series of four to seven exercises that the student can select in any order from a menu. Ideally, the exercises should be done in sequence since there is a progression from recognition to production. The exercises of the "Préparation" in each unit follow a similar format, with the same types of exercises. The "Activités" section consists of two open-ended activities.

Unimaginative Presentations. Grammar review seems to be the true purpose of *Tête à Tête*. The software skims over many grammar points, including the use of articles, regular -er verbs, the passé composé, and the subjunctive. Several activities begin with a curt review in French of grammar rules. Graphics are not used, except for the mnemonic symbol of a house with arrows to represent verbs taking "être" in the passé composé. The value of these dry, unimaginative presentations is questionable, since students needing a review of the grammar would be better served by referring to a textbook. Furthermore, as each unit attempts to offer practice of many different items, nothing is treated in depth.

Activities Exploiting Computer Capabilities. The more successful activities in *Tête à Tête* are those that exploit capabilities specific to the computer rather than using the computer to mimic a textbook. In "Arrêtez la machine," for example, the student chooses the correct form of the verb from a selection of four that flash rapidly, one after the other, on the screen. The appropriate form is selected by pressing the space bar. The verb form then appears in a complete

sentence, often unrelated to the topic of the unit. It is a disadvantage that the choice of words begins to flash on the screen as soon as the cue appears, not allowing the student time to anticipate the answer. The words flash so rapidly that fast reflexes are needed to stop the machine at the right moment. At the end of the activity, the computer calculates how well the student performed and shows the percentage of correct answers. Scores are not saved.

In other activities, the student matches sentence halves from two lists or forms sentences by placing words in order. Selection of words or sentence halves is with the arrow keys and the return key. There is a certain satisfaction in seeing the sentences properly reassembled on the screen. In "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" a picture is drawn in stages as the student supplies correct answers. After every three questions, the student has a chance to guess what is being drawn.

Several of the exercises in the "Activités" sections provide the student with information in chart form. This sort of exercise could be developed. A chart contains restricted and specific information that reduces variation in student responses while allowing some creativity.

In Unit 5, "La Lettre" is an interesting exercise. The student supplies personal information in reply to questions from the computer. The information is incorporated into a letter (in French) from the student to his parents about a school trip in which he hopes to participate. While it might have been advisable to use a more realistic situation, personalizing the activity in this way attracts the reader's attention. There are two other examples of this exercise in Units 6 and 7.

The ubiquitous "Passage à compléter" makes several appearances. The student fills the gap in a passage or a sentence with the appropriate part of a verb. Instead of a flashing cursor indicating the location of the missing words, there is a clumsy looking arrow. Unfortunately, the arrow signs do not disappear when the correct words are entered, but remain on the screen as disturbing blobs. Considering that the intended user of the software is learning to read and write French, a legible screen is important.

There are other instances of a poorly designed screen. In the exercises, "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" and "Les casiers," the student types in a missing word. The computer response of "parfait," "fantastique," etc., appears immediately beside the word supplied by the student, undifferentiated in color or size and without punctuation to separate it from the student's answer.

Activités. According to the booklet accompanying the software, the "Activités" sections include some freeform activities where the student produces language. In fact, the student is required to produce very little French—three sentences only in several of the activities. In "Pariscope," a freeform exercise in Unit 9, the student plans an evening out from a list of cinemas and films. The task is to complete the sentence, "Allons voir . . . three times. The computer accepts the names of three different cinemas for the three sentences but does not accept a proposal to see two films, e.g., "Allons voir César et 2001."

In another exercise in "Activités," the student first reads a text and then reproduces it by completing sentences. Some variation in answers is accepted, as well as answers which contain some and not all the original information. However, before reading the text, the student is not aware that it is necessary to remember information for a subsequent exercise. Neither does the screen design help in the comprehension of the material. In "Le Jeu de dames" (9), the text is a dialogue between someone playing checkers and an observer. The text is displayed below a graphic of a static orange and black checkerboard. Visually, there is no differentiation between what is said by the observer and what is said by the player.

There are several cases of inconsistency with this software that might be misleading to the learner. From the instructions for the exercise just described above, the student expects to read a short passage, which turns out to be a short dialogue. In Unit 1, after a grammatical explanation about when to use the definite and indefinite articles, both are accepted indiscriminately. The alternating use of English and French for instructions and explanations is disruptive. This reviewer would have preferred to see only

French instructions on the screen, with the option of a translation. Since grammar is explained in French, it seems logical to give directions in French also. The translation option is available at some points in the program. Finally, in Unit 9, the student might be puzzled when instructed to enter "the correct form of the verb direct object pronoun."

User-Friendly. In terms of user-friendliness, the student can leave an activity by typing "* return" at the answer prompt. Within an activity, it is not possible to skip a question. Once the student has begun an activity, it is not possible to refer to the grammar section without leaving the activity: There is no help function. Error analysis is basic, with eight symbols for eight different types of mistakes such as extra character, wrong character, letters inverted, etc. The key to these symbols is printed in the booklet only, so it is necessary to provide students with a copy of the error symbols. In some exercises, the wrong answers prompt the computer to suggest the correct response with the gentle hint of "essayez . . ." On the whole, instructions are straightforward, although an example of how to do activities would be helpful.

The software uses some simple, low-resolution graphics. The line illustrations are sharp, but

some of the colored illustrations are difficult to recognize, e.g., the cigar on an oval shaped ball in Unit 1. The program uses two sizes of text: The smaller size is clear, if a little thick, and the larger size text is bold and attractive.

CONCLUSION

It is doubtful whether anyone would "learn" French from this software. This may be due, in part, to the limitations inherent in the Apple computer. Software such as this package seem to be a step back to the days of grammar grind. Macintosh and IBM computers have more exciting capabilities that should encourage designers to create software that will inspire both students and teachers. Computer software must offer students new and different opportunities for language learning—opportunities that other media cannot offer.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

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

Systeme-D version 1.0 Writing Assistant for French — Software

Vital Statistics

Author(s): James S. Noblitt, Donald F. Sola,
Willem J. A. Pet

Courseware Name: *Systeme-D version 1.0
Writing Assistant for French*

Application: French language word processor
with on-line databases for introductory and
intermediate French

Instructional Method: Independent writing
practice

Vendor: Heinle & Heinle

Cost: \$150 net; cost of student kit (including
documentation and flier disk: \$15

Copy Policy: Site license available; inquire for
schedule

Equipment: IBM PC-XT, AT (or compatibles)
or PS/2

PC Memory Required: 512K and approximately
3 megs. of hard disk storage

Prerequisites: Hard disk drive; monochrome or
color monitor

(Editorial Note: The Editors of *J.E.T.T.* have sent to Heinle & Heinle the comprehensive and detailed pages of discrepancies the reviewer encountered in the process of reviewing this software. We have decided not to publish all the specifics for the simple reason that, in our judgment, those in a position to do something about the program are the ones who need to know how to improve it.)

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

How clearly are objectives of instruction defined? The objectives of instruction are met by the use of the tutorial. The software is to assist

one in writing, acting as a reactive "informant" as it were. Also acting as non-interactive, this software is an electronic dictionary with a grammar section. The student must elicit assistance and be rather precise in such solicitation.

Is the material presented at an appropriate level of difficulty? This program has few preconceived ideas of the linguistic level of the user. He or she can ask for as little or as much assistance as needed.

Is the information presented useful for a language learning situation? This reviewer feels that the information presented is useful for *some* language learning situations. Depending *heavily* on the linguistic and computational sophistication of the user, this reviewer sees the program as being a "natural" introduction to French prose production via a computer, or one of the worst ways imaginable to accomplish said experience.

The high preponderance of computer jargon leads me to see this documentation via diametrically opposed eyes. I can easily foresee people (students) who may find this to be an intriguing way to increase their productivity; others (faculty) may never want to use a computer again in the near future.

Is the language training students receive from this program adequate to begin using it in communication situations with little or no additional instruction? If there is not much pressure to be productive from the onset, this reviewer feels that the ability to accomplish "minor" writing tasks is present with little additional instruction after the tutorial.

Is the instruction supported by exercises that relate to students? Absolutely insufficient practice is afforded by doing the tutorial. In addition, the presence of only one (1) practice exercise means that it must be amplified/supplemented to provide an exercise more closely related to one's own students.

Do the exercises enable students to apply language concepts in their communication? No. The exercises are preprogrammed modifications of one short letter.

Does the program make provisions for the reinforcement of what has been learned? Via the tutorial, no effort is made to reinforce previously seen material.

Does the program cover the objectives thoroughly? The program covers its objectives thoroughly enough. Its goal is to become an intermediary in the student's production of lexically and syntactically correct French. The limitations of what assistance to provide *AFTER* putting a printed item on the screen, however, is where *système-D* falls down.

For example, the use of the dictionary will assist the user in learning how to say "faire la lessive" and assist in the conjugation thereof. Suppose, however, that the user produces the sentences in which he or she spells "chanter" and its various conjugations, accidentally writes "chantaiis," and does not notice the typographical error. The fact that the user knows the verb "chanter" thoroughly and feels no need to look it up in a dictionary means that the misspelling will remain on his or her paper indefinitely. Users may not have time to look up all the words on their papers and want a spelling checker to do so for them.

Equally important, the "bilingual dictionary which is central to the program," providing "core lexical and grammatical items for learners at the elementary and intermediate levels," has only 4400 French entries, far too few in general and somewhat ridiculous when one considers that neither the student (user) nor the instructor can modify/expand/personalize this dictionary.

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Are directions/instructions clearly stated? The

directions/instructions are clear. Are they accurate? Sometimes.

Do the instructional techniques allow students to progress at their own pace? This material is definitely user-independent. The user gets out of this program what (effort) he or she is willing to put in.

Is the information presented in a logical sequence? If properly done, the documentation tells the user to do A, then B, then C, then . . . in order to guarantee that all users who follow this sequence will achieve the objectives of this software.

EASE OF USE

How "user-friendly" is the program? If one is willing to accept the "user-friendliness" of the IBM PC and/or its compatibles, then this reviewer supposes that the atmosphere in which *système-D* is used can be described as "user-friendly."

This reviewer, however, questions whether the circumstances are friendly enough to persuade reticent faculty and/or student users to overcome the numerous obstacles in this program that can be described as unfriendly.

Can the program be ended prior to completion? Because it is not really a program as such, it can be ended at nearly any point in its execution.

Is it possible to take a topic out of sequence? During the use of *système-D*, there is no sequence. The user determines the order based on his or her needs.

Does the program provide a HELP facility? One of *système-D*'s greatest strengths is its attempt to provide as much HELP as a typical introductory and/or intermediate level student could want.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

One of the angles from which to look at *système-D* is in its use by different populations, namely, undergraduate non-majors, undergraduate majors, professorial colleagues, and language learning center directors. I question whether *système-D* meets many, if any, of the needs of these populations.

Undergraduate Non-Majors. The undergraduate non-majors are in a *required* sequence of up to four (4) semesters of instruction with heavy emphasis on grammar and often finding themselves in classes of 25 (or more) students; there is very little done in the way of composition. Their obligatory presence does not imply obligatory performance/participation: The written assignments would not be favorably embraced when coupled to an additional task of learning how to use a computer and a program like *systeme-D*. This reviewer estimates that 10%-20% of this population are computer literate, and those are more likely to have been exposed to Macintosh and its philosophies than IBM and its philosophies.

Undergraduate Majors. The undergraduate majors are the only population for whom written assignments are both numerous and lengthy—justifications, possibly, for the effort required to learn how to use *systeme-D*. At this point, however, we encounter the reality that *systeme-D* is probably only good enough and challenging enough for the most mediocre majors and not at all satisfactory for the best and the brightest of them. The inability to personalize the dictionary constitutes a mortal blow in the eyes of this reviewer. Raising student motivation and interest via personalization of composition is, for many teachers, a useful, effective, and favorite teaching technique; to contend with only 4400 predetermined and fixed lexical entries—some of which do not even need to be there—is something many teachers would not be willing or able to do. Adding insult to injury, the lack of a spelling checker to find “Parris” present—when I know how to spell “Paris”—is a *sine qua non*.

Professorial Colleagues. Some of them have been exposed to IBM and its wiles and are quite willing to continue to tolerate the difficulties such wiles create; others have been exposed to Macintoshes and are ready to live/die by them. Most, if not all of them, have already learned to use a word processor. The absence of word-processing in *systeme-D* beyond the most rudimentary level means that they, who probably perform quite well linguistically, will find no *personal* use in *systeme-D*.

Language Learning Center Directors. Last,

but not least, are the language learning center directors. I mention these often beleaguered people because at many institutions, they are responsible for helping/instructing faculty/staff/students in whatever is necessary in the use of technology, including computers, in foreign and second language learning. Those language learning center directors who consider the ease with which one acquires (and retains) the skills needed to perform *well* with a program as a primary variable of how “good” the program is, may find *systeme-D* disappointing. The fact that all currently used spelling checkers allow the creation of individual, personalized dictionaries—and *systeme-D* does not—could destroy the usefulness of this program for both the clientele the language learning center serves and the director who must master it.

SUMMARY

As stated in the documentation and in the second line of its title, this software program is to assist one in writing French. With this restricted goal in mind, *systeme-D* does an excellent job. If one has the equipment, the *individually* available hard disk drive and its 3 megabytes of FREE SPACE, the above-mentioned experiential prerequisites, and a need to produce short documents in French, then the collection of files in *systeme-D* deserves consideration. The ease-of-use, speed of execution, satisfactory documentation, and presumed (via statements in the documentation) user support by either the authors and/or publisher all lead to a B+/A- rating.

Nevertheless, for this reviewer, the bottom line is one of disappointment. Numerous errors and discrepancies, rudimentary word-processing capabilities only, no provisions for personalization of spelling checker—these aggravatingly serious problems make *systeme-D* with its bright beginning and ambitious goals a case of promises inadequately met.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Charles James Mitchell is director of the language laboratory at Skidmore College. Interested readers may write to him at the following address: Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

France From Within — Videotapes I and II

Vital Statistics

Producer: Bernard Petit Video Productions
Publisher: Heinle & Heinle
Title: *France From Within, Tapes I and II*
Available: For purchase from Heinle & Heinle
Address: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 20 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116
Format: VHS
Length: 60 minutes
Language: Entirely in French
Level of Difficulty: Intermediate
Copyright: *Tape I*, 1985; *Tape II*, 1987
Supplemental Materials: With *Tape I*: *Student Study Guide* with *Tapescript*; with *Tape II*: *Tapescript* and *Viewer's Workbook* (forthcoming)
Cost: \$150 net per tape (includes *Tapescript*)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

France From Within consists of two hour-long videotapes, containing short interviews with native French people whose major activities or interests demonstrate certain popular aspects of everyday life in France. Both of these tapes (with their ancillary materials) fall into the rather freewheeling category of "supplemental instructional materials." As such, these tapes could be embedded into a curriculum and course syllabus: Teachers could use them occasionally in class on an ad hoc basis, or they could take up residence in the language learning center and be available to students who want supplemental target language and culture exposure. Although most appropriate for intermediate and advanced college students or adult learners, these videos could—with careful teacher guidance—also be used even with beginning students.

The Interviewees. The interviewees or subjects of these videos come from all walks of life. A young *mère de famille* shares with us her joys, sorrows, and hopes in raising a family; a high school teacher recounts his *mai '68* experience; a waiter on the TGV tells us about his job and the people he serves, and, in one endearing piece, a group of teenagers in the Midi show us how to play *boules*. Their spontaneity and frank enthusiasm are priceless. Moreover, this piece is chock full of potential for the classroom. Above and beyond the activities supplied in the workbook, one could study the accent, the characteristics of adolescent speech, or the vocabulary of the game of *boules*. If the teacher were able to procure a set of *boules*, students could test their understanding of the game through a reenactment in class.

Friendly Banter. A nice feature of many of the pieces in *Tape I* is the opportunity they give us to study how the French typically construct and implement the fragments of interaction known as "friendly banter." There are very few textbook resources to help the student learn about this aspect of oral language, and teachers are often forced to skip over it in favor of the more formalized language objectives of their already overburdened syllabi. Unlike *Tape I*, *Tape II* tends to contain longer, more monologue-like interviews with less of an emphasis on interaction. *Tape II* may be more satisfactory for teachers who are oriented toward teaching traditional cultural concepts.

Ancillary Materials. *Tape I* is accompanied by a *Student Study Guide* which for every interviewee gives a verbatim transcript with references to difficult vocabulary words or cultural references, oral and visual comprehen-

sion questions, an exercise on a particular grammar problem presented by the material, and questions for use in either a discussion or as a basis for a composition. *Tape II* is accompanied by a *Tapescript*. A *Viewer's Workbook* is forthcoming but was unavailable at the time of this review.

AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON VIDEO

Upon first glance, one might wonder why the producer of these fine vignettes did not exploit their richness through a larger, more thorough *Student Study Guide*. It is difficult, however, to fault a producer whose great contribution is the actual video material—the authentic, unscripted, unmassaged material that many students and teachers thirst for. For this reason, there may be almost as many uses for these videos as there are teachers to use them. This reviewer predicts that many French teachers—a breed almost as feisty and individualistic as the people it studies—will be inspired to create their own materials for these vignettes regardless of the workbooks and guides that accompany them.

PRODUCTION VALUES

The production values for these tapes are fairly good. Mr. Petit tapes in the documentary style and is to be commended for the very good composition and generally good lighting and sound. There are the occasional weaknesses; none, however, is too distracting.

Minor Faults. The usefulness of the *Marche de Cavillon* piece would be enhanced with better

lighting and clearer, longer shots of the labels for each food item shown. This reviewer heard a windy sound in the piece on the *boules*, probably the inescapable Mistral.

In postproduction editing, Mr. Petit could have improved the quality of some transitions and hiatus's through the use of dissolves or less choppy editing. Another improvement would be the use of a professional narrator. There is an unfortunate and striking contrast between the stilted narration and the natural tones of the interviewees. This reviewer emphasizes, however, that these minor faults can be easily overlooked; overall, the viewer gets a very comfortable feeling watching the vignettes—mostly due to Mr. Petit's practice of the documentary style.

CONCLUSION

By keeping the topics simple, focused, and relatively short, Bernard Petit achieves versatility in the two tapes of *France From Within*. At a time when many of the media-based productions on the market follow tortuous paths—in order to teacher-proof them or enlist students in this or that method of learning a language—it is refreshing to see a resource as elemental and generally useful as Bernard Petit's *France From Within*.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Carolyn G. Fidelman, a free-lance educational media consultant and teacher, works with interactive technologies at Harvard University where she is a student in the Graduate School of Education. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02138.

The French Way: Video

Vital Statistics

Producer: Bernard Petit Video Productions
Publisher: Heinle & Heinle
Address: 20 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts
02116
Title: *The French Way*
Available: For Purchase
Format: VHS
Length: 60 minutes
Language: French
Level of Difficulty: All language on the tape is
generated by native speakers at normal speed.
The *Workbook* is designed to facilitate
comprehension by even beginning French
students.
Copyright: 1987
Supplemental Materials: *Viewer's Workbook;*
Tapescript with workbook answer key
Cost: \$150 net for the video; \$7.00 net *Viewer's*
Workbook; Tapescript & answer key included
with video at no charge

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The French Way video program (tape, work-
book, tapescript, and answer key) comes as a
package intended to provide the viewer with
authentic samples of "unsimplified, unscripted"
French speech captured "live" in culturally rich
contexts. The goals of the program promise to
give students "practice in understanding and
using practical French" and to acquaint them
"with the living culture of many French-speaking
countries or regions."

The Videotape. The videotape, which has a total
playing time of approximately an hour, offers ten
self-contained programs, each of which is broken
down into different scenes that vary in length
from 15 seconds to slightly over seven minutes.
The first eight programs provide the vocabulary

and structures necessary to perform survival-type
functions in French culture. These programs
include **Basic Communication** (making
introductions, talking about yourself, saying hello
and good-bye); **Arriving** (going through
customs, locating a room); **Asking for**
Directions; Everyday Business (at the bank, at
the post office, on the telephone); **Travel by Rail;**
Food and Drink; Making Purchases; and
Needing a Doctor. The last two programs—the
French at Home and Leisure Activities—are
less functional in approach and concentrate more
heavily on cultural aspects. The medium
(videotape) allows the teacher to replay each
segment as many times as needed for students to
comprehend both the visual and auditory
messages.

Participants on the Tape. The participants on
the tape, who use their own names, are not
professional actors—indeed, they are ordinary
residents of various regions of the Francophone
world and represent an interesting variety of age
and social groups. None of the episodes is
scripted. For the most part, the language used
seems genuinely spontaneous and is replete with
false starts, repetitions, and stammers which
characterize authentic communicative language.

A particularly original segment from the
linguistic point of view is Part 3 of Program One.
Entitled "Euh, Puff, and Bof!," it deals
effectively with some conventional French time
fillers and sensitizes the viewer to the nonverbal
movements which accompany their use.

Sight and Sound. The quality of the soundtrack
is high; background interference due to technical
problems is virtually nonexistent, and the critical
sounds of the language are readily discernible.
The visual richness of the video programs also
merits applause. Interior and exterior shots—

depicting buildings, objects, signs, and social interactions—provide the link between sight and sound needed to reinforce the learning of lexical items. The nonverbal signals so crucial to any communicative interaction are caught by the camera—and the *Viewer's Workbook* makes a good start at educating for visual literacy.

The Workbook. The workbook is actually an indispensable component of *The French Way*. It explains and expands—not duplicates—the linguistic and cultural materials in each video program. The format includes cultural information in English, brief discussions of grammatical forms and function, notes on vocabulary, and structured as well as open-ended exercises, both written and oral. There is a satisfactory variety in the types of exercises offered. They are designed to help students understand the flow of native speech and the cultural context in which it occurs, practice the language, and ultimately use it to communicate with classmates.

The quality of the exercises is for the most part good, although occasionally a learning task seems banal: In the program on making purchases, students are given a vocabulary list and asked to simply match each term with the corresponding sketch of an item of clothing. In the same program, however, a more creative exercise invites students to express orally what they would say to a shoe salesman if they found themselves in situations depicted by the drawings: in one, the heel of a shoe is precariously high; in another, a tiny foot is seemingly lost inside a huge shoe; in another, a hulking foot is painfully crammed into a dainty slipper.

Transcript and Answer Key. The third component of *The French Way* is a booklet containing a complete transcript and an answer key to the exercises in the *Viewer's Workbook*. By offering these under separate cover, the authors give the teacher the choice of how soon (if ever) they will be shared with the students.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

The workbook delineates very clearly the preferred instructional method. Since the intent of

the authors is to encourage student-to-student interaction, the workbook is not designed for individualized study. Whole group discussion of cultural points is a regular feature, as are exercises calling for students to work together in pairs. Certainly these techniques make sense in an approach intended not only to provide listening practice but also to simulate active oral communication.

For the teacher who chooses to follow the workbook format, getting the knack of running the program smoothly may require some effort. The method calls for considerable switching from workbook to video—watching first without sound, then with sound—then pausing to complete an exercise before watching yet again.

Some may object to the mélange of English and French in the workbook: Cultural, vocabulary, and grammatical notes are given in English, while written and oral exercises are explained and conducted in French. Students in the novice category will doubtless welcome the accessibility of information in English, however, and there is nothing to prohibit a teacher from conducting discussions in French.

LIMITATIONS

In spite of the authors' assertion that "the colors on *The French Way* are rich and accurate," viewers accustomed to the brilliance of today's television will find the video colors vaguely disappointing. Background landscapes tend to blur out into shades of gray, and the bright colors which do appear in the foreground seem somehow artificial. In only a few scenes, however, does this lack of fidelity to the spectrum tend to diminish enjoyment: The outdoor market shots could have been spectacular; the *haricots verts* at the Resto-U should have been decently *vert*.

If the color is less than perfect, the sound (which for our purposes is the crucial factor) is very good. So what if the viewer is occasionally startled by the appearance of a hand-held microphone thrust into the face of a *fonctionnaire*! We agree that the quality of the audio should not be sacrificed for verisimilitude.

Sometimes the whole situation seems contrived: a young man stands in front of a map of the metro system, holding a microphone, and explains how to proceed from one point to another; a bank clerk arranges a static display of French and U.S. currency and solemnly compares the two; a woman makes a phone call, describing—ostensibly for her own edification—the step-by-step procedure she is following. Although incidents such as these detract from the “this-is-the-real-thing-and-you-are-there” ambiance, they are not mortal flaws. In fact, many learners will find that these structured interludes are helpful in clarifying the language and culture.

Occasionally, the French speakers on camera display a certain self-consciousness, but it is more endearing than disgusting. And, there are plenty of scenes to charm the viewer: the driver of a calèche in Québec fervently urges his horse not to drink too much from the street fountain (“Pas trop, Catherine, pas trop!”); the French boy at breakfast, gulping *café au lait* from a *bol*, drinks a hefty *tartine* with true *savoir faire*; a woman physician examines a patient and scolds him soundly for smoking too many cigarettes (“Ce n’est vraiment pas raisonnable!”); a baby dangles strands of melted cheese between a wedge of quiche and his own hungry mouth; little Cajun children are caught by the camera at a concert, stuffing their fingers into their ears; and, a Parisian gentleman, somewhat ill-at-ease to be conducting a very un-French tour of his home, nevertheless, permits the viewer to peek over his shoulder into a bedroom closet, peer into dresser drawers, and note with relief that the shelves in his host’s study are as cluttered as the viewer’s own.

CONCLUSIONS

The French Way is a videotape accompanied by a *Viewer’s Workbook* and a *Tapescript with Workbook Answer Key*. Its purpose is to give any learner of French—from beginner to advanced—

the opportunity to hear and see authentic French being spoken by a variety of speakers in culturally valid settings.

The communicative situations depicted on the video include old stand-bys (greetings and leave-takings; going through customs; buying tickets; cashing a check; renting a hotel room; ordering meals, etc.). This is not a criticism; it is important for students to feel competent in these high-frequency situations, and the variety of ages, accents, and social levels depicted make the point that “the French way” actually is multi-dimensional. Over 100 native speakers—mainly from France, The Louisiana, and Quebec—participated in the taping, and they come across as the real people they are.

The *Viewer’s Workbook* is carefully constructed to explain the language used in each of the ten programs, to provide both oral and written activities designed to involve the student in gaining control of that language and explicate points of culture included in the video.

The methodology of the workbook is in line with the current thinking regarding the need for presenting language in a cultural context, supplying large amounts of listening practice, establishing a non-threatening environment, and providing opportunities for students to use the language to perform functions, convey ideas, and express emotions. The value of the videotape and workbook in meeting those requirements is high; the potential of the package for increasing student motivation to learn French is superior. As a visual and auditory supplement to any text, *The French Way* should bring solid returns on the investment.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Genelle Morain is Professor of Language Education at the University of Georgia and a Contributing Editor of *J.E.T.T.* Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Language Education, 125 Aderhold Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602, U.S.A.

Cara a Cara — Software

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Robert Ariew (Program and lesson design) & Richard S. Rosenfeld (Color graphics)

Courseware Name: *Cara a Cara*

Application: Beginning Spanish

Instructional Method: CAI/CALL

Vendor: Heinle & Heinle Publishers

Address: 20 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Copy Policy: No copy permission; backup sets at \$65 each

Equipment: Apple II and compatibles (II, II+, IIe, IIGS, or Franklin Ace

PC Memory Required: 48K

Prerequisites: One disk drive and monochrome or color monitor

Cost: \$150

OVERVIEW

Cara a Cara is a first-year Spanish language program incorporated into the format of a computer-assisted (CAI) program, consisting of five, double-sided, double-density, diskettes. There are ten fundamental units dealing with basic content areas such as personal facts (vital statistics); **expressing one's likes and dislikes; purchasing groceries; arranging travel plans; giving directions and seeking advice; describing daily routines; talking about past events; sharing opinions with others, leisure time activities, and expressing one's thoughts about the future** (in the form of hypotheses and conditionals). Every unit focuses on certain grammatical facts and introduces basic common verb structures.

Clearly Defined Objectives. At the onset of each unit, the authors have clearly defined the objectives involved. The level of difficulty, it

should be noted, is concomitant with a first-year Spanish language program; hence, common regular and irregular verbs are introduced along with much needed grammatical concepts and lexical items which are central to the topic area discussed. Many of the exemplary sentences do, however, include new and unannounced lexical items which necessitate the use of a dictionary. Were *Cara a Cara* the basic instructional device in a language learning program, these unannounced concepts would present a problem. However, this is a computer-assisted program and consequently, these exercises enhance and embellish on the concepts already introduced in the classroom textbook.

Interesting Exercises. The exercises employed in *Cara a Cara* are interesting. There are numerous uses of lexical recognition exercises, labelling in Spanish of pictorial representations, and sundry self-tests. The most interesting are the time-stressed exercises because they demand the full attention of the student during the operation. Many of these exercises demand only one answer, and the student is not allowed to proceed until the answer is given. Many hints are provided, however, to assist the student in discovering just what the response should be. Among the informative and useful exercises in this program is the creation of a story in Spanish about yourself. In this exercise, you are asked certain questions about yourself, and the answers are used to generate a story in Spanish about you and your interests in life. A common denominator to all these exercises is reinforcement. It is the reinforcement feature that adds strength and integrity to this software program.

Easy to Use with Some Difficulties. The five double-sided diskettes are rather easy to use. However, some difficulty exists in the area of

diacritics. This is especially true in the case of accented [i] and [a]. Not only are the directions for creation of these forms not cited in the user's guide, but the technique for creating an accented [e] should be easily transferable in the creation of other diacritics; it is not. In the creation of an accented [e], for example, one is asked to type the letter [e] followed by pressing ESC and then the previous letter [e]. This results in the creation of an accented [e]. This same technique, however, does not create other accented vowels.

Another problem area in the program has to do with the use of special symbols to indicate errors. These symbols are abstruse. An equal sign, for example, means "wrong character." It would be easier and clearer to merely underline the letter and type the message on the computer screen.

TECHNO-LUST AND DIDACTIC QUESTIONS

It should be noted that computer programmers are usually involved with techno-lust and tend to be unconcerned with didactic questions. This is

not the case, however, with *Cara a Cara*. The lesson design is sophisticated, and the lesson materials are clearly presented. The graphics, in some cases, could be enhanced.

An improvement of the *Cara a Cara* software program should be made in the accessibility of these lessons for study and review outside the learning laboratory. The student should be given the option to make hard copies of these units as they are needed.

With the exception of these few difficulties, *Cara a Cara* is excellent and contributes to the language learning environment.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Robert N. St. Clair is Professor of Linguistics, Systems Science, and English at the University of Louisville. His areas of specialization include sociolinguistics, language and culture, and bicultural education. He has worked with numerous groups on the creation of bilingual textbooks: American Indians, Polynesians, and Spanish Americans. A computer-enthusiast, he has taught numerous courses on programming and has built two computers (Z80 and 8088 based central processing units). Persons wishing to write to him may do so at the following address: Department of English, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292.

Entre Líneas — Textbook

Vital Statistics

Author: Laura Martin

Title: *Entre Líneas: A Strategy for Developing Reading Skills*

Publisher: Heinle & Heinle

Address: 20 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Copyright: 1987

No. of Pages: 190

Supplemental Materials: Instructor's manual and teaching manual (free upon adoption of text)

Language: Spanish

Level: Beginning through intermediate

Cost: \$15 net

The demand created by the proficiency movement for instructional materials that provide authentic content for language use and its practice through appropriate and well-balanced exercises as well as strategies for implementing, practicing, and improving communicative skills consonant with ACTFL/ETS proficiency standards and guidelines has resulted in *Entre Líneas*, a strikingly innovative text which, according to its author, "...is different from most other Spanish texts in that it focuses on a single skill: reading in ...an effort to help the student read *real* materials, not readings composed for beginners (vii)."

WELL-CONCEIVED READING PROFICIENCY TEXT

A surprisingly tightly constructed and well-conceived "reading proficiency" book designed for independent use by students from beginning to intermediate courses, *Entre Líneas* is a well-organized text whose format and self-contained exercises not only permit the student to progress

easily from one item to another in a self-paced manner, but also allow for its effective use at any level of instruction where the development and acquisition of reading proficiency is the primary target.

Authentic Realia. Visually attractive and supported by a variety of authentic, well-chosen, unaltered and un glossed realia that familiarize the student with language and cultural information of varying length and difficulty, *Entre Líneas* contains ten units of uniform organization that, when completed in the order presented, can easily provide the necessary material for a one-semester college program. When used in tandem with a grammar and conversation book, the text fulfills the goals of a two-semester college language sequence or a full-year program at the intermediate level in high school. In addition, the well-thought-out sequence and format of the book allow it to complement communicative activities texts, cultural and literary readers and grammar review texts at the intermediate level.

Units Stress Readability. Each unit stresses readability through an effective use of contrasting type faces. At the same time, an array of clear illustrations (charts, posters and billboards; listings, captioned and captionless cartoons; questionnaires, graffiti, line drawings, application forms, ticket stubs, official notices, a variety of directories, menus and recipes, announcements, advertisements, journal and newspaper clippings, articles) and a series of black-and-white photographs of excellent quality, depicting authentic scenes that accurately present Hispanic culture; they also provide the necessary stimuli for student interpretation and evaluation as well as classroom discussion and add much to enhance the quality of the text.

Development of Skills in the Reading Process. Each unit, systematically arranged in order of difficulty of content, not on grammar or vocabulary as in most other communicative texts, is organized into three sections which teach skills that characterize the reading process: "Reading Strategy," "Dictionary Interlude," and "Applying the Reading Strategy."

While "Reading Strategy," the opening section, includes review practice of materials useful in reading, the "Dictionary Interlude," unique to this text, is devoted entirely to the development of good dictionary skills. "Applying the Reading Strategy" section presents from one to several new (often longer and more content-based) passages to which the reading techniques established earlier in that unit may be applied.

Each section is then followed by a progressive sequence of exercises aimed at developing specific skills in the three stages of the reading process: *pre-reading*, *text-decoding*, and *post-reading*. These exercises prepare the student for a particular format and its contents, provide methods for strengthening comprehension, and guide the student in analyzing and interpreting the context of the passage.

Designed for Individual Use. Since the text is designed for individual use, the exercises of each unit are enhanced by four clearly visible and strategically located symbols that effectively guide the student from one task or section to the next. They either direct the student to re-read all or part of the passage; to stop and check a written exercise before continuing, to pause and answer questions mentally or to look up information before proceeding, and to continue on into the unit.

Finally, *Entre Líneas* ends with an answer key that provides correct responses or guides the student through additional information based on the reading process.

Instructor's Manual. The accompanying 26-page *Instructor's Manual*, while providing a

lengthy introduction about the reading process, summarizes each step of the "Reading Strategy" and gives helpful suggestions for the appropriate coverage of both exercises and readings. An additional section offers suggestions for locating supplementary material.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above outline of the contents of each unit, it becomes apparent that Laura Martin has put forth a great deal of effort in creating a text that offers a variety of material framed by a clear and distinctive writing style, format and length—all systematically arranged so as to effectively teach and develop in the student the skills characterized by the reading process.

Although the book is technically well done and includes very few errors which may be corrected in a later edition, the very small print of some realia (charts, newspaper clippings, and announcements) could be enlarged and the gray background on advertisements, maps and listings could be eliminated to aid readability.

Despite these few shortcomings, *Entre Líneas* with its wealth of material, its accessible and visually attractive format, and its timely appearance on a marketplace wanting in proficiency-based textbooks (especially reading proficiency) accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely, to help students develop, achieve and apply reading strategies in their own reading. The text should serve both instructor and student well in the beginning and intermediate levels: The student should gain greater confidence in reading a variety of material in the target language.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Sixto E. Torres teaches in the Department of Languages at Clemson University. Interested readers may write to him at the following address: College of Liberal Arts, Department of Languages, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina 29631.

Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden — Textbook and Audio Recording

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Claire Kramersch & Ellen Crocker
Title: *Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden*
Publisher: Heinle & Heinle Publishers
Address: 20 Park Plaza, Boston, Massachusetts
02116
Copyright: 1985
No. of Pages: 220
Supplemental Materials: Cassette for student
use included with each copy of the text, instruc-
tor's manual free upon adoption of text
Language: German
Level: Intermediate
Cost: \$18.50 net

INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATION

For those instructors of German frustrated by the exigencies of conducting productive classes in "Conversation and Composition" courses, Heinle & Heinle's text by Claire Kramersch and Ellen Crocker of MIT, *Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden*, should constitute a bright light on a rather dark horizon.

Organized Around Functions. As the authors rightly point out, the majority of texts for conversation courses have a strong bias on vocabulary acquisition (although they rarely suggest how it is to be accomplished) and topical content. This text, in contrast, emphasizes "interactional strategies for communication: how to initiate, maintain and close conversations; how to communicate and respond to intentions, wishes, and beliefs; how to behave appropriately

in face-to-face interaction. *Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden* distinguishes itself from other conversational readers through its functional approach: It is organized around the **functions** needed to interact in conversation, not around situational vocabulary or grammatical features of speech. The emphasis is on the **process** of communication, not on the linguistic product."

The Procedural Nature of Conversation. If one gives some thought to the matter and analyzes the difficulties students have in those courses after the introductory sequence—in which we try to force them into performance in a conversational, communicative mode—the need this text fulfills becomes almost revelatory. While we as instructors and the students as learners have always had to deal with the inevitably uneven productive skills (the results of their previous training and what they have done with it) it is rare that any students have, in our efforts to "get conversation going" or "make conversation work," been exposed systematically to the **process** that we require them to attempt to learn within the context of these courses. How many instructors are even aware that conversation is **procedural** in nature? Because many instructors are unaware of communicative process, not infrequently, "conversation" courses result in a situation where the blind leads the blind to a level of frustration that abates only when the final examination is over.

An Adaptable Text. Kramersch and Crocker's book is designed for intermediate and advanced students of German. They envision these as being second-year students, although this reviewer

suspects that will vary from institution to institution.

It is this reviewer's personal feeling that the reality of this book lies more with the advanced than with the intermediate student, although a lighter touch on the material in the book could work well with students whose preparation puts them closer to the novice end of the scale. The text is adaptable: It can be the sole basis for an intermediate or advanced conversation course or it can be used in conjunction with other textbooks with a grammatical or literary/cultural orientation. It is acknowledged that the appropriate level might be anything from third to fifth semester (and the reviewer suggests, beyond).

Audio Recordings. The text is accompanied by listening exercises that provide access to authentic conversations by native speakers (illustrating the way speakers fulfill the **functions** of speech according to the various chapter topics). The recordings provide both a **functional** and lexical basis for the materials in the chapter, and they encourage students to listen for content as well as for an active analysis of communicative strategies.

Building on Vocabulary Already Acquired. As for vocabulary acquisition—without a doubt one of the banes of our students' existence—this text suggests that this new approach might, indeed, have something to offer: There are no vocabulary exercises of the kind we see all the time (word lists with English glosses intended for short-term memory, or at least recall through the next quiz). Rather, the chapter activities encourage students to build on vocabulary already acquired and to engage in a paraphrasing routine which gradually expands the individual's vocabulary and provides a much more relevant contextual framework for genuine acquisition.

Language Class Becomes a Language Laboratory. One senses that with a textbook of this nature, the language class becomes a language laboratory in which actual research

occurs on the nature of the target language, examining its structural components and how they interact with one another; observing the nature, characteristics, qualities, and effects of these structural components; conducting experiments to see what happens when these elements are put into play; learning how and when to use the elements efficiently and effectively; and measuring what goes a long way and what must be used sparingly. The text is set up for such a variety of group activities—activities that would be difficult for any class to resist.

CONCLUSIONS

The effective use of *Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden*, nonetheless, presupposes an instructor who could perform the balancing act of knowing when to keep his or her mouth shut and when to open it as a resource for necessary information. The instructor's manual (with tapescript) helps in this regard, although it does not intend to provide instructors with real inspiration. The reviewer suspects that those instructors who choose *Reden, Mitreden, Dazwischenreden* will be the inspired ones anyway, or at the very least, instructors trying to get more out of their students while at the same time giving them a real feel for the language and its fascinating intricacies.

One can always hope that Heinle & Heinle will provide the encouragement to other authors who produce texts of this nature and purpose, and that Claire Kramersch and Ellen Crocker will continue their work in explicating the importance of functions and strategies in the learning and teaching of German.

J.E.T.T. Contributor Profile

Robert A. Jones is director of the language resource center at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. Interested readers may write to him at the following address: Language Resource Center, P.O. Box 413, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.