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# *J.E.T.T. Interviews Wilga M. Rivers in “Fidelman on Rivers: “The Best Way of Being Taught Is to Teach”*

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*The work of Wilga M. Rivers spans four very colorful decades; it has had particular impact since the heyday—in the 1960s—of the Audiolingual Method and its concomitant, the language laboratory. This interview attempts, with a very broad brush, to describe an area within which Professor Rivers sees herself as having moved and which she helped to create. The three topics we discussed were 1) the history of language teaching methodology; 2) the present and future of new technologies in language learning; and, 3) the important part that language laboratory directors can play in implementing the linkages that are crucial to the success of new learning technologies.*

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**F:** Dr. Rivers, how have you seen things develop since you got interested in all of this, in your role as teacher, researcher, writer, and administrator of foreign language programs?

**R:** I’ve been teaching language since 1940. Also, I’ve taught in various countries, so you see, I’m not particularly limited to the American scene. Developments might not be what an American scholar has experienced.

**F:** What has changed in the way we Americans educate our young people to speak foreign languages?

**R:** When you read many of the American foreign language education writings, you get the impression that until the audiolingual method came along, the only thing that was around was grammar translation. It also amuses me when

other people give the impression that the Direct Method started in the 40s and 50s. The Direct Method goes back to the 19th century and in every other country in the world, the Direct Method was a very lively part of the scene previous to the World War. When I spoke to the International Federation of Modern Language Teachers Conference in Canberra (Australia) in January, I quoted from a teacher from Poland who had written an excellent article around 1939 (at a conference of the same association) where everything she said fitted in perfectly with my own views on foreign language education. I often wonder where the Direct Method stream went in the U.S.

The Direct Method was always very prevalent in foreign language teaching in France, Sweden, and Denmark. In France, there was Passy, and in Germany, Viator, who started the German *Neuerensprachen* movement (meaning “the new language”). The Direct Method was very much the way in which languages were taught. The Natural Method of Terrell is like the Direct Method. He himself admits that. When you think of how languages were taught in the last hundred years, you have to keep the Direct Method stream very much in focus if you’re taking a world view. If you’re taking an American view, I still think there was a strong Direct Method trend. The *Modern Language Journal* clear back in 1919 documents this trend particularly among French teachers.

**F:** What were some of the manifestations of the Direct Method in the United States?

**R:** In the 30s, you had the University of Chicago Method of Otto Bond—the Oral Reading

Approach, which was a development of the Direct Method. People decided that reading was the chief aim of language teaching, but they decided that one should approach it from the Direct Method point of view. You get people into reading directly for meaning from having some ability in using the oral language.

All of these streams came to us from various places, France and so on. With John Dewey as such an important educational figure, you can't tell me that the foreign language teachers were all hiding down the corridor and didn't know what was going on in the rest of the school. I think people frequently underplay the fact that the Direct Method and grammar-translation have a long history. Grammar-translation was the new method in the 19th century! In Montaigne's day, of course, it was the Direct Method; they would hit tennis balls at each other and that was how he was taught to speak Latin. Then, grammar-translation spread through Europe in the mid-19th century. It was the big new thing; it was a breakaway from other people's thinking and emphasized language study as an intellectual occupation.

**F:** What you are saying is that from our 80s or American point of view we often lose sight of the relative importance of certain core movements.

**R:** My article, "Linguistics, Psychology, and Language Teaching" (the first chapter in *Communicating Naturally*) gives the complete outline. You see there that the Audiolingual Method took a great deal from what the Direct Method preached about the primacy of the oral language, the fact that language is speech not writing, that one should concentrate on people being able to communicate within a culture. They gave it more structure because the structuralist linguists were so firmly in the saddle. That structural element was imposed on the use of the oral language in class. But, for example, dialogues go back to the famous *Assimil* series (*French/German Without Toil*) which were around during the 20s and 30s. These books always began with dialogues which you learned by heart.

**F:** The audiolingualists, perhaps unconsciously, appropriated some characteristics of the Direct

Method. They felt they had invented the wheel but, in fact...

**R:** They may have developed it themselves but they provided a perfectly good development from the Direct Method. In France, from the Direct Method they moved into *Crédit* and *Voix et Images de France*. *Voix et Images de France* and similar materials had *mécanismes* which were your structural drills. It was a structuring of the Direct Method which itself was found to be too free-flowing. Now these days teachers are rejecting the structuring and are going back to the free-flowing, which was exactly what the Direct Method was anyway. In the Direct Method, you didn't have any particular textbook; you didn't need a textbook. You could quite easily invent materials as you went along.

**F:** This was similar to the Berlitz method...

**R:** Berlitz was a leading methodologist and exponent of the Direct Method at the end of the 19th century. What I'm saying is there is this continual interplay between the more free-flowing attempts to get people to speak at any price, to speak within the bounds of what they know and to speak about things that concern them, and the other stream that says people should know something about the language. They should know how it works in order to be able to make it work for their purposes. With the development of programmed learning around the 60s—based on Skinnerian principles of minimal increments—there was a new emphasis on what used to be called "terminal behavior," and was subsequently called "behavioral objectives." The stream of people who feel strongly about accountability profit more from this situation than other people who want students to develop in a kind of natural and spontaneous way and get wherever they're going their own way.

The programming stream became very important in developing language lab materials. This fitted in very well with the audiolingual approach of giving students lots of practice in structures. The first efforts with the computer and PLATO programs in the 1960s—under Marty and others—had the programming type of approach transferred to the computer. Now you come to all the sudden burst of energy that has come with the development of much cheaper computers and much more accessible courseware, software, and

authoring languages. And, what do you get? If you're not careful what you get is exactly what you had, which is more drills and exercises and more programmed learning. Where is the difference? What we found out through the experiences of the language lab was that people really don't enjoy being put into straightjackets and made to behave according to predesigned objectives, that is, "trained."

I am continually contesting all the people around the country who talk about language "training." I've tried to get some quite well-known figures to stop talking about language "training." This behavioral approach implies that if you only structure the situation sufficiently well and if you provide the right kind of input, you'll get the output that you desire. Personally, I feel much happier with less of a straightjacket. In education you are developing people; in language learning you are developing people to express themselves and to develop a spontaneous use of language. This is hard to do within a straightjacket. Now you're getting the same thing with computers. People are rushing into this area who have very little knowledge or feeling for the directions in which foreign languages are going. If we're not careful, everyone will go back again to what is the easiest thing to do, which is to create drills and exercises in order to reach terminal behavior. Since drilling can now be done out of the classroom, the teacher is liberated to do other things. Unfortunately, many teachers have not thought beyond drill and exercises and lots of structure.

**F:** They see themselves as trainers?

**R:** Yes, exactly. They are aiming for terminal behavior. The computer has a tremendous potential to liberate everybody. All of the new interactive approaches of computer scientists, artificial intelligence experts, and so on, are working towards enabling us to do with the computer things that go far beyond "training." People are able to do more original things with the computer. You have the contrast of, say, the Athena project at MIT and the Brigham Young experiment with *Montevideo*. There are those who are trying to see what potential the computer has, not as an extension of the language lab and not as an extension of the behavioristic, structurally dominated approach. They are trying to see what you can do with the computer to take

people out into the culture, so that language learners can become familiar with it as never before. The computer with videodisc enables them to interact with people within a culture. In the Athena project, for example, they are trying to allow for choice, to allow for people to take different tracks which will bring them into different experiences and, therefore, enable them to create their own learning paths, their own environment, and their own story. There is a rather clever use of telephone answering in the French materials. When the student "comes home" there are five messages; following up one or the other of these messages leads into a different type of adventure and aspect of the story.

**F:** In your book, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*, you talk about intrinsic programming (programming with branching) as compared to linear programming. Would you call this intrinsic or would you go beyond that term?

**R:** Intrinsic programming was the forerunner of this approach. With intrinsic programming you gave multiple-choice items with a variety of possible answers which lead to branching in different directions. But this was, in the 60s, tied to structure. It simply enabled people to move beyond the step-by-step approach. People could go on to the third lesson if they got the first item in the second lesson right. Others might go back and redo the first. The multiple-choice items in the *Montevideo* program lead to different encounters and adventures.

People have always been trying to liberate the student, but what is true liberation? In my most recent article, "Ten Principles of Interactive Language Teaching," I begin with Principle 1: The student is the language learner. One of the principles, however, is that we need both language knowledge and language control. I do not believe that if you get ten people in a room with a native speaker they are all going to end up speaking the language beautifully. Some say it doesn't matter if they speak it badly as long as they get their meaning across. But most of our students don't want to go out in the big wide world like some kind of village idiot who has to be understood by understanding the weird way he or she speaks. We are patronizing students when we say it's good enough for them to speak any old way as long as they can get their meaning across. That's alright as an initial way of getting

the inhibitions out of them and getting them to speak freely. In our Oral Survival Course at Harvard, low-intermediate students talk and say what they want to in order to get their meaning across. They get all the inhibitions out of them and, after that course is over, they ask for a course where they will now be corrected and helped to develop more accuracy. You can't bypass knowledge of the language. People have to know something in order to be able to use the language. It amuses me that we need to state this. I don't think there is any other science where one would presume that some knowledge was not essential—that one could suddenly become a chemist and start mixing things all over the place without knowing the periodic table, without knowing the potential of different elements. The place would blow up in no time. But somehow in foreign language there is this stream that continually says they don't need to *know* anything—just let them play around with it and it will come together.

I think they need a solid basis of knowledge from which to work, because with a solid basis they can then express their meaning in a variety of ways. They then have all kinds of means at their disposal to express nuances of meaning, real nuances and not just any old thing that you can get over by waving your hand or pointing at a door or picking up an object. Of course, you don't need language to say to someone "Would you like a bite of my apple?" You can do that by waving an apple at them and taking a bite, and pushing the apple toward them. So a lot of what we think of as communicating "any old how," getting meaning across, is done through gesture, tone of voice, and knowledge of the world. People know that apples are for eating and that if you are waving an apple at them, you are probably offering to share it with them. I think we need both language knowledge and language control (which is the ability to handle knowledge, build your own meanings and talk about anything and everything). We need experience in both, and maybe the computer can help us by giving the students more individual time to develop their language knowledge, but not by sacrificing the opportunities to use the language in spontaneous ways! We have to look carefully at the ways in which the new computer knowledge can help us to provide environments in which students can produce their own interactive use of language.

That's where I think the real work lies because a lot of the drills and exercises on the computer add little that isn't in the textbook except for instant correction and instant explanation of errors.

**F:** You can get quantities out of this that you can't get out of your classroom situation...

**R:** Yes, but on the other hand, a great deal of it is the old "page turning"—give them the rule, give them a few exercises on it, and then (in the old days) let them look up the answer key. Well now, instead of looking up the answer key, the computer will very quickly tell them. In a way, looking up the answer key made them concentrate more on the answer than the computer giving them the answer instantly. Of course, it can be done more subtly so that you lead them to think for themselves. The point I'm trying to make is that we have these two streams in language learning. We have this more structured stream, and then, we have this more free-flowing stream; I think they're both necessary.

In class we've tried to get the teachers to go beyond the structuring in the textbook and the practicing, into getting students to actually use the language in a more free-flowing way. And now we come to computers that can make sure we don't get students caught into a program which concentrates so much on their knowledge of the language and their accuracy that they never get a chance to use it. We need these programs, we need to use all the potential of the computer to create programs where the students can freely use the knowledge that they have acquired.

Obviously, the computer won't put the teacher out of a job because, at the moment, it is very difficult for the computer to recognize free-flowing speech. The computer can take a whack at it by recognizing an element and acting like the modern therapist. If it hears the word "brother," it can say "Tell me more about your brother." or "Is there a problem with your brother?" The computer is programmed to appear to understand, whereas the computer is only picking out a word here and there.

**F:** True artificial intelligence is not yet a reality...

**R:** Well, it's artificial, you see. It's not quite genuine. If so, it would not be called "artificial" intelligence; it would be called "authentic"

intelligence! We need opportunities for people to interact with people because a person who has continually interacted with the computer is going to have the same problems that every child who has interacted with a book has had. When faced with a person, they cringe back into their shell because they feel the emotional impact of the communication. They feel very vulnerable and think to themselves "What a fool I'm going to make of myself! What is this person going to think of me?" The computer is safer because it is programmed to say nice things like "Good effort, John!" and so on.

**F:** There seems to be an analogy to a situation you describe in your 1986 MLJ article. You make the argument that students learn a lot in the interactive classroom here in the United States that they often don't manifest until later. They then go to the country where the language is spoken where they experience a blossoming of their speaking ability. It's interesting because you seem to be talking about the possible computer-based learning environment in the way that you have talked about the interactive classroom. It can be an incubator for learning, giving the student a safe place to absorb information. Could we now hope that the blossoming might take place in our own classrooms?

**R:** If teachers are able to use the computer for the kinds of things teachers have spent so much time on in the classroom, like grammar explanations and drills, the teacher will have more time to get the students interacting. We should get the grammar out of the classroom. You can't do away with it. If we can at least get it on to the computer then the fast student doesn't have to wait around while the slow student gets it all wrong. Slow students can spend a longer time at it and not feel embarrassed, since nobody but the computer sees the kinds of mistakes they're making. As one of the students at the machines in the PLATO days said, "The computer is so kind!" Even the best teacher gets a bit impatient, and even if they don't get impatient, there's a look in the eye that says, "Oh no! Seven times you've said that!" Even when the teacher tries not to, there is a certain kinesic element. So slow students themselves feel they're wasting the teacher's time and everyone else's, and they clam up. I think that, although we certainly need to develop programs where the computer can lead

learners into much more interactive activities, while we are waiting for these to be developed, we can at least move some of the grammar learning out of the classroom in already available ways.

The next important point I want to make is that the work on the computer must begin with the ongoing course. With the language lab, the best teachers have always taken what was on the tapes and worked it into what was going on in the classroom. At Harvard, the language lab director used to observe that at the beginning of the semester, the language lab was packed. After about three or four weeks, she knew which teachers were incorporating the work into the classroom because those kids kept coming and the others disappeared into the woodwork. Why would they bother going to the lab when the teacher never made any effort to incorporate anything into classwork or knew whether they'd been or not? So, all of this has to be incorporated. That's where the teacher can be liberated to do the things that only a human being can do, which is interacting at a deeper level with other individuals. Or the computer can give the simulated practice which gives an appearance of interaction so that when a student finally does have to interact with human beings, you've gotten rid of some of the inhibitions. It is going to be a long time before the computer is doing all of this and finally producing a person who feels free to interact happily with other people.

I know about this problem of inhibition myself. I studied French very hard for years before I went to France. I finally went to visit my *correspondante* in La Rochelle. She worked during the day, so she said, "You go wandering around La Rochelle and come back here tonight and we'll eat together." I didn't dare to go into a café. I didn't dare to go and buy a bun. I just went all day without anything to eat. I bought some grapes I pointed to in the market and I went and drank water out of a faucet in the park. By the time she came home, I was in tears. She said, "This is ridiculous. You can speak French perfectly well!" It was just that I felt so completely inhibited and so vulnerable that I preferred not to put myself in the position of trying to use the French I knew perfectly well. You have to get this emotional inhibition out of students by getting them to interact with other

people outside of the classroom. The computer can enable you to stretch, as it were, the time available so that there is more time for this type of activity.

**F:** I believe you can talk about two language lab situations. The first language lab was the audiotape language lab which I understand you say had some failings...

**R:** It was just that many people were not really using it. Only half the teachers had read the pedagogical materials. More than half the teachers were trained before the labs ever came along. The majority of the teachers, apart from those who went to NDEA institutes, didn't know what to do with the lab or how to integrate it with what they were doing in class.

**F:** The linkage was just not made. And so we're coming into this new period with computerized language labs. We have a lot of hope that we'll be able to free ourselves up to teach and create this more natural, more humane environment. What do you think? We're not talking so much about technology as we're talking about...

**R:** ...you get back to the old question of teacher training!

**F:** How can the language lab be set up or how can teachers get acquainted with it in order to maximize its potential?

**R:** Well, one of our problems is going to be the problem that happened in the 50s and 60s. There's a great emphasis across the country these days on the importance of getting back to a more classical, basic type of education. Every report that comes out says people have to do more math, science, and foreign languages. Across the country, many states are mandating at least two years of language for high school graduation and more universities are strengthening their requirements. That means that we're going to have a language teacher shortage just at the stage when we have many more things for them to learn about teaching languages. There are going to be a lot of people out there training teachers who themselves haven't kept up or who are not in the mainstream. One problem ACTFL emphasized years ago was "Who is training the teacher trainers?" So we're going to have to come back again to the same question. Are the people who are doing the present training going to be able to

give the type of teacher training that will enable people to move into the 21st century? Can they integrate all of the potential of the new technologies with an approach to language learning that enables students to use it in interaction with people from other countries? It has been said in other countries that Americans cannot communicate with people outside the U.S.; they cannot sell their goods. We need people who can get out there and use the language. We're going to have that emphasis coming up again. With all the new potential for enabling people to do this, are we going to have the same old teaching and training? Some of the teacher trainers keep up well with the field. They are there at meetings; they know what's going on. They are writing new materials and so on, but not all, unfortunately.

**F:** The dissemination of this information does not seem to be very centralized. This is not like some countries, where directives come down from a central office.

**R:** No. A centralized system often becomes conservative and traditionalist, but in the U.S. we have a great diversity of teachers, and we're going to need more teacher trainers just at the time when we have to work out just how to prepare them for these new approaches. There is a potential for us to land in the same situation we landed in when language laboratories came in. We have to have many more serious workshops. I don't mean workshops where somebody shows you how to run a little program and, perhaps, teaches you to write your own first program. Workshops should show you how to integrate technology into a proper language learning program so that it is not just the tail wagging the dog.

I haven't mentioned the other problem that is always lurking in the background, particularly in the departments. Most of the faculty are employed because they have a Ph.D. in literature and they are hired to teach literature. If they don't teach literature, they don't get very far. So, you have people who are really literary oriented who land themselves in language teaching jobs but don't know too much about it. Some become completely informed and active; others do whatever they can to keep the thing going until they can get back into literature. The third group become bandwagoners, promoting the latest approach because they don't have a solid back-

ground. They suddenly jump on whatever new thing is coming around. So, you have the problem as well when you're talking about who's training the teacher trainers. Sometimes the teacher trainers are those whose background in literature falls in the last two categories. Many of them, however, do the training within the departments without necessarily putting the work in to get themselves the full and necessary background, because they see themselves as doing it temporarily.

**F:** What would you say to language laboratory directors about what their role is or will be in making all this happen?

**R:** Language lab directors are in a difficult position vis-à-vis the departments. Very often they're in a little area all their own. They must get to know the administrators and teachers in the department and their aims. Then, they have to be able to provide regular workshops, demonstrations, and some way of enticing the people who are actually charged with teaching into using and developing more technological areas. The language lab directors are the ones who should know what's going on and have a very clear picture of the various possibilities in language learning, the diverse objectives, and how the material can best be used for different objectives. You would say that this is what a language lab director would automatically do, but in some cases they are very isolated from the departments. If they don't have a cross-appointment with the department (as some actually do...)

**F:** And teach...

**R:** Yes. But some language lab directors don't have a foreign language teaching background. They are not able to talk to people on the same level about language learning.

**F:** Let us assume that there are a number of lab directors out there that don't have a teaching background or a language background. What are they going to do?

**R:** You have the potential for a situation where people can't talk to each other except about schedules and availability of tapes or whatever. It all comes down to the fact that we have to upgrade the level of respect for language teaching personnel and also the level of respect for their

counterparts, the language lab directors. In order to be respected, the language lab directors will have to provide information on trends in language teaching, give demonstrations and know whom to invite and how to help people in the departments who don't necessarily know this area. It's a big job for both the language lab directors and for the people in the departments to come together.

**F:** The solutions you're recommending are a kind of human resources approach, the "let's get in touch and talk with each other about this" approach. But would you make any recommendations for this situation structurally?

**R:** You can't. Different places have different approaches. If you have a "language center" you're going to have a different approach than if you have "departments." If you have departments, the language lab director is usually in an audio-visual center or something that serves a number of different departments. If the language lab director is really trained in language teaching, then he or she should try to teach at least one language class to keep up-to-date. This only brings them in touch with one department, then you have to have some efforts to bring together people from all the departments with the technical people and have them working together towards learning more about language teaching and the needs of language teachers. The language lab director can be so much more useful if he or she knows what directions the people in the institution would be interested in going. It's asking a lot of the language lab directors who are trained in one particular field as it's asking a lot of the people in the departments who are perhaps trained in other fields. Somehow, there has to be a meeting of the minds; who's going to do it? Individual directors must start to build bridges and show that they are able to talk on a level other than that of pure technology. If teachers participate, then it can help them develop the kind of programs that fit in with what they're interested in.

**F:** It seems like we're asking both parties to learn two fields.

**R:** We have to, unfortunately. In the old days in Australia when language labs first came in, I was in charge of the workshop for language laboratories which drew together all the people in language learning from Australia and New

Zealand. At these meetings, we had three groups: the group that knew what was going on in language teaching and was avidly sharing and growing with their colleagues, using this opportunity to grow in relationship to a larger group of people; then the people who were sent by their departments to workshops because they were native speakers and knew little about language teaching or the language lab; and finally, those who suddenly discovered there was a language lab out there and were told by their departments to find out what to do about it. The last two groups knew nothing. We had to give them basic knowledge and training. At the same time, we had to provide interest to people who were coming because they wanted to grow in language learning and language teaching. Of course, we always included the technicians. Language lab directors tended to be technical people who worked with the department. We brought them along to the conference so that they would be able to interact with each other and interact with us. So, it was an attempt to bring those three groups together.

**F:** In looking at the larger picture of this relationship between language learning laboratories and foreign language departments, what recommendations would you make for the relationship between the IALL and the large foreign language associations?

**R:** It does seem it would be good for them to continue, as this association has always done from its very beginning, by having sessions at the bigger meetings. If there are too few sessions on the subject of their interest, they could perhaps ask for a bigger block of time. They have to develop enough parallel sessions on matters important to them or link up with others. For example, the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators of Foreign Language Programs meets at ACTFL. That is obviously a group that should be having a combined meeting with this group, because they are the people who are, like myself, coordinating or organizing programs and trying to get people to use technology.

In addition, this group could have a combined session with AATF on materials in French, AATSP for materials in Spanish, etc. They could do their infiltrating work at these conferences and get the cross-fertilization they need by hearing what the French teachers need and by discussing

with them what has been done in France, and so on. They can discuss the available materials and find out through the people from the AAT's presenting at this meeting the things that they are doing or the problems they are encountering. A meeting with ACTFL should not consist of just one hour of the IALL, but a number of meetings scattered throughout the larger meeting with other groups. If the IALL acts as a very cooperative group that is always available, people will come to say that "If we want anything of this type, we should be calling on the IALL to help us with this meeting!" This will give you much more visibility within these other groups, as being a group that can be called upon on all occasions to help other people—not to take over, but to help others. This would start a movement going. The more people can meet under the same umbrella, the better. If the IALL has its meeting at the same time as one of the bigger meetings, then lab directors with limited time or monetary resources get double service. They get the opportunity to go to the meeting of the IALL, perhaps in a neighboring hotel in the same city; then they can go across the road to ACTFL, or an AAT or the Northeast or Central States Conference while still keeping in touch with their own community...

**F:** They can retain their identity and also be involved with the larger group.

**R:** IALL people should also be closely associated with TESOL because they're also serving the ESL people and the ESL people are much further advanced in this area in many cases than the foreign language people. They're doing more research and they're drawing on what is being done in a number of other countries. The Japanese are well informed of these things; the Association of Teachers of Japanese can offer a lot of ideas, that is, if the language lab directors see themselves as being on the cutting edge of new developments. But perhaps they're not. Perhaps, they're saying to themselves, "How can I best run a lab and provide the needs dictated to me?" rather than seeing themselves as people who are going to give a lead to people in other departments. It isn't easy.

**F:** What kinds of sessions could the IALL have for teachers?

**R:** In teaching French language, you might be interested in teaching French films on video-cassettes. They could offer a session at the AATF on how to do this, stipulating that it would be in association with the IALL. They can also offer sessions on college teaching with technology at the MLA. Some of the people who are working in language laboratories need the contacts with the MLA in order to get jobs and so on.

**F:** We've talked about teamwork between the language lab professionals and department faculty. There is another growing area where you need teams of people. We mentioned before that we are going to need computer programs that integrate into the curriculum. How are they going to get written?

**R:** That's a very good question. The same problem as we've had with the language labs is going to arise or has arisen: Who writes the programs? Are they given the rewards of the profession for writing programs? No one is going to go on writing programs if they are not going to get promotion, if they're not going to get tenure, if they're not going to get a raise in salary at some stage. They're going to find themselves out on the road if they do. They will devote much time and energy to writing programs, then, when they find they don't get tenure, they're going to be driving taxis in New York. This is what has happened in the past. As a profession, we must work to have materials preparation recognized as a worthwhile professional activity.

**Carolyn Fidelman:** We want to thank Professor Rivers for this thought-provoking interview. Many of you have inquired as to Professor Rivers' health and future plans. She has recently undergone very successful bypass surgery and is well on the road to recovery. 1988-89 will be her final year before retirement from her post as Coordinator of Language Instruction in the Romance Languages at Harvard University. We all wish her the best but suspect that she will hardly "retire" from contributing to the profession through both her insightful writing and valuable participation in the foreign language community.

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