

IN OTHER JOURNALS

This column summarizes articles published elsewhere of interest to IALL members. Please consider submitting summaries of articles that you have found especially helpful. This issue's contributors are: Robin Lawrason (Temple University), Frank Ryan (Brown University), Marie Sheppard and Robin McClanahan (University of Colorado at Boulder).

"Creating Motivating Job Aids," by Angie Tilaro and Allison Rossett, *Performance and Instruction* (October 1993): 13 – 20.

This article aims at helping performance technologists to create more motivating job aids. Job aids are defined as instruments to provide information; to prompt procedures; or to coach perspectives and decisions. They are commonly used in business settings to provide guidance to employees on common tasks. Language Lab directors may use job aids, for example, to train and guide their student workers to perform routine lab functions such as checking out materials, making tape copies, answering the telephone and other aspects of client service.

The authors note that the challenge in creating job aids is to overcome the reluctance of employees to use them. They cite

the work of John Keller and his ARCS model of motivation (Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction). They modify slightly his model to direct attention to design concerns for job aids:

Attention: How can I get employees to pay attention to the job aid?

Relevance: How can I link the goals of the job aid to employees' priorities and goals?

Confidence: How can I influence employees' perceptions that using the job aid will help them succeed at performing the task?

Satisfaction: How can I encourage use of the job aid through rewards?

The development of job aids is described as part art and part science requiring planning, building, installing and maintaining. Samples of single page job aids in the article include simple graphic and text reminders to encourage food handlers to wash their hands, checklists for a loan processing department and 911 emergency call information.

Once created, the next challenge for managers is to find convenient places to

In Other Journals

post the job aid for accessibility to workers. In summary, Tilaro and Allison define a successful job aid as one that workers choose to use. While the facts need to be clear, they are not sufficient. Planning, anticipating, coordinating and following up with workers are also essential to assure that job aids matter to employees.

—Robin Lawrason

“Eliminating the Keyboard: A New Method for Exotic L2 Answer Entry, Feedback, and Revision,” by George M. Henry, *CALICO Journal* 10.1 (1992) 53 – 68.

Many CALL resources use some form of question/answer/feedback/response (QAFR) activity. Answer entry and revision pose a number of problems. Input via keyboard can be problematic especially with non-Roman writing systems, often leading to “errors” that result from typing problems rather than from imprecise control of the language ability that is being checked. Typing errors are difficult for software to distinguish from real errors, and it is questionable if typing skills are a desired learning goal for a language class. Mouse, touch screen, and other non-keyboard entry modes usually restrict questions to the multiple choice type, which is somewhat limiting.

Progress in developing intelligent answer judging and feedback has been slow, and even the latest resources are limited. In practical terms a middle ground between restrictive multiple choice and completely free-form open-ended responses is the state of the art available today.

Henry describes a Thai project which addresses these issues. When asked for responses, students are given the resource of an author-specified pool of answer pieces

which he calls “chunks.” These chunks are written in Thai and can be rearranged and moved to an answer area for judgment. Necessary revisions including adding, deleting, or rearranging chunks are made in the same way.

This response method avoids typing mistakes completely, yet supports a variety of question types and difficulties. Among those mentioned are: choosing correct prefixes or words, forming phrases and sentences, and ordering chunks in lists according to specific characteristics. Because each chunk is active while selected it could be linked to multimedia resources, audio playback, for example.

Five levels of feedback are discussed: simple right/wrong; error type; error type and location; error type and location plus correct ordering; display correct answer for imitation. Henry emphasizes here that this system avoids the need to judge spelling errors in addition to word-level errors. Future versions may include some aspects of intelligent tutoring and the development of a student model based on learner characteristics and behaviors—not on presumed internal knowledge states.

This project has also considered the input problems of lesson authors, especially those who are novice users of particular keyboard layouts. An additional problem in Thai includes the need to type vowel+tone combinations. Keyboard entry of these can require as many as 5 keystrokes. These have been addressed by the development of virtual keyboards that can pop up on the screen in the authoring mode.

—Frank Ryan

"Japanese by Satellite: Effects of Motivation, Language Learning Styles and Strategies, Gender, Course Level, and Previous Language Learning Experience on Japanese Language Achievement," by Rebecca Oxford, Young Park-Oh, Sukero Ito and Malenna Sumrall, *Foreign Language Annals* 26.3 (1993): 359 – 371.

The Oxford, *et al.* article describes the Japanese Satellite Program (JSP) of the University of Alabama and reports on a study of factors related to achievement. The authors note that foreign language distance learning is likely to increase due to scarcity of teachers in the less commonly taught languages and greater demand for these languages. The JSP began in 1989 and was selected as Best (K – 12) Live Distance Learning Broadcast at the 1992 TeleCon Awards Conference. Several features of the program assure interactivity: students are required to communicate by telephone with the instructors during the broadcast, with students at other schools by telephone, and with native Japanese tutors via a toll-free number.

The article reports on a 1990 – 1991 study of the achievement of 107 precollege students and eight schools in different states. The study examined possible influencing factors in this instructional setting: motivation, language learning styles, language learning strategies, gender, learning strategies as related to language course level, and previous language learning experience. Motivation proved to be the best predictor of achievement, but a preference for a visual learning style was also a factor. Auditory students were more motivated than visual students, but visual students performed significantly better than auditory, tactile and kinesthetic learners. This was true even though students used the telephone frequently to converse with native tutors. The finding concurs with the authors' prediction "that visual students

would like satellite language learning more than students who were auditory or hands-on, although there [had] been no research on this theme to our knowledge" (362). As a result of the study, they state that "*clearly, learning style is an important consideration in distance education, just as it is in regular classroom teaching*" (367 – 8).

—Marie Sheppard
& Robin McClanahan

"Khorosho! An Interactive Videodisc Survival Russian Program," by Helena E. Hughes, *Foreign Language Annals* 26.3 (1993): 393 – 398.

Khorosho (pronounced Hara-sho), is a self-study, beginning level, interactive videodisc course that teaches Russian speaking, reading and listening skills in approximately the equivalent of 100 classroom-hours. Designed, developed, and produced by the Federal Language Training Laboratory, *Khorosho* consistently uses the Total Physical Response (TPR) concepts of Asher, and the Natural Approach of Krashen and Terrell as learning strategies. The basic methodology of the EXITO program for Spanish was followed and refined. After completing the course, "students should be able to ask and answer simple specific questions, handle simple everyday transactions, satisfy the ordinary requirements of courtesy, and have an elementary understanding of Russian culture" (391).

Khorosho uses scripted video: the storyline centers on a group of American tourists visiting Russia. The characters are played by native, and a few near-native, speakers from various federal agencies. Students using the program are able to join in the trip to learn Russian and about Russian culture while traveling. The program is divided into 20 "days," or chapters, with

In Other Journals

approximately 30 accompanying activities each. The student can complete a "day" in about five hours of concentrated work. The last chapter gives information on the Commonwealth of Independent States and includes either Russian or English narration.

Khorosho will be ready for beta testing in 1994.

—Robin McClanahan
& Marie Sheppard

IALL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATES

The IALL Membership Directory published in the most recent issue (Volume 26, Number 3) contained a few errors and omissions. If you have corrections for the Directory, please send them directly to:

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