

ReCALL

Newsletter

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New Subject Centres

Following the review of the Computers in Teaching Initiative and the Teaching and Learning Technology Support Network carried out earlier this year, the four UK HE funding bodies have published a Report, whose key proposals are to establish

- Subject Centres for learning and teaching
- a Generic Technology Centre
- a Central Management Unit

The report is available at http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/hefce/pub98/98_47.html and a consultation paper relating to the report has been sent by HEFCE to all UK higher institutions, with responses required by 7 December 1998.

CTI Centres are particularly pleased that the subject-based approach, for which we have always argued, has been recommended by the review panel, and that the new subject centres will work closely with teachers, subject associations and professional bodies in their respective subject areas.

CTI Centres will remain in operation until the new subject centres are established, with a view to ensuring continuity in the provision of services.

Needless to say, we hope the resources and expertise built up at the CTI Centre for Modern Languages over ten years will play an important role in any new subject centre for languages.

FDTL News

TransLang: Incorporating Transferable Skills Into Non-Specialist Language Learning

Background

This Project is being funded over two and a half years by the Fund for the Development of Teaching & Learning (FDTL) to promote the development of transferable skills incorporation within teaching and learning for non-specialist learners of modern languages. This is a key issue for higher education and will gain in importance as the impact of the Dearing Report is felt across the sector. The implications are that subjects and degree programmes will have to clarify the skills acquired by graduates as a whole through learning outcomes, e.g. knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, subject specific skills, key skills.

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) have long acknowledged the importance of key transferable skills: communication, application of number, IT, working with others, improving own learning and problem solving. Such skills are needed by employers for flexible, innovative team workers. Dearing recommendations 20 and 21 necessitate making the skills element explicit within learning outcomes of subjects and degree programmes by 2000.

Projects are already investigating transferable skills development in other subject disciplines but only this one project is investigating transferable skills incorporation with regard to foreign languages (see editor's note 1). Moreover the project is addressing this theme with reference to non-specialist language provision, which is an area with considerable potential for growth, (the TransLang Survey predicted 10% year on year), and one which involves a range of innovative teaching and learning methodologies, e.g. communicative techniques, role play, vocational language, open and self-access learning, CALL, satellite TV, tandem learning, etc.

Language learning therefore implicitly expects students to learn or apply a whole range of addi-

tional skills. Non-specialist language providers have adopted a whole range of innovative practices as a necessity. They are therefore particularly well placed to develop skills training for students.

IT is one of the key skills acknowledged as essential for graduates of the future. Non-specialist language learners are encouraged to develop this through self-access, CALL and multimedia learning packages. The results of work by TransLang already indicate that there is a lot of innovation in this particular skills area.

Developing IT skills:

One of the first undertakings of TransLang, in November 1997, was to survey the current status of non-specialist language provision in the UK and the extent to which transferable skills were being explicitly taught and assessed.

When asked which transferable skills were regarded as being developed most strongly when learning a language, six were identified:

1. effective communication
2. presentation
3. comprehension
4. role play (including telephone skills)
5. report and letter writing
6. IT skills, email, Internet, word-processing

In follow-up visits to HEIs IT/CALL aspects of non-specialist language provision have been identified as areas of particular interest for staff developing materials and resources. The task group working on Learner Autonomy for TransLang has produced and is now trialling a Learner Support Pack. This contains three generic language activities focussing on IT skills. CALL facilities were repeatedly mentioned for the important role they play in supporting self-access and open learning of languages, and especially in the way IT is used to bolster language learning in areas of grammatical competence and vocabulary building. A number of these examples are cited below:

Tandem Learning:

Takes many forms, from email-based links between native and non-native speakers of a language to formally assessed learning projects. Tan-

dem learning provides language support, opportunities for research, communication, networking, and preparation for the year abroad. Much of the communication is electronic so it develops email and keyboard skills, and builds cultural awareness and communicative confidence.

Use of Internet:

A growth area for programmes reflecting the topic based nature of non-specialist language learning. It is used by minority languages, for example, or where there are limited foreign language resources, in order to provide access to cultural information and foreign language materials. In addition developments are underway at a number of HEIs to incorporate the Internet into preparations for the residence abroad and for research activities. Considerable time and energy is being spent teaching skills in the use of this medium and also assessing the way students are using this autonomous learning tool.

CALL and multimedia language learning:

A critical resource, and for students on non-specialist language programmes absolutely vital when language contacted is limited (2-3 hours, TransLang Survey). In the case of some non-specialist minority languages likely to disappear with the vagaries of demand and cost effectiveness, these can become the sole learning resource! The skills developed relate to keyboard skills and autonomous learning. One HEI provided non-specialist language learning through CALL and multimedia independent learning packages, supported by fifteen minutes or less of personal contact, and yet it resulted in high levels of motivation and achievement.

Video-conferencing:

An infrequent but potentially useful player in non-specialist language provision, in so far as it can again keep language programmes alive when resources are at a premium. Chinese classes via video-conferencing to outlying centres with some self-access support are being provided successfully by one HEI. This method of teaching a language can result in students acquiring a whole range of new and desirable communication and

interpersonal skills.

Conclusion:

The above examples illustrate the incorporation of IT skills in non-specialist language learning, but they are not the only skills to be developed on such programmes, and often form only part of the package. TransLang has produced an extensive taxonomy through the questionnaire survey and discussions with HEIs showing which transferable skills are associated with non-specialist language learning. The taxonomy produced by TransLang lists 45 skills and the questionnaire survey resulted in five key groups comprising 53 skills in total.

The skills identified correspond well to the proposed pattern of headings outlined in response to Dearing recommendations:

TransLang	Dearing
Study Skills (learning to learn)	Knowledge & understanding
Interpersonal skills	Cognitive skills
Communication skills	Subject specific skills
Language learning skills	Key skills
Research skills	

The aims of this project are to support the *process* of skills incorporation, not the determination of which skills should be delivered nor by whom. This is important. TransLang aims to facilitate the incorporation and development of transferable skills by providing tools, suggestions, and a methodology for the processes involved. The choice of *which skills* will reflect the language level, programme, and the HEI context, mirroring the variety of provision which is the keynote of higher education in the UK.

Ruth Pilkington, University of Central Lancashire

References:

1. Jackson N., QA Agency "Implications of Programme Specifications for Describing, Measuring, and Recording Achievement", Conference paper, February 1998.
2. Visits to universities of Doncaster, Nottingham, Sheffield, Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Bolton and Southampton Institutes informed examples mentioned above.

Editor's notes:

1. See also HE VOCAL, a recently-completed project funded by the Department for Education and Employment - <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/hevocal>. A CILT publication resulting from HE VOCAL, entitled *Languages and the transfer of skills: the relevance of language learning for 22st century graduates in the world of work* will appear early in 1999.
2. For further information on language-related projects funded by FDTL, see the website of the Co-ordinating Group for languages at <http://lang.fdtl.ac.uk>

Advising for Language Learning

University of Hull, 2nd and 3rd July, 1998

Following the initial conference on Language Advising last year, the University of Hull hosted a follow-up series of workshops over two days. The participants came from diverse backgrounds but all shared a common interest in advising and in promoting learner autonomy.

Marina Mozzon-McPherson, Language Adviser at Hull and Project Leader of the FDTL-funded SMILE project (Strategies for Managing an Independent Learning Environment) started day one with a paper on the role of the adviser in fostering autonomy through supportive learning environments. The Hull experience of advising illustrated the importance of social interaction and the cultural dimension of learning, giving impetus to subsequent discussions.

Small group discussions on the nature and aims of an advisory service preceded optional visits to the self-access language learning facilities at both the University of Hull and the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. This allowed delegates to compare two very different types of learning environment.

Peter Voller gave an overview of his most recent research project at the University of Hong Kong, namely a teacher development video aimed at introducing teachers to the processes of advising or 'one-to-one consultations'. The video showed several 'consultants' at work with students, which

was fascinating and helped to stimulate lively discussion on the structure of the first interview.

Two parallel sessions followed. Debra Marsh gave a paper on Merlin, which is a web-based environment developed at the University of Hull, focusing to a great degree on interaction, initially to support distance learning of EFL, but now extended to other disciplines. A demonstration of the environment was given, allowing delegates to judge for themselves the impact of such an innovative use of the Internet. *The Virtual Language Adviser: Language Advising by Intranet*, presented by Andy Hagyard and Jocelyn Wyburd, gave the opportunity to browse the extensive web-based learning support system developed at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside.

Learning to Listen by Steve Page, Head of Counselling Service at Hull, was certainly a very active and thought provoking workshop. 'Active listening' proved to be more demanding than most of us had imagined, as did the avoidance of closed and leading questions. The parallel workshop, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Interdependent Class*, led by Russell Whitehead, Frances King College, London, was equally stimulating, with simple yet effective ways of demonstrating the benefits of interdependence and social interaction.

Participation was again called for in Marina Mozzon-McPherson's workshop on "Learning to Learn". By taking part in a short and totally unexpected Czech lesson, we had to employ language learning strategies that some of us had become unaccustomed to using: it was a most effective way of raising awareness of the possibilities. The final parallel session was on the role of Computer Mediated Conferencing as applied to a Dutch project run by Miranda van Rossum at Hull. This gave insights into the support that can be given to independent learners of different levels through CMC, peer co-operation and advising as opposed to formal teaching. The four learners involved all felt they had made great progress although doubts were raised by delegates as to whether the project could be successfully replicated with larger groups.

Due to the practical need of catching trains, the programme remained flexible and culminated in a brief question and answer session with the SMILE panel. The overall impression was that there was

far greater awareness of the need for advising. Everyone had the opportunity to learn from one another's experience, whether they were officially designated as advisers, consultants or simply *ad hoc* advisers when time permitted. It was generally agreed that progress is being made, and the level of social interaction throughout the workshop would seem to indicate a successful future for language advising.

Judy Jowers, University of Hull

Pubblicità in TV A Case Study in Multimedia Courseware Development

Pubblicità in TV is the title of a multimedia CD ROM package which uses off-air recordings of adverts from Italian TV as stimulus learning material. The adverts interplay with activities at three notional levels (*base, intermedio, avanzato*) which are designed to practise and develop (not test) vocabulary learning, listening skills, listening comprehension and grammatical structures.

The program has been developed by a two-person team consisting of a teacher of Italian and a designer/programmer. The teamwork dynamic has been present from inception and the skills and expertise of both parties have influenced every stage of the project (i.e. technical feasibility informing pedagogical applications not previously anticipated and pedagogical requirements informing design and operation).

The project has evolved into the development of a framework for further multimedia courseware development (in other languages, with other stimulus material etc.) The program is written in Multimedia Toolkit 4.0, and future plans include adapting the framework for a Web interface.

For further information on this project or to obtain copies of the longer case study article (currently in preparation) please contact:

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University of Lincolnshire & Humberside,
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email: jwyburd@humber.ac.uk.**

CTICML Database Online

The CTI Centre for Modern Languages software database is now online and searchable on our website at the URL <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/searchdb.htm>. The database contains details of over 1100 language-related software applications, and is focused primarily on our constituency of teachers and students in UKHE institutions. The search form allows you to query the database on up to eight search terms to find the appropriate software package for your needs.

We would welcome any feedback, positive or negative, on this service, as well as suggestions as to how the search engine and/or the database could be improved. Please send any feedback to

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Tel: 01482 466316

New EC-funded projects

New Course in ICT for Language Teachers

Thames Valley University has succeeded in securing funding under the SOCRATES Programme of the Commission of the European Communities to design a syllabus and to deliver a WWW-based course in Information and Communications Technology for Language Teachers (ICT for LT), with an emphasis on the implementation of new language teaching methodologies. The main target group is language teachers already in service, although parts of the syllabus will also be suitable for teachers undergoing initial training and for teachers following short intensive courses. It is anticipated that the syllabus and the delivery mode developed and piloted in this project will lead in the longer term to a recognised international qualification, e.g. a Diploma or MA Degree. The partners in this project are:

- Thames Valley University, UK (Co-ordinator)
- University of Venice, Italy
- University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- CTICML, University of Hull, UK
- CILT, UK

The project builds upon a number of national and EC-funded projects which the partners have successfully completed or in which they are currently engaged, in particular the New Technologies Sub-Group of the SOCRATES-funded Thematic Network Project (TNP) in the Area of Languages, which includes three of the partners in this proposal, who have already drafted an outline ICT syllabus for language teachers and are currently contributing to a series of conferences and workshops on ICT for language teachers in EU member states. The ICT for LT project will take two years to complete, commencing in October 1998.

The project aims to set up a course consisting of a total of 15 modules at three different levels, with

five modules at each level, using the WWW as the main delivery mode, backed up by local seminars and workshops, printed materials, email and computer conferencing. The project aims to pilot ICT training courses for 150 language teachers/trainers in the UK, Italy and Finland, i.e. 50 per country, delivering the course materials in English, Italian and Finnish. The first set of materials for piloting will be ready in Spring 1999 and will be made available free of charge to selected educational institutions.

For an outline of the course, and details of a complementary project based at the University of Limerick, please see the website below.

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/GrahamDavies1/ictforlt.htm>

*Graham Davies, Thames Valley University
GrahamDavies1@compuserve.com*

MALTED: Multimedia Authoring for Language Tutors and Educational Development

The Language Centre at University College London has secured significant funding from the European Commission's Joint Call for Educational Multimedia Software (Telematics Applications, Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes) for a major project whose outcome will be the creation, verification and demonstration of new specialised authoring tools, and a system of access to content materials, for the language learning community, including language tutors in educational and vocational training environments and commercial publishers. With a total budget of over 2 million ecus, the programme offers the opportunity to create tools and systems which will have an impact on the future of materials creation for language learning.

MALTED starts from the premise that commercial programs, usually designed for a mass consumer market, are often too general, and rarely address the needs of more advanced learners of languages. Although tutors can create courseware using simple authoring systems created specifically for language learning, these are often text-

based. Multimedia facilities offer new possibilities for language learning, but most language tutors are rarely able to take advantage of these facilities and create or adapt materials for individual circumstances. Authoring tools and systems are available, but require considerable training and expertise for the creation of well-structured, pedagogically sound programmes.

MALTED addresses these issues on behalf of teachers, tutors and trainers. Tutors will be able to create sophisticated programmes without the need for training as programmers, and tailor courseware to their individual requirements. They will also have telematic access to materials which can be used with or without adaptation, and then offered to students in packaged courseware or at run-time. The system will also enable new or revised content to be re-posted to the assets base for wider use. Even commercial publishers will benefit from using the tools to reduce production time, thus bringing into commercial viability programmes that hitherto would not have been possible.

The initial approach will draw from experience of using a 'templated' approach to materials creation. It will also attempt to prevent much re-invention of wheels by setting up the dynamic database system to store and retrieve content to support the tools on offer. The tools developed will be platform and language independent and will not impose any particular pedagogical approach. Their exact nature will be decided largely by consultation with the language learning community.

Thus, as a first measure, the project is instigating a phase of requirements capture. The programme needs to ensure that the tools and systems it creates are those required by the end users and that they can be used to create methodologically sound courseware, avoiding being driven by the technology rather than the pedagogy. This consultation process is vital for a successful outcome. A website - www.malted.com - has been set up, so that contributions in the form of a completed questionnaire may be collected from the CALL community. There will be opportunities at a later stage of the programme to be involved in trialling the tools and database systems.

The next steps will involve the creation of the telematics support structure and other systems for

the verification of a prototype. A range of learning materials, across several languages and ability levels, can then be put in place in time for the creation of a large-scale demonstrator in the next academic year. This will operate across five countries, including schools in Spain and Portugal, tertiary and vocational institutions in the UK and in France. A commercial publisher will also create learnware material to be tested in a primary school and domestic environment in Ireland. With these aims, MALTED will evolve into an ongoing learning network for Europe on a fully commercial basis. To give an idea of the scale of the trials envisaged, it is aimed to reach a total of over 25,000 pupils in Spanish schools alone.

MALTED aims to make a significant impact on the quality of learning materials which can be created by language tutors, as well as enabling much larger quantities of pedagogically sound courseware to become available. This will benefit all language tutors, but especially significant will be the impact on minority languages and special purposes, areas which up to the present have not been well supplied with good courseware.

Project participants

University College London, UK - (Co-ordinator)
Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia - Programa de Nuevas Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación, Spain
Capture Productions Ltd, Ireland
Département Informatique, École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications de Bretagne, France
France Télécom - Service National d'Enseignement, France
División de Ingeniería Software, Sema Group, Spain
Cycnos Systèmes Ouverts, S.A., France
Departamento de Inglés, Escola Superior de Educação, Bragança, Portugal

Paul Bangs
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ALLADIN

Autonomous Language Learning in Art and Design using Interactive Networks

The ALLADIN project has been awarded £270,000 over three years to embed the use of C&IT materials into language learning for art, design and media disciplines. This project is funded by HEFCE and DENI as part of the Teaching & Learning Technology Programme (TLTP) and is managed by a consortium comprising the Surrey Institute of Art and Design (lead institution), the London Institute and the University of Southampton. The initial focus of ALLADIN will be to raise awareness of the benefits that new technologies can bring to these specific learning environments and thereafter to the broader language community and also other discipline areas. Of particular importance to the project is the need to establish an effective relationship between specialist lecturers in art, design and media disciplines and language teams, as this can only enhance the potential achievement of a learner studying both subjects. Such relationships will be equally important when examining mainstream language teaching in combination with other disciplines.

ALLADIN has originated from a number of factors. Languages have been taught in art, design and media contexts for some time, and in a variety of ways ranging from one part time lecturer for a single programme with little back-up, through generic IWLPs to large-scale multimedia provision for dedicated language modules for specific subjects; however, the combination of language learning and art/design education tends to surprise the uninitiated, and quite often the scope and value of pairing such subjects in the curriculum is not fully understood.

The art and design curriculum is expanding to encompass the development of skills which will promote employability amongst its graduates, including language skills in order to enrich their professional development. Furthermore, from a creative point of view the integration of language learning and artistic creation can also provide new channels for meaning and expression. The need,

therefore, to quantify provision in the sector and obtain detailed information to feed back into both the art/design and language communities has arisen.

The sector is being mapped at present and participation has been invited from a number of different parties: language providers for art/design/media courses, language providers for other disciplines, professional networks and discussion groups, art, design and media specialists and their colleagues in related fields and policy makers. A preliminary survey of current resources is also underway and appears at present to confirm the dearth of materials to suit the specific needs of art/design/media language learners in any comprehensive way. The project will also seek to identify the best way forward to overcome the lacunae.

Beyond the art/design/media focus of ALLADIN, the project also seeks to build on its points of commonality with other existing ventures - in particular the ten FDTL language projects, with whom ALLADIN is now formally linked. In addition, the project team are exploring areas of development such as independent learning strategies, which have a relevance for a number of language and non-language initiatives. The project is already investigating links with other initiatives in the field of C&IT across a wide range of disciplines, as part of its commitment to facilitate the fuller integration of new technologies in the HE curriculum.

ALLADIN will be formally launched in November 1998 and involvement in the project is warmly welcomed from interested parties. Current information, including our questionnaire, is available at the ALLADIN website:

<http://www.surrart.ac.uk/alladin>

or contact:

Alison Kennard
Project Co-ordinator ALLADIN
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Software Reviews

GramDef English v1.02

Supplier: The TELL Consortium

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/tell.htm>

System requirements: IBM compatible 386 with 4MB RAM (8MB preferable), 1MB hard disk space, VGA or higher monitor. Windows 3.1 or higher.

Price: single licence £40.00 + VAT, site licence £80.00 + VAT.

Note: The reviewer used a Pentium PC running Windows 3.1

Background

GramDef English is the latest *GramDef* for modern languages from the TELL Consortium, following *GramDef French* and *GramDef German*. Once again, the designer and programmer, Paul Hickman has used the same user-friendly interface in a nice neat package to help language learners (and native speakers!) with the basic terminology used for describing grammar concepts. The introduction on the opening screen defines the purpose of *GramDef English* as,

"[to] augment, reinforce or refine [learners'] knowledge of syntactic terminology which will enable them to use 'mainstream' textbooks, manuals and language reference works [and] ... discuss the structure of English ... with their teachers"

And *GramDef English* definitely seems to fulfil that purpose. In designing software like this which specifically focuses on recognising and using the metalanguage of grammar rather than simply teaching the grammar itself (e.g. *The Grammar Rom*), TELL have put into the hands of learners a potentially powerful self help, diagnostic tool.

Using *GramDef English*

Getting Started

GramDef English is supplied on a 3.5in floppy and loads via a setup program accessed through the Windows File or Program Manager. Installation is quick and easy and the user simply double clicks on

the *GramDef English* icon to start the program. After an informative opening screen outlining the purpose and functions of the software, the user is shown an option screen providing a choice of six short texts for study. The texts are extracts from works of literature and newspaper articles and though the range of genres is limited, some effort has been made to vary the register. The texts themselves comprise a number of relatively short sentences and the seeming lack of inversions and other, more complex syntactic structures, suggests that the texts have either been carefully selected to meet the needs of the program or have been adapted. If true, this raises the issue of authenticity. *GramDef English* does not have a facility for importing texts, so the learner is forced to work with the six texts provided. Though this potentially limits both student choice and exposure to different genres, it is doubtful whether importing texts would be desirable even if possible in programming terms.

Modes of use

Once the choice of text has been made buttons appear at the bottom of the screen and the user has to choose one of three modes via these buttons.

The default Explore mode allows the learner to highlight a word within the text which in turn calls up an explanation of the word's grammatical function in the sentence. This can be repeated for all the words in a text with each word which the user chooses turning first green then grey when another word is selected. The basic repetitiveness of this mode leads me to expect that many users only spend a limited time in this mode before switching to one of the test modes.

The Basic Test mode provides a selection of buttons with various grammatical categories (noun, past participle etc). The learner clicks on a button and is told how many words from that category there are in the text. The purpose is then to find the words from this category by highlighting each one in turn. It is not possible to highlight multiple words.

A correct answer is greeted by the message "You are right! This is a _____", but the learner can only continue after the OK button is clicked. At first there is a tendency for the user to forget to do this, but continued clicking on the OK button becomes more and more frustrating the longer the program is used. A wrong answer triggers the message "No, '_____' is not a _____. It is a _____". At any point in the Basic Test mode it is possible to click on the InfoGram button which gives a reasonably detailed explanation of the grammatical category selected. But users used to the online (Internet-based) reference aids of multimedia software may find the page-per-category explanations a trifle limiting. A Show Unfound Words button helps the learner who is having difficulties. Though the number of right and wrong choices is recorded on-screen there has been no attempt to add a competitive element to *GramDef English* by, for instance, having users pit their knowledge against each other. This adds to the overall impression that the software has been primarily designed with the mature, serious adult user in mind, perhaps forfeiting a share of the lucrative young learner market.

In the Advanced Test mode, the learner first chooses the word then answers a series of up to six questions by selecting an option from a drop down menu. Answers are automatically provided to confirm the answer to each question and there is a basic scoring system for rating progress. This task is substantially more difficult than those in the Basic Test mode and may give rise to questions among more able learners. Indeed, judging from a discussion with a colleague about one answer the program gave, this seems almost a certainty. This suggests the program may be more suited to guided self study than to a self access situation.

Exiting the program

At any time in the program the user can exit the mode they are in and choose an alternative text. The program itself can also be exited at any time by clicking on the Exit button in the bottom right hand corner. There is no save and resume feature to allow the user to leave the program in the middle of a category and return to it at a later time, though whether there is a need for such a function is doubtful.

Comments from the chalkface

As a teacher of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to international students I believe *GramDef English* unquestionably meets a very real need. A significant proportion of students who join university EAP classes have noticeable difficulty identifying and labelling the syntactic and grammatical properties of a text. My response in the past has been to use the Names of English Language Words unit in McCarthy & O'Dell's *English Vocabulary in Use*. I believe *GramDef English* offers a real alternative to this and is an example of software that does do it 'better than a piece of paper and a pen'. Whether the extra cost justifies the improved pedagogy is for every teacher themselves to answer. Certainly, what *GramDef English* does, it does well. I do think, though, there is a real danger that all but the most determined learner would find the activities boring and repetitive before the learning process is complete. More varied activities such as click and drag and against the clock would be a welcome addition to future versions of this software.

David Catterick
University of Dundee

References:

- Freebairn I. & Rees-Parnall H., *The Grammar Rom*, Longman
McCarthy M. & O'Dell F. (1994), *English Vocabulary in Use*, Cambridge: CUP

Create your own web exercises Hot Potatoes

For Windows 95 or Macintosh, this software has been developed at the University of Victoria Language Centre for language teachers to create web-based exercises in a variety of formats. It is available as freeware and requires no programming skills to use.

Take a look at the site <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/> for further information.

A short review of the capabilities of the software has been written for CTICML by Dawn Ebbrell, University of Hull, and is available on the CTICML web site at the URL on page 1.

Eindrücke - Einblicke

Computerübungen

Ein Programm für die Mittelstufe Deutsch als Fremdsprache.

Author & supplier: Dr C. Hall, Dept. of German, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH

System requirements: IBM PC or compatible with at least 640 KB RAM

Price: single user £10 or DM25, site licence £75 or DM185, plus postage & packing.

This suite of computer programs is based on grammar and vocabulary exercises from the workbook of the course *Eindrücke - Einblicke* (Langenscheidt 1994), which is aimed at intermediate (post-beginners) learners of German.

The package, supplied on single floppy disk, runs under DOS. Installation to hard disk is fast and straightforward and the whole package takes up under 1 MB disk space. The software was written with the Canadian *mcBOOKmaster* authoring system and is networkable. A simple command loads a German keyboard.

The package comprises 60 lessons (Lektionen) covering a wide range of topics. Most of these are gap-fill exercises on grammar and word formation (e.g. declination of weak nouns, pronouns, the passive, verb prefixes and noun suffixes). Many exercises are based on transformations of grammatical structures. Others test lexical differentiation skills, for example, identify the meanings of the verb *gehen* or supply alternative forms for noun-verb constructions such as *in Anspruch nehmen*. A number of text-based exercises rely on the learner's familiarity with material covered already in the coursebook. After each lesson the program returns a breakdown of performance with a percentage score; the score is weighted according to the number of attempts at a question (there are no points after the second wrong attempt). On exit the program should write a record of performance to floppy disk.

Moving around the screen with the cursor is simplicity itself and the program's responses to learner input are helpful. Up to two leading spaces in the input are ignored, although any extra space within a phrase or sentence is marked and the

learner has to remove it. Occasionally the response is misleading: for example for the input phrase *in vielen Länder hungern* the program does not signal an error, but informs the user that no space is required after *Länder*. Normally, however, the program facility directs the learner to the first position in his response at which an error is detected. Typing errors involving upper and lowercase letters and punctuation are flagged up for correction. It must be said that some responses require the learner to type in rather a lot of material according to model answers provided on the screen. Entering numerous versions of the same modal verb for certain exercises may also stretch some learners' patience.

The user has instant access to 80 help pages, with a clear overview of the contents, a German-English dictionary, and short context-sensitive hints; descriptions of grammatical points are brief but the coverage is comprehensive and the content informative. The exercises have all the advantages of the very sound course from which they are derived: they are linguistically demanding and require the student to develop a good knowledge of grammar, structures and vocabulary. All the instructions and on-screen material, including the responses, are in German. The documentation is lucid, concise, and also in German; it takes only a few minutes to read the 18-page manual, after which the learner should be able to find his way around the package without further reference to it.

Although designed for use in conjunction with *Eindrücke - Einblicke*, the package could easily be employed on its own as a support for grammar practice. As a no-frills DOS-based package many teachers will prefer it to certain flashier-looking multi-media programs with less interesting and less demanding linguistic content.

Derek Lewis, University of Exeter

CTI Modern Languages Open Days 1999

Wednesday 6 January

Wednesday 3 February

Wednesday 24 March

Bookings at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/services.htm>

Forthcoming Events

9 December 1998, London, UK

IT and modern languages: from old tech to new tech (beginners)

Information: CILT, 20 Bedfordbury London WC2N 4LB
Tel: +44 171 379 5101 ext 240 (quote code LO128IT2)

11 December 1998, London, UK

CALL98: What does ICT do for language learning?

Information: CILT, 20 Bedfordbury London WC2N 4LB
Tel: +44 171 379 5101 ext 240 (quote LO128CA2)

15 December 1998, London, UK

IT and modern languages: from old tech to new tech (advanced)

Information: CILT, 20 Bedfordbury London WC2N 4LB
Tel: +44 171 379 5101 ext 240 (quote code LO128ITA)

27 - 31 January 1999, Paris, France

Expolangues: 17th Fair for languages, cultures and international exchanges

Information: REED-OIP EXPOLANGUES, 11, rue du Colonel Pierre Avia, BP 571-75726 Paris Cedex 15, France

5 - 6 February 1999, Louvain, Belgium

Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies Empirical Approaches

Information: Sylviane Granger, Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, Université Catholique de Louvain, Place Blaise Pascal 1, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium
Tel: + 32 10 474947; 32 10 474034, Fax: + 32 10472579

26 - 28 March 1999, York, UK

Language World - Raising Standards: Better Language Teaching and Learning

Information: Association for Language Learning, 150 Railway Terrace, Rugby CV21 3HN, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1788 546443, Fax: +44 (0)1788 544149

28 - 31 March 1999, London, UK

CAL 99 - Virtually in Education

Information: Phillipa Orme, CAL99 Conference Secretariat, 12 Church Street, West Hanney, Wantage, Oxon OX12 0LN, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1235 868811, Fax: +44 (0)1235 868811

7 - 9 April 1999, Leeds, UK

Fourteenth BALEAP Conference, 'Issues in EAP Learning Technologies'

Information: Peter Howarth, The Language Centre, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK
Tel: +44 (0)113 233 3250, Fax: +44 (0)113 233 3252, Email: p.a.howarth@leeds.ac.uk

1 - 5 June 1999, Oxford, USA

CALICO 99

Information: CALICO, 214 Centennial Hall, Southwest Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666, USA
Tel: +1 512 245-1417, Fax: +1 512 245-9089

22 - 26 June 1999, Maryland, USA

IALL '99 Conference

Information: IALL '99 Conference, The Language Center, College of Arts and Humanities, 1105 Jiménez Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742-4811, USA
Tel: +1 301 405-8544, Fax: +1 301 314-9841

9 - 11 September 1999, Exeter, UK

8th International Exeter CALL Conference

Information: Keith Cameron, CALL '99, School of Modern Languages, Queen's Building, The University, Exeter EX4 4LE, UK

16 - 18 September 1999, Besançon, France

EUROCALL 99

Information: Thierry Chanier, Laboratoire d'Informatique de Besançon, Université de Franche-Comté, France
Tel: +33 3 81 58 84 70, Fax: +33 3 81 66 64 50

31 August - 2 September 2000, Dundee, Scotland

EUROCALL 2000

Information: EUROCALL, CTI Centre for Modern Languages, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1482 465872, Fax: +44 (0)1482 473816, Email EUROCALL@Hull.ac.uk

Visit our full listing of CALL-related conferences, seminars and workshops at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/events.htm>

