

2001 NFLRC SUMMER INSTITUTE:

Developing Web-Based Foreign Language Learning Environments

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EVALUATION

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BACKGROUND

Since 1958, the Modern Language Association (MLA) has conducted surveys on foreign language enrollments in United States institutions of higher education. The latest, from Fall 1998, gives information not only on such commonly taught languages as Spanish and French, but also on less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) such as Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Korean at American universities and colleges (Brod & Welles, 2000). Although some LCTLs have seen enrollment increases since the 1980s, their overall numbers are still very small, particularly when compared to Spanish. The MLA statistics do not differentiate by level and so do not reveal whether students of LCTLs are enrolled in beginning and intermediate or upper-level classes. However, it is generally known that many institutions offering LCTLs limit instruction to the first two years. Very few institutions teach advanced level courses or offer major programs. In today's fiscal climate, this situation will probably not change. For this reason, there is a need to develop alternate delivery methods for such courses, and new technologies in distance learning offer options which were not available in the past.

Distance education and L2/FL instruction

The rationale for the NFLRC 2001 Summer Institute Workshop in Developing Web-Based Foreign Language Learning Environments lays precisely in serving the needs of the profession by creating advanced-level courses in LCTLs in skills other than speaking, to be offered at a distance. As Hiple and Fleming (in press) point out:

... exclusively Web-based delivery is appropriate for skills other than speaking, and is especially suited to higher levels of language study where learners have established a foundation of reading and writing skills they can use independently as a means for two-way communication.

The logical candidates for the workshop were institutions with established advanced instructional resources in less commonly taught languages. Web-based course development would make it possible for resource-rich institutions to offer those resources to other institutions at which advanced instruction in LCTLs might otherwise not be available at all, as well as to individuals at widely scattered locations. Given the low enrollments that are a perpetual concern in LCTL courses — especially advanced ones — Web-based instruction would also improve the possibility of pulling together sufficient numbers of learners to make an advanced class viable.

Distance education in LCTLs and the University of Hawai'i

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has programs in a number of less commonly taught languages and is a leader in developing innovative distance learning courses in these fields, delivered either via interactive television or on the Web. These grew out of an effort, supported by a grant from the National Security Education Program (NSEP), to improve the delivery of LCTLs via distance education. The Web-based courses that came out of this effort served as models during the workshop. Further details on the pedagogical design of these courses are given below.

Prior to the development of the Web courses, UH had produced a set of self-instructional CD-ROMs in Chinese and Korean, with some focused on reading authentic texts and some focused on listening to video interviews. The Web-based classes were conceptualized as communities for learners who would benefit even more from the CD-ROMs if, instead of using them on an individual basis, they joined with other learners to engage in preparatory activities before “entering” the CD-ROM, and then followed up with language practice activities following each use of the CD-ROM.

In the model Chinese and Korean courses, the teacher was actively involved with the students via Web forums which facilitated the carrying out of daily tasks and team assignments. The teacher managed and monitored student progress and gave feedback through numerous lesson phases, including a Grammar Clinic where selected student postings were identified and “workshopped” by the class. A language exchange near the end of the term also featured Web-based exchange with native speakers in Taiwan or Korea. Student feedback was elicited via anonymous Web-based questionnaires at various points during the course. The sequence of activities is detailed below.

Course structure

The sequence of instructional activities was based on a pedagogic approach grounded in schema theory. Accordingly, the instructional sequence of the course was designed so that each unit comprised the following stages:

Warm-up activities/word bank

Students share linguistic and real-world background knowledge by filling out Web-forms with vocabulary and sentences. Student responses are accumulated on a guestbook-page for each query, so that all the answers that have been input are visible at a single glance. Answers are also gathered into a course database — a “word bank” for student use.

Preparatory activities

Students complete a preparatory matching task at the baseline level (rather than the target level) of the lesson. Instant feedback is provided with a “check answers” button employing javascript.

Core lesson

Students complete the CD-ROM lesson, which is structured according to a receptive-skill lesson model rooted in schema theory, comprising the following five stages:

- pre-activities — prediction, activating background knowledge;
- global activities— identifying and locating topics, “mapping” the text;
- specific information activities;
- linguistic activities — learning about linguistic forms in the text; and
- post-activities — using the knowledge gained in the lesson in a communicative task that is a natural outgrowth of the text.

Students can then participate in a “Q&A” forum to troubleshoot any problems they had completing the CD-ROM lesson. Discussion can be in Chinese or English.

Students are assigned a discussion task via email. They are directed to a specific thread in the forum, where they will interact with one or two other classmates in Chinese in a role-play or task.

After the students have worked on the task, the instructors choose five or six erroneous utterances (i.e., postings that have syntax or usage problems) from the student discussion threads and place them in the next forum, the Grammar Clinic. Students are directed to respond to two or three of the erroneous sentences by supplying a correction. Finally, the teacher adds comments to each thread, and everyone reads over the accumulated contents of the forum.

Post-lesson activities

Students are told in advance of the final writing task of the unit, which is usually a short persuasive essay related to the topic of the lesson. In preparation, students first read a model text on a topic related, but not identical, to the lesson topic, in which certain linguistic features — usually discourse connectors or other useful tools — are highlighted. Students complete linguistic exercises based on the highlighted items in the model text to strengthen their familiarity with these items.

Students complete a final writing task, usually a written role play related to the theme of the lesson, and post the composition to a threaded discussion. Each student is assigned to respond to two other students’ writings with appreciations and critiques.

A multiple choice quiz based on the content of the CD-ROM lesson is also included at the end of each unit. The quiz is assigned minimal weight in the grading of each unit.

The original development team for the UH Web-based courses comprised an instructional designer, a Web designer, and a programmer. During the development process, these members with their diverse skills and knowledge worked together, each playing a distinctive role.

- The instructional designer was responsible for developing a general sequence of instructional activities that would be followed in all the units, and then developing specific instructional activities for each unit in line with the sequence.
- The Web designer was actually a language instructor with enough expertise in HTML and javascripting to convert the instructional designer’s paper version into non-dynamic HTML and to incorporate some javascripting for student self-checking of answers.
- The programmer created and implemented scripts that enabled the dynamic elements of the course, including passwords and permissions, grading functions, student grouping, “word banks,” and forums.

The “course shell” created through the efforts of the instructional designer, the Web designer, and the programmer comprised ordinary Web pages written in HTML, as well as some javascript, integrated with dynamic elements written in ColdFusion Markup Language (CFML) and conjoined via Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) with a Microsoft SQL Server database. All the dynamic elements in the courses were “homemade,” and their creation required a considerable level of programming expertise. The diverse skills brought to the team by each

member were harmonized through constant back-and-forth consultation. For example, while the instructional designer was aware from the beginning of the more obvious constraints of the medium (e.g., that the course would be asynchronous and that interactions would be restricted to written communications), he was encouraged by the Web designer and programmer to work without worrying too much about other limitations of the medium. Most of the time, the instructional designer worked on paper to sketch out ideas, which he then revised after meeting with the Web designer and programmer.

With the model courses — and the creative process that produced them — as a suitable foundation, the presenters set out to plan and present the workshop.

THE WORKSHOP

The 2001 NFLRC Summer Institute (SI) Workshop in Developing Web-Based Language Learning Environments was organized around the abovementioned topic for advanced learners in German, Japanese, Norwegian, and Turkish. The SI lasted two weeks from June 11 to June 22, 2001. Its goal was for each team to design and produce a prototype for a freestanding Web-based language course for advanced learners, comprising a curricular outline, an interface design (course shell), and at least one functional unit. A second component will be a videoconference to share the results of the implementation or beta testing of the courses designed at the workshop. It will take place on December 13, 2001 with the following institutions participating: University of Hawai'i (Japanese team and workshop organizers); University of Minnesota (Norwegian team); Hunter College, City University of New York (German course designer); and Princeton University and the U.S. Government (Turkish team).

In contrast to previous years, when advertisements were sent by mail to professional organizations and academic institutions, and electronically to people on the NFLRC mailing list, this time publicity was targeted at institutions that had demonstrated through previous projects or other evidence their capacity to create Web-based courses analogous to the existing UH courses. Through a criterion-based selection process, the NFLRC selected developers in German, Japanese, Norwegian, and Turkish to participate. The goal of the institute was to create actual course shells and sample units during the time of the workshop that would enable the participants to complete the full Web-based course at their home institution for implementation in the future. Thus, a long-term benefit of the work done at the SI would be guaranteed. In order to reach these goals, a further aspect of the institute was to increase the participants' familiarity with different authoring systems and tools for Web page building (i.e., Dreamweaver, Fireworks). The overall objectives of the SI 2001 were product oriented. In previous years, the focus of NFLRC summer institutes was more process oriented, and the ultimate outcome could not be controlled since it was not known how the participants would apply the newly gained knowledge at their individual institution.

Originally, in accordance with the creative process that shaped the UH courses, it was planned to have teams of three, consisting of an instructional designer, a Web designer, and a programmer. However, this format turned out not to be feasible for every team, and in the end,

team members worked on various tasks and received technical and programming assistance from the institute staff, an arrangement that worked well.

The Summer Institute took place in the Moore Hall PC lab on the Mānoa campus of the University of Hawai'i. Three Macintosh computers were also installed there. The availability of both operating systems was important to test the sample units for compatibility, visual appearance, and so forth. Participants also had access to a scanner and an audio lab for recording of sound. All the equipment was up to the newest standards and in excellent working condition. There were no technical breakdowns during the institute.

Facilitators and Staff

David Hiple is the Summer Institute director as well as the associate director of the UH NFLRC. He is an internationally known expert on proficiency-based teaching and testing. On the first day, he gave a formal introductory presentation on distributed versus Web-based teaching/learning. He discussed questions of the general course rationale, levels of instruction and suitability of such levels for on-line instruction as well as administrative and institutional issues. During the two weeks of the workshop, David came to the lab on a daily basis to discuss the individual projects with the participants.

Stephen Fleming was the leading facilitator of the workshop. He is Instructor in Technology for Foreign Language Education in the College of Languages, Linguistics & Literature at the University of Hawai'i. He is currently working on the National Security Education Program-funded grant "Disseminating Technology-Based Models for Distance Education in Critical Languages," which includes offering workshops nationwide in strategies for foreign language instruction via interactive television and for the development of Web-based foreign language instruction. The grant project has also enabled UH to offer Web-based Chinese and Korean language courses to colleges and universities on the Mainland. Stephen provided the instructional "backbone" of the workshop, conducting informational sessions on theoretical matters, giving overviews of daily activities, leading planned whole group activities, and coordinating groups presentations.

Yun Du is a Ph.D. student in the Communication and Information Sciences doctoral program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her doctoral research is on developing Web-based language learning environments. She assisted the participants with programming issues related to their individual projects.

Nestor G. Trillo holds a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication from the University of Hawai'i, a Bachelor's degree in Spanish from Dartmouth College, and a Certificate in Japanese Studies from Keio University in Tokyo, Japan. He conducted the sessions on Web course design and introduced the participants to Macromedia Dreamweaver and Fireworks. During the entire workshop, he was regularly present in the lab and assisted the participants in solving technical problems.

Other key personnel included the following individuals:

Clayton Chee, Media Specialist, assisted with software issues arising in the various course designs.

Jim Yoshioka is the program coordinator who was in charge of all the essentials of life, ranging from travel, lodging, parking, Saturday excursion, breakfasts, snacks, bento (lunches), stipend checks, and so forth. He made participants' life comfortable and attended to all details of the SI.

Deborah Masterson is the publications specialist at the UH NFLRC.

Heidi Agunias is a student assistant (office support). She was also the instructor of lei making.

Kin Chan is a student assistant who provided technical support in the use of computers during the open lab sessions in the evening.

Annette Kym is Associate Professor and Chair of the German Department at Hunter College, City University of New York. She served in a dual role, as Summer Institute Evaluator as well as participant. This allowed her not only to observe the presentations and work of the SI but also to experience the hands-on activities and produce a course which is now being offered at Hunter College (Fall semester 2001).

NARRATIVE OF WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

The workshop schedule was a mix of structured activities and individual work time. Each day, there was an open computer lab from 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. and from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. During this time, the participants were free to work on their projects or communicate with others via email. In general, the participants did not stay at the lab until it closed since most of them brought their own laptops and preferred working in their rooms in the evening. The daily workshop activities followed a fairly flexible but consistent schedule (see Appendix A for workshop schedule).

Day 1

In the morning on the first day of the workshop, David Hiple and Stephen Fleming presented a general overview of different forms of distributed, synchronous, and asynchronous distance learning. The advantages and disadvantages of the different delivery methods were addressed. David particularly touched on overarching administrative issues dealing with marketing, listing or cross-listing such courses, sharing tuition revenue and dealing with different tuition rates at different institutions, counting teaching load for faculty members, and so forth. This general discussion set a framework against which the design of the courses had to be planned. The participants were reminded to always keep the ultimate goal in mind regardless of the intriguing possibilities the Web would offer.

Optimal levels of linguistic competency for on-line courses and rationales against using Web-based delivery for beginning courses were discussed. The goal of the SI was to create Web-based learning environments for upper-level courses where there might not be enough students at one institution to justify offering an on-site class. Pedagogical issues of traditional versus Web-based courses were also addressed.

In the afternoon, Stephen gave an introduction to the different functions of instructional design, Web design, and programming. He prepared a worksheet listing different tasks. The participants were to decide which ones had to be carried out by the instructional designer, the Web developer, or the programmer, and in which order. An interesting discussion followed on the setup of a Web page and the sequence of the course materials. It became evident that the instructional design phase is the most crucial one for the successful development of a course.

As illustration, Stephen presented the Web course developed for third year Chinese. He explained the setup of the interface and the underlying philosophy. Each lesson consists of the same stages: warm-up activities/word bank, preparatory activities, core lesson, post-lesson

activities. The activities progress from receptive to productive, and from what the student knows to what she/he does not know. They culminate in shared knowledge and support independent learning. They provide for communicative use of the language obtained in the lesson and move from lower to higher text types and functions (e.g., from questions and answers to description/narration, from discrete sentences to paragraph length discourse). The same outline is followed in each chapter; thus the structure of the course becomes transparent to the students. Stephen also discussed the software programs Dreamweaver and Fireworks which were used for the creation of the course Web pages.

These formal presentations and ensuing discussions set the stage for the workshop and the work to be done by individual groups. Originally, it was planned that all teams would develop their own course shells using the Chinese course as a model, but it turned out that due to institutional decisions the German and the Norwegian teams had to use commercially available platforms, BlackBoard and WebCT respectively. This necessitated that the groups work more independently while the staff tended to their different needs and issues.

Day 2

The second day started out with an overview of the commercially available platforms WebCT and BlackBoard. Stephen showed some Web courses using them, and Kenwick Chan, the campus administrator of these two platforms, answered questions. This was a good format since it showed the differences, possibilities, limitations, and adaptations necessary when using these platforms.

During the remainder of the morning, the teams were given the task of working on the instructional design of the front page and the navigation tools, and presenting their paper plan to the seminar participants.

In the afternoon session, Nestor Trillo demonstrated the software programs Dreamweaver and Fireworks. He explained their possibilities for courseware creation and pointed out the ease with which both programs can be used. The group then had a chance to do some hands-on activities. Most participants had already worked with these or similar programs and seemed to be at ease using them. For the German participant this was more challenging since she had no previous experience; however, since there was no need for her to develop a course shell, the lack of previous exposure to and current mastery of these software programs was not crucial. The participants liked the hands-on technology oriented session and felt that the instructional staff was very knowledgeable about all aspects of technology. Participants' reviews can be summed up by the following comment: "I liked the hands-on and technology oriented sessions. Good mixture between hands-on activities and presentations by instructors."

The goal for the first two days, to give everyone the necessary background to start the designing phase of their courses, was reached.

Day 3

During the first part of the morning, the teams worked on their individual projects developing the interface (menu bar, sub-categories, etc.). After the break, it was show-and-tell time. The Japanese and the Turkish team adopted the model developed at UH for Chinese and Korean. There will not be a CD-ROM available for their courses. Thus, in their finished versions, they will have to host more activities on the Web. Both teams were developing full versions for an academic setting. The Turkish team will have the option of deleting certain features should the program be used for government purposes.

The Norwegian team adapted their WebCT interface to resemble the Chinese model. They created an expandable menu that was very clear and user-friendly. During the discussion, the question arose whether the materials should be designed as a credit-bearing Web-based course, as supplementary modules for traditional or non-traditional college courses, or as an enrichment course for life-long learning (offered through an alumni organization). David Hiple advocated developing a full product that could be used selectively or be pared down, an easier task than upgrading an already existing program.

Before the participants went back to work on their individual projects, Stephen reminded them to carefully think through the entire course design on paper before getting too carried away by trying out different tools on the computer. With this in mind, the teams went back to their planning tasks and Stephen consulted with them when help was needed.

At the end of a long productive day, Heidi showed the group how to make a lei. The participants enjoyed this activity and went back to their rooms surrounded by the wonderful smells of their creations.

Day 4

All the participants took advantage of the early opening hours of the computer lab to work on their individual projects. At mid-morning, the Japanese team showed their paper copy of an individual unit. The topic dealt with food preparation and the tradition of bento. A lively discussion followed, particularly with regard to the actual carrying out of certain activities. These seemingly simple questions triggered more fundamental decisions whether, for example, discussion activities would be linked to a separate database or just be carried out on a self-contained Web page. It was obvious that the team had not thought through all these issues in detail. It became clear to all the participants how valuable such a paper copy design would be in the planning process.

In conjunction with the food preparation unit, a further topic of discussion touched on the appropriate language level needed for individual activities. Whereas the pre-reading activities seemed to be on the word level, the discussion topics on recipes required a superior level mastery of the language. Stephen reminded the group to be constantly aware of realistic linguistic expectations and to take this into consideration when designing all exercises.

Another discussion centered around the feasibility of using the synchronous chat feature in the Japanese course. Objections to using such a feature were raised since this might lead to time

conflicts particularly if the course were marketed not only to students on the local campus but to learners in the entire Pacific Rim region. The Japanese team felt very strongly that live chats bond students in a virtual community and should be a feature of the course.

In the afternoon, the Norwegian team showed their course shell for an individual unit. It was well designed. The team had not yet decided on the exact format of specific exercises since the individual texts were still missing.

Enlightened by the discussions of the day, the groups spent the rest of the afternoon working on their projects. The Japanese presentation of their paper design served as a valuable lesson on how later problems could be avoided by giving detailed thought to the instructional design before going on to the next steps, namely Web design and programming.

Day 5

During the greater part of the day, the teams worked on their individual projects. Originally, there was a show-and-tell session planned for the end of the day, but the participants voiced the opinion that this would be better placed after the weekend when they had done more work on finishing up the overall layout of the unit. This was the only major change in the overall workshop schedule.

The staff was, as usual, very helpful in accommodating the individual needs of the participants and finding solutions for different design problems.

During the afternoon, Stephen conducted a very informative short session with the Japanese team sketching out the set-up of the “Grammar Clinic”, a feature on the Web page. These activities were carried out again on paper in order to visualize the different design options. Culture-specific questions came up: How to deal with the important aspect of “not losing face” in Japanese culture. Should mistakes be corrected in a public forum or should the instructor provide feedback and corrections to the individual student via private email? In this context, technical solutions as well as workload issues for the instructor were discussed. The Web designers gave their input and by the end of the discussion, the Japanese team had a clearer idea of the options available to them.

The group member working on the German project was handicapped by the fact that she did not have a partner with whom to collaborate or discuss instructional design or technical issues. The Web designer/programmer had to withdraw from the workshop at the last minute. Arrangements were made with David and Nestor to solve this problem.

From the discussion with the participants and workshop facilitators, the following topics seemed to crystallize and were put on the agenda for the following week.

- Platform compatibility: How easily can other institutions adopt/adapt the course?
- Institutional commitment to offering the course on the home campus.
- Consortial agreements between different institutions.
- Clear idea of work associated with such courses and how this translates to academic credit and workload for the instructor.
- Question of “free-ware” or “credit-based” ware with associated fees.

In the Mid-Point Evaluation (see Appendix B), the participants gave generally high marks to all aspects of the institute and voiced some suggestions for activities during the second week. The staff acknowledged this and was flexible enough to include them in their schedule.

Day 6

The day started with a show-and-tell session by the different groups. The Japanese team showed their course shell and a sample lesson on Valentine's Day as well as initial parts of the lesson on food and food preparation. They had overcome some initial difficulties and were on their way to a fully operational unit by the end of the workshop. One important issue came up with regard to the ephemeral nature of Web pages (i.e., Japanese store Web pages advertising Valentine's candy). Pages available at the time when a link was created might disappear or change by the time the course is offered. The staff offered technical solutions to this problem.

The second group to present was the Norwegian team. They had developed a full unit on the Norwegian language with culturally and linguistically well-integrated activities. The front page was nicely designed and logical, and the exercise types were varied, targeting the different modalities. All in all, they seemed to be well on their way to reach their goal of producing a product that could be beta-tested and implemented in the near future.

The Turkish team showed their shell, which followed the Chinese/Korean model. Additional exercises had to be developed to make up for the lack of a core textbook or CD-ROM. One team member developed the reading activities shell with pre-reading, reading, and post-reading exercises, whereas the other member concentrated on finding appropriate texts and writing the actual exercises in the target language. Judging from the work produced in the first five days, the team would be leaving with a good prototype to beta-test in the near future. A new member from another institution joined the team for the second week, and the challenge was how to integrate their different institutional philosophies into a single product.

The member working on the German course showed some of the lessons she had developed and raised some questions about the BlackBoard interface.

The teams spent the rest of the day working on their projects.

Days 7 – 9

There were no formal presentations or show-and-tell sessions. The participants felt it was most useful to spend as much time as possible on the individual projects. The initial problems with regard to design and software applications had been solved. As during the previous week, the staff was available to assist with any questions during these days.

Day 10

This was the day of the grand finale: presentations of the Web pages produced during the workshop. All teams exceeded the goals stated at the beginning of the Summer Institute. In

addition to having a working course shell and one unit, they also produced additional materials for beta testing.

The Norwegian team showed their product first. The lesson on the Norwegian language was complete with pre-reading, reading and post-reading exercises, historical explanations, maps indicating the different linguistic areas, sound files, and so forth. The modules on geography and the media were also well-planned and the team had already found reading materials for these lessons.

The Japanese team showed the finished unit on Valentine's Day and some of the exercises for the food unit. The staff had helped them to develop some very clever visuals to be used in matching exercises. Over the summer, the team planned to finish the remaining lessons in order to beta-test the prototype in the fall. The course is scheduled to be offered in the spring.

The Turkish team showed their very well-developed site with excellent and varied reading exercises. The unit on gender discrimination was finished and the second one on women in politics almost complete.

The member working in German showed sample lessons with assignments tailored to several possible different proficiency levels of students in the class. The course featured many task-based activities, such as writing brochures, forum-based exchanges with Germans on the topic of German unification and its economic impact, résumé writing, and so forth.

The products presented on the last day of the Summer Institute showed clearly that the objectives of the Summer Institute had been met.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

During the workshop, the evaluator asked the participants for informal comments at the end of each day. A mid-point and final survey were also administered.

Summary of Mid-Point Evaluation Questionnaire

- 1. Given the overview of the seminar presented on Monday, do you feel that the workshop activities correspond to it and have they met your expectations?**

All the participants answered yes, and two felt that the presentations exceeded their expectations and helped them make progress toward meeting their goals.

- 2. Which one of the presentations did you find most useful? And why?**

The general consensus was that the discussion of instructional design issues (paper planning) was very helpful. David's presentation about distance/distributed learning in a broader perspective was considered informative.

One participant felt that there were too many "talking heads" on the first day, but felt it very worthwhile to discuss the rationale for combining an interactive shell with a static CD-ROM.

- 3. How helpful were the presentations of Dreamweaver and Fireworks? Are you using**



these tools for building your own Web page?

All participants felt that both presentations were very helpful and they liked the format of having a formal presentation first and a hands-on activity as a follow-up.

4. What difficulties have you encountered in using these tools? Describe them please.

In general, the participants did not encounter any major difficulties using these tools.

“I wanted Fireworks to open other file formats, so I had to use a different program first.”

“I haven’t had any trouble with Fireworks, but Dreamweaver will take longer to master. It is taking me longer than usual to make Web pages with Dreamweaver, but it is getting easier each day.”

5. Are there other difficulties your group is experiencing? What are they? Is the staff helpful in solving these problems?

There was general praise for the staff, their expertise, and their willingness to help. One group experienced difficulties in designing interactive exercises within the WebCT platform. They pointed out that the different staff members had been very helpful in finding solutions for these problems.

6. Do you have any suggestions for changes in the workshop for next week? What topics do you feel should be addressed?

“Testing, debugging on 4 browser/platforms.”

There were divergent opinions on the desirability and usefulness of the presentations and show-and-tell sessions. Two participants found this format very informative and helpful. “I like the format for the workshop, especially the mix of presentations on instructional design and technology, discussions and show-and-tell with other participants, and work in our language group.”

One participant felt that there should be fewer presentations and that the show-and-tell sessions had little practical value for him/her since the projects were so different.

7. Any other comments and suggestions?

In general, there was high praise for the institute and the participants were very thankful for being taken care of so well. They were, however, feeling challenged by the amount of work expected during the institute:

“Right now, I feel tired, a little frustrated at how (seemingly) simple tasks take forever. But that’s the process.”

8. During the next week, may I ask you to keep a diary of the important issues that come up regarding your successful development of the Web-based course.

All the participants were willing to keep a diary of their activities but they asked to be reminded of this task.

Final Evaluation Questionnaire

The following summative evaluation and comments by individual participants are from the final survey and support the fact that the objectives of the SI had been met. The participant results are indicated in Table 1 (survey form in Appendix C).

Table 1: Participant Responses to Workshop Evaluation; N = 9
1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

item	question	mean	std
1	The information I received about the Workshop/Summer Institute prior to coming was adequate for my needs.	4.22	0.67
2	The Workshop was well organized and well run.	4.78	0.44
3	The staff was helpful.	4.89	0.33
4	The Workshop facilities and technical support were adequate.	4.78	0.44
5	The length of the workshop (two weeks) was appropriate.	4.44	0.73
6	I was satisfied with the logistical and social aspects of the workshop (housing arrangements, breakfast, afternoon snacks, weekend activities, bento option, lei making, etc.)	4.89	0.33
7	I enjoyed the overall format of the Workshop (institutional issues, planning sessions, technology-based hands-on sessions, demos, group discussions, individual work).	4.78	0.44
8	I found the variety of perspectives represented by Workshop facilitators and participants valuable.	4.56	0.53
9.1	The following issues addressed at the Workshop are applicable/relevant my professional goals: Instructional design issues	4.67	0.50
9.2	Web design issues	4.67	0.71
9.3	Introduction of software supporting Web design	4.56	0.73
9.4	Institutional issues	4.44	0.53
10	I found the process of learning about, developing, and producing Web-based language courses useful and relevant.	4.78	0.44
11	I was satisfied with the facilitation of the Workshop.	4.67	0.50
12	Overall, my expectations of the Workshop were met.	4.67	0.50

The participants rated all the answers between the *strongly agree* and *agree* ratings. Thus, they indicated general satisfaction with the workshop activities and with their learning. The lowest rating of 4.22 for question 1 indicates that some participants would have liked to receive a detailed schedule in advance. The other two questions where the mean was somewhat lower were 5 (length of workshop) and 9.4 (instructional issues). Since most

participants do not have any administrative and decision making functions at their respective institutions, they attributed less weight to the discussion of institutional issues.

At the end of the questionnaire, there were some general questions. The following quotes sum up the common feelings:

1. Please describe your most valuable learning experience(s) at the Workshop (e.g., specific session, conversation with a Workshop facilitator/another participant, etc.)

“Getting away from the computer to PLAN on paper is so much common sense – but something I need to keep in mind. But so much was helpful and stimulating, it is hard to single out more specifics.”

“The most valuable parts of the workshop for me were the presentations/discussions about distributed learning in general and about instructional design. I also feel as if I learned WebCT well enough to do both our course as well as to use it as a way to organize my supplemental Web materials for my face-to-face courses.”

“All were valuable, hands-on was probably the most valuable.”

“Nestor’s workshop and his tech support. Stephen was helpful developing the instructional materials as well as technology.”

“The discussions with David and Stephen about task-based activities, goals and outcomes assessment.”

2. What effect will the Workshop have on your teaching/professional development?

“I will be able to use what I learned about instructional design in my classroom teaching as well as in materials development, and I want to teach courses on-line as well as help some of the other faculty at my institution get more of their materials on-line.”

“I am encouraged to develop more course material aimed at the intermediate/advanced level.”

“It will contribute to my ability to design distance learning courses and materials.”

3. How do you expect to share/disseminate what you have learned with colleagues at your home institution?

“Presentation at departmental session.”

“Informal talk, trying to ‘sell’ the idea to the gatekeepers.”

“Demonstration of prototype.”

“System-wide presentations to other faculty members preparing to teach on-line courses.”

4. When do you plan to beta-test and/or offer your Web-based course at your institution?

Most participants will offer some beta testing in the fall with implementation of the course in the spring 2002 or fall 2002.

5. What issues or challenges do you foresee at the institutional level as you prepare to offer the course?

“My institution is a traditional school and does not make changes quickly. I don’t know how open they would be to offering on-line courses for credit.”

“To solve problems on different platforms.”

“Course credit, registration of non-credit learners.”

“Question of technical support and work load/release time for faculty member.”

6. What could we have done better at the Workshop?

Most participants replied: Nothing!

“More tech sessions (perhaps mini workshops), introduction to ColdFusion.”

7. What did we do particularly well?

“Creative ways to get us thinking about the whole process of designing and teaching – both on-line and in person.”

“Everything! From hospitality to instruction to facilitation. Mahalo [Hawaiian: thank you] to all who made it possible!”

Evaluator’s assessment of workshop

The following discussion is based on notes and observations I made throughout the workshop relating to the operation and the success of the Summer Institute 2001. As noted in the introduction to this evaluation, the goal for SI 2001 was for each team to design and produce a prototype for a freestanding Web-based language course for advanced learners, comprising a curricular outline, an interface design (course shell), and at least one functional unit. A videoconference in December 2001 to share the results of the implementation of the course designed at the workshop was the second component.

Products

The ambitious original goal of designing and producing a prototype for a freestanding Web-based language course was met and even surpassed. Even though the plan of having teams of three consisting of an instructional designer, a Web designer, and a programmer could not be implemented, the existing teams together with the skilled help from the workshop facilitators had enough expertise to produce the shell and the prototype unit. Some of the participants were technologically less advanced than others and this caused some friction at the beginning, but the facilitators offered creative solutions and helped them overcome these shortcomings. Since the participants had given ample thought to the type of course they wanted to develop before coming to the SI, they could, after the initial theoretical part, proceed without delay to designing and preparing the prototype course unit.

There were three major aspects that influenced the actual outcome of the workshop:

- The well-designed Chinese/Korean course served as a model, and this saved time in the design phase.
- The decision to keep general presentations to a minimum gave the teams enough time to devote to the development of the actual product.

- The expert help by the workshop staff and the well-equipped lab created the ideal conditions for achieving the set goals. Web-design and programming problems could be solved without delay. The staff could suggest software/freeware available. This saved the participants time-consuming searches on their own.

One question that could not be answered was how much support the home institutions would give to finish these projects. Since the Japanese team was housed at the University of Hawai'i, the institutional commitment was guaranteed. The two Norwegian team members were affiliated with two different institutions, a large state university and a small private liberal arts college. There, the issue of where to house the course would be crucial in further development. The Turkish course was developed by team members from very different institutions, an elite private university and a government language school. Whereas in Norwegian, issues that might impede the further development and eventual offering of the course were more of an administrative nature, in the case of Turkish, pedagogical issues were at the core. Since the participant working in German was not part of a team, no pedagogical or institutional conflicts arose. The unsolved issue for her, as in the other academic institutions also, was the question of workload and reward in developing and offering such time-consuming new courses.

Since the courses are housed on institutional servers and are password protected, the general public cannot view them. For this reason, sample pages of the various courses are to be found in Appendix D. They show the general design of the courses as well as sample exercises.

Participation

It was clear throughout the workshop that all the participants did experience important professional development in expanding their expertise in developing and designing Web-based foreign language learning environments. The participants were actively involved in the workshop each day and in the "open lab" outside of the formal sessions. Since everyone had brought a computer along, they all put in additional time in the evening and over the weekend to work on their courses. In general, the different groups worked well together. There was a problem in one group where one member only joined during the second week of the workshop. It was difficult for her to integrate herself into the group who had established a good working relationship during the first week; consequently, some extra time was spent discussing different visions and possibilities. In the end, it did not prevent the group from reaching its goal of producing a fully functioning sample unit. Thus, even though there may have been small problems with the group dynamics in some instances, there was substantial professional development across all participants.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2001 NFLRC Summer Institute at the University of Hawai'i successfully brought participants together to work on developing Web-based foreign language learning environments in less commonly taught languages. The goal to create four course shells and sample units was met and in all instances exceeded. All the prototypes were developed taking into consideration

the most recent research on reading, task-based instruction, and proficiency-based level and outcomes assessment. Thus, the products created during the workshop were of high quality.

The structure of the workshop appears to have worked well from both the participants' and the administrators' perspectives. Since the projects were so diverse, the rather loose format of limited theoretical discussions and extensive hands-on work coupled with the technical help was ideal. This structure allowed the facilitators to monitor areas that needed to be addressed more explicitly and make suggestions either to a particular group or to the workshop participants as a whole. This schedule should be considered again for similar workshops in the future.

Overall, the workshop went smoothly and successfully. The original plan to have institutions send an instructional designer, a Web designer and a programmer was too ambitious since most institutions do not have the staff or the necessary resources to send a team of three. The instructional and technical staff designed the workshop in such a way as to overcome the difficulties of not having experts in all the abovementioned fields represented. The technical deficiencies of two participants could be overcome through one-on-one work. This approach did not hold back other technically more savvy participants and allowed for maximum use of time and resources.

A major issue — which will probably be addressed during the videoconference in December — is the institutionalization of such courses in general. David Hipple talked about these problems in his introductory lecture. However, as long as the academy does not value this type of work as equal to scholarly publications, it is difficult to encourage junior faculty members, who most often are interested in innovative new teaching, to devote themselves to such time-consuming tasks. This may be a topic for a future seminar.

Finally, from the dual viewpoint of a participant and evaluator, I feel that the workshop was overall very successful. I am convinced that the participants learned a great deal and that the course shells and sample units produced during the workshop will help them to complete the entire course in the near future. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of those who made this workshop possible.

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APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Monday, June 11

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:00 Introduction to workshop & overview (DH/SF/JY)
9:00 – 10:00 Overview of distance learning / distributed learning (DH)
10:00 – 10:45 Web course walk-through (SF)
10:45 – 11:00 Break
11:00 – 12:00
- Overview of administrative issues, server siting, recruiting, registration, etc.
 - Your course rationale, goals, audience
 - Discussion of task interface
- 12:00 – 1:00 Welcoming luncheon (Beau Soleil catering) — NFLRC main office
1:00 – 2:30 Intro to instructional design (ID)
- Conceiving the course interface
 - Adapting a course for the web
 - Outlining course content, including number of units and topic for each unit
 - Mocking up course home page (to be used tomorrow at 9:30) (SF)
- 2:30 – 3:00 Break (afternoon snacks)
3:00 – 4:30 Intro to web design (WD)
Intro/overview of team resources (w/ worksheet); learn Fireworks (produce something)
4:30 – 5:00 Reflect on afternoon's work; formative feedback

Tuesday, June 12

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:30 Overview of WebCT / Blackboard as course solutions (SF/Kenwick Chan)
9:30 – 10:45 Work by language- site requirements (what kinds of pages with what kinds of functions, and where); examine and revise ID's paper site plan from previous day
10:45 – 11:00 Break
11:00 – 12:00 Work by language- continue revisions; role-play a student in the site navigating through a typical instructional unit
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
1:00 – 2:30 Tasks for ID
- Functional approach to instructional unit design
 - Mocking up first instructional unit (to be used tomorrow at 10:30)
- 2:30 – 3:00 Break (afternoon snacks)
3:00 – 4:30 Tasks for WD
Intro/overview of Dreamweaver (mockup frameset and/or homepage; to be used tomorrow at 10:00); learn Fireworks (produce something)
4:30 – 5:00 Reflect on afternoon's work; formative feedback
5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Wednesday, June 13

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:00 Logistics / upcoming social events (JY)
9:00 – 10:00 Work by language- revise frameset / homepage mockup from previous day
10:00 – 10:30 Break
10:30 – 11:30 Work by language- examine and revise current "paper" version of instructional unit
11:30 – 12:00 How's It Going?
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (bento option — Ba Le)
1:00 – 2:00 Overview — course evaluation (student surveys); conclude w/work by language

- 2:00 – 2:15 Break (afternoon snacks)
- 2:15 – 4:00 Tasks for ID &WD
 - ID: finalize “paper” development process for instructional unit
 - WD: continue site development w/placeholder files; deliver site map
- 4:00 – 4:15 Break
- 4:15 – 5:00 Work by language — feedback & revision of ID’s “paper” design of instructional unit. Make copies for all Institute colleagues
- 5:00 – 5:45 Lei-making lesson
- 5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Thursday, June 14

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
- 8:30 – 9:00 Logistics (JY); overview of today’s schedule (SF)
- 9:00 – 10:00 Each ID leads a show-and-tell of the revised “paper” design of the instructional unit
- 10:00 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 12:00 Tasks for ID & WD
- ID: plan deliverables for each remaining day of the Institute and post your “due dates” on the wall; begin “paper” design of the next instructional unit
- WD: make pages for instructional unit that has been received from ID
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (bento option — Boston’s North End Pizza)
- 1:00 – 2:00 Overview course tools (grading, grouping, class resource and personal resource managers); conclude w/work by language
- 2:00 – 2:15 Break (afternoon snacks)
- 2:15 – 4:00 Tasks for ID & WD
 - ID: continue design of the next instructional unit
 - WD: complete pages for Word Bank (or corresponding portion) of instructional unit
- 4:00 – 4:15 Break
- 4:15 – 5:00 Continue as above
- 5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Friday, June 15

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
- 8:30 – 9:30 Overview of today’s schedule (SF); Work by language — look over and revise frameset / dummy pages for instructional unit
- 9:30 – 10:30 Tasks for ID & WD
- ID: continue design according to own schedule
- WD: overview javascripting, as in “prep activities” section of Chinese course (radio buttons)
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:00 Tasks for continued
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:30 Tasks for ID & WD
 - ID: continue design according to own schedule
 - WD: implement “prep activities” (or equivalent) — have something to show Monday a.m.
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break (afternoon snacks)
- 2:45 – 4:00 Tasks continued
- 4:00 – 4:15 Break
- 4:15 – 5:00 GRAND SHOW AND TELL: Site with frameset and real and/or dummy pages for instructional unit [note: this was moved to 6/18]

Saturday, June 16

- 8:30–1:00 Optional social event — Diamond Head hike/Makapu’u Loop drive



Sunday, June 17

12:00 – 5:00 Optional social event — Lunch/opening of the Korean Gallery at Honolulu Academy of Arts

Monday, June 18

7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:15

- Overview of today's schedule (SF)
- Work by language — assess finished version of pre-activity/Word Bank (or equivalent)

Bank (or equivalent)

- Assess finished version of preparatory matching activity (or equivalent)
- Assess ID's progress on "paper" unit design

9:15 – 10:30 Tasks for ID & WD

- ID: continue design according to own schedule
- WD: implement "core activities" through the small-group forum

10:30 – 10:45 Break
10:45 – 12:00 Tasks continued
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (bento option — Peppa's Korean BBQ)
1:00 – 1:30 How's It Going?
1:30 – 2:45 Tasks for ID & WD

- ID: continue design according to own schedule — have something to show Tuesday a.m.
- WD: implement core activities up through the Grammar Clinic — have something to show Tuesday a.m.

2:45 – 3:00 Break (afternoon snacks) / Visit the NFLRC store! (publications display)
3:00 – 5:00 Tasks continued
5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Tuesday, June 19

7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:00 Overview of today's schedule (SF)
9:00 – 10:00 Work by language- assess progress of each team member from previous day
10:00 – 10:30 How's It Going?
10:30 – 10:45 Break
10:45 – 12:00 Tasks for ID & WD

- ID: continue design according to own schedule
- WD: implement post-activities, begin work on linguistic activities inside post-activities

12:00 – 1:30 Long lunch
1:30 – 2:45 Tasks for ID & WD

- ID: continue design according to own schedule — have something to show Wednesday a.m.
- WD: implement post-activities, including linguistic activities — have something to show Wednesday a.m. If possible, begin work on quiz

2:45 – 3:00 Break (afternoon snacks)
3:00 – 5:00 Tasks continued
5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Wednesday, June 20

7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:15 Work by language- assess progress of each team member from previous day
9:15 – 10:30 Tasks for ID & WD

- ID: continue design according to own schedule — have something to show Thursday a.m.
- WD: implement quiz — have something to show Thursday a.m.

10:30 – 10:45 Break
10:45 – 12:00 Tasks continued
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (bento option — The Well-Bento)

- 1:00 – 1:30 How's It Going?
1:30 – 2:45 Tasks for ID & WD
- ID: continue design according to own schedule; meet with WD to consider design of student feedback instrument
 - WD: surf and debug; meet with ID to consider design of student feedback instrument
- 2:45 – 3:00 Break (afternoon snacks)
3:00 – 5:00 Tasks continued
5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Thursday, June 21

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:00 Overview of today's schedule (SF)
9:00 – 10:00 Work by language- assess progress of each team member from previous day; discuss implementation of student feedback instrument
10:00 – 10:15 Break
10:15 – 12:00 Tasks for ID & WD: prepare for tomorrow's demonstration
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (bento option — TBA)
1:00 – 2:45 Tasks continued
2:45 – 3:15 Work by language- Ready for tomorrow's demo? Assign wrap-up tasks
3:15 – 3:30 Break (afternoon snacks)
3:30 – 4:30 Wrap-up tasks for tomorrow's demo
4:30 – 5:00 How's It Going?
5:00 – 8:00 Open computer lab

Friday, June 22

- 7:30 – 8:30 Open computer lab (8:00 — morning refreshments)
8:30 – 9:00 Overview of today's schedule (SF)
9:00 – 9:30 Language demonstration 1
9:30 – 10:00 Language demonstration 2
10:00 – 10:15 Break
10:15 – 10:45 Language demonstration 3
10:45 – 11:15 Language demonstration 4
11:15 – 12:00 Wrap-up; workshop evaluation
12:30 – 2:00 Closing luncheon and celebration at Student Services Center 412

APPENDIX B: MID-POINT EVALUATION FORM

Your assistance with this questionnaire is greatly appreciated. During the day, please take a few minutes to assess the effectiveness of the Workshop so far. You can either write your comments on this sheet or on a separate piece of paper. Please return it to me at the end of the session today, Friday, in the enclosed envelope. Completing it carefully will aid those who participate in future Summer Institutes. Thank you very much!

1. Given the overview of the seminar presented on Monday, do you feel that the workshop activities correspond to it and have they met your expectations?
2. Which one of the presentations did you find most useful? And why?
3. How helpful were the presentations of Dreamweaver and Fireworks? Are you using these tools for building your own web page?
4. What difficulties have you encountered in using these tools? Describe them please.
5. Are there other difficulties your group is experiencing? What are they? Is the staff helpful in solving these problems?
6. Do you have any suggestions for changes in the workshop for next week? What topics do you feel should be addressed?
7. Any other comments and suggestions?

During the next week, may I ask you to keep a diary of the important issues that come up regarding your successful development of the web-based course.

APPENDIX C: FINAL EVALUATION FORM

Your assistance with this questionnaire is greatly appreciated. Please take a few minutes to assess the effectiveness of the Workshop. Completing it carefully will aid those who participate in future Summer Institutes. Thank you very much!

Part I

Please check the phrase or statement that best applies to your experience. Feel free to add any comments to clarify or enhance your response.

1. The information I received about the Workshop/Summer Institute prior to coming was adequate for my needs.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

2. The Workshop was well organized and well run.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

3. The staff was helpful.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

4. The Workshop facilities and technical support were adequate.

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

5. The length of the Workshop (two weeks) was appropriate.

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

6. I was satisfied with the logistical and social aspects of the workshop (housing arrangements, breakfast, afternoon snacks, weekend activities, bento option, lei making, etc.)

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

7. I enjoyed the overall format of the Workshop (institutional issues, planning sessions, technology-based hands-on sessions, demos, group discussions, individual work).

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

8. I found the variety of perspectives represented by Workshop facilitators and participants valuable.

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

9. The following issues addressed at the Workshop are applicable/ relevant to my professional goals:

Instructional design issues

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Web design issues

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Introduction of software supporting Web design

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Institutional issues

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

10. I found the process of learning about, developing, and producing web-based language courses useful and relevant.

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

11. I was satisfied with the facilitation of the Workshop.

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

12. Overall, my expectations of the Workshop were met.

- strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Comment _____

Any other comments: _____

Part II

Please respond to the following questions. Your comments will assist in the preparation of the evaluation report.

1. Please describe your most valuable learning experience(s) at the Workshop (e.g., specific session, conversation with a Workshop facilitator/another participant, etc.).

2. What effect will the Workshop have on your teaching/professional development?

3. How do you expect to share/disseminate what you have learned with colleagues at your home institution?

4. When do you plan to beta-test and/or offer your web-based course at your institution?

What issues or challenges do you foresee at the institutional level as you prepare to offer the course?

5. What could we have done better at the Workshop?

What did we do particularly well?
