

Penn Language News

Volume 1, Issue 1, Fall 2002

An Interview with Ed Dixon

By Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl, Director
Penn Language Center

In this first issue of *Penn Language News*, we welcome Ed Dixon to our campus. As the new foreign language technology coordinator, he is a valuable resource for language faculty and graduate teaching assistants on integrating technology in the language classroom. This interview was recorded on August 23, 2002, and outlines some of the highlights of his career, his plans for Penn, and his views on language teaching and technology.

NVD: First of all, welcome to Penn. We're very happy you are here. This is a time of tremendous growth in technology and its applications for language pedagogy and I'm sure everyone is looking forward to having the opportunity to learn more about these exciting developments in the field. Can you tell me a bit about your new position here at Penn as Foreign Language Technology Coordinator? What are your primary duties?

ED: As the Coordinator, I assess the technology needs of the language faculty and instructors at Penn and develop services that will meet those needs. I meet with faculty individually and in groups to advise and assist them learn technologies that they can use to enhance teaching. I am also the Manager of the Language Resource Center where I

oversee the operations of a facility where faculty can come to develop instructional materials with high-end equipment and software that they do not have available to them on their desktop office machines, such as Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and iMovie. My office is next to the LRC in Williams 441A and I am there to help instructors use the software and equipment at the workstations.

*"By using the web,
teachers can focus on
training their students to
become life-long learners
of a language"*

NVD: What can you tell us about your academic and technical background?

ED: I have a Ph.D. from the Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pennsylvania. During and after my Ph.D. studies, I taught as a lecturer at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Swarthmore, Drexel

and George Washington University and while teaching I learned to use computer technologies. I found that technology, and in particular multimedia, can be a wonderful medium to instruct and entertain. I developed my technical skills and continue to do so by reading, going to conferences, joining listservs, keeping in email contact with colleagues in the field, and by enrolling in professional development programs. This past summer I took a course at the University of the Arts in Flash.

NVD: Before you came to Penn, you were employed in a similar position at

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Penn Language Center
715-716 Williams Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Tel: 215 898 6039

Fax: 215 573 2139

plc@ccat.sas.upenn.edu

Georgetown. What were some of the projects that you were involved with there? Is there anything that you felt was very successful there that you would like to introduce here?

My position at Georgetown was similar to the one I now have at Penn. I was the Coordinator for Technology in Foreign Languages and helped faculty learn applications such as Blackboard. I coordinated special projects involving for example, a FIPSE grant that the faculty received to learn and develop multimedia materials. I also co-coordinated and participated as a trainer in the week-long Summer Institute, where faculty from disciplines across the university met in a conference like environment to hear about technology, discuss it and learn new applications. The Summer Institute was sort of a boot camp for faculty interested in learning technology.

NVD: I think the Summer Institute is a great idea. Other universities have used it successfully. It is something that might be an interesting topic to discuss with faculty, something that we perhaps could initiate here. On a more abstract level, how do you view the role of technology in relation to foreign language teaching? How do you see the future of technology for foreign language teaching?

ED: From a motivational point of view, I think technology can be used to make language learning more interesting for the student. The Internet e.g. gives students far more opportunities than in the past to access culturally authentic sources. Sitting at their keyboards in their dorm rooms, students can visit a restaurant in Bavaria or read a newspaper from India and talk about it the next day in class or online with their classmates. From a learning perspective, technology can make learning easier. Multimedia e.g. offers students greater control of their learning in ways, which were previously not possible. Students can access online video, audio, graphics, text and all on one screen. They can easily freeze a video frame, replay the clip several times, turn on the transcript, click on individual words for their annotated meanings, and answer comprehension questions with immediate feedback. I mention these few examples because I believe we will see technology used more frequently in the future as pedagogical tool to help students learn

quickly, increase their understanding of world cultures, and better prepare them for study-abroad.

NVD: You started here in January in your position. So you've finished your first semester here at Penn. How would you assess your first semester here at Penn? Can you give some examples of the projects and activities that you were involved in?

My first semester was a challenge -- which I expected it to be -- but my boss John MacDermott and other colleagues helped me acclimate quickly. One of the highlights of the semester was working with Kate McMahon and Christina Frei in the graduate level course GRMN 517 / ROML 691. The course focused on the evaluation, design, and development of multimedia and emphasized through numerous readings and workshops the relationship between pedagogy and technology. During the course, I helped the graduate students with their projects, which ranged anywhere from videotaping in-class student performances for later delivery on the web, to web page development with Dreamweaver, to coordinating a NetMeeting video conference with Carina Ferreira, a participant in the course, who presented her project to an audience at Penn from Paris.

NVD: What are some of your plans for the upcoming year?

One of my goals is to improve strategies for helping faculty learn new technologies and the resources available to them through SAS computing. We are offering a fall workshop series which will take place every Tuesday afternoon from 1:40 to 2:50 in MMETS, where faculty can come together to train with Blackboard, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, iMovie, PowerPoint and Flash. In the spring, I expect to be working again with Kate McMahon and Christina Frei in the GRMN 517 / ROML 691 course. Throughout the year, I will also concentrate on improving the services and resources of the Language Resource Center. I will also continue collaborating with Penn Language Center on new initiatives involving, for example, Language Direct as well as on conference and grant proposals for integrating technology into the PLC's curriculum.

NVD: You are among the local organizers of the Consortium Conference on Technology to be held on our campus in October. What are some of the

highlights of this conference in your opinion? In what ways can participants benefit from attending such an event?

ED: Among the highlights is the caliber of speakers and panelists who will be addressing specifically the relationship of the web to foreign language education. The research work of the speakers and panelists will most certainly lend itself to an interesting conference for anyone concerned with effectively using the web in their teaching.

NVD: What advice would you have for instructors who are interested in technology, but are reluctant to begin incorporating it into their teaching for various reasons (e.g. lack of time, technology learning curve, etc.).

Ed: Allow yourself time. Just as learning a foreign language requires time, so does learning to use technology. Be prepared for obstacles but I am confident that if you are persistent, you will experience major successes.

In response to why use technology, I can think of a few reasons. Today's generation of students have grown up using technology and increasingly expect to use it throughout their education. We are also living today in a world where knowledge via the Internet is available on demand at anytime and anywhere. When we go to the web and do a search, we get answers to our queries immediately. Immediacy is gradually becoming an expectation with regards to gathering information and knowledge. Within the context of these new learning trends, I think we need to devise stimulating and reliable ways for our students to take full advantage of what technology has to offer.

NVD: What are some of the advancements in technology in recent years that you feel are most beneficial to language pedagogy? Can you give some specific examples?

ED: Probably the most beneficial advancement in technology for language learning over the past couple of years is the speed at which a learner can play digital video on line. Of course, one still needs to have a high-speed network, or on a DSL line or cable connection to play digital video with good quality but if you do have a high speed connection you can bring

foreign language TV and radio broadcasts and multimedia based instructional materials to your desktop or laptop at home. With these kinds of advancements in online technology, teachers can use the web to teach their courses while at the same time give their students a venue for maintaining their language skills long after the course is over. By using the web, teachers can focus on training their students to become life-long learners of a language and students can begin to perceive language learning as more than just a requirement.

NVD: In terms of the current state of research on language teaching and technology, what journals, conferences, professional organizations, etc. would you direct people to who would like to inform themselves on this issue?

ED: I would direct instructors to the CALICO (Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium), and IALL (The International Association for Language Learning Technology) journals. Each of these journals is affiliated with a web site, listserv, and conferences from where instructors can gather good information for using technology with language teaching. The web site for CALICO is <http://www.calico.org> and the web site for IALL is <http://www.iall.net> ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) is another source and there is also the on-line journal Language, Learning and Technology at the web site <http://llt.msu.edu>.

NVD: There seems to be a need for classroom based research projects in this topic. What kinds of topic or issues would you suggest to our readers for research in this area?

ED: I would suggest action research because no one knows better than the teacher as to what works best in the classroom. Since there isn't much research stating that technology improves FL acquisition, instructors can take the opportunity to become researchers themselves and discover the benefits of technology. Of course, the only way to get the data and find out what works is to experiment.

NVD: Thank you very much for this conversation.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS FOR LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS

WHEN: Tuesdays from Sept 10 through Dec 3

TIME: 1:40—2:50 PM

WHERE: MMETS PC Lab 2, David Rittenhouse Bld. *

Session 1 Tue, September 10

Bb5: Getting Started—

Using Threaded Discussions, Course Documents,
and Drop Box

Session 2 Tue, September 17

Bb5: Continued —

Creating Quizzes for Listening Comprehension

Session 3 Tue, September 24

Creating a Web Account and Using FTP

Session 4 Tue, October 1

Dreamweaver I—

Creating a site, writing text, creating links, and
inserting images, using color tools .

Session 5 Tue, October 8

Dreamweaver II—

Creating rollovers, embedding Video and Sound

Session 6 Tue, October 15

Dreamweaver III—

Templates vs. Frames and learning both, centering
Tables and Cells

Session 7 Tue, October 22

Dreamweaver IV —

Cascading Style Sheets

Session 8 Tue, October 29

Power Point —

For classroom and conference presentations

Session 9 Tue, November 5

Power Point II—

Embedding video and images and saving
presentations for the web

Session 10 Tue, November 12

Photoshop—

Optimizing images for the web

Session 11 Tue, November 19

iMovie—

Capturing video and sound for on-line delivery

Session 12 Tue, November 26

Creating an on-line Slide Show —

with Flash and importing through Dreamweaver

Session 13 Tue, December 3

Project presentations (Voluntary)

To **RSVP**, please contact :

Edward M. Dixon, Ph.D.
edixon@ccat.sas.upenn.edu

* The **David Rittenhouse Building** is located at 33rd and Walnut.

Campus Grant Project Report:

Use of Scola satellite broadcasting video/audio for upper level Japanese instruction

By Hiroko Kimura Sherry, Senior Lecturer
Japanese

The aim of this project is to create current listening comprehension materials using the Scola satellite programs in Japanese for upper level Japanese courses at University of Pennsylvania. A major problem in the upper level courses in Japanese is managing a mixed group of students with and without the Chinese character background in one class. The more sophisticated the reading material becomes, the more the vocabulary appears in Chinese characters, creating considerable advantages for the students with such a background. This can discourage non-background students from staying in upper level Japanese courses. Furthermore, while a Chinese character background is a powerful advantage for reading, it has other repercussions. Because Chinese characters are ideograms, students with a background tend to depend on visual clues to get the meaning, and often fail to establish a firm association between aural clues (in Japanese) and the meaning; this results in

relatively poor listening and speaking proficiency. By introducing more listening material from which students can build their vocabulary in upper levels of Japanese courses, we could solve or ease such an imbalance in the students' backgrounds. Further, we could accommodate both groups fairly and effectively in one class.

I have completed an initial project on this subject, and reported the result at the Computer-Assisted System for Teaching and Learning Japanese Third International Conference (CASTEL/J2002), which was held at UCSD in July of 2002. The website of the project is <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/japanese>. I am currently gathering and classifying video clips in order to prepare listening materials for future FLAC (foreign language across the curriculum) courses in Japanese.

The Consortium for Language Teaching and Technology

Version 2.0 Foreign Language Collaborations and the Web

October 11-13, 2002

The University of Pennsylvania

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/consortium2002/>

PLC Travel Grants for Foreign Language Lecturers

Penn Language Center is happy to announce that it will be able to offer a small number of travel grants for lecturers to attend conferences or other professional events related to the teaching of foreign languages. We can support travel, conference registration, or hotel accommodations. Priority will be given to those who will be presenting a paper and those who do not receive support from departmental or other sources. We encourage lecturers who will be presenting papers at professional conferences to apply for a PLC travel grant of up to \$500. If you

plan to attend a conference but will not be delivering a paper, we can support requests of up to \$250.

Please fill out the PLC Travel Grant Application and return it to Dr. Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl at the Penn Language Center (715 Williams Hall). A copy of the form can be found on p.11 of this Newsletter or can be printed out from the PLC web site at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/> (under “Services”). Deadline for submission of requests for the academic year 2002-2003 is **JANUARY 31, 2003**, but please apply as soon as possible, as our budget is very limited.

Book Announcements

Penn Language Center is very proud to announce that two of our instructors have published a book this past year:

Roslyn Blyn-LaDrew has published *Clóicín Dearg*, an Irish translation of Little Red Riding Hood, which appeared in 2001 by Another Language Press. Dr. Blyn-LaDrew has also used her teaching experience with Irish Gaelic as the basis for several conference presentations. This Fall, for example, she will present “Ireland’s Cultures in the Language Classroom” at the American Conference for Irish Studies Mid-Atlantic Conference. In addition, she will be reading a paper on Irish Gaelic naming patterns at the American Society for Geolinguistics, and present at the American Folklore Society. She has also served as president of the North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers, where she established a

prize for original children’s books in the Celtic languages.

Grace Wu has just published her book *Beginning Taiwanese*. Taiwanese is one of the truly less commonly taught languages in the United States and Penn is one of only a handful of universities to offer it. Materials for such languages, as many of you are undoubtedly aware of, are difficult to obtain and—if available at all—are often not appropriate within an American teaching context. Over the past ten years, Grace has put together her teaching materials into a communicative textbook for beginning learners of Taiwanese. The book focuses on both pronunciation and conversation and addresses a variety of communicative activities. The book was published in 2002 by Erudition Books, North Chelmsford, MA.

Our congratulations to both!

New Web site and Resource Collection

Over the summer, the Penn Language Center has been working on its new and improved web site, which can be found at its old url: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/>. Among the new features are a searchable list of languages offered through PLC, a calendar of upcoming events, an up-to-date list of courses offered each semester, and an overview of services available through PLC.

We are also working on building a collection of resources for language teaching. We are in the process of acquiring materials on language teaching methodology, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and

second language acquisition. We also would like to expand our collection of language instructional materials, including multimedia resources for language teaching. For a list of our recent acquisitions, please visit the PLC web site and under Services click on the link, which can be found under “Resource Room”. Our plan is to add a searchable database in the near future and allow language instructors to borrow these materials. If there are any books that you find useful, please send us your suggestions and we will try to add them to our collection as our budget allows.

Conferences and Grants

Sociological Initiatives Foundation Grants

The Sociological Initiatives Foundation was established in 1999 to support research and social action projects that focus on understanding and finding solutions to a broad array of social problems. The primary goal is to encourage research, including participatory action research that supports and promotes necessary social change.

The Foundation provides grants of \$5,000 to \$15,000 to support research and social action projects. Areas of interest include but are not limited to social justice, social welfare, human rights, literacy, language learning and use, dialect use and curricular issues in teaching second languages and non-native languages. Complete guidelines for the **September 15, 2002**, application deadline are available at <http://www.grantsmanagement.com/sifguide.html>.



2nd National Conference on Heritage Languages in America

The second National Conference on Heritage Languages, "Building on our National Resources," will be held **October 18-20, 2002** at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel at Tysons Corner, Virginia. The purpose of the conference is to provide a place for individuals, organization, and associations to participate in new initiatives in heritage language development. Specific goals for the conference include:

- Develop visibility and public awareness of the economic, personal, and social benefits of proficiency in languages other than English and of the language resources that we have in the United States.
- Increase the extent to which heritage language issues are part of the national dialogue.
- Provide a public forum for participants to shape a national heritage language policy and to engage in heritage language planning for the nation.

- Provide a forum for information sharing (current best practices and successes) and information building (new practices and funding opportunities).
- Provide opportunities for participants to work together in various, flexible groups on issues of interest.
- Develop collaboration among all constituent groups and a plan that moves us from rhetoric to action.

For further information about the conference and for online registration materials, please visit the Center for Applied Linguistics web site at: <http://www.cal.org/heritage/conferences/2002/index.html>



PSMLA Conference 2002

The Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association's annual conference will be held in Erie, PA, on **Friday, October 25 and Saturday, October 26, 2002**. The theme of the conference is "Energizing the profession." A copy of the registration form and further information about the conference can be obtained from the PLC office, 715 Williams Hall.



ACTFL 2002

The annual convention of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) will be held from **NOVEMBER 22-24, 2002**, in Salt Lake City Utah. The theme of the convention is "Beyond our customary borders: Language and culture in context." For information about registration and a preliminary program, please visit the ACTFL web site at: www.actfl.org.



WorldCALL 2000 Call for Papers

- Collaborative CALL projects
- Distance learning
- Curriculum development for CALL

WorldCALL is an umbrella association of national and international CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) associations. WorldCALL 2003 will be held in Banff, Alberta, Canada, from **May 7-10, 2003**. Proposals of 150-200 words are invited in either French or English for WorldCALL 2003, the second worldwide conference on Computer Assisted Language Learning.

The main conference theme, "CALL from the Margins", reflects WorldCALL's aim to enhance computer assisted language teaching and learning in the global community by bringing together educators from around the world in an atmosphere of constructive dialogue and sharing.

Conference subthemes are:

- Less commonly taught languages
- Evaluating CALL materials
- Assessment and feedback

Deadline for submission of proposals is **October 15, 2002**. Proposals can be submitted online at: <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/worldcallcfp/>.



CALICO 2003

CALICO 2003 will take place at the University of Ottawa from **Wednesday, May 21 to Sunday, May 25, 2003**. It will again feature uses of cutting edge technologies in foreign language teaching and learning. Workshops, presentations, poster sessions, and courseware showcase demonstrations will all present information of vital importance to anyone interested in the field of Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Information will be posted on the conference web site at: <http://www.calico.org/CALICO03/index.html>.

Culture and Technology for Teachers of Japanese

By Hiroko Cakmak, Lecturer in Foreign Language Japanese

In July 2002, The Alliance of Association of Teachers of Japanese offered a program called "Culture and Technology" for teachers of Japanese in Makuhari New City, Japan. Funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad program allowed the Alliance to provide fellowships to twelve teachers K-16 from U.S.A. This was conducted in collaboration with Japan's National Institute for Multimedia Education.

The goal of this program was for teachers to develop standards-based lesson modules using multimedia technology and authentic materials while experiencing and learning about Japanese culture. It provided many culture-oriented classes, numerous short excursions such as Kabuki play and a five-day trip to Nagano Prefecture. We also had wonderful opportunities to visit schools and many government institutes to learn about their web-site language materials

We had two mini-projects 1) to develop a web-based lesson 2) to develop an authentic video lesson using a digital video camera with 24 Japanese teachers from Japan and 3) to develop an individual video lesson. For this process, we gathered authentic materials by filming and interviewing people and learned to use Premier software to edit video clips using a digital video camera.

The project covered many topics ranging from the video clip "Daily Life at a Japanese elementary school" to "How to manage home stay in Japan for high school students" My web-lesson was "A mid-year gift giving custom in Japan" and the video lesson was "Nagano and nature : its environmental issues" which used a video clip with interviews with Nagano people about the political and environmental issues of anti-dam construction, advocated, by then and now Governor Tanaka. We all had a fruitful six-week stay in Japan.

PLC LANGUAGE OFFERINGS

FALL 2002 - SPRING 2003

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
elementary, intermediate, advanced

AMHARIC
elementary, intermediate

BENGALI
elementary, intermediate

CANTONESE
elementary, intermediate

CHINESE
commercial, advanced Conversation

CZECH
elementary

GERMAN
advanced for business

GREEK (MODERN)
intermediate

GUJARATI
elementary, intermediate

HUNGARIAN
elementary, intermediate

IGBO
elementary, intermediate

IRISH GAELIC
elementary, intermediate

JAPANESE
advanced for business

KANNADA
elementary, intermediate

KOREAN
advanced for business

MALAYALAM
elementary, intermediate

OSHIWAMBO
elementary, intermediate

PANJABI
elementary, intermediate

PASHTO
elementary, intermediate

PERSIAN
elementary, intermediate, reading and writing

POLISH
elementary

PORTUGUESE
elementary, intermediate, advanced

SHONA
elementary, intermediate

SPANISH
medical, elementary, intermediate, advanced for business,
for the professions

SWAHILI
elementary, intermediate

TAGALOG
elementary, intermediate

TAIWANESE
elementary, intermediate

TAMIL
elementary, intermediate

THAI
elementary, intermediate

TURKISH
elementary, intermediate

TWI
elementary, intermediate

URDU
elementary, intermediate

VIETNAMESE
elementary, intermediate

WOLOF
elementary, intermediate

YORUBA
elementary, intermediate, advanced, language and culture

ZULU
elementary, intermediate

Penn Language Center Events and Lectures 2002-2003

Fall 2002

Friday, September 13

PLC Town hall meeting

followed by a wine and cheese reception
Place: Cherpack Lounge, 5th Fl. Williams Hall
Time: 3:00-5:00

Friday, September 20
to Sunday, September 22

OPI Workshop

For a detailed schedule, please consult the PLC web site at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/>

Friday, October 11
to Sunday, October 13

Consortium Conference: “Version 2.0 Foreign Language Collaborations and the Web”

For a detailed schedule, please consult the PLC web site at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/>

Friday, November 15:

Nina Garrett

Director, Yale University Center for Language Study
Topic and place: TBA
Time: 3:00-5:00

Spring 2003

Friday, January 31:

Elana Shohamy

Professor of Language Education, Tel Aviv University and
Visiting Professor at Penn State University
“Performance assessment and learner outcomes” (tentative title)
Place: TBA
Time: 3:00-5:00

February

Workshop on Creating a Teaching Portfolio

Date, time and place: TBA

Friday, March 21

Rod Ellis

Professor of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics, University of
Auckland, New Zealand
“Focusing on Form in the Classroom”
Place: TBA
Time: 3:00-5:00

All lectures will be followed by a wine and cheese reception

**PLC Travel Grant for Foreign Language Lecturers
Application Form for Academic Year 2002-2003**

Deadline: Friday, January 31, 2003

Name _____ Date _____
Department _____ Payroll Title _____
Home phone _____ Email address _____
Conference Title _____
Dates and Location of Conference _____

Will you be delivering a paper? If so, please give title:

Include a copy of the program, an abstract, or a letter of invitation with your application form.

Itemized amount requested:

airfare: _____

hotel: _____

conference registration: _____

Total amount requested: _____

Please indicate other sources of possible support:

Acknowledgements

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- Roslyn Blyn-La Drew, Lecturer in Irish Gaelic
- Grace Wu, Lecturer in Taiwanese
- Hiroko Cakmak, Lecturer in Japanese
- Jay Treat, IT Director, SAS Computing

Please send any contributions, suggestions, or comments to Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl (pldeusen@ccat.sas.upenn.edu) or to Penn Language Center (plc@ccat.sas.upenn.edu).



*Penn Language Center
715-716 Williams Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104*

Tel: 215 898 6039

Fax: 215 573 2139

plc@ccat.sas.upenn.edu