

**Annual Report of the  
Interactive Language Resource Center  
1999-2000**

Submitted by Daniel E. Meyers, Director

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The Interactive Language Resource Center (ILRC) at Miami University is a restricted reference laboratory open to students, faculty, and staff of the following departments: French and Italian; German, Russian, Hebrew, and East Asian Languages; Spanish and Portuguese; and Classics.

The ILRC's mission is to serve the four language departments in actively implementing computer assisted language learning technology into foreign language education, to act as a central repository of foreign language related materials and multimedia resources, and to promote technological advances related to foreign language education through workshops, individualized assistance, conferences, and regular announcements.

Total officially logged attendance figures for this year indicate that **22,490** students visited the ILRC facilities. This brings a total of **422,119** known students who have visited the ILRC and its predecessor, the Language Laboratory, since these facilities began operations in the early 1960s. Attendance figures by language and activity are shown below:

**Attendance Figures for 1999-2000 Academic Year**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Fall 1999</b>	<b>Spring 2000</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Chinese	114	52	166
Classics	283	63	346
French	2,943	2,021	4,964
German	2,380	2,756	5,136
Hebrew	1	0	1
Italian	1,087	495	1,582
Japanese	572	467	1,039
Portuguese	51	57	108
Russian	158	116	274
Spanish	4,508	4,330	8,838
Guest	8	28	36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,105</b>	<b>10,385</b>	<b>22,490</b>

### Attendance Figures for Previous Ten Academic Years

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>Yearly Totals</b>	<b>Visits since lab opened</b>
<b>1990-1991</b>	6,936	4,492	11,428	273,394
<b>1991-1992</b>	5,349	3,497	8,846	282,240
<b>1992-1993</b>	5,800	3,512	9,312	291,552
<b>1993-1994</b>	8,679	4,403	13,082	304,634
<b>1994-1995</b>	9,621	7,147	16,768	321,402
<b>1995-1996</b>	11,801	8,146	19,947	341,349
<b>1996-1997</b>	10,754	7,567	18,321	359,670
<b>1997-1998</b>	13,830	10,169	23,999	383,669
<b>1998-1999</b>	8,539	7,421	15,960	399,629
<b>1999-2000</b>	12,105	10,385	22,490	422,119
<b>Average Visits</b>	9,341	6,674	16,015	

### Attendance Figures by Day of Week and Time of Day

<b>Day</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Sunday	509	227	736	08-09 am	750	703	1,453
Monday	2,449	1,779	4,228	09-10 am	1,574	1,721	3,295
Tuesday	2,812	2,435	5,247	10-11 am	2,283	2,013	4,296
Wednesday	2,258	2,066	4,324	11-12 pm	1,905	1,182	3,087
Thursday	2,837	2,787	5,624	12-01 pm	868	1,264	2,132
Friday	1,240	1,091	2,331	01-02 pm	878	946	1,824
Saturday	0	0	0	02-03 pm	1,049	956	2,005
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,105</b>	<b>10,385</b>	<b>22,490</b>	03-04 pm	967	655	1,622
				04-05 pm	880	326	1,206
				05-06 pm	506	266	772
				06-07 pm	386	160	546
				07-08 pm	59	193	252
				<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,105</b>	<b>10,385</b>	<b>22,490</b>

### Attendance Figures by Activity

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Total</b>
Audio Listening	6,709	4,640	11,349
Computer Usage	3,131	4,121	7,252
General Homework	38	44	2
Satellite Viewing	1	10	11
Tape Duplication	1,849	1,153	3,002
Testing	46	9	55
Video Viewing	329	410	739
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,105</b>	<b>10,385</b>	<b>22,490</b>

Attendance figures and its resulting data are the results of raw numbers of students working in the ILRC. The time that students worked in the ILRC ranged widely, from an average of 20 minutes for students checking their E-mail to several hours for students working on term papers or students listening to the audio component of their assigned homework. No attempt was made to justify students on an hourly scale (for example, one student working in the lab for three hours would equal three visits).

During the course of the semesters, several classes had reserved the computer classroom. Attendance figures under “computer usage” incorporate students present for these classes. While the classes were in progress, a student assistant made a head count of participants in that particular class and logged them in under the appropriate language and activity. Likewise, several classes had reserved the audio laboratory. Attendance figures under “audio usage” incorporate these students in like manner.

Attendance figures for satellite conferences and for faculty and staff using the ILRC facilities were not incorporated into these figures. For reference purposes, however, these figures are given by the activity requested:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Video Duplication	63	41	104
Audio Cassette Duplication	71	10	81
SCOLA Taping Request	4	3	7
Miscellaneous Equipment Checkout	11	3	14
Materials on Reserve Request	31	16	47
Attendance at Satellite Teleconferences	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>254</b>

## Services Provided

The ILRC provides many different services to students, faculty, and staff throughout the academic year, some of which have already been mentioned. The most common services performed are:

- audiocassette and video tape duplication and distribution
- video translation from PAL or SECAM into NTSC format
- provision of foreign language materials, dictionaries and reference resources
- archival of weekly SCOLA broadcasts in foreign languages
- camcorder, tripod, and video editing services
- scanning, printing, digital video conversion, and server maintenance services
- computer classroom upkeep and maintenance
- various workshops on aspects of technology related to foreign language learning
- technical support services to students in the ILRC
- basic technical support services to faculty and staff in language departments
- promotion of various satellite teleconferences and guest lectures
- assistance to language classes utilizing ILRC resources
- procurement of funding opportunities when available

## **Projects and Events Held This Academic Year**

### CALICO Conference - June 1999

The Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium's (CALICO) annual conference was held on the Miami University campus from June 1<sup>st</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup>. Over 500 participants from six continents attended. Almost every aspect of this international conference went without problems and the satisfaction rate by both members and organizers regarding planning, implementation, services provided, facilities, and coordination was well over 90%.

In addition to the myself and Paula Fogt (Arts and Sciences), who coordinated the conference, several other people and organizations assisted in preparations: John Skillings and Reed Anderson (Arts and Science); Guy Moore, Sherry Proffitt, Paul Gentle of the Computer Technical Support Group in Arts and Science; Stephen Sauer, Peter Forsgren, Jakub Dürr, and Keegan Swanson, ILRC assistants at the time of the conference; the Office of Conference Planning; and the staff of Shriver Center.

### ILRC Promotions and Guest Visits

Over the course of this academic year, several faculty and staff from other colleges and Universities have visited the ILRC facilities to experience what we have to offer Miami Students and Faculty. Among those visits included a contingent of faculty and staff from the Spanish Department of Hanover College in Indiana on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999, a visit by Gernot Neuwirth, director of the Sprachlabor at the Universität Wien in Austria on July 19-20<sup>th</sup>, Several German and Austrian exchange students sponsored by the Department of GREAL in late July 1999. In addition, another Gymnasium instructor from Germany toured the ILRC in late April 2000.

### Conferences and Workshops

During the academic year, the director participated and assisted in various workshops and conferences. During the week of June 18<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>, a Windows95 Certification course was completed, though the certification test was not taken. The director also assisted the June 1999 V-Roma workshop, which was held on the Miami campus during this week. This conference brought together several faculty from across the nation for an intensive week of training and using technology to restore and build a virtual replica of ancient Rome. In October 1999 the director co-presented with Judith De Luce (Classics) at the Midwest Association of Learning Lab's annual conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The topic of this presentation was "Virtual Rome wasn't built in a Day," the effects of collaboration among the participants of the V-Roma project.

Workshops held in the ILRC included several courses on introducing faculty and staff to BlackBoard, the university's web-based course companion. Three workshops were held during the months of November and December 1999 and several individual workshops were held in January and February 2000.

Finally, the director assisted the Department of French and Italian and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese with several tenure-track faculty interviews. Each prospective employee was shown the lab facilities, how Miami instructors typically integrate technology into foreign language learning, and what questions or comments they might have had about Miami.

## ILRC Equipment and Furniture Updates

The ILRC was able to procure new sturdy computer tables and chairs for the lab. A total of 64 chairs, 10 tables, and one presentation stand were acquired. After installation in February 2000, many faculty commented on how the ILRC "finally looked like a real lab." The previous hodge-podge of warped tables and mismatched chairs went to university auction.

In May 2000, the ILRC acquired a new file server and distribution mechanism for delivering digital audio files to students, faculty, and staff. This server was granted to the ILRC through a generous gift by the Classics department. The server's name, "Montgomery," is in honor of the alumnus who donated the majority of the funds to acquire this valuable piece of equipment. Testing and diagnostics will be taking place throughout the summer months and final rollout of the fileserver will be ready for Fall Semester of 2000. In addition to the fileserver, the Classics department also donated some funds to enable the ILRC to purchase a digital camera.

Fall equipment funds were not readily available this year due to budget constraints. However, the College of Arts and Science released funds to purchase 15 new computer monitors so students could clearly see their weekly assignments and daily work in the ILRC.

### **Issues pertaining to the ILRC**

The beginning of the academic year brought some minor confusion among new faculty and staff in the language departments as to whether or not the lab director was also responsible for support as a Technical Support Representative for each of their computers, personal or professional. After some quick clarification by the associate deans to the College of Arts and Science, this confusion was quickly resolved.

The ILRC will need to upgrade its computer equipment with more modern machines immediately, especially with the new file server and digital services that the ILRC will be beginning in Fall 2000. The current computers are neither adequate nor powerful enough to handle large digital files. In addition, there are simply not enough computers to hold weekly classes in a comfortable setting. Several times a week 25 or more students must cram into a lab space that can hold only 18 at maximum. The ILRC will be requesting at least 60 computers again this coming academic year to help alleviate the problems encountered thus far.

The current Tandberg learning system is now quite outdated and has literally blown smoke at us. Two visits by the manufacturer had to be made this year which cost the ILRC 1/4<sup>th</sup> of its annual budget. As a result, maintenance could not be performed over the academic breaks. Currently 8 of 40 booths are non-functional and average repairs cost the ILRC at least \$900 per repair session. A newer, smaller Tandberg system in conjunction with newer computers (as mentioned above) will enable the ILRC to function much more efficiently.

As usual, space to expand the ILRC is an ongoing issue. The ILRC would eventually need to expand in a way to incorporate two learning classrooms so faculty from the four language departments could hold separate classes simultaneously. As of now, the one computer classroom we have is booked on a first-come first-served basis. Any one else wishing to use the ILRC's classroom is simply out of luck if something is already booked up.

## **Acknowledgements**

The smooth operation of the ILRC would not be possible were it not for several people who have helped and assisted at various times. The director wishes to acknowledge Paula Fogt from Arts and Sciences for her insight and generous help with complicated technical support issues and for serving as the Technical Support Representative to the four language departments, John Hughes for his guidance with space, budget, and funding issues, Reed Anderson for his guidance in matters of protocol and administrative issues, and to Guy Moore for giving his ever-helpful insight to potential solutions on various technical matters. The director also acknowledges the work performed by the various student assistants and graduate assistants in the ILRC. Were it not for their assistance, the director would not be able to work on a personal and serviceable basis.

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