FLEX YOUR TECHNOLOGY MUSCLES

The topic? Technology tools to encourage communication. Some are old (TV) and some are new (podcasting, Skype). All can be used to expand the cultural horizons of our students, extend our classrooms, and help students learn "real-world" ways to connect with other languages and cultures. They can also be used to build community within language programs, across school and district lines, and with peers around the world.

The activities? This FLEX session is a chance for you to explore and discuss ways to use these technologies for yourself and your classes.

There are links to the sample sites on the *FLEX Links* page, which is a "Quick Link" from the Multimedia Language Laboratory home page.

Suggested Activities

Interested in one-to-many communication? International TV programs, films, and videos are always of interest. Internet radio and podcasting are newer and offer greater possibilities for individualization. Podcast creation by students encourages oral communication.

- Use iTunes to find one or two podcasts that you might use in class or recommend to colleagues and students.

- Explore ways of creating podcasts that you and your students can use.

Are you looking for ways to encourage collaboration among students? Do you need to find more "real-world" writing tasks? Both blogs and wikis encourage writing and collaboration.

- Look at examples of wikis and blogs to explore their similarities and differences.

- Use a blogging service to create a blog for yourself or your class.

- Use a wiki platform to start creating a class wiki.

Skype is an application that can be used in a remarkable number of ways. Because computers can be set up to record Skype calls, Skype can even be used for traditional "language lab" activities like pairing and small-group conversation. Skype also encourages (and logs) typed chat for informal written practice.

- Create a Skype account.

- Ask one or more colleagues to participate in a Skype call. (If one of you is on a Macintosh in the Lab, you can record the call.)

Moodle is an open-source course management system that is designed to support multi-lingual computing. Moodle is extremely versatile, and supports wiki-building, Hot Potatoes exercises, and much more. It can even display RSS feeds.

- Explore the Moodle for Language Teaching at *http://moodle.org/course/view.php?id=31.* (You can sign up for an account here.)

- Log into the University of Richmond Moodle as a teacher and explore the ways to set up a course and create activities.

Need a traditional language lab (listen, repeat, compare) function on your computer? DLRecorder is a free application from Dartmouth designed just for this purpose.

- On a Lab PC, go to Start > All Programs > MMLL Applications > DL Recorder.

- Click "Load", browse to an audio file, and upload it. (There are sample files in the My Music folder or you can download an MP3.)

- Click the "Play" arrow to listen and the "Record" button to speak.

- Click "Save" and then "Play" to listen to both the master and your recording.

Interested in BYU's WebCape placement test? Ask Sharon to log you into the French, Spanish, or German version.

World TV and Videos

The Screening Room is set up for both TV and video viewing. Viewing stations around the Lab are set up for individual/pair viewing of TV and DVDs. All DVD players are multi-standard and region-free.

World TV is broadcast on channels 7 – 11 (academic buildings only), 13 (SCOLA), and 15 (HITN). Channels 7 – 11 are distributed through the Language Lab; programming is selected from over 40 possible sources. If you're interested in seeing how we capture and distribute TV, just ask. DISH Network has academic pricing for international programming.

If you brought videos to share, the Lab Assistant will help you set them up in the Screening Room.