

REVIEWS

INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL OPENS UP A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

by Marti Morandi and
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As many educators know, the subtle nuances of language and a culture cannot always be readily conveyed in classroom texts or by conventional teaching aids. With the increasing availability of satellite broadcasts throughout the world, students who may not have the opportunity to experience another country's culture firsthand now can "visit" any culture they are studying by simply accessing a video monitor.

At Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, the Language Learning Center is providing that opportunity to 1200 students enrolled in the university's foreign language courses. Among the satellite networks to which Willamette subscribes, the International Channel is a valuable educational resource.

The International Channel, a multilingual cable network, has been utilized at Willamette for more than a year. The International Channel is owned by Los

Angeles-based Intercontinental Television Group, which acquires, produces, and broadcasts multilingual programming to over five million TV and cable households across the United States.

In our experience, the channel has two distinct advantages: it provides current, up-to-date news in numerous languages and it offers a wide variety of programming—movies, dramas, specials, game shows—that can help students get an inside look into a country's popular culture.

Several of the university's faculty members are introducing both live and prerecorded programs of International Channel broadcasts into their curricula that illustrate these advantages. First, professors have found that receiving news broadcasts in a timely manner provides a teaching tool that can offer students an edge in understanding the latest world developments. A good example of this occurred during the Gulf War this past year. Students and professors literally watched the war unfold on the television screen. In the Language Learning Center, the International Channel provided rapid war coverage with an added benefit:

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students studying foreign language gained insight into other nations' perspectives of the war.

Of course, the skills acquired by students watching news broadcasts are different than those they acquire by viewing other types of programming. The International Channel's variety of shows has proved to be an effective way to enhance the students' acquisition of very specific language skills, while at the same time adding an important dimension to language study—one that helps students gain a better understanding of culture, customs, humor, and dialect. Recently, for example, a Japanese language instructor requested prerecordings of "Kurama Tengu," and Japanese serial drama that focuses on the political power struggle between the Tokugawa government and the Emperor, for use in her fall 1991 classes. The professor noted that the English subtitling would be particularly helpful to beginning students, as Japanese is a difficult language to master.

However, the primary benefit of using the series lies in the program itself—students receive a wealth of historical information in the target language, all of which is presented in an interesting audiovisual format.

Willamette's faculty has used a variety of off-satellite programming in the past to teach foreign language skills in new ways. For example, instructors have shown foreign commercials in their classes. This helped students to develop skills forming questions and answers, as well as in general comprehension. Game shows, talk shows, and other special programming illustrate for students the indirect nuances of a culture such as gestures and mannerisms.

The International Channel's array of programming (*See the schedule that follows this review. Ed.*) is a good resource for instructors who want to supplement traditional methods of language instruction while at the same time offering invaluable firsthand

information about the culture.

For his literature course, a German language professor is anxiously awaiting a number of new German language series which are premiering on the International Channel this fall, among them a serial drama and a weekly news magazine, which he hopes to use as a complement to his classes.

At this writing, the International Channel features programming in 17 different languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, French, Farsi, German, Italian, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, Hindi, Tagalog, Thai and Portuguese.

About 40% of the programming is news, including daily newscasts by satellite from Tokyo, Taiwan, Moscow, Paris, Montreal and Manila. Chinese, Vietnamese, East Indian and Arab news shows, featuring domestic news as well as satellite reports from around the world, and produced in the U.S., also air daily on the International Channel.

In accordance with international copyright laws, the International Channel carefully negotiates all performance and copyright fees for its U.S. delivery of programming gathered from the world's major television companies. Although its primary focus is commercial, for cable distribution, The International Channel also provides reasonably affordable access by schools and colleges. Their rate is 15 cents per user per month, based on actual users rather than on the total number of students enrolled at the institution.

With permission, Colleges and universities can sample the programming free of charge for one week as a means of developing their own sense of how the service may benefit students and staff. However, since the International Channel has recently scrambled their signal, those interested should contact Karen Livingston at (617) 734-7821, or the International offices at (213) 826-8249, 12401 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90064.

International Channel Schedule for February 1992

AM						AM		
PST	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	PST	Saturday	Sunday
4:00	KTE Prog. (Korean)	KTE Prog. (Korean)	KTE Prog. (Korean)	KTE Prog. (Korean)	KTE Prog. (Korean)	4:00	KTE Prog. (Korean)	KTE Prog. (Korean)
4:30						4:30		
5:00	Newswatch Manilla	Newswatch Manilla	Newswatch Manilla	Newswatch Manilla	Newswatch Manilla	5:00	TBA	TBA
5:30	Viet News	Viet News	Viet News	Viet News	Viet News	5:30	Viet News	TBA
6:00	Ariana Afghanistan	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	6:00	Thai Prog.	Armenian Teletime
6:30	TV (Farsi)	Islam (Arabic)	TBA	Islam (Arabic)		6:30		
7:00	Emshah (Farsi)	Emshah (Farsi)	Emshah (Farsi)	Emshah (Farsi)	Emshah (Farsi)	7:00	CAMTV cambodian	Armenian Horizon
7:30	Sima-Y-Ashena (Farsi)	Sima-Y-Ashena (Farsi)	Sima-Y-Ashena (Farsi)	Sima-Y-Ashena (Farsi)	Sima-Y-Ashena (Farsi)	7:30	Cambodian TV	Israeli Cultural Line (Hbr)
8:00						8:00		
8:30	Arabic Drama	Arabic News	Arabic News	Arabic News	Arabic News	8:30	Vietnam Prog.	
9:00	Supertime News & Features (Jpn)	Supertime News & Features (Jpn)	Supertime News & Features (Jpn)	Supertime News & Features (Jpn)	Supertime News & Features (Jpn)	9:00	Vietnam Performing Arts	Talk w/ Zev Brenner (Eng)
9:30						9:30		
10:00	Taiw. News (Mand)	Taiw. News (Mand)	Taiw. News (Mand)	Taiw. News (Mand)	Taiw. News (Mand)	10:00	Truyen Hinh (Viet.)	Jerusalem on Line (Hbr)
10:30	Children's Prog. (Mand)	Children's Prog. (Mand)	Focus Taiwan (Mand)	Focus Taiwan (Mand)	Focus Taiwan (Mand)	10:30		Jewish Spectrum
11:00	TBA	ACTV (Mand) News/Variety	ACTV (Mand) News/Variety	ACTV (Mand) News/Variety	ACTV (Mand) News/Variety	11:00	Indiavision (ANEN)	The Jewish Ent. Hour
11:30	TBA					11:30		Nat'l Jewish TV Spe.
12:00	Hindi Film	Hindi Serial Drama and Songs	Hindi Serial Drama and Songs	Hindi Serial Drama and Songs	Hindi Prog.	12:00	Asian Variety Show (Hindi)	Shalom Show (Hbr/Eng)
12:30						12:30		Hineni (Hbr/Eng)
1:30		Pinoy Wrestling (Tag)	Aavitan Kita (Tagalog)	Martin After Dark (Tagalog)	Santa Zita at Mary Rose (Tagalog)	1:30	Aavitan Kita (Tag)	Tele-Italia (Ita)
2:00						2:00		
2:30		TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	2:30	German Prog.	German Prog.
3:00	Inform-TV (Russian)	Inform-TV (Russian)	Inform-TV (Russian)	Inform-TV (Russian)	Inform-TV (Russian)	3:00	German Prog.	German Prog.
3:30	Arabic Drama	Arabic Drama	Arabic Drama	Arabic Drama	Arabic Drama	3:30	Vision of Asia News	German Prog.
4:00	Arabic News	Arabic News	Arabic News	Arabic News	Arabic News	4:00	Sounds Brazilian	Hungary '92
4:30	French News	French News	French News	French News	French News	4:30	Arab-Amer TV (Arabic)	Japanese Drama

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