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# ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education:

Instructional Technology

by

Suzanne Florence Marsolais-Johnson
March 2003

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June 2003

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6/5/03 Date

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### ABSTRACT

According to Higgins, "It has been said that the computer is fast, accurate, and stupid. Humans are slow, inaccurate, and brilliant. When they are able to combine effectively, the results will be unimaginable" (1995, p. 94). This thesis demonstrates the effectiveness of using computer technology and the Internet to enhance classroom teaching. A variety of computer and Internet based projects that complement lessons initiated by the classroom teacher provide real life situations for additional practice, reinforcement, motivation and greater student achievement.

Through the demonstration of these computer based projects and their effectiveness, this thesis aspires to demonstrate the "unimaginable" potential for instructional brilliance when teachers enhance their skills with the resources available through computer technology and the Internet. Further, it will demonstrate how such an alliance between teacher and computer can guide students to a similar alliance, bringing student performance up to an "unimaginable" potential as well.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### CHAPTER ONE

#### BACKGROUND

### Introduction

The revolution in computer technology that marked the second half of the 20th century has greatly affected the realm of teaching. As computers have become prevalent throughout society and the working world, it has become necessary for schools to adjust their curriculum to prepare students for integration into the Age of Computer Technology. Further, such implementation of computer technology into the foreign language classroom will enrich the learning environment with authentic activities that engage the students and increase learning.

## Purpose of the Thesis

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate how computer technology and the Internet provide instructors with a very valuable teaching tool. This tool provides authentic resources and "real life" situations that engage student learners and promote higher achievement. A variety of sample projects (see Appendix A) will show how computers and the Internet make it possible for authentic communication to enter into the classroom. These sample projects will demonstrate the integration of word

processing, PowerPoint, basic web page design, Internet navigation, Internet searches, and email into the foreign language curriculum. They will exemplify the implementation and effectiveness of technology-based lessons.

The foreign language based projects demonstrated in this thesis include a teacher web page (see Appendix B) that links all of the projects together, and encourages student organization and communication with parents. A  $^{\emptyset}$ French café lesson (see Appendix C) introduces students to French culture while familiarizing them with the Internet. A French country report (see Appendix D) hintroduces Internet search techniques and basic web page design, while guiding the student toward understanding the global significance of French culture. An ePALS project (see Appendix E) provides authentic Internet based communication. A Virtual Reality Trip to Paris (see Appendix F) integrates advanced language proficiency, a strong cultural foundation, and more in-depth computer and Internet competency. A web page tutorial (see Appendix G) provides independent demonstration of basic skills required to complete such projects. Internet search tips (see Appendix H) are also provided to assist instructors and students with less experience in this area.

through many methods ranging from cooperative activities and student centered projects, to TPR story telling and the Natural Approach to foreign language acquisition (Ellis, 1984). Such methods emphasize that the lesson should be conducted as much as possible in the target language, and that new content should be taught within the context of "real life" situations. Thus, teachers would demonstrate new concepts by acting out stories, speaking primarily in the target language, and by making use of props and roll-play to provide comprehensible input while engaging the attention of the learner (Krashen & Scarcella, 1980).

Some classrooms also had limited access to computers and French language software. This software, however, was primarily tutorial based used for drill and practice.

Students were not encouraged to create original projects using computers (Becker, 1985). They were not provided with the opportunity to apply their language skills in the authentic environments available through the World Wide Web. They were not guided to explore French culture through the window provided by the Internet. Their language usage remained limited to the boundaries of the foreign language classroom.

# Significance of the Project: Preparing the Classroom of the Future

The classroom of the new millennium continues to have the good fortune of benefiting from the wide variety of valuable techniques and tools already mentioned. Computer technology and the Internet are wonderful additions to these tools. Some advocates of computer technology suggest that it could be used to replace out-dated teaching methods, or even the teacher himself (Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999). The author believes, on the contrary, that the best use of computer technology is not as a teacher replacement, but as a supplement to the many positive methods already used by foreign language teachers. There is no need to "reinvent the wheel," but computers can help us to improve upon it. Skehan points out that "...almost any language teacher will voice the belief that it is the appropriate combination of instructional conditions matched with the appropriate learners that produces success" (1989, p. 134). Computers and the Internet have become much more accessible to teachers and students. They also provide a wide variety of resources appropriate for foreign language students with skills ranging from novice to expert. An alliance between teachers and technology will greatly enhance teaching and student achievement.

The foreign language based projects presented in this thesis demonstrate the effectiveness of such an alliance. Not only do the web pages encourage student organization and communication with parents, the computer based lessons introduce students to French culture while familiarizing them with the Internet, introducing them to Internet search techniques and basic web page design, and guiding them toward understanding the global significance of French culture. These projects progress from basic, beginner computer and language literacy lessons, to those providing authentic Internet based communication which integrate advanced language proficiency, a strong cultural foundation, and more in-depth computer and Internet competency.

## Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the thesis and sample projects:

- The foreign language instructor has a strong teaching foundation and is comfortable using a wide variety of tools and second language teaching methods.
- 2. The class has access to computers that are connected to the Internet, and loaded with a

- word processing program, Microsoft PowerPoint, and a web page composer tool. There should be at least one computer for every two students.
- 3. The instructor has a basic knowledge of word processing, PowerPoint and web page construction.
- 4. The instructor has a basic familiarity with the Internet, the usage of browsers, search engines, and Internet based tools such as ePALS.com

  (2001) and quiz making sites like Quia (2001).
- 5. The French students have a wide variety of backgrounds. The first projects presented require very little fluency in French and may be used with first year students. The final project requires an advanced-intermediate fluency in reading and writing French. Teachers may also require oral fluency if students will be asked to present their completed project to the class.
- 6. Students have basic keyboarding skills, and are familiar with word processing. The projects will increase computer technology skills while enhancing language proficiency and knowledge of French culture.

### Limitations and Delimitations

During the development of the project, a number of limitations and delimitations were noted.

### Limitation

To encourage student interest, many graphics, pictures and sounds were added to the projects presented in this thesis. Such features may require longer upload times for students working on older computers at home. This can cause student frustration, decreasing student motivation and learning.

## Delimitation

To remedy this limitation, it is recommended that a "Quick Download Version" of each web page be provided for students using older computers. This version would include very few graphics and no sound so that pages can be accessed easily and quickly.

### Recommendations

In spite of these limitations, the Internet can provide a very valuable tool to encourage student centered, active, high interest, real life learning activities. To successfully integrate computer technology and the Internet throughout the curriculum, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Teachers and students must have access to technological resources. The teacher must have access to a computer during the preparation period, and the students must have frequent access to computers to complete technology-based projects during class or after school.
- These computers must be connected to the Internet as well as loaded with the software programs required for the completion of the specified project.
- 3. The student computers could be installed in the individual classroom, or in a computer lab to be shared by a number of teachers. However, there must be a sufficient number of computers and labs available so that students can access them as frequently as is required by the specified project. Technology tutorials for instructors and information on grants are available at the University of Wisconsin, Madison web site (2001).
- 4. Before embarking on Internet activities, schools must set up some type of filtering system to protect students from inappropriate material.

- 5. Students must sign "Appropriate Use" forms, and teachers must supervise use of the computers. Chat rooms can connect students to dangerous individuals if this is not monitored.
- 6. Teachers must also clarify copyright guidelines to the students. Just as plagiarism is not acceptable from books and magazines, teachers must assure that students do not plagiarize work posted on web pages.
- 7. Finally, teachers must provide students with guidelines to evaluate Internet sources for content and validity of information.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project.

- Foreign Language Proficiency In this thesis, foreign language proficiency will be defined as the varying ability to use the target language to express knowledge and ideas.
- Foreign Language Learning In this thesis, language learning will refer to any progress made by the learner toward autonomous language proficiency.

- <u>Autonomous Proficiency</u> In this thesis, autonomous proficiency will refer to the ability to think and speak fluently in a language.
- Authentic In this thesis, the term authentic means genuine or real. It will be used specifically to describe cultural environments that are created and maintained by members of the target language and culture. The opposite of authentic environments would be imaginary environments created by the classroom teacher to imitate real-life situations.

# CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

The learning theories upon which education is based have not drastically changed with the implementation of technology. In fact, these theories demonstrate how technology can be used as an excellent auxiliary tool in teaching foreign languages, in encouraging higher level learning and thinking, and in increasing foreign language proficiency. This chapter will outline the essential components of several learning theories as they relate to foreign language learning. The application of computer technology to these theories will also be discussed.

## Language Proficiency Theories

Anderson identifies three stages of language proficiency. In the Cognitive Stage, one uses conscious activity to communicate. Speakers can use short phrases and basic structures that follow grammatical rules. In the Associative Stage, one detects and corrects errors.

Thinking is still done in the native language, but the speaker can use more advanced grammatical structures. In the Autonomous Stage, speaking becomes more automatic and

errors are infrequent. Thinking is done in the second language and speaking becomes subconscious (1985).

Taylor (1988) supports Anderson's theory, describing proficiency as the ability to use knowledge, and defining knowledge as competence. This thesis demonstrates how computer-based projects (see Appendices A-H) support the students in sharing and using their new knowledge in the target language. In this way, they encourage the students to move toward the Autonomous Stage of language proficiency.

The most popular theories in foreign language instruction are language learning and language acquisition. Language learning is the traditional approach whereby students learn the second language through the memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Language acquisition emphasizes that foreign languages are acquired through methods that are used when one learns the first language (Ellis, 1984, 1986, 1990). Both theories provide insight to second language instruction.

In his discussion of language learning, Krashen describes "teacher talk," whereby the instructor uses simplified language within a specific environment. The

teacher is careful to speak using vocabulary familiar to the student, and using simple phrases comprehensible to the second language learner. The teacher presents a limited number of vocabulary words, expressions and structures, informing the learners of the objectives. Each lesson builds upon previous lessons, stimulating recall of prior learning. The lesson is presented within an environment created by the teacher. As the lesson continues, the teacher provides guided practice, elicits responses from the students, and assesses performance (Krashen & Scarcella, 1980.)

For students who benefit from this style of instruction, computer-based projects may be linked to web based tutorials (see Appendices F, G, & H). While these projects are intended to be completed under the guidance of the instructor, students may independently access additional instruction in basic communication structures through these more structured, online presentations. They may do so at their own pace, as they work toward the completion of a particular project.

While many students benefit from such techniques,

Krashen points out potential problems if one over

emphasizes the language learning approach. He states that,

...many classroom exercises, with their emphasis on correctness, often place the student "on the defensive" entailing a heightened "affective filter" which makes them less than ideal for language acquisition. (1988, p. 2)

Krashen's language acquisition approach emphasizes that students acquire a second language through exposure to natural environments and interaction in the target language (Ellis, 1984, 1986, 1990).

In his studies of language acquisition, Krashen noticed that native speakers who communicate with a foreigner use simplified input to accommodate for the foreigner's limited communication skills. Krashen identifies this as "foreigner talk." While the vocabulary may not be limited to that of the second language learner, the native speaker presents the communication within a context, and may rephrase ideas in a simplified manner to enable the foreigner to comprehend (Krashen & Scarcella, 1980). Krashen and Scarcella's study included an American who spent three years studying French and German. He spent ten months living in Vienna, Austria, and one month living in Paris, France. The remainder of his studies were completed in the United States. He received about the same amount of "teacher talk" in both languages, but had a

great deal more "foreigner talk" in German because of his extended stay in Vienna. As a result, he was able to read fairly difficult material in both German and French, and express himself. However, he had a much more difficult time in French with listening comprehension, and had "...less feel for phrasing and finding the right word" (p. 9). His fluency in German was much greater.

The majority of methods used in a second language classroom encourage "teacher talk." Even when students are organized into interactive, cooperative group activities, the speakers in the class have a similar language foundation. This eliminates the possibility of "foreigner talk" (Hatch, 1978). When students are required to use French Internet sites to complete activities, they encounter authentic language that is perhaps beyond their current capabilities. However, because these authentic sites provide their information contextually, and because students have the guidance of the instructor to simplify the language and thus assist comprehension, the Internet can be an ideal setting for "foreigner talk." Therefore, computers and Internet based projects such as those presented in Appendices C, D, E and F provide an ideal setting to combine the benefits of language learning and

language acquisition to enhance second language proficiency.

The projects presented in this thesis use computer technology and the Internet to guide students through authentic experiences using the natural French environments available online. As mentioned above, Krashen and Scarcella (1980) point out that students learning a language within the actual cultural and language environment are more successful than those removed from that context. The projects presented by this thesis bring the student into such actual, authentic cultural and language environments, therefore increasing their opportunity to move toward autonomous language proficiency.

Spolsky's examination of foreign language instruction draws one's attention to four factors that affect the progress toward foreign language proficiency. First each learner possesses a unique level of knowledge and skills at any given moment in the learning process. As a teacher begins a lesson, students each have their own strengths, weaknesses and breadth of knowledge, which continues to develop and change as a result of the learning process. Second, each learner has various ability levels.

Instruction must accommodate a wide variety of student

needs, as each student's capacity and rate of learning differs. Third, affective factors such as personality and motivation also affect the learning process. The students each have their own interests, attitudes and prior experiences that effect their responses to instruction. Finally, various learning opportunities affect the resulting proficiency level. Some students have supportive family environments and access to computer technology, while others face stressful situations at home with limited access to instructional resources. Some students benefit from relatives with whom they may practice the target language, while others have nobody to assist them with homework (Spolsky, 1988).

Computer-based projects strongly compliment Spolsky's four learning factors. First, the wide variety of authentic experiences provided through these projects are more likely to trigger prior knowledge and skills.

Further, these Internet experiences call upon the learner to use that prior knowledge in order to problem solve and complete each assignment. Second, the web-based tutorials allow students to work at their own ability levels, and to learn individually any required concepts that they may be lacking (Merrill, 1996). Third, students are highly motivated by computers and the Internet, and the wide

variety of web sites are likely to provide resources that correspond to their individual interests. As Spolsky (1988) points out, student motivation is directly related to student achievement and proficiency level. Finally, the Internet provides a great variety of learning opportunities for each foreign language student. Computer labs open before and after school make these environments and resources available to all students.

Ellis (1990) points out that the language acquisition theory assumes adults learn a second language in the same way as a child learns the first language. He states that it is probably more accurate to claim that they have features in common. The author agrees with Ellis. When children learn a first language, they have no preconceived notions about communication, or pre-established habits in expressing their ideas through language. Adults, however, have been trained to express their ideas within the parameters of a primary language, its structures, syntax and idiomatic expressions. While some of the techniques used to teach children a first language may be beneficial to adults learning a second language, it must be recognized that the adult learner must also experience retraining. The adult second language learners must be re-taught to express ideas using structures and syntax

that may contradict those of their primary language. For example, a native French speaker who has learned the language necessary to express an idea, may still rely on the correct French grammar with which he is comfortable. This would encourage him to say, "I have hunger. Give me an apple red, if it please you." The further developed the students' primary language experiences before they are exposed to a second language, the more retraining they will need to feel comfortable expressing themselves outside of the grammatical parameters of their first language.

It is the author's belief that the most successful approach to foreign language instruction is to incorporate a wide variety of techniques and theories. In this way, the teacher is more likely to meet the wide variety of student needs inherent in the American classroom. The Internet is the doorway to a vast array of tutorials, projects and authentic web sites that address a wide variety of student learning styles in a highly motivating and authentic environment. Computer-based projects are the teacher's key to opening that door.

# Cognitive Learning Theory

Ausubel and Gagne both support the Cognitive Learning Theory, proclaiming that new ideas and concepts must be "potentially meaningful" to the learner. Ausubel explains that anchoring new concepts into the learner's already existing cognitive structure will make the new concepts recallable (Grabe & Grabe, 2000). His explanation of cognitive learning is known as the "subsumption theory."

According to Ausubel, learning is based upon the kinds of super ordinate, representational, and combinatorial processes that occur during the reception of information. A primary process in learning is subsumption in which new material is related to relevant ideas in the existing cognitive structure on a substantive, non-verbatim basis.

Cognitive structures represent the residue of all learning experiences; forgetting occurs because certain details get integrated and lose their individual identity (Kearsley, 2003).

Ausubel describes the processes of receiving information. He emphasizes that new concepts are relevant to the learner when they relate to previously learned concepts. He emphasizes that learning comes about when the student restructures his previously learned cognitive

awareness, rather than creating new cognitive structures (Ausubel, Novak, & Hanesian, 1978).

In Gagne's explanation of the cognitive learning theory, he discusses different types or levels of learning. Different teaching situations are necessary for each level of learning, and students must be given the opportunity to practice as they learn. He outlines nine instructional events and corresponding cognitive processes:

- 1 gaining attention (reception)
- 2 informing learners of the objective (expectancy)
- 3 stimulating recall of prior learning (retrieval)
- 4 presenting the stimulus (selective perception)
- 5 providing learning guidance (semantic encoding)
- 6 eliciting performance (responding)
- 7 providing feedback (reinforcement)
- 8 assessing performance (retrieval)
- 9 enhancing retention and transfer
  [generalization] (Kearsley, 2001).

Gagne's interpretation of the Cognitive Learning Theory emphasizes that skills should be stated as performance objectives, and that assessment should be done through task analysis (Grabe & Grabe, 2000).

B. F. Skinner took Gagne's Cognitive Learning Theory, and emphasized the importance of goals and objectives to create the Behaviorist approach to education. However, his ideas focused assessment practices on measurement of knowledge and skills, with little emphasis on performance and understanding. Further development of the cognitive theory led back to a stronger emphasis on the learning process.

Since the late 1980s, however, researchers have been building an understanding of learning that grows out of cognitive and developmental psychology. The key notion in this new "constructivist theory" is that people learn best by actively constructing their own understanding (NCRL; Constructivist Model for Learning web site, 2002).

Thus, while Skinner's emphasis clarified the cognitive concept of goals and objectives, the constructivists brought back the emphasis on task analysis (Learning Styles and CAE web site, 2000).

Jonassen, Peck, and Wilson are constructivists who also support the cognitive theory, expanding these concepts to the usage of computers and the Internet. They point out that technology must be meaningful to the students, engaging them in the lesson. They suggest that,

"Memorized information is meaningless unless attached to context or use" (1999, p. 4). They demonstrate how technology successfully compliments the Cognitive Learning Theory:

- Technology is more than hardware. Technology consists of the designs and the environments that engage learners. Technology can also consist of any reliable technique or method for engaging learning, such as cognitive learning strategies and critical thinking skills.
- Learning technologies can be any environment or definable set of activities that engage learners in active, constructive, intentional, authentic, and cooperative learning. (Jonassen et al., p. 12)

According to these cognitive theorists, technology is more than just computers, software and the Internet. It is the process of using them as authentic environments through which students build upon pre-existing concepts to create something original, while increasing their level of knowledge.

This thesis presents contextualized group projects that complement these theories by using the environments provided by computers and the Internet. Research projects

are a valuable method to center the learning around the student, and to encourage him to apply what he already knows to the new material in the creation of his project. In an Internet project (see Appendices B & D), information may be taken from sites that are more up to date than encyclopedias and books published several years earlier. Graphics, video and sound may also be available to bring the culture to life (Merrill, 1996). Further examples of projects integrating computer technology and the constructivist approach to the cognitive theory may be found at the University of Alabama web site (2001).

The theorists Ausubel, Gagne, Skinner, and Jonassen, all agree that lessons should engage the learners in meaningful activities that build upon pre-existing knowledge. These cognitive theorists declare that technologies should not simply convey information nor control all of the learner's actions. Instead, they should fulfill a learning need. They should be "intellectual tool kits that enable students to build more meaningful personal interpretations and representations of the world" (Jonassen et al., p. 13). They should be learner initiated and learner controlled. These cognitive theorists confirm some of the ideas presented by the language learning and language acquisition theorists. They agree that

contextualized learning improves the opportunity for students to increase learning, and thus improves their foreign language proficiency skills. They add the idea of performance based objectives and task analysis to the learning process.

## Environmental Learning Theories

Ellis (1986) demonstrates the importance of contextualized, interactive activities by comparing two types of learning results. He says that the multitude of learning strategies result in two types of linguistic products: formulaic speech and creative speech. In formulaic speech, expressions are learned and used in specific circumstances. For example, classroom simulations or quizzes require students to demonstrate proficiency with a specific set of vocabulary, expressions and structures. In creative speech, Ellis goes on to explain that the learner is able to produce entirely new sentences based on rules of the system. In an authentic environment, there are no limits to the language that may be encountered by the student. Because the student's objective is to understand and in turn, be understood, he is forced to use environmental cues when faced with language he has not previously learned. To express

himself, he must creatively manipulate previously learned vocabulary and grammatical structures in a culturally appropriate manner that will be understood by the native speaker (Ellis, 1986). Therefore, the student's ultimate goal is to pass beyond formulaic speech proficiency, and achieve creative speech fluency.

Spolsky (1988) agrees that the learning environment greatly affects the learning result. In the classroom environment, students use fewer strategies than in a natural environment. If the teaching objective is correct language usage rather than language fluency, the students' usage may be limited further (Ellis, 1986). Ellis adds that classroom learning has a smaller sociolinguistic domain than naturalistic settings (1990). Piranian (1979) confirms Ellis' theory with his findings that American university students learning Russian depend more on avoidance, while students with natural exposure use paraphrases.

The Internet offers situations that are not like real life, they are real life. Students may access real-time data such as current weather statistics, live video feeds, and streaming audio and video from French speaking sites around the world. The World Wide Web is very successful because it integrates multimedia (text/video/sound) and

hypermedia [links to move from site to site] (Merrill, 1996). It is not linear like textbooks. Because of this flexibility, students may explore and modify their project as it unfolds. They are forced to adapt, to select paths, and to adjust their strategies in order to meet the criteria of a given project (Grabe & Grabe, 2000). These are all important elements to both the environmental and cognitive learning theories.

## Sociocultural Learning Theories

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning moves beyond the Environmental Theory, stressing the importance of understanding the cultural environment. Sociocultural Learning emphasizes teaching about the country, culture and civilization associated with the language (Kearsley, 2002). Byram, an advocate of Vygotsky's theory, defines culture as "...that part of foreign language teaching which conveys information, attitudes, images and perhaps even prejudice about the people and countries where the particular language is spoken" (1988, p. 1). He claims that teachers traditionally see this as background or context, giving it low priority. Byram believes that cultural studies are an integral component of learning, and that words in each language refer to meanings in a

particular culture (Byram, 1988). Students must understand that gestures, vocal intonations and literal translations of words and expressions from their native culture's language may convey an entirely different meaning in the language of another culture.

Bruner (1990) calls this link between language and culture, "meaning making." Cultural information is not retained or fully understood by the student if it is too unlike the familiar realizations of the native culture. However, direct experience may not lead to understanding unless it is accompanied by interpretation and explanation (Byram, 1988). Stauble (1980) confirms this theory, suggesting that it is not only necessary to adjust one's cultural habits, but also to learn the appropriate linguistic habits to communicate in the target language. She suggests that the "process of acculturation" combines social and psychological adaptation. This acculturation involves not only learning the language, but also the beliefs, attitudes, values, and other behavioral patterns inherent in the sociocultural environment (Krashen & Scarcella, 1980). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory incorporates language learning with cultural understanding through the emphasis of interactive cultural activities (Kearsley, 2002).

Vygotsky declares that cognitive gain occurs first through interpersonal activity, then through intrapersonal activities within the cultural environment. In this way, his theory emphasizes the importance of group activities (Grabe & Grabe, 2000). Ellis also applies the importance of group activities to second language development. He suggests that the proficiency of students "...grows out of the interactions they take part in" (1984, p. 84). The transformation from classroom to naturalistic environments occurs when the interaction transforms from input to discourse, from lecture to interactive learning.

Proficiency increases when the learner has the opportunities to modify and extend his language system through interaction (Ellis, 1984).

Through interaction with other group members, students are forced to put their prior cognitive abilities to use. Further, they benefit from the knowledge contributed by the other group members. This interaction presents a more natural social environment than the traditional classroom lecture format. Therefore, it better prepares students for "real world" social environments. Finally, the students learn more about themselves and the effects their actions have on those around them as their attitudes and prejudices are revealed through their

interactions. This encourages intraspection, the ultimate step to cognitive gain in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning (Kearsley, 2002).

Students may deepen their understanding of the target culture by exploring foreign web sites (see Appendices C & F). Such sites are inherently embedded with the beliefs, attitudes, values and behavioral patterns of the target culture. Through the exploration of such authentic environments, the students begin the "acculturation" process toward social and psychological adaptation as suggested by Stauble. The guidance from the teacher throughout the project provides the "meaning making" emphasized by Bruner.

The Internet also provides a wide variety of interactive learning environments. An example of online discourse is the ePALS project (see Appendix E) which makes use of the ePALS.com web site. Through e-mail and online bulletin boards, French students can correspond with "ePALS," pen pals through email. In this way they may participate in idea sharing, passing along information, and expressing and sharing feelings with native French speakers. This type of asynchronous communication (messages sent and received at different times) is convenient when working with foreign students from another

time zone. Students can interact with native speakers through the classroom computer, without traveling to France. This enables participation in discussions between students from different cultures. Students have more time to respond, and they do not feel rushed, which lowers the affective filter and increases learning potential (Merrill, 1996). It also allows students to reflect on their messages and proofread them before sending them. As a result of the ePALS Project presented in Appendix E, it was noted that students were much more likely to carefully proofread their work if it was going to be read by another student, particularly a native French speaker. Further, students expressed surprise when their French correspondents questioned their attitudes about some topics, and expressed ideas very different from those of the American students, which led them further toward intraspection.

Addressing National Content Standards

Current trends in education encourage the

implementation of curriculum driven by local, state and

national standards. Briefly, the national standards for

foreign language (see Appendix I) declare that students

will become proficient in oral and written language, and

capable of expressing ideas in the foreign culture (standards 1, 2, 3, 8). As explained previously, computer-based projects and the Internet provide an excellent tool and environment for meeting these objectives. While using French in authentic environments (see Appendices C, E, & F), students deepen their understanding of French culture (standards 4, 5, 7, 9).

Reinforcing and furthering the student's knowledge of other disciplines addresses standard 6 of the National French content standards. Math and science enter into the Virtual Reality Trip to Paris Project (see Appendix F) as students discuss actual weather reports and convert temperatures from centigrade to Fahrenheit using Internet weather sites. History and social studies also enter this project as students discuss Parisian museums and monuments. Geography is one of the many disciplines reinforced in the French Country report (see Appendix D). Using computer-based projects enables students to learn and reinforce computer skills.

Standard 5 expects students to understand the culture's products and economy. The French Café Project (see Appendix C) and the Virtual Reality Trip to Paris (see Appendix F) provide opportunities for students to participate in various industries such as French travel,

restaurant, hotel, art and many others. Standard 10 expects students to use the target language beyond the school setting. The Internet provides a window for students to visit a museum in Paris (see Appendix F), converse with a French student (see Appendix E) or experience a French Café (see Appendix C). Becoming life-long learners and preparing to achieve career goals are expectations of standards 11 and 12. The Internet provides a starting point from which students may embark on adventures of their own long after the completion of a specific project.

French content standards specify that students must learn more than grammar and vocabulary in a French classroom. The goal is for them to reach a level of fluency whereby they can successfully communicate with someone from a French speaking country. They must be sensitive to cultural differences. They must be capable of expressing ideas, feelings and opinions on a wide variety of topics in a spontaneous manner. The vast resources available through the Internet provide a valuable opportunity for teachers and students to achieve these goals.

## Summary

The Cognitive, Environmental and Sociocultural

Learning Theories all support the idea that one learns

through authentic, realistic activities. While each of

these theories take on a slightly different emphasis, each

can be easily linked with the implementation of computer

technology and the Internet into foreign language

instruction. Education cannot be limited to the

memorization of facts. The ability to apply information

and skills within a variety of settings is essential for

students to become active members in society. The ability

to utilize language in a variety of cultural settings is

essential for autonomous language proficiency.

Computers and the Internet provide a variety of tools that are ideally suited for group activities as well as interpersonal communication. The Internet also provides a variety of authentic, cultural environments. Current learning theories confirm the value of such tools in second language learning. Because technology has become an integral part of society, the integration of technology must become an integral part of our curriculum throughout the content areas (Grabe & Grabe, 2000).

#### CHAPTER THREE

#### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Murrieta Valley Unified School District (where the author of this thesis is employed as a French teacher) placed a computer connected to the Internet into each teacher's classroom during the 1998-1999 school year. A French II student, Zachary Cadenhead, offered to make a French web page as part of a web page design assignment for a computers class in which he was concurrently enrolled. He took his French class notes and the lesson plans the author had saved on a word processing program, and recreated them into a web site. He provided links to class information and assignments for each level of French. As the author noticed that more and more students were using this site to access class notes and assignments, the author asked Zach to teach her the basic components of Netscape Composer. He came to the classroom during lunch and provided the French teacher with the basic information necessary to maintain and build upon the French web site, and to download it to the district server.

The following year the author enrolled in the California State University, San Bernardino Master's Degree Program. She had been so inspired by the increased motivation of students using Zach's French web page that she decided to pursue the concentration in Instructional Technology. As a result, the author learned to upgrade her web site and to develop a wide variety of computer-based projects. Five of these projects are presented in this thesis.

This chapter describes the methods used to develop computer-based projects that enhance foreign language proficiency. The five projects discussed were developed and conducted with several sample student groups to demonstrate their functionality. The five projects presented by this thesis are:

- 1 Teacher Web Site: organizing a course and encouraging communication
- The French Café: an introduction to the Internet and French culture
- 3 French Country Report: web page basics and French cultural diversity
- 4 ePALS: authentic Internet based communication
- 5 A Virtual Reality Trip to Paris: the ultimate web quest

The specific methods for the development of each project will be described in this chapter.

## General Development

While the development of each project was in many ways unique, all of the projects were created using computer technology and Internet resources. This section provides a general outline of the methods and development used to create these computer-based projects. These generalized methods are intended as a model for other foreign language instructors who may wish to create their own Internet based projects, or modify these to meet their individual needs.

## Population Served

The computer-based projects were divided into lessons for target students who were enrolled in high school French. The first lessons require very little experience with computers, French language or culture. They were conducted with beginning students and used to promote cultural awareness through contextualized learning.

The level of difficulty increases with each project.

The last project requires that students have at least a primary proficiency level (Anderson's "associative stage"), and are capable of expressing basic and

moderately detailed ideas in French. This project was conducted with a group of advanced intermediate students familiar with the présent, the futur proche, the passé composé and the imparfait. The computer-based component to this unit gives directions in French, so students needed an intermediate level of French reading comprehension. No previous experience with computers was necessary as both the instructor and student group members assisted students with limited expertise. Students worked simultaneously with a classroom unit that included prepositions, grammar and vocabulary taught within the context of Parisian culture.

## Resources and Content Validation

The five computer-based projects were created by the instructor using PowerPoint, Netscape Composer, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Paint and Inspiration. A File Transfer Protocol program (FTP) was used to download each completed project to the district server to make it accessible to students in the classroom, in the computer lab, and at home through the Internet. Finally, information, pictures, graphics, sound and backgrounds were taken from the following resources available on the Internet: 3D Flags, Altavista, Angelfire, Animation Factory, Animation Station, Barry's Clip Art, Clipart.Com, Cool Archive, Cool

Graphics, Dogpile, ePALS, Euro Home Page, Flaming Text,
Free Backgrounds, Google, Grapholina, Harry the Cat,
Hotbot, Hotmail, Le Louvre Home Page, Les Pages de Paris,
Lycos, Media Builder, Modern History Sourcebook, Monaie de
Paris, Notre Dame de Paris, Overture, Pacbell, Paris sur
Web, Power Backs, Présidence de la République, Quia,
Surfette's Pages for Teachers, Tennessee Bob's Famous
French Links, Warner Brothers Home Page, Web Page
Resources, and Yahoo (complete details are listed in

Each project required the integration of content and culture learned in the classroom with content and cultural contexts available on the Internet. The computer-based lessons addressed National French Content Standards (see Appendix I). Further, the learning theories presented in Chapter Two were combined and integrated into the creation of each computer-based lesson.

## The Internet as a Research Tool

The Internet is a very valuable multi-media research tool. In order to assure that students benefited from this resource, accommodations were made for the three categories of multimedia learners:

The Knowledge Seekers that stick to their goals, and examine information carefully.

- The Feature Explorers that are easily distracted by special effects.
- 3 The Apathetic Users who spend limited time searching, and move rapidly through material in a linear fashion (Grabe & Grabe, 2000).

Because of the huge quantity of information available on the web, all three types of multimedia users could have easily become overwhelmed and distracted as they surfed the web. For this reason a variety of techniques were used to guide students through their inquiry as they worked on web based research projects.

Scaffolding through web quests was one method used to guide students through the Internet research projects. In this case the teacher provided specific web sites students could use, and a specific outline detailing what information the students were required to find (see Appendices B, C, E, & F). This was a positive way to allow students to get their feet wet in the Internet, before diving in to surf the web through search engines.

Understanding "search engines" was another key to student survival in this journey through the Internet.

Learning to use these online reference tools kept the student researchers from drowning beneath giant waves of erroneous information. Search engines are online services

that help retrieve information. The best search engine catalogues only about one third of the total web pages available. By using a variety of search engines, students were able to gather much more information.

A list of search engine links appeared to facilitate the process for the researcher (see Appendices D & F).

Once at a search engine site, students browsed through a variety of categories or menus to narrow the search. At any time, the researchers were able to type in key words and press enter. At this point, the search engine hunted through all of the computers online to find any page containing these key words. This list could have appeared as a 15-foot tidal wave to the novice web surfer. To avoid confronting such intimidation, students were taught to use categories, menus, and Boolean Searches to narrow the search, and significantly reduce the size of this wave of information (see Appendix H).

Teacher Web Site: Organizing a Course and Encouraging Communication

### Overview

Student Ability Level: all

The Teacher Web Site Project (see Appendices A & B) is a site that enables parents and students to communicate with the teacher, and to keep current of course content,

expectations and assignments. This site provides general information to parents, as well as links to specific lessons, notes and assignments. Students can access this information from home to obtain missed assignments and notes when they are absent if they have a computer connected to the Internet. Links are also provided to encourage two-way email communication between the teacher and the parents or students.

The site's hyperlinks to other French web sites encourage students to use their knowledge of French for personal enjoyment and enrichment by listening to an online French radio station, or reading a French teen magazine (standard 11, Appendix I). Some sites expose students to industries and careers available to people proficient in French (standard 12, Appendix I). Further, Internet based projects are posted to this site so that students may have the opportunity to work on them from home, devoting more time to the development of their presentations. While the projects would be initiated in a school computer lab under teacher guidance, students could be encouraged to continue working on them during their own time, at their own pace, independently as well as in groups.

The French web site includes links to:

Assignments: daily assignments and the lessons, notes, vocabulary, and songs they may need to complete them.

Syllabi: a specific syllabus for each French course. Expectations: general for all levels.

Email Link: a shortcut link that opens an email message pre-addressed to the teacher.

Meet la Prof: introductory information about the instructor including mission statement, teaching philosophy, teaching strategies, rational for using computers, educational background, and personal information.

French Links: hyperlinks to online French tutorials, other instructional sites, and authentic French web sites.

Navigation Buttons: links to the high school and district home pages, as well as to the pages mentioned above.

Additional Links: links to other French sites, to the French Content Standards, and to technology-based projects.

# Specific Development

The Teacher Web Site Project developed from the web page that had been created by Zachary Cadenhead. The

original site contained all of the menus the author had requested on one, long web page. According to Mr. John Ruttner, instructor of Educational Technology 691, spring quarter, 2001, Internet users do not like excessive scrolling. The author did an informal pole of students that confirmed his theory, so the author decided to break up the original page into a number of subdirectories. Mr. Kenneth Decroo, instructor of Educational Technology 500, fall quarter, 2001, points out the importance of a mission statement. The "Meet the Teacher" portion of this project developed from this idea, and from projects assigned in the Educational Technology 500 course.

To break up the original page, the author saved the file with three different names. The author uploaded the fleur de lis background from the Internet and used the Netscape Composer background menu to attach it to each page. The author used an Internet search engine to find a wave file of the French national anthem, which the author then uploaded to the computer web page file from the Modern History Source Book at fordham.edu. The background menu from the Front Page web page development program provided the option to add this sound wave to the background.

The author used the table tool in the Netscape Composer web page development program to create several tables with three columns on each page. This provided more flexibility for the arrangement of headings, graphics, pictures and buttons. The author created the headings by pasting the fleur de lis background onto a Microsoft Paint file. Then the author used the Word Art tool in Microsoft Word to create the headings for each page, and copied and pasted them on top of the Microsoft Paint fleur de lis file. The author saved this file and inserted it into the center column of the table at the top of each page. The author uploaded the waving French flag graphic from Tennessee Bob's web site, and inserted one into each of the outside columns in the heading table. The author provided a hyperlink to his web site on the French Links page.

To create the navigation buttons that bring the Internet visitor from page to page, the author used Flamingtext.com. This online tool allows one to type the French label for each button selected, and to upload them into the web page file. The author again used tables to space these buttons on the page, and used the Netscape Composer link tools to create them into hyperlinks.

To make the site more interesting to the web surfer, and to encourage cultural awareness, the author used a search engine to find photographs of Parisian monuments, uploaded them into the web page file from various web sites, and inserted them into the tables using the Netscape Composer insert menu. The author sited the source of each photograph used, and created the picture and the reference into a hyperlink back to the Internet site of origination using the Composer link tools.

The author used the Netscape Composer editing tools to type the remainder of the information onto the page, and to customize the font styles and sizes. The author used the Composer character tools to insert accents where necessary. Throughout the creation process, the author did informal interviews with students regarding the appearance and usefulness of the site. Finally, the author uploaded an animated graphic from another Internet site and inserted it at the bottom of the page to make it more interesting to students. The methods outlined here apply to each of the remaining web pages that make up this project. The author added a table at the bottom of each subsequent page with links to make it easier for the students to navigate throughout the site.

For the syllabi, each of the documents had previously been composed using Microsoft Word. The author opened the files and then saved them as web pages. The author added a different background for each syllabus using those available in the Word program, and those uploaded from Freebacks.com. The author modified the font size and style to be more appropriate for a web page, and added a navigation link at the bottom taking the web surfer back to the home page.

The course expectations had also been composed previously as a Word document. In addition to saving this document as a web page, adding a background and reformatting the font, the author added several graphics to increase the viewer appeal. Further, the author inserted targets and links using Netscape Composer tools so that users could skip around within the document to the specific details in question. Finally the author added another photograph of a Parisian monument and hyper linked to its source. This provided consistency with the other pages in the project, while further encouraging cultural awareness.

Some of the components to this project were very simple. For example, to create the "email Madame" shortcut, the author used the Netscape Composer link tool

and typed "mailto:" followed by the email address. The

French Sites page is a copy of the previous pages with a

series of hyperlinks listed in a table. The web sites

listed were discovered during search engine hunts,

referred by students, parents and friends, and provided in

the high school French textbook teacher's manual.

The "Meet the Teacher" pages were also very quick to create. The author used a black background with red headings as they are the high school colors. Once the author created the tables, links and hyperlinks, the file was saved with several new names. Each page that followed was simply a copy that the author modified. In this way, it was not necessary to repeat the work for each subsequent page.

The author added family photographs to personalize the web site. The pictures were taken on a traditional 35-millimeter camera. The developed prints were scanned into the computer, and then inserted into the web pages. While providing a personal look at the instructor, the "Ma Famille" page also serves as an example for students working on a family unit conducted during French II. Although that unit is not presented in this thesis, the example provided here can serve as a model for other French instructors wishing to use the idea.

Finally, the author linked the assignments button to another menu page where the student may select his level of French. The level 1 button provides an example of what a student would find on this page. The author provided links to notes, vocabulary lists, and to the assignments in each chapter with the dates of study as well. On each page, the author provided more links to specific grammar notes and actual vocabulary lists. The author used a table to create an interactive calendar which links the student to assignments and notes for that day. Computer-based projects would be posted on the appropriate calendar day as well.

## Objectives

- Students will demonstrate organizational skills by using the Teacher Web Page to keep the French notebook up to date with all assignments, notes and vocabulary.
- Students will demonstrate positive study skills by using the Teacher Web Page to keep track of daily assignments on an assignment sheet.
- The student will demonstrate the use of the target language beyond the school setting by using the links provided on the Teacher Web Page to complete assignments (standard 10).

- The student will use the target language for personal enjoyment by using the links provided on the Teacher Web Page to complete a scavenger hunt (standard 11).
- The students will explore career possibilities relating to fluency in the target language by using the links provided on the Teacher Web Page to complete a scavenger hunt (Standard 12).

## Implementation

Students were given the web address of the Teacher Web Site the first day of school when the teacher provided the course overview. The web address was written on the general information handout provided on the first day as well. This handout was to be read and signed by the parents and returned, so that the teacher had verification that the parents received the web address. The teacher modeled the use and navigation of the web site during class regularly, and during Back to School Night for the parents.

The instructor conducted periodic notebook checks.

Students missing notes or vocabulary lists were guided through the web site and assisted in printing out the missing materials to add to the French notebook. Students

with excused absences were guided to the web site for missing assignments and class notes.

Early in the school year, students were taken to the computer lab where they were guided through the links and hyperlinks provided on the Teacher Web Site. They were required to click onto each of the links, visit the corresponding Internet sites, and write the names of the sites that they found most interesting and why. Extra credit was offered if the student found a French web site that was not provided by the teacher (Two sites were submitted and later added to the French Links page). The students were also required to name three careers one could pursue if bilingual in English and French. They were encouraged to use the information provided on the Internet sites to find their responses. They were assisted in using Microsoft Word to compose their assignments.

The French Café: Introduction to the Internet

### Overview

Student Ability Level: beginner

The Café PowerPoint lesson (see Appendices A and C) exposes new students to French culture through a virtual reality visit of a French café (standards 3, 5, 7, 9, & 10). Students also learn basic computer and Internet

terminology, and basic Internet navigation skills (standard 6). This information is presented within the context of a virtual reality field trip to a French café where students learn the differences between French cafés and American restaurants, and discuss different customs such as eating habits.

## Specific Development

This project began when the author stumbled across the paris.org web site while searching for French sites to share with students. The author was lured in by the beautiful photographs and remained to read the fascinating histories of each café that connect them to famous people and historical movements in France. The author read through several of these web pages and created a few questions for the students to spark their curiosity, and encourage them to thoroughly investigate the site.

The author used Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft
Paint to create the Café Lesson (see Appendix C). The
background and many of the graphics were selected from the
Microsoft PowerPoint menus. The author uploaded several
pictures from the paris.org web pages and inserted a
hyperlink to this site using the PowerPoint slide show
drop down menu.

To create visuals of the various screens showing the menu, tool and task bars several steps were followed.

First the author opened Microsoft Word, as this was the program the students would be required to use. Then the author pressed the "Print Screen" button on the keyboard.

Next the author opened Microsoft Paint. In the "image" drop down menu the author set the "attributes" to .50 inches tall and wide. The author clicked the "select" tool, then right clicked over the blank square, and clicked "paste." The document size automatically enlarged to accommodate the image. In this way no white space remained around the picture.

The author used the paint tools to cut out the section of the image the author wanted to use, and then opened a new Paint page. After modifying the attributes to .50 inches wide and tall, the author pasted the selected image onto the blank page. Again, the size automatically enlarged to accommodate the size of the image. The author gave the visual a name and saved it in the Café PowerPoint folder.

The author inserted these visuals in the same way as other pictures or graphics using the PowerPoint tools. Finally, the author used the "autoshapes" menu to create red arrows, and used the "custom animation" tool in the

"slide show" menu so that arrows would fly to the focal point, drawing the viewer's attention to important elements. Once completed, the author saved the PowerPoint Café lesson in the web page folder, and linked to it from the Teacher Web Page.

## Objectives

- The student will demonstrate the use of the target language beyond the school setting by navigating an authentic French web site (standard 10).
- The student will demonstrate the ability to use the target language to gather information from an authentic French web site (standard 1).
- The student will demonstrate basic computer skills by navigating Internet web sites, presenting an assignment on a word processing document, and maneuvering between the Internet browser and the word processing program (standard 6).
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the French culture by comparing

a French café to an American restaurant (standards 4 and 9).

• The student will use the target language for personal enjoyment (standard 11).

## Implementation

The French Café PowerPoint was posted to an Internet server, and a link was provided from the teacher web page. Students were taken to the school computer lab and guided through the PowerPoint introduction. The teacher modeled navigation techniques using an LCD projector while the students navigated through the links on their individual computers. The teacher also modeled minimizing and reducing the sizes of windows, and methods for operating a browser and a word processing program simultaneously. The students were then provided with independent lab time to complete the assignment while the teacher provided individual assistance as needed (see Appendices A & C for complete details of the assignment).

French Country Report: Web Page Basics

Student Ability Level: beginner

Overview

The French Country Report (see Appendices A & D) requires students to use the Internet as a research tool.

With a partner, each pair of students selects a different French speaking country. The pair uses search engines and links provided by the teacher to prepare a report about the country. Students must include information about any fifteen of the twenty items outlined by the teacher.

Through the examination of different countries, and observing pictures of people, landmarks and landscapes, students develop an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied (standard 4). Examining the country's economy, government, religions and customs further helps students to understand the viewpoints of its people (standards 4, 5, 7, 9 & 12). Using the Internet to find information about foreign countries takes students outside of the school setting to authentic, foreign web pages (standard 10). Through the production of a computer-based report, students reinforce and further their knowledge of disciplines such as computers, artistic design, and journalistic layout, while studying French culture (standard 6).

## Specific Development

Foreign language instructors have used the French Country Report for years. Its transformation into a web page development project resulted from studies of the

cognitivist learning theory, and the author's love for web page design.

The author created this project using Netscape

Composer and Internet web building sites. The author

uploaded the background and the revolving globe from

angelfire.com. The author uploaded the waving flag

graphics from 3dflags.com and provided a hyperlink to this

web site at the bottom of the page. The author used the

Netscape Composer format menu to attach the background and

graphics to the page, and to select normal text and link

text colors and fonts.

The layout of these pages is based upon a series of tables within tables. This provided more flexibility for the arrangement of headings, graphics, pictures and directions. The author used the Netscape Composer tool to create four tables. The first table was centered at the top of the page with one row and three columns spreading across eighty percent of the page. The first and third columns occupied 20 percent of the table width each. The middle column occupied the remaining sixty percent of the table width. The page title was centered in the large, center cell. A copy of the revolving globe was inserted into the two outside cells. The author included no cell or

table borders so that the table is invisible when viewed on the Internet.

The author typed a subheading in the center of the page under the first table. Beneath this subheading, the author centered the second table with five rows and four columns spreading across the entire page. In the top and bottom rows, the author inserted the graphic of a flag from a francophone country into each cell. In the second, third and fourth rows, the author deleted the third cell, and made the second cell two columns wide. The author inserted a flag into the first and last cell in each of these rows.

In the second row, the author typed the first two directions. Under these directions, the author inserted another table. Thus, the author had a table within a table. The new table had one row and three columns. The author used the Composer table menu to format a 3-pixel borderline width to give it the look of navigation buttons. Within each cell the author added a hyperlink to a search engine, thus providing "scaffolding" for the less confident Internet users. As the author conducted this project with students, several of them provided the names of additional search engines. They were added to the site

by inserting another row to this interior table, and links were provided to these search engines as well.

In the third row the author typed the next five directions into the middle cell. Then the author typed the heading for the list that appears in the fourth row. In the next row the author again inserted a table within a table. In the middle cell the author inserted a table without borders, with one row and two columns. In this way the author was able to list the items to be included in the report in two columns. Beneath this table the author provided a link to the second web page.

The author placed the fourth table at the bottom of the page. This table contained one row and three columns. Formatting a 3-pixel borderline again by using the Composer table menu gave it the look of navigation buttons. The insertion of links made it easier for the students to navigate out of the site.

Finally, the author used the Netscape Composer editing tools to type the directions onto the page, and to customize the font styles and sizes. The author used the Composer character tools to insert accents where necessary.

The second web page was done in the same way. Only the fourth row makes use of the table within a table

approach. The author provided links from this page back to the first page, and also to the PowerPoint tutorial on web page design.

The author used Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Paint to create the Web Page Tutorial (see Appendices A & G). The background and many of the graphics were selected from the Microsoft PowerPoint menus. To create visuals of the various screens showing drop down menus and tool bars the author followed the same steps mentioned in the Café PowerPoint Lesson. Once completed, the author saved the PowerPoint Web Page Tutorial in the web page folder, and linked to it from the Country Report web page.

# Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of French culture by comparing the standard of living and economy of the United States with that of a francophone country (Standards 5 & 8).
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of culture through the comparison of the general culture of the United States with that of a francophone country (Standards 1, 8, & 9).

- Students will reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the comparison of the climate and geography of the United States with that of a francophone country. They will also point out the affect these differences have on the attire and customs of the target culture (Standards 1, 6, & 8).
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the target culture by recognizing several distinctive symbols from a francophone country including the flag, national crest, national monuments or national anthem and discussing their significance to the target people (Standards 1, 4, 7, & 9).
- Students will acquire information and demonstrate that language is not the only factor that distinguishes one country from another, further demonstrating that they recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through foreign cultures (Standards 1, 4, 7, & 9).

- Students will reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines by typing a report using a word processing program, and by creating a web page report of a francophone country (Standards 3, 6, & 12).
- Students will use the target language beyond the school setting by using search engines and the Internet to obtain information about a francophone country (Standards 6, 10, & 12).

## Implementation

At the beginning of the first phase of this project, students were taken to the school computer lab and guided through the project criteria that were posted to the Teacher Web Site. The teacher also demonstrated the use of search engines and various methods for limiting searches (see Appendix H: Internet Research Tips). The students were then provided with the remainder of the hour, and an additional hour during the next class period, to gather the information they needed for their report. The first due date was one week after the project was assigned so that students could continue working independently as needed. At the end of this time, each pair turned in a printout of their report typed in a word processing program, and a copy saved on a computer disk.

Once the instructor had reviewed all of the first phase reports, the students returned to the computer lab where the teacher returned the computer disks and the printouts with any corrections necessary to the students. At the beginning of the second phase, the teacher guided the students through the web page PowerPoint tutorial. This tutorial presentation was posted to the Teacher Web Site so that students could refer to it as needed while completing their web pages. After making all of the necessary corrections to their word processing reports, the students were assisted in transforming them into web pages. They were provided with the remainder of the hour and an additional hour during the next class period to complete their web pages. They were required to format the background, insert a picture, and create targets, links and hyperlinks. The finished pages were turned in to the teacher on a computer disk. She posted the country report web pages to the server after evaluating them for a grade.

For the final phase, upon reading the online student reports, the teacher made a short list of questions. She then used the net TV in the classroom to show the students that all completed web sites had been posted. Students were given one week to use their home computer, or the school computer lab during lab hours, to read several of

their classmates' reports. They were also required to answer any ten of the teacher's questions correctly. They received one point for each correct answer, and received extra credit for any correct answers beyond the minimum (The teacher chose to use an online quiz tool for this assignment so that students could submit their responses electronically. Other instructors may choose to send home a worksheet).

# ePALS: Authentic Internet Based Communication

## Overview

Student Ability Level: intermediate

The ePALS Project (see Appendices A & E) encourages students to make the acquaintance of a French teenager using email and the Internet (standard 10). Through this project, students have the opportunity to learn what life is like for a young French person (standards 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11), and to engage in authentic communication using French (standards 1, 2). The project also provides the opportunity for American students to help a French person express himself in English (standard 8).

## Specific Development

The ePALS Project was created to motivate students to write to French speaking pen pals using email. The

creation of the project began when the author joined ePALS at http://www.epals.com, an online service that connects teachers and their students through monitored email accounts.

First the author established a "class profile." The author described the location of the school, the age level of each class, and specified an interest in taking turns corresponding in French and in English with students of similar age groups in francophone countries. Although the profile was updated periodically, the author received no response to this listing.

Next the author used the "find classrooms" directory to locate a partner class. Initially, the author requested any class in any country where French was spoken. The only limitation was that the students should be in grades 9 through 11. The ePALS directory found 2,277 matches. The author decided to narrow the search by specifying classes in France only. This narrowed the selection to two classes. By expanding the search to include eighth graders as well, the directory located 610 matches.

The contact link provided by ePALS was used to initiate correspondence with several teachers of English in France. For several months, none of these teachers replied. Finally, after again initiating contact with

about a dozen more teachers, three of them responded.

Because the American high school teacher had four times as many students as the teachers of similar age groups in France, the author selected four of the seven American high school classes to participate in the project with the students of the three teachers from France.

The author used the ePALS site to establish monitored accounts for three French II classes, and one French III class. Because ePALS is set up for maximum class sizes of twenty-five students, and the California class size average is thirty-five, it was necessary to join ePALS with eight different names. The author used Marsolais1, Marsolais2, et cetera. Once these accounts were established, the author provided each student with an email address and a password, and explained the directions for the first ePAL letter. Then the American teacher distributed the names and email addresses of the French ePALS.

The author created the assignments using Netscape

Composer and Internet web building sites so that they

would be accessible to all students using the Internet,

including the partner schools in France. The author used

backgrounds provided in the Microsoft Word Program, and

uploaded the graphics from various Internet web sites. The

methods for creating these web pages were the same as those used for the Teacher Web Pages and the French Country Report.

For the initial "ice-breaker" assignments presented here, the author selected topics which had already been studied by all students. In this way, all participants would be familiar with the vocabulary and expressions necessary to express their ideas and feelings about the selected topic, thus lowering the "affective filter" discussed by Krashen (1988). Further, the notebook section of the Teacher Web Page provided links to these notes if students needed to review them.

# Objectives

- Students will use the target language to engage in written conversation with a student close to their age from a French speaking country by sending email through the ePALS project (standards 1 & 8).
- Students will use the target language to provide and obtain information about selected topics in written conversation with a native French speaker by sending letters through the ePALS project (standards 1 & 7).

- Students will use the target language to express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions with a native French speaker by sending email through the ePALS project (standard 1 & 7).
- Students will use the target language to present and understand written conversation on a variety of topics as demonstrated by letters sent through the ePALS project (standards 2 & 3).
- Students will also deepen their understanding of French culture and perspectives as demonstrated through letters sent as part of the ePALS project, and as demonstrated through participation in class discussions of the letters received by French ePALS (standards 4 through 12).
- The students will show evidence of becoming life-long learners and using the target language for personal enjoyment by continuing to correspond with their ePALS after the project requirements have been satisfied (standard 11).

## Implementation

At the beginning of the first phase of this project, the teacher sent home a permission slip that was to be

signed by the parent or guardian of each student. This verified that the student had permission to communicate with a French teenager through the monitored email of the ePAL.com web site.

Next, the author accompanied the class to the school computer lab where the author guided them through the ePALS registration process. Each student was assigned an email pen pal, or "ePAL." Then the author provided the students with the subject of the first letter: Who are you?

Students gave the answers to these questions in their first letter, and in turn, asked them of their ePALS.

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- Where do you live?
- What is the name of your school?
- Which classes are you taking, and which ones are your favorite classes.
- Which days do you go to school?
- What time do your classes begin and end?
- What do you need to buy to go to school?

Each month the author provided a new set of questions for the next assigned letter. The author presented these

questions on a web page so that students could access them from an on-line computer.

Students wrote their ePALS at least one time per month, and showed this letter to the teacher. When the ePAL responded, the student showed this letter to the teacher, and summarized the contents orally to demonstrate comprehension. Specific topics continued to be assigned. Some students wrote additional letters independently as they became acquainted with their ePALS.

A Virtual Reality Trip to Paris: The Ultimate Web Ouest

## Overview

Student Ability Level: advanced-intermediate

This is the largest project included in this thesis. It consists of a series of web page projects and PowerPoint tutorials combined into one travel unit. Conducting the entire project with students takes at least six weeks. As discussed in Chapter Five, it is recommended that this project be broken up throughout a longer period of time. Throughout this project, students address all of the French content standards (see Appendix I).

## Content Outline:

- I. Project Overview
  - the "Virtually Real" situation

- content expectations
- grading criteria

#### II. The Game

 students review the grammar necessary for comprehensible communication through a series of interactive tutorials presented through
 PowerPoint slides posted on the Internet.

## III. Hotel Selection

- location and price
- conveniences and amenities
- season and weather for trip
- directions from the nearest airport
- directions to the nearest train station

#### IV. 3 Monuments

- directions from hotel using the metro
- description of appearance
- description of historical importance

## V. Museum and 2 exhibits

- directions from the hotel using the metro
- description of appearance
- description of three exhibits
- physical description

The author created the foundation for this project using Netscape Composer and Internet web building sites as described in the Teacher Web Page, French Country Report, and ePALS projects above. The author uploaded the backgrounds and the animations from various online sources. See the References for a complete list of these sites. The author used the Netscape Composer format menu to attach the background and graphics to the page, and to select normal text and link text colors and fonts. The author used the Composer character tools option to add necessary accents and the table tool to organize the page layouts. The author made use of scaffolding techniques to assist the students by building links to helpful web sites and search engines into each page.

The author used Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft
Paint to create many of the tutorials and language
reviews. The methods for their completion were the same as
those outlined previously in the description of the French
Café PowerPoint and the Web Page Tutorial lessons. The
author selected the backgrounds and many of the graphics
from the Microsoft PowerPoint menus. The author also
uploaded several pictures from the paris.org web pages and
referred to these sources by inserting hyperlinks to the
French site using the PowerPoint slide show drop down

menu. Once completed, the author saved the Virtual Reality
Trip to Paris and all of its components in the web page
folder, and linked to it from the Teacher Web Page.
Objectives

After completing this project, the students will have engaged in all twelve of the National French Content Standards (see Appendix I). In addition, students will be able to:

## A: use the Internet to locate

- French travel information
- French maps
- hotels
- French monuments
- French museums
- Weather

# B: give directions

- to travel using the metro
- to get from one location to another
- to select a hotel using hotel guide symbols
- to transfer temperatures from centigrade to Fahrenheit

### C: describe

the appearance and quality of a hotel

- the appearance of a monument
- the history of a monument
- the appearance of a museum
- the history of a museum
- the importance of a museum exhibit or an artist
   D: Journal a travel experience using a variety of tenses
   and structures, including
  - présent
  - futur proche
  - passé composé
  - imparfait
  - prepositions
  - adjectives
  - content specific vocabulary

# Implementation

This entire project was conducted in the target language. The teacher accompanied the students to the school computer lab for the first week to guide the students through the opening phases of the project (the review game and the hotel research). Students were responsible for completing the first section of the project (hotel selection) and submitting it to the teacher

in a printout of a word processing document one week later.

After reading and grading the first phase assignments, the teacher again accompanied the students to the computer lab to initiate the second, and later the third, phases of the project (the monument and museum research). Again, another two hours of lab time was provided during class for each phase, and one week was provided outside of class between the two phases for independent research. Students again submitted each section to the teacher in a printout of a word processing document. After reading and grading the second and third phase assignments, the teacher provided another week in the lab during class to guide the students through the web page production portion of the project.

The students used an Internet browser to view the project and to access information. They used Microsoft Word for their Travel Journal. They created a group presentation using either PowerPoint or a web page creation program. The author selected these programs because they are readily accessible to the target group in the high school lab. All projects were posted to the instructor's web site. In this way, groups were able to do class presentations without wasting time downloading files

onto the classroom computer. Each group presented a summary of their project to the class in the target language.

For the final phase, the teacher used the net TV in the classroom to show the students that all completed web sites had been posted to the Internet. Students were given one week to use their home computer, or the school computer lab during lab hours, to read several of their classmates electronic travel journals. They were then required to submit an essay written in the target language that described their favorite web site, and the Parisian vacation plan they preferred, providing justification for their opinions.

#### Summary

To enhance foreign language instruction, the author decided to implement computer-based Internet projects into the school curriculum. The author used simple techniques requiring moderate expertise in the usage of several Microsoft programs such as Word, PowerPoint, Paint, and the web page composer programs Netscape Composer and Front Page. The author also made use of several online web-building sites.

The author used the Internet to find authentic French web sites that complement classroom lessons, and to further research concepts being taught in class. Lessons were created that guide students through the exploration of these authentic sites. Rather than replacing teaching strategies and lessons that the author used successfully for fifteen years, the author embellished these lessons with computer-based components.

Until recently, students studying French in this

Southern California high school rarely had the opportunity
to make use of the language outside of the classroom. They
may have encountered a French traveler, or perhaps one of
the very few immigrants from France living in the region,
but these opportunities did not occur very often. The
computer-based projects presented in this thesis provide
every student with the opportunity to experience French
culture and use the French language outside of the
classroom through "Virtual Reality" travel, and authentic
communication with native speakers using the Internet and
the World Wide Web. According to the theorists discussed
in Chapter Two, such authentic experiences enhance one's
understanding of foreign cultures, as well as one's
foreign language proficiency.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

After creating these projects and posting them to the Teacher Web Site, the author used them with several classes to determine the actual effectiveness of each project. Evidence was examined to determine each project's ability to meet its objectives. The author also looked for indications that the projects enhanced French proficiency levels. The following chapter describes the results of these trial runs.

# Presentation and Discussion of Initial Projects

### Teacher Web Site

During parent phone calls, parent conferences, Back to School Night and Open House throughout the 2001-2002 school year, the instructor noticed many parents mentioning that they had made use of the web site at least once. These parents provided very positive feedback regarding its usefulness, and they also indicated that they encouraged their children to use the web site. The frequency of emails received from parents has increased since the link was provided on the Teacher Web Site. This

implies that the Teacher Web Site led to an improvement in parent-teacher communication. Before this link was provided, the author received an approximate average of six parent emails per year. By the end of the 2002 school year the author had received an average of 18 parent emails per month. Fewer and fewer parents are using the telephone as they always receive voice mail when calling during school hours. Very frequently the teacher's return call is another message on a home answering machine. With email, the parents and teacher can communicate at anytime, and receive messages at anytime as well. Feedback from parents has indicated that those working outside of the home especially appreciate this form of communication.

As part of an assignment at the end of the first month of school, students responded to questions regarding Teacher Web Site usage. Ninety-seven (48%) of the 202 students who completed the assignment had visited the site outside of class at least once. The same assignment was given one month before the end of the school year. This time, 186 (92%) of the students had visited the Teacher Web Site at least once. One hundred and fifty-eight (78%) of the students had visited the site more than once. One hundred twenty-five students (62%) visited the site at

least once a month. Only twenty-eight students indicated that they visited the site weekly.

The second assignment also queried the students regarding the site's usefulness. One hundred forty-one (70%) of the students used the Teacher Web Site to obtain assignments, and one hundred thirteen (56%) of the student used it to copy notes. One hundred seventy-four (86%) of the students used the web site to copy vocabulary lists. Only 44 (22%) of the students had tried any of the hyperlinks to other French sites. The final assignment also provided an opportunity for students to offer criticism of the web site. These comments will be included in Chapter Five.

Feedback from these classroom assignments indicated that web site usage increased during the school year. Further observations revealed that encouraging the non-users to try navigating the site with the teacher after class, during break or during class had increased the number of those utilizing it. Initially, they required teacher guidance to navigate to the assignment or section of notes that they needed. However, once they became more familiar with the site, they began to use it more regularly. Overall, parents and students found the site very useful.

# The French Café: An Introduction to the Internet

Two groups of students completed The French Café
Internet Project. The first group consisted of three
sections of first year French students (approximately 105
students). These students were primarily 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>
graders, but there were nine 11<sup>th</sup> graders and two 12<sup>th</sup>
graders. Eighty percent of these students were college
bound. The majority of this group typically completed
class assignments in a timely manner throughout the school
year.

The second group consisted of one section of Introduction to Foreign Language students. These students were primarily 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, with eleven 9<sup>th</sup> graders and eight 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. This class consisted primarily of "at risk" students, approximately half of whom were identified with some type of learning disability. Many had already failed a first year foreign language course and were using this introductory course to make up these credits. The majority of this group typically did not complete class assignments throughout the school year unless monitored regularly by the teacher.

The first group completed the assignment very quickly. There were a few students who completed the assignment before most of the other students, and then

assisted others with navigation and word processing commands. The author watched the reactions of the students as they completed the project. The animation helped to engage them in the activity, and the links helped them to successfully access the correct Internet sites. Seven students used pens or pencils and paper to write their responses, and later typed them into the word document. Some students needed assistance with the PowerPoint commands. If they clicked too quickly, they needed help returning to previous slides. However, once the instructor or a fellow student assisted them, they continued without delay. Most students worked successfully with three windows open: a browser, a word processing document, and the PowerPoint presentation.

The second group also completed this assignment very quickly, with very little monitoring by the teacher. They were engaged very effectively by the animations. They were more confident clicking on links provided by the French café site than the first group of students. While the first group searched for the required responses, the second group investigated the interlinked French site with more curiosity. They did, however, need added encouragement to complete the required questions. Only two students used paper and pen or pencil before typing

responses into the word processing program. This project provided one of the most productive lessons of the school year for this "at risk" group of students.

Conversation about French and American culture that resulted from this project demonstrated an increased understanding of cultural relativity in both groups.

Students not only pointed out many differences between French cafés and American restaurants, but they also remarked the differences in attitudes brought about by these differences. Finally, both groups discussed some of the resulting differences in social standards and communication expectations.

## French Country Report: Web Page Basics

The French Country Report Project was completed by one group of students consisting of three sections of first year French students (approximately 105 students). These students were primarily 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, but there were ten 11<sup>th</sup> graders and two 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Eighty percent of these students were college bound.

The research phase of this project went very smoothly. Most students made use of the search engines provided by the teacher, while a few used their own favorites. The students with very little computer skills were paired with those more experienced with computers.

Most questions were resolved through this partnership.

Students who did not bring computer disks were set up with a Hotmail email account, and emailed their documents to their home computers. Ninety-three percent of the students completed this portion of the project successfully. Many of them admitted spending more time perfecting their project because they realized that it would be posted for everyone to see on the Internet.

For the web page design phase, students needed a great deal more assistance. The teacher demonstrated the basic procedures of web page design using the PowerPoint tutorial, and then modeled the web page building basics. Students were provided with about an hour of free lab time to complete this project. Only about twelve of the students completed the project during that time. Fortunately, an additional hour of computer lab time was available during the following class. By the end of this time, only 40 students had completed their web pages, but the library lab would not be available again for another month. The remaining students took their disks home to complete the project. A few came to the classroom during lunch or break to work on the classroom computer with instructor assistance. By the end of the week, only 70 of the 103 students had completed the project.

Once the completed student web pages were posted to the Internet and linked to the Teacher Web Page, ninety-eight percent of the students successfully completed the post-questionnaire. This is a greater percentage than the 80-85% of the students who turn in daily assignments from the textbook and workbook. Students expressed enthusiasm at seeing their projects posted to the Internet, and at comparing them with the quality and creativity of their classmates' projects. Further, classroom discussions contrasting each country with the United States demonstrated that the project resulted in increased student understanding of culture and geography. Finally, students commented that creating their own web page with links and hyperlinks helped them to understand Internet navigation.

## ePALS: Authentic Internet Based Communication

The French ePALS Project was completed by one group of students consisting of three sections of second year French students (approximately 95 students). These students were primarily 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders, but there were a few 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Ninety percent of these students were college bound.

Several days before beginning this project, students were provided with information regarding the ePALS.com

Internet site. A letter was sent home with each student for the parent, explaining the supervised nature of the site. Each student was required to return this letter signed by the parent designating approval to participate in the project. Students without parental approval would be provided an alternate assignment. All students returned this letter signed with parent approval.

When the parent letters were signed and returned to the teacher, students received an outline of the contents for the first ePAL letter. They had one week to compose this introductory letter. They were then required to turn their final draft in to the teacher who would verify comprehensibility, and make any corrections necessary. Minor errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation were ignored. Only errors that would interfere with comprehension were corrected. After this initial letter, students would be free to compose their letters and send them on their own. The teacher would be available for proofreading upon request. The web site safeguards put all emails sent by students into a teacher file. Once the teacher gives each email final approval, the emails are sent.

On the first day of the project, the teacher accompanied the students to the library lab and guided

them through the registration procedures on the ePALS.com web site. Each student was assigned an ePAL which had been pre-arranged between the American and French teacher. Students were then provided with lab time to type and send their letter. Over half of the students received responses within the first week. All of the students received at least one letter from their ePAL by the end of the first month.

The students were very enthusiastic about this project. All of them wanted their first letters proofread by the teacher before sending them. Once they received letters from their ePALS and began noticing errors in the English, they became much more confident at sending letters in French independently. The project is continuing upon the printing of this thesis.

While analysis is ongoing, the initial results have shown that students are very enthusiastic about writing in French to their ePALS. Further, the students have demonstrated an increase in their communication and French coping skills as is indicated by their desire to discuss topics initiated by their ePALS. Rather than limiting themselves to objectives that would be addressed on a quiz or examination, they use the dictionary and approach the teacher during break or lunch to learn new expressions

that will help them to communicate with their ePALS. The project has become an activity for personal enjoyment for many of the students.

# A Virtual Reality Trip to Paris: The Ultimate Web Quest

One class of 19 French III students were assigned the Virtual Reality Trip to Paris. While each student had previously received instruction in the pre-requisite French curriculum, the ability of students to handle such material varied. Approximately 60% of the students had previously demonstrated 80% or higher comprehension and proficiency skills with the required vocabulary and grammatical structures. This assessment was based on prior written tests and essays, listening comprehension and speaking proficiency activities, and completion exercises. Approximately 20% of these students had previously demonstrated 69% or lower comprehension and proficiency skills. The remaining students demonstrated proficiency levels between 70% and 79%.

In spite of these successful achievement levels using traditional assessment methods, only approximately 20% of these students demonstrated the Associative Stage of proficiency through their writing and oral communication.

In the Associative Stage, students detect their errors and

use more complicated structures. Approximately 80% of the students remained at the Cognitive Stage, using short phrases that follow basic grammatical structures.

All of the students had some previous experience using the Internet and PowerPoint presentations. Two students had experience making web pages.

On the first day of the project, the teacher accompanied the students to the school computer lab. The teacher demonstrated navigation from the Teacher Web Site link to the project flow chart, and then to the first page of the project using an LCD projector. The students navigated along with the teacher on their individual lab computers. After the first day of working with the web-based project, the teacher discussed it with the students in small groups to obtain feedback and comments for possible improvement. Throughout the project, the instructor continued to monitor the students' attitudes and levels of engagement, frustration and enthusiasm. Upon completion of their individual projects, the students were required to fill out a multiple-choice questionnaire. This assignment included nine Likert scale statements with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The questionnaire ended with five short answer

questions. The assignment included the following questions:

## Navigation

- 1. The project was well organized.
- 2. It was easy to navigate.

# Graphic Design

- 3. The page layout was interesting.
- 4. The page layout was appealing.
- 5. The graphics were clear.
- 6. The text was readable.
- 7. The color scheme was appealing.

#### Content

- 8. The content was clear and understandable.
- 9. The topics met the stated objectives.

### Quality

- 10. Did you find any dead or broken links? If so, which ones?
- 11. The time required to load each page was too slow/acceptable/fast?
- 12. Was the project interesting?
- 13. What did you like about the project?
- 14. What would you change about the project to improve it?

The overall rating of the project was excellent.

General comments were that the design was very appealing,
easy to use, well organized, and had a nice layout. The
students liked the Internet links provided, the
organization of the directions, and the links to French
notes that assisted them with their French expression.

As the students progressed through the phases of this project, the teacher noticed improvement in their communication skills. Writing was evaluated based on four criteria:

- Comprehensibility the communication can be understood in spite of errors.
- Completeness the student elaborates and expresses ideas freely, discussing completely all topics required.
- Correctness the student uses correct spelling, grammar, and usage of French language.
- Risk Taking the student makes an attempt at using more complex grammatical structures, and to discuss the topics in great detail.

By the time the students reached the final phase of the project, the quality of their communication had increased in all of these areas. Approximately 80% of the students

had attained the Associative Stage of fluency discussed in Chapter Two, while only about 20% remained in the Cognitive Stage. All students demonstrated improvement in their language proficiency skills.

# Summary

The initial assessment of these projects demonstrated evidence of each one's ability to meet its objectives.

Conversations with parents and students, observations of student groups, and feedback from student participants revealed reactions, frustrations, levels of engagement and enthusiasm. To determine actual effectiveness in increasing student learning, the extent to which each project enhanced French proficiency levels and increased cultural awareness was also examined. While this chapter provides the results of these preliminary trials as they relate to increased learning and language proficiency, Chapter Five will discuss their ramifications. Further, specific recommendations will be made to improve each project's effectiveness.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

Frequently, students learn specific vocabulary for a quiz, but several units later are incapable of recalling this information and adding it to a new conversation. The implementation of these five computer-based projects encouraged students to continuously recycle the information they had previously learned as they acquired new language skills. Further, by using these skills within the environment of authentic, French Internet sites, the students learned the coping skills necessary to communicate with native speakers. Finally, the students developed the skills necessary to adapt, generalize and invent communication through the integration of everything they had previously learned within an authentic French cultural environment. An evaluation of the initial trials described in Chapter Four leads to several conclusions and recommendations for successful implementation of computer-based Internet projects, and a final analysis of their ability to enhance foreign language learning.

#### Teacher Web Site

Most students use the Teacher Web Site regularly.

While a smaller number of the parents visited this

Internet site during the trial period, it received

overwhelmingly positive feedback from those that did.

Students and parents found that it was an effective method

to access information.

# Conclusions

- The Teacher Web Site is an effective method for providing parents with course specific information.
- The email link encourages more frequent parent-teacher contacts, especially with parents employed outside of the home.
- 3 The site is beneficial to students as a study and an organizational resource. Students found it useful for verifying their class notes, and accessing accurate vocabulary lists.
- The site helps students keep current of assignments when they are absent. It also helps parents keep track of their child's progress in the course.
- 5 The hyperlinks provided on the site encourage a few students to use their French outside of

class, and thus to increase their language proficiency.

## Recommendations

Several developments and changes have already occurred due to recommendations received during the implementation of this project.

- 1 Upon the recommendation of the parents, a
  French/English glossary of frequently used terms
  has been provided at the beginning of each
  assignment page. These pages remain written in
  French to encourage the students to use the
  target language as often as possible.
- 2 Upon the recommendation of an instructor in the Instructional Technology Department at California State University, San Bernardino, the format of the teacher site was modified. The initial format of one long page requiring a great deal of scrolling was changed into multiple short pages, all interlinked.
- 3 Upon the recommendation of a colleague and feedback from students, tables were added to the web site in order to better organize the visual presentation of the site. These tables assist in site navigation by helping to organize

- assignments by date. They also eliminate the need for excessive scrolling by presenting content such as vocabulary in columns.
- Many students expressed frustration with slow upload times (the time one must wait before a web page appears on the computer screen) due to the graphics and music files. It is recommended that web visitors be provided with the option of a multi-media free page. An introductory page should be created from which the Internet visitor can select between one link that opens the current page, and a second link that opens a graphic-free quick upload version.
- 5 The music which accompanies the home page should be removed from the background, and instead linked to a graphic or button. In this way the Internet visitors have the option of clicking this link if they wish to hear the musical selection, or moving on if they do not wish to wait for the file to upload onto their computers.
- Due to the low number of students making use of the hyperlinks to other French web sites, it is recommended that additional scavenger hunt

activities be created. Students would be required to visit each site where they would find the solutions to a list of questions provided by the instructor. This modification would provide students with an initial exposure to this site, which could encourage them to explore such sites on their own. These activities could be done throughout the school year.

After conducting the scavenger hunt, a survey should be completed in order to determine its effectiveness in increasing student motivation to use the Teacher Web Site as a link to authentic French sites.

#### The French Café

The French Café project guided students through basic concepts of the Internet and web page browsing within an authentic French environment.

## Conclusions

The French Café project was very engaging and highly motivating, especially for "high risk" students.

- The project encouraged conversation about French and American culture, which demonstrated an increased understanding of cultural relativity.
- 3 Students remarked the differences in attitudes brought about by cultural relativity.
- 4 Students recognized differences in social standards and communication expectations.
- 5 Students demonstrated the ability to access the Internet, and used basic word processing skills to express their ideas about cultural relativity.

# Recommendations

The first version of this project presented several objectives on each PowerPoint slide. Upon the recommendation of the students, the following changes were made resulting in the final version submitted here.

- The author divided the objectives onto individual slides in order to help the students focus on one concept at a time, and facilitate their completing each task before beginning the next.
- The author extended the tutorial on Internet based terminology in order to provide more

reinforcement for students less familiar with computer technology and Internet navigation.

3 It is further recommended that an additional PowerPoint tutorial be provided for students needing assistance with word processing.

### The French Country Report

The French Country Report web page project broadened student knowledge of foreign cultures while deepening their understanding of web page functions.

### Conclusions

- The French Internet resources provided authentic environments in which students increased their understanding of a wide variety of francophone cultures.
- Conversations contrasting the United States with foreign countries demonstrated an increased awareness of cultural relativity.
- 3. The web page based project presentation increased student engagement.
- 4. Online student research increased student computer and Internet browsing skills.
- 5. The web page based student presentations increased attention to details and accuracy, as

- well as student motivation to produce higher quality work.
- 6. The web page based student presentations increased student knowledge of web page navigation functions such as links and hyperlinks.

### Recommendations

The first version of this project provided fifteen facts to be included in each student's report. It did not provide a web page tutorial. Upon the recommendations of the students:

- The author provided twenty facts for the students, requiring that each report include any fifteen. This will help to accommodate for the variety of information that may or may not be available for each country on the Internet.
- The author created the PowerPoint web page tutorial that appears in the final project presented here.

### It is further recommended that:

Additional lab time should be scheduled for the final web page construction phase of the project. Most students did not finish within the allotted time and needed additional assistance

from the instructor with this final phase.

Working independently at home led to added frustrations, which in turn resulted in the failure of many students to complete the project. More lab time with the instructor would benefit all of the students.

An extension activity should be added for the students who are more experienced with computers and finish quickly. This activity could require the integration of more advanced web page design with more extensive cultural elements.

### ePALS

The ePALS Authentic Internet Communication project also demonstrated enthusiastic responses.

### Conclusions

- 1 The ePALS project encouraged a great deal of student enthusiasm about writing in French.
- 2 Students demonstrated an increase in their communication and French coping skills as is indicated by their desire to discuss topics initiated by their ePALS.
- 3 The project became an activity for personal enjoyment for many of the students as indicated

by the increased amount of time they spent communicating in French outside of class.

### Recommendations

The ePALS project is the most recent addition to this master's thesis. Feedback has not yet been received for improvement. However, a recommendation to teachers wishing to utilize this project is to allow plenty of time to find a teacher in another country and plan the correspondence between students. In spite of the fact that the author had intended to initiate this project at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year, the author was unable to form a partnership with a teacher in France until the second semester.

Virtual Reality Trip to Paris

The assessment of French fluency and cultural understanding through the development of student web pages led to the following outcomes.

### Conclusions

- 1. This web quest was very engaging to the students.
- 2. The project encouraged the improvement of French communication skills.

- 3. All students participating in the project increased their French proficiency level.
- 4. All students participating in the project increased their awareness of France and French culture.
- 5. All students participating in the project increased their computer and Internet browsing skills.
- 6. In deepening their knowledge of French culture, the project also deepened each student's ability to communicate with people in an environment different from their own.

### Recommendations

- Students suggested that another support page be added with assistance on web page design. As a result, the author developed the Web Page Tutorial unit that is included in the French Country Report. A link was provided to that tutorial in this project as well.
- 2 Students also requested more tutorials added to assist them with completion of the written journal. This will be the next project.
- It is recommended that the instructor schedule at least a week of lab time beyond the time

needed to complete the project. Unpredictable computer problems seemed to plague the first trial of the Virtual Reality trip to Paris.

During one of the days reserved to work in the lab, the county shut down the server for upgrades so the students were unable to access the Internet. The district server crashed several times during the next few visits to the lab as well. At the end of another day, the high school experienced a "rolling blackout" due to California's energy crisis. This caused the district server to go down. On yet another day, a fire drill forced the class to evacuate the lab. Because of overcrowding at the high school, the class was unable to reschedule this time.

Students need to be prepared with at least five computer disks each lab day. Because of the "deep freeze" program on the lab computers, any new information is deleted each time the computers are shut down, and they are reconfigured to their original format when they are restarted. Therefore, even if students had saved their work in a computer file, all student files are deleted when the computers restart.

During the first implementation of this project, many students saved work in a computer file until the end of the class period when they moved everything to a disk. When we experienced the "rolling blackouts," students lost a great deal of work. Students learned to save their work to disks very frequently.

- methods for saving work. When this project was initiated, students were encouraged to email their work and attachments to themselves and to the instructor at the end of each period, as well as to save it to a disk. Each student was set up with a Hotmail.com email account.

  Unfortunately, Hotmail did not enable them to send attachments large enough to include pictures, backgrounds and web pages.
- It was recommended to break the project down into sections so that the students complete each phase and submit it to the teacher before moving on to the next phase. This recommendation was followed for the second group of students completing the project, which made it much more manageable to the students.

7 It is recommended that students be encouraged to save the web address for each background, picture and graphic used. Students do not need to save them to the disk until the end of the project. Such graphic files take up a great deal of computer memory and make it difficult for students to save their work on a single disk.

### Summary

"Enhancing Foreign Language Learning Through the
Integration of Computer Technology" was developed to
assist and encourage foreign language teachers to guide
their students toward autonomous proficiency through the
implementation of computer technology and the Internet
into classroom instruction. This thesis demonstrates how
such a partnership between teacher and computer technology
enhances the student's foreign language proficiency and
cultural awareness. A variety of theoretical foundations,
including sociocultural, environmental and cognitive
learning theories, support the ideas presented here. These
philosophies emphasize the importance of interpersonal
interactions, group activities, cultural
contextualization, and student centered activity based
learning. Computers and the Internet provide opportunities

for students to engage in all of these activities within highly motivating, authentic French environments.

The integration of technology into foreign language curriculum has not greatly changed the author's philosophy of teaching, or her role as an instructor. Teachers have been implementing the self-directed objectives emphasized by the cognitive learning theorists for some time now.

Active learning strategies geared toward creating life long learners are already an active part of current trends in foreign language instruction.

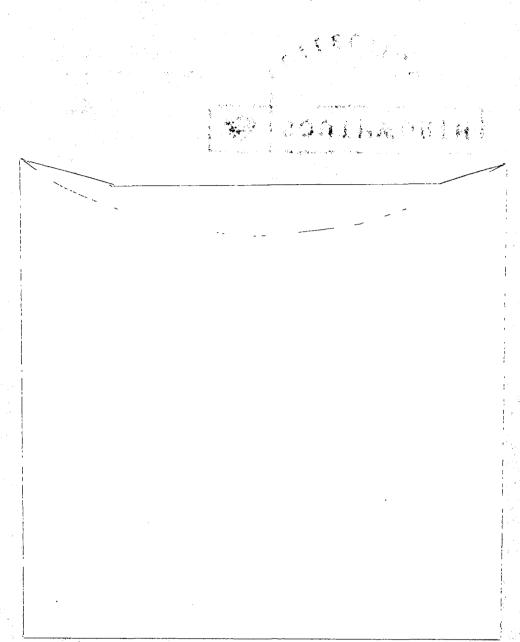
The sample projects presented in this thesis demonstrate that the integration of computer-based Internet activities support traditional theories while providing a fresh perspective. Each project integrates the foreign language content standards. While they are all ready to be used with students, they should also serve as models to other teachers of how to create computer and Internet based projects that enhance foreign language learning.

Teachers should not feel threatened by the increased usage of computer technology in instruction. The rise of technology-based lessons is a wonderful supplement to the many strategies already used in the classroom. It is not a replacement for these strategies, nor a replacement for

the teachers. It is an enhancement of current foreign language instructional methods. As educational technology continues to develop, we will have more opportunities to motivate our students to reach higher levels of learning, more advanced levels of second language proficiency, and deeper cultural awareness.

# APPENDIX A PRESENTATION OF THE INTERACTIVE PROJECTS

**美统的 发数联络** 表示 5



# APPENDIX B TEACHER WEB SITE

Addiess http://www.murieta.k12.ca.us/mvhs/staff/smarsolais/

♥ ⊘Go Links



# Bienvenu au Web Site Français









To learn more about La Tour Eiffel, go to http://www.paris.org/Monuments/Eiffel/info.html

To See the French Content Standards click here.

To See Some Technology Based French Projects click here.

To learn about "La Marseillaise," go to http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/marseill.html



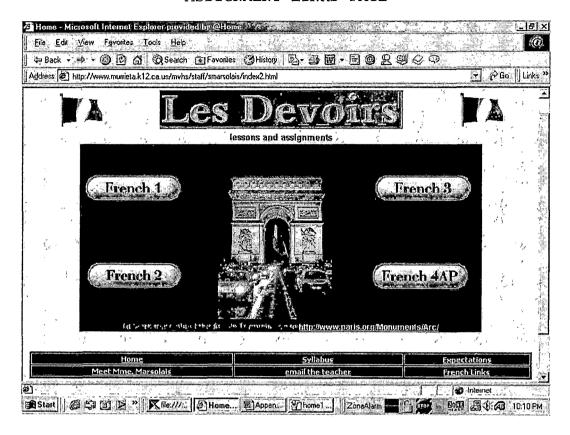


# FELICITATIONS! CONGRATULATIONS!

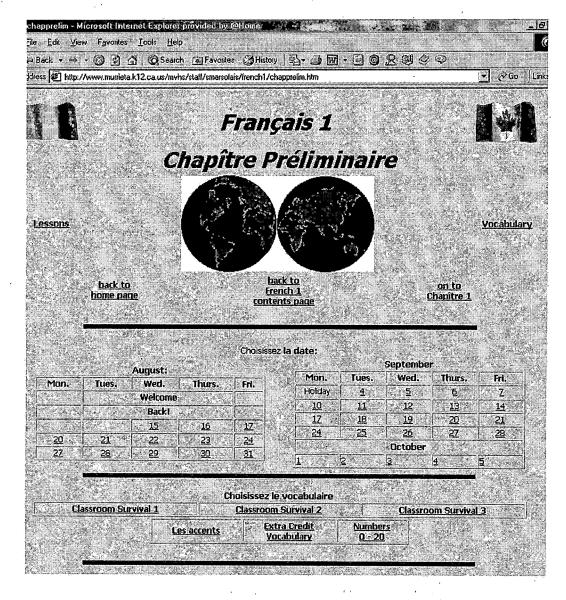
AP Test Scores have arrived:
100% of our
AP French students
\*\*Passed the exam!!!

This site is maintained by: Suzanne Marsolais-Johnson, French Teacher, Murrieta Valley High School Murrieta, California U.S.A

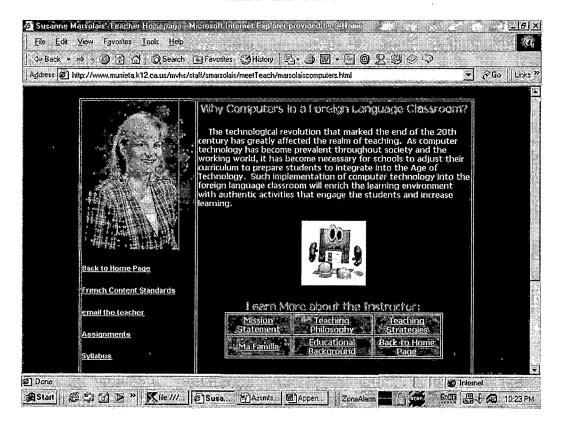
### ASSIGNMENT LINKS PAGE



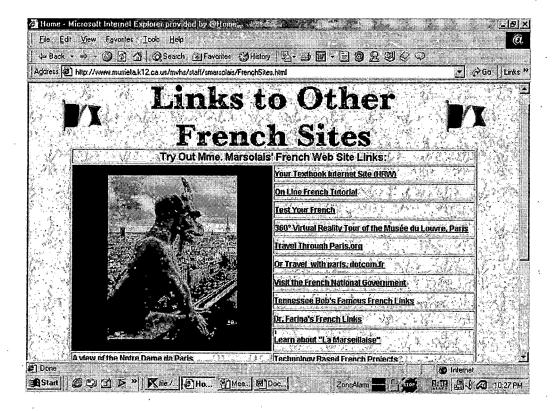
### FRENCH 1 ASSIGNMENTS LINK



MEET LA PROF



### Links to Other French Sites



### APPENDIX C

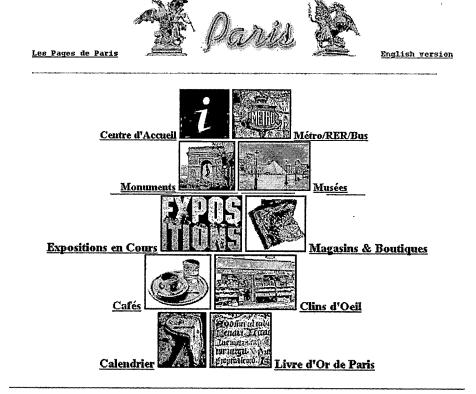
FRENCH CAFE - AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE INTERNET

### Project Overview:



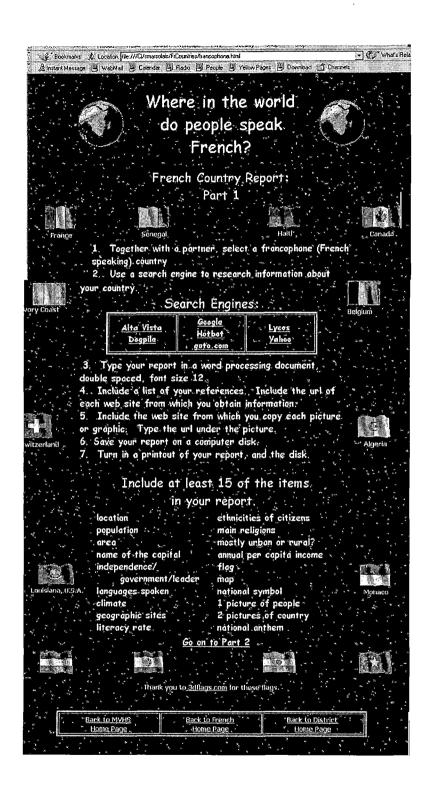
Project linked to http://www.paris.org

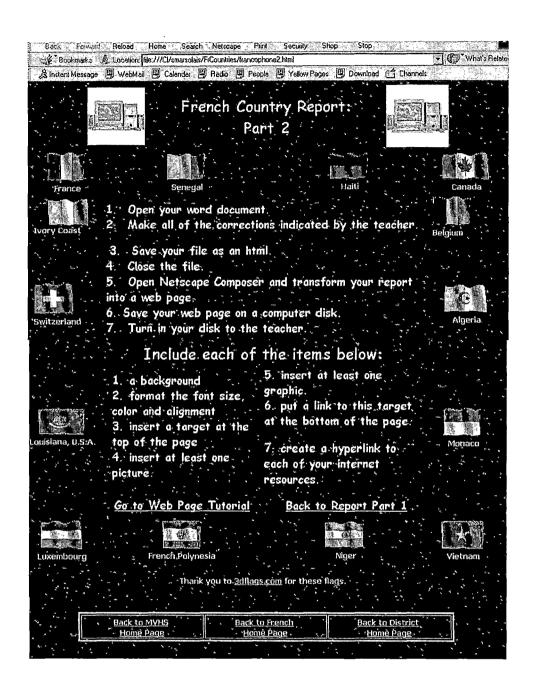


Hotels || Restaurants || Groups de Discussion || Ecoles et Facs || Carte interactive des Musées et Monuments. || Plans de Paris || Glossaire de Les Pages de Paris || Les Gares de Paris || Autres Liens || Petite Bibliographie || Index || Signer le Livre d'Or || Rechercher dans Livre d'Or || Comment pouvez vous participer ? || Les Pages de Paris FAQ || Naviguer || Quoi de Neuf?

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# APPENDIX D FRENCH COUNTRY REPORT - WEB PAGE DESIGN BASICS





### APPENDIX E

EPALS - AUTHENTIC INTERNET

BASED COMMUNICATION



### Pen Pals by Email (French Epals)

Click Here For French Version



You are going to make the aquaintance of a French teenager using email and the Internet I'm going to help you in the beginning. In this way, you will learn what life is like for a young French person.

You must write your pen pal (or "epal") at least one time per month, and show me this letter. When the epal responds, you must write a summary of his/her letter. Give me this summary with a copy of the letter that he/she sent to you.

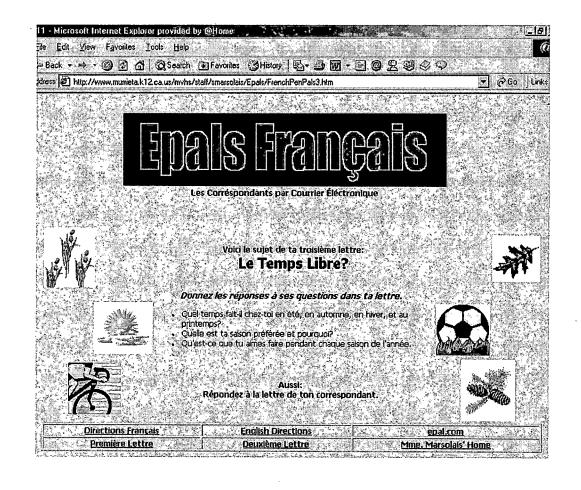
> Here is the subject of your first letter; Who are you?

Give the answers to these questions in your first letter:

- What is your name?
- How old are you?
- Where do you live?
- What is the name of your school?
- Which classes are you taking, and which ones are your favorite classes.
- What time do your classes begin and end?
- What do you need to buy to go to school?

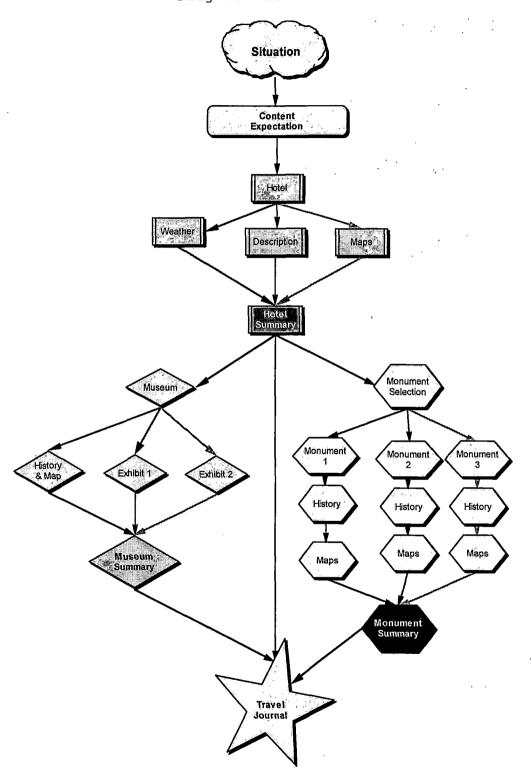
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# APPENDIX F VIRTUAL REALITY TRIP TO PARIS - THE ULTIMATE WEB QUEST

Project Flow Chart



### Introductory Page



## The Game: Review of Vocabulary and Grammar (Sample PowerPoint Slides)



### Internal Links: Grammar Review





## On Voyage à Daris



## **Voici les Notes:**

les Devoirs	Date Complète	Points Possible
<u>l'hôtel</u>	le 21 mai	15
Corrections	le 25 mai	5
les Monuments	le 23 mai	. 15
<u>Corrections</u>	le 30 mai	5
<u>le Musée</u>	le 1er juin	15
Corrections '	le 5 juin	*
<u>le Journal Écrit</u>	le 5' juin	10
<u>e Journal</u> Électronique	le 11 juin	., 30
	Total	100



### Le Projet:

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### I a Dévision

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Météo .	la nourriture	prépositions	présent	composé	conditionnel	l'Imparfait



## ON CHOISIT L'HÔTEL



(Images de http://www.paris.org/parisF.html)

## MAINTÉNANT, IL VOUS FAUT CHOISIR L'HÔTEL:

the Committee

### A: Tous les trois membres Du groupe visitent

http://www.parls.org/parlsF.html

I. CLIQUEZ SUR Plans de Paris
2. CLIQUEZ SUR Plan de Paris 1960
ETPlan Interactive des Musées et Monuments de Paris
3. REGARDEZ LES MONUMENTS ET MUSÉES EN CHAQUE
ARRONDISSEMENT. PUIS, CHOISISSEZ L'ARRONDISSEMENT
OÙ VOUS DÉSIREZ RESTER.

### B: RETOURNEZ À

http://www.paris.org/parisF.html

- 1. CLIQUEZ SUR Hôtels
- 2. CLIQUEZ SUR LE NUMÉRO DE L'ARRONDISSEMENT QUE VOUS AVEZ CHOISI.
- 3. Cliquez sur les hôtel pour trouver les détails. (Cliquez sur legend pour comprendre les symbols.)

POUR CONTINUER



CLIQUEZ LE DRAPEAL

### Le Projet:

		<u>les</u>		
les Notes			le Musée	le Journal
<u>La Page</u> <u>les Notes</u>	<u>Le Jeu</u>	Monuments		

### la Dévision:

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2	prepositions	composé

## ON CHOISIT L'HÔTEL (CONTINUED) QUAND VOUS AVEZ CHOISI



# VOYAGER!



### (Images de http://www.parls.org/parlsF.html) MEMBRE 2: MEMBRE 1: MEMBRE 3: L'HÔTEL AU RESTAURANT AU RESTAURANT Où va-t-on manger? Où va-t-on manger? Comment va-t-on à l'hôtel? Visitez Visitez mapquest.com Visitez paris.org/parisF parls.org/parlsFet cliquez sur "Cafés" pour trouvez un restaurant ou pour trouvez le plan et cliquez sur "Cafés" pour aller de l'aéroport à l'hôtel. Donnez-moi pour trouvez un restaurant ou un café. un café. Dites-moi ce les directions. Dités-moi ce que tous Cliquez ici pour plus de détails les membres du groupe que tous les membrés du groupe ont mangé. ont mangé. Quel temps fait-il? Quel temps fait-il? Quel temps fait-il? Visitez weather.com Visitez/weather.com \* Visitez weather.com pour découvrir la météo pour découvrir la météo pour découvrir la météo peńdant votre sejour. pendańt votre sejour." pendant votré séjour. Décrivez-la moi. Décrivez-la mol. Décrivez-la moi. Cliquez ici pour plus de détails Cliquez ici pour plus de détails Cliquez ici pour plus de détails



CLIQUEZ LE DRAPEAU

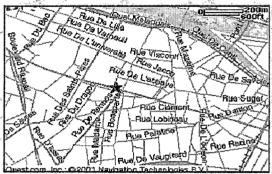
La Page les Notes Le Jeu Monuments le Musée le Journal

La Dévision:

La Météo les la le présent le passe compose conditionnel l'Imparfait

Internal Link: Giving Directions

## LES DIRECTIONS:



Visitez mapquest.com.
Cliquez sur l'icon "Maps."
"Select Country:" Choisissez "France."
L'écran va changer.
Puis, tapez l'address.
(Vous pouvez trouver l'adresse à paris.org.)
Effacez les virgules (commas).
Cliquez "Get Map"

"Zoom in" et "Zoom out" comme il faut. Changez la direction du plan avec les flèches (arrows).

Aussi, Visitez Paris org./parisF.html Cliquez sur: Métro/RER/Bus ou: Plans de Paris

Vous pouvez voyager au Métro ou en taxi.

Retournez à la page "Home"

Retournez à la page d'Hôtel

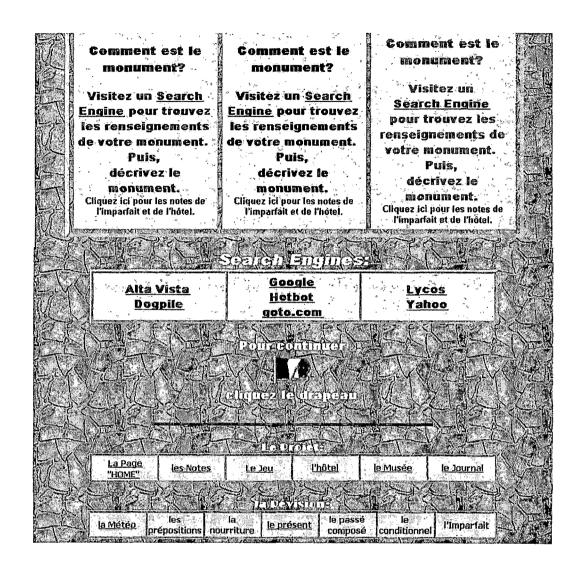
Cliquez ici pour trouvez les prépositions et le vocabulaire des directions

Internal Link: Discussing Weather



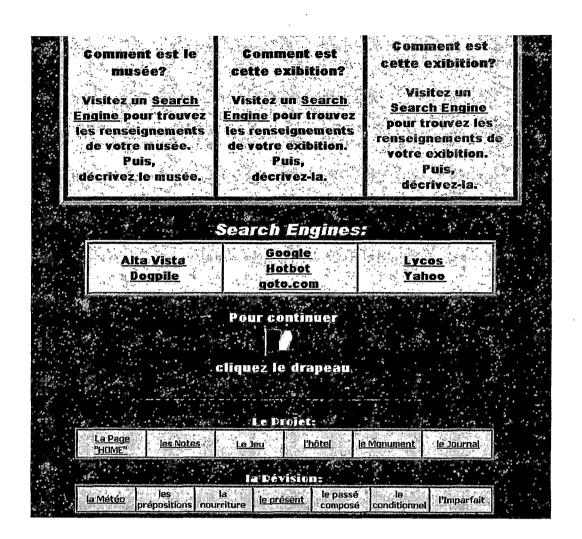
#### Parisian Monuments Lesson





#### Museum Lesson





### Un Journal de A. Journal Traditionnel: 1. Composez toutes vos déscriptions avec Word ou un autre program de "Word Processing." Chaque des devoirs doivent être font 12 et "double spaced." 2. Le professeur va marquer la première copie. L'étudiant(e) va faire toutes les corrections, et les vérifier avec le professeur. 3. Tous les membres du groupe vont rassembler leurs copies finales dans une chemise. Il faut décorer la chemise, sans employer les photos ou les graphiques de l'ordinateur. 4. Il faut avoir les cartes, les dessins ou les photos dans le journal. Vous pouvez les prendre de l'ordinateur, mais il faut 🕺 indiquer l'adresse Internet.

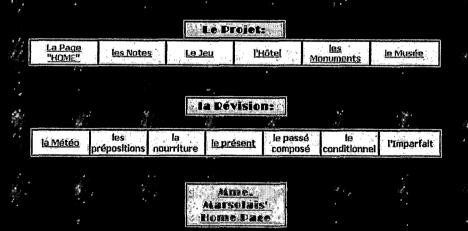
5. Il faut avoir une bibliographie.
Donnez toutes les adresses Internet employées par le groupe.

### B. Journal Electronique:



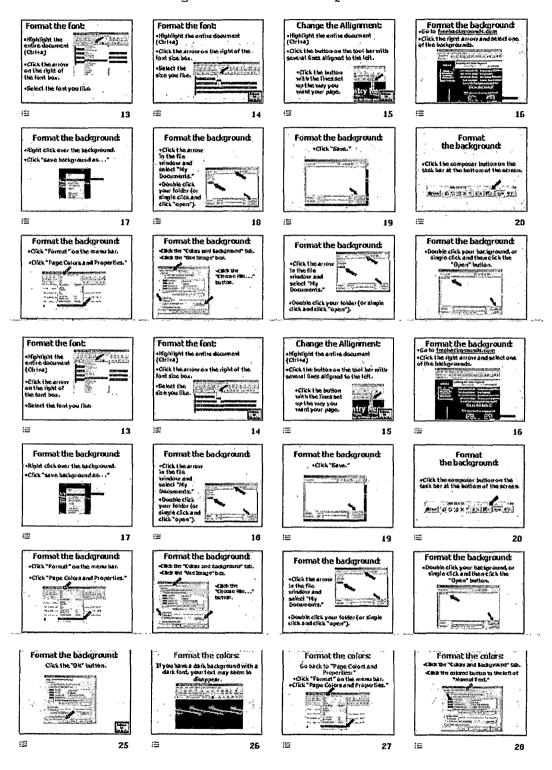
- 1. Postez tous vos devoirs sur une page Internet.
- 2. Toutes les pages du groupe doivent suivre le meme format. Vous devez choisissez ensemble les couleurs, les dessins, les styles de lettres.
  - 3. Il faut avoir les photos ou les graphiques, avec l'adresse de la page Internet indiquée.





APPENDIX G
WEB PAGE TUTORIAL

#### Web Page Tutorial: Sample Slides



## APPENDIX H INTERNET SEARCH TIPS

Narrowing the Search

Keyword search tips:

- type: civil war battles the search finds all pages containing any one of these words
- type: "civil war battles" the search finds only pages containing the phrase

#### Boolean Searches:

- type: bat NOT baseball NOT computer the search finds the furry kind
- type: bat AND NOT baseball
- type: bat-baseball (note there are no spaces)
- type: basketball AND bulls the search finds only entries including both
- type: basketball +bulls (note it is word1 space + word2)
- type: basketball AND (bulls OR jazz) the search finds only entries including either of the two combinations
   Do not type in capitals as this limits the search.
   Lower case requests will locate lower and upper case words.

To locate pictures or graphics:

type: image:name (for pictures of frogs - i.e.
 image:frog)

Keeping track of sources: bookmarks/favorites:

- click "bookmark" on menu bar (or the bookmark icon)
- click onto the desired site listed, or click onto "add bookmark"

To edit and organize bookmarks:

- click on "communicator" (in earlier versions click on the Window menu)
- click on "bookmarks"
- click on "Get Info" to modify the title of the page so that it is more meaningful
- click and drag, or cut and paste bookmarks into organized order
- add "separators" (horizontal lines) to list for organization

To set up student bookmark files:

- click on "communicator"
- click on "bookmarks"
- choose "select all" and then "clear" from the edit menu. This removes all bookmarks.
- click on "Save As" to create empty bookmark file.
- label with student name

Other useful inquiry tools:

FTP - to transfer info to your computer, or from your computer to another

QuickTime and RealAudio - used to access video streams on demand

# APPENDIX I FRENCH CONTENT STANDARDS

- Standard 1: Students engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions
- Standard 2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
- Standard 3: Students present information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
- Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.
- Standard 5: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.
- Standard 6: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
- Standard 7: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.
- Standard 8: Students demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

- Standard 9: Students demonstrate an understanding of the nature of culture through comparisons of the culture studied and their own.
- Standard 10: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
- Standard 11: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.
- Standard 12: Students engage in the activities that prepare them to use the target language to achieve career goals.

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