INTRODUCTION

Our positive experience with last summer's language camp suggests three objectives that must underlie any viable solution to the problem of improving foreign language instruction: 1) greater cooperation among educators and educational institutions at various levels; 2) stimulating student motivation through innovation use of technology, including IVD; and 3) increasing student involvement in the learning process.

THE STATE OF THE ART

Despite widespread distribution in schools, computers and computer software have yet to realize their full potential in broadly improving foreign language teaching/learning. Furthermore, effectively integrating computer/video-based material where it does exist remains a major pedagogical challenge. Lack of clear understanding about what these materials can do, how and by whom they should be created, how they should be used, and exactly where they fit into existing curricula are among the many reasons for their largely unrealized potential.

Because most foreign language curriculum models treat computer programs and video as supporting materials, these materials are often "forced to fit" existing courses based on vague and undefined criteria. Undeniably, high-quality supporting materials enrich the cultural component of many courses but seem to play a marginal role in advancing language proficiency. As happened in the past with films and audio tape programs, instructional designers are finding it difficult to effectively integrate video/computer materials into existing curricula. With some notable exceptions, where language courses are based on
video programs, the integration issue is foremost among teachers and curriculum designers. Our language camp experience suggests that using video materials as the focus for instruction with support from other media as deemed appropriate is an effective model for integrating video into language instruction. In fact, this shift to a "paperless" environment where the video was central to the lesson was the guiding instructional design principle for the camp.

THE LANGUAGE CAMP EXPERIENCE

Overview
The first annual USAFA Summer Foreign Language Camp began as scheduled on Friday, June 29 with five students, three French and two German. The initial activities consisted of registration administration of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Examination. Formal instruction began on July 2nd. This video-based instruction emphasized listening and speaking skills and was designed to maximize student participation. Classroom activities were dynamic, offering real-world situations and simulations which reinforced the content and concepts learned/introduced by the IVD materials. Students ate lunch in the cafeteria with a near-native speaker at the table to motivate and encourage conversation. Lunch was followed by a 45 minute recreation period, with activities varied among games, sports, and films. Throughout the 3 1/2 week camp students spent approximately 50% of their time in the LLC, 40% in the classroom, and the final 10% in lunch or recreational activities. The daily instructional experience rotated between the classroom and the LLC, with students generally spending no more than 20-30 minutes in any one place. Each instructional unit began with an introductory IVD session in the LLC, followed by a classroom practice session that limited lecture and grammar explanation to an absolute minimum. Each classroom practice session was followed up with analysis and further practice in the LLC.

Teacher Training
Recognizing that camp teachers would require some special training in the use of IVD materials, a three-week workshop was conducted for prospective teachers. The seven teachers who completed the workshop received graduate credit from the University of Colorado Springs. The workshop focused on theory and application of technology in foreign language education, followed by intense, hands-on work in the LLC. Workshop participants created courseware in French, German, and Spanish for use in the language camp and subsequently in the USAFA foreign language programs. The workshop provided valuable insights to the participants.
and resulted in usable products for the camp. Applications for this year's workshop already exceed our capacity!

Camp evaluations/feedback

Students, faculty, and the program itself were evaluated as follows:

(1) Pre-test: The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was administered to campers upon arrival. The two German students both placed near the bottom of the low to mid novice scale on the Oral Proficiency (OP) examination. Both had one year of high school German in a program with a high turnover of German teachers. The French test results were more varied, ranging from novice low to intermediate low. These were two first-year and one third-year French students.

(2) Post test: Two instruments were used: the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Examination and the USAFA Foreign Language Placement Test. Final OP results placed both German students at the intermediate low level which compares favorably with third year college students in an average program. All French students improved at least one level according to the OP exam. It should be noted that the OPI evaluator tested only for the expected level of proficiency based on the students' age. She stated later that students might have placed higher if she had attempted to test at a higher level.

The results on the USAFA Placement Validation Exam are even more dramatic. One of the German students actually tested at a level that would have allowed her to validate the Academy's language requirement. Both tested within ranges comparable to USAFA cadets who have had 3 1/2 to 5 years of high school German. This is especially interesting given that the test also examines grammatical accuracy as well as listening comprehension. The results of the French testing also showed some remarkable improvements. One French student with three years of previous instruction scored near the top of the USAFA Placement Validation Exam. The other two students with less experience, one or more years, scored at a level consistent with USAFA cadets with 2-3 high school years.

(3) Student evaluations: Each student completed a written evaluation form. Results indicate that all students found the instruction positive and interesting. Specifically, they found the use of the IVD materials integrated into the small-group activities a real strong component of the camp.

(4) Anecdotal observations: Results in testing indicated a difference in the achievement of the German and French campers. German students appeared to have learned more. While it is difficult to identify a precise explanation for this, it is possible that the German instructor's familiarity with and confidence in
the IVD materials enabled him to make better use of the technology. The "Kontakte," "Velvet," and "nachrichten" materials were the only materials used by the German campers. The German campers also spent more time in the LLC, than did their French counterparts. The German instructor felt less need to introduce supplementary materials and made greater use of simulation and role playing, with the IVD materials providing the only models. The French instructor, on the other hand, had very limited experience working with IVD until just before the camp and found it more difficult to tear away from the "more traditional" classroom setting.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER

Any conclusions drawn from this pilot program are preliminary. The remarkable language proficiency gain scores cannot be attributed solely to the camp experience because a myriad of factors could help explain those gains. Recognizing all of the program’s shortcomings and constraints, however, we are still comfortable in drawing some general conclusions about the use of IVD. Those conclusions are based on observations and anecdotal data from the camp and on our rapidly-growing experience in creating and using IVD materials in Academy language programs. Specifically, we conclude that:

- given the proper training and guidance, classroom teachers can efficiently create IVD materials which increase student motivation and produce improved learning and retention outcomes.

- time on task can be increased with motivating, interesting, video materials

- for small groups, video can be used effectively as the major language stimulus

- there are compelling reasons to further investigate the role of video in instructional design models

- we need to redefine the role of the instructor and provide require "upskill" training to allow instructors to take full advantage of the capabilities of IVD

- IVD-based learning is effective enough to consider reducing the use of standard teaching materials such as texts and workbooks to an absolute minimum.

- the extraordinary results achieved by the German campers on the Placement Validation Exam, which is largely written, grammar type test, indicate that the use of IVD materials allows for significant transfer of skills from oral/aural to reading and writing.
MOVING TOWARD NEW RESPONSES FOR NEW CHALLENGES

Forced to abandon a "more-of-the-same" strategy, we must look toward finding better ways of getting and keeping students "connected" to foreign language materials. Vigorously exploiting some of the interesting computer-based video materials now available offers some promising possibilities. Current foreign language instructional models need to be reviewed and revalidated in light of the changing student and instructor parameters which are inherent in the implementation of technology. Augmenting existing texts with video, computer programs, or other supporting materials is difficult, at best. As we look toward technology and better integrating technology into existing programs, we must not overlook the possibility that technology provides new/different ways of looking at the problem. We must avoid the tendency to apply new technologies to old or existing procedures and be willing to imagine innovations that take full advantage of the capabilities of technology. Toward that end, "freeing" our thinking from past constraints is essential to thoroughly investigating the full range of possibilities made available through new technologies. While technology may not be the solution to educational problems, any substantive improvements to be made will most assuredly contain some technological dimensions.