The Computer in the Writing Class : A *Low-Tech* Approach

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Computer labs are appearing more and more in the Japanese school system. However, sometimes teachers are reluctant to use the available facilities. Confusing computer jargon or *tech-talk*, and an assumption that one must have *high-tech* skills may be reasons why teachers as well as students do not use computers for class activities. The purpose of this study is to offer practical examples of how the computer can be integrated into language instruction. This will be done by focusing on simplistic and basic applications of the computer, i. e., *low-tech*. In taking a *low-tech* approach, this study will : 1) propose a theoretical rationale for integrating basic computer technology into foreign language class work ; 2) offer some fundamental activities designed to give the students *hands on* experience in using the computer for basic word processing applications ; and 3) present activities designed for the purpose of integrating computer work into a writing composition course. Results of two surveys, which were conducted for purpose of evaluating the students' progress on using computers, will also be analyzed in this study.

Key words : *High-Tech, Low-Tech*, Processs Writing, Cohesion, Coherence

1. Introduction

The idea that one needs highly specialized skills to operate a computer no longer exists. Over the years, the development of various kinds of software and hardware have made using the computer to perform many functions much easier. Therefore, today, the computer is quite accessible to many members of society. In Japan, computer labs and computer assisted language learning (CALL) are becoming a part of the school system from the lower grades to the universities. Of course, the use of technology in education, especially in language learning, is not a new idea. The foreign language teaching profession has had a long history of integrating technology and pedagogy. The multitude of language laboratories in school systems is a testament to this fact. As Maley writes, "Computer assisted language learning is the latest in the series of modern aids to language learning which began with the gramophone" (1995 : 3). However, the fact that computer labs are now popping up in the school systems does not mean that teachers have been eagerly flocking to these labs, and have been using them as means to raise the efficiency of foreign language education. On the contrary, teachers have been reluctant to use the labs because they still have memories of struggling with language lab gadgets in the middle of a lesson, perspiring, hoping for the absent lab assistant to return, as students wait and giggle. For these teachers, the idea of bringing their students into a computer lab is even more frustrating.

1. 1 Outline of the Study

This paper will address the concerns of teachers who may view the use of computers in class work as something that is done by only those with specialized computer skills. In taking the mystery out of integrating computer work into the classroom, this study will first briefly look at the theoretical role of computer technology in foreign language learning by examining how it relates to the teacher and the students. Second, the study aims to show that highly technical skills (*hi-tech*)

are not required for integrating the computer into class instruction. Therefore, this paper will focus on the application of basic computer techniques designed for the purpose of integrating the computer into a writing class. Selected computer activities, given to the students, will be presented and discussed. The class used in this study was a writing composition class of 40, 4th year students, majoring in education at Kumamoto University. The machines used in this study were Macintosh computers. The data from two surveys ; pre-task and post-task, which were given to the students to analyze their progress using computers, will also be discussed.

2. Rationale for Integrating Technology and Pedagogy

Technology has been around ever since man began fashioning implements for the purpose of doing a task more efficiently. In most cases, digging a hole by a stick was much faster and easier than doing it by hand. In the same way, technology has provided tools to make teaching and learning a language more efficient and hopefully more productive. However, technology should not be thought of as the panacea for language teaching. There are no miracle techniques in language learning. On the other hand, technology in language learning has proven to be a useful tool and for that reason the teacher and the student should not hesitate in using whatever is available to help enhance the learning process.

2. 1 Teacher's Role

Upon realizing that computers can be helpful in language learning, teachers should find ways to intergrate them into the class curriculum. This means teachers should find ways for the students to use them during the course by including computers in the class work. Doing this will insure that the computer lab does not collect dust. It is also important that teachers begin to take control and utilize the computer facilities at school. Computer labs will appear more and more in the school systems and if computers are going to be integral to class work, then teachers should become familiar with computer instruction rather than letting *outsiders* dictate what the role of computers should be. As Phillips states (1988 : 10) "It is important that we as teachers and practitioners take control of the influence of new technology upon our profession."

Another reason for why the teacher should be open to the possibility of integrating newer technologies like computers into the classroom is that innovation and teaching go hand in hand. Just like any teaching practies, when you have settled into a new system, it is time to look for new challenges. Learning is an empirically dynamic process. This can be noted in the line from the song, *What Wonderful World*, "They'll [children] learn much more than I'll ever know" (1968). As the song suggests, each generation has a great advantage because they inherit past achievements of the previous generations. Information from the past is built on and new ideas develop. Therefore, teachers must also be aware of change so that they can stay a step or two ahead of the students. Students are already beginning to use computers at an alarming rate for computer action games, so it seems fitting that teachers should find ways to apply their expertise as class managers to use computers for the educational purpose of enhancing learning.

2. 2 In Relation to the Learner

From the learner's perspective, there are several good reasons for why the computer can be

successfully included into class work :

- **Interactive** : The students are actively involved. When the student operates the computer there is immediate feedback as there are quick reasponses to commands. This is clearly evident in educational software ; interaction takes place as the soft-ware program offers responses to the viewer's (student's) moves.

- **Motivation** : Students are encouraged to use computers. They view learning computer skills as knowledge that can be immediately transplanted to the outside world, and therefore, as something more than a specialized piece of equipment only for use within the walls of academia. In this sense, working in a computer lab may be more meaningful to students as opposed to language labs. "The Language Lab was always a specialized piece of technology. [On the other hand,] the computer is now part of the mass consciousness and permeates social life at many different levels" (Phillips : 4).

- **Creating Skills for Future Benefit** : Most students see computer skills as something necessary for their future. More and more companies are requiring their workers to have computer skills (see survey, Q5).

- **Independent Learning** : The computer can allow students to work at their own pace. As the trend in language teaching has become student centered, teachers take on the role of facilitators and the students are given more responsibility for their own learning. Murray puts this in perspective when talking about teaching writing. He cites "In an actual [traditional] classroom the teacher speaks and the students listen ... the writing teacher who teaches least usually teaches most if his students work in an environment which allows them to teach themselves" (1983 : 41).

- **Cooperative Learning** : The strong help the weak. Students are quick to ask each other for help on using the computer. This particular aspect of student cooperation is particularly useful in a process writing class as peer evaluations are integral to the course.

3. *A Low-Tech* Method for Using the Computer in a Writing Class

A 10,000 mile journey begins with the first step--Confucius

In this basic course, the first step was to give the students some practical *hands on* experience using the computer for writing documents. In other words, they needed practice in operating the word processing functions of the computer. A *hi-tech* approach was not required. They did not need any highly technical (*hi-tech*), complex knowledge of operating a computer system. To put it simply, the students only needed basic computer skills. A *low-tech* approach would be sufficient. Consequently, the students were brought into the computer lab and 'basic-operation' tasks were given to them. These tasks were aimed at helping the students to be able to :

(1) be familiar with a computer keyboard and computer terminology.

(2) switch a computer system on.

(3) load a program into a computer (e. g. from a disk).

(4) start the program working ; *Open* a *File, Save* and *Quit.*

(5) operate commands for editing : *Copy, Cut* and *Paste, Spell-check, Thesaurus* etc..

3. 1 Activities for Getting to know the Computer

The implementation of computer activities into the writing course was done in three stages ; pre-computer work-work done before the students use the machines-work done at the computer-and post computer work done away from the computers (Hardisty & Windeat, 1994). The students were

first given the following pre-computer work activity. The purpose of the activity was aimed at 'basic-operation' task (1) in the preceding section 3.

Activity # 1

In this pre-computer work task, the students were given computer terms that they would need to know. The words were written on the board in two sets. After each set was written on the board, they were discussed for understanding. The words were then erased and the students, in pairs, had to type on the computer screen as many of the words as they could remember. This part of the activity (step # 3) was done in the following activity # 2, step # 5.

CALL word game : (Suggested by Puchta and Schratz, 1992 : 114)

Step # 1 : Explain or elicit from students meanings of computer terms

Step # 2 : Ask students to remember as many as possible, then erase words

Step # 3 : Put students in pairs and have them type in as many words as possible

● Discuss 1st set of words on the board :

disk	disk drive	MS Word	keyboard
cursor	screen	mouse	keys
drag	to type in	click	release

● Discuss 2nd set of words on the board :

printer	monitor	file	save
delete	copy	cut	menu
quit	to print out	to delete	eject

Activity # 2

In this activity, the class began working on the computer. After becoming familiar with the basic computer terminology learned in activity # 1, the students were given activity # 2, which specifically focused on being able to operate the computer i. e., 'basic-operation' tasks' (2), (3), and (4) in section 3. In doing the following activity, the students were presented with the handout below and, in pairs, had to read the directions and apply the steps on their own.

Getting Started
  1. Turn on computer.
  2. Put disk in disk drive.
  3. Click MSWord icon twice.
     (Note : this opens up the word processing software already installed on the start-up screen).
  4. Put all fingers on keyboard and type your name.
  5. Type in as many computer terms as you can remember (see step 3, activity # 1).
  6. Click *File* menu one time and drag to *Save* and release ; fill in information.
  7. Click *File* menu one time and drag to *Quit* and release.
  8. Click *Special* menu one time and drag to *Eject Disc* and release.
  9. Click *Special* menu one time and drag to *Shut down* and release.
  10. Congratulate yourself for successfully using the Macintosh Computer.

After completing the two preceding activities, the students were now ready to use the computer, specifically, for the writing course ('basic-operation' task (5), section 3) .

4. Advantages of Using the Computer in a Process Oriented Writing Class

The course took a process-focused approach to writing. Process oriented writing is a way of teaching writing that is different than a product oriented writing class. The product oriented approach focuses on what the student finally produces. Instruction emphasizes the linear development of writing ; Introduction, paragraphs (body) and conclusion. In taking a top-down approach, students first develop the introduction and then move on down to writing paragraphs and finally the conclusion. The teacher evaluates how successfully the student has developed the paper by looking at the final paper i. e. finished product. However, writing ideas and creating sentences does not simply flow from the brain to the paper in a neat, linear order. Shaping ideas into a neat and logical order is what may be the most difficult thing to do in writing a composition. And it is at this stage that the student needs the most training. As Petty points out, "The *product* is not behavior, nor does it represent what has gone on in the individual's mind. It is only a product ; *process* is what people do" (1988 : 38). Many feel this is what the teaching of writing requires. Teachers have to get the students to focus on the process of developing their ideas. In doing this, teachers need to be aware of what the students are doing and help them along in the process to do it effectively.

In a process writing course, the students have to first get their ideas on paper. Then, they have to shape their ideas so that what they want to say will eventually end up in a logical order. The process for doing this requires writing, and rewriting several drafts before the end product is complete. As Murray analyzes, "Writing is exploration-discovery of meaning, discovery of form-and the writer works back and forth, concentrating on one of the basic skills at a time, so that he can discover what he has to say and how to say it more efficiently" (p. 10). The idea of writing and revising drafts plays a seminal role in a process writing course. But, the process of rewriting previous ideas can be very difficult for the students. The student often hesitates to be involved in the writing process because he or she soesn't want to rewrite, change, add and eliminate thoughts on a composition that has already taken so much time to do. Eventually, the teacher spends a lot of time proofreading and making comments that could have been taken care of if the students took more interest in revising their original composition.

However, the computer in a writing class frees the teacher from the task of correcting too much, and more importantly it offers students a stimulation to reshape their compositions. When discussing the advantages of using a computer in a writing class, Richard/Amato stated, "Being able to delete material, move whole passages to the other parts of a document, select and change formats at will, write and send messages [e-mail], and perform numerous other functions does much to facilitate the writing process" (1988 : 216). The following reasons further offer several advantages of using the computer in a writing class :

● **Efficient** : Students are encouraged to experiment and to edit their own writing because mechanical changes can be easily done when editing. Moreover, language aids ; *Spelling check, Grammar* and *Thesaurus* are also easily available (see survey, Q4a).

● *Visual* : Printed copy looks professional and reinforces students' interest (see survey, Q4a, 2).
● *Stimulating* : Computers encourage a playful and experimental attitude towards revising ones own writing during the writing process without having to rewrite the whole text.
● *Peer evaluation* : In a process writing course, classmates are given tasks to help each other revise their drafts. Students usually hesitate to write on another classmate's paper and make suggestions. The computer eliminates this problem as students can exchange disks, make suggestions and hand them back to each other. Then, the students can open up their file on the disk and make the necessary changes right on the computer.

4. 1   Practical Writing Activities

At this point in the course, the students were ready to learn how to manipulate or move the text on the screen. In computer terminology, this can be referred to as *Copy, Cut* and *Paste*. As stated previously, the commands to move the text around, add and delete are quite convenient when the students need to revise their drafts. The following suggested computer activity allows the students to focus on writing skills that help to develop their ideas in logical order, and at the same time it teaches them how to manipulate the text on the screen.

Activity # 3

In this activity, the students learn to operate several commands used in editing (basic-operation task (5), section 3) . They are given a work sheet with directions on how to *Cut & Paste* (Part A). The students not only learn to move their text around but also practice   *Cohesion* and *Coherence* (part B), which are important for developing skills in writing in logical order within sentences and to connect ideas. The activity on the computer begins when the students are given a file. The contents of the file were previously prepared by the teacher. The students click on the file and screen # 1 appears. The contents of the file include a paragraph of a story. The sentences of the paragraph are in a scrambled order in part C. In order to emphasize practice in *Cohesion* and *Coherence,* the students are asked in part B, to put the story back in its original form. In the activity, they must insert transition words and use the *Spelling check* and *Thesaurus.*

A. Directions For Commands : *Cut & Paste*
1st : Highlight the word or section that you want to be moved.
2nd : Go to *Edit.* Click ; drag to *Cut* or *Copy* and release.
3rd : Move cursor to area where you want the word or section to be moved and click.
4th : Go to *Edit.* Click ; drag to *Paste* and release.
(Screen # 1)

B. Language Task : Developing good text : <u>Cohesion</u> and <u>Coherence</u>
1) Put the following story (C) in order :
2) Use the *Spelling* command to check spelling
3) Place the following transition words in logical places : <u>Eventually, Initially, When</u>
4) Next, in order to check your work, go to step II (see Activity # 4)
C. Text of paragraph in scrambled order :
● She hides this from her husband

- her husband will find out and she will have to choose between her husband's insistence that no white woman can drive a black one.
- more out of the need to have Odessa cleaning the house on time than out of any conviction, Miriam saves Odessa the long walk two mornings a week by picking her up on the way back from a convenient grocery.
- Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus, the blacks boycott the buses and Odessa begins the tiring routine of walking to and from the Thompson house.
- and her own sense that the bus boycott is right and should be supported.
- and his red-neck (narrow-minded, prejudiced) younger brother.

Activity # 4

In the next the task, the students learn how to copy their work and move it to another file. They are asked to move the corrected text from the preceding activity to another file, marked *original*. This file has the original version of the paragraph that they were required to put in order (see screen # 1). When the students copy their text and move it to the other file, they can self-correct their own work by comparing it to the original version (Screen # 2).

A. Directions for Commands *Copy* and *Paste* (moving data to another file)
1st : Highlight the section that you want to be moved.
2nd : Go to *Edit*, click ; drag to *Copy* and release.
3rd : Open your disk. Move cursor to file marked *original* and open.
(At this point, the students are now into the new file, in Screen # 2).
4th : Move cursor to part C (your composition), and click below.
5th : Go to *Edit*, click ; drag to *Paste* and release.
(Screen # 2)

Language Task :
1) Check your composition to the correct one in this file.
2) Use the *Thesaurus* command to replace Eventually, When and Initially with other synonyms.
(Note : The Computer thesaurus would suggest that Initially could be replaced by Primarily.)
B : Original Composition :
When Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus, the blacks boycott the buses and Odessa begins the tiring routine of walking to and from the Thompson house. Initially, more out of the need to have Odessa cleaning the house on time than out of any conviction, Miriam saves Odessa the long walk two mornings a week by picking her up on the way back from a convenient grocery. She hides this from her husband and his red-neck (narrow-minded, prejudiced) younger brother. Eventually her husband will find out and she will have to choose between her husband's insistence that no white woman can drive a black one and her own sense that the bus boycott is right and should be supported.
C : Your composition :
(student's composition would be pasted (added) here to compare above original version.)

Activity # 5

In the Faculty of Education at Kumamoto University, the 4th year students are required to write a graduate thesis, in English, on an area related to language studies. Consequently, part of the writing course, used in this study, was aimed at helping the students to develop research skills. An important research skill the students need to know is how to organize information, which they have collected from various readings on their thesis topic. One efficient tool for doing this is to first, form an outline. An outline is a useful heuristic device for organizing chunks of information into a shortened form. The next useful step is to summarize the information from the outline into prose, which can then be documented and used for the research paper.

In the next activity, the students are given practice on developing research skills by learning how to build an outline, and are then asked to make a summary of it. The activity also requires the students to use their previous learned *cut & paste* skills. In the task, the students are, first, given an outline with information missing (part A). Next, they are given the missing text in scrambled order (part B). They have to build the outline correctly and then compare it to the finished one, which is located on another file, in part C (see appendix). Finally, the students are asked to do a summary of the completed outline. The information for the activity was put into a file and loaded into the computers. The only thing the students needed to begin the task was to go the computer, start it up and click on the prepared file called *outline*. Next, the following screen would appear : (Screen # 3)

Language Task : Research Skills ; Building an Outline and Summarizing

1) Read the article
2) Using the *Cut* and *Paste* commands, put the main ideas from part B into the framework of the outline in part A
3) Compare your work with the original outline ; make corrections.
4) Summarize the article after comparing your completed outline with the original.

A

1. *The Early History of African-American Music*

A. Hardships the early Afro-Americans endured under slavery had an influence on their music

   1.

   2.

   3.

     a.

B. Influences of the Church on their music

   1.

   2.

   3.

C. Influences of African tradition.

   1.

     a.

     b.

   2.

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a.

B The text of the outline in scrambled order :

● These songs became known as "work songs" and reflected the conditions under which they lived in the new land.

● This new interpretation of the Christian songs gave birth to what is known as Gospel music or African-American Spirituals.

● They were separated from their families and were prevented from using their own language or practicing their own customs.

● They were also forced to work under terrible conditions.

● To lessen their suffering they sang in the fields where they toiled.

● Because of segregation, the early African Americans had to form their own churches.

● When they sang the songs, they added the flavor of their own African tradition.

● Inside the church, they could sing the Christian songs the way they wanted to.

● So, the music had to be energetic with a strong rhythmic beat.

● In Africa, music, song and dance were often used as a medium to awaken the attention of the "spirits" or the Gods.

● In this same fashion, they sang the Christian spiritual hymns or religious songs in church.

● The songs were adapted and changed to fit the African-American style.

4. 1 Summary of Activities Integrating the Computer With a Writing a Task ; Activities' # 3, 4, 5

In thinking about activities'# 3, # 4, and # 5, of course, the teacher could have opted not to use the computer to do these writing tasks. However, it would mean that the teacher would have to prepare several strips of paper, each representing the text sentences. The strips of paper containing each sentence would also have to be replicated for each pair or group of students, who would be asked to put the strips in the correct order. Then, in the case of activity # 5, the students could be given a work sheet with part A on it. This could be done, but it would be quite messy because each group of students would have to fumble around as they try to match up twelve strips of paper to fit the framework of the outline (part A). Not only would it be messy, but it would take much time for the teacher to prepare materials for the activity. On the other hand, if the teacher does the activity by computer, the task is done quite neatly, efficiently, and with much less time to prepare. Thus, a simple example of how the computer can help facilitate the language learning process.

5. Feedback from the Students

In the study, two surveys were carried out for the purpose of finding out how the students felt about using computers in their writing class. The following two questionnaires were given to the students. The first was designed as a pre-task questionnaire (results in parenthesis (%)) ; before the students started using computers in the writing class, and the other a post-task questionnaire (results in brackets [%]) ; The latter was given to the students when they were six weeks into the course to analyze their progress. The questions and results of the two surveys are as follows :

● *Subjects : 40 students, 4th year-Faculty of Education-Kumamoto-U-Writing Class*

● *Pre-task = (%)   Post-task = [%] 6 weeks later*

1. How is your typing ability ? (5 = very good 1 = poor)

a. 5 (5%)   b. 4 (5%)   c. 3 (10%)   d. 2 (35%)   e. 1 (45%)
    [6%]   [6%]   [30%]   [42%]   [16%]

2. How is your computer ability ?
a. 5 (2%)   b. 4 (2%)   c. 3 (2%)   d. 2 (33%)   e. 1 (61%)
    [2%]   [10%]   [2%]   [56%]   [30%]

3. How comfortable are you with using a computer in Englisn (E) ? In Japanese (J) ?
(*5 = very comfortable 1 = not at all comfortable*)
a. 5 (E: 10%) [12%]   b. 4 (E: 25%) [22%]   c. 3 (E: 38%) [44%]   d. 2 (E: 21%) [22%]   e. 1 (E: 5%) [0%]
     (J: 5%) [14%]   (J: 22%) [28%]   (J: 45%) [33%]   (J: 20%) [22%]   (J: 8%) [3%]

4. How comfortable are you with using a computer to write a paper in this class ?
a. 5 (12.5%)   b. 4 (22.5%)   c. 3 (45%)   d. 2 (17.5%)   e. 1 (2.5%)
    [22%]   [31%]   [28%]   [29%]   [0%]

4a. Give 2 reasons for your response in Q4. (This question was asked in post-task survey only.)
1. Easy to organize or change [49%]   4. Takes too much time [28%]
2. Printed copy looks professional [49%]   5. Difficult to think and type on computer
3. Spelling check [48%]   at same time [26%]

5. Do you think computer skills will be necessary for your future ? For teaching in the future ?
(**5 = very necessary 1 = not at all necessary**)
a. 5 (Future: 83%) [72%]   b. 4 (Future: 16%) [25%]   c. 3 (Future: 2%) [3%]   d. 2⁻   e. 1⁻
    (Teaching: 70%) [64%]   (Teaching: 20%) [28%]   (Teaching: 10%) [8%]   d. 2⁻   e. 1⁻

5. 1 An Analysis of the Data

As the results of questions 1 and 2 show, most students rated their typing and computer ability very low. The latter fact offered another reason why the students needed to be given activities that first taught them how to use the computer. One positive analysis from the results of questions 1 and 2 was that in the post task survey [%], six weeks later, the students began to feel more confident about using the computer. Interestingly, the responses from question 3 indicate that the students didn't have any problem with using the computer in English as opposed to their native language. Question 4 asked the students about their view on using the computer in the writing course. Since most of the students had little or no experience using computers, it could be expected that they were not highly confident about using them in the writing class. The results of question 4 point this out. However, if the second survey were given four months later as opposed to six weeks later, a higher rating might be expected. The responses from question 4a show, in almost a 2 : 1 ratio, that the students clearly see the advantages of using a computer for their class work. Finally, the results of question 5 support the points made earlier in the study (2.2) that in relation to the learners, students are motivated to interact with computers because they feel it will create skills for future benefits.

6. Long Term Perspective : Present and Future

In the very near future most students will have access to a computer. There will be more and more uses of the computer in the school curriculum, and therefore in foreign language learning. In that sense, the future is speeding towards us. Students are already highly motivated to get information from the *internet* and to talk to the world by sending messages via electronic mail (*e-mail*). Although this paper is determined to focus on introductory or basic uses of the computer, it is worthwhile to at least mention the fact that there is so much more offered by computer technology and, consequently, at the finger tips of teachers. In just considering using the *internet*,

a future study needs to be done demonstrating ways to get the students involved in using it for educational purposes. For example, there are already discussion groups available, where class-rooms from different countries, under the control of teachers, can exchange information related to a similar subject that they are studying. Activities are planned jointly by the teachers, who commucicate via *e-mail*. In turn, their students can work on the tasks with an assigned student (keypal) in the exchange class using *e-mail*.

The potential for making language learning more meaningful is greatly enhanced by using sources such as *internet* and *e-mail*. The materials become much more authentic as students are given opportunities to use the target language for real purposes of communication. Moreover, *internet* and *e-mail* are very easy to operate. This fact, will be encouraging to the language teacher as he or she begins to integrate computer technology into the classroom.

7. Conclusion

This study was specifically aimed at the teachers who have hesitated using the computer in course work for fear that one must need highly-technical (*high-tech*) skills for using them. In taking a *low-tech* approach, this paper tried to demonstrate that some very simple knowledge of how to operate a computer is all that is needed. To further provide an impetus for teachers to integrate computers into course work, this paper presented some theoretical justifications for why the language teacher might want to use some of the technology that is available. At the classroom level, the study attempted to show how teachers could apply some basic uses of the computer into class work. This was done by presenting activities that have already been used in a writing class. The activities presented in this study were deliberately kept simple.

Simplicity should not be thought of as lessening the effectiveness of an activity. As most teachers know, activities that are complex can often slow down the learning process whereas simple activities ; tasks that have clear objectives and are in the range of the students' level, can do much to facilitate learning. In conclusion, it is hoped that from this type of study more teachers will be encouraged from time to time to use the available resources in computer labs as one more way to enhance foreign language learning.

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Appendix (completed text from activity # 5)

C Completed Outline
1. The Early History of African-American Music
A. Hardships the early African Americans endured under slavery had an influence on their music

1. They were separated from their families and were prevented from using their own language or practicing their own customs.
2. They were also forced to work under terrible conditions.
3. To lessen their suffering, they sang in the fields where they toiled.
   a. These songs became known as "work songs" and reflected the conditions under which they lived in the new land.

B. Influences of the Church on their music

1. Because of segregation, the early African Americans had to form their own churches.
2. Inside the church, they could sing the Christian songs the way they wanted to.
3. When they sang the songs, they added the flavor of their own African tradition.

C. Influences of African tradition

1. In Africa, music, song and dance were often used as a medium to awaken the attention of the "spirits" or the Gods.
   a. So, the music had to be energetic with a strong rhythmic beat.
   b. In this same fashion, they sang the Christian spiritual hymns or religious songs in church.
2. The songs were adapted and changed to fit the African-American style.
   a. This new interpretation of the Christian songs gave birth to what is known as Gospel music or African-American Spirituals.