Notes by Hal Schiffman, Facilitator

Saturday Session:

List of URL’s has been prepared (by Jim Nye) and is on the following site:
http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/su/southasia/lctl/

Other issues that emerged from this session:

a. What is the demand/market for Distance Learning? How well do we meet this currently? How can we even know what the demand is?

b. How can higher Education and the NRC’s meet the demand for competence in our languages? Are we currently responding adequately?

c. What coordination do/can NRC’s of the Inner/South Asian region play in providing instruction in the LCTL’s?

We need to do things like cooperate on summer institutes, preparation of Web-based materials, collaborative development of other materials to make them meet broader needs, and make them up-datable periodically.

Sunday Session:

We discussed the following issues and topics, but found it hard to reach definitive conclusions. Having been starved for resources for years, we find ourselves hard-put to respond to demands that we now mount large-scale projects. Personnel are wanting, since job opportunities have been few and far between, and our teaching materials, such as they are, are ill-adapted to immediate use in DL contexts.

1. Sharing Resources: funding for DL students.

Currently we can only respond to the needs of students who can come to us, either in AY programs or in summer intensive programs. With funding categories broadened beyond the old Title-6 in-house awards, or ‘portable’ T6’s that students can bring to a summer institute, we need a third category: T6’s for non-resident students at non NRC Centers who could access our sites via DL. How to fund this? New category of scholarship/fellowship? Vouchers that Centers can give out? Not clear.

2. Setting priorities for Languages and Levels:
Whose priorities are uppermost? Academic or national security? Who will set these priorities, using which criteria? Different for Inner Asia and South Asia.

a. Summer Institutes are probably a must, a la SEASSI.


c. Knowledge of and implementation of technology, web-based facilities, etc.: we need to have summer institutes for the teachers as well as the students, so they can learn to use the technology.

d. What will this cost? Hard to know how to estimate.

3. How to ‘federate’ ourselves in order to collaborate:

a. What superstructure do we need? (cf. successful models such as SEASSI, others?)

b. How to encourage teamwork in the production of new DL materials?

Team needs a producer, director, programmers, pedagogists, native-speakers, data-entry people, TV people, font specialists, etc. …

c. How to sustain efforts after the federal money disappears? (This lesson was not learned in the past; after federal money waned in 70’s, universities downsized programs, dropped people, discontinued courses.) Language programs are an on-going process; they are always ‘works-in-progress’ and must be updated constantly.

d. How to share knowledge about DL pedagogy with teachers trained in previous methodologies? How to give incentives to teachers to upgrade, update, innovate? In LCTL’s, teachers has to be a ‘jack of all trades’—devise the materials, teach the course, demonstrate the technology; no luxury of specialization of labor.