Project Year

2001

Project Team

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Project Title

Italian Drill Program

Audience

All Peabody students must complete four semesters of foreign language study. This program is targeted to Peabody first-year Italian language students. The introductory Italian course enrolls 60-80 students every semester; German and French enroll similar numbers. This program has the potential to expand beyond Italian to be useful for introductory students of all languages offered at Peabody.

Pedagogical Issue

Language study requires regular, individual practice in a number of skill areas, with immediate feedback being extremely valuable where possible. A solid grounding in vocabulary and grammatical concepts, to be achieved by out-of-class drilling, would permit more efficient use of class time and more focus on interactive verbal skills.

Solution

This project team proposes to create a virtual language laboratory through which students can test themselves at their own pace and on their own time. The software will offer immediate feedback, so students will be informed, right away, as to whether or not they understand the concepts. The tool, when completed, will include the following features: a complete set of drills for *Italian I* and *II* that match chapters in the textbook being used at Peabody; a notes field, which can remind students of grammatical concepts as needed; advanced response matching, to allow for drills of more complicated concepts; an online form where students can give feedback on the program; and a downloadable version so that students may use the program on their home computers. Although this first version of the virtual language laboratory is being developed for Italian, with minor modifications (additional buttons for other types of diacritical marks) the program could, in the future, be used for any language. The drills are written in simple text files and could easily be adapted to match any textbook. The resulting program could be helpful for all first-year language students.

Technologies Used

Programming – C++