Project Year
2003

Project Team
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Project Title
Italian Drill for Music Students, Final Phase

Audience
Language students and language instructors

Pedagogical Issue
Students of Italian at Peabody require numerous opportunities for practicing aural comprehension and paragraph length writing skills. Currently, students engage in aural exercises on an occasional basis in the language lab or in the classroom. The instructor corrects each transcribed passage by hand, which is time-consuming. In addition, commonly available language drills test only simple grammatical phrases, vocabulary, and single-sentence translation, leaving more complex writing assignments to be evaluated with traditional classroom methods.

Solution
This team proposes to develop two online drills that will test aural comprehension. Students will listen to audio clips of native Italian speakers and transcribe what they hear. Their transcriptions will be graded online; students will be offered the opportunity to implement corrections and submit their work a second time. Similarly, for complex writing (composition) assignments, students will write and upload short essays that can be graded online using software developed for this project. Some checks for spelling and grammar will be performed automatically, relieving the instructor of some time-consuming routine tasks. The pedagogical advantages to this approach include skills improvement, generated by this automated method to train and improve aural skills; evaluation, since aural skills can be further emphasized in the classroom; and, finally, consistency, since all homework can be completed through a single interface. The advantages for the faculty member are enhanced productivity, since listening lab homework will be automatically graded, and greater accuracy, since spelling and some small grammatical errors will be automatically corrected in the written assignments.

Technologies Used
C/C++