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Language Resource Center Valuable Asset for Students

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Language Resource Center Valuable Asset for Students

January 18, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Since its creation in 1990, the Language Resource Center (LRC) has provided a quiet place for students to study and develop their foreign language skills.

Conveniently located in room 107 of Buck Memorial Library, it is a coveted homework spot equipped with four tutor tables, four iMacs, ten PCs, a printing station and a typewriter. Foreign language books, magazines, dictionaries, DVDs and USB headsets are available for checkout from the student-run resource desk.



Michael Henry '12 and Jennifer Fitton '11 study at the Language Resource Center.

The popularity of the space may also be due to the beauty and history of the room. Remnants of the original 1922 architecture can be spotted throughout the LRC. In the corner, students often gather around the same, original fireplace that generations of Titans warmed their fingers by, when Buck was the University's main library.

Today, replacing the fire, hangs a flat-screen T.V. where students can watch films from around the world using the LRC's region-free DVD player.

According to LRC Coordinator Allison Weiss, the center is in the process of expanding their technological resource library. The LRC has already obtained a digital camera and four Flip video cameras that are available for use by foreign language classes. "We are trying to integrate technology into the learning experience. We want to enhance the LRC with equipment that makes learning exciting," said Weiss.

However, Weiss believes that for students taking courses within the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures or the Department of Hispanic Studies, the major appeal of the LRC is the availability of capable and caring tutors.

"Students can get assistance with any level of language learning at the LRC. Our tutors can help students develop their reading, writing, study or conversation skills," said Weiss.

Tutors are available in all languages offered at IWU, which include Chinese, French, German, Italian, Greek, Latin, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Often, the LRC hires international students to tutor in their native languages.

Most tutors are accomplished students who have studied abroad and are recommended by professors. Sessions with the LRC tutors are believed to be so helpful that professors often require their lower-level language classes to attend one-on-one sessions to practice speaking in a foreign language.

"In a classroom with 20 students, there's limited time to practice speaking skills. So, it's important to get the students speaking outside of class," said Co-Chair of the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures Department and Associate Professor of German Sonja Fritzsche, "I don't care what the students talk about as long as it's in German."

As LRC German Tutor Amanda Stoeke explains, practicing a foreign language with a peer is a different experience than talking with a professor. "Sometimes students are more comfortable talking to other students, so in that way, I can increase their understanding of the language," said Stoeke.

Always working to strengthen the quality of tutoring offered, Weiss has developed an on-line training course for LRC tutors. "This Moodle course can help make good tutors great," said Weiss.

Also new this year is an online sign-up application on the [LRC's website](#).

By clicking on the [Tutor Sign-Up Link](#), students can see which tutors are available at what times and make an appointment that fits into their schedules. "It's so easy now, you don't even have to leave your dorm room to sign up," said Weiss.

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