

LEARNING LINK GOES ONLINE

Sony published the first issue of Learning Link in 1995. The newsletter soon gained a reputation as the reliable source for language learning technology news. Issues have been educator-driven and packed with user tips and lab activities, advice and insights into new technologies, grant offers, financing options, product information, trend reports and profiles of educators making the most of technology.

Now, a good thing is about to get even better. Starting with our Fall 2001 issue, you'll find Learning Link online. Yes, we're going electronic. No more print newsletters will be coming your way.

So, if you like Learning Link – find it chock full of pedagogical support for the purchase of a language learning system, a tool for lobbying administration, a guide to funding resources and user and product information – and want to be notified of future issues, please complete the enclosed business reply card and return it to Sony. We need to get your e-mail address and those of colleagues at your school or college who should be on our mailing list ASAP. If we don't receive your e-mail address, this will be your last issue of Learning Link, and we will not be able to alert you to future issues.

We hope to see you online in the fall!

COMING
FALL
2001

WWW.SONY.COM/LEARNINGLINK

Learning Link Goes Online	Cover
The Global Village.....	2
AP Testing Goes Digital	3
Breaking The Money Barrier	4
Air Time	6
Say Goodnight, Gracie	8

LEARNING LINK

THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

In 1992, School Superintendent John Jones and a few concerned residents knew the world wasn't going to come to the Quillayute Valley School District in Forks, Washington.

SO, THEY DECIDED TO BRING FORKS TO THE WORLD.

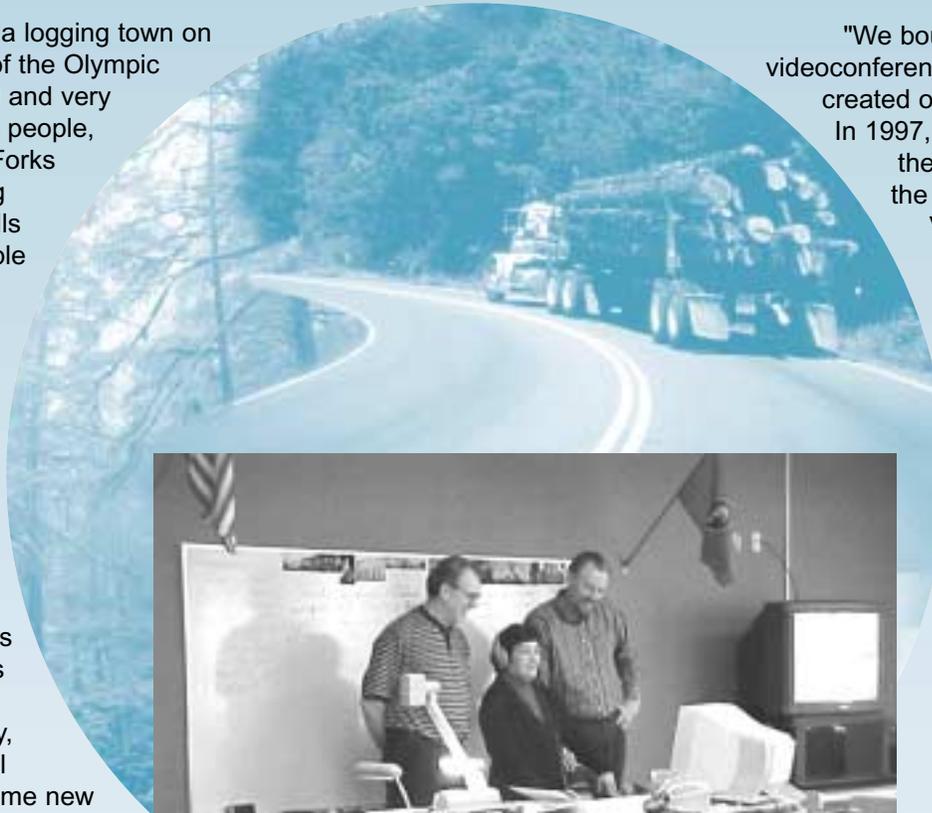
Forks, Washington is a logging town on the western portion of the Olympic Peninsula. It's the rural and very isolated home to 3,500 people, and not too long ago, Forks was a small town in big trouble. The lumber mills had closed; many people were unemployed and young people were leaving for better opportunities.

"Low-paying service industry jobs were all Forks could offer," says Quillayute Valley School District Superintendent John Jones. "Local educators and community leaders knew if we didn't give people a reason to stay, expand our educational offerings and attract some new residents and businesses, Forks would be a ghost town."

Today, Forks is very much alive – thanks to some very determined residents and John Jones. Nine years ago, John and his team at the Quillayute Valley School District launched an ambitious technology plan for the future, and a Sony Symphony® Learning System is a key component of Fork's outreach initiative.

Fork's High-Tech Turnaround

It all started with a 1993 grant from the Department of Commerce and funds from the Quillayute School District. Forks took the money, installed a fiber-optic backbone network, wired every classroom in the district and put a computer on every teacher's desk. This was cutting-edge, and soon Century Tel, a local telecommunications company, and Nortel, a Canadian networking company, took notice. Forks was selected as the charter school for the Century Tel Infrastructure Investment project to bring online distance learning to rural school districts. More high-tech enhancements followed.



"We bought and installed videoconferencing systems and created online classrooms.

In 1997, with a grant from the state, I launched the K-12 Washington Virtual Classroom Consortium.

Teachers from nine rural districts were now able to interact visually, and we expanded our course offerings dramatically.

Then," adds John, "we built a new addition to Forks High School – our foreign language classroom and home to our Sony Symphony® Learning System.

Photo: L. to Rt. Jim Bennet, Technology Consultant, Rosa Lincoln, Foreign Language Instructor and John Jones, Superintendent of Schools

The Flexible Choice

Scheduling can be a problem for small schools, according to John. "We had students who wanted to study one or more languages, but couldn't fit these courses in their schedules. A language learning system, we believed, would offer us some much-needed flexibility." John and Rosa Lincoln, Fork's foreign language teacher, had seen the Sony Symphony System at another school. They liked it and invited Glenn Priest of Education Technology Specialists in Vashon, Washington to the school to run a demo. "We saw that the Sony system offered virtually unlimited flexibility and gateways to the future," says John. "The quality of the system was evident. Plus, it was very user-friendly. We signed on the dotted line."

“The Sony Symphony System has had a tremendous impact. Students are completely immersed in their study when they’re in our lab. They are part of the language, use it more, comprehend more and incorporate more vocabulary. I just don’t think you can replicate that level of learning in a traditional classroom setting.”

**John Jones, Superintendent,
Quillayute Valley School District**

A System for Success

Education Technology Specialists installed a 32-station, multimedia Sony Symphony System. Twenty-two stations equipped with Sony ER-8020 student recorders and 10 equipped with Sony Soloist™ Digital PC Comparative Recorder Software. All Soloist stations are wired to the school’s network and the Internet, so once again Forks is on the cutting-edge. They were the first school to install an analog/digital networked system with a VCR, DVD, CD-ROM, video presentation stand and full video capability.

Up and running since early 2000, the Sony Symphony System easily integrated into the school’s network, curriculum and high-tech plans. “Forks has always offered Spanish and French, and most college-bound students enroll in classes. Since installing the Sony Symphony System, foreign language enrollment has increased dramatically, and we have been able to expand our language offerings,” notes John.

Through the Virtual High School and the Sony Symphony System, John reports, students have studied Latin and German — just because they wanted to. The 10 Soloist stations are used for proficiency testing, according to the school, and student recordings are sent to Educational Testing Services on CD-ROM. Forks will soon offer ESL classes, and John and Education Technology Specialists are exploring the idea of offering a community-wide immersion course in lost languages for Native Americans in a neighboring school district.

“Students love working with the system. They’re focused, on task and delighted all class period. And, Rosa Lincoln is a reborn language teacher since we installed the Sony Symphony System. She’s having a lot more fun, and the system has helped her to remove many barriers to communications and learning.”

Future - Forward

Through the Virtual Classroom Consortium, students at Forks High School can choose from and earn credit for many electives. Online and videoconferencing course offerings include: history, global studies, literature, virtual home and family life, high-tech A+ certification programs, language studies and water-quality testing. The town has a technology center, and plans are currently underway to wire the town to a high-speed DSL network.

“I don’t expect Forks to become the next Silicon Valley. I do expect, however, that our technology will positively impact the local economy and bring us a broader view of the world,” says John. “Technology is giving our children and their families more choices, and that can only better prepare them for the future. I’m pretty proud of what we’ve done here.”

FYI!

AP TESTING GOES DIGITAL

Education Testing Services (ETS) in Princeton is piloting the acceptance of student recordings for the speaking section of the foreign language AP exams in digital audio format. ETS accepts Zip Disks®, CDRs or Compact Flash Cards. In order to submit your AP student’s speaking section responses on a media other than cassette tapes, you must call the College Board Advanced Placement Programs at **1-877-274-6474.**

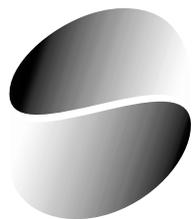


BREAKING THE MONEY BARRIER

Funding can be the biggest obstacle to the purchase of a language learning system.

Now, Sony steps up to that challenge with a new and flexible funding option—and it's easier than ever to get the language learning system you want ASAP.

INTRODUCING



Sony Financial Services

Looking for a complete language learning technology solution? Want to update your existing system? Integrate computers or distance learning technology? Sony Financial Services offers a number of lease/purchase options for public and private schools – all very flexible, structured to meet your school's precise needs and available through your Sony Authorized Reseller.

"Sony Financial Services can make it easy and affordable for schools and government organizations to acquire the technology they need," says Brenda Witel, Dealer Sales Manager, Sony Financial Services. "Many schools wait until they have the capital allocation before making purchases. Sony Financial Services can provide the additional financing required to obtain the equipment they need, at the time it is needed, with financing options that complement the school's budgetary requirements." It's efficient to lease/purchase from Sony Financial Services. Firstly, the application process is quick and simple. Secondly, Sony Financial Services' financing professionals have the expertise to structure applications to meet the unique needs and requirements of each school. Finally, and most importantly, Sony Financial Services offer affordable, total financing solutions.

Sony Financial Services provides a turnkey solution, financing Sony and non-Sony equipment, furniture, installation and training in one affordable package. No more waiting to get all the funds you need.

Sony Lease/Purchase Options

With a lease/purchase plan from Sony Financial Services, you select the terms of financing. A Sony Authorized reseller delivers and installs your equipment and you pay for the technology as it is being used.

For Public Schools: The Municipal Lease/Purchase Plan is an equity-building lease/purchase option – and it's easy for public schools to meet the necessary requirements. Simply appropriate the money for the first lease payment in your current budget, then pay for your technology as you use it – at a preferred interest rate. Pay \$1.00 at the end of your lease and the equipment is yours. Of course, the plan's documentation includes a non-appropriation clause.

For Private Schools: Sony Financial Services offers a comprehensive range of commercial financing programs that offer flexible terms at competitive rates.

For All Schools: Terms are very flexible. Since Sony Financial Services is a specialty finance company, you can configure your agreement to meet any specific term and budget objectives you may have, and there are no penalties for pre-payment. Choose the length of your lease – from 12-60 months. Finance the full or partial purchase price. It's all up to you. At the end of your lease, equipment can be returned without further financial obligation. If you want to upgrade to the latest that technology has to offer, you will have to enter into a new lease.

The Application Process

Your Authorized Sony Reseller will help you to select the equipment you need and take you through the lease application to structure the most affordable and flexible lease for your school. All transactions are quoted individually, and our resellers will help to guide you through the application submission and approval process.

"The one-page lease application, is very user-friendly, and our professionals work diligently to get fast approvals," says Brenda. "If your paperwork is completed correctly, approvals can take less than a week."

Make the Call

Weston High School, in Fairfield County, Connecticut selected the lease/purchase option from Sony Financial Services, and in a little over three months, they had the language learning system they wanted fully installed. For more information, call your Authorized Sony Reseller or Brenda Witel, Dealer Sales Manager, Sony Financial Services, at **1-877-751-2168**.

IT'S SMART TO FINANCE WITH SONY

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL
TAKES THE MUNICIPAL
LEASE/PURCHASE OPTION

- **100% Financing:** Sony Financial Services provides one-stop financing for all your language learning technologies. Bundle your system, peripherals (including equipment from other manufacturers), furniture and installation into a single financing package.
- **Flexible Payment Structures:** Lease payments are designed to meet your school's budget and needs. Sony Financial Services offer 12-60 month terms with more flexibility than other types of financing. Plus, you can repay your lease in full before the end of the term without any pre-payment penalty.
- **Preferred Interest Rates:** School and government interest rates are very competitive.
- **Maintains Your Capital Reserves:** Leasing won't disrupt your existing credit lines. No down payment is required, and monthly lease payments are fixed, at a lower interest rate and often less than monthly purchase payments.
- **Maximizes Your Equipment Budget:** With no down payments and low monthly payments, leasing improves your cash flow and simplifies budget planning.
- **A Non-Appropriation Clause:** Lease/purchase documentation includes the necessary non-appropriation clause.

1999

"The foreign language department at Weston High School knew they wanted a language learning system," says Doug Rice, of Chester Technical Services, a Sony Authorized Reseller. "They'd done their research and knew they wanted the 28-station Sony Symphony System – fully loaded. Their School Board, however, could not commit all the necessary funding in one year."

2000

Chip Howe, Doug's associate at Chester Technical Services, presented a smart option; a municipal lease/purchase option plan from Sony Financial Services. Weston High School took the three-year financing, and their system, furniture and peripherals were installed and up and running for the start of the Fall 2000 school year.

According to Chester Technical Services, the purchase price for the Sony Symphony System Weston's foreign language department wanted was three times the funds they had available. A number of large capital purchases had been budgeted for the 2000 fiscal year. Time was also of the essence. The system had to be in place for the Fall 2000 semester.

Buying and leasing through Sony Financial Services facilitated the purchase. The coordination of funding, delivery, installation and training was easier than with other forms of financing. What's more, Sony Financial Services covered the lease/purchase option of the Sony Symphony System, furniture, installation and peripheral equipment, even from third-parties.

2001

Weston High School's 28-station Sony Symphony System has been up and running since September. Doug reports that teachers and students love the system. In fact, approximately 500 students in split class sessions use the system every week.

All 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students in the Weston School District study Spanish. Students in the 6th through 12th grade have a choice of Spanish, French and Latin, and over 90% of the students study a language. In the high school's language lab, the emphasis is on listening and speaking.

We understand that teachers play films with foreign language sub-titles to improve comprehension, and they are seeing very positive results. Students are more comfortable speaking and interest in studying a foreign language has increased. Student oral portfolios also show they are making substantial progress – and the Sony Symphony System is meeting expectations.

WORDS OF FINANCING WISDOM

When leasing, you must remember this:

- **Work the numbers**
A lease/purchase option will impact your school budget for the length of the lease, so you will need to budget expense for several years.
- **Plan ahead**
Your system will be delivered after the lease process is completed, so begin the financing process long before your scheduled installation date.
- **Know your school funding policies**
Your district council attorney may need to get involved in the financing—depending on the dollar amount—and this may extend your internal lease approval process to 90 days.

AIR TIME

Q How much time a week do students actually spend communicating in their second language?

A Twenty-seven seconds.

Yes, each student has only 27 seconds "air time." That's according to observations done in Austria, Germany and Switzerland and published in Vienna in 1994.* In fact, Ekkehard Sprenger of the Goethe Institute who works with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Olympia, Washington believes, after visiting classrooms over the last 18 months, that students may even spend less than 27 seconds speaking their target language.

Language learning systems can help to dramatically increase student air time, while aiding classroom management, monitoring and accountability. Highly interactive, systems also help to keep students interested and on task—and there's more. With a multimedia learning system, it's easier and faster to group and pair students and to keep them talking in their target language for longer periods of time. Learning systems are the smart and efficient way to:

- Maximize second language acquisition.
- Deliver instruction to larger numbers of students.
- Individualize instruction and provide assessment and feedback.
- Change pairs and groups without using up precious classroom time – and that can increase student air time.
- Transition students from one activity to another.
- Utilize all cooperative learning formats to vary activities.
- Record or save digital audio files on a network drive or audiotape for later review.
- Increase student motivation by adding an accountability factor and a performance record.
- Share one student's, group's or pair's performance with the entire class.



*BY ANNE
MUELLER*

GOING SHOPPING

Teenagers love to shop – or at least hang-out at the mall. "Going Shopping" is a beginning level learning unit. The goal of this unit is to engage students in "real world" activities and maximize student air time. Going Shopping is a two-part, highly interactive unit and will take several class sections to complete. Part one is "Pre-shopping Activities," and part two is "Catalog Shopping."

This activity makes use of the "Student Select" mode – a new function available with Sony Conductor™ Companion Software and Soloist™ Digital PC Comparative Recorder Software. In Student Select mode, each student can "phone in" and select a student to pair with for oral exercises.

Don't have a Sony Symphony System? You can still use this learning unit. Content can be adapted to a traditional classroom setting. A learning system will, however, make it easier to record and evaluate student work, add greater flexibility to pairings, streamline classroom management, and dramatically increase student air time.

Want to increase air time ASAP? Go to www.sony.com/education in the "activities" area. You'll find a step-by-step guide to this engaging learning unit and all the worksheets you'll need—even an evaluation form. The guide and forms will make it easier for teachers – in their language labs or classrooms – to custom-design the activity to allow an easy transition from one partner to another. That will facilitate your role as an observer, intervening in transactions if students need assistance and take note of topics that may need re-teaching – and, most importantly, help you to increase student air time beyond the 27 second mark.

*Source: Bundesministerium fuer Unterricht und Kunst (ed), "Zukunfts Forum – Sprachen lernen – Menschen verstehen: Eine Herausforderung," Wien, 1994 S. 60. (Department of Education and Arts (ed), "The Future – Learning Languages – Understanding People: A Challenge," Vienna, 1994, p. 60.



STUDENTS LEARN A LOT GOING SHOPPING

Content: Shopping

Vocabulary: Money, numbers, stores, phone courtesies, addresses

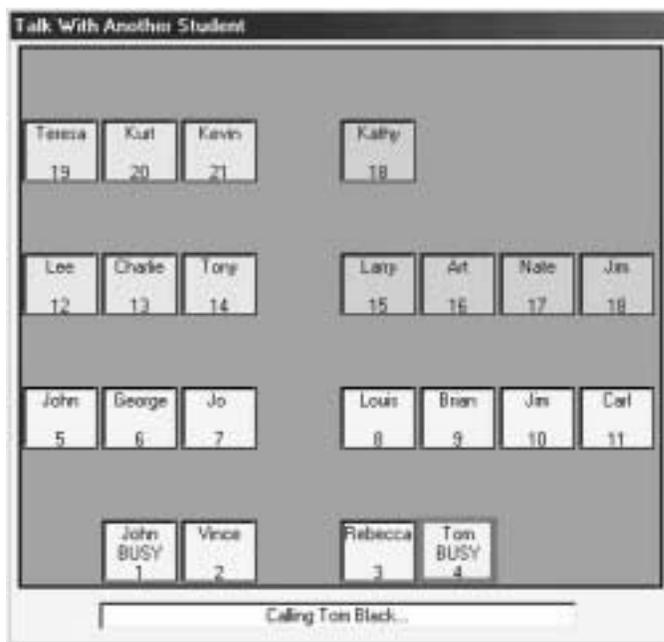
Grammar: Adjective agreement, formal form

Functions: Make and respond to greetings; respond to basic commands; identify and list; express quantity; give address and telephone numbers; state likes and dislikes; express location; use simple descriptive phrases; use numbers, prices, times in common situations; ask yes/no questions; request assistance; confirm obtained information and ask for information and questions.

Level: First or second year

STUDENT SELECT MODE PUTS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN CONTROL

Sony knows flexibility is key to effective teaching. Sony's Conductor™ Companion Software works with Soloist Digital PC Comparative Digital Recorders and makes it easy for students to select who they will pair with for aural/oral exercises – and that gives teachers more teaching options and more classroom control. The software adds the "Students Select" option to the "Pair Setting" dialog. Click the "start" button, and students using the Soloist software see a display of the classroom layout similar to that shown on the teacher's console. To select partners, student simply click on the name of the student they want to pair with. The dialog informs the teacher of all student selections. The teacher then clicks OK, and the student pairs are ready to work.



"SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE..."

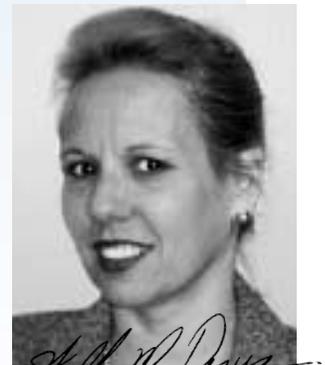
I don't know how many of you are old enough to remember "The Burns and Allen Show." It's a classic from the Golden Age of Television. At the end of every show, George and Gracie stepped in front of the curtain and ran through their shtick. Gracie would go off on some hair-brained track, and George would turn to her and say, "Say Goodnight, Gracie," and the show would come to a close.

America's tastes in television changed, and, sadly, Gracie died. George went solo, started making movies and became one of our most treasured comedians. Why am I going on about this? To make the point that fads, fashions and media come and go – and sometimes you have to say goodbye to the old and hello to the new.

Print is a great media. It's tactile. You can cozy-up with it and read it at your leisure. There will always be a place for print, but not at Learning Link. In the Fall 2001 school year, Learning Link is going online. Sony's team of writers, designers, technology gurus and product and marketing professionals are currently working to develop an electronic format and design.

Electronic delivery will allow us to better meet your information needs. We'll be able to increase the number of articles we publish and increase our coverage. Learning Link online will be far more interactive. At a click, you'll have a direct link to Sony, including product information, dealer contacts, user testimonials and customer service. Electronic delivery will lend a far greater sense of immediacy. We'll be able to supplement scheduled issues with breaking news updates and respond quickly to your questions and feedback. Accessing Learning Link on-line will also make it easier for you to click and go directly to the articles you want to read. You'll be able to click, download, save or forward issues and articles to colleagues and friends – and you'll save some trees.

So, now's the time to say, "Goodnight, Learning Link print, hello Learning Link online." This is the last issue that you'll receive via snail mail. A notification of the next issue will arrive on your virtual desktop in the fall. If you send us your e-mail address, that is. Please complete the enclosed business reply card or respond online right away. We don't want you to miss the Link.



Stella Derum
Marketing Manager
Sony Education Systems

LEARNING LINK

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