

# Language Studies Technology Project

by Sharon Sellars and Chad Garrett

## Overview

The Language Studies Technology Project (LSTP) resulted from a combination of need and opportunity. The university's Language Lab is currently using equipment that is over a decade old, so the department and its students **need** updated technology. With the renovation of Stabler Hall, we have the **opportunity** to replace this equipment and create a much more versatile space that integrates technology for students and faculty.

This first phase of the LSTP had a simple goal: determine how to create a modern learning space for students and teaching space for faculty. Based largely on the Language Resource Center Questionnaire and the Faculty Needs Assessment Questionnaire completed by DISLS in the Fall 2004, our findings have also been informed by faculty comments, installations at other institutions, and research in learning technology/space design. This document highlights those findings and the three options at our disposal.

In the next phase, the department will decide which option best meets its goals and what other work needs to be done to prepare for implementation. This second phase should be complete by Thanksgiving. Subsequent phases will include planning, installing, testing, and assessing the project.

## Goals

The goals of the first phase were essentially this proposal and its options. The end goals of all phases, though, will depend on the option chosen. These ultimate goals could include the following:

- To create a space devoted to language studies in which all students have computers at their seats
- To provide an informal, technology-rich communal space in which language students can collaborate, share cultures, and enhance their language learning
- To provide students with updated digital learning resources in a variety of forms (audio, video, images, etc.)
- To integrate modern digital audio listening/recording capabilities into student learning inside and outside the classroom
- To provide faculty with a comfortable, non-threatening environment to develop and test technology-rich curricula
- To provide instructors with multimedia capabilities inside traditional classrooms

## Options

Through the project, we have identified three available options, each of which implements technology in different ways. Before moving into the specifics of each option, however, we should address the one thing they all have in common: all the equipment and furniture in Stabler Hall 205 will be replaced:

A small collaboration/lounge area would replace the existing large check-in counter. Here students could work in small groups, use their personal laptop computers, study together, etc. The area where the six computers are in a circle would be replaced by a network closet to securely house the networking equipment and hopefully audio/visual materials, supplies, carts. The remainder of the space would be completed by new furniture: desks, comfortable chairs that can roll and maneuver easily, presentation station and drop down screen. New lighting, flooring, ceiling tiles, paint, and HVAC system would complete the area. There will be 24 student stations with laptop computers that are bolted to the desk or in a locked drawer at each seat. Why laptops? Laptops are smaller and will give the student more room to write and study—plus they allow for greater visibility for both the student and instructor. Due to the space limitations of the

room (square footage, multiple doors, screen position, etc) laptops will allow the best and most efficient use of the space.

The following options are based on the Language Resource Center Questionnaire and the Faculty Needs Assessment Questionnaire completed by DISLS in the Fall 2004. (See attached results in Appendix A.) While other needs were expressed, the options described here fulfill the majority of our needs—of course additional equipment and programs can be added over time. Note that the Appendix B contains floor plans for both 205 and 202 and Appendix C provides examples of the bulleted items below.

#### **A. Language Lab Showplace**

(Language Resource Center in SH205)

A high-end, state-of-the-art language lab (only 205)

- new computer furniture
- computer on every desk
- network printer
- computer-assisted language learning system
- furniture for collaboration/lounge area
- integrated presentation station for instructor
- networking equipment for high-speed streaming media

#### **B. Language Studies Technology Suite**

(Language Resource Center in SH205 & Viewing/Seminar Room in SH202)

A solution outfitting two rooms (205 and 202) with technology to enhance curricula

- new computer furniture (205)
- computer on every desk (205)
- network printer (205)
- furniture for collaboration/lounge area (205)
- furniture for small seminar/viewing room (202)
- portable presentation system to share between the rooms
- networking equipment for high-speed streaming media

#### **C. Simple Lab and Classrooms**

(Language Resource Center in SH205 & Presentation Classrooms in 303 & 301 or 302)

An approach to integrate student computers into the lab and instructor presentation systems into selected classrooms

- new computer furniture (205)
- computer on every desk (205)
- network printer (205)
- furniture for collaboration/lounge area (205)
- A/V systems in classrooms (instructor station) (303 and either 301 or 302)

## **Discussion**

What students/faculty can do. Regardless of the chosen option, you will have access in some form to a presentation system that will contain a DVD/VCR combo, CD player for audio, document camera (VID), computer, laptop connection, all digital control, a video projection screen with an interactive pen display (which allows instructors to write on the monitor and display the writing via the projector).

Thus students can listen, record, or watch DVDs or VCR tapes; use the Internet for textbook-based or other activities; and access software for language learning, tutorials, and reference. Instructors can assist students with video recording to develop digital productions and multimedia presentations.

Advantages/Disadvantages. Each option has advantages and disadvantages:

**Option A—Language Resource Center in SH205**

Advantages:

- state-of-the-art facility
- new CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) system
- presentation station for instructor
- collaboration area

Disadvantages:

- only one room/space enhanced with technology
- “library” usage for students

**Option B—Language Resource Center in SH205/Viewing Room in SH202**

Advantages:

- two rooms enhanced with technology
- seminar classroom/meeting room
- collaboration area

Disadvantages:

- shared presentation station
- no CALL system
- “library” usage for students

**Option C—Language Resource Center in SH205 & Presentation Classrooms in 303 & 301 or 302**

Advantages:

- two classrooms plus lab
- majority of language students benefit
- collaboration area

Disadvantages:

- simple lab model
- one classroom neglected
- no CALL system

## What We Must Do Now

After reviewing this information, the department will have several tasks to accomplish:

1. Decide which option best meets the needs of both our students and our faculty both now and in the future. This will require an analysis of teaching, learning styles and a clear mission of exactly what we want and why. Our committee (Sharon, Rosalie, Mary Anne, Sherrie and Leah) will be talking with you and further researching our options. The final decision must be made by Thanksgiving.
2. Research what resource and teaching materials can replace our current analog materials: CDs, DVDs, Web-based materials, language software. Our textbook publishers might provide some resources and information about this. At this point any item will be considered—at any price. Please consider making suggestions for the college’s Tech Funding Proposal program; proposals are due by October 10.
3. Be willing to attend any training sessions to implement new equipment and software and keep an open mind. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 19, for a presentation from Auralog on a language software program. More details will follow.
4. Develop an informal assessment plan for the project’s outcomes.

**Note from Sharon:** I would urge everyone to stop and analyze his/her teaching style and perhaps even discuss with students what would best encourage their language learning. I’m sure none of us teaches like he/she did years ago, so let’s look for a system that reflects our current style and will enable us to expand and update in the future! Remember that nothing is “mutually exclusive”...that is, we can consider any and all possibilities.

## Questions

An undertaking on this scale requires questions. We've answered several of these below:

Where will the funding come from/will the department's funding be affected? The college (via the Dean's Office) is responsible for the funding of this project, so the department's funding will not be affected.

What's the timeframe? Our plan is to have the project (whichever option is chosen) completed by next fall. If construction delays occur, however, we'll have to reschedule accordingly. In the end, we would hope to have the project ready for you by the time you again meet classes in Stabler.

What brands will be purchased? We are bound by university and state guidelines, so we will purchase according to those. The student computers will be PCs and will come from one of the state's contractors, which currently are Gateway, Dell, HP, and IBM. Faculty will still be able to retain and use your portable Macs, however, for nearly all of your work. For furniture and other fixtures, cost will force us to bid that portion of the project.

Will students be able to work independently (do individual assignments/exercises like current lab)? Yes, they will. In fact, the new setup will allow students to do multiple things on their individual stations. For instance, students could be watching a video in one part of the screen and completing an online short answer assignment in another.

Who will administer and support the computers (hardware and software)? The college's Multimedia Technology Center will assume responsibility for hardware/software support and administration.

## Appendix A: Questionnaire Results

### FACULTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FINAL TALLY

We would appreciate your completing the following questionnaire to help us in determining the desires for our language lab renovation. Thank you.

#### Which of the following tools do you use NOW as part of your language teaching?

Audio cassette tapes .....	12
Audio CD's .....	11
Videotapes .....	12
VID (video projection unit) .....	4
Smart Cart .....	5
Internet activities.....	14
Textbook based internet activities.....	7
Satellite TV.....	2
CD-ROMs .....	6
On line workbook/lab manual .....	5

#### Which of the following tools would you like to use in your language teaching if available?

Check all that apply.

DVD's .....	12
Electronic reference materials (dictionaries, multimedia encyclopedias) .....	8
Software for computer-assisted language learning (grammar exercises, listening and/or reading comprehension enhancements to literature and text analysis) .....	14
Others (be specific): Multistandard VCR/DVD, Pronunciation Programs (computerized w/microphone) personal websites, PC based ESL activities (many are not for MAC), CD-Writers (as needed for NCATE), laptops, wireless computers, slim screen TV, universal DVD/VCR	

#### What are the current obstacles to your use of technology? Check all that apply.

Logistics (teaching in another building, off campus) .....	9
Unreliable internet service .....	8
Inconvenience (physically moving equipment) .....	9
Unreliable computers in lab .....	8
Poor classroom facility .....	6
Lack of personal knowledge .....	5
Lack of computer/technology support .....	4
Lack of classroom time .....	3

Other (please be specific): General comments about unreliable computers, software, internet; time consuming to move around the cart and remove it from closet

Compiled: January 2004  
Sharon Sellars

## **Appendix B: Sample Floor Plans**

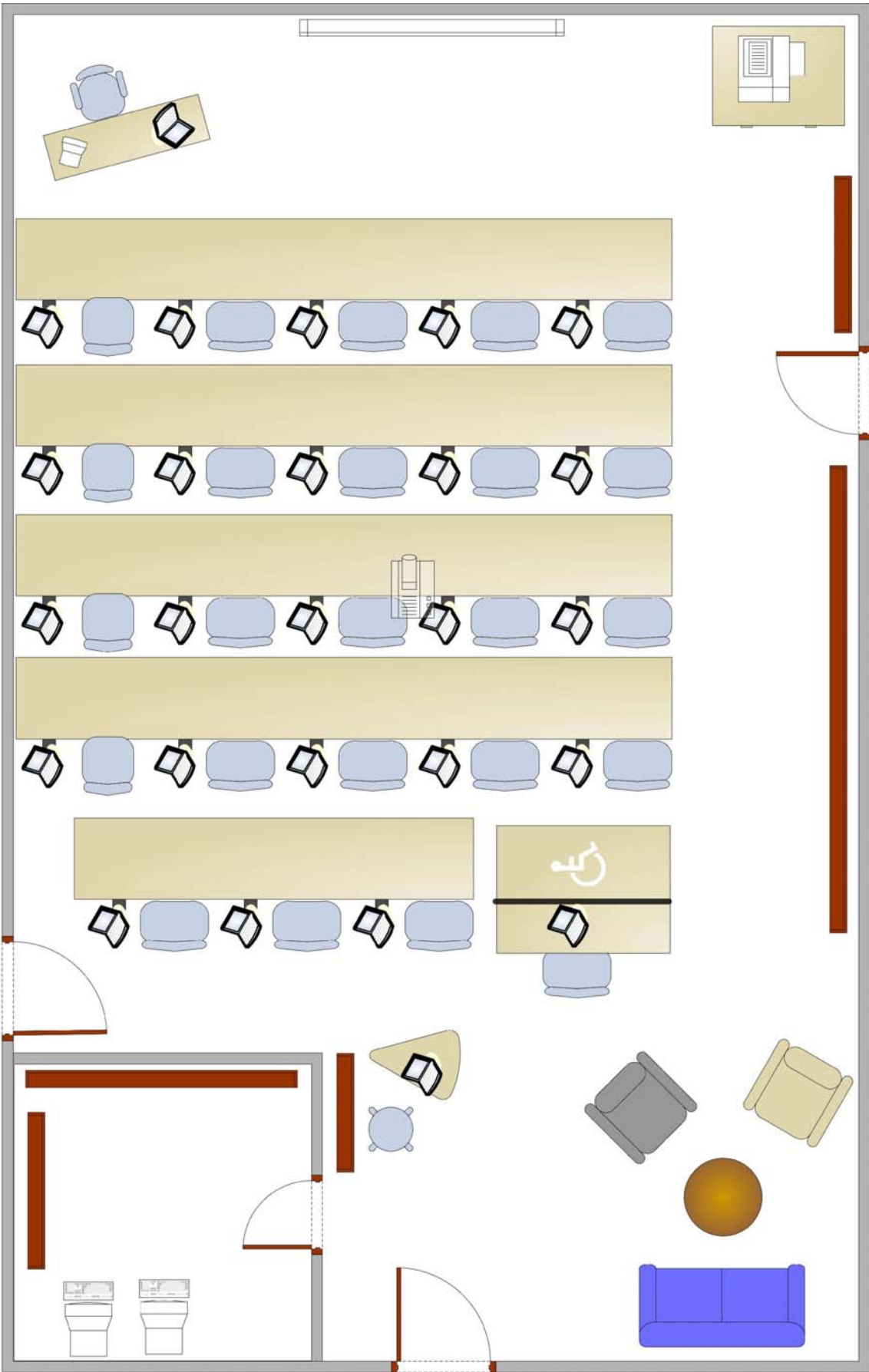
The following three pages provide sample floor plans for both 205 and 202, and we've included a brief explanation of each here:

**Language Lab Layout.** While this is officially a sample, we have determined (in conjunction with architects and designers) that the basic layout of tables in 205 is fairly concrete, i.e., we haven't another choice.

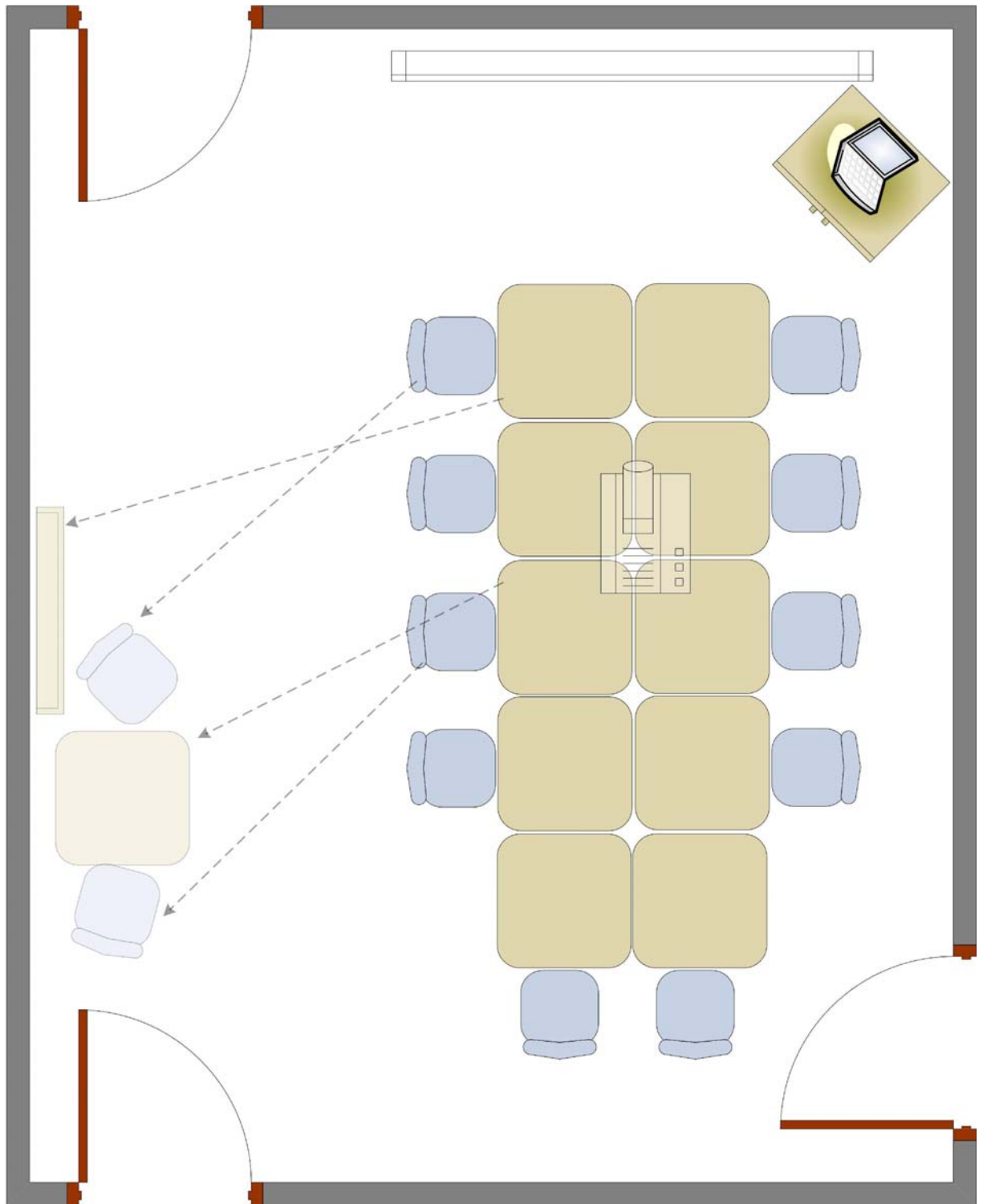
**Language Seminar/Viewing Room.** Option B includes enhancement of SH202. This enhancement is designed to make 202 a very versatile room. This plan shows the room configured for a seminar or meeting. Notice that two people can easily break off into small group work by simply rolling the tables and chairs to the side.

**SH202 in Viewing Format.** This plan shows SH202 configured for viewing. Notice the tables are collapsed against the wall and out of the way. At the same time, a table and chairs could be used for small group work while others viewed the screen.

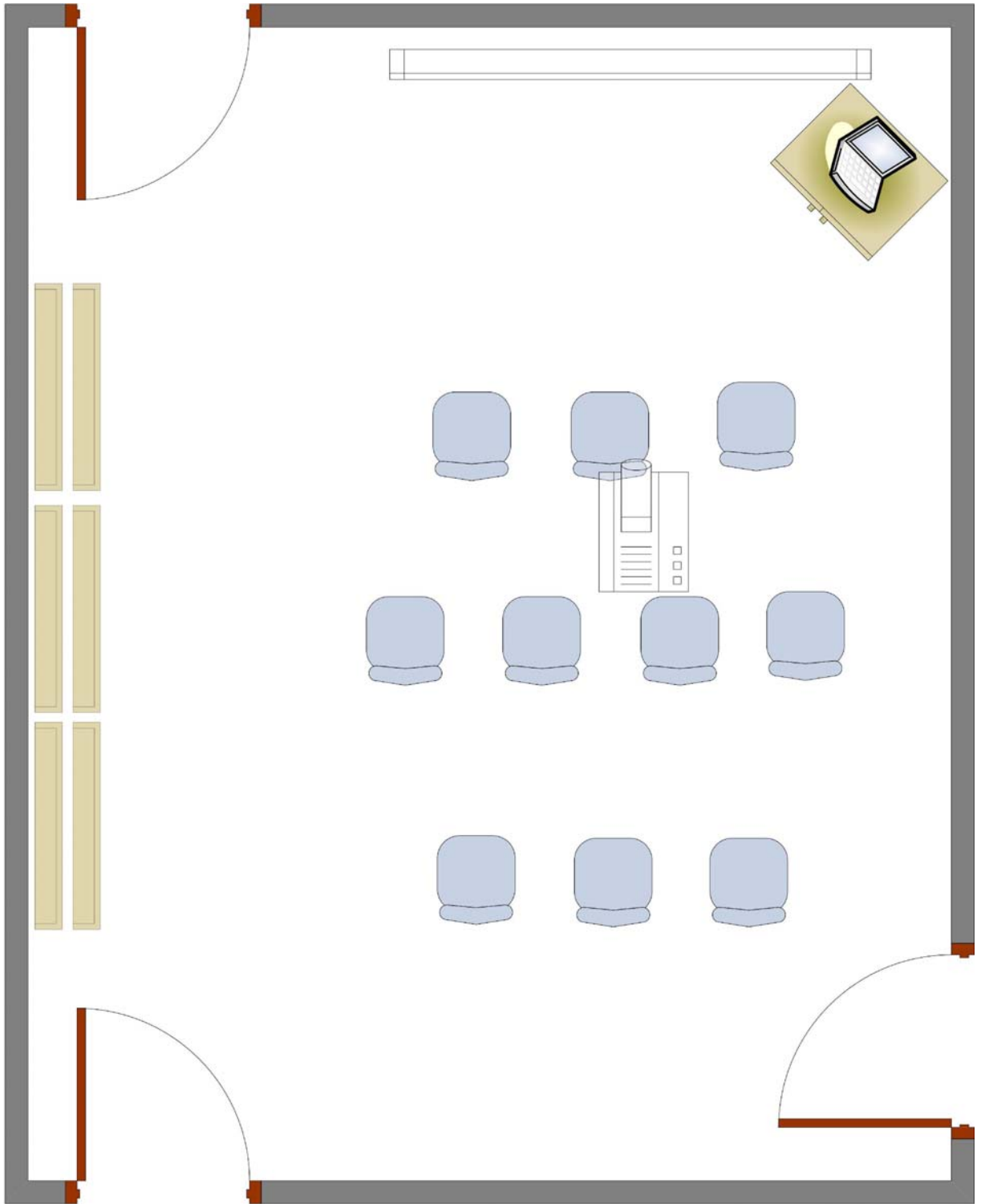
Language Lab Layout



**SH202 in Seminar Format**



**SH202 in Viewing Format**



## Appendix C: Examples

We provide these pictures as a convenience to help you envision the end result. They are here for demonstration only and could change at any time. They do not indicate a guarantee or promise of look, feel, color, brand etc.

### Computer Furniture



### Common Area Furniture



## Media Room (202) Furniture



## Laptops



## Computer-Aided Language Learning



(Based on departmental decision; Rosetta Stone is pictured.)

## Teacher Station



## Portable Presentation System

