



language methodologies at my teacher's training. Most of these methods seem to presume that the student is a humorless human being who, after some manipulation, can show off a trick. The writers of such methods will never manage to inspire and motivate a student who is made out of flesh and blood."

When I started at UC-Berkeley I decided to stay open minded and first of all use the course material (*Help! Kunt u mij helpen?*), which was in place. Although I was not too happy reviewing this material before I started, I decided that only practice makes perfect and try *Help!* on my students. Unfortunately, we became more and more annoyed as the semester wore on: the grammar that was introduced did not always correspond with the exercises in the same chapter, the exercises were far from challenging, the texts/language situations were poorly written and were not necessarily representative of contemporary culture or the Dutch character and, to top it off, one of the key characters in the book was Maria Borsato, an Italian woman learning Dutch and therefore speaking with such a heavy accent that my students should do anything but emulate her. Above all, the book was humorless and students frequently poked fun at the texts and its illustrations.

Because I found the *Help!* method inadequate and incomplete (the introduction of new grammar needs to be promptly reinforced by both spoken and written exercises, neither of which the method provided enough of), I had to supplement with extra exercises and eventually I resorted to the Direct Dutch exercises and texts I had used with so much fun with expats in The Hague. My students became curious. Where did I get these texts and exercises and could they not use these instead of *Help!*?

Encouraged by my students, I contacted Hisgen and found that the language school has flourished, with a high number of enrolled students, its own social club, its own monthly newsletter as well as a reputable translation service, which excels in the translation of Dutch-English and English-Dutch documents. The book I had used in the nineties had undergone several printings (after testing the curriculum constantly on the students) and now comes with an audio cd and a great teacher's manual as well as an answer key for the students.

Interested? For more information or a sample copy of the Direct Dutch method *Home in on Holland*, contact Ruud Hisgen at Direct Dutch, Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 275, 2593 BS The Hague, The Netherlands, tel +31 70 36546777, [info@directdutch.com](mailto:info@directdutch.com). Their website can be found at [www.directdutch.com](http://www.directdutch.com).

*Inez Hollander, Ph.D*  
*Dutch Studies/German Department*  
*University of California at Berkeley*  
*5404 Dwinelle Hall*  
*Berkeley, CA 94720*  
*(510) 643-8105*