

Facilitated Language Study: a model for student-driven learning

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How can we address the need to offer less-commonly taught languages within current budgetary restraints?

- learning and assessment is personal and ongoing
- students are passionate about different areas of language and culture and a variety of different languages
- there is a wide variance of proficiency levels across skill areas
- there is never enough time or money
- there are many possible resources left undiscovered

Creation of the Facilitated Language Study Classroom

- Facilitator (teacher) helps students set pacing guidelines and assesses students through participation activities and a proficiency-based portfolio
- Multiple languages in each classroom: Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Korean
- Students are guided through a scope and sequence of language study and cultural exploration that involves student choice, autonomy and collaboration
- Language practice occurs through individual or small group tutoring

Connecting the community to the classroom

- Institutions of Higher Learning
- EFL classes for international students
- Teachers of Critical Languages Program
- Community members
- Current and former students
- Practicum students
- Teleconferencing



Tutoring sessions

- Students are responsible for their learning
- Students able to practice at their own level and get individual or small group guidance
- Students get a chance to discuss culture with native-speakers
- Students can differentiate their learning based on individual needs
- Students connect in person and/or through technology

Continuing Collaboration

- Training Tutors and interns
- School visits to UW-Madison campus
- Schoology and other technology
- STARTALK Korean language and culture academy



Feedback from students

Positive

"It's really cool to have the opportunity to study Arabic. I know it will set me apart on my college applications."

"Talking with the tutors really helps my speaking skills and I get to learn a lot about their culture."

"I like working at my own pace and choosing what I want to learn."

Challenges

"It can be hard to balance the workload without a teacher to keep me on track."

"It is a little intimidating at first talking with the tutors but you get used to it."

Feedback from tutors

Positive

"I feel the experience as a whole went well. Using Skype really bridged the time and transportation coordination that can be complicated. Answering direct questions about language/culture also went smoothly."

"My students prepare a lot outside of class. They always come with questions about the lesson or an assignment that they have completed that they want me to look over. I think their preparation outside of class is critical because it really drives the tutoring session."

"I hope, and it seems so, that this connection and support have encouraged them to continue learning this language with enthusiasm."

Challenges

Tutors not always knowing where students were in the material;

Differing expectations of student preparation, who's "driving" the tutoring sessions

Scheduling conflicts: school calendars vs university, changes in school schedules

Wanting to arrange face-to-face meetings

Consistency in partners: Desire to always meet with same students

Technical problems!

How is this relevant to workforce and community development through language learning in Wisconsin?

- expanding students' worldview
- encouraging students to pursue global education through the Global Education Achievement Certificate
- connecting language study to student cultural interest allows the course to stay relevant to current needs
- allowing flexibility for schools to respond to community and workforce needs
- teaching students initiative and problem-solving skills

For more information

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- Facilitated Language Study model
- Class resources and handouts
- Teacher of Critical Languages Program information