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Creating a Spanish Conversation Textbook

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SABBATICAL REPORT:

Summary

During my sabbatical leave, I authored a Spanish Conversation custom textbook. In the past, the department's textbook did not adequately reflect the teaching philosophy adopted by JCCC's Foreign Language department. Further, with this new free online textbook students are now relieved of the high price of the previous textbook. Finally, this course may also be offered online, allowing a wider range of students to enroll.

During my leave I was able to:

- 1) Develop a Spanish textbook and online materials for our Spanish Conversation class.
- 2) Create an online version of our Spanish course based on the new textbook.

- 1) **Spanish textbook and online materials.** I wrote a JCCC sponsored Spanish textbook based on incorporating the national World Language Standards recommended by the American Congress on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. This approach focuses on effective communication as opposed to the outdated philosophy of expecting students to focus narrowly on mastering Spanish grammar.

Another positive outcome is that the book is printed by JCCC's Printing Services in a spiral bound format so that students will save \$190.

During my sabbatical I:

- Produced listening and understanding exercises for the textbook.
- Interviewed and video recorded native speaker students from Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Argentina, and Spain.
- Developed video activities, audio recordings, and interactive games for the online component.
- Worked with JCCC Educational Technology to produce a CANVAS class component.

2) **Online version for our Spanish conversation class.** The newly created textbook will allow JCCC to offer an online delivered version of our Conversational Spanish class. Alternating online and face-to-face delivery will increase enrollment throughout the fall, spring, and summer semesters.

During my sabbatical I:

- Created voice and video recording exercises for students to give presentations via CANVAS.
- Incorporated video conferencing components into CANVAS for students to practice from home.

- Worked with Educational Technology to create the online program and its companion paper textbook.

COMMUNITY AND COLLEGE BENEFITS

Students from the Health Care Interpreting and Legal Interpreting programs take our Spanish Conversation class as part of their coursework. Hence, this course will be vital in creating quality professional interpreters who will flourish as communicators in the workforce.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BENEFITS

Professionally, my spending several weeks in Argentina and Spain was a unique opportunity to keep current with the ever-changing linguistic and cultural aspects of the target language. While abroad, I had time away from regular departmental chair duties and other obligations that allowed me to focus on this project with few distractions. As an example, some mornings I visited sites like the Gaudi Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. This was the perfect inspiration to sit down and develop exercises based on art and architecture of Spain.

As a language teacher, it was a valuable learning experience to be exposed to Catalan in Barcelona and Italian in Naples. Not speaking these languages and having to communicate in basic terms made my lesson creation much more in tune with the concrete learning process of students. Under these

circumstances, one becomes much more aware of the importance of visual cues in communication.

Likewise, constantly negotiating meaning in another language was a springboard from which to create textbook activities that may develop efficient communication skills.

The time in Barcelona and Argentina is already enriching my classes this semester since I have fresh, experiential stories that provide more vivid meaning to classroom instruction.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank those who participated and helped with this project. JCCC's Educational Technology office was instrumental in the development of all the online audiovisual activities and learning exercises. Ed Lovitt and Saul Epstein spent many hours converting my ideas into viable CANVAS exercises. The product is more polished thanks to the editing suggestions of my colleagues Luz Maria Alvarez, James Hillen and Helene Perriguet-Keene. Of course, many more participated by recording the vocabulary words and providing video recordings for the online exercises.

In summary

This brand-new custom-made textbook reflects the new pedagogical philosophy of our department at a reasonable price for students. In addition, the book allows us to offer a much-needed online version.

This online format will open opportunities for more enrollment that eventually will improve communication amongst Hispanics and the larger KC community.

I am looking forward to receiving feedback from our students who are enrolled in the class this semester.

The sabbatical represented a challenge and an excellent professional opportunity to explore the field of textbook authoring. I am satisfied with this final product that will bring something fresh to the field of Spanish language education at JCCC.