IITG Mid Year Project Report : Entry # 191

Name of Principle Investigator:

Sarah Jourdain

IITG Project Title (truncated)

2014-Stony Brook-Jourdain-Building Innovative Open Korean and Japanese Courses: A Pilot on Technology-enhanced Curriculum Development

1) Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

We are on target with our project timeline. Specifically:

Four Japanese courses--JPN111 (1st semester elementary), 112 (2nd semester elementary), 211 (1st semester intermediate), and 410 (upper-division, Business Japanese)--and one Korean course--KOR 311 (Advanced Korean)--tried the on-line tool VoiceThread for the first time in Fall 2014.

The course proposal for a 100% online section for Elementary Japanese I (JPN111) was submitted to the curriculum committee on January 15th. We plan to offer it in summer 2015 if approved. Currently, we are creating a course pack and VoiceThread-based content delivery platform for this section.

We are also conducting self-study of JPN211 materials this winter using Google Doc and VoiceThread shared with students, TA, and an instructor. Out of 10 students, 6 students are making a progress.

The Korean component of the plan has progressed with field-testing of digital tools such as VoiceThread, ProProfs, and Storyline and has started to build web-based module structures for KOR111 (Elementary Korean I). Feasibility tests for the most appropriate instructional platform for blended/online language courses have been conducted through testing different tools and consultation throughout the fall of 2014. As a result, a web-based platform enforced by interactive modules and delivered through Blackboard was finally chosen and will be field-tested for a 25% blended course for KOR111 in spring 2015.

The digital flashcard project is progressing.

The IRB application for the research project "The Efficacy of Online and Blended Foreign Language Courses compared to Traditional Face-to-Face Classes" was approved.

Needs analysis/learner survey of students' needs and interests in Asian language learning was completed in fall 2014. Analyses of these data will occur in spring 2015.

Sharing the preliminary findings and lessons learned from the pilot stage will occur at CIT conference in spring 2015.

2) How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates? (You may also choose to detail issues regarding access to funds in the next three questions).

We are on target with our spending. We will be paying our PIs and co-PIs this semester, and travel expenses will also be paid this semester. We have hired students to begin the design work, and they have been paid accordingly. We have purchased necessary software.

Services. IITG: $3,000
Paid as of 12/31/14: $750 to 3 students for design work

Equipment. IITG: $5,699
Purchased as of 12/31/14: ProProfs software: $959.28
Purchased as of 12/31/14: Articulate Global Incorporated software: $ 1,957

3) Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution, in particular any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

Our Japanese & Korean course developers offered the following feedback:

Online/blended course preparation is taking longer than expected as it is labor intensive and thus quite time-consuming.

It was difficult to find student assistants who understand the nature of the instructional projects and provide necessary technical support on campus.

Technical exploration of different tools has been very challenging as well as time-consuming.

4) What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might would be helpful to other PI's?

Our Japanese & Korean course developers offered the following feedback:

Digital tools are very stimulating for students. They can give students a chance to observe their peers' performance much more closely through digital tools than just being in a traditional classroom.

Digital tools help students collaborate very easily. They can receive dozens of suggestions from their peers over night.

Digital tools foster independent learners because they can move forward whenever they feel ready.

5) Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.

We have the following recommendations and thoughts about our project:

Make sure to know what the University currently offers and try those resources first before looking for additional resources.

Make sure what sort of support the University can currently offer, because they can make a difference for day-by-day teaching and assignments.

It is important to start trying tools before making a full plan because you'll find many different ideas only after actually trying tools with students.

Developing and teaching online courses require different attitudes from instructors and new approaches to instructional priorities, revised student-instructor relationships, new course requirements and expectations, as well as innovative pedagogical tools. It is important to be aware, though, that technology will not automatically solve the problems and limitations we have in offline classes; instead, it seems that a key to the success of online learning and teaching depends on the level and quality of tech-enhanced human interactions. It takes time to develop such tools.