

Project Name Dreaming in Languages: Politics, Pedagogy and Technology for Language Instruction

Principal Investigator Juan De Urda Anguita

Campus Fredonia, State University College at

Year of Project 2012

Tier Tier One

Project Team

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Overview Summary

A three session workshop: the political climate around language teaching, current theories on language acquisition and pedagogy and an entire afternoon session devoted to technological innovations and applications for language instruction.

Outcomes Summary

A resource page from the symposium and workshop details are on the outcomes page

Project Abstract

In this globalized world, communication and exchanges between people and cultures are becoming indispensable. This need is felt more intensely in areas like Western New York where access to wider markets and diverse cultures is not a luxury but a necessity. In today's world, it is crucial that every SUNY student develops basic language and cultural literacy to be able to converse fluently with our ever-changing world. If we aim to make our students' education a transformative and valuable experience, we should enable them to communicate and navigate through the various cultures at a basic level. The purpose of this grant is to organize a symposium to discuss the newest ideas on language acquisition and technology, in order to reconceptualize the way we teach.

Last year, SUNY Fredonia began to revise its General Education program resulting in new baccalaureate goals, approved by the University Senate last April. SUNY Fredonia will focus its mission to “ensure that all Fredonia students, utilizing knowledge developed through a broad range of intellectual experiences, will be skilled, connected, creative, and responsible.” Within this discussion, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures created a task force called “Dreaming in Languages” to explore models of teaching foreign languages and engage the campus in redefining learning goals and designing a truly complete and practical language requirement. We would like to engage other SUNY faculty and high school administrators and teachers from Western New York, so that we conceive a seamless language experience from its beginning in K-12 and not programs in isolation.

A Symposium tentatively planned for November 2012 or March 2013 will provide a theoretical framework to begin the design of a new curriculum for language requirements. The symposium will focus on three major areas. 1) The political climate that brought us here and the challenges we face. 2) Current theories on language acquisition and pedagogical approaches, 3) Technological innovations and applications for language instruction. The material presented together with the results from surveys and questionnaires conducted afterwards will be made available.

The one-day program will begin in the morning with either Dr. Ana Celia Zentella or Dr. James Cummins, upon availability. Dr. Zentella would deliver a keynote address discussing the politics of foreign language teaching in United States today. Although nationwide we support foreign languages, Dr. Zentella would show how politics and policies actually undermine those goals. A Professor Emeritus from UC San Diego and one of the most important researchers in what is known as “Anthro-Political Linguistics”, Dr. Zentella is one of the nation’s preeminent advocates for second language instruction. Dr. Cummins, from University of Toronto, is an expert in Multiliteracies and bilingual education, and his address would focus on the demand for multiliteracies in a shifting world, how to make bilingual education feasible and accessible even in the most rural areas. The keynote talk will be followed by group discussions that will be reported back to the assembly.

Dr. Tania Convertini will hold a late morning workshop on cutting-edge pedagogy both about the use of multiple intelligences with language students and on synesthetic experience in the language class. Dr. Convertini is Language Director at Dartmouth College in the French and Italian Department. Dr. Convertini is quickly establishing herself as “guru” of innovative pedagogy and best practices in language acquisition through the use of media and technology, being herself a consultant for McGraw-Hill regarding online instruction.

After lunch, Dr. Fernando Rubio will give a workshop on the applications of technology to language learning and the development of blended and online curriculum. Dr. Rubio is an expert in the field and has presented extensively on the topic. An alumnus of both Fredonia and UB, he is now Chair of the Department of Languages and Literatures at the University of Utah, where he has led innovative technological language instruction. Workshops will be followed by small groups activities.

The day will end with a round table, “From Dream to Reality: What’s Next?,” led by the presenters and members of the task force to discuss practical applications of the ideas generated throughout the day. All attendees will be invited to fill out a survey about the Symposium at the end of the day and to become part of a listserv to continue the discussion and to work in collaborative projects in the future.

The Symposium will be advertised locally, regionally and throughout the SUNY system and it will be open to Fredonia students, faculty and administration, to other SUNY institutions’ faculty and administration and to language instructors, principals and superintendents of Western New York public schools.

Please, be advised that the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Fredonia is also in the process of submitting another IITG grant proposal in collaboration with the Department of Modern Languages at Buffalo State College. Faculty and administrators from that institution are especially invited to the

Symposium, since we think both initiatives are inclusive, and we hope this event will help frame the goals for that project as well.

After the Symposium, all materials from presentations and discussions that might be legally disseminated will be posted on the most appropriate online open fora (YouTube, iTunes, department website, and others). In this way, we will fulfill another objective of this Symposium, namely to make the information it generates available for the professional development of educators interested in more efficient and effective language teaching and learning.

Reports and Resources

- [Project website](#)
- [Symposium flyer](#)
- [Facebook community](#)

Faculty Development

- Organizational Models of Faculty Support