

Implementation of the Multicultural Language and Cultural Intensive Summer Program at CSUSB

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Program Overview

The United States is faced with a serious shortage of linguistically and culturally competent students to meet the needs of our global population and economy. Several reports have cautioned that there is a serious lack of cultural and language competencies by US employees and college graduates. In order to address this deficiency, the US government has funded several initiatives to increase our nation's capacity to train teachers and students in critical languages. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), which coordinates its efforts mainly through the Departments of Education, has coordinated funding for many of these initiatives Department of State, Department of Defense, along with other departments. The challenge of bringing students to functional ability and high proficiency in languages and cultures is that it takes many years for students to reach these levels. Since our K-12 educational system does not integrate foreign language in its curriculum at the early levels, it becomes very hard to reach the goal by starting at the college level and taking regular courses.

In 2006, California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) joined the Southern California Consortium of the California State Universities (CSUs) to launch a rigorous language and culture program with a mission to develop a model program and disseminate it for others to use on their campuses. Another goal of this initiative is to educate students in critical languages so that they reach advanced proficiency level (as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) or ILR 2 and above (as defined by the Interagency Language Roundtable). This would allow them to become functional and competent in their areas of study using one of the target languages. The summer intensive program was designed to combine education in language, culture, and current affairs as they relate to the cultural, socio-political, historic, and economic developments of the target regions.

In 2007, CSUSB received federal funds for five years to develop and implement an Arabic language and cultural program. The first cohort of 19 students participated in the six-week Arabic program during summer of 2007. Since then, other critical languages and cultures were added on our campus due to discontinuation of the respective programs at other CSU campuses: with Persian in 2010, Chinese in 2012, and Korean in 2013. By the end of summer 2013, a total of 634 students completed the program in all four languages and cultural programs. Over the past seven years, enrollment in the Summer Program has grown substantially from 19 students (2007) to 160 students (2013), most of them receiving scholarships and earning 16 to 20 academic units. The length of the program was also extended from 6 to 7 weeks in the U.S. and a study abroad component was initiated with a nine-week session.

The 2013 CSUSB Summer Language Intensive Program marks its seventh year in operation and continues to be one of the most engaging, diverse, comprehensive, and affordable intensive language and culture summer program in the United States. It is a

robust program that integrates Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) with colloquial Arabic and develops all students' language skills with special emphasis on communication. Both components of the Arabic program—the residential-immersion in the United States and the study abroad in Jordan, later Taiwan, China, and Korea, respectively—are carefully planned to engage students and provide them with a stimulating learning environment. In addition to building language proficiency, participants gain a thorough understanding of Arabic, Persian, Chinese, and Korean cultures: on campus, they are exposed to authentic food, artifacts, and culture of these regions by speakers, exposure and field trips, and they are connected to the community and institutions conducting business with these regions. Students have options to study abroad through the Program's affiliated institutes or universities for nine weeks in the country where their language they are learning is spoken. This program is not affiliated with the CSU's Study Abroad Program.

The on-campus program includes a rigorous summer program comprised of both a seven-week intensive residential immersion session on campus and a nine-week study abroad session in Jordan, Taiwan, China, or Korea. During the on-campus component of the program, the languages are taught in context by exposing participants to real-life situations and building their confidence in expressing themselves in their respective languages. In addition, students gradually gain understanding and appreciation for the historical, cultural, and socio-political aspects of these cultures and regions. There are some cross-cultural experiences for all language components as well as individualized language-specific courses, field trips, and activities.

In the residential program in San Bernardino, students earn 16 academic units and some may take elective courses for additional units up to a total of 20. Classroom and lab work are supplemented with daily extra-curricular activities. These include sports, games, calligraphy, music, liturgical recitations, movies, discussion, cooking, folkloric dance, ceramics and interaction with guest speakers. All activities, including field trips are conducted from early morning to late evening including weekends. These programs are extremely demanding and stimulating; and it is not uncommon to find students working on their projects, practicing their oral skills, and preparing a late-night snack at 2 or 3 a.m.

Students who study abroad with CSUSB's partner, Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan, during summer 2013 earn 14-18 quarter units in the Arabic language. Some students enhance this special international experience by undertaking an internship and participating in community service projects while residing in a special compound provided by the host institution. All students abroad connect with the local people and experience the culture of the Middle East. Students learning Asian languages (Korean and Chinese) also participate abroad in Taiwan, China, or Korea in a similar experience; the structure for the Arabic language program was used to develop the Asian language study abroad programs. The affiliation in these countries was established by their previous CSU institutions and the CSUSB program maintained these agreements as a part of its study abroad component.

Upon completion of both the residential and study abroad programs, students of the language and cultural program usually earn a minor or certificate in their respective language. Those who take a few more content-based courses can also opt to receive the Bachelor of Arts in their respective language and culture. The Arabic Language and Culture is the first such degree in the 23-campus CSU system. With careful planning, students can also earn a minor or certificate in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies or

Asian Studies and complete several requirements for a degree in business administration (international track).

The celebration banquet at the end of the program is a critical component to engage members from the campus and external communities. The event includes cultural experience such as dance, performances, speakers, display and presentation of students' work and accomplishments, and food from local restaurants to highlight culinary experiences. More than 750 attendees representing the families, friends, campus, and community stakeholders participate in the banquet; and this allows the program to highlight and showcase its activities and provide an avenue to solicit support for financial and in-kind donations to the program.

Challenges, Issues, and Solutions

When the program started with Arabic language and culture in 2007, with addition of Persian, Chinese and Korean languages in subsequent years, the need to develop advanced competencies in each language in a 7-week period was a major challenge. The model developed for the Arabic language program was used as a base to build other language programs as they were added. Even though there are four language and culture components in the Program, this report will address issues and challenges related to the implementation of Chinese and Korean to the program.

- a. Academic challenges:
 1. Due to small size of these Asian programs at this time, it is not feasible economically to offer courses at different levels of proficiency at the same time. There are only two tracks: A beginning track and an intermediate / advanced track. Ideally, the intermediate and advanced could have been divided into two separate groups along with a heritage learner track. Therefore, faculty and students have to adjust to diverse proficiency levels of students (beginning and intermediate/advanced) and they have to differentiate instruction in the same course to challenge students at each level without overwhelming or confusing others at different levels and competencies.
 2. The location of our campus is isolated from major concentrations of Chinese and Korean communities; therefore, the field trips and excursions had to be planned carefully to maximize their experience with Asian communities and activities.
 3. Due to the distance from CSUSB to the Asian communities, bringing guest speakers (artists, performers, experts) to the campus can become a challenge and is costly for the program. To address this, on-line options were explored such as Skype, Chat rooms, video conferencing, and identifying stimulating and authentic on-line programs/materials for instruction. A special receiver that connects more than 500 Asian channels was installed in the language lab on campus for student access and used to supplement their in-class experience.
 4. Faculty and language tutors need to be constantly trained to acquire the latest pedagogical methods on foreign language instructions and techniques. The Program had to invest heavily in professional development by sending faculty to language conferences and workshops. Focused

sessions were conducted to provide in-house training for faculty and staff. Furthermore, a language coach was invited into the classroom over a 4-week period to observe the instruction by faculty and tutors and provide constructive feedback to enhance instruction.

5. Due to the intensive nature of the program, the students had to be engaged in activities beyond the traditional classroom and textbooks. Activities and programs, all in the target language, were planned for them from early morning until late in the evenings for each day including weekends. Faculty and staff are required to develop material and activities that can be used during off-hours and to keep students engaged at all times. These include targeted activities during field trips, extra-curricular cultural activities such as martial arts, sports, Asian ceramics, calligraphy, music, dance, food and culinary arts.
 6. In order to keep the program affordable for the students, only a limited number of faculty and instructional support staff could be recruited. However, since the faculty and staff are engaged with the students for the 24 hours over the 7-week program at CSUSB, they were burned-out before the end of the session. Staff to student ratio was 1:4, which is ideal for the program and the learner; however, the commitment required from the staff was daunting. To address this issue, rotation of staff relieve/time off can be arranged in the future so that staff can have a weekend or two off during the period of the program to prevent burnout.
- b. Logistic challenges of the implementation:
1. Internal campus issues: To have a fully residential experience, there were many departments and programs that needed to be consulted and negotiated with to keep the program cost affordable for the students. These include housing, food service, financial aid, admission, records, recreational and fitness center, student health center, facilities, academic affairs, student union, and College of Extended Learning. Since local restaurants provided the meals for the Program were provided to provide authentic taste, approvals from campus food services and Environment Health and Safety were obtained.
 2. As a requirement for one of the grants received, some high school students participated in the program. These high school students provided a particular challenge; due to their age, a special counselor was needed in the housing, and they required special admission status and tuition waiver, which were special accommodations that added another layer of bureaucracy to the program.
 3. The celebration banquet also provided a special challenge due to the large number of attendees. The preparation for the banquet starts 6 to 12 months before the summer program and it includes tasks such as arranging for space on campus food vendors, rental of tables, chairs, and decorations, insurance, invitations, etc.
- c. Funding Challenges:

1. CSUSB is a designated Minority Serving Institution. The area's unemployment rate is still near 10 percent. Our first-generation college-going rate is 70 percent, and 80 percent of the high school population qualifies for free lunch programs. Furthermore, 66 percent of undergraduate students qualify for Pell grants making external funding critical for the program's continued expansion. Therefore, continued funding for the Program is an on-going issue for its sustainability. The Program has received several grants that allowed it to grow and become among the most developed Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) in California and around the nation. Some of these grants include the CSU Consortium for the Strategic Language Initiative, Startalk, Project GO, Fulbright, in addition to smaller campus and community based grants. In addition to these grants, some community support includes donations by individuals, local restaurants, organizations and religious institutions.
2. Since the Asian languages programs are relatively new, additional support from the Asian communities has not been fully explored. The Program will work with the CSUSB's Center for International Studies and Programs, faculty and staff, AFSSA (Asian Faculty Student, and Staff Association) as well as University Advancement and other on campus and community entities to solicit their input and support.

Literature Review

Summer Intensive Language Programs are extremely effective and affordable avenues to gain language and cultural proficiency in a relatively short period of time and sometimes, at a lower cost than studying abroad (Abdulla, 2012). This has led to a mushrooming of these programs around the nation, especially after the federally-funded Startalk initiative, which has sponsored more than 160 such programs in the U.S. during the past seven years. As Fortune and Menke (2010) argue, such programs still face many challenges and at different levels: instructors, students, administration, and institutional. The case for Less Commonly Taught Languages, which includes the four languages taught during the Summer Language Intensive Program at CSUSB (Chinese, Korean, Arabic and Persian), carries additional challenges which deal with, among many other factors, material development, teacher qualifications and sometimes low enrollments.

As language standards (aka 5Cs: Culture, Communication, Connection, Communities, Comparison) (ACTFL 2012), proficiency guidelines, cultural standards, assessment outcomes are continuously being revised and developed, maintaining faculty up-to-date with the most effective pedagogical methods is a financially taxing and time consuming venture. Since most instructors in these languages are lecturers instead of tenured faculty, expecting them to develop entire curricula to adapt to students' new learning styles and lack of appropriate material is an added burden on an already underfunded field. Hence, the integration of Integrated Performance

Assessment (Hauk, et al, 2011) techniques, and other sound methodological approaches such as content-based learning, usage of authentic material, and adherence to target language use in the classroom require concerted effort on the part of the instructors who may not have administrators always espousing the latest recommendations and evidence-based data related to effective foreign language acquisition.

Implications and Outcome of the Program

Since its inception in 2007, the Language and Cultural Program graduated over 630 students from all over the United States. The success of the program can be assessed by its graduates; for example, some are completing graduate degrees to be employed in international fields of work. Some joined the civil service in federal government agencies, some joined military service, while others remained abroad teaching or working in the respective countries. Many received prestigious awards in their employment and some received scholarships to further develop their language and culture skills.

As the Program and its reputation are becoming well known across the nation, the number of applicants to the program increased tremendously. For example, in 2007, 25 applications were received and the Program accepted 19; in 2013, over 350 applications were received and the Program was able to accept only 160 participants due to limited space, resources, and funding.

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- Serrano, R.; Llanes, A.; Tragant, E. - Analyzing the effect of context of second language learning: domestic intensive and semi-intensive courses vs. study abroad in Europe- System, 2011 - Elsevier

Appendices

1. Program Website: <http://arabic.csusb.edu>
2. Presentation at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Conference by Dany Doueiri and Terri Nelson: Building Sustainable LCTL Programs in Times of Budgetary Crisis
3. Factors Affecting Students' Attitude and Performance during Proficiency Tests by Dany Doueiri, Ph.D. and Gaby Semaan, Ph.D.

4. Assessing LCTLs Proficiency Assessment Tools: What Will Work for You? by Dany Doueiri, PhD and Gaby Semaan, PhD

Resources for language programs:

1. Sustainability: <https://sites.google.com/site/sustainablectl/>
2. Foreign Language Assessment Directory: <http://www.cal.org/CALWebDB/FLAD/>
3. Assessment of Foreign Languages: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/index.html>
4. CLEAR (Assessment Resources for LCTL): <http://clear.msu.edu/assessment/>
5. OWL Testing Software: <http://www.owlts.com/index.htm>