

ACS Teaching with Technology Fellowship Proposal  
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Developing Slide Presentations for Spanish Language Instruction

## **Project Description**

The purpose of this project is to develop power point presentations covering the vocabulary and grammar studied in first through third semesters of Spanish: specifically covering chapters *Ante Todo* through eighteen from the text *Puntos de Partida: An Invitation to Spanish* 6<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw Hill). These slide presentation are intended as supplemental material to be used by students and faculty.

The vocabulary slide presentations provide visual aids to introduce new words, tell stories and, generally, encourage production of target language. Students do not sit and watch; rather they answer questions, discuss topics and practice according to the prompts. The grammar slide presentations focus on reviewing topics covered in the text, contain unique follow up activities and provide answers.

The idea is to create a central web page that contains these slide presentations. Students are able to access these presentations with the possibility of downloading and printing the grammar slides to use as reference materials. Instructors also access this page and, according to personal teaching style and classroom requirements, use the slides in or outside of the classroom.

## **Background and Context**

The Spanish faculty at Southwestern University teach approximately one-third of the SU student body. In addition to the number of students impacted by the Spanish program, language learning remains an essential ingredient to the core values expressed in a liberal arts education. Through Spanish, students develop an appreciation of diverse perspectives as well as an deeper understanding of the humanity of all people. Outside of the sphere of academics the proliferation of the Spanish language in daily life in the United States accounts for the ever-increasing interest and necessity to learn Spanish.

It is important to note the challenges Spanish poses for both learner and instructor in an academic setting. As adult non-native learners, students have a tendency to approach language learning cognitively; they want to learn and talk about the grammar, syntax and pronunciation, but don't easily put the language into practice by speaking it. An instructor has to appease and combat this tendency. One strategy, employed by Southwestern's Spanish faculty, is to use a communicative approach to teaching Spanish. This approach provides students with a classroom environment that fosters speaking and employing the language while assigning the grammar as homework. What's missing in this scenario is a structure which provides students with follow-up or review grammar tools and activities that are accessible, easy and generally more fun than their text.

Therefore, this project is intended to reinforce what non-native adult learners want and need in the process of second language acquisition, as well as to promote classroom time on speaking and employing the language.

In my teaching during this 2003-2004 academic year, I have piloted a number of slide presentations and have been pleased with their success. In addition, María Hernández-Ojeda and I have successfully exchanged power point presentations, and other. This project is intended to allow me to develop new resources and modify existing ones to create a more comprehensive framework for these resources.

## **Timeline**

This project will be finalized by July 30<sup>th</sup> 2004. Important milestones include:

### **Fall 2003 & Spring 2004**

Pilot various vocabulary and grammar slide presentations for second, third and fourth semester Spanish.

June 11<sup>th</sup>

Finalize presentations for first semester Spanish (vocabulary and grammar)

June 25<sup>th</sup>

Finalize presentations for second semester Spanish (vocabulary and grammar)

July 9<sup>th</sup>

Finalize presentations for third semester Spanish (vocabulary and grammar)

July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Organize Central Web page for Project

July 30<sup>th</sup>

Create guide to assist faculty members as well as create and provide individual CDs to Spanish faculty at Southwestern. Create evaluation questionnaire.

## **Technology**

The project will require collaboration with Southwestern's Language Learning Center, specifically Bill Christensen and Eric Hanke, as regards the creation and maintenance of the centralized web page hosting these presentations. Additionally, photos from the Alianco *REALIA* project will be integrated into the slide presentations.

Power Point is compatible with MAC and PC computers and is widely available on the Southwestern and other university campuses. Many faculty are familiar with creating and editing power point presentations or have access to technical support staff who can provide this

expertise. In addition, power point presentations can be published as web pages offering a further option for distribution.

### **Other Support: Institutional Requirements for the Project**

This project encompasses the collaboration and cooperation of faculty, staff from the LLC and Audiovisual Services as well as students. Faculty will have to take the time to familiarize themselves with the slide presentations as well as integrate them into the current curriculum. The LLC will handle bugs or technical difficulties encountered with creating and maintaining the central web page. Faculty will need to request appropriate computer equipment to use in the classroom.

### **Learning Outcomes: How the project will enhance teaching & learning**

While using technology in the classroom can be very rewarding and dynamic, it is also very time-consuming. Therefore, having ready-made and editable teaching tools for vocabulary and grammar is welcome. Also, to be an effective teacher, it's important to present information in a variety of ways to match students' different ways of learning.

Instructors comfortable with power point, may use the vocabulary slides in the classroom. This method facilitates guided pronunciation practice, word/picture association, and encourages dialogue amongst students and as a class.

Additionally, these slides provide a structure through which instructors may identify students' weaknesses. Often a student can't articulate what they don't understand; with the slides, students and/or instructor will better be able to identify problem areas.

In addition, if used in conjunction with the current Spanish curriculum, these slides will decrease the disparity between levels of Spanish within a particular class. Students enter at varying stages of the curriculum and bring differing levels of expertise to the classroom. These slides help provide a framework through which students can review and obtain additional essential information to help minimize that distribution.

### **Curriculum: How the project will be integrated into the curriculum**

The Spanish curriculum at Southwestern requires that students obtain a fourth semester language proficiency. Semesters one through three are designed to introduce to students the fundamentals of Spanish grammar. The fourth semester is a discussion-based course focusing on short stories within a cultural context.

This project applies to the required curriculum as well as to the students seeking a minor and major. For example, students who place into second semester Spanish without the basic principles obtained in first semester Spanish are able to review key grammar aspects individually, in consultation with a faculty member.

This project also aids those students seeking a minor or major in Spanish. As an instructor of a "fifth" semester course intended to prepare students for subsequent upper division courses, I see a need for a self-paced grammar review outside of the classroom before students take on more challenging upper division courses.

### **Assessment: How the project will be evaluated**

Spanish Faculty will be surveyed about the use and effectiveness of the slide presentations throughout the 2003-2004 academic year. In addition, the number of hits and downloads can be tracked to estimate the effectiveness and utility of these presentations.

### **Dissemination**

These slide presentations will be published on Southwestern's Language Learning Center's web page and available to Southwestern faculty and students as well as other universities. Since the presentations are editable, users become the authors who then also want to share their teaching resources with their colleagues.