

COVER PAGE

a. Project Title: Using Electronic Webfolios to Facilitate Assessment for Learning in UMD FLL Classrooms: A Programmatic Initiative *Note per 6/5/08 email from PI: Title change from 'Spanish' to 'FLL'; both Spanish and French classes will be involved.*

b. Project Category: Programmatic Improvement

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f. Total Amount of Funds Requested: \$21,000

g. Project Abstract: Designed for UMD's FLL program, this project advances the idea of assessment for learning through the developmental tool of electronic webfolios. Using easily-accessible Google tools to facilitate faculty buy-in into the assessment process, this project also offers advantages for using webfolios to develop student agency in the process, illustrate student attainment of departmental standards, and in connecting with other campus eportfolio systems such as Chalk and Wire. The project also describes a mentoring process in which faculty work with other faculty to integrate Web 2.0 technology tools with webportfolio tasks, enabling the construction of multimedia tasks and content to further enhance students' learning experience.

h. Signature of Department Chair: _____

i. Signature of Investigator's Dean: _____

j. Signature of Provost: _____

“USING ELECTRONIC WEBFOLIOS TO FACILITATE ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN UMD FLL CLASSROOMS: A PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVE”

PROJECT NARRATIVE AND DELIVERABLE

From an assessment perspective, one of the most important teaching and learning issues facing our UMD foreign language department today is how to transition from a culture disposed to assessment of learning to a culture of assessment *for* learning (Stiggins, 2002; Barrett, 2004). Assessments need to be embedded within courses and within classroom instruction and used to inform teachers and students what they need to do next. They need to be task-based and non-trivial and connected to students’ expertise and interests. Assessments need to be used to assist both teachers and students in how to improve the learning process as well as conversations about learning in general. Finally, they should place the student at the center of this process and increase their sense of agency in improving their own learning.

Although many teachers would agree in principle with the idea of assessment for learning, it is often difficult for them to put this type of assessment into practice. Faculty are often threatened by the very idea of assessment and perceive it as something that can be dangerous to their departmental status or image. Many faculty perceive assessment initiatives as extra work and something imposed upon them that they must “put up with.” Since many teachers would rather not reflect on their teaching or what they could do better, assessment may be viewed as something that must periodically be “tacked on” to their busy schedules and then dismissed once the furor of program assessment abets.

The use of electronic webfolios to motivate assessment for learning can help mitigate these difficulties and provide benefits for both faculty and students. For

example, through the use of electronic webfolios in classes, faculty can avoid the panic sensation that comes with every assessment cycle. Faculty can become more aware of the content of departmental courses, making course integration and development easier. From a program-centered perspective, departments can use webfolios to assess attainment of departmental standards. From yet another perspective, students can become actively involved in constructing meaning as they tailor the content of tasks to their own interests and areas of expertise. Importantly, electronic webfolios also facilitate joint professor-student interaction and make the process of sharing work and providing feedback an easier and more efficient process.

General Project Goals

The purpose of this proposal, then, is to request support for developing a culture of assessment *for* learning within the Dept. of FLL through the use of electronic webfolios. In contrast to commercial software systems, that often require a steep learning curve and extensive technical support, webfolios can successfully be used with freely available Google tools, tools which are already familiar to many FLL faculty. Since less time is spent in learning the software language, more time can be given to the development of webportfolio content and tasks. At the same time, webportfolios can be compatibly used with the goals and practices of already established campus eportfolio systems such as ChalkandWire. Thus, their use produces gains in faculty buy-in while at the same time offering flexibility in terms of being used for course, program, or even institutional assessment. Finally, their use can also facilitate development of students' professional portfolios.

This project builds upon departmental learning outcomes assessment documents and on 2007-2008 departmental Seminar work focused on the integration of language and culture within all stages of the foreign language curriculum. The experience gained from this project will help our FLL program consolidate and visualize the work from these previous initiatives at the same time that it improves our assessment process. It will also help position us to solicit external funding in the future for related grant projects.

Specific Project Goals

(1) design a webfolio template for FLL faculty that fosters links between student assessment, faculty, and program evaluation (2) address the competencies needed for FLL faculty to develop electronic webfolios, including a clear concept of the difference between assessment of learning and assessment for learning, technology skills needed, and experience converting artefacts into digital format (3) implement a pilot webfolio project during the 2008-2009 academic year (4) facilitate faculty mentoring of other FLL faculty in this process (5) reflect upon growth experienced during the course of the project and on ways in which the use of webfolios might link to other established eportfolio systems on campus such as ChalkandWire.

Methodology for Achieving these Goals

In order to achieve our general project goals we must identify FLL people within the department who are willing to champion and/or participate in this initiative. The project requests support for a Project Director, 4 Faculty Leaders, and Faculty Participants.

Director: organizes an orientation meeting in early Spring with Faculty Leaders, facilitates the project and communications between the Director and Faculty Leaders over the summer, develops a departmental webfolio and any needed templates, models the

implementation process in one of her classes during Fall 2009, administers the budget, designs electronic media to facilitate on-line communications (through posting of relevant information on Google documents and blogs), represents project at university events, facilitates the mentoring project as well as reflection and implementation of project in classrooms. Also explores ways to link webportfolio work to established campus portfolio systems such as ChalkandWire.

Faculty Leaders: the Faculty Leaders who have agreed to participate in this project represent both Spanish and French and full-time as well as part-time appointments within the department. They will participate in summer planning and development sessions with the Project Director using Web 2.0 technology tools to build electronic webfolios in select courses. They commit to revising at least one course in ways consistent with the webfolio template process described below, commenting and responding to the Project Director's feedback as well as feedback of IT technology staff. Faculty Leaders will commit to revising course content as standards-based modules within the context of a course webfolio, to designing at least five course tasks that integrate Web 2.0 tools, and to posting this information on the FLL webfolio. For ease of use and purposes of familiarity, the Faculty Leaders will commit to using Google Tools and multimedia technology in the revision of course design. They will also commit to trying out ideas in an actual course and to using technology to implement and reflect upon the intervention. Finally, the Faculty Leaders will agree to mentor non-participating departmental faculty in the use of course webfolios during the Spring 2009 semester.

Assessment Plan

Qualitative indicators will be used to assess this project's effect on both faculty and students. These indicators will incorporate the results of before and after surveys, emails, web-based feedback and commentaries, samples of faculty and student work and student self assessments. In addition, all the stakeholders in the project will be invited to reflect on their response to the project. The Project Director will compile results and findings.

Project Budget

The project budget addresses the need for the human and material resources needed to complete the project. In terms of human resources, funds are needed to support a summer stipend for the Project Director (\$6000), and a summer stipend for faculty work by the Faculty Leaders (4 at \$2000 each=\$8000). After conversations with Magali Carrera, UMD Instructional Development Leader, anticipated technical support for the project is \$4000.00, to be used at the discretion of the Project Director. Material resources needed include one digital recorder (Marantz Solid State Recorder, #PMD676, \$1000), three microphones (\$300), easy web video software for 5 people (\$500), an HP Photosmart R847 Digital Camera (\$200) and a digital camcorder (\$1000.00).

Total Requested: \$21, 000

Project Timetable (planning, implementation, reflection, future goals and plans)

Summer and Fall 2008: planning and implementation/Spring 2009: mentoring, reflection