

PROPOSAL FOR
ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY GRANT

Project Title: Multi-modal Language Acquisition Through the Use of Technology

Project Category: Programmatic, Multidisciplinary, and/or Multicampus Teaching Improvement

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Joao Rosa
Assistant Professor of Curricular Theory and Practice
Department of Education
UMass Dartmouth: jrosa@umassd.edu or 508-910-6603

Co-Principal Investigators

Carlos Almeida
Department of Portuguese
UMass Dartmouth: calmeida@umassd.edu or 401-438-0311

Tyra Lopes
Center for University, School and Community Partnerships
UMass Dartmouth: tlopes@umassd.edu or 774-929-3038

Campuses and Disciplines Involved:

The project is an international cooperative effort between UMass Dartmouth and the Public University of Cape Verde. At UMass Dartmouth, this project will involve the departments of Education, Portuguese, Sociology/Anthropology, as well as the Center for University and Community Partnerships, and the Instructional Development team within Computing and Information Technology Services. Additionally, the project will involve the Department of Languages in the Public University of Cape Verde.

Participants:

Glaucia Silva, Assistant Professor
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Magali Carrera,
Team Leader, CITS Instructional Development
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The principal aim of the project is to allow UMass Dartmouth students participating in the Creole (language spoken in Cape-Verde) language classes to communicate directly with students from the University of Cape Verde who are working on English language acquisition. The program proposes to create a balance between the use of Creole and the use of English so that both Universities are able to derive benefit such that UMassD students gain a better usage and understanding of Creole while students from the University of Cape-Verde enhance their capacity to speak and write English. Utilizing Wimba, a synchronous voice tool, and other collaborative technologies such as wikis and blogs, the language acquisition program not only allows real-time communication among the students and faculty but also the capacity to collaboratively interact on projects that demonstrate learning outcomes. We envision that this program will utilize online pedagogical technologies such as the sharing of video and audio files for analysis, the utilization of chat rooms for synchronous communication, wikis and blogs for asynchronous communication, collective creation of powerpoints, etc. The uniqueness of this language acquisition program is that it develops language fluency by promoting the use and exchange of audio, visual and textual materials in synchronous and asynchronous communication delivered through diverse technologies. Prior to the initiation of the proposed research, participating investigators and students at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth will be required to fulfill IRB requirements in accordance with University policies.

Rationale:

Recent educational research (Gee, 2004) suggests that students are increasingly utilizing technology in ways that enhance/deepen understanding and at the same time, contradict traditional learning/teaching paradigms. This program seeks to capitalize on students' increasing use of collaborative technology as a means of constructing information to enhance language learning/teaching. In many ways, we expect that the development of the language acquisition program will have the corollary effect of placing teachers at the edge of their

understanding of the use of technology thereby allowing them to develop new skills while understanding the potential for collaborative technologies from a pedagogical standpoint. The program seeks to fully utilize technological resources structured around an interactive culture in the construction of knowledge. Some of the skills that we expect students will develop include but are not limited to:

Enhanced Language Competence

We expect that students will develop increased language fluency in Creole and English.

Increased Awareness of Cultural Diversity and Historical Links Among the Groups

Since the communication of students will be structured thematically (history, culture), we expect that students will develop an increased cultural and historical understanding of each other.

Critical Analysis and Inter-group Communicative Skills

The development of collaborative projects structured around the students' realities provides opportunities for students to become critically aware of their surroundings.

Enhanced Multi-media Understanding

The technical aspects of this language acquisition program provide students with an opportunity to increase their current understanding of the potential for collaborative technologies in learning generally.

Collective Problem Solving

The use of collaborative projects in the assessment phase of the language acquisition program provides opportunities for students to engage in collective problem solving in the accomplishment of the overall objective.

3. Project Deliverables:

While the learning tools and processes that we are developing are specific to the target populations, this project aims to open up a new language learning format that can be replicated by any language department within UMass. The general applicability is such that future adaptations can be made by other departments in the content of study yet utilizing and maintaining/enhancing the basic structure of our program. It is our intent to develop specific learning objectives and assessments that are commensurate with the current learning objectives of the foundation courses of Cape-Verdean Creole [CVC 101, 102, 201 and 202]. Program success will be determined by the monitoring and assessment of communication among the cohorts as well as through the completion of the final collaborative assignment.

4. Dissemination of Results:

We expect to demonstrate the project (from theoretical conceptualization to instrumentality and objectives) to the UMass learning community as well possibly research journal publications.

5. Project budget

Budget Item	Enhancing Learning Technology Grant	Uni-CV in-kind contribution	Total
Investigator and Participant Stipend \$ 500.00 X 8	\$4000.00		\$ 4000.00
CITS Technical Support		Technical Support \$3500.00	\$3500.00
Technical Assistance for Faculty (Student Assistants)	\$10 hourly at 150 hours per semester \$3000.00		\$3000.00
Echo Lecture Capture Software	\$5000.00		\$ 5000.00
Laptop	\$2500.00		\$2500.00
Total	\$14,500.00		\$14,500.00

Budget Rationale

The project aims to use Student Assistants in the development and testing of learning objects. At 10 hours weekly, we estimate a cost of approximately \$1500.00 per semester. The University of Cape-Verde has agreed to absorb the cost (\$3500.00) associated with travel and lodging of CITS staff for initial training and hardware updating. The language acquisition program necessitates the Echo Lecture Capture instructional software, instructional software that can facilitate the production of tutorials and other educational learning objects (\$5000.00). Additionally, the language acquisition program requires a laptop (\$2500.00) for the development of the tutorials and learning objects. Investigator and participant stipends for program development (\$500 x 8= \$4000.00 summer stipend).

6. Project Timetable

Summer 08	Consultation with Staff of University of Cape-Verde. Faculty Training by Instructional Development Team at Uni-CV. Selection of student cohort.
Fall 08	Initial contact among the cohorts. Development of Phase 1 of project through the use of technology (such as Wimba, Wiki's and chat rooms) for the development of language competence.
Spring 09	Follow up among cohorts with continued use of collaborative technologies supported by final assessment of language competence.



TO: UMass SAT Grant Committee

FROM: Gláucia Silva, Assistant Professor, Dept of Portuguese

DATE: February 1st, 2008

RE: Letter of support for SI Grant Proposal

I have reviewed the SI Grant Proposal “Multi-modal Language Acquisition through the Use of Technology” at UMass Dartmouth, put forth by Dr. João Rosa, Carlos Almeida, and Tyra Lopes. The international collaboration proposed in the project explores the development of language competence through the use of technology, creating a partnership between students from the University of Cape Verde and from UMass Dartmouth. In terms of foreign language learning, the collaboration proposed would be invaluable for both groups of students, since language would be used for real communication (as opposed to classroom situations). Furthermore, the project would allow both groups to learn about sociocultural aspects directly from peers who live in the target culture. I strongly support this grant and I look forward to participating in the project.

February 1, 2008

Dr. Anthony Garro, Provost
and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
North Dartmouth, MA 02747

Dear Provost,

I am writing this strong letter of support for the innovative and visionary project that Professor Joao Rosa and lecturer Carlos Almeida of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth have skillfully designed and are planning to launch in the fall of 2008. Their proposed project - Multi-modal Language Acquisition Through the Use of Technology - is based not only on sound research in the field of second language acquisition through both linguistic and cultural immersion, but also on the latest research on the use of emerging (Web 2.0) technologies in the areas of language acquisition and the development of intercultural competence. Indeed, the elements of their application for the Enhancing Learning Through the Use of Technology grant directly address your programs goals, including the promotion effective learning, the encouragement of exploration, experimentation, and innovation in teaching and learning with technology, as well as the effective use of a variety of instructional technology tools, and the advancement assessment of teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

As an advanced doctoral student in the Technology, Innovation, and Education program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, as well as the TEACH UrbanSouth! program director at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Center for University, School and Community Partnerships, I am a delighted to act as a co-investigator of this creative project that Dr. Rosa and Mr. Almeida have designed. I strongly believe that the proposed language acquisition program pushes the current boundaries on language teaching/learning paradigms by supporting the use of collaborative technologies as well infusing a dimension of constructivist pedagogy in the development of a utilitarian approach to language acquisition.

Best regards,

Tyra Anne Lopes
Program Director,
TEACH! UrbanSouth
Center for University, School and Community Partnerships
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

TO: UMass SAT Grant Committee

FROM: Carlos A. Almeida, Half-Time Lecturer, Department of Portuguese

DATE: January 31, 2008

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for SI Grant Proposal

I have reviewed the SI Grant Proposal “Multi-modal Language Acquisition Through the Use of Collaborative Technology” at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. As a Co-Principal Investigator, I certify my strong support for and participation in this grant. This grant will enable us to set up a unique system of collaborative learning that transcend the University walls but reach beyond the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Thank you, for your consideration of this grant.

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Almeida