

## **Project Year**

2013-2014

## **Project Title**

Breathing New Life into On-line Spanish Video Tutorials

## **Project Team**

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## **Audience**

This project is designed to assist students taking our elements and intermediate online or hybrid Spanish courses as well as students struggling in all the in-classroom sections, including literature and culture classes taught in Spanish.

## **Pedagogical Challenge**

Grammatical concepts, whether broad and basic or more focused and nuanced, can be difficult to learn in an online course or through a textbook alone. Students in the early stages of learning Spanish--or any language--often need additional explanations and help from instructors in order to grasp these structures. When the course is taught online, face-to-face tutorial help between instructors and students becomes difficult. Students are limited to email or instructors' office hours, which are often insufficient to provide the necessary assistance and scaffolding students require for concept mastery. Additional online materials developed by textbook publishers tend to offer explanatory notes that are similar to those in their textbooks.

## **Solution**

The solution to this challenge is as simple as the source of the problem: provide students with personal tutorial assistance. We propose creating a set of tutorial videos - using CAMTASIA software or a similar application - to be available to all students and instructors of Spanish. These videos would present an instructor as she describes and explains (transitioning from more English to more Spanish) the most challenging grammatical concepts in each unit. The videos would feature several formats to avoid learning monotony, including:

1. the recording of an instructor in an actual classroom presenting a grammatical concept,
2. the voice of an instructor while writing on a digital whiteboard,
3. a live instructor conducting either a PowerPoint presentation or another explanatory platform.

## **Faculty Statement**

The Spanish Language Program (SLP) has decided to convert some of its sections to fully online or hybrid online/in-class modes. In the past, the SLP has only offered distance language courses during the summer. Through observation of these courses, we have identified the need to improve both the grammatical explanations that the students received through the textbook materials and the instructors' responses to occasional questions from the students. Normally, a large group of online students is less proactive about asking grammar questions than is its classroom counterpart. This makes it more difficult for the instructor to assess students' understanding of some grammatical concepts.

To provide the students with a learning environment as close as possible to that of the face-to-face classroom, several teaching materials need to be adapted to the new online or hybrid space.

The CER grant would provide the resources necessary to create online tutorial videos developed primarily to:

- clarify grammar concepts,
- create a more personal learning experience,
- provide students with additional opportunities to ask questions to the online/hybrid/ in-classroom instructor about a grammar topic, by referring to specific segments of the grammatical explanation in the text,
- connect grammar concepts to additional activities,
- create grammatical points of reference.

These videos would also help the instructor to promote learning by providing opportunity to ask follow-up questions and activities for independent exploration.

Although there are many online videos that include grammar tutorials, most do not match the JHU course objectives for a particular level, nor are they connected to the vocabulary or communicative functions of our program. These videos would be unique in the sense that they would be tailored to our students' needs and levels, and would correspond to the online course activities.

The project will be successfully completed when the 35 videos are published online for students and instructors to view. Their impact will be determined after the first iteration of each course is completed and data from student course evaluations, grades and instructor interviews are reviewed.

All other courses in Spanish could use these videos as a resource, including literature and culture classes, and the model could be adapted for other language and non-language courses.

The videos will be hosted on Blackboard for future semesters and uploaded to a website with a link hosted in JShare for use by all instructors.