Project Year
2004

Project Team
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Project Title
Spanish through the Eyes

Audience
Students in the elementary, intermediate, and advanced Spanish language courses

Pedagogical Issue
Listening comprehension is one of the hardest skills to develop in a foreign language. Many students find the audio activities available through textbook publications artificial and contrived, and very few students have an opportunity to hear the different varieties of the language that occur in the Spanish-speaking community.

Solution
By videotaping and interviewing native Spanish speakers in the Baltimore area, digitizing these videos, and making them available through a WebCT site, the project team proposes to provide an increased number of opportunities for students to practice their listening comprehension skills. In addition, by videotaping native Spanish speakers in the Baltimore area, students will be exposed to the rich local community of Spanish speakers near the Johns Hopkins campus.

Technologies Used
Courseware (WebCT development), Digital Audio, Digital Video, HTML/Web Design

Project Abstract
Studies have shown that grammar, writing and reading skills are effectively reinforced in foreign language classrooms, but that many students find listening and speaking skills more difficult to acquire. During class time, students learn and develop some strategies for listening comprehension. However, time and resource constraints limit their practice. In this project, we propose for the Technology Fellows to create dialogues, monologues and discussions in Spanish, videotape native speakers, and prepare digital video clips to be viewed online. The clips will expand upon grammatical and cultural topics covered in class. The students will be able to control the speed of the videos, and play the clips as many times as necessary. The video clips will be streamed from WebCT; students will have the opportunity to access them from any location with a computer and a browser. The proposed result of this project is to have students of Spanish language, of all levels, improve their listening skills and gain familiarity with a wider range of the different accents found in the Spanish speaking world. They will see and hear real

people, not actors, who study or work in their familiar university environment. This familiarity will encourage active learning of the language outside the classroom. With the help of the CER and the resources that Technology Fellows and faculty receive, this project could be completed in two semesters. The videos will be kept on department servers and available for use in future semesters. The evaluation of the project will be based on the teachers and students' feedback (qualitative data). It is possible that other language teachers at Johns Hopkins could use this project as a prototype and modify it for their own courses.