



Meeting the Costs of Critical Languages

Providing an alternative approach to executing a critical language program



Middle East Studies program goals:

- 1. Faculty Professional Development
- 2. Creation of 3 new classes/revision of at least 16 existing classes
- 3. Community outreach
- 4. Student study abroad to a MENA country
 - 6 students will travel to Morocco in May 2012
- **5. Create a program for teaching Arabic at Greenville Tech**

Challenges:

- Insufficient funds, administration unwillingness to pay a full-time Instructor for Arabic
- Difficult to find qualified Arabic instructors willing to teach at community college, particularly in an adjunct position
 - Must have 18 graduate credits of Arabic minimum to meet accreditation standards



Challenges:

- No near-by schools offer Arabic
 - Closest is University of South Carolina, Columbia: 120 miles away
 - Survey of students found interest in Arabic at Greenville Tech and other area schools

Solutions:

- Project Director networked with International Studies community for a solution
 - Colleague at College of William and Mary suggested USADLN

US Arabic Distance Learning Network:
Montana State University

Phone: 406-994-4032
Email: rudman@montana.edu



The U.S. Arabic Distance Learning Network
Administered by Montana State University
Funded by the US Department of Education,
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

Solutions:

- US Arabic Distance Learning Network
 - Coordinated by Montana State University
 - Offers Arabic instruction via videoconferencing system
 - Qualified distance instructors interact live with students at multiple schools via the videoconference system.
 - Uses the al-Kitaab textbook series published by Georgetown University Press.
 - Adheres to the standards established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
 - Local teaching assistants are hired to monitor students and provide in-person assistance
 - T/A's do not require 18 graduate credits of Arabic.

Solutions:

- USADLN charges \$8250 per 1 year sequence (2 semesters) of Elementary Arabic.
- The local T/A costs \$4800 per 1 year sequence (2 semesters).
- This is a significant savings over the cost of hiring a full time instructor.

Implementation:

- Elementary Arabic I via USADLN offered in Fall Semester of 2010
 - 31 students enrolled, 25 finished the semester
- Elementary Arabic II via USADLN offered in Spring Semester of 2011
 - 13 students continued to the second semester
- Due to these successes, classes were offered again in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012

Implementation:

- Overall, 69% of students who have taken an Arabic class at Greenville Tech have passed with a C or higher
 - This rate may improve at the conclusion of the current semester.



Unexpected difficulties:

- Connection and technical difficulties in our first semester.
 - Greenville Tech invested in upgrading the video conference facilities (re-wiring for faster connection speeds), and these problems were eliminated.
- Some students feel disconnected or uninvolved during the videoconference sessions.
 - USADLN instructor revised his teaching strategy for greater class participation.

Success:

- Student evaluations were positive
- Greenville Tech's Arabic classes attracted students from other local schools.
 - EX: Furman University and Clemson University.
- Interest in Arabic specifically and Middle East Studies generally increased on campus.

Success:

- Due to the success of our Arabic classes, Greenville Tech has committed the needed funds to hire an Arabic instructor and develop and teach Elementary Arabic “in-house” starting in Fall Semester 2012.
- This capacity building was possible only through the use of grant funding, and the cost effectiveness of the USADLN program.
 - Administration is now confident enough to commit the budgetary resources needed to have our own instructor.

What's next?

- Teach at least one section of Arabic every semester.
- By Fall 2013, offer Intermediate Arabic
- Offer at least one study abroad opportunity in a MENA country each academic year
- Build relationships with institutions of higher education in MENA countries.
 - Student and faculty exchange
 - Student and faculty virtual exchange using videoconference architecture
 - Faculty professional development