

# Spanish 1010 Online Materials Standardization

## *I. Summary:*

Naomi Wahls, a Master's student in the Spanish program at the University of Colorado Denver and owner of Wahls Instructional Design LLC, is requesting funding for the Spanish 1010 (SPAN 1010) class within the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Colorado Denver (UCD) for the **Canvas Grant**. UCD offers 5 sections of SPAN 1010 in the spring term, 1 in the summer term, and 7 in the fall term, each with 25 students. This project will therefore affect 13 sections with a total of 325 students a year.

The course is a requirement for all students entering the Spanish program.<sup>1</sup> "College of Liberal Arts & Sciences students must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language at the second semester college level prior to graduation."<sup>2</sup> Spanish is the most popular, making it a critical part of UCD's language requirement. Latin is the only language program online at UCD. Spanish would be the next language to standardize their online materials for their 1010 section. SPAN 1010 meets twice a week for 3 hours on campus.<sup>1</sup> This will be the first year that all sections of Spanish 1010 have a course shell in Canvas. The proposed project will consist of standardizing the syllabi, designing a standard course shell, designing web-based course materials that will fit with the textbook currently used in SPAN 1010, creating a guide for students to create eportfolios, and designing a social media plan.

## ***SPAN 1010 Materials Standardization:***

There are 5 aspects to this project: standard syllabi, standard course shell, online materials, eportfolios, and social media. Two standard syllabi will be created for this course: specific and general. The specific syllabus will contain all activities both for in the classroom and in the Canvas course shell. The specific syllabus is a great start for new instructors because it will give them a starting point, saves them time, and helps them make the course more unified with other sections to facilitate tutoring, substitution, and preparing the students for further Spanish courses within the department. The generalized syllabus will contain grade categories with percent for the categories so that seasoned instructors can utilize some activities and control their own grading more, according to their teaching style and what works for them. Instructors who have taught SPAN 1010 before will be able to make changes to the grading and category sections easily while also maintaining a standard syllabus with the rest of the SPAN 1010 sections.

The course shell standardization will follow the 10-component guideline for online courses described below and course instructors will be able to utilize all 10 components or pick and choose what fits for their teaching style. The course shell will include the online materials created in this project. This format will also provide a rich environment for the instructor to utilize resources that compliment the textbook. A different topic will be covered each week in Canvas as listed in either syllabus such as: introductions, likes/dislikes, commands, time, seasons, family, work, school, and more. Each instructor for section of SPAN 1010 will have access to this same course shell, with the same content and format so that they can copy it into their own course. The designer will be available to assist with course copies for the pilot and initial semester.

Online materials will be created to support the textbook with a focus on learning through culture and music. The online materials are meant to supplement the learning in class and provide students with a chance to practice what they are learning. One example is the comic strip series. Each chapter in the current textbook has audio from a song by various artists. A series of comic strips will be created to support the audio section in the chapters. The comic strip will tell more about the artist/group for each chapter and will utilize the vocabulary used so far for each chapter. It will then build on the students' knowledge to provide them a chance to learn culture while also using their new vocabulary. The first chapter does not have audio and the comic strip will be in English introducing the series of comics so that students can understand the purpose of the comic series. Vocabulary and grammar activities will also be created for each chapter with a focus on practice through culture and music. Students will have the opportunity to practice their vocabulary in a VoiceThread activity where each vocabulary word has been stated and the student records themselves repeating the words for that chapter.

corrected along with their resume translated into Spanish. Students will be taught how to create a Spanish resume from their current resume. The eportfolio in Canvas will enable students to build their portfolio throughout their studies, receive input from their instructors, and share the portfolio with employers seeking Spanish speakers. Students will be guided with video and PDFs on how to create and use the eportfolios specific to studying Spanish so they can use them at any point in their education.

The final portion of the proposed changes to Spanish 1010 includes social media. Out-of-class time will be spent learning course content through a variety of technology mediums posted in the Canvas course. In addition to videos, students will learn through progressive learning tools such as the following social media tools: Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest. The social media tools will be linked in the Canvas courses. A shared Facebook page will be made for all the sections on which students can learn course content through social media updates, which will appear in their Facebook news feed. A Twitter hashtag will also be created for the course where students can share course-related tweets and pictures for classmates to see and it will be specific for each section of SPAN 1010. Finally, a shared Pinterest board will be created for students to share images that relate to what they are learning. Content for the social media will be designed and provided to the instructors with a social media timeline and plan. Instructors can utilize social media specific to their course or allow their students to interact with other sections of Spanish 1010 through the social media. The designer will have timed releases on some content so that the instructors do not have to build all the content for the social media.

The project will include a document on supporting this standardization project. During the project, the instructors will be able to review the standard course format and provide input for changes. The instructors will be allowed to use the standard course format as a basic course shell with resources and they can choose to not use some of the resources. They will be given the option to use at least one of the syllabi and the standard course shell. During the pilot, instructors will be asked to use the resources available to them and provide feedback to the designer. Instructors will be trained on how to use the online course shell and materials. The course designer will be available to trouble shoot any issues throughout the pilot and the first semester of the course.

### ***Materials Standardization***

Previous research shows that standardization can be beneficial for the students and instructors and has also created a list of components considered to be necessary for all online course shells. Social media guides have been designed by UCD's sister's school, the University of Colorado Boulder.

Standardizing the syllabus and course design can help both instructors and students in many ways. "Standardizing the components will facilitate course navigation, promote efficient content reusability, and improve the potential for student success."<sup>3</sup> This project will use the basic guidelines approach, in which all instructors use the standard format for the course and have additional resources available to them to use in their online course as they choose.

"The basic guidelines approach is when minimal design and structure expectations for online courses are adopted by the institution. This is similar in nature to having standardized sectional headings for all syllabi. Examples of basic guidelines for online courses could include each course having a weekly announcements section, up to date grade books, discussion boards, instructor contact information, and/or other components in each course. In this model, students would see these common components when they log-on to every course."<sup>3</sup>

There are many advantages to standardizing: instructors new to teaching online have a basic framework from which to begin their online course development; instructors still have a high degree of flexibility in terms of course modification; student familiarity with course structure can reduce learning curves for navigation and procedures, resulting in increased student and instructors satisfaction as well as fewer technical support questions; and commonalities between course structures can help create a baseline of expectations for course quality control and consistency, which assists in evaluations and assessments during internal or external reviews.<sup>3</sup>

provided. The following are the 10 components:

Announcements, Course Information, Instructor Information, Course Modules –Each module consists of four basic elements: introduction, objectives, resources and a "to-do" list, Discussions, Submissions, Assessments, Grades, Send email section, and Course Support.<sup>3</sup>

This project will include a social media component and will follow the social media guidelines created by the University of Colorado Boulder: <http://www.colorado.edu/social-media-cu/social-media-guidelines>. “Social media can help you bridge the distance that exists in online learning, not only in terms of community and relationship-building, but also in expanding the technology options available within a course site.”<sup>4</sup> Social media will be used to connect all the students taking Spanish 1010 with their peers and with the instructors along with any public interested in interacting with the students and instructors. The instructors will help manage the social media. The designer will help manage the social media initially and provide guidelines for the instructors to continue to manage the social media selected.

## ***II. Grant Money***

The main cost of this project will be designing the comic strips, standardizing the syllabus in 2 formats, surveying the instructors and students to evaluate needs and interests, meeting with the SPAN 1010 instructors to discuss proposed changes and suggestions from surveys, training the SPAN 1010 instructors, setting up social media pages/boards/accounts, creating how-to videos for students for assignments/activities/portfolio website building/social media interaction, purchase Pixton account to design full length comic strips, purchase license for Adobe Captivate to create vocabulary and grammar building activities based on the textbook, and VoiceThread account for students to practice their vocabulary online.

## ***III. Current Resources for project:***

The current resources for this project are on: <http://noemiwahls.weebly.com/canvas-grant.html>.

## ***IV. RFP Priorities & Category:***

### **Innovation/Wow Factor/X-factor/Holy Crap!**

The virtual language resources are new to the instructors and students at UC Denver. The online materials will support a new style of learning: community learning. Social media helps to not only create a community of learners, but it also opens students up to community learning where the students help to create and share the knowledge. Instructors will be able to teach the course meeting more learning styles by providing activities that address visual and musical learning styles. This project has a focus on learning through music and culture in activities that support the textbook. Standardizing the course format will create a new sharp look for all Spanish 1010 sections. Online portfolios are becoming more prominent and students who create eportfolios with a Spanish focus are likely to have a lead in the work place.

### **Potential for practical application**

This project will enable all SPAN 1010 instructors to have access to 2 syllabus options, a standard course shell built by an elearning environment designer, online materials and resources already created, and a social media guide, timeline, and content created by a social media manager. Currently the SPAN 1010 instructors have to create their own online course content, materials, and social media presence. Instructors can pick and choose which activities fit their teaching style best and which syllabus is best for them. Additionally the activities will focus on the students applying the vocabulary and grammar knowledge in a cultural way.

### **Adherence to open standards**

The online course materials such as the comic strips and video how to's will be posted on <http://noemiwahls.weebly.com/canvas-grant.html>. The course shell will be available for all UC Denver SPAN 1010 instructors to copy into their own course shells and the designer will be available to assist the instructors with their course copies should they need assistance. A video tour of the course shell and the social media plan with the timeline will be posted on the above mentioned website.

can copy over the standard course shell format, social media guide, and even some of the activities for review. These resources are tailored to the textbook, which is also used in SPAN 1020; therefore the activities created for SPAN 1010 will also benefit SPAN 1020 students looking to review what they previously learned.

#### **Experience/expertise of submitter and/or team**

The designer has previous experience working on a grant for the Community College of Denver in designing a game based learning environment: [www.aaa109.weebly.com](http://www.aaa109.weebly.com). The designer also has worked for CU Online, UC Denver's online department. Because teaching Spanish and designing content in Spanish is newer to the designer, she will be working closely with the SPAN 1010 instructors and the department head throughout the project. As the owner of the Wahls Instructional Design LLC, the designer has experience managing social media which includes creating a social media plan, timeline, and content for a medical research organization.

#### **Fits provided categories**

Although this project could fit into many of the categories, this project fits best under "New model of content and curriculum development and sharing" or NMCCDS and how it fits is further described below.

#### ***New Model of Content and Curriculum development and sharing Category:***

Standardizing SPAN 1010 fits the NMCCDS category because the content, syllabi, and course format are designed to be models for all of the SPAN 1010 instructors. Instructors can pick and choose their online materials to accompany their in class work while they will also be able to share content they create should they chose to do so. Instructors can select which syllabus fits for them and they can further modify it easily to fit their teaching styles. The course shell can be modified or taken as is. The content in the course shell will be new to all SPAN 1010 instructors. The project will be the first introduction of online materials built and designed with the Spanish instructor input to accompany the textbook and in class work. They can share their ideas during the meetings or in the website for the grant mentioned above. The online materials will be designed with the focus of the students applying their knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary in a cultural setting. For example, the chapter on family will have activities that highlight how a Spanish speaking family's cultural might be different from an English speaker's. The eportfolio will help engage students throughout their education in the Spanish department and also help encourage them to think about their ultimate career, even if it is outside of the language department. The online materials will be created with universal design in mind, although not everything may be universally designed. The online activities such as the comic strip will be created to facilitate competency-based learning, a style of learning where students learn small bits of information in steps or competencies in order to grasp a larger concept which is perfect for language learning since it involves learning small bits of grammar or vocabulary in order to proceed to more complex topics, by utilizing the vocabulary from each chapter and previous chapters.

#### ***V. Project Management and Evaluation:***

***Naomi Wahls, CCD Adjunct Professor:*** Ms. Wahls holds an M.A. in Information and Learning Technologies with an emphasis in Designing e-Learning Environments. In addition, Ms. Wahls will utilize skills and knowledge gained from her work for the Community College of Denver, where she worked on the ACCESS Grant and created a game based learning environment for AAA 109 and her experience working for CU Online at the University of Colorado, where she worked with both instructors and students in the online learning platforms of Blackboard and eCollege to develop and implement the use of the Canvas Course. She owns Wahls Instructional Design LLC and manages social media for a medical research organization.

#### ***Evaluation: Preference will be given to solutions that generate rich data and analytics:***

Students will be observed and their feedback measured a number of times from the design phase to the project's execution. In the design phase, students in SPAN 1010 classes will be surveyed about what they'd like to see within the Canvas Course. In the testing phase, students and instructors will participate in usability sessions. Their feedback will be incorporated in product revisions. In the implementation phase, students in the pilot class will be evaluated on their satisfaction with the materials and overall experience and the results compared to a similar evaluation completed by their non-pilot study counterparts. Five instructors will be surveyed during the implementation phase to determine successes and challenges for instructors.

1. In fall 2014, UCD will pilot the Canvas course with 1 section of 25 students.
2. In spring 2015, UCD will include five classes that use the Canvas game and five that use a traditional model for data comparison, with 25 students in each: total 150 students. Student overall course grade will be compared.

**Student outcomes:**

1. Content mastery is expected to increase by about 10% increase in final overall grades among student participants in the Canvas course model.
2. Retention is expected to increase by about 5% among student participants in the Canvas course model.
3. Graduation rates among students who take one or more Spanish courses is expected to increase by about 10% by 2017.

1 UC Denver (Viewed on January 14, 2014). Schedule of Courses. Retrieved from: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/Pages/Catalogs.aspx>.

2 UC Denver (Viewed on December 20, 2013). Foreign Language Requirement. Retrieved from: <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/class-advising/Degree%20Planning/Pages/ForeignLanguageRequirements.aspx>.

3 Lee, C; Dickerson, J; Winslow, J. (2012). *An Analysis of Organizational Approaches to Online Course Structures*. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, Volume XV, Number 1, March 2012. Retrieved from [http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/spring151/lee\\_dickerson\\_winslow.html](http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdl/spring151/lee_dickerson_winslow.html).

4 UC Boulder. (Viewed on December 17, 2013). *Social Media Guidelines*. Retrieved from: <http://www.colorado.edu/social-media-cu/social-media-guidelines>.

5 Venable, M. (2013) *Connecting with your online students using Social Media*. Retrieved from: <http://www.onlinecollege.org/2013/04/15/connecting-with-your-online-students-via-social-media/>.