

Course Correspondents: Bridging Continents and Connecting Students

Linking residential and study abroad programs!

Program goals:

- Broaden the cultural understanding of students abroad
- Expose residential students to authentic language and culture
- Increase awareness about benefits of studying abroad

Digital communication technologies are important resources in expanding opportunities to communicate and collaborate internationally. Faster and more cost-efficient than international travel, these technologies make new global learning and research opportunities available to students who may not have the wherewithal to travel abroad.

UNC 2012 Academic Plan

How can we leverage the experiences of study abroad students in Seville, Spain?



Interviews with local citizens;
interaction via VoiceThread



Narrated photos of local culture:
interaction via VoiceThread



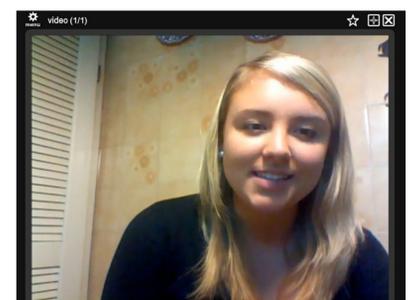
Skype sessions between
Correspondent and
residential class

Pilot implementation

- 1 Correspondent per course section
- Correspondents used in 21 Intermediate Spanish course sections
- Correspondents earned 1 credit hour
- Weekly correspondent activities integrated into course syllabus
- Pilot funded through Lenovo instructional innovation gift

Correspondent attributes

- Hispanic studies majors/minors
- Former students
- Outgoing and enthusiastic



Program costs

Item	Pilot Cost	Ongoing Cost
Course integration (assignments development, best practices)	\$2K per course	A repository of activities and best practices is being developed that can be used by instructors for other courses.
Correspondent technologies (camera, case, tripod)	\$240 per Correspondent	Necessary technologies will soon be covered by students' personal devices.
Infrastructure (VoiceThread)	Supported by central IT	Continued ITS support
Correspondent orientation/support	Language Resources Center staff	Department is committed to continued support.

Expansion proposal

- Creation of new Interdisciplinary Studies course (IDST 296) managed by Office of Undergraduate Education
- Course Correspondent Learning Contract requires departmental approval
- Participating students must be enrolled in UNC-approved Study Abroad programs

Pilot Results - Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012

Residential Student Survey - Fall 2011/Spring 2012 /Fall 2012 (n=294)

Understanding authentic Spanish language:	73% said the Correspondent interviews were helpful or very helpful.
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"Helped me jump from speaking "classroom" Spanish to more authentic Spanish. This is the first time I've engaged with or heard native speakers as part of class."

"It made me get used to listening to native speakers, which I think is the most difficult aspect of learning Spanish."

Exposure to foreign culture	59% have never traveled outside the US. 69% have never traveled to a Spanish-speaking country.
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"I became aware of a way of life of people outside the US."

"Because I have not been to Seville, it helped me get a "true" look at Spanish culture today and it showed me glimpses into the culture that books and readings cannot express."

"Even though I'm a senior and will not participate in Study Abroad, I'm happy to gain perspective from people who did."

Interest in studying abroad:	77% said their interest increased some or a lot as a result of the Correspondent activities.
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"She (our correspondent) was easy to relate to and made studying abroad seem not so scary."

"It gave me more cultural knowledge of Seville and inspired me to travel abroad."

"Saw how rapidly those study abroad students improve their Spanish."

Correspondent comments

"Being a correspondent forced me to go out of my comfort zone and interview people that I never would have talked to in the first place. It was nice to learn more about how the locals felt about their culture and social issues."

"I paid more attention to my surroundings while working as a correspondent because many of the topics required that I discuss everyday things like advertising or shopping."

"The Voicethreads gave me the confidence to just walk up to strangers and ask if they would be willing to do an interview, which isn't something I wouldn't normally do in English, let alone Spanish."

Instructor comments

"For many of the 255 honors students, this was the first time in their formal study of Spanish that they have been expected to deal with real spoken language."

Dr. Bill Maisch

"I think that my students were pleased to hear from the people on the street about the topics we discussed in class. The formal discussions and structured information from class were complemented with a more informal and personal view of issues that pertain to Spanish society."

Dr. Abel Munoz-Hermoso



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