

St. Lawrence University
Center for Teaching and Learning
Technology for Teaching Grant Proposal

(Full-time faculty members are eligible to submit proposals for teaching grants.)

Technology for Teaching grants are designed to infuse technology-enhanced pedagogy into the university curriculum. Intended to serve both experts and newcomers to technology, the grants help faculty members explore, develop, and support technology-related strategies and curricula. Examples include, but are not limited to: workshop attendance, course-specific software or hardware, using trained student assistants to enhance technology-orientated teaching, or travel to a technology and teaching conference. Any questions about proposals can be directed to the CTL.(x5981)

Smaller grant proposals (\$500 or less) will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Proposals for larger grants (\$501 to \$1500) must be submitted by **April 15** for the Fall, and by **October 15** for the Spring. All proposals will be reviewed by a committee of faculty and IT staff. Larger grants are limited to one every other year, and requests for travel will be approved only if the applicant's regular pedagogy travel fund has been exhausted.

Grant Criteria:

1. The project represents an innovative use of technology to enhance teaching, or changing technological need related to past innovations.
2. The project represents a new pedagogical direction for the instructor or the course. We particularly encourage projects that involve students in collaborative research and instructional roles.
3. The project exhibits a demonstrable connection to institutional or departmental curricular goals.
4. The project's outcome represents a new application of technology to the course(s) involved.
5. A final report summarizing the project must be submitted by the following April 1 for Fall support and September 1 for Spring support.

Name: Jenna Torres Department: Modern Languages Phone: 5155

Project Title: Teaching Languages

Dates of Project: Fall semester 2005 (August –December)

Please send this cover sheet and the following information by email as a Word attachment to ctl@stlawu.edu or via campus mail:

- **Project description and specific goals with respect to enhancing teaching**
- **Itemized list of resources and expenditures needed for project**
- **Student support responsibilities (if applicable)**
- **Brief description of how you might share the pedagogical impact of this project through a CTL sponsored Shop Talk or IT program**

Total amount requested: \$837.85

Faculty Signature: _____ Date: 4/15/05

OFFICE USE ONLY:

CTL Director: _____ Date: _____

Total amount approved: _____

Final report received: _____

Technology for Teaching Grant Proposal Form
Jenna Torres
Modern Languages

Summary of request: I am requesting a video camera and accompanying material (case, tripod, memory card, mini DV tapes, and software) for use in collaborative student projects to create new photo and video materials and activities for language labs.

This proposal is for a new course in our department entitled *Teaching Languages* (cross-listed in Fall 2005 as Chinese/French/German/Japanese/Spanish/Swahili 248 SPTP; 0.5 units). The course description that appears in the course listings is as follows:

As a course designed to help students develop competency in language instruction, *Teaching Languages* is mandatory for student teaching assistants in the department of Modern Languages and Literatures. In this course, we will explore what it means to be part of a communicative classroom from the perspective of both a student and an instructor. As part of this focus, students will discuss and create activities for lab that fit into the model of communicative teaching, and complement the VirtuaLab and textbook activities. After being trained in VirtuaLab (CAN8) software, students will complete a project in which they will design original visual and auditory materials and exercises for use in their own lab sections.

This course represents both a new pedagogical direction and use of technology for the department, because in the past TAs have not received any training nor have we created new materials for our CAN8/VirtuaLab software (CAN8 is the software used to create VirtuaLab activities). Currently, the instructors of the 100-level beginning and intermediate language courses (101, 102, 103, and 104) choose their TAs from upper-level language classes. The TAs are expected to run the lab sections themselves, using activities created in consultation with the professor, in addition to materials available on the VirtuaLab system. Normally, these VirtuaLab materials are taken from the standard audiotapes and CDs sent along with the textbook for the course. The VirtuaLab system allows students to listen to the auditory material and to respond verbally via a microphone, where the results are recorded and can be reviewed by the TAs and professors. However, the CAN8 software is capable of much more. New materials can be designed easily, using original audio tracks, photos, and video clips. Activities can then be created around these new materials with fill in the blank

exercises, multiple choice questions, verbal responses, and/or writing sentences and paragraphs. We pay for the license to use the CAN8 software, yet we only use it in a very limited manner.

The restricted use of VirtuaLab is not the only limitation in our labs. As it stands, our methods of running labs are not optimal. The activities created by TAs vary greatly in quality and efficacy, since the TAs are not trained in how instruct language students. This puts TAs in a difficult spot, since they are expected to guide their peers through extra practice in the language without ever having gone in front of a class before, or having prepared a lesson. In addition, students have reported in evaluations that they do not enjoy the VirtuaLab activities, since they are tedious and repetitious, regardless of their usefulness in increasing comprehension. According to instructors at McGill University¹, students prefer originally-created material, which uses familiar voices and faces from their own university rather than the “canned” material available from the textbook. It is our goal as a department to improve this aspect of the quality of our beginning and intermediate language instruction, while also making it challenging and enjoyable for all the students involved.

Therefore, the specific goals of *Teaching Languages* include: making TAs more comfortable and effective in lab by helping them understand what our pedagogical goals and methodologies are and helping them create activities which fit into that schemata; giving them projects to create original VirtuaLab material so that language students become more interested in and challenged by the computer materials that are available to them; having TAs in each language work collaboratively on these projects to increase the quality of their activities; and overall improving the quality of our beginning and intermediate language instruction.

In order to achieve these goals, we will first have students use non-technological means to create activities. The students will then receive training on how to program new material in CAN8,

¹ Ryenne Araujo and I took a trip to McGill in December 2004 to talk to language instructors and their Instructional Technologist in order to see how they use the same CAN8 system for their language labs. They have a much wider range of uses for the software than we currently do, with much success.

with assistance from Ryanne Araujo and her student interns. Since there will be several student TAs for each language, they will work collaboratively to create audio-only material for use on VirtuaLab as their first technological project, then material using still photos as the second project. In the final project, students will create original video clips as well as several different language activities which use these clips for the VirtuaLab system. To accomplish this, students will receive training on video editing and using a video camera².

The request being made in this technology grant is for a video camera to be used by the students, as well as accompanying material (see itemized list below). Although video cameras are available through IT, they are in very high demand. In addition, this is an ongoing project throughout the majority of the semester, and the students will need access to the camera frequently; this use would put a strain on IT's current resources, not allowing their cameras to be used for other courses and projects. We would also be able to use the camera to take still photos for the second technology project described above. The camera I requested is capable of both quality photos and quality video (see specifications in link below), will be able to be used for the next several years if not more, and is able to be used on both PCs and Macintoshes. While the students will be formally trained in Movie Maker using the computers available in Carnegie, I would like to give them the opportunity to use the Macs available in Madill (along with iMovie) if they wish. I have also requested a case for the camera so it does not get damaged, a tripod to help them film their clips without shaky video, a second memory card since the students will be taking many still photos, and a set of mini DV tapes to start the class with (since they cannot be reused while maintaining the same video quality, we need at least one per student). As of April 15, there are 10 students registered for the course, but we expect several more as the professors finalize their TA choices for the fall. I have also requested a copy of iLife, which has the current versions of iMovie and iDVD for Macintosh;

² This course also represents a new pedagogical direction for me personally, since I have never used video editing or video cameras in general in my courses.

since I have a Mac in my office and I have never done video editing before, I wish to familiarize myself with the most recent version of iMovie before helping the students.

In summary, if this course is successful, it will increase the quality of our lab sections for the students by providing them with more interesting, effective, and challenging material. It will help make lab better for the TAs by allowing them to have a wider range of pedagogically-sound activities to work with and increased confidence in the classroom. It will also be a benefit for the professors in charge of the 100-level courses by having their students get increased quantity, quality, and variation in their practice in the language. In addition, we will be increasing the use of an existing technology in our language labs so that it is more helpful to TAs, professors, and students. Overall, this new course promises to help make our language instruction more effective, challenging, and interesting for everyone involved.

I would be happy to share the pedagogical impact of using collaborative video projects for a shop talk or IT program once the fall semester is over, when everyone reports on how the experience went and if it was successful in improving the quality of our language labs. I could discuss the impact on student learning, how the TAs were able to deal with the training and project and what their experience was, how the professors perceived the project, and how video projects might be used in other types of classes.

Itemized list of technology requests with costs:

1) Canon Elura 85 Mini DV Camcorder \$599.99

<http://www.cameraworld.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?storeId=10151&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&productId=13236957&bct=t1003%3Bc1008>

2) Carrying case for Canon camera \$29.95

3) Canon Deluxe Tripod 200 \$44.95

4) Panasonic 256 MB Secure Disk Memory Card \$59.95

5) iLife (with academic discount) \$59

6) Mini DV tapes (15)

Panasonic 5 pack \$24.99 \$74.97

Total: \$868.81

Descriptions of each item are provided with the hard copy of the grant application.