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Web 2.0 Tools in the Foreign Language

Andres Villagra
Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, Pace University

Final Report

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Title of the Project

Web 2.0 Tools in the Foreign Language

- Classroom

Cornerstone 3 Interdisciplinary Informatics

- Principal Investigators Names along with their School/College

Dr. Andrés Villagrá

- Dyson School of Arts and Sciences, Pace University

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  The Spanish Lounge de Pace University": Goals of the Proposed Project. (2008)

The" Spanish Lounge de Pace University" project began in 2008 as a pilot program to be used in the Spanish upper-level courses that I regularly teach at this institution. This concept evolved from my pioneering efforts in using student blogs in the "Advanced Spanish Composition" writing course in the Spring semester of 2007. In addition to blogs, the development of new web 2.0 tools such as wikis, and e-portfolios as well as the simplification of interaction of new Internet environments lead to a further and more sophisticated implementation. Mainly, it allowed "The Spanish Lounge" to be adapted as a private, flexible, visually rich collaborative learning environment within a unique content management system.

The original plans stated that: "This project is two-fold: The development of both the social networking environment "Spanish Lounge at Pace University" (http://spanishlounge.wetpaint.com); and the student piloting community project called: "Spanish Success Story". Both pilot projects have already started in the Fall 2008 and are under way at this point. The funds requested will help with a additional design work and maintenance of these projects.

1- The "Spanish Lounge de Pace University"

The purpose of the "Spanish Lounge de Pace University" project is to provide a social

networking space for present students, alumni and other professional and friends connected with the Spanish community at Pace University. The goal of this social network has started as a collaborative wiki covering the following content areas: "members' area"; the "Spanish Success Story" project; student and professional resources; projects and collaboration; and Web 2.0 media tools. In spite of its short existence, this challenging and innovative project has been labeled as a pioneering project in the country. After an initial membership screening, authors/writers are allowed to collaborate and create documents both in Spanish and in English translation or to provide a summary. The student resource section also provides cultural, grammatical and literary support for use in Spanish language classes at all levels and it would be extremely useful for presenting cultural information in the lower level courses (110 to 280). Sections include: links to the Dyson Academic Advisement office, grants and study abroad information, online grammar resources, as well as video, radio and TV programming in Spanish from around the world."

2-"Spanish Success Story": Students in the Intermediate Conversation course created an electronic portfolio including an autobiography as a Spanish language learner, 4-5 compositions written during the semester and a final contribution to the "Spanish Success in the US", a project that already started in the prior semester. The next step was to require students to interview a person of success in their field of specialization and to record the interview in video format. Students interviewed psychologists, professionals in the criminal justice and medical fields, musicians, actors, etc, whose job was related to the Hispanic World, or had a Hispanic background. Once the interview was typed and uploaded into our website, students were also required to provide a personal reflection including the process of selection of candidate, the relevance to their specialization, and the implementation of technology and later publication in the web. The purpose of this exercise was two-fold: one to reveal to students the significance of creating, publishing and being responsible of meaningful and public work and materials; and second, to give them the opportunity to start a network with professionals within their field of specialization.

B) What progress have you made towards your original goals on

"The Spanish Lounge de Pace University" has been fully functioning since its inception in 2008 as a language-learning environment. Presently, this 200-member community offers an environment where members communicate; practice Spanish and share resources and other wealth of information. Even after graduation, members continue to post, add information that they find useful and relevant for other members. It has been also serving as a way of communication between present students, recent graduates, students abroad and professors. Students at programs abroad regularly send pictures, updates or request assistance with particular needs. Simultaneously, the "Spanish Success Story" has evolved into a databank of rich media documents that are used in elementary an intermediate courses as reading and listening comprehension and writing exercises. Students of all levels of Spanish language level instructions are introduced to this project and encouraged to participate, comment and create their own materials as well. Each online interview webpage also includes a discussion forum where past and present members can continue a discussion about the chosen topic. Once we have achieved a large number of documents, students and other members will be working in refining and expanding these student-created materials into an online textbook version for educational purposes.

A) What activities have been completed to contribute to meeting/progressing toward these goals?

'The Spanish Lounge" is a flexible, multifaceted language learning environment that can be adapted to simultaneous and diverse language level projects. Besides regular communication among members, past and present projects are being redefined or developed during the academic year and with specific objectives in mind.

In addition to creation of the "The Spanish Lounge" learning environment and the "Spanish Success Story" community project, there are a number of other ongoing smaller projects. As such, students become co-creators of educational materials that become part of a course and are redefined as well by future students.

"The Spanish Success Story" project was originally created as a project for an Intermediate

Composition Course" in the Fall 2008. As part of the final project for this class, students were required to identify, contact and request an interview from a public official, professional figure or artist who was associated with Hispanic professional success in New York. The interview video segment was conducted in Spanish between the interviewee and the student and it was then edited and uploaded into a free video hosting site (Youtube, Jing, Real Player, etc). An online template was then created for every student project, which included the following elements: the embedded edited video segment, a biography of the person being interviewed, and a personal reflection based on the process of personally selecting, editing, and commenting on the importance and relevance of creating this online testimonial. The accompanying texts were also created in both English and Spanish to accommodate monolingual page viewers, and also keeping in mind future employers as potential readers of this student e-portfolio. In addition, students were suggested to create questionnaires and bibliographical links related to their area of research.

"Culture through Film lesson Plans"- The work conducted by my students in the "Hispanic Culture Through Film" course has been striking and utmost satisfactory to me. After an initial two-week learning curve, students started creating materials and presenting information in the most creative and innovative ways. Not only they strived at being informative and fulfilling the course requirements, but also students worked hard at incorporating new technological tools such as online quizzes, questionnaires, and themes for discussion and research projects. The final project for this class involved the creation of an educational lesson plan to be reused in future courses. Topics ranged from "Surrealism Movement", "The Theater of Absurd" "Politics, Economics and Prostitution in Cuba", "Chilean Failed Revolution", etc.

The recent course "Spanish Translation and Interpretation" in Spring 2010 incorporated a new element into the learning and creativity equation. This upper-level course was open for upper level students coming from a variety of specializations. Applying the professional approach of the Spanish Success interviews and the creativity and personal reflection required at the time of developing a personal lesson plans, students were also required to help translate documents from Spanish into English and vice versa concerning their area of specialization. A requirement for this final project was that projects needed not to have been translated into the other

language and they were related to their major or area of expertise. There were a number of very diverse projects at the end of the course such as: literary translation of Puerto Rican Short Stories into English, technical translation of documents related to concrete pathologies in Psychology; documents related to non-governmental organizations or educational aspects of hip hop culture. Interviews and reports were conducted as well, such as an interview with the author and director of the New York-based Spanish Theater "Thalia". Beyond the educational emphasis of the course on translation and interpretation, the student was also required to develop a practical final projects which now includes: video production, content development, lesson plan and direct professional application to their professional specialization.

A) What activities have not been completed? Please indicate why they have not been completed.

The "Spanish Lounge" project is a kind of a living entity that continues to evolve and grow with new and old materials being readapted in new courses and projects. The main two objectives were already being developed since is inception. Having fulfilled these objectives, the participation of its members is crucial in discussions and future direction for new projects. I anticipate a larger number of contributions as projects are redefined or are more timely developed.

A) Please outline the outcomes you have received as a result.

1- The website "Spanish Lounge de Pace University" was nominated as one of the best 5 educational sites of the year 2009 within the wiki environment of about 1.5 million wiki sites.
2- *The Spanish Lounge de Pace University* learning model" was presented at the "Campus Technology" Conference in Boston, July 26-29, 2009. This is certainly the most important conference in educational technology in the US. The use of technology and particularly Web 2.0 technology applied in the Foreign Language Classroom is gaining interest and attention internationally. The Spanish Lounge project has been accepted for presentation at the

Association of History, Literature, Science and Technology, Madrid, June 2010; The Foreign Language Information technology in Cyprus, Fall 2010, and the Foreign Languages Learning Technology, Thailand, Spring 2012

I have also directed some panel discussions concerning the use of technology in the classroom. This approach to student-faculty content creation has resulted in my panel "The Publishing Revolution: Creating Textbook Content with Web 2.0 Tools" took place at the North East Modern Language Association in Montreal, March 2010. Panelist came from Poland, Texas and Virginia. This panel addressed similar initiatives that develop or adapt course content or textbook materials in an online, collaborative environment. I will also be conducting a follow-up panel entitled "The Future of Open Education Initiatives" in which several issues will be discussed such as: the use of copyrighted, protected content available through the web, as well as the use and adaptation of student generated content; the flexibility of social networking environments, and the creation of student e-portfolios; and it will also address issues of assessment and academic recognition system following "The Horizon Report 2010" stating the need to create "reward structures that support the sharing of work in progress, ongoing research, highly collaborative projects and a broad view of what constitutes scholarly publication." The analysis of the direct relationship between the developing of structured assessment tools simultaneously progresses with the recognition of the field of technological scholarship.

The Spanish Lounge has received attention from the press as well. The magazine "Latinos New York" (March 2008) published an article about this project called: "Dr. Andres Villagra, Our Educator of the Future". Also, the 'Spanish Lounge" project has been included as one of the key features of the "Pace University Annual Report 2009-2010."

A) Has your project impacted students? If so, how many?

As projects are more polished and developed, students feel more enthusiastic once they understand the impact that their class work can have in their future careers. In the Spanish Lounge environment, student don't reproduce knowledge for a grade as in traditional course

approach, but they projects require essential skills such as finding, assessing, interpreting and synthesizing the vast array of information available today. I could cite numerous letters and e-mails from former students where they appreciate the work developed in my courses. As an example, this letter from a recent graduate in my Spanish Translation course in Spring 2010 arrived recently. I am translating from Spanish and summarizing the letter: "this summer 2010 I have been working as an Intern at *The Pan American Health and Education Foundation* (PAHEF) in Washington D.C. Initially, my last day at work was last Friday, but guess what? They have offered me a full time position. I am very excited and I feel very fortunate to found a job in my area of interest… I want to thank for having taken your classes. Without them, this job would have been much more difficult." (Stephanie Salvador)

A) Has your project impacted other faculty members? If so, how many?

Web 2.0 Technologies have been rapidly adopted across disciplines and professional environments. First year students are more and more familiar with these new technologies and colleagues in the academic world are steadily increasing the use of technology in the classroom. As a pioneer within my school, I have always made myself available for answering questions, show materials or to offer training to interested colleagues. Also, my students have been very eager to present this work to the Pace University academic community. During the last Dyson Day (March 2010), students Amanda DeCiilis and Caragh Baragh enthusiastically presented our work to the whole community. The Dyson Technology Award 2011 I received represents the recognition of the quality of the innovative, collaborative work in the Spanish Lounge. As I mentioned earlier, our community has grown over 200 members, and many students and alumni chose this environment when we communicate among ourselves. The "Spanish Lounge" website now contains videos to facilitate the site navigation as well as representative student work and e-portfolio samples to serve as model for others.

A) Were there any unintended outcomes achieved?
B) Do your outcomes reflect the change or benefit you were hoping to receive?

The students in the Spanish Lounge project are receiving several benefits beyond learning the course content. These students are learning to work in a collaborative, public environment, which emphasizes personal responsibility for their contributions as well as authorship over their creative research. . Certainly, students are also receiving an education on applied web 2.0 technologies that have become an indispensable skill in today's professional world. Unlike traditional final papers, the projects created in this technological environment are reused and can be readapted for a variety of purposes beyond the course, and become part of the student e-portfolio.

I perceive technology not only as a tool in the educational process but also as final product, an end result. The use of technology demanded a new conceptualization of my teaching style; e.g, the choice and use of materials, learning objectives and outcomes, student created content and assessment methods. New technological content development and teaching approaches needed to be added in the final assessment of the student performance. Each course requires its own project design and implementation. This is a hard part at this point. In time, the acquired experience and student familiarity with these new technologies will make course design a more habitual practice.

A) How has your project furthered the Thinkfinity Cornerstone you selected?

As discussed earlier, The Spanish Lounge pedagogical approach encourages all series of interdisciplinary approaches based on the student area of expertise and the nature of the course. As such it perfectly responds to the Thinkfinity Cornersotne 3 "Interdisciplinary Informatics" guidelines. The use of technology provides the perfect platform where to develop and share student projects with others and from a variety of disciplines. The Spanish Lounge is a work in progress, which means it will keep expanding and refining itself as input and experience from both students and members are been added into this web environment. Beyond the direct application of a new technology for teaching purposes, the Spanish Lounge aims to infuse a culture of sharing and to integrate technology as an essential component of pedagogy in the foreign language classroom.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Andrés Villagrá