THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning

Newsletter

Toni Theisen

ACTFL President 2013

&

Digital Badge Earner

Digital Badges
For an Open World

Fall 2013

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COERLL Newsletter

Fall 2013
Digital Badges for an Open World

This newsletter is a biannual publication of the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL) at the University of Texas at Austin.

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Scan the code to the right with a scanner (barcode reader) application to explore COERLL.

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Mission

The Center for Open Educational Resources & Language Learning (COERLL) is one of 15 national foreign language resource centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Title VI of the 1990 Higher Education Act). COERLL's mission is to produce Open Educational Resources (OER) for the Internet public. In addition, COERLL aims to reframe foreign language education in terms of bilingualism and/or multilingualism.

From the Interim Director

COERLL is now entering its fourth and final year of the 2010-2014 Title VI grant as a Language Resource Center. From my perspective as Interim Director, COERLL continues to assume increasing importance nationally and internationally in the community of foreign language educators, program administrators, and students. While working in our booth at this year's CALICO and AATSP conferences, I was impressed by the many educators who stopped by, recognized the COERLL name and made comments like, "Oh yes, you are the folks who give away all those great materials for free!" Clearly, COERLL has made an impact in the field of foreign language education.

We have been busy with a number of projects since our last newsletter in the Spring:

- We successfully co-sponsored the IADA Dialogue in Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multicompetent Communities of Practice Workshop in March, which featured many fine talks by professors and students from Europe, Asia, Canada, and the U.S. We're currently editing a volume of papers by some of the presenters plus other invited authors.
- We kicked off the summer with a series of three successful teacher webinars that drew hundreds of participants from across the US. (See p. 14 of this newsletter for details.)
- This May, our presence was noted at the CALICO 2013 Conference in Honolulu, where COERLL staff gave several well-attended presentations.

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- In June, at IALLT in Fort Lauderdale, COERLL project manager Rachael Gilg and graduate student Arthur Wendorf were given the Henderson Award for the best submission to the IALLT conference. Their presentation was entitled "A Video Corpus for Language Learning: Open Source Tools and Materials from the Corpus-to-Classroom Project."
- In July, at the AATSP 2013 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, our staff and other professors who directed projects sponsored by COERLL informed the audiences about COERLL offerings in Spanish and Portuguese, notably Brazilpod, the SpinTX Video Archive and the Spanish Proficiency Training website.
- Our work on digital badges continues! As the focus of this newsletter shows, we are raising awareness about open digital badges for professional development, a new credentialing system that we believe holds great promise for foreign language educators in the 21st century. The concept of badges can be applied to validate teacher training efforts and expertise, and perhaps one day to verify continuing professional education for school districts. (See p. 4.)
- In an exciting development, we will be collaborating with ACTFL to offer a professional development badge for attendees at this year's convention in Orlando. The badge will be awarded to those who extend and amplify the conference through professional networking, sharing ideas and encouraging peer-to-peer exchange. (p. 14.) Our hope is that this badge will lead to new social networks and a more participatory professional culture.

As these different ideas and projects arise, COERLL continues to define and redefine itself and its objectives in a dynamic and worthwhile way.

For an open world,
Dale Koike, Interim Director of COERLL

Dale Koike, Director of COERLL

Join the Effort

Scan the code to the right to donate now to COERLL. Your tax-deductible donation will support the development of publicly available OER and will help to create a more open world in language learning.

DIGITAL BADGES:
Professional Development for the 21ST Century

In an era of unprecedented information exchange, one thing is remarkably clear: people all around the world have more opportunities to learn than ever before. We can explore new subjects through free Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), community workshops, extension courses or, for those eager and independent learners, Open Courseware and Open Educational Resources (OER).

At the same time, as more educational institutions and employers are emphasizing the importance of marketable skills, students and jobseekers are increasingly asked to "show what they know." Institutions like the University of California-Davis, Purdue University, and Carnegie Mellon University have started to explore how digital badging programs and sharable e-portfolios can improve their students' educational experience and lead them into successful careers. In addition, various non-profit foundations (e.g. Bill & Melinda Gates, MacArthur, Mozilla) as well as for-profit groups and research entities (e.g. Disney-Pixar, Intel, NASA, NOAA) are all promoting badges as a way to document and demonstrate learning.

We at COERLL are eager to explore the ways that organizations, educational and professional institutions and even businesses are starting to use digital badges as a system of recognition for learning and achievement. We are especially interested in how digital badges can play a key role in translating lifelong learning into a powerful tool for engaging in communities of practice, demonstrating skills to others and initiating career development.

What are digital language badges?

They may take the form of a colorful emblem or a traditional certificate. They are issued by language resource centers, foreign language organizations and other professionally recognized entities.

How do language professionals earn badges?

Through all of the usual forms of professional development, but also through participation in virtual interaction, such as webinars and live streaming events. Badge earners can display these digital representations of professional development on their personal websites, Facebook pages or wikispaces, for example. In this way, professional progress is displayed to the world.

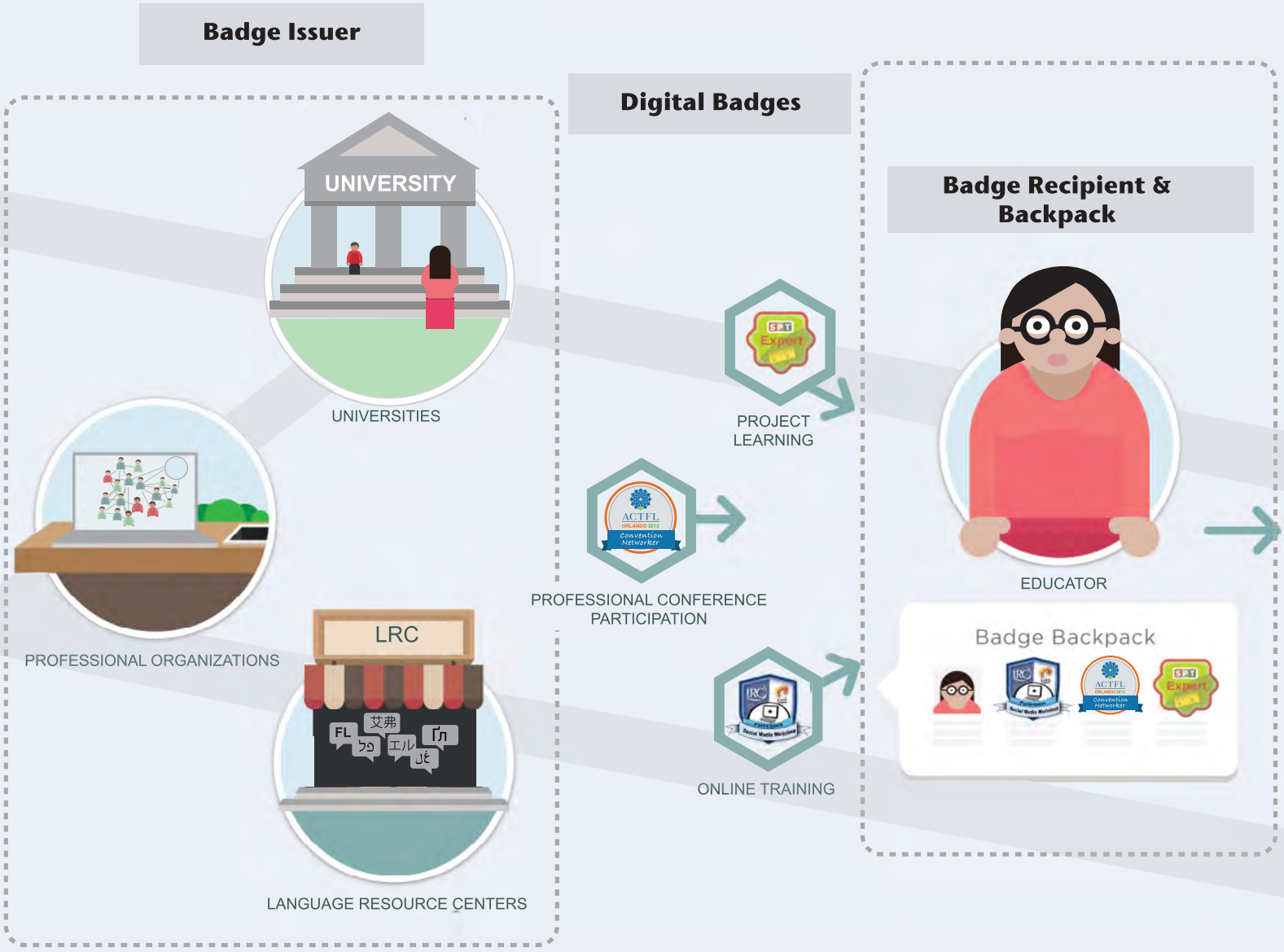
Viewers (e.g. peers, employers) who click on the digital badge can see important information, including the badge issuer and a course description. Viewers also see what the badge represents, including achievements, skills, competencies, community involvement, CPE credits earned, evidence for formal or informal learning, links to portfolio work and other details reflecting the merit of the badge.

COERLL is currently working with ACTFL to implement a digital badge called the "Convention Networker" at the conference in Orlando, FL. We are looking forward to seeing the reaction of the foreign language teaching community to this new concept in professional development. Visit: **http://www.actflbadges.org** for more information and see p. 15 of this newsletter.

We are also exploring the integration of a badge system into some of the language learning resources we have created at COERLL. We are excited to test the affordances of this new concept and to provide learners who use our materials with meaningful ways to "show what they know." We welcome your feedback as we explore the promise of digital badges for foreign language education. (See the back cover of this Newsletter for contact information.)

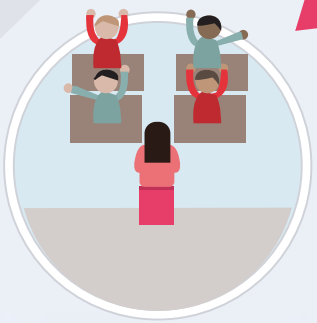
HOW DIGITAL BADGES WORK

Digital badges allow language educators to earn credentials for the 21st century classroom and share them with the world. See how reputable badge issuers provide opportunities for educators to showcase their skills and interests with peers and employers.

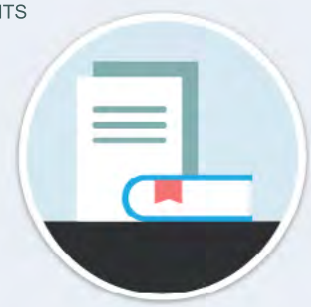


Visit
openbadges.coerll.utexas.edu
to start earning badges for your backpack and join the community of 21st century language educators.

Badge Benefits



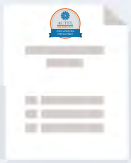
CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENTS



WIDER RECOGNITION

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Professional Networks, Employment Sites & More



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Modified by COERLL - http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/coerll.

coerll for an open world

OpenBadges

Badgified!

We have been talking to foreign language educators and influencers who are excited about the future of digital badges for alternative credentialing. Find out how they're getting involved and what they hope for the future of badges for foreign languages.

If you are planning to attend this year's ACTFL convention go to http://www.actflbadges.org to learn about a badge-earning opportunity or visit http://openbadges.coerll.utexas.edu for information about badges in language learning.

Badge Earner

Toni Theisen

ACTFL President
and Loveland High School
French Teacher

@tonitheisen

My digital badge experience

Like many things, when there is an interest, articles and opportunities pop up. So I started reading about badges. This summer, I attended an information session by Mozilla's http://openbadges.org. Then I earned my first professional development badge by participating in the Social Media Workshop 2013, an online event presented by LARC (Language Acquisition Resource Center, San Diego State University). I signed up for my Mozilla Backpack (for storing badge information), and have displayed my badge on my wikispace: http://tonitheisen.wikispaces.com.

My vision for badges

I want ACTFL members to learn about the badge concept and the potential of recognizing their skills and expertise at a more detailed level. This is why we are partnering with COERLL to present the first ever ACTFL badge. (See p. 15 of this newsletter.) ACTFL can lead the way for developing ideas of using badges to recognize many possibilities of professional teaching and learning through multiple paths of credentialing. I would love to see the development of a robust ecosystem of badges that meets the needs of our members in the 21st century.

Impact on professional development

An alternative credentialing system could give more equitable access to professional learning and teaching opportunities to many more teachers. Also, many of our new teachers are ardent users of technology. A system like this would hopefully draw more members to ACTFL. The more members we have, the bigger our voice in the educational field. A badge system would allow foreign language educators to show off all of their skills and expertise, and it would help administrators find the best candidate for the job. The concept of a digital badge backpack makes it easier to share and display one's skills. It also makes it easier for administrators to search for qualified candidates. I can't wait to get my ACTFL badge!

My digital badge experience

Last November I attended an ACTFL conference presentation called “Badges: An Online Approach to Continuing Professional Development” (presented by COERLL). I was intrigued by what I learned. Firstly, the idea of going digital is very alluring as a 21st century approach to monitoring, updating and, more importantly, sharing credentials with the online community. Secondly, the idea of badges is one that is already used in areas such as gaming and scout organizations well known to the general public. Making badges digital simply takes them to a new level. It gives language teachers a way to be recognized for their particular skills.

My vision for badges

In general, badges can help teachers grow their craft and become proud of their achievements. Specific to language education, I see potential for badges to be a reflection of a teacher’s language proficiency, their ability to differentiate instruction or to integrate 21st century skills and their knowledge of how to embed culture into instruction. In addition to teachers having an innovative way to visually display such attainments, it would help me determine which teachers can lead professional development workshops in certain areas.

Administrator & Badge Enthusiast

Tina Dong
World Languages Coordinator,
Austin ISD

Impact on professional development

I can envision professional development offerings being classified or categorized based on digital badges. Then teachers would be more strategic and intentional in selecting sessions or workshops to attend, in order to accumulate badges of interest. As part of this year’s teacher evaluations, I will be using the Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning (TELL) framework to allow language teachers to self-assess their skills. They will choose one or two areas from the seven TELL domains in which they would like to grow. I plan to use this information to guide future professional development. If digital badges were introduced, they could work in conjunction with the framework so that teachers are empowered to manage their own professional growth in a truly reflective way. This will ultimately benefit our students.

Why administrators should pay attention

Our Superintendent recently spearheaded an initiative for administrators and teachers in the district to be aware of our strengths and to play to these strengths. She is motivating us to focus on what is strong rather than what is wrong. I see a strong connection between our Superintendent’s initiative and digital badges because, in essence, badges allow professionals to name and claim their strengths.

Badge Developer

Abby Dings
Associate Professor of Spanish
and Coordinator of the Spanish Language Program,
Southwestern University

My digital badge experience

Carl Blyth and Dale Koike (COERLL Director and Interim Director) introduced me to the concept of digital badges. Dale and a group of graduate students had created the Spanish Corpus Proficiency Level Training (SPT) website, designed to help teachers learn how to evaluate Spanish proficiency levels. With COERLL's support, Spanish instructor Malia LeMond and I worked together in the summer of 2012 to create a sequence of badge challenges designed to guide teachers through the SPT website and develop knowledge and skills in proficiency assessment.

This past spring, I piloted the SPT badges in an upper level Spanish course. My students worked through the sequence of badge challenges over the course of the semester, using Moodle forums to share their reflections and comment on their classmates' postings. Currently I'm looking into piloting the badges with a group of Spanish professors who are interested in learning how to assess their students' oral proficiency more systematically and uniformly.

My vision for badges

There's a great deal of potential with digital badges for language education. The gamification aspect appeals to many language learners, particularly the younger generation, and provides a type of motivation not present in many online language-learning sites. At the same time, the badge structure provides a learning map for reaching higher levels. Badges also encourage learners to explore their personal interests. Educators can create various badge options that allow students to select which aspects of the target culture they'd like to explore in greater depth and to make comparisons and connections across cultures. Cultural badges might include field trips or other out-of-school experiences.

Badge issuers (like COERLL) need to validate the criteria for each badge. And there needs to be institutional oversight of the assessment of the badge earner's work, particularly considering that we seek to have the SPT badges count towards Continuing Professional Education credits in Texas.

Impact on professional development

Digital badges are poised to play a central role in Continuing Professional Education for language educators. Digital badges allow educators to explore areas that interest them, and to join peer communities focused on similar topics. The opportunities for networking and sharing expertise and ideas are valuable aspects of many badge challenges. Educators and other badge earners will be able to provide granularity to their resumes and portfolios, with verifiable credentials that legitimize and specify training and skills. Administrators can rely on the validity of the badge based on the credentials of the badge issuers and the attached metadata documenting the badge earner's contributions.

My digital badge experience

Digital badges for language education first came across my radar at the Open Language Summit hosted by COERLL at UT Austin in October of 2011. As I witnessed friends on Facebook interacting with Foursquare and proudly displaying their badges and status information online, I began to imagine how the same motivating concepts could be applied to professional development for language educators. The idea of open badges for language education is designed to be a high stakes achievement, indicating skills learned, the amount of effort it took to achieve the badge and proof of work.

This summer, LARC piloted a badge system with participants of the Passage Rating Workshop and Social Media and Language Teaching Workshop. Badge earners, such as Toni Theisen, current ACTFL president, have displayed badges on personal wikis, websites and social media sites. Toni earned a badge for presenting at the Social Media and Language Teaching Workshop (**http://tonitheisen.wikispaces.com**).

My vision for badges

I have very high expectations for badges in foreign languages. I imagine badges taking on gamified elements, where leaderboards will highlight high achievers. General statistics about any individual's activity and performance could be accessed. I envision a community of practice in which participants will be proud to share their badges online, and where a sense of fun and friendly competition will motivate language professionals to create their own online personal learning networks (PLNs). By the same token, I hope badges are taken seriously and honored by employers, school administrators and professional language organizations. Achieving this outcome will take increased effort from badge issuers, such as COERLL and LARC, to ensure that the badges represent current language teaching skills and that the workshops are of the highest professional quality.

Impact on professional development

In the long-term, badges for language educators could become an alternative credentialing system that is shared across state lines. However, my immediate aim is to establish badges as a credible, evidence-based, transparent form of documenting and displaying continuing education and professional development efforts by current and prospective K-16 teachers. Once this goal is achieved, the inherent value of badges becomes limitless. Badges serve educators by allowing them to pursue a professional development agenda that is more customizable in every respect, without losing an ounce of rigor, but rather offering the possibility of a more interactive and more rigorous, continuing education.

Badges can serve administrators by providing the opportunity for faculty to design and deliver a professional development agenda, while still allowing them to vet and verify the status and standing of any current or prospective teacher on their staff. This goal will lead us into the future.

Badge Issuer

Evan Rubin

Director of Instructional Technology, Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC)

@larc_sdu

LARC SDU

COERLL Project News

For more information about our projects in development contact us at info@coerll.utexas.edu.

New OERs

Le Littéraire dans le quotidien

Open Textbook (French)

Le Littéraire dans le quotidien (*The Literary in the Everyday*) is an open textbook for use in French courses. Users have the rights to edit the content according to its open license agreement (Creative Commons). You may use these open materials as you wish—in whole or in part. For example, the materials can be downloaded without changes as a PDF or modified as a Google Doc in Google Drive. Applicable to all foreign languages, *The Literary in the Everyday* represents a new pedagogical approach to reading and writing at the lower levels. Teachers of foreign languages besides French can read about the approach in the Teacher's Guide.

OER link: http://goo.gl/VurRFE

Project Director: Joanna Gay Luks (Cornell University)

German Frame-semantic Online Lexicon

Vocabulary Learning Tool (German)

The *German Frame-semantic Online Lexicon* (G-FOL) is a prototype of a new kind of pedagogical dictionary. The goal is to help students learn how words are used in modern-day German. This online resource is different from traditional dictionaries and textbooks because it is based on the German FrameNet (http://laits.utexas.edu/gframenet/) at the University of Texas at Austin, a digital archive of how German words are used in real life contexts. Students can easily access up-to-date information about the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic contexts in which a German word appears. In addition, each lexical entry provides information about a word's register, frequency and related meanings. Thanks to G-FOL's web-based architecture, the lexicon easily links to other pedagogical resources in digital format and can be updated with new words or new usages of existing words.

OER link: http://coerll.utexas.edu/frames/

Project Director: Hans Boas (Deptartment of Germanic Studies)

Chinese Word Order Practice

Open Access Website (Mandarin Chinese)

This site offers several interactive exercises in Mandarin Chinese at different difficulty levels. Students can practice their grammar skills by moving word tiles into their correct sentence position, receive

instant feedback and repeat the exercise as many times as they want. The site is part of the *Gateway to Chinese* umbrella project (**http://sites.la.utexas.edu/Chinese/**).

OER link: http://coerll.utexas.edu/quiz/Chinese/word-order/

Project Director: Wen-Hua Teng (Department of Asian Studies)

Conversa Workbook

Print-on-demand Workbook (Portuguese)

We have been hard at work to release an entirely new print-on-demand workbook for the *Conversa Brasileira* material that includes the video transcripts and translations as well as the pop-up commentary transcript. We are happy to announce that the workbook is finished and available for purchase. The PDFs are also available for download on the *Conversa Brasileira* website.

POD link: http://goo.gl/ylXKbw

OER link: http://coerll.utexas.edu/brazilpod/cob/

Project Director: Orlando R. Kelm (Department of Spanish and Portuguese)

Updated OER

SpinTX Video Archive

Open Access Website (Spanish)

The SpinTX Corpus-to-Classroom project has reached the end of its LIFT Grant funding and has rolled out a number of improvements to the SpinTX video archive website. Updates to the interface were made in response to user feedback, a bank of activity ideas for educators was added and the amount of video content was increased to a current total of more than 550 video clips. In the next phase of this project, COERLL will strengthen its community outreach efforts around this resource, specifically working with a core group of teachers who will be developing activities for use with SpinTX and helping our development team better understand how SpinTX can be used to augment classroom instruction or as an extracurricular activity.

OER link: http://www.spintx.org

Project Directors: Almeida Jacqueline Toribio (Department of Spanish and Portuguese) and Barbara E. Bullock (Department of French and Italian)

Updates to Deutsch im Blick

Print-on-demand Textbook (German)

The 2nd Edition of *Deutsch im Blick* is released in time for the start of the school year. The latest edition features a new front cover, revised graphics, and exercises.

OER link: http://goo.gl/ZpL7u

Project Director: Zsuzsanna Abrams et al. (University of California Santa Cruz)

OER in Development

OER Commons

A conversation around updating COERLL's metadata fields in the OER Commons database led to conversations with OER Commons staff around forming an ongoing collaboration to tie various foreign language OER in OER Commons to ACTFL standards. Stay tuned for more updates!

OER Survey

We are currently working on a survey that will help COERLL better understand how UT faculty share learning resources as well as their awareness and use of Open Educational Resources in teaching. We hope to have the survey complete and results available by Winter 2013.

Events Report

June Webinar Series Report

In June, COERLL held a three-part webinar series for professional development which focused on Open Educational Resources for foreign language educators. The events were free and open to the public and participants were able to receive CPE credits if they had pre-registered. Here are the topics we covered:

- **Webinar 1: Finding Open Media for Foreign Language Instruction**

  June 12, 2013

  Presenters: Garin Fons, COERLL Projects Manager; Nathalie Steinfeld Childre, COERLL Publications Manager

  This session explored the principles of Open Education and how it fits into a landscape of education that is rapidly changing from an industrialized model to an organic model. In addition, we provided suggestions as to where foreign language educators can find and adapt high quality open resources to their classrooms and become a part of this collaborative movement.

  Watch the recorded webinar: http://youtube.com/watch?v=XpjLIX11Jew

- **Webinar 2: The Practice of Adapting, Teaching, and Creating OER**

  June 19, 2013

  Presenters: Garin Fons, COERLL Projects Manager; Nathalie Steinfeld Childre, COERLL Publications Manager; Orlando Kelm, Professor of Portuguese and Spanish at UT Austin

  This session focused on using Open Educational Resources to improve and augment the teaching and learning experience. Portuguese and Spanish Professor Dr. Orlando Kelm, COERLL Director Dr. Carl Blyth and French Ph.D Candidate Amanda Dalola joined in the conversation to provide insight on what it is like to create, adapt and teach with OER in their classrooms.

  Watch the recorded webinar: http://youtube.com/watch?v=uh_aBwVJNb8

- **Webinar 3: A Focus on SpinTX — An Open Video Archive for Language Learning**

  June 26, 2013

  Presenters: Garin Fons, COERLL Projects Manager
  Barbara Bullock, Professor, Dept. of French and Italian
  Jacqueline Toribio, Professor, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese
  Rachael Gilg, Lead Developer of SpinTX, COERLL
  Arthur Wendorf, Developer, Ph.D. Student, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese

  The final session introduced SpinTX (www.spintx.org) to a broad range of teachers and technologists from around the country. Project Directors Dr. Barbara Bullock and Dr. Jacqueline Toribio and developers Rachael Gilg and Arthur Wendorf joined the conversation to showcase the features of SpinTX and to answer a variety of great questions from our participants.

  Watch the recorded webinar: http://youtube.com/watch?v=XaW5r4TewqU

Spanish in Texas Materials Development Focus Group Report

In July, 2013 the Spanish in Texas (SpinTX) project team brought together a diverse group of educators to collaborate on the development lesson plans and materials to accompany the SpinTX video archive. The participating educators were selected from a pool of applicants, and included Jared Abels (Round Rock Christian Academy), Tina Dong (Austin Independent School District), Viridiana Gallegos (University of Texas Pan American), Claire Meadows Parrish (The University of Texas at Austin), Liz VanHuss (Callisburg High School) and Sarah Jey Whitehead (The University of Texas at Austin). The materials developed by the educators will be adapted into Open Educational Resources and shared through the SpinTX website (www.spintx.org) and Corpus-to-Classroom blog (sites.la.utexas.edu/corpus-to-classroom)

Upcoming Events

ACTFL Convention 2013 – Florida

November 22 – 24

http://www.actfl.org

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