Offering Students a Global Education: SDSU’s Title VI Centers

Center for International Business Education and Research - CIBER
Center for Latin American Studies - CLAS
Language Acquisition Resource Center - LARC
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San Diego is a complex and dynamic community. Located on the Pacific Rim at the US door to Latin America, it has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. Internationally recognized institutions of higher education engage in global research. Regional businesses with commercial ties to many countries play increasingly important roles in a state that ranks somewhere between fourth and tenth among the largest economies in the world. It is home to strategic military installations where the US Navy and Marines train and deploy troops on international missions to defend and protect domestic and global security.

San Diego has attracted immigrants from a broad spectrum of cultures. One neighborhood has 30 documented home languages, earning it the moniker “The Ellis Island of San Diego.” To serve their needs we must educate ourselves about their cultures; as we do the doors will swing open to the linguistic and cultural resources they bring to our community, the region, state, and nation. San Diego’s multiculturalism represents a wealth of still untapped opportunities.

The events of 9/11 made it tragically evident that international understanding and mutual support are critical to global well-being and security. There is renewed appreciation in the United States of the advantages (and disadvantages) of being a “melting pot” of cultures. The US government supports area studies-focused National Resource Centers (NRCs) and Language Resource Centers (LRCs) through the International Education Programs Service of the Department of Education. Other branches of the government, including the US Department of Defense, are supporting newly funded projects directed at development of high level expertise in critical world languages and their regions. Some say we are experiencing a “Sputnik” moment, that is, a time when foreign languages, math, science, and other educational and scientific programs will receive increased (and overdue) attention.

San Diego’s major academic institutions leverage their assets in ways that provide national models for programs of excellence. By working together as a system, we can provide articulated and well-constructed educational paths for young and adult learners.

San Diego State University houses excellent academic units focusing on global peace and conflict resolution1, as well as three centers whose missions relate to international education, with a heavy emphasis on development of language and culture skills. These nationally funded Title VI centers share over a decade of collaborative work. They are: the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), and the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC). Some of their programs are described below, together with remarks about the community-based action research and projects they nurture. Also described is their collective ability to leverage cultural and linguistic diversity by creating nationally sharable resources and training opportunities.
Preparing Students as Citizens of the World
An Interview with San Diego State University Provost Nancy Marlin
By John Vitaglione

San Diego’s first streetcar chugged its way up Fifth Avenue from the waterfront on July 3, 1886. But it wasn’t until 2005 that a light rail trolley finally connected San Diego State University with downtown and other outlying areas. It took over four years of campus-wide displacements, detours, building rumbles and student grumbles to get the job done.

SDSU Provost Nancy Marlin reflects on the literal and figurative significance of the trolley opening during an interview from her office just a few steps from the grassy mall leading to the underground station. “Despite the arduous and complicated process,” Provost Marlin says, “we are finally at the literal end of our tunnel, but this tunnel goes on from our SDSU station.”

She proudly points out that more than three thousand semester trolley passes were sold during the first two weeks of the trolley’s operation, a clear sign that this new mode of public transportation is making the campus more accessible to the community—local and international.

Provost Marlin is widely acknowledged for her work in implementing the university’s strategic plan to internationalize education. She points out the trolley’s role in her agenda. “You get on the trolley at San Diego State, take it to San Ysidro, and walk across the border from there. How many other universities in this country or throughout the world offer such access to cross-border mobility?”

The university’s new physical link with Mexico brings home just what it means to live on this border. The provost cites the “myriad of bi-national cross-border programs, degrees and activities” available in the San Diego/Tijuana region and the “daily vibrancy” of the rich academic environment that has been generated. She points out that border life means having to deal with it all, the positive and negative, . . . socially, environmentally, politically, and economically. “For students to be able to engage in the study of these aspects and the implications for not only a region, but a country in the world, really puts us in an amazing situation.”

Proximity to the border is just one of the many factors that contributes to SDSU’s leadership in international education. The region is also part of the Asia-Pacific Rim; it is ethnically very diverse, largely urban/suburban, and economically oriented toward high tech. Provost Marlin feels that “we are not doing a good job, unless we interact with these attributes now.”

The provost’s effective blend of strong administrative support and coordination has facilitated broader faculty and student engagement in the international arena. Mini-grants for travel allow faculty and their international colleagues to put the structures in place that articulate credits earned abroad with SDSU degree programs. Where students were once reluctant to study abroad, they now appreciate the diversity on their campus and are eager to participate in international education. Currently at 1215, the number of SDSU students studying outside the US increases substantially every year. The goal is to make the study abroad experience a requirement for graduation from the university, a requirement already in place for some programs, such as International Business. Provost Marlin observes, “Study abroad is absolutely essential to the integrity of our degrees and the quality of education, which is demonstrated for the very first time in the history of SDSU by six students receiving Fulbright grants. This is something to be very proud of and it is a testament to the work of our faculty and students.”

A student writing in 360 Magazine credits the provost with providing the leadership and inspiration to internationalize, “Given an open window, more and more San Diego State students are taking flight as citizens of the world. Provost Nancy Marlin planned it that way.” Marlin addresses the educational priorities of student learning outcomes and outcomes assessment from the perspective of an educator who cares about quality education and as a global thinker and diplo-
mat. The emphasis has shifted from teaching to learning, where the questions become, “What are students learning, and what are they going to be able to know and do?” Marlin sees “nothing more powerful for student learning than to get them abroad . . . there is no substitute for it, there isn’t anything that powerful.”

Creating study abroad opportunities is easier now, even with all the difficulties necessarily associated with setting up international agreements. With the opportunities in place and available, the next step towards global mobility is acquiring the second language and cultural skills needed to negotiate living and studying abroad. Despite her own successful academic career in teaching, research, publishing and service, Nancy Marlin says there came a time when she simply “did not feel well educated because I couldn’t function in another language.” High school and undergraduate courses in Spanish and French trained her tongue to make the switch between qué and qu’est, but she jokingly adds, “The only thing I could really do is pronounce a few names of wines.” Determined to be able to function in another language, she approached a faculty member in the Spanish Department and asked, “May I sit in on your class?” Marlin remembers the faculty’s reactions, “Imagine the scary thought, the great trepidation, of having the person in charge of everything academically in your class. It was a threat to faculty, but I gained the semestery ‘may I sit in?’ reputation. I was really just another regular student.”

The language education community has developed guidelines to measure and describe proficiency. Referencing these criteria, Provost Marlin evaluates herself as, “the longest term ‘intermediate’ student in the world because I haven’t been able to make that jump to the next level.” She continues to “sit in” on advanced Spanish courses and says, “The joy of this is that I can now function at least at the intermediate level in Spanish, and that changes the world. I feel like I’ve seen this other part of the world that I never saw before. When I go and speak in my best Spanish, the interactions and the stereotypes held about North Americans change, and I’m so grateful to have that experience and see this aspect.”

Second language skills require the ability to think critically and understand one’s place in the world. Drawing on her own experiences, Marlin shares her convictions regarding the relationship between critical thinking and language learning and experiences with other cultures. One of the things she tells students when motivating them to go abroad is, “You’re not going to become an expert in whatever culture you visit, but you are going to gain comfort with ambiguity . . . you might not know exactly what’s going on or understand it, but you can function, and you can be comfortable! You will gain much more self-confidence and self-efficacy knowing that you can deal with this.” There are flip side cultural benefits to be gained from these experiences as well: students have the chance to see their own culture from an alternate perspective. “Here,” Marlin states, “is where you see yourself and your own culture, and that’s what kicks in all that critical thinking, because you have the ability to see things that you simply cannot see and perceive when you only stay in one culture.”

Study abroad (is not) an exotic opportunity for an elite few

Provost Marlin is always searching for people to whom she fondly refers as “zealots,” to help implement her strategic plan to internationalize education. She credits the success of SDSU’s many international programs to the work of such zealots and expresses her gratitude for everything they do. She specifically singles out the collaborative work of the three campus Title VI International Education Centers: the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER,) the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS,) and the Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC). This interviewer beams when the provost praises the last, the center where he works, “LARC is such a wonderful example of a group of zealots, and you’re a magnet for zealots. You’re not only zealots, you attract other zealots yourself in the wonderful work that you do.”

Marlin brings up the Language Acquisition Resource Center’s projects that make authentic language and culture materials available to students and faculty through online technologies. “I hear a lot from faculty who have worked with LARC to create authentic material that they can use for their students and their own work. Having the ability to access those authentic materials enriches the true study of language and makes it alive for students. Research efforts and collaboration with other Title VI Centers on campus allows them to leverage off LARC’s wonderful materials. LARC has been an extraordinary asset to the campus for really furthering internationalization in a very meaningful way academically.”

Provost Marlin refuses to view study abroad as an exotic opportunity for an elite few. She is committed to increasing the numbers of SDSU students participating every year and believes that study abroad, “can and should be institutionalized as a degree requirement.”

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The San Diego State University Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) is one of thirty centers nationwide. Its activities include providing grants to fund faculty research and student study/internships abroad; outreach and development programs for the business community; training programs for language and business faculty from institutions across the country; and a variety of innovative activities which impact interdisciplinary education in the United States and further the CIBER mandate to enhance US competitiveness abroad.

With our network consortia the SDSU CIBER has been able to make considerable advancements in faculty and curriculum development in business language through the programs we offer.

**International Business for Foreign Language Professionals**

As part of a comprehensive outreach and faculty development effort, the SDSU CIBER, along with eight other CIBER institutions co-sponsor a national workshop, *International Business for Foreign Language Professionals*, designed to bring together language professionals seeking to build or strengthen their involvement with business language pedagogy and international business content. This workshop offers participants valuable insights into the relationship between foreign language and international business, discusses how to develop a business language curriculum, and explores the resources available to the foreign language educator interested in this new and exciting field. Above all, this workshop serves as a unique forum for the exchange of ideas among participants. Through this workshop, the network of institutions has been able to reach 3300 students per year.

**CIBER Business Language Conference**

The CIBER Business Language Conference is the largest of the three business language consortia we participate in. Through a variety of workshops, papers, and a panel of business professionals, the conference addresses issues relevant to business language and offers a gathering place for business language professionals from around the nation to share their experiences and knowledge. The event also provides access to opportunities that establish mutually beneficial relationships, enrich Business Language courses, and further develop individual and institutional curricula. It is estimated that this yearly conference reaches over 10,000 students per year.

**Lessons from the MBA Classroom**

Lastly, we belong to a consortium of CIBERs that co-sponsor a two-day workshop, *Lessons from the MBA Classroom: Business Concepts for Foreign Language Professionals*. This seminar presents basic international business concepts, segmented by discipline, to an audience generally unfamiliar with business theory. The two-day workshop includes presentations and discussions on utilizing business concepts and methodologies to complement and enliven the foreign language classroom. Discussion groups and teaching tools are offered so that integration of these concepts into the language curriculum is more easily accomplished. The program is designed for high school and higher education foreign language teachers and professionals interested in learning more about global business concepts and the ways business and professional students often learn, as well as incorporating business methodologies into the classroom. It is estimated that over 1600 students benefit from this workshop through curriculum changes made at their institutions.

Ms. Diane Coseo is assistant director of the San Diego Center for International Business Education and Research, a Title VI center sponsored by the US Department of Education.
International Business Program is Ranked 7th in the Nation

One of CIBER’s most prominent projects is the International Business Program at SDSU. Co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Business, San Diego State University’s International Business (IB) program has more than 650 undergraduate majors, very likely the largest international business major in the nation. Students studying IB at SDSU must complete a business core accredited by the AACSB, a language emphasis of more than the equivalent of a minor in the language, a regional/cultural emphasis equal to a minor, mandatory study abroad, and mandatory international internship. In addition, all students must pass a business language exam to graduate.

Publications and Materials

Dissemination is one of the most important activities that are performed by the Title VI centers. CIBER has three publications to assist the foreign language and international business community in improving the ways in which they do business.

Making Business French Work
This publication contains 13 articles (nine written in English and four written in French) written by veteran business French educators.

Québec Inc: Un manuel de français des affaires
In this publication, eight case studies of key Québec companies are examined to provide an overview of Québec’s economic situation following the establishment of NAFTA.

Business Language Exams

As a result of CIBER’s successful study abroad programs, the center has developed and/or hosted several business language exams to ascertain the appropriate levels of language skills and abilities of its students. One of these exams is the prestigious international exam Certificat de Français Professionnel, which SDSU CIBER has been administering since 1986. Other exams administered and developed by CIBER in collaboration with SDSU LARC include Examen Internacional de Negocios en Español (EXIGE) and EXIGE Brasil. If you are interested in administering these exams for your students, please contact Diane Coseo at dcoseo@projects.sdsu.edu.

Study Abroad/Intensive Programs

In Spring 2005 SDSU CIBER worked with Asia Pacific Studies Department on their inaugural business and economic study program in Bangkok, Thailand at Chulalongkorn University. The planning and development of this program was supported through the SDSU CIBER Faculty Grant Program. In June and July of 2004, eleven participants traveled to Thailand for eight weeks attending an intensive program featuring classroom instruction in language, business and area studies. For more information about this program, others like it, or the SDSU CIBER Faculty Grant Program, please contact Diane Coseo at dcoseo@projects.sdsu.edu.
The Center for Latin American Studies entered the 2005-06 academic year with an increase in our number of graduate students and with a number of new projects underway. Our summer pilot internship program in Tijuana with Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF), Mexico’s primary public provider of social services, is up and running; our collaboration with the Graduate School of Public Health has expanded the scope of our proposed concurrent degree program and deepened the role of Latin American Studies students in working with agricultural communities in Baja California; we are actively developing workshops with local educators which will address some of the needs of San Diego’s Mixtec community; and we are in the process of developing a number of new courses that will be offered in collaboration with other departments in the College of Arts and Letters.

The upcoming deadline for submitting our application for refunding as a US Department of Education National Resource Center is an opportunity to think creatively about new programs, new opportunities, and how we can combine forces with the other Title VI Centers to enrich the learning environment at SDSU and to bring academic resources to a wider audience. San Diego State University is filled with bright, energetic, and dedicated teachers and scholars, but we often go about our work without realizing how resources from different campus units might be combined to produce truly unique and spectacular programs. Pulling resources together from disparate departments is one of the key jobs of the three Title VI Centers, and also one of the primary benefits to the campus of their continued funding. For example, our Mixtec language program has slowly gained notice at a national level and is playing a leading role in uncovering the needs of this “hidden” migrant community and in providing information to educators and service providers, both locally and at a distance. Our efforts are enhanced by collaboration with LARC, and the Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics. Our summer programs in Oaxaca and La Paz, Mexico, and in Cartago, Costa Rica, continue to draw students from across the curriculum who share an interest in languages and Latin America, and who are seeking authentic research experiences or internships. In our new round of funding we are proposing a major initiative on sustainable communities in Latin America. If funded, this initiative will create opportunities for students and faculty in international business, entrepreneurship, economics, anthropology, political science and other fields. The proposal is also looking at a collaboration with SDSU’s nationally recognized Center for Children’s Literature and LARC, to bring unique and unknown materials from Latin America to teachers and kids in the United States.

American universities are one of our nation’s greatest resources, and SDSU is no exception. Sometimes, however, it takes a bit of “academic entrepreneurship” to overcome departmental boundaries, to combine existing resources in new ways, and to find the hidden strengths that are spread across disciplinary boundaries. Yet that is precisely the task of CLAS, LARC and CIBER, and the work that make it possible for each of us to fulfill our specific missions.

Dr. James Gerber is a professor of Economics at San Diego State University and director of the Center for Latin American Studies, a Title VI center sponsored by the US Department of Education.
FLAS Awards
CLAS is nationally recognized as a recipient of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. FLAS fellowships are extremely competitive and are available to MA students in any discipline. Academic year fellowships currently provide students with $14,000 in stipends and up to $11,000 in tuition and fees. FLAS fellowships are grants, not loans.

In addition to academic year awards, the FLAS program also provides fellowships for intensive language instruction during the summer. Priority is given to students studying the less-commonly-taught-languages of Latin America, such as Mixtec or Nahuatl, but all qualified students are encouraged to apply.

Travel Grants
Depending on funding, CLAS also offers summer travel grants to undergraduate and graduate students. These grants are available to students from all disciplines. Requirements are that you are in good academic standing and engaged in the study of some aspect of Latin America and/or Spanish, Portuguese, or a less-commonly-taught Latin American language. These travel grants have ranged between $400 and $1,200, and in some cases may also include the cost of tuition and fees at a foreign university.

Summer Programs
The following summer programs are administered by the SDSU Latin American Studies department.

- Costa Rica
- La Paz, Mexico
- Oaxaca, Mexico

The following countries host programs sponsored by SDSU, ISEP, or CSU-IP. The number of programs in each country is in parentheses.

- Argentina (4)
- Brazil (1)
- Chile (3)
- Costa Rica (2)
- Ecuador (2)
- Mexico (14)
- Nicaragua (1)
- Spain (14)
- Uruguay (1)

Coffee with CLAS
CLAS would like to invite you to join us in support of the indigenous communities of Chiapas by buying fair trade, shade grown coffee from the Mutz-Vitz co-op. Certified organically grown in Chiapas, Mexico by CERTIMEX.

We are currently offering $10 one-pound coffee bags of both Medium and Espresso Roast. If you would like to savor the flavors of this organically grown coffee, please contact Elizabeth Saenz at esaenz@mail.sdsu.edu.

To learn more about the activities of CLAS or if you have any questions please feel free to contact them directly at esaenz@mail.sdsu.edu or visit them online at http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~latamweb/index.html.
LARC’s Digital Media Archive project is actively working to create seamless national access to authentic materials for teaching and learning languages via the web. Collaborating faculty bring to LARC their copyright-cleared materials and in collaboration with LARC, develop media-rich teaching and learning resources, lesson plans, and course modules for both less and more commonly taught languages. The following piece describes a project that is currently being developed by Tess Lane at Hawai‘i Pacific University and LARC at SDSU. This project is as a DVD set at nflrc.hawaii.edu/voces. The DMA version of the project will be available soon.

An Ethnographic Approach to Listening
Las Voces project uses an ethnographic approach to listening. The voices heard in the media from Latin America are overwhelmingly male voices. Women carry the principle responsibility to socialize their children, and therefore are rich sources of cultural views and information. In my travels, I have found that many women in Latin America are willing to share their views and experiences with me, and through my video camera, with my students. They are pleased that someone cares about what they have to say. Their sincerity and candor in expressing their views provides students with a rich source of both authentic language and cultural insights. This project is possible because the women have opened their hearts and lives by sharing their voices with us. Blair E. Bateman (2002) eloquently sums up the goal of ethnographic interviews which is shared by this project:

“Besides providing insight into the interviewees’ culture, ethnographic interviews have the potential to help students learn about themselves. As they come to understand the point of view of an individual from another culture, students become aware of aspects of their own culture that are often invisible until seen in contrast with other cultures. They learn that there are ways of looking at the world besides their own, and begin to comprehend how they are seen by others. This understanding can lead students to a fuller awareness of their own culture and how it influences the way they see the world” (p. 321).

User Interface and Presentation of Listening Materials
Las Voces is an HTML-based program that opens with a map of Latin America, indicating the three locations of Quetzaltenango, Morelia, and Lima. Students click on the desired location. At the home screen for each location, a fixed menu bar offers students options to read a short history of the area in Spanish (Historia), view photographs of the area (Fotos), read instructions to use the program (Instrucciones), and listen and view introductions by the 20 women of that region (Introducciones). In the Preguntas option, students see a list of the seven questions and can listen to all 20 of the women’s answers to one question, as each interview is segmented into seven clips. The last menu button, Entrevistas, takes students to a screen that plays the entire interview. This database of interviews gives students many choices to develop their own research questions and to look for answers. Hoven’s (1999) model identifies control and navigation as important in learner-centered instructional design. Students click on one of the 20 women’s photos to access the interview clips, with the question displayed at the top of the screen. Students have full control of the QuickTime video, which allows for listening to the same videoclip, or part of the videoclip, multiple times. Students can also choose to reveal or hide a glossary of regional words and expressions specific to each clip.

These listening materials are different from most recorded interviews in that they provide students with many voices answering the same set of questions. Responses contain many of the same vocabulary words and structures, which provides repetition and restatement in listening practice. Students can select which women to listen to, and they are exposed to regional varieties of Spanish. Idiomatic expressions and para-linguistic features such as gestures and facial expressions enhance the students’ listening experience.

According to Hoven (1999), the level of difficulty of authentic listening materials can be modified by varying the texts, contexts, and tasks. The materials are accessible to all levels, as lower level students can concentrate on the introductions and first two or three
Las Voces de las Mujeres de Latinoamérica is an ongoing project to bring the voices of women of Latin America to students of Spanish. Videotaped interviews were conducted in 2003 and 2005 with 20 women in each of three locations: Quetzaltenango, Guatemala; Morelia, Mexico; and Lima, Peru. This growing video-archive presents the views, values, and choices of women of many ages (10 to 78), backgrounds, and professions. Each woman was asked the same set of seven open-ended questions in Spanish:

1. Introducción. Introduction, description of family, profession, personality
2. ¿Cuáles son las tres cosas más importantes en su vida? ¿Por qué son importantes? What are the three most important things in your life, and why are they important?
3. ¿Qué problemas tiene en su vida? ¿Qué hace para resolverlos? What problems do you have? How are you trying to resolve these problems?
4. ¿Cuáles son los valores más importantes que aprendió Ud. de su madre? ¿Cómo pasa estos valores a otras personas? What values did you learn from your mother? How do you pass these values to others?
5. ¿Hay una experiencia que me pueda contar que tuvo un impacto fuerte en su vida? Is there an experience you can tell me about that had a strong impact on your life?
6. ¿Qué espera para su futuro? ¿el futuro de su familia? ¿el futuro de su país? What do you hope for your own future? the future of your family? the future of your country?
7. Si tuviera la oportunidad de hacer cualquier cosa, no importa el dinero, ¿Qué haría? If you could do anything, and money didn’t matter, what would you do?

This project is being developed as part of the LARC Digital Media Archive. Its goals are:

1. Help students explore the female views of cultures with an inductive approach.
2. Provide students with repetitive, structured, and student-controlled listening practice.
3. Provide a model for an ethnographic approach to learning language and culture.

questions. The intermediate to advanced students can understand most of the interviews, but they can also be allowed to self-select which interviewees they listen to. Students can compare all of the women’s answers to one question, or listen to an entire interview of one particular woman.

The following activities have been used with intermediate and advanced students of Spanish in a stand-alone version of the interviews with women of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Raphan (1996) suggests three phases of activities in her multimedia approach to academic listening: prelistening phase, listening phase, and postlistening phase activities. I prefer the terms previewing, viewing, and post-viewing to emphasize the visual component of the materials.

Previewing Activities
Previewing activities designed for Las Voces materials consist mainly of students answering the questions themselves before listening to the interviews and to share their own answers with the class. The sharing of both personal answers and later summary and analysis by students of the women’s answers helps to create a social context and builds community in the classroom, two features of Hovel’s model (1999). This activity is a challenge for some students, as these are not questions most US students have thought about.

Students also activate important vocabulary and grammar structures that are needed to express their answers in Spanish. Bacon (1992) found that students spent a lot of time activating schema and contextualizing listening passages. This pre-viewing activity might help shorten that time and better prepare students for the listening task. I have used this pre-viewing activity as an opportunity to review or provide important vocabulary and structures with my high-intermediate and advanced students of Spanish. According to Dunkel (1986), this is a crucial step which helps in “establishing common semantic fields between the speakers and the listeners, especially when listeners are from ethno-cultural backgrounds that differ from that of the speaker” (p. 103). Further support for listeners to better understand the background of the speakers is provided through the history of the area and photographs.
In May 2005 I finished a one-year Fulbright teaching and research grant on the Law Faculty at Moscow State University (MGU), where I taught courses on American Criminal Law and Terrorism in Russia. It was the culmination of, and at the same time, a continuing challenge on the road to self understanding through learning a second language and another culture. In these days of achieved globalization, learning of different cultures, languages, and traditions is a mandatory for all, especially in the United States, where we are comfortable with English and unfortunately demonstrate our chauvinism, conscious or unconscious, by expecting all others to speak English as well. To know and understand one’s own language and culture, you must first know and understand a foreign one.

Over forty years ago I attended a high school in Chicago, where four years of Latin was required, and I also took two years of classical Greek. At the time I tried an early morning French class, but was not motivated to spend mornings learning something “extra.” At the factory where I worked many of my fellow workers laughed at me for studying Latin and Greek, and argued that those languages were no longer spoken. At the time I felt their argument carried weight, but later in life I realized that these languages provided an understanding to what we call Western Civilization and provided the origins of many English words. Also, they were an excellent foundation for the learning of other languages.

After finishing a three-year tour in the Army, I returned to Chicago to practice law. At that time the need to learn Spanish was becoming apparent. Most of the Spanish I learned was in basic courses offered by city colleges. The few words of Spanish gained immeasurable respect from my Spanish speaking clients.

Before my move to San Diego in 1971 I had taken an interest in Russian, the language of the Soviet Union, which included what are now 15 separate countries. My interest was prompted not only by curiosity about the then arch enemy, but also because Russian uses much of the Greek alphabet and is built on a similar grammar. I even found common grammatical comparisons between Spanish and Russian, which, like English, are Indo-European languages with a common heritage.

Now in San Diego working at the Federal Defenders office, the ability to speak Spanish was invaluable. The Federal Government permitted the office to support Spanish language training, and many of the attorneys learned the language. In Antigua, Guatemala, and Cuernavaca, Mexico, I learned the Spanish of the people, and more importantly, of the culture, usually of poverty. The understanding I acquired was far more than language.

In 1985 while on a hiking trip in southern Russia, I discovered that I might have some latent ability in Russian. A friend who spoke Russian was able to direct questions to the local inhabitants, but he could not understand their response. Although I could not effectively speak Russian like he, I was able to understand in essence what they said. The following year, while visiting a Russian bookstore in San Francisco, I heard a young American speaking wonderful Russian and asked where he learned it. He had just completed a master’s program at the Language School at Middlebury College in Vermont. They had a program for beginners as well as advanced students, and I signed up for the nine-week program.

That was the first of thirteen summers in a row I spent at the language monastery. The school required you speak only Russian, and you were immersed in both the language and the culture. The program is struc-
Mr. John Cleary is a lecturer at San Diego State University and a practicing attorney. He has been disciplined, with three hours of class and lots of homework every day. My goal in Russian had been to read Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* in Russian, which I achieved during my fourth year. The Russian School was one of eight language schools at Middlebury. On my way to a doctorate of modern languages, I had to acquire a second language and spent two years at the Spanish School. From 1996-1998, with the generosity and support of my law partner, I completed two years of study at Moscow State University and wrote my dissertation (in Russian) on “The Russian Jury Trial: The Symbol of Troubled Judicial Reform.”

As part of my doctorate program I had to take several graduate courses, and one of them was at SDSU. The course was *Hispanic Theatre* taught in Spanish by an extremely talented and experienced visiting professor from Chile. There were 13 students in this graduate program, 11 native speakers. The course was designed to address social realism in plays, and the teacher started with a classical analysis of the theatre and the purpose of a play. His brilliant analysis was far beyond the grasp of his students. As a great teacher, he adapted to his students, and we learned method acting by Stanislavsky in Spanish. In a conversation with him, I explained I was a lawyer, not an actor, but he incisively responded that I was an actor in the truest sense, for I represented other personalities. He taught me a lot about teaching and about myself. This was only possible because we could communicate in Spanish.

In 2001 SDSU initiated through the College of Extended Studies the first three-week Russian Criminal Justice Course in Moscow at MGU, which is now conducted every June. The course provides an essential insight into the new Russian culture in one of the most exciting cities in Europe. The course is taught in English but includes a one-hour lesson each day in survival Russian. This year the American students visited the Russian Duma (Congress), the Constitutional Court, a central jail, and the KGB Museum. In 2004, SDSU initiated a Russian Student Program where Russian students participate in a three-week course on American Criminal Justice, which is taught in English and includes one hour a day in English instruction. They also participate in visits to the courts and jails and on police ride alongs. These programs are a legacy of language training and provide much needed contact with a prominent world culture.

This academic year I am teaching (in Russian) a course on *Practice Before the European Court on Human Rights* at Moscow State University. I will also be writing a text on Russian Criminal Justice for the SDSU summer course. When I started learning Russian I never would have believed that I would be teaching in Moscow, a place then so foreign and uninviting. What I have learned is an appreciation of “otherness,” which is necessary for a healthy understanding of ourselves and others. Learning another language is the first step towards achieving this awareness.

**Mr. John Cleary** is a lecturer at San Diego State University and a practicing attorney.
Each of the Title VI centers at SDSU has a specific area of focus. CIBER’s main focus is International Business, CLAS focuses on Latin America, and LARC has begun to work primarily with language for special purposes. One common goal, however, is the clear understanding that you must know the languages of the people with whom you will be dealing. A very effective way of acquiring language and cultural experience is through study abroad programs. Each of the three centers has been involved in sending students abroad or working with international students. Where are these students and what are they doing?

LARC - Katherine Swensen, ADLP Arabic Student (experience in Damascus SYRIA)

I lived and studied in Damascus, Syria, for a period of nine months (September 2004-June 2005) on a travel grant made available to me through LARC’s ADLP Arabic program. My time in Damascus can be divided into two separate parts, in which I had two very distinct living and studying situations. In the first part, from the beginning of September until mid-January, I lived with a host-family in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Damascus, and studied as a foreign student in the Language School at the University of Damascus. The second part, which took place from mid-January until the beginning of June when I left Syria, found me living in a flat with other foreign students in the downtown area of “New Damascus,” studying independently with weekly private instruction.

The city of Damascus is bigger than Los Angeles and very daunting. The streets are very busy, the shops and markets ubiquitous and the vendors notoriously aggressive. This along with the heavily polluted air and the general sense of unfamiliarity can be very exhausting, and it takes time for one to fully adapt to the rhythm. Nevertheless, those who have stayed there long enough to find their niche in the city have been rewarded greatly. Syrians will do everything they can to make visitors comfortable and happy; they are some of the most welcoming and helpful people I’ve met. Living with an Arab family is a very valuable experience, and they can provide great linguistic and cultural resources to the newly arrived. I would definitely recommend any student do this for at least one month, and to engage as much as possible with the family. The time with my host family was the most culturally informative time I had.

After my time with the family ended, I found a centrally located flat with some European friends who were also studying at the Language School. The flat was in a very modern part of the city: streets lined with flashy and hip clothing stores and filled with young-sters hanging out in their expensive new cars, blasting music, parading around in too-tight jeans. This was “LA” Damascus, and it afforded a completely new perspective on Syrian life and changing society. Living with foreign students really helped me to evaluate my own experiences. My interactions with foreign students from many different nationalities and backgrounds filled a space left by the inaccessibility of cultural activities in the city. By forming a network we were able to inform and enrich one another’s experience.

This fall I will begin my Masters in the Social Anthropology of Development at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), a school within the University of London. I plan to complete the program by fall of 2006 and hope to work in the Middle East after that. I would be very open to the idea of going to Damascus again, as I found it an interesting place to live, although I am also curious about other parts of the Middle East. I would like to conclude by saying that the time in Damascus was a very formative and crucial time for me, that has left me driven to pursue a career in the field and the region, and, linguistically, has left me at a critical point to move forward from as well.

Message from LARC: To learn more about the program that Katherine participated in, please contact LARC at nlrcsd@mail.sdsu.edu.

CIBER - Blanca Villalobos, International Business Student (experience in Madrid SPAIN)

I’m currently studying at the Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, in Madrid. One of the main reasons I chose the International Business (IB) major is because of the opportunity to study abroad. My specialization for the major is finance, and working over seas has always been my main goal.

Learning and understanding culture is essential to learning how they do business in Spain and other countries. I have only been here for a month and already have an interview with a company that offers internships within the finance and marketing depart-
ment. The internship consists of working not only with customers in Spain but in the US and South America. My knowledge about all the different cultures has increased dramatically because I have learned things that books never mentioned. It is different to hear it from a person who has actually lived there than to see it in pictures or to read about it. The population of Germans in Spain has increased dramatically in the past few years; in my building alone about fifty percent of the residents are German. While I help them sharpen their Spanish skills, they have been teaching me some German. I never thought I would ever learn how to speak or understand German.

Overall, I have seen and experienced things that no one has ever told me about or read about in any of my history books. My cultural awareness is growing tremendously and will continue to grow. I would highly recommend this experience to anyone who might be considering study abroad.

Knowing several languages helps you to connect with the world. I see New York City as a world in miniature; it has the most diverse population of the planet. When you know several languages, you feel you belong to the world because you have your own cultural identity but you are able to communicate with your neighbors from other places. Knowing only your own language restricts you to interacting with one group.

On the other hand, when I arrived in the United States and lived among American students, I was surprised that so few of them could speak a foreign language and that many of them didn’t even have a passport. It is true that American citizens do not need a passport to visit Canada and Mexico or to meet foreign people. I agree that California and New York are the largest melting pots in the world. However, as the US is the world’s super power, I feel the American educational system has a duty to educate and offer to its young population a window to open their mind to foreign cultures, a window that will help make them aware of the inequities of this world. Of course learning a language is not going to allow everyone to work for the United Nations, but I think it is definitely a factor in opening one’s mind to the outside world.

Because the United States is the world’s most powerful and richest country in the world, I think its population has the duty to look after the poorest countries because they have more means than anyone else to stop the injustices of this planet.

LARC - Joaquin Contreras, Student of Mixtec Language (experience in San Diego CA)
Migrants from Mexico arrive in cities all across the United States. Many people still think that these Mexican migrants only speak Spanish. This is not true. Many only speak an indigenous language. Take the Oaxacan farmworking laborers in Del Mar (CA) and other northern San Diego cities—they speak Mixteco and just enough Spanish to linguistically survive day by day in a world that is dominated by English and Spanish. Many migrants who come to work in the fields in northern San Diego county live by camping out in the valleys located right smack in the middle of housing developments, nurseries, and tomato fields. They do it to save money and to send money back home to their families.

When I saw that Mixteco was offered at SDSU, I decided to take advantage of learning a language that I needed to conduct my research. I wanted to have an edge. By speaking their language I would be better able to gain their trust and eventually understand how they experienced life in northern San Diego county.

Global Connections would love to hear your travel abroad experiences. If you are or were a language student and would like to share your experiences, please send your submissions to Maria Ortega at mortega@projects.sdsu.edu. Not all submissions will be printed.
Center for International Education & Research (CIBER)

CIBER sponsors a unique International Business undergraduate major. It is one of the most popular majors in the university – so much so that the program is “impacted.” It features an obligatory study abroad component with programs in many countries and opportunities to complete dual and even triple degree programs in some instances. The program supports globalization and interoperability among business professionals. It has won national acclaim and is among the top ten undergraduate international business programs in the US. Graduate students must demonstrate proficiency in a second language. Spanish language-based programs mandate that students satisfactorily pass a computerized business Spanish test that focuses on business language and concepts. This test, called EXIGE, was co-created by LARC and CIBER and is available to universities throughout the US and the world. CIBER also sponsors research and conferences for teachers and businesspeople. There are 30 CIBER centers funded, in part, by the US Department of Education, Title VI.

Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS)

CLAS shares resources and responsibilities with the University of California, San Diego as a two-institution consortium. Their support for teaching the indigenous languages of Latin America (including Mixtec, Zapotec, and Nahua) relates to the strongly felt and expressed needs of these ethnic communities in San Diego and surrounding counties, where newly arrived immigrants fear their children will lose their native languages as they assimilate into US schools. LARC and CLAS researchers are working with speakers of these languages and entering media, stories, poems, and other resources into the Digital Media Archive (DMA). This archive, supported by LARC and CLAS funding, will help document endangered languages through the preservation of important cultural and linguistic artifacts. CLAS, like CIBER, sponsors research and conferences for teachers and students. It awards Foreign Language/Area Studies (FLAS) grants to graduate students for both study abroad and in-country language training programs and funds scholars to conduct research in Latin America.

Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC)

LARC is known for supporting teacher education in world languages and for research, training and promotion of advanced technological aids to enhance language acquisition and assessment. Like CIBER and CLAS, LARC reaches out to immigrant communities to help them preserve and enhance linguistic and cultural knowledge. Its innovative after-school Arabic program has flourished, thanks to the strong involvement of local community leaders. There are now three after-school Arabic programs; other community-based groups (Urdu, Punjabi, Mixtec) have come to LARC for support in organizing youth enrichment programs. Filipino is unique in that it is taught in some San Diego high schools. However, under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind act, all teachers must be credentialed in their subject matter to be considered “highly qualified.” Although these teachers have been educated in the Philippines, they do not have the US credits, nor do they have the degree required for credentialing. LARC has been instrumental in locating the programs and personnel willing to bring a preparation program to SDSU. Many less commonly taught languages in the US will fare similarly unless there are innovative programs and training opportunities to bring would-be world language teachers up to the professional standards the profession now requires.

Other constituencies in the local community have come to LARC for language and cultural training and consultation, including the US Armed Forces. It is imperative for reconstruction and reparation activities, for example, that US service men and women understand and respect the cultures and languages of the communities where they are deployed, if peace is to be well-crafted. Language proficiency requirements for military linguists are more rigorous than ever and must be satisfied before deployment or assignment. Program exit requirements for the Defense Language Institute and other government language schools also demand deeper knowledge of the culture, history, religion, and politics of the particular region.

LARC’s next move will be to inventory the resources available in the California State University system of some 23 campuses, and to propose programs and educational paths to which advanced level language and content instruction can be linked. It not only takes a village—it takes an entire system of higher education—to meet the needs of our richly diverse nation on its inexorable path toward globalization.

Footnotes

1 The Fred J. Hansen Center for World Peace has supported a number of innovative peace-related international faculty initiatives at three San Diego universities (University of California, San Diego; San Diego State University; and, University of San Diego). SDSU offers a bachelor’s degree in International Security and Conflict Resolution and a more technical master’s degree in Homeland Security.

Dr. Mary Ann Lyman-Hager is a professor of French at San Diego State University and director of the Language Acquisition Resource Center, a Title VI center sponsored by the US Department of Education.
The teacher can also use class discussion of the students’ own answers to help students analyze which questions generate answers that are shared by many students (shared cultural values), and which questions seem to elicit different answers (individual variation). This type of analysis serves as a model for careful generalizations drawn by the students after they listen to the interviews. According to Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996), “students should be guided to focus on similarities as an initial point of departure” (p. 436). The authors also state that, “By directing attention first to similarities, the tendency to exaggerate and generalize differences can be undermined with positive affective and perceptual results, producing the opportunity for the synthesis of perceptions and joint understanding that is necessary for subsequent tolerance of differences” (p. 435). Students need to learn to draw careful conclusions about cultural values and norms through inductive reasoning. I have found that the teacher needs to model this process for the students using their own answers before sending students to listen to the voices of women from cultures that are very different from their own.

**Viewing Activities**

The principal viewing activity is to listen for the main points of each woman’s answer, and to summarize each response, rather than listening for specific words or forms. Jack Richards (1988) recommends that the design of instructional materials for teaching listening comprehension reflect “a view of the nature of listening and the process it involves” (p. 59). He stresses the importance of activities that encourage top-down processing in listening, as this is a more real-life task than bottom-up processing activities, such as listening for specific words or grammatical features. These authentic women’s voices provide students with many examples of both social and informational functions of language.

Each student develops a research question after listening to all of the women’s introductions, which will help them select the women and parts of the interivew that they will listen to. Las Voces provides a wide range of ages, education, ethnic identity, marital status, profession, and economic status. Students gain insights into shared values as well as changing values of three home cultures of these women by comparing their answers. Research questions can seek to compare the women’s answers within one culture. For example, students can listen to the difference in the problems of older women and younger women within the same culture. They could also compare young women’s answers across cultures. Students listen carefully to authentic extended discourse, taking notes as they listen.

**Post-Viewing Activities**

Students analyze their notes and look for similarities and variations in beliefs, practices, and attitudes within a culture, and draw conclusions about shared cultural values. Students share their summary and analysis with the class, either orally or in writing. Critical thinking is encouraged as students form research questions and are asked to summarize or paraphrase responses and draw conclusions.

Students studying a second language need to learn to ask questions and listen carefully in order to acquire communicative competence. These materials model an ethnographic approach to listening and to learning about other cultures. Students can be encouraged to form their own questions and conduct interviews with local Spanish speakers. An ethnographic approach to teaching culture along with foreign language has been shown to be very effective (Donan, 1997; Egan-Robertson and Willett, 1998). Bateman (2002) reported that students in his study who conducted ethnographic projects showed “an increase in understanding of and respect for Spanish speakers” and that “many of them achieved a degree of empathy and understanding for the experiences of their interviewees” (p. 327). However, native speakers of a target language, especially those from more remote regions, are not always readily accessible to foreign language students. Ideally Las Voces de las mujeres de latinoamérica should serve as a model to encourage students to engage in conversations with native speakers of Spanish wherever they are.

**Future Goals**

It is my hope that Spanish teachers who use these materials in different ways will share their ideas about how to effectively use video-taped interviews in teaching and research. It would also be wonderful if teachers who travel could add to the voices of the women of Latin America collected to date. Perhaps this project will also encourage similar projects that would share the voices of women in languages other than Spanish.


**References**


As undergraduate experiences abroad increasingly become the norm on the SDSU campus, it’s the returning students who are turning out to be the best recruiters. According to the provost, “every student says this is the best thing that I’ve ever done educationally, and most say this is the best thing that I’ve ever done in my life.” The campus’ student population is going global as more and more of them are, “taking flight as citizens of the world.” Thank you, Provost Nancy Marlin, for giving them their wings.

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