

# Engaging Language Learners in Community Service

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# Our time together today...

- Presenter introductions
    - Dr. Susan A. Hildebrandt, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics/Spanish, Coordinator of Teacher Education
    - Dr. Juliet Lynd, Associate Professor of Spanish
  - Setting the stage - LAN assets and challenges
  - Hildebrandt - LAN 320.11 World Language (WL) Teaching in the K-12 Setting
  - Lynd - LAN 214.15 Conversation and Culture in Spanish
  - Questions?
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# Setting the stage

- Majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish; minors in Chinese, Italian, Japanese, and Latin
- LAN assets
  - Department working together to confront challenges
  - Collective desire to develop mutually beneficial civic engagement activities with community stakeholders
  - Several faculty members have developed American Democracy Project and TEACH+PLUS course redesigns
- LAN challenges
  - Nature of language learning is frequently misunderstood
  - Advanced-Low proficiency, as measured by the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), required for LAN teacher candidates to student teach

# LAN 320.11 WL Teaching in the K-12 Setting

- Practical implementation of K-12 world language teaching techniques. Clinical Experiences: 50 hours (at least 25 at Unity)
- First eight weeks: Teacher candidates explore Unity learners through the lens of learner assets...
  - diverse backgrounds
  - family makeup
  - other issues related to power and privilege
- Last seven weeks: Teach beginning Spanish and French to K-5th graders for 45 minutes at Unity Community Center in Normal
- Since Spring 2012, program has run at Unity for seven semesters



# Active learning

- ISU LAN teacher candidates put theory into practice immediately with K-5<sup>th</sup> graders
- They learn how to co-teach effectively
- Learning transfers to edTPA performance?



- Unity youth learn beginning Spanish, French, and/or German that they wouldn't get otherwise in Normal district
  - Focus is on getting youth up and moving, while communicating in language
  - Consistent, high quality programming for Unity since Spring 2012
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# Building relationships

- Unity youth and LAN teacher candidates become close, knowing one another as individuals
- Consistent volunteer presence for youth
- Hugs and graffiti 😊



# Curricular Changes

- 25 of 50 hours required to be spent at Unity
- Increased connection between theoretical and practical coursework
- Focus on student assets, discouraging “deficit thinking”

	Oct. 15- FR	Oct 22	Oct. 29	Nov. 5	Nov 12	Nov. 19	Dec. 3 REVIEW
Team	Aubrey & Danielle	Amy, Kristina & Shoko	Alli & Taylor	Juliana & Alyssa	Nayeli & Nancy	Francisco & Natalie	
Where? (Map – Francisco & Natalie)	Bretagne, France	Argentina	Mexico	España	Puerto Rico	Colombia	
Weather (Kristina, Shoko, Amy)	Il fait beau	Nieva	Hace buen tiempo	Hace buen tiempo	Hace calor	Hace sol y calor	
Clothing 1 (Aubrey & Danielle)	Un short	Abrigo	Vestido	Camisa	Gafas de sol	Gafas del sol	
Clothing 2 (Alli & Taylor)			sombrero	capa	sandalias	Traje del baño	
Celebration name	Fest Noz	Navidad	Día de los muertos	El Encierro	El día de los reyes	Concierto de Shakira	
Celebration object	Les biniou (mot celtique)	Fuegos artificiales	máscara	Toro	regalo	baile	
Celebration month (Nancy & Nayeli)	L'été	Diciembre	noviembre	julio	enero	febrero	

Song: Juliana & Alyssa

- Where are we going?
- What's the weather like?
- What should we wear?
- What are we celebrating?

# Challenges

- TIME for instructor and teacher candidates
- Changing personnel at Unity



# ACTFL Global Engagement Initiative

- Features “outstanding community-engaged learning experiences within the world languages curriculum at all levels of instruction”
- 2015-2019 recognition





- **Conversation and Culture in Spanish REDESIGNED**

**Dr. Juliet Lynd**

**Languages, Literatures, and Cultures**

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## Why redesign this course for Civic Engagement?

1. Practical: Students talking to each other (and me) vs. students talking to people beyond the classroom.
2. Intellectual: Perfect opportunity to explore the meaning of citizenship, lack of citizenship, and global citizenship.

# SPA 214

# Culture and Conversation in Spanish

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- Students didn't sign up for community work when they registered for the course
- Students may or may not have the level of language required to participate effectively in Spanish in community organizations where that would be useful
- Students may make assumptions about the need for Spanish where there is none (misguided stereotypes)
- Importance of building positive and mutually beneficial community relationships

So what happened?

# Concerns

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## Day One survey invited honest responses

- Students were overwhelmingly positive:
  - 2 already volunteered at Western Ave. and one of them also at Bent Elementary in the bilingual kindergarten class
  - Everyone else was excited to be pushed to get out there. About half were nervous but still appreciative. A few worried only about time commitments with busy schedules.
  - Well disposed group; presence of students at Western Avenue had a positive influence



# Initial Student Reactions

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## **Worked with Deborah Halperin at IWU and had 15 possible placements around town for 14 students (min. 8 hours each):**

- Western Avenue Community Center After School Program (8, including 2 already there)
- Bent Elementary bilingual classroom assistant (1)
- Kingsley Jr. High tutoring, via YWCA (1)
- YWCA Family Night Carnival (1)
- IPA Voter Registration (1)
- Girls Scouts (1; student started a bilingual troop)
- Pop Up Produce (1)
- Speech Pathologist shadowing at Cedar Ridge bilingual elementary (1)

# **Placements**

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it



1. Enthusiasm: “Service Learning” attitudes (I will help; I will determine what service you need)
2. Nervousness: I will practice my Spanish; I hope my Spanish is good enough because you need my Spanish  
(Very ME-centered)

# Student Expectations

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1. Orchestrate shift from service learning to civic engagement
2. Teach about others' needs as language learners (or not!); identify stereotyping and generalizations

Identify myths vs. realities of Spanish in the Community

**My job (through class activities, readings, films, discussions)**

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## Mid-term Interview and Final Report

- Overall positive growth
- Some placements turned out not to need Spanish at all or use of Spanish was more fluid and not what students expected
- Many students planned to continue on in their volunteer activities
- Only one student reported negative attitudes (blamed “bad” student behavior in After School Program on “bad” families)

# Success?

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- Level of insight somewhat limited
- Challenge of really deep and difficult topics (What is global citizenship? What are community needs? What is my relationship to this sector of the local community? How are the challenges of this community related to larger issues of migration?)
- 200-level course is still intermediate Spanish; difficult to serve; difficult to reflect and analyze

**And yet...**

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- We need a whole new class!

I look forward to proposing a course on **Spanish in the Community** with weekly volunteer work, sustained focus through readings and films, ongoing reflection and analysis.

# Conclusions

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- Both presenters are grateful for the support of the American Democracy Project.
- The LAN teacher education program is grateful for the support of Unity Community Center and to the Office of the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for initially funding this critical relationship in 2011.

# Acknowledgements

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# Questions?

Contact us with any questions.

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