

Faculty Fellow Project Report

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Title and brief description of the project.

I became a Faculty Fellow in Fall 2017, to work on various projects:

- Revision and redesign of ITAL 1050 Fast-Track Italian, and ITAL 2120 Intermediate Italian from traditional courses to a flipped classroom model.
- Support my FRIT colleagues in the use of technology and in the transition from D2L to Canvas.
- Liaison between the FRIT department and ASSETT.
- Revision of ITAL 1010 Hybrid in Fall 2017, and ITAL 1020 Hybrid in Spring 2018. My colleague Giorgio Corda, who designed these hybrid courses went on leave in Fall 2017, and I took over these courses and revised them, since we adopted a new textbook.

Describe the challenge addressed with this project.

- The French and Italian Department has been at the avant-garde of teaching with technology. Our colleague Giorgio Corda has developed online/hybrid courses for our first year language classes and these courses have been a great success. They have given our department great exposure and have boosted our enrollment. I wanted to see more colleagues take advantage of the great tools of technology: flipping classrooms, engaging in online forum discussions, using Voice Thread, using ludic learning. These can all aid the students in learning. The more students are engaged in visual ludic activities, the more motivated, and excited they are to learn. There are so many tools and resources available and we are not fully taking advantage of them. When we started discussing about adopting a new textbook for our first and second year Italian language courses, I wanted a textbook that would facilitate teaching the courses with a flipped classroom model. We had various meetings on the matter and we all agreed that the textbook should have an extensive online platform, which would cater to every instructor's needs.
- Another challenge encountered was the Transition from D2L to Canvas. During our FRIT meetings, many faculty members expressed concern with the new LMS system. They wanted to know how to begin, how to navigate, is it better than D2L, or is it not as good as D2L, and so on. I quickly expressed interest in helping with their concerns. I told them I would contact IT and set up workshops and training sessions.
- A third challenge was to restructure and reorganize and teach the hybrid courses using the new textbook.

Desired results.

My desired results and goals were to:

- Successfully flip ITAL 1050 and teach it implementing the new classroom model in Spring 2018, and ITAL 2120 in FALL 2018.
- Arrange Canvas workshops and training sessions for FRIT in fall and spring.
- Teach the revised ITAL 1010 and 1020 Hybrid courses with the new textbook.
- Be a liaison between FRIT and ASSETT.

Describe the project.

1. Flipping ITAL 1050. I started the process in the fall (2017). We adopted a new textbook, Percorsi, L'Italia Attraverso La Lingua e La Cultura, Third Edition, by Italiano/Marchegiani.

This textbook has a state-of-the-art online platform which includes a wide selection of language-learning tools and resources: tutorials, audio recorded materials, activities, videos, readings, voice recording activities, and more.

ITAL 1050 is a fast-track course that combines the two beginning courses (ITAL 1010 and 1020) in one semester. We covered 2/3 of the Percorsi material. The third part is covered in ITAL 2110 (third semester).

Every evening students had assignments in the online platform called MyItalianLab. They listened to the pronunciation of new vocabulary through the audio program, they watched a tutorial, a narrated interactive grammar explanation with audio, and completed the related activity for practice. The next day we used in-class time to practice speaking and to employ all new grammatical concepts and vocabulary, through worksheets, textbook activities, readings and videos. Once a week students also had an assignment in Canvas: a voice recording, in which they had to talk about a topic presented in the chapter; a writing on a topic covered in the chapter; or a discussion assigned in the discussion forum. The online platform also has a video that accompanies the textbook. Each chapter has a different episode. At the end of each chapter I assigned the students to watch the video clip (approx. 5-6 min. video) and complete the related activities: either answering the questions on the video, adding subtitles, or a voice recording.

Outcome.

This new teaching model was very successful, not only in my opinion but also from the students' point of view. Many students complemented me on the array of different resources, and technology tools and how they liked being able to watch tutorials before coming to class and feeling already knowledgeable about the concepts.

I find that having the students work on and study the new concepts before class time, rather than sitting through 10-15 minute session of grammar explanations at the end of class is beneficial. The attention span of students during a grammar explanation in class is becoming shorter. Completing homework online and receiving feedback right away is key to learning the concepts fast and they are able to return, correct their mistakes and submit again, all within a few minutes, whereas correcting homework in class takes up 10-15 min every day at the beginning of class time and not everyone understands and corrects the mistakes they made.

As with any online program there will be glitches, and Percorsi/MyItalianLab has a few. My colleagues and I have opened a file in Google drive so we can report all the typos, errors, fails or problems we or the students have encountered. We will then send the report to our Percorsi representative.

Some comments from this semester's FCQs:

- I really like the pace and the structure of the course. I loved the cultural engagement and learning opportunities. This class exceeded my expectations.
- I really enjoyed this class and what I was able to learn in such a short amount of time. I hated ... in high school because it was so stressful but this class has been well structured and anxiety free. Thank you!
- Outstanding class overall. Wonderfully committed and caring professor, timely grading and feedback, valuable guidance on language and cultural matters, patience, and academic rigor ...

2. Revising the hybrid classes (ITAL 1010 and 1020)

The textbook I used is the same as ITAL 1050. I was able to restructure both ITAL 1010 Hybrid, and ITAL 1020 Hybrid in a similar way as ITAL 1050. Of course the hybrid courses move at a slower pace since they cover 1/3 of the textbook, whereas ITAL 1050 covers 2/3. All grammar instruction, pronunciation and vocabulary, and related activities were assigned in MyItalianLab every evening: Sunday through Thursday. During class-time we worked on strengthening those concepts through worksheets, role play, ludic activities, readings and videos. Every Thursday – Sunday there were assignments in Canvas: recordings on a topic covered in the chapter, a writing, or a discussion.

Outcome.

At the beginning of the semester, I warn students that the hybrid class is not for everyone. Our hybrid classes are also flipped in addition to being hybrid. It takes a great deal of diligence, organization, seriousness, and consistency in order to succeed in a hybrid course. This is what I write as introduction to the syllabus:

This hybrid course is taught using the flipped classroom method. A great deal of work is done online. In order to succeed in this class you must watch tutorials, and complete all assignments before coming to class. In class we will keep working on those concepts, introduced by the tutorials, through worksheets, group work, readings, and ludic activities; keeping grammar instruction to a minimum. Even though we do not meet in class on Thursdays and Fridays as in a regular course, you are expected to complete the same amount of work online on those days. 20% of your grade is based on homework, online activities and participation. It takes motivation, organization, self-discipline and commitment to succeed in a hybrid course. If you feel you cannot keep this commitment, please consider a regular course.

Some of the comments from last semester's FCQs:

- Interesting course. I liked the material and the way the teacher teaches. Good class and fun to learn.
- This course was awesome...
- I thought the course was thought provoking and engaging ...
- I wish all the online homework was in one place rather than both in D2L and MyItalianLab.
- The class was fun! I enjoyed it a lot, and the online assignments weren't too inconvenient.
- I will be avoiding hybrid courses in the future as I do not feel it was very effective in achieving any long term learning.

After I read comment #4, I took care of the issue right away, even though only one student in the class addressed it, and this semester I had a link to MyItalianLab in Canvas so they did not feel as if they had to log into two separate sites.

The last comment is why I have the above mentioned introduction to the syllabus: the hybrid course is not for everyone ...

3. Canvas workshops and training sessions for FRIT in fall and spring.

I organized Canvas workshop and training sessions for my FRIT department in the fall and in the spring. Aisha Jackson and I had a couple of phone meetings and she helped me organize and customize the trainings to fit the needs of the faculty members. The LTCs who lead the workshops were amazing.

Outcome.

In the fall a total of 6 faculty members attended. Out of the six, 3 of us chose Canvas as our LMS this semester. One faculty member was going on a sabbatical and the other 2 decided to use D2L one last time this semester. I am very satisfied with Canvas and so are the others. One colleague has some concerns with the gradebook and I know she provided feedback when she filled out the “end of the semester survey”.

In the spring I organized the same training session for those who cannot attend in the fall. 7 faculty members and graduate students attended. The graduate students are choosing Canvas for their summer courses and the faculty for the fall courses.

Everyone thought the workshops were very helpful, especially because they were in our department and they didn't have to go to the TLC or make an appointment with IT.

An outline of the workshop follows:

French and Italian Department Canvas Workshop Thursday, April 26, 2018, HUMN 345, 5-6pm

- I. Navigation and Administrative Tasks
 - a. Canvas Overview
 - b. Notifications

- II. Communication
 - a. Setting Up Home Pages
 - b. Announcements
 - c. Inbox
 - d. Discussions

- III. Course Content
 - a. Migration Overview
 - b. Migrating Content from D2L
 - c. Module Creation and Management
 - d. Files & Course Content
 - e. Pages

- IV. Assessments
 - a. Assignments
 - b. Groups
 - c. Rubrics
 - d. Speed grader
 - e. Gradebook Overview
 - f. Quizzes

- V. Additional Tools & Support
 - a. Calendars
 - b. Course Analytics
 - c. Attendance
 - d. Syllabus
 - e. Where to get Canvas Support

Experience as a Faculty Fellow.

Being a Faculty Fellow is a wonderful experience. I have enjoyed being a liaison between ASSETT and the French and Italian Department. I especially treasured the meetings between the Fellows because I was able to talk to them about my project, listen to new ideas, and suggestions, and at the same time hear about other innovative projects happening in other departments. I would like to thank everyone for their support, and especially the Teaching and Learning Consultants for their guidance, and helping me develop and complete my projects.