Career/Major-Related Project Proposal

TO: Sergey Rybas, Professor

FROM: Becca Hassain

DATE: March 23, 2011

SUBJECT: Career/Major-Related Project Proposal

**Introduction**

Background

In recent years the United States of America has been the place of refuge for those fleeing oppression, poverty, and lack of opportunity. Latinos are the largest growing minority in the country, making up at least fifteen percent of the population. According to the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, there are approximately 354,674 Hispanics in the state of Ohio (“Ohio”). There is a great chance that America will receive more immigrants, particularly due to the drug violence in Mexico. Many Americans blame immigrants for loss of jobs. In reality, immigrants are acquiring the low paying jobs that the rest of us may not want to do. Latinos have a great impact on society, particularly in Ohio. According to The Immigration Policy Center, Ohioan Latino and Asian voters accounted for half of the vote that allowed Barack Obama to win Ohio in 2008(“New”). However, Hispanics, especially immigrants struggle to climb America’s social and economic ladder. When applying for any decent job, employers ask for excellent communication skills, high proficiency in writing and speaking English, computer skills, and at least a high school diploma. Less than sixty percent of Latinos graduate from high school. Hispanic students are at a disadvantage because of the language barrier, family responsibility, and their surrounding environment. Many immigrants are forced to live in poverty. Unfortunately these unstable conditions and lack of educational opportunities lead some young people to join gangs and/or become teenage parents. Communities need to reach out to the immigrant population as our economy also depends on them.

**Project Description**

The purpose of the website*, El Cuaderno*, is to offer a translation and tutoring service for Hispanic students who are not yet familiar with the English language. Since successful completion of high school is a major issue, the target audience will be Hispanic students aged 14-19 and recent immigrants. The goal is to interact with young teenagers over the internet who are in need of an education. I will also create a discussion board in which students can type in their homework questions. Participants can even interact with each other, similar to the blackboard discussion setup. There will be at least seven pages on this website centered on the rules of the English language. The punctuation and spelling section will explain common errors students make when learning English as a second language. The subsequent sections will be formatted as mini lessons. In the end, I hope to engage other Spanish Capital University students to assist any clients.

*El Cuaderno* components include:

1. Introduction

The introduction will appear on the homepage as well as a few visuals. The introduction will address the audience as it states: “*El Cuaderno* is here to give you an exciting and free introduction to the English language and culture. You will have the option of contacting an online tutor for any questions or concerns you may have. Services include translation, essay editing, and friendly online discussion”.

The homepage will also include a brief overview of the differences between the Spanish and English language. On the left sidebar will appear links to the following pages. All pages will be available as a PDF file so users can save the files to their personal computers.

1. Punctuation

This page will include a guide to the use of period, commas, colons, semi –colons, quotations marks, and apostrophes.

1. Independent clause
2. Dependent clause

**Grammar:** The following sections will be located on a page entitled “grammar”.

1. Spelling

This section will cover common mistakes and difficult rules that native English speakers also struggle with.

1. The difference between, there, their, and they’re
2. i/e rule for example; chief vs. receive
3. difference between your and your’re
4. Vowels and consonants

There are various differences between vowels and Spanish and vowels in English. Vowels are longer and our lips are more relaxed when we speak. Native English speakers talk with a schwa. This concept will be explained with an audio demonstration on the website.

1. Articles

This section will explain the difference between the definite article “the” and the indefinite articles “a/an.

1. Verbs tenses

Since verb tenses are complicated for English students learning Spanish tenses, presumably it will be difficult for Hispanics to learn English tenses. Thus, a lot of time will be devoted to this section.

1. Prepositions

I will also focus a lot on the preposition section, which will discuss the use of “on, at, in, by, from, to, until”, etc.

1. Numbers

**Culture:** Lastly I will include a brief discussion of American history and customs.

1. Fun facts

The section will include visuals of America’s pastimes, cities, and cuisine.

1. Contact me page

This section will include my email address. Also it will explain my reasons for making the website.

**Justification of worthiness**

Learning how to design a webpage will help me develop skills in web design and communicating with others over the web. I have to assess the effectiveness of the design, readability, use of space, content, color, use of font, and the purpose of any visuals. This project will allow me to practice incorporating many rules of elements of design we have learned this semester. I always wanted to find a way to help others who are in need and teaching English is a possible future career for me. My goal is to have this website serve as a sort of “online tutor” for Hispanic students that presumably will be free of charge. By experimenting with web design at this time, I believe that in a few years *El Cuaderno* can be a success. My time management and discipline will also have to be strengthened to the time limit of this project.

**Methodology**

A great amount if time will be spent on the content and design of the webpage. I will examine similar websites and try to offer something they do not. Next I will research rules of the English language. I will incorporate some of the skill learned from my Spanish phonetics and phonology class. To successfully complete this project, I will have to develop skills on translating English to Spanish and vice versa. Before submitting the website, I will ask fellow Spanish students if there is anything else I should include. After all the preliminary work, I must advertise the website. This will involve contacting and writing letters to local elementary and high schools and any other educational institutions with a number of Hispanic students. The emailed letters will include an introduction and description of the website. Also My Spanish professor, Dr. Saunders has suggested that I use her as a contact, so schools know this is a legitimate project.

**Timeline**

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| Week One (March 21-March 27) | Continue researching Latino education in America.  Design personal web site template and add:   1. Introduction page 2. Punctuation |
| Week two (March 28-April 3) | Begin website design for Grammar   1. Spelling 2. Vowels and Consonants 3. Articles |
| Week three (April 4- April 10) | Continue website design   1. Verb tenses 2. Prepositions 3. Numbers |
| Week four (April 11-17) | Finish website  1.Fun facts  2. Contact me  3. Test website and receive feedback from others  3.Fix errors and begin advertisement of website |
| April 18 Project due |  |

**Risks and Constraints**

Time is the biggest constraint for this project. If time permits, I would like to make a complete Spanish version of the website. My biggest concern is the advertisement and response from the public. It is important to have enough interested clients to keep the website up and running. I do not have much knowledge about teaching English as a second language so I hope to learn through trial and error.

Works Cited

"New Americans in the Buckeye State." *Immigration Policy Center*. July 2009. Web. 17 Mar. 2011. <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/new-americans-buckeye-state>.

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