Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning

Newsletter

Educators
For an Open World

Fall 2012

In this issue

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

To find a scanner application, Google "QR Reader" and the model of your phone or the operating system of your computer.
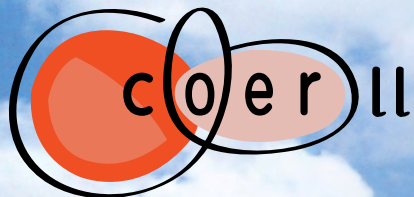
Mission

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 Director

In his 2009 book, *The World is Open*, instructional technologist Dr. Curtis Bonk makes the provocative claim that now anyone can learn anything from anyone at anytime thanks to the Internet. Similar to Thomas Friedman, the *New York Times* columnist who argued that social and technological "flatners" were levelling the world's economic playing field, Bonk argues that technological "openers" are currently transforming global education.

I agree that open education is bringing about dramatic changes and that our mission as a Language Resource Center should be to explore, document, and exploit thoughtfully these momentous shifts. But despite all the hyperbolic talk about global transformation, my work as the director of COERLL has convinced me that the word has not yet reached the trenches. Today, I routinely preface my talks to language teachers with a quick question: "Who among you has ever heard the phrase *open education* or the acronym *OER*?" Typically, two or three people in the crowd raise their hands. A recent survey conducted by the National Institute of Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE) of small liberal arts colleges in the U.S. corroborates my experiences with teachers—the vast majority of educators still know very little about open education despite its rapid growth.

As a consequence, COERLL has increased its efforts to educate the public about open educational products and practices. In August, we held a symposium entitled "The Power of Openness" (see page 15). The symposium brought together foreign language teachers, instructional designers, and educational administrators to discuss the application of open educational practices to the foreign language classroom. In addition, COERLL offered a live video stream of the symposium so that people could join us virtually. The live stream was such a success that we have decided to continue this practice

for future events. Videos of the presentations and activities are available at http://sites.la.utexas.edu/power-of-openness/material/.
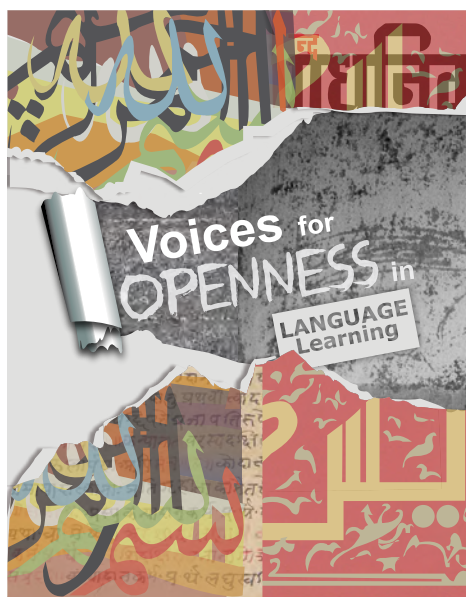
As part of the symposium, we asked language teachers to share their personal stories about open education with the participants. We collected these fascinating stories into a publication called *Voices for Openness in Language Learning* available online at http://sites.la.utexas.edu/voices/. Our hope is that these stories will encourage more language teachers to explore educational innovations. And finally, the symposium included many practical tips about how to take the first steps in becoming an open educator, which we have summarized in this newsletter. (See "Becoming an Open Educator" on page 4 and "How to Search for Openly Licensed Educational Resources" on page 8.)

At COERLL, we agree with Curtis Bonk that open education is a momentous shift, but we would like to propose a new title for his book that captures how we see things: The World is Becoming More Open … One Teacher at a Time.

For an open world,
Carl Blyth, Director of COERLL

Dr. Carl Blyth, 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.

Becoming an Open Educator

The Open Education movement is based on the belief that educational materials should be free and accessible and that educators should share and collaborate more than they currently do. But why would educators go to the trouble of producing and sharing their materials with others without seeking any financial gain? The answer lies in the value system of education itself.

Education is fundamentally about sharing knowledge, and open educational resources (OER) are designed to do just that: promote the efficient sharing of knowledge. Armed with digital tools, an entrepreneurial spirit, and online communities of practice, many foreign language educators are beginning to realize the power of openness. More people are collaborating with colleagues and students to produce their own high quality materials. These new open practices and products have the potential to transform foreign language learning.

And yet, open education is still an unfamiliar concept to many educators. A recent study of more than 2000 tenure and tenure-track faculty members at Florida public colleges indicated that just over 10% of instructors had actually used OER, mainly as a supplement to traditional materials (Henderson 2011). While the Florida survey found widespread support for efforts to reduce the cost of textbooks, it also showed concern about the quality of OER.

A similar survey conducted by NITLE to assess the impact of Open Education on small liberal arts colleges found that faculty had minimal knowledge of these innovations. The data "suggest that there is potential interest in OER, but that there is a need for more quality resources relevant to the liberal arts curriculum, that these resources should be more easily discoverable, and that faculty may need to be convinced that they are sufficient quality" (Spiro & Alexander, 2012: 18).

These surveys raise a host of provocative questions: How do teachers become open educators? What does the process look like? Why are some educators adopting open educational practices while others are not? In an attempt to uncover some of the answers, COERLL has begun to collect teachers' stories told in their own voices of how they joined the open education movement.

What Does an Open Educator Look Like?

Open educators span the globe, particularly in language learning. Members in this ever-growing community share some key qualities you may identify in yourself.

- *Innovative*: Open educators pinpoint areas of need and say, "Is there something new I could do to improve the situation?"
- *Proactive*: Open educators are not afraid to take the first step toward a solution, even though it may not solve the entire problem.
- *Informed*: Open educators are on the lookout for new tools in technology, social media platforms, and web resources.
- *Collaborative*: Open educators ask, "What can I learn from what others are doing? How can I contribute and make it even better?"

Listen to the experiences of these open educators who are pushing the limits of professional development and helping to form a new identity for language educators. You will hear how the need for quality Yoruba language materials fueled innovation in Fehintola Mosadomi. Being proactive helped French professor George Detiveaux transform his community college classroom using OER. Fernando Rosell-Aguilar found a powerful platform for his Spanish language video clips by staying informed on the latest technology. And finally, language learner Nicola Mabbot showed the quintessential collaborative spirit of open educators when she benefited from an open language resource then used the resource to create a new tool for learning, and shared it with the world.

INNOVATIVE

Fehintola Mosadomi
Assistant professor at UT Austin and creator of Yorùbá Yé Mi, *the first open access Yoruba textbook.*

" My goal is to bring Yoruba to the level of French, German, and Spanish. We are really not that far because of programs like *Yorùbá Yé Mi* that incorporate technology, such as QR codes and multimedia, to enhance learning. Other programs out there are much more expensive. And there are no other OER in the Yoruba language. Open textbooks will help to promote the language and the culture. Making Yoruba language and culture available at little or no cost to the wider world, not just to my own students, gives learning a higher meaning.

PROACTIVE
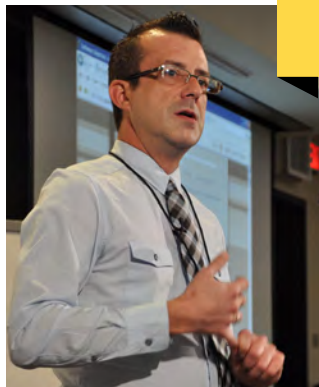
Georges Detiveaux
French professor and OER Advocate, Lone Star College-CyFair.

" Exploring the wealth of online educational resources has been a great source of professional development for me. I started small, gradually incorporating OER into courses. I would assign OER as additional work, use web exercises in the labs, or use OER for in-class supplements when a section of a publisher-sponsored text didn't help impart the concept at hand. Eventually, after a couple of semesters of finding OER for everything my learners needed, I took the plunge and eliminated the publisher-sponsored text altogether. Thanks to my exploration of OER, I have been able to grow as an educator and create my own universe of teaching that is truly customized to my learners' needs. I have cultivated an entrepreneurial "can-do" spirit.

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Hal Plotkin, Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of the Under Secretary of Education and principal figure in the open education movement, describes OER as "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits sharing, accessing, repurposing—including for commercial purposes—and collaborating with others." http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Free_to_Learn_Guide
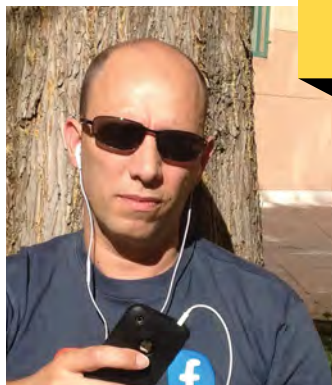
INFORMED

Fernando Rosell-Aguilar
Lecturer in Spanish and coordinator of iTunes U content for the Department of Languages at the Open University, UK.

" When in 2006 I transferred one of the video clips I was developing for a Spanish course at the Open University to my iPod, I immediately noticed that the video had become much more appealing than when I watched it on my TV screen. I could watch however many times I liked, wherever, whenever. The next step was to figure out how to deliver the resources from my course to my students and–why not?–to anyone else who may want to learn from them. The answer was iTunes U. Apple launched iTunes U in 2007 to disseminate educational content provided by universities. The Open University joined iTunes U in June 2008 and since then has become a key player, providing more downloads than any other provider (over 52 million as of June 2012 – over a quarter of these originating from the USA).

COLLABORATIVE

Nicola Mabbot
EFL teacher and foreign language learner.

" As I walk a lot during the summer, I downloaded the *Tá Falado* lessons (one of the resources offered on COERLL's Brazilpod, a website of Portuguese language learning materials) onto my MP3 player and listened to them whilst walking. From *Tá Falado* I went on to *Conversa Brasiliera*. I found this project very useful, because the greatest difficulty for me with Portuguese is understanding native speakers chatting at natural speed.

Being a writer of teaching materials for the English language, and being inspired by Brazilpod, I suppose it was only natural that I started to experiment with writing materials for students of Portuguese. I didn't know how they'd turn out, but if I could help people get even more out of Brazilpod, that would be fantastic! My role has changed considerably–before I was only a learner, and now I am helping others to learn.

YOUR VOICE

You can find these and other inspirational stories at the website, *Voices for Openness in Language Learning*. We welcome you to explore the benefits of open education and to share your story with this online community by clicking "Add Your Voice" at the top-left menu. In doing so, you are contributing to the participatory spirit of open education and helping to construct a new identity for language educators—as innovative, proactive, and informed collaborators.

Visit *"Voices for Openness in Language Learning"* at:

http://sites.la.utexas.edu/voices/.

5 Steps to Becoming an Open Educator

Interested in becoming an open educator but don't know where to start? Follow these simple steps and share your experience with others.

1. Curriculum assessment

Assess your curriculum carefully and determine where the weaknesses lie. Do your students need more form-focused activities? Do you need to jazz up the readings? Does your course suffer from a lack of authentic language input?

2. Search for an OER

Conduct a thorough search to find the right OER. As a guide, see "How to Search for Openly Licensed Educational Resources" on page 8 of this newsletter. There are numerous web sources to help in this search.

3. Classroom Implementation

Determine how to integrate the OER into your existing practices. What changes will you need to make? Once you have thought this through, implement the OER as part of a few lessons.

4. Evaluate Results and Improve the Resource

How did it go? Was the OER a success? Did it change the classroom dynamic? Did it deliver the results you were expecting? Did you and your students enjoy the experience? What could you add or change about the resource to make it better?

5. Join a Community

Now you have a resource and an experience to share. Join a community like MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching), where open educators like you can share and improve on OER. There is no better way to understand the power of openness than by helping students learn a new language online with the aid of OER and an online community.

Open Education

A system of teaching and learning that emphasizes the use of digital materials that are easily edited and customizable, a virtual or mobile learning environment, the integration of knowledge with social networks that connect people to ideas, an effort to personalize instruction as much as possible, and a belief that knowledge is best understood as a creative process of co-constructed meaning within a community of practice.

Sources

Henderson, S. (2011). The challenges and lessons learned from Florida's open textbook initiative. Online video available at http://sites.la.utexas.edu/open-language/2011/challenges-and-lessons-learned-from-florida%E2%80%99s-open-textbook-initiative/
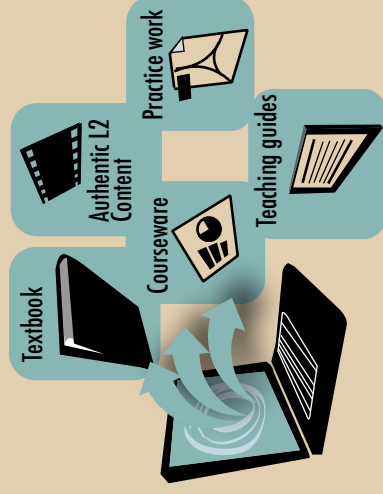
Spiro, L. & B. Alexander. (2012). Open education in the liberal arts. NITLE Working Papers. [Accessed 09/20/12].

How to Search *for* Openly Licensed Educational Resources

The growing body of online educational resources is helping to create universal access to language education. This is a good thing.

Textbook

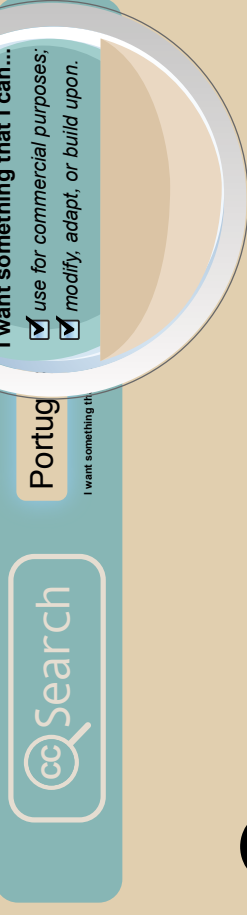Authentic L2 Content

Practice work

Courseware

Teaching guides

However, finding openly licensed educational resources (OER)—which can be edited, built upon, and shared without copyright restrictions—isn't always easy.

Use this introductory guide to find open resources for your classroom. The OER ecosystem works best when everybody contributes content. Consider sharing your own.

---
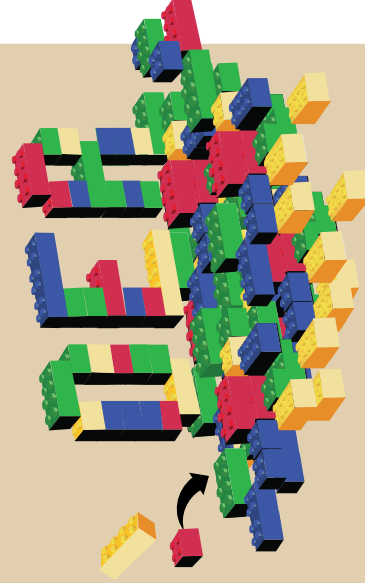
3 Next, at the top of the page set the parameters of your search for resources with the most open licenses.

CC Search

Portug...

I want something th...

I want something that I can...
☑ use for commercial purposes;
☑ modify, adapt, or build upon.

4 Now that you have chosen your license, determine what kind of content you are looking for (video, audio, text). Choose a source below by clicking a button. If you are not sure, simply choose "Google/Web" to look at all possible formats.

Europeana — Image	Flickr — Image	Fotopedia — Image
Google Images — Image	Jamendo — Music	Open Clip Art Library — Image
Wikimedia Commons — Media	YouTube — Video	Pixabay — Image
SoundCloud — Music		

Google — Web

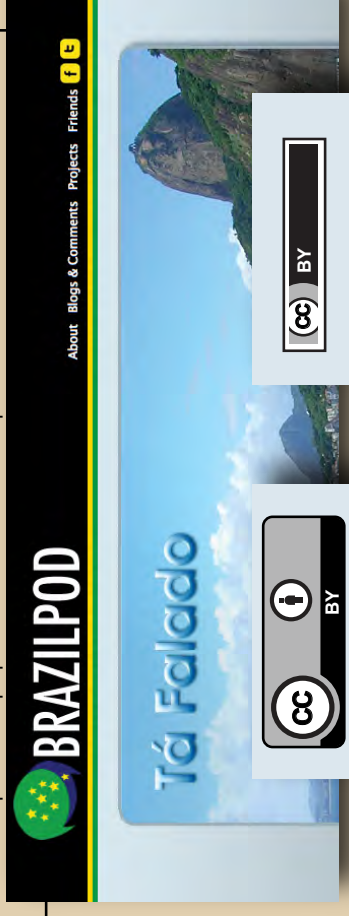**SpinXpress** — Media

CCMixter — Music

5 After clicking on a match, look for the license agreement.
NOTE: Creative Commons offers licenses with various degrees of openness. We recommend looking for materials published with the most open license – CC BY.
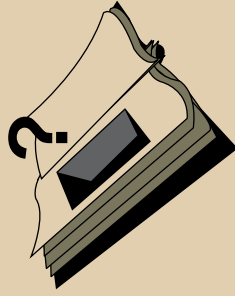
Tá Falado : Brazilian Portuguese Pronunciation for Speakers of ...
coerll.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/
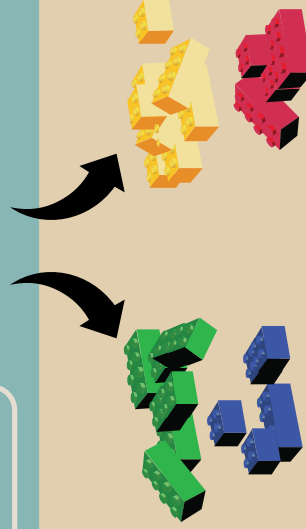Tá Falado provides mp3 podcast lessons that show pronunciation differences

BRAZILPOD

About   Blogs & Comments   Projects   Friends

Tá Falado

CC BY

CC BY

6 Evaluate the resource and try it out with your students.

Criteria for Evaluating OER

☑ Does it match your learners' needs?
☑ Does it align with curriculum standards?
☑ Is there ease of use and accessibility (i.e., open formats, open source files)?
☑ ability to download restrictions?
☑ Are there quality of the license reputation of the source?
☑ What is the quality of the source? has it been content? For example, peer reviewed?
☑ Is there a community of users?
☑ How large and open is it?

7 Remix the resource to better fit your students' needs. For example, create a lesson plan around a video or audio clip.

Where to Remix Educational Content

☑ YouTube Video Editor
http://www.youtube.com/editor
☑ TedEd
http://ed.ted.com
☑ OER Glue
http://www.oerglue.com
☑ WikiEducator
http://wikieducator.org/Main_Page

8 Consider sharing your new OER online. First add a CC BY license using the Creative Commons license generator http://creativecommons.org/choose/. Then submit it to a repository like MERLOT or OER Commons, so that it can be found by others like you.

Let the Search Begin

Educators often supplement foreign language textbooks. Perhaps your students need more grammar, authentic L2 materials, or listening practice exercises.

1 Go to an open content search page. For example, Creative Commons offers a system of open licensing which enables resource sharing. Their CC search page is a great place to start.

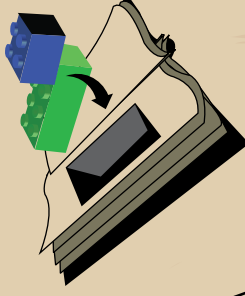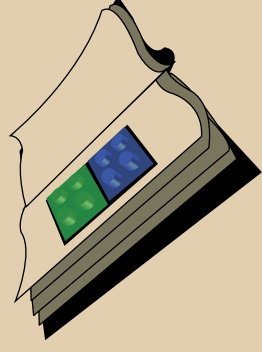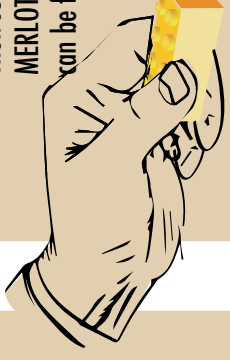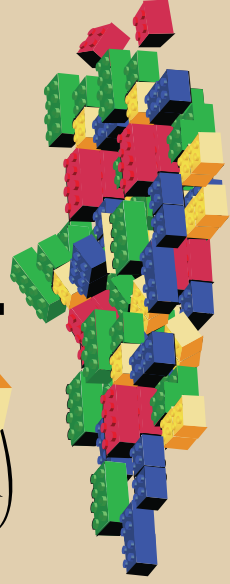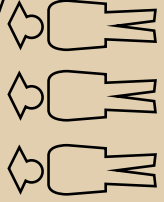http://search.creativecommons.org

[cc Search]

2 Enter your keyword or phrase.

Portuguese pronunciation |

[cc Search]

coerll
for an open world

COERLL Project News

New Collections of OER for LCTLs

LCTL = Less Commonly Taught Language

Brazilpod

Open Access Website / Video and Audio Collection (Portuguese)

Brazilpod is a collection of online, open access, and free-to-use materials for the learning of Portuguese as a foreign language. Almost all of these materials serve as stand-alone ancillary for independent learning, language courses, and other programs of study. Brazilpod is more than just a website with a list of different materials. It brings together multiple parts of independent language projects for users to mix and match, build, and reshape. For this reason, Brazilpod also includes Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, contributions from outside users, blogs, student projects, and unique course materials. The format and delivery increases exposure and implementation contributions from a worldwide audience.

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

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

Gateway to Chinese

Open Access Website (Mandarin Chinese)

This site offers a collection of free interactive language learning resources for beginning Mandarin Chinese. Students have the option to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading skills at their own convenience. Gateway to Chinese resources give students the valuable feedback they need to improve language skills in the critical early stages of learning. An extensive number of interactive exercises allow students to practice what they learn. With these tools, instructors can utilize valuable classroom time to do what they do best: teach!

OER link: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/chinese/

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

SPT *Actividades de práctica con aprendices de español*

New Open Courseware (Spanish)

This site, aimed at Spanish language learners, educators, and researchers, provides an online corpus of videos of second language and heritage language learners of Spanish during oral interviews covering a variety of topics. The videos are derived from the Spanish Proficiency Training & Learner Corpus, a website that comprises over 320 videos of Spanish language learners.

OER link: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/actividades-spt/

Project Director: Dale Koike (Department of Spanish and Portuguese)

Enhancing French Skills

Open Access Website (French)

Enhancing French Skills is a website for intermediate learners of French. It features authentic language videos from authoritative websites such as TV5 Enseigner.tv, France.fr, and RhôneAlpes.tv.

OER link: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/enhancing-french-skills/

Project Directors: Karen Kelton, Nancy Guilloteau (Department of French and Italian)

Bilingual Language Profile (BLP)

Assessment Tool (French, Spanish, Catalan, English, Arabic)

The BLP, a free tool to assess language dominance in bilingual populations, has been translated into additional language pairs. The questionnaire is now available in English/French, English/Spanish, Spanish/Catalan, English/Arabic, and English/Russian.

OER link: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/bilingual/

Project Director: David Birdsong (Department of French and Italian)

Arabic Listening Comprehension Worksheets

Open Access Website (Arabic)

The Aswaat Arabiyya website has been updated to include 57 video segments that have accompanying pre-listening, intensive listening, post-listening, and comprehension worksheets, along with related vocabulary.

OER link: http://laits.utexas.edu/aswaat/

Project Director: Mahmoud Al-Batal (Department of Middle Eastern Studies)

Updated OER

Yorùbá Yé Mi

Open Access Textbook (Yoruba)

A revised version of the *Yorùbá Yé Mi* open textbook is now available.

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

Project Director: Fehintola Mosadomi (Department of Middle Eastern Studies)

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

OER in Development

German Frame-Based Dictionary

Open Access Website (Multilingual)

Learn German vocabulary with frame semantics.The project team has developed a prototype for a corpus-based lexicon that illustrates how words are used in real-life contexts.

OER link: http://coerll.utexas.edu/coerll/projects/lexicon

Project Director: Hans Boas (Department of Germanic Studies)

eComma

Open Source Web Application (Multilingual)

COERLL has been developing eComma, an online tool for collaborative tagging and commenting on texts, and plans to release the tool as open source software later this year.

OER link: http://coerll.utexas.edu/coerll/projects/ecomma

Project Directors: Carl Blyth (Department of French and Italian), Sam Baker (Department of English)
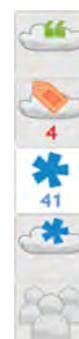
Spanish Proficiency Training (SPT) Website User's Guide

Open Access Website (Spanish, Teaching Methods)

Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro (Associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Iowa) is currently developing modules based on the SPT site. These modules will be available for classroom use by instructors of courses in applied linguistics, teaching methods, and Spanish language skills. This work will advance educators' understanding of the construct of L2 oral proficiency that underlies the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the ACTFL OPI.

OER link: http://laits.utexas.edu/spt/

Project Director: Dale Koike (Department of Spanish and Portuguese)

Word Cloud
Tag Cloud
Comments
Comment Cloud
User activity

Featured Project

Spanish in Texas
A Pedagogical Interface to the Spanish in Texas Corpus (Spanish)

Winner *of the* LIFT Grant 2012-2013!

The Spanish in Texas (SPinTX) project is working to bring a pedagogically useful corpus of authentic Spanish and bilingual Spanish-English speech samples into language classrooms across Texas. The project was selected to receive funding from the Longhorn Innovation Fund for Technology (LIFT) for the grant period September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013. The focus of the project over the next year will be to help educators exploit the SPinTX corpus to customize materials for the teaching of Spanish at all educational levels. The aims of the project are:

- to develop a pedagogically friendly interface for the corpus;
- to involve teachers and learners, via crowd-sourcing, social networking, and workshops, in the development of open educational resources (OER); and
- to develop a model for using open source tools and a pedagogical interface that can be adapted for any language corpus.

In the spirit of openness, we will be sharing and discussing what we learn and create throughout the project on a new blog. We invite you to join with us as we explore new tools and methods for integrating authentic content and open data into the language classroom!

OER link: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/spanishtx

Development Blog: http://sites.la.utexas.edu/corpus-to-classroom/

Project Director: Barbara E. Bullock (Department of French and Italian), Almeida Jacqueline Toribio

Summer Workshops report

On Tolstoy and Toilets: Teaching High and Low Culture in Russian

June 9, 2012

Presenter: Thomas Garza, Associate Professor, Dept. of Slavic and Eurasian Studies

This workshop examined the place of both "high" (formal) and "low" (everyday) culture in the teaching of Russian. Participants learned about the use of authentic texts, media, and realia to make culture relevant to language students and the potential of portfolio-based assessment of cultural literacy to promote proficiency gains in the language.

Texas Spanish in Texas Schools: Do you speak your students' language?

June 23, 2012

Presenters: Barbara Bullock, Professor, Dept. of French and Italian
Jacqueline Toribio, Professor, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese

Texas leads the nation in the state's percentage of residents who speak Spanish at home, but not everyone in Texas speaks Spanish the same way. This workshop helped educators to understand the origins of such variation and how a focus on language as it is actually spoken can enhance the classroom experience. Over 100 workshop participants collaborated to create activities using authentic video samples from the Spanish in Texas Corpus project.

The Yin and Yang of Learning: Chinese In and Out of the Classroom

July 21, 2012

Presenters: Wen-Hua Teng, Sr. Lecturer, Dept. of Asian Studies

This workshop provided fifty Chinese language teachers with ideas on how to create instructional and learning materials to supplement their textbooks. Chinese materials from Gateway to Chinese, a COERLL web resource, served as examples to illustrate how quality materials can promote effective learning outside of the classroom.

Symposia report

The Power of Openness: Improving Foreign Language Learning Through Open Education

August 9-10, 2012

This symposium brought together over seventy foreign language teachers, instructional designers, and educational administrators to discuss the next generation of foreign language materials, open educational resources (OER). For more information, please see "How to Become and Open Educator" on page 4 of this newsletter.

Videos and presentation powerpoints are available at

http://sites.la.utexas.edu/power-of-openness/

http://goo.gl/MGQwU
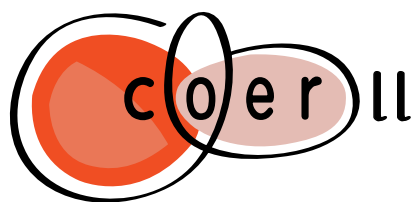
The University of Texas at Austin
Center for Open Educational Resources
and Language Learning
1 University Station, Mail Stop B3500
Austin, TX 78712
USA

Connect to COERLL

Facebook
http://facebook.com/coerll

Twitter
http://twitter.com/coerll

YouTube
http://youtube.com/coerllut

Website
http://coerll.utexas.edu/coerll
Sign up for COERLL news through the form on our site.

Scan the code above with a scanner (barcode reader) application to explore COERLL. To find a scanner application, Google "QR Reader" and the model of your phone or the operating system of your computer.