STARTALK and beyond: Building Collaborations with High Schools and Universities

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Goals

• I can build bridges to support continued learning of the STARTALK languages after STARTALK
• I can develop collaborative relationships with local schools, universities, and communities
Beyond STARTALK: What’s Next?

• STARTALK helped build many successful critical language programs
  • Making a difference—seeing long-term results
  • Your examples? 1 minute
• How do we preserve the legacy?
  • Infrastructure grants
  • Building bridges
Beyond STARTALK: What’s Next?

• GOAL: Build bridges to ensure continuity of instruction to bring students to **advanced level proficiency** as **efficiently as possible** (beginning with selection of students for your program)

• What’s the trick? Foreign Language Learning:
  • USE IT OR LOSE IT
  • Motivation + opportunity
KSU Foreign Language Academy

- Student program / no previous knowledge of FL + Teacher program (Russian & Chinese)

- 4-week immersion program in a safe, culture-rich environment (Elementary I)
  - Lead instructors and assistant teachers (structured task-based learning): 9 AM – 3 PM
  - TL-only lunch (with staff)
  - Culture instructors and RAs: 6 PM – 9 PM
  - Study hall (self-study with staff): 9 PM – 11 PM
  - Immersion experience in community
    - Fieldtrips
    - Cooking workshops
    - Special guests

- On KSU campus—exposure to college environment
KSU Foreign Language Academy

- Mandatory AY follow-up blended learning component (Elementary II)
  - Monthly Saturdays sessions
  - Plus distance learning (SKYPE, Ning, LanguageLabs)
  - Funded through the PSEOP
  - Students receive high-school and college credits
Retention Rates

- Between summer and AY: High retention rates
- Creates a path to college-level language learning at intermediate level
- Upon completion of the program, students continue to study the language at the college/university of their choice at the Intermediate level
Building Bridges

- High-schools
  - PSEOP
  - Dual Credit Programs
- Our program’s collaboration with high-schools (symbiotic; building capacity)
  - Combined teacher-student program
  - High-school teachers are best recruiters for our programs
Building Bridges

• Connecting students to university communities
  • KSU Russian Club (movie nights, cooking workshops, cultural fairs, etc.)
  • Russian tea and Chinese coffee hours on campus
Building Bridges

- TL communities
  - Balalaika orchestra
  - Festivals
  - Stores and restaurants
Building Bridges

- Be purposeful
- Create a plan with a budget (story about budget)
- Document impact of events
  - Facebook
  - Department webpage
  - Newspapers
Discussion

• Share an example of a connection to:
  • Schools
  • Universities
  • TL communities
Student Reactions
How did you find out about our STARTALK Program?

- Language teachers (notably, of “non-critical” languages: French, Spanish)
- Peers who went through the program
- Friends (non-school)
- Counselor (only 1 in 10 students)
High-school Counselors

- The majority of our students reported that their school counselors do not know much about STARTALK programs
  - “My high-school promotes very little” (about STARTALK programs)
  - My counselor did not know about STARTALK programs
Students’ Suggestions (Student-centered)

Inform teachers, especially language teachers

Send easily distributable information to schools (e.g., STARTALK posters; target high-school counselors directly)

More discussion of future/career opportunities with critical languages (language industry)
Students’ Testimonials

• Program as bridge to college:
  • This program was different compared to my high-schools courses
    • Along with the STARTALK AY component, “I’ve been taking regular community college
classes and I feel ready for college life”
  • This program changed my choice of colleges to apply for:
    • They (colleges) must have majors in the critical languages I studied
    • I want to make Russian a part of my career
Students’ Testimonials

• Program as bridge to further CL learning:
  • Critical language connection – students seek colleges that offer more foreign language options
  • Study-abroad connection – students seek colleges that offer study-abroad programs
    • Choosing colleges with a good study-abroad program
      • “I want to go to a college with a good Russian program and study-abroad options”

• Overall awareness of benefits of being multi-lingual:
  • “I became more appreciative of languages and feel more comfortable learning the things unfamiliar to me”
  • “Taking Russian broadened my cultural knowledge and made me comfortable in trying out something new that is unknown”
Challenges

- AY component: Students tied-up with school work
- Challenges of distance learning (overcome with long-term goals and instruction quality)
- Limited support at high-school level (CLs are not well-represented in OH high-schools)—high-schools can contribute more to a concerted effort to promote the study of critical languages
- Fear of political situations
Future Directions

• Collaboration with high-schools
• Introduction of FL in middle-schools (European experience)
• Government-sponsored programs (NSLI-Y and more)
• Study-abroad promotion at the college level
• Building infrastructure
Take-home

• Identify at least one way your STARTALK students can continue learning their CL
  
  • colleges that offer your CL
  • government-sponsored programs
  • privately-sponsored programs available for your communities
  • possible destinations for study abroad/potential challenges (cost, political instability, element of scare—parents' reluctance, etc.)