



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT-BASED ARABIC TEACHING MATERIALS FOR HERITAGE STUDENTS AND ADVANCED LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ABSTRACT

Arabic teachers and students have fewer materials and resources available to them than their counterpart in more commonly taught languages. This may be due in part to the small size of the field. However, many Arabic specialists, educators and language instructors have raised their concerns regarding the lack of resources and efforts to provide and design textbooks and content-based materials for all learners specifically those who reach higher level proficiency in Arabic. The Flagship Collaborative Innovative Grant Initiative will contribute considerably to efforts focused on overcoming this problem.

The Arabic Instruction Flagship Program (ALIF) at Michigan State University (MSU) plans to develop three content-based courses namely: Aspects of Arab Culture, Arab Cinema and Theatre and Advanced Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. These courses will prepare undergraduate heritage students to reach the superior and distinguished level (ACTFL scale) in Arabic. Each course will consist of thematic units followed by detailed lesson plans that include the main texts, key concepts and terminology, guided exercises and follow up activities.

In addition, each lesson will be accompanied by a listening component (audio or video) that focuses on topics related to the main themes. The video/audio segments will help students gain more information about the subject matter as well as improve their language skills. A set of tasks will be prepared for each episode or segment and will be available online (see rationale for the online component). The audio/video materials for the content courses will raise students' awareness about the phenomenon of diglossia and expose them to the language of educated Arabs; a mix of Modern Standard (MSA) and the dialect. The dialect course will prepare our students for the study abroad at Alexandria University in Egypt.

The courses mentioned above will be designed and prepared with the support of the University of Maryland and San Diego State University. We plan to spend the first year collecting and designing reading texts and listening materials. This process will include the selection of various discourse types, review of materials, editing, and typing. We will also pilot the materials online (i.e. mini lessons).

During the second year of the project, we will design the lesson plans and exercises. In addition, we will prepare a teacher's manual and student guidelines. The purpose of these manuals is to provide instructions and guidance for both teachers and students. We will continue with the online component.

The last year will be devoted to the design of the web page and completion of the online component. We will also review the materials and try them out in the summer and regular year programs. Michigan State University, University of Maryland, San Diego State University, University of Texas at Austin and Middlebury College have agreed to pilot the materials upon completion.

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