



Five College Center for World Languages

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The Coordinating Entity - The Program Staff and/or Director(s)

Necessity of Coordination

In order for the Mentored Language Program to function successfully, it must be organized by a coordinating body that serves in the place of a professor. This is not a task that can be tacked onto someone's fulltime job as an "extra." Depending on the size of the program and the number of languages, it can be a fulltime job or a few fulltime jobs. The amount of individual instructional time given to each student makes the Mentored Language Program a superb experience for a determined, independent student.

Areas Coordinated by the Program Staff:

Hiring

Nothing impacts the quality of the program as much as the personnel serving as mentors and conversation partners. While conversation partners can be drawn from the undergraduate, international study body since their assignment is to speak their native language and they are not in a position to give grades, mentors need to have finished a BA at a minimum. Mentors need to be able to discuss grammatical concepts, correct homework and assign grades. One good source for mentors is the Fulbright/Institute for International Education program for Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs). This cooperative venture enlists American academic institutions as hosts for young international teachers, who come to the U.S. for a year to teach.

Training

Even young people trained in second language acquisition will not be familiar with a program such as the Mentored Language Program; therefore, a training period is needed. This period should include time before the beginning of the academic year and should continue at least throughout the first semester.

Many international language teachers are used to focusing on reading and writing, so it is a good idea to provide an early introduction to the methodology that informs teaching for oral proficiency and giving an oral proficiency interview. Since the mentors may be new teachers, we recommend a system in which mentors meet weekly with the program staff to discuss how they are planning to prepare the material in the weekly study guide. Furthermore, program staff observations of select

tutorials and conversation sessions increase the type and utility of feedback that the program staff can give the mentors during the weekly meetings.

Admission

Because of the semi-independent format of the Mentored Language Program, selective admission is one way of insuring that the program fits the learning profile of potential students. To gain admission into the Five College program, students must first fill out an application before they are admitted.

Orientation

Students interested in enrolling in the Mentored Language Program need to understand exactly what will be expected and how much independent work will be required. Since there is no professor to whom they can direct questions, students need either a one-on-one or an online explanation of program details. The Five College Mentored Language Program's online orientation provides an initial explanation and also serves as a refresher for students to consult during the term.

Homework Portfolio

With all the elements that make up the Mentored Language Program, it is a good idea for the program staff to maintain a homework portfolio for each student. The Five College Mentored Language Program now compiles an online portfolio into which is scanned each student's graded homework before it is returned to the student.

Self-Assessment

In order for the self-assessments to be effective, students must complete them regularly and submit them each week by a designated deadline (the Five College Mentored Language Program's deadline is every Monday by 9:00 AM). Program staff read the self-assessments, record them, and follow up on any problems or issues raised by the students with regard to the course.

Grade book

The program staff should maintain the master grade book for all students. Grades are entered into the book each week as homework is scanned into the portfolio.

Final Exams

Organizing the final exams is an exacting task that is performed by the program staff who must schedule the students individually, the examiners individually and the Skype facilities – all far in advance of the actual exam. The program staff provides exam grade sheets to each professor for each individual student that are returned with comments and grades following the exams.

Final Grades

At the end of the semester, program staff assembles all the elements that make up the student's final grade, performs the mathematical calculations and enters the grade into the grade system.

Training Resources

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- [Best Practices for Individual Tutorials](#)
 - [Best Practices for Conversation Sessions](#)

 [Some Study Strategies for Independent Language Learning DOC](#)

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