

Title: A Shared Classroom Initiative for Collaborative Teaching and Learning
Author: Minjin Hashbat, Yale University

Abstract:

In 2017, Yale University and Bowdoin College entered into an agreement to share a Yale Advanced Russian course with Bowdoin utilizing the already existing collaborative framework for a Shared Course Initiative between Yale, Columbia, and Cornell to teach less commonly taught languages through high definition video conferencing technology. The main goal of this new live, synchronous course is to fill the existing curricular gap at Bowdoin for advanced level language instruction as well as to gain an expert level instruction from Yale.

Following the existing research on the challenges in attaining high levels of proficiency according to ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Malone, Rifkin, Christian, Johnson, 2005), the paper addresses the critical issue of having to deal with the different levels of proficiency of the entering students in the first weeks of the fall semester due to different curricular requirements and course offerings. The use of the innovative methodology developed in a new textbook was instrumental in overcoming this particular challenge. This textbook combined the scaffolded approach to integrating advanced grammar concepts, selected vocabulary development, and mastery of rhetorical devices with teaching history of the late 18th and the 19th centuries of Russia, as well as focused on written compositions and formal and informal oral presentations. The shared course had a transformative effect on the students' motivation; it also facilitated cross-institutional collaboration as other SCI data demonstrates (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2015). The outcomes of the pilot project suggest that this type of collaboration may also serve as a future model for sharing specialized literature and culture seminars and courses, thereby expanding course enrollments for both institutions.