

CELT Teaching Grant Final Report

For media enhanced teaching in the Department of Anthropology

Stephanie W. Alemán

The initial project for this grant was to involve faculty in one or two department seminars regarding the use of media in the classroom to bring teaching faculty into dialog about how they used media in the classroom and to introduce new ideas about how visual media in particular is being used in other anthropology departments as well as to discuss emerging theory on how the visual representation of cultures impacts the learning experience. A further use of the grant involved giving each participating faculty member a small budget to purchase media for use in the classroom from the wide variety of new media being produced for use in anthropological coursework.

RESULTS:

The participating faculty in this project are as follows:

Stephanie W. Alemán
Max Viatori
Nancy Coinman
Matt Hill
Ann Jones
Sam Pack

Shu-min Huang graciously made over his allocation to the department because his retirement prevented him from using the funds. Hsain Ilahiane declined to participate in the project after the award had been granted, although he did participate in the seminar discussion. Jill Pruetz was on leave doing research for the period of the grant.

Each faculty member was given the budgeted amount and directed to spend it on media for the classroom. The budget for each faculty member was initially \$125.00 and this proved to be too little to purchase the anthropological media offered by most educational media houses which typically charge between 300.00 and 350.00 for copies of ethnographic films. Due to this, budgets were increased and the amounts for facilitating the seminars were reduced. The department set aside time in our annual faculty retreat for the discussion of the use and results of the grant funds and this was a very fruitful interactive conversation from across the subdisciplines. In addition, we put the CELT project on the agenda for several faculty meetings in order to have opportunity for further discussions.

A further redirection of the funds was made in order to accommodate some of the original and rich ethnographic data produced by the faculty themselves. Alemán, Viatori and Pack used some funds to produce media for the classroom based on their own research. These materials were used successfully in the fall and spring semester as part of their courses. Alemán used IT services to make a DVD and audio CD of village life among the Waiwai of southern Guyana; Viatori purchased media to record language use among the Zapara of Ecuador and Pack also purchased media to transfer some of his research materials on the use of television by members of the Navajo nation.

Alemán, Coinman, Hill and Jones all used funds to purchase films for courses that became part of the permanent collection in the department. These films are available for immediate use in the classroom and are also available to our student group – Anthro Club – to show as part of their monthly film series, an event that allows for students to meet and discuss anthropology in an informal setting.

It is my assessment as the grant coordinator for this project that our expected outcomes were reached and that the use of the funds was in keeping with departmental goals. The media purchased and produced was integrated successfully into the classroom as part of discussions and on the syllabi. In the retreat section dealing with the use of media, we were able to discuss the current trends in the use of media in the classroom to enhance our teaching skills. We were able to supplement our own film library and offer the media for use to the department as a whole, including students. The production of media based on faculty's original research was especially fruitful in that it gave students an opportunity to understand how their instructors were involved directly with the issues they taught in the classroom and were actively engaged in research in their respective areas.

It is my hope that we might be able to secure funds again for similar projects and the department as a whole thanks CELT for the implementation and the awarding of this grant.

Stephanie W. Alemán – CELT grant facilitator for the Department of Anthropology