Mellon LCTL Collaborative Partners

With the support of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the University of Chicago will bring together pairs of instructors of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) from different home institutions to develop shared course sequences in the target language. The sequences will be articulated between the two instructors so that students will be able to achieve greater proficiency gains that would be possible for a single instructor teaching on a single campus. The grant will run from July, 2016, until June, 2021; we will start with two pairs in 2016, and plan to add pairs over the next four years.

The collaborative pairs:
- will come from Big Ten Academic Alliance and Ivy Plus institutions, or from others if LCTL instructors identify an ideal partner
- will develop shared curricula, with materials appropriate to the outcomes and goals specific to their language
- will become trainer-experts as new pairs are added each year, participating and presenting at workshops and symposia to share their experience and insight

We will build on existing course-sharing models in order to capture the moment when instructors are rethinking their pedagogical practices. We hope to challenge instructors to consider what can be accomplished outside the classroom to maximize face-to-face time (whether local or remote). Multimedia will enhance (but not drive) every aspect of teaching and testing.

We hope to learn:
- about the variety of ways LCTL instructors may construct curricula – are there best practices?
- whether learning outcomes in a shared environment can be reasonably established and reliably measured
- how local and remote learning compare, in terms of outcomes and the experiences of both teacher and learner

We seek to provide broad access to professional development activities among our colleagues and promote broad dissemination of instructional materials and assessment instruments. All workshops – and funding to attend them - will be available to instructors beyond identified pairs. The workshop foci, assessment, reverse design, multimedia materials design and enhancement, are useful to all language instructors. We hope to develop a cohort of LCTL pedagogues, where collaborative pairs evolve into trainers, and all participants share experiences and insights.

The grant provides:
- ACTFL Oral Proficiency Assessment training for all pairs, as well as for instructors of LCTLs who may be interested in joining the project
- workshops on reverse design as well as on development of materials and multimedia, also open to other interested instructors
- travel and lodging for all pair participants in all workshops
- support for the development of assessment and evaluation instruments
- instructional support funds, to be used at the discretion of each institution