

Alliance to Advance Liberal Arts College  
Faculty Workshop Program 2017  
Workshop Proposal

## **Digital Language Learning: A Liberal Arts Exploration of New Modes of Teaching and Learning Languages**

Submitted by Steve Snyder, Middlebury College  
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### **Description**

Digital tools are changing how people communicate and learn. Language learning is not immune—we have seen a host of websites and apps for language learning appear in the last decade. As enrollment numbers in language programs decline (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015), liberal arts institutions must ask what these trends mean for us. What unique roles can liberal arts institutions play in the digital languages context? How can we lead in scholarship and teaching in digital language learning?

This moment is not only of threat, but of great opportunity. Digital tools offer affordances that can sustain and transform language pedagogy. Digital language learning transforms traditional classrooms by amplifying deep connections and differentiation, and by extending language learning moments beyond the walls of the classroom.

Liberal arts institutions are already experimenting with digital in language learning, but conversations about the complexities of digital learning are largely absent. This two-day institute will strike a balance between sharing and experimenting with ideas and deep discussions into the questions that emerge from digital learning, such as:

*What forms of teaching and learning does the digital privilege and are those approaches aligned with what we want for language learners?*

*What is the role of technologists in designing and supporting digital language experiences?*

*How can data from digital environments shape teaching and scholarship?*

*How does digital language learning complement face-to-face language instruction?*

*How can digital language practices connect students successfully across cultural and national borders to impact intercultural communication?*

We anticipate this topic will attract more interest than we can accommodate. We welcome up to twenty-five participants from other institutions for the 2017 workshop, but expect that the workshop will be a springboard for a community of practice (CoP) among AALAC institutions on digital language learning. Middlebury College is committed to fostering that community by supporting a digital platform for interactions and resource sharing among CoP participants. The CoP will have a dynamic website that will provide additional learning and collaboration

opportunities via webinars, online discussions, and digital resource sharing, including syllabi, assignments, and assessments.

Another unique characteristic of this workshop, and a possible source of ongoing collaborations, will be expert support from instructional designers and technologists at AALAC partner institutions. These professionals will provide guidance throughout the event and will support sessions about digital topics. Middlebury's Office of Digital Learning will also host a Technology Test Kitchen during the Friday evening reception. Attendees will be invited to play with technologies, such as virtual reality headsets and iPads, to lower the barriers to entry and to inspire new ideas.

## Format/schedule

Location: Middlebury College

Dates and duration: Spring 2017, beginning on Friday and ending on Saturday evening

Day 1	
Morning	Opening keynote
Afternoon	Breakouts addressing 3 key questions
	Pop-up sessions (Exploring ideas and tools)
	Breakouts addressing 3 key questions
Evening	Reception & technology test kitchen

Day 2	
Morning	Panel of innovators from AALAC schools
	Breakouts addressing 3 key questions
Afternoon	Pop-up sessions (Exploring ideas and tools)
	Unconference (participant-led explorations & discussions)

## Organizers and Potential Participants

### 1) Workshop liaison

Steve Snyder, *Dean of Language Schools and Kawashima Professor of Japanese Studies,*  
*Middlebury College*

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This proposal has received broad interest and support from fifteen faculty representing seven languages from across twelve AALAC institutions.

The following faculty have agreed to serve as workshop leaders and co-organizers. Co-organizers will help determine the final program, including keynote/panel speakers and questions that will guide each session. They are (in alphabetical order):

- Gabriele Dillman, *Associate Professor of German and Julian H. Robertson Jr. Endowed Chair, Denison University*
- Felix Kronenberg, *Associate Professor of Modern Language and Literatures and Director of the Language Learning Center, Rhodes College*
- Lynn Miyake, *Professor of Japanese, Pomona College*
- Renee Jourdenais, *Dean of the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education, Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey*
- Peipei Qiu, *Professor of Chinese and Japanese on the Louise Boyd Dale and Alfred Lichtenstein Chair, Vassar College*
- Ann Sherif, *Professor of Japanese, Oberlin College*
- Tatiana Smorodinska, *Professor of Russian, Middlebury College*
- Tom Van Order, *Associate Professor of Italian, Middlebury College*

The following faculty have indicated their interest in participating in this workshop, should it be funded (in alphabetical order):

- Sakaya Abe, *Assistant Professor of Japanese, Middlebury College*
- Hélène Bilis, *Assistant Professor of French, Wellesley College*
- Helga Bruxelles, *Professor of German, Williams College*
- Raquel Greene, *Associate Professor of Russian, Grinnell College*
- Ana Lopez-Sanchez, *Assistant Professor of Spanish, Haverford College*
- Maria Lozano, *Associate in Spanish and Latin American Cultures, Barnard College*
- Patricia Vargas, *Lecturer in Spanish, Swarthmore College*
- Hélène Visentin, *Professor and Chair of the Department of French Studies, Smith College*

The following individuals are committed to supporting this project through logistics planning and program support:

- Amy Collier, *Associate Provost for Digital Learning, Middlebury College*
- Bill Koulopoulos, *Director of Academic Technology, Middlebury College*
- Jason Mittell, *Director of the Digital Liberal Arts Initiative and Professor of Film & Media Studies, Middlebury College*

## **References**

Goldberg, D., Looney, D., & Lusin, N. (2015). Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2013. Modern Language Association of America. Available:

[https://www.mla.org/content/download/31180/1452509/2013\\_enrollment\\_survey.pdf](https://www.mla.org/content/download/31180/1452509/2013_enrollment_survey.pdf)