

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
AND STUDIES PROGRAM
(84.017A)**



**Fiscal Year 2010 New Grants
Summary and Abstracts
Instructional Materials**

International Education Programs Service
U.S. Department of Education
6th Floor, 1990 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006-8521

Application No., Applicant and Project Director	Project Title	Type	Years	Funding		
		IM/RE		FY 2010	FY 2011 (est.)	FY 2012 (est.)
P017A100007 University of Maryland Office of Research Administration and Advancement 3112 Lee Building College Park, MD 20742 Avital Feuer	Creating an Advanced-Level, Communicative Hebrew Textbook	IM	3	\$113,053	\$114,099	\$132,091
P017A100018 Japan Society, Inc. Education 333 East 47th Street New York, NY 10017 Robert Fish	About Japan: A Teacher's Resource	IM	3	\$166,433	\$189,693	\$161,980
P017A100019 Center for Applied Linguistics Language Testing Division 4646 40th Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20016 Donna Christian	Developing a Computerized Oral Proficiency Assessment for Mandarin Chinese	IM	3	\$139,410	\$141,827	\$140,861
P017A100054 The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System Center for Southeast Asian Studies, College of Letters and Science Research and Sponsored Programs 21 North Park Street, Suite 6401 Madison, WI 53715 Ellen Rafferty	Authentic Indonesian Readings: Improving Reading Proficiency via Interactive Lessons	IM	3	\$217,361	\$235,342	\$161,206
P017A100057 Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania Office of Research Services 3451 Walnut Street P221 Franklin Building Philadelphia, PA 19104 Audrey Mbeje	Standards-Based African Language Courses Online (SALCO)	IM	3	\$185,617	\$187,960	\$179,161
P017A100094 University of Hawaii Office of Research Services 2530 Dole Street Sakamaki D-200 Honolulu, HI 96822 Chhany Sak-Humphry	Reading Khmer Folklore Online: The Tales of Hare	IM	2	\$74,594	\$72,300	\$0
				\$896,468	\$941,221	\$775,299

Creating an Advanced-Level, Communicative Hebrew Textbook

The project, entitled, “Creating an Advanced-Level, Communicative Hebrew Textbook” aims to improve the current state of Modern Hebrew pedagogy by developing a goals- and standards-based curriculum. We will create a textbook and website for advanced students who hold a foundational proficiency in the language. The proposed project will provide students and instructors with a pedagogically and culturally up-to-date resource for a proficiency level with no published textbooks or materials suitable for American students studying Hebrew as a foreign language. The project’s specific goal is to apply tenets and applications of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)—thoroughly researched, evaluated and practiced in more commonly taught languages—to the field of Hebrew pedagogy. CLT, the accepted method of language teaching, promotes use of authentic materials in the four skill sets to teach learners to function across a variety of sociolinguistic contexts. Textbook units will emphasize cross-cultural comparison, critical thinking and challenging students’ preconceived notions about Israel through analysis of a multiplicity of sources from various minority groups.

The final product of this project, created by a team of specialists in Hebrew language pedagogy, culture and Hebrew grammar, will be a ten-unit textbook and password-protected Web site featuring supplementary materials, tests and a Teacher’s Guide. The project provides ample time and opportunity for piloting, evaluation and revision. The resources will comprise the following topics:

- Categorized units of progressive difficulty focused on language function (i.e., functional linguistic tasks students will be able to perform upon completing the unit)
- A comprehensive review of verb *binyanim* and *gzerot* (morphological grammar categories) including exceptions, with ample practice exercises
- In-depth study of syntax and practical applications in writing and speech
- An emphasis on modern Israeli and Middle Eastern society with texts about cultural celebrations, daily routines and etiquette, multicultural literature; discussions of current events, politics and geography
- Authentic, multi-genre reading texts commonly in circulation in Israel
- Writing and speaking assignments ranging from day-to-day, informal tasks to sophisticated, critical and analytical debate
- Explicit listening and pronunciation instruction to prepare students for a variety of formal and informal sociolinguistic interactions
- An online materials bank with up-to-date articles, songs, tests and links; video and audio clips for listening exercises; Teacher’s Guide for pedagogy instruction.

Suitable for postsecondary, advanced high school and private and government-affiliated language programs, the thorough textbook and online materials will provide students with advanced communication tools for sophisticated linguistic functioning in the target language community.

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About Japan: A Teacher's Resource

To foster an educated citizenry to assure the security, stability, and economic vitality of the United States in a complex global era, American children need to learn about Japan, our closest ally in Asia and second largest source of foreign direct investment in the United States. Knowledge of Japan and the ability to communicate in Japanese is important to the promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation our nations and their peoples.

This project will create free, online materials to help K-12 educators teach about Japan in a global context. These unique resources, which will include lesson plan ideas, background essays, abundant video and audio material, and numerous materials for classroom use, will be posted on Japan Society's Web site, *About Japan: A Teacher's Resource* (<http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/index.cfm>).

Based largely on primary sources in multiple formats, the project will develop materials largely centered on the following six themes/topics.

1. Using Authentic Materials in High School and University Intermediate and Advanced Japanese Language Classes;
2. Japanese Culture for Elementary Schools: Integrating Language and Culture (for both Japanese language classes as well as mainstream classes);
3. Teaching Modern Japanese History through Primary Sources;
4. Japan and the Globalization of the Economy;
5. Japan and International Environmental Issues; and
6. Teaching Difficult Ethical and Social Issues Utilizing Japan.

The project will benefit from input from not just K-12 teachers and leading Japan Studies specialists, but true collaboration with world leaders from the spheres of business and policy.

Japan Society's education Web site, *About Japan: A Teacher's Resource*, features free, high quality teaching ideas, classroom resources, and background materials on teaching about Japan in a global context. Launched in August 2007, *About Japan* is created and maintained by Japan Society (www.japansociety.org), an internationally-recognized American nonprofit, nonpolitical organization dedicated to cultural exchange and promoting a sophisticated, balanced understanding of Japan. From an early viewership of less than 5,000 unique visitors per month, the popularity of *About Japan* has grown rapidly, averaging over 30,000 unique visitors per month in the fourth quarter of 2009, with prospects of continued growth in popularity.

Developing a Computerized Oral Proficiency Assessment for Mandarin Chinese

This proposal outlines a Title VI International Research and Studies Materials Development Project to be conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in partnership with the University of Oregon's Chinese Language Flagship program, and Brigham Young University's Chinese Language Flagship program. The project will create a computerized, semi-adaptive oral proficiency assessment that can be administered and rated locally, giving individual Mandarin language programs control over their testing programs. The project will provide the participating Mandarin language programs and ultimately secondary and post-secondary Mandarin language programs throughout the country, with a standards-based, valid, reliable, and sustainable oral proficiency assessment.

The proposed project will yield the following outcomes:

1. A valid, reliable, and practical oral proficiency assessment that can be used in a sustainable way to provide information on oral proficiency to students and instructors of Mandarin;
2. Increased positive wash-back to the classroom through the rater training of instructors and the self-assessment of students;
3. Capacity-building in Mandarin through the provision of an instrument to measure proficiency outcomes and set expectations; and
4. A tool for program evaluation that will ensure greater accountability of Mandarin language programs.

This project will fill a major gap in the availability of standards-based, valid, reliable assessments that are practical for Mandarin language programs to use sustainably. The oral proficiency information gathered from this assessment can inform students and teachers, can set expectations for proficiency outcomes, and can be used in program evaluation. Further, as students and teachers use the self-assessment and rater training components of the assessment instrument, they will understand the importance of oral proficiency in language learning. All of this will help to keep language programs accountable, sustain and support effective language teaching and assessment, and build U.S. capacity in Mandarin.

To develop project materials, CAL will design, draft, pilot, and revise the Mandarin Computerized Oral Proficiency Instrument (COPI) materials with participation and feedback from partnering instructors and students. Involvement of instructors and students will give them an investment in the products. Certified Mandarin testers will be retained through the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to review the materials and rate student performance on the tasks. Three Pillar Global will provide the necessary computer programming services.

P017A100054
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Ellen Rafferty

Authentic Indonesian Readings: Improving Reading Proficiency via Interactive Lessons

Professor Ellen Rafferty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison proposes a three year project to develop forty-five, online interactive lessons to teach reading strategies and improve Indonesian reading proficiency. These materials will complement any basic Indonesian language textbook while providing readings that range from the novice-mid through the intermediate-high levels on the *American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (ACTFL) proficiency scale. Indonesian, which is categorized by the U.S. government as a critical language, is the most widely spoken language of Southeast Asia with a population of over 240 million people in Indonesia. There are many more speakers and readers of Indonesian in the Malay-speaking world that includes: Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, East Timor, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines.

This project continues the efforts of Rafferty to develop competency-based materials that promote proficiency in speaking, listening, grammatical accuracy and reading for Indonesian. The reading materials proposed will incorporate online, interactive exercises for the first and second year Indonesian language instruction in U.S. tertiary education. These materials will be accessible on PC and Apple computers and made available to the abroad programs such as the Critical Languages Scholarship (CLS) program sponsored by the State Department and the Advanced Indonesian Abroad (AIA) program sponsored by the national organization, the Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian and Malay (COTIM). The lessons will also be accessible on the internet to anyone around the world at no charge.

The reading lessons will be developed using schema theory using authentic texts found in the Indonesian mass media and other public domains. The topics of the readings will be chosen with the interests of university students in mind, beginning with concrete readings dealing with self and personal survival needs such as receipts, maps, and timetables and then moving on to texts such as signs, announcements, schedules and advertisements where the internal structure is simple and the topics deal with personal needs such shopping, travel, entertainment guides, and application forms. By the intermediate-mid and high levels, the topics will include readings about family, biographies, narratives, school, occupations, society, the environment, and religious traditions among others. First and second year students using an interactive, online format with dual platform accessibility will be able to move from novice-mid through intermediate-high reading proficiency levels on the ACTFL scale. The lessons will be piloted by teachers at the University of Wisconsin, Southeast Asian Studies Summer Institute (SEASSI) summer language program, and by a number of COTIM member institutions before the final revisions are made available online.

Standards-based African Language Courses Online (SALCO)

Quality materials in African languages are crucial to enhance African Language Programs and enable African studies programs to produce students with adequate knowledge of African languages and cultures. As the interest in the study of Africa increases, institutions seek to infuse African languages into their African area studies curricula. Yet, there is still paucity of high quality instructional materials in African languages, which calls for an urgent need to develop quality resources for online delivery of African language courses. The Standards-based African Languages Courses Online (SALCO) project at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) will provide a robust language learning environment on par with current innovative approaches for foreign language learning. The aims of the SALCO project are: (1) to develop up-to-date instructional resources; (2) promote effective teaching strategies; and (3) disseminate materials and techniques nationally for four strategically important African languages, namely Amharic, Sudanese Arabic, Tigrinya, and Zulu. The project will utilize the most efficient technologies for storing, updating, and expanding African language resources for online accessibility. It will be an open access instructional resource for the project languages and will serve as a template that can be expanded for other Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs).

The African Studies Center at Penn, a National Resource Center (NRC) since 1993, is committed to providing researchers and students of Africa with knowledge of Africa. Over a decade later, the ASC continues to offer unique language training opportunities and maintains an extensive African Language Program (ALP) that forms an integral component of the African Studies curriculum at Penn. We believe that we are uniquely qualified to produce high quality pedagogical online African language courses and share them with the world-wide audience.

The SALCO project will produce standards-based online, multimedia course modules from elementary, intermediate and advanced levels for each of the SALCO languages, as well as a *Users Manual* for instructors and students. The SALCO project will address the challenge of *Cultural Distance* faced by learners of African languages in the United States by exposing students to contextualized communicative usages of the project languages and engage them in meaningful learning activities to develop their linguistic and cultural competency in these languages.

Collaboration will be one of the key distinguishing strengths of the Penn SALCO project. We will launch a National Advisory Board consisting of top authorities and scholars of LCTLs at Penn and nationally to produce high quality online course modules in these four critical languages of Africa.

Khmer Folktales Online: Tales of the Hare¹
(Web-Based & DVD formats)

Knowledge of Khmer language, culture and literature is on the rise to meet the needs of our international education and foreign language requirements which are critical for our nation's diversity, security and its ability to compete in the global market. The development of new, improved and strengthened Khmer language and literature programs in the United States has so far been impeded both by lack of qualified instructors and lack of cooperative institutional support, but mostly by the lack of essential instructional materials for all levels, particularly due to the expertise and cost of developing such materials. The project is designed to engage all levels of heritage and non-heritage learners of Khmer in a multi-dimensional representation of the rich beauty of the Khmer language, literature and culture. The two-year proposed instructional materials use the Communicative Language Teaching Approach combined with task-based learning and cooperative and learner-centered activities; the aim is to develop a nation-wide distance education course using authentic Khmer folktales.

The product of these instructional materials will be:

1. Web-based materials² for an online course in Khmer Folktales; and
2. A DVD format which contains all audio, video clips of Khmer culture and interactive tasks and exercises programming with auto corrections.

The online course will provide distance learners and regular students with a foundation in language proficiency in reading skills for classical Khmer folk literature. The 21 lessons from *the Tales of the Hare* range from beginning-high (1+) through advanced-high (3+) levels on the American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency scale. Building on previous work³ and Project Investigator Sak-Humphry's experience on teaching Khmer online courses at the National Foreign Language Resource Center⁴ (NFLRC), the cost and time of working on the proposed materials will be held to a minimum. The proposed project will fill the urgent need for up-to-date pedagogical and technological interactive instructional materials for Khmer language and culture in the United States and abroad, thus filling a gap in the pool of currently available Khmer materials. This proposed online course will also serve as an education clearing house for the Khmer language, and it will improve the capacity for delivery of education in a language critical to United States national interests.

¹ The tales in our text were first published by P. Midan in the *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises* in 1933 (*BSEI*, Nouvelle Série, VIII (1933).4: (ii) + 49-116.). They are re-issued here by the kind permission of the Board of Directors of the Société des Études Indochinoises, to whom we express our gratitude. Midan's collection is one of the few which present each as a separate tale, which is clearly more suited to classroom use. From the 27 stories of the tales, we will select 20 stories to be used for our project.

² PI for online sample lesson at CARLA, link: http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/materials/khmer/int_0002.htm

³ Sak-Humphry's Khmer instructional materials for Third Year and Intermediate Level were funded by the USED, IRS. <http://learnkhmer.net/modernkhmer.htm#thirdyear>.
<http://learnkhmer.net/modernkhmer.htm#secondyear>.

⁴ These Web-based task-activities and exercises have been successfully delivered in four levels of online courses offered by Sak-Humphry at <http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/onlinecourse/default.cfm>