

The FHIS Learning Centre: A Model for Fostering Intercultural Competence and Exchanges in F2F and Online Language Communities

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The FHIS Learning Centre

The FHIS Learning Centre is a peer-driven learning community, for which volunteer-tutors currently enrolled in degree-granting programs of the Department of French, Hispanic & Italian Studies are trained to offer extracurricular support with the continued development of the skills necessary for acquiring and ultimately becoming proficient in additional languages.

What is extracurricular support?

Extracurricular support could be categorized as anything that supplements the practices and expectations of the regular curriculum for any given course or program. These activities are typically student or instructor-driven, and are not regulated by grades, compulsory participation, and other formal aspects of the curriculum.

FHIS Learning Centre Goals

- **FOCUS** on student-centered goals and encourage reflection and metacognitive engagement with language and culture
- **EXPAND** upon course-related learning goals that are adaptable to different levels, languages, and student goals
- **CREATE** a safe and comfortable learning community by involving peers at every level of the curriculum
- **EXPLORE** authentic and real-world oriented resources and uses of the language with students
- **ENCOURAGE** autonomous learning strategies in interactions with students to build student confidence and independence.
- **PROMOTE** intercultural competence through activities that put languages and cultures in dialogue with one another

The FHIS Language Tables Hubs for Intercultural Dialogue



Looking toward the future

Facilitating Intercultural Exchanges in an Online Teaching and Learning Context



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Choose a practical, secure and robust virtual home

Choose a platform that abides by the privacy standards established at your institution, and has tools that facilitate scheduling, expansion of student skills, and peer-peer interactions.

Establish clear expectations and guidelines

Explain the dynamics of the online learning community (communicative, academic, interpersonal) and how the initiative will address varying student needs, interests, and limitations.

Promote flexibility and adaptability

Offer different opportunities for interpersonal connection – discussions, chat, virtual sessions, and more – to incorporate practices and methodologies that allow for flexibility and adaptability.

References

1. Reva, Anna. *The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Foreign Language Learning in University Settings*. 2012. University of Saskatchewan. <https://harvest.usask.ca/bitstream/handle/10388/ETD-2012-06-507/REVA-THESIS.pdf?sequence=3>
2. Buch K. and K. Barron. 2012. *Discipline-centered Learning Communities: Creating Connections Among Students, Faculty, and Curricula: New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 132, Winter.