

Italian Summit 2018

The Ohio State University

February 12, 2018

After the series of presentations, the participants were divided into four groups and each discussed one of the following topics:

1. How to increase enrollments in Italian in both HS and university
2. Articulation issues between HS and university
3. How to increase the number of students who take the AP test
4. What can universities do to support HS language programs and vice-versa.

The following notes reflect the discussion that followed.

1. How to Increase enrollments in Italian both in HS and university?

Proposed: Universities and high schools should work together to coordinate campaigns that serve both in order to avoid duplication of efforts and support each other.

Discussed: The importance of pop culture or other 'chic' influences that attract young people. The attention drawn by popular TV shows, movies, sports figures was noted.

Proposed: Further targeting of non-traditional learners, like baby boomers, to spark inter-generational conversation.

Discussed: It would be good to find a famous 'face' for Italian; a famous person would do a publicity spot. The OLIC has pursued a 'face of Italian' but has concluded that social media campaigns are far more effective than advertising. The following resources were mentioned in relation to this topic:

- 'Dillo in italiano' campaign in Italy and TedTalk: Annamaria
Testa: <https://ed.ted.com/on/Me7vwWaC>
- #Dante2018 and article in La Stampa
- Italy the Extraordinary Common Place video - <https://youtu.be/LaXqHU32bm4>
- La settimana della Lingua - Ministero degli affari esteri 2018: “L'italiano e la rete, le reti per l'Italiano” -
https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/politica_estera/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/settimanalinguaitaliana

Action Item: We will designate a hash tag slogan for Twitter and Instagram that can be leveraged to unite our efforts. We want a hash tag slogan that communicates the 'why' of studying Italian. We will ask our students to create a hash tag option and we will all submit our student-created hashtag slogans to Lisa at ldolasin@indiana.edu by Feb. 21. Lisa will then create a survey monkey that will allow us to vote for the hashtag. Students will vote on the best one and will be asked to vote for two so that they don't just vote for their own. Ultimately, we decided that we will pick the hash tag option that best represents our objectives and allows for the best long-term use. We feel this is an important avenue for us to change the narrative about why we study Italian (departing from the typical reasons sometimes offered that can border on furthering stereotypes).

Once the hashtag slogan is designated, we must create an overall strategy with tangible goals and deadlines. It was suggested that we create 'challenges' or interactive campaigns based upon the designated campaigns already in existence with Italcultura. We will link to the Italcultura hashtags (provided by Alberta Lai) that are created for their events, and this will propel our initiatives to an international audience and keep our hashtag perpetually relevant.

Date for official slogan rollout - proposed Monday, Feb 26

The first challenge will be submitted on Italian Design Day - March 1 (on February 27 and 28, we will send a reminder to all summit participants and all in our network to encourage students to post to Instagram and Twitter a picture with our hashtag and the Italcultura hashtag of them with something that is of Italian design).

Other challenge days that link with initiatives from the OLIC:

- International Women's Day - March 8
- Week of Italian Cinema in May
- Week of Italian language in October
- Week of Italian Cuisine in November

It is important that we have a central voice (Instagram? Facebook? Twitter?) where we can control the narrative and feature the 'best' posts we see come through with the hashtags. We must discuss further what the function of this central voice/account will be (sharing resources? Highlighting student work? Etc...) Who will monitor this? Who will mastermind this social media strategy? A small committee will be needed. Mia and Kristin from Kent State expressed interest.

Discussed: Why doesn't STEM see the value of a language requirement and how can we convince them? They state that have so many credits for accreditation that they do not have time in four years to take language classes.

Cultural competence cannot exist without appreciation for language. We are alarmed that programs take students abroad without requiring any language competency, and that some institutions are peddling responsible global citizenship without a language component.

If a pre-departure course is created for university students before they go on study abroad programs without a language component, would STEM programs use this pre-departure course to

count for the world language requirement? If so, would the university then claim that if it is good enough for STEM it is good enough for everyone, and reduce the world language requirement to one course that is in Italian/English for all university students?

2. Articulation Issues /Between High Schools and Universities/How do high schools and universities support each other

Discussed: What is the responsibility of high schools to prepare students for university and vice versa? One person brought up the fact that students need to be prepared for placement tests (if they have not taken the AP or earned enough AP credit) so that they can test out of courses. OSU, like many universities, will be mandating a placement test as soon as students come to campus, so it is in the best interest of the high schools if their students test out of at least one course. This is great advertising. Full-immersion teaching is very important in order for students to be prepared for university courses. If instructors need help with this, Prof. Aski's online course (<https://cllc.osu.edu/purposeful-interactive-foreign-language-teaching>) is full of helpful suggestions. Note that some schools have worked with the administrators so that taking the online course will count toward professional development despite the fact that the course does not provide an official certificate. High schools should consider keeping track of where their students go to college and whether they 1) continue in Italian and 2) test out of a course. These are great measures of success and great for advertising.

In turn, Universities should be including high schools in their Italian Club and departmental programming (such as famous singers that are brought to campus). Universities can also offer outreach to local K-12 such as bringing undergraduates to make presentations, teach Italian as part

of a service learning course, etc. Can high schools do something similar for middle and elementary school students?

Discussed: What are the advantages of various tests and what does each test indicate to university admissions? How does this differ from one institution to another? What are advantages per test for students?

Discussed: We discussed the possibility of a lobby for teachers to have certificates that are valid at a national level? Kathy Shelton explained issues of licensure, reciprocity, and legislation, as well as differing standards across States. We discussed the fact that differences between local, state, and national curricular needs and issues make it impossible to get every State in the US to agree on licensure. The fact that the number of university credits earned per AP score is not standard across the board (differences in recognition of what constitutes a 'passing' AP score) is an obstacle and often undermines work of students and teachers.

Discussed: How will changing university credit requirements trickle down and affect high school programs? If universities reduce the language requirement or even eliminate it, what happens at the high school level where languages are already vulnerable and there is a shortage of teachers? Can or would foreign language education disappear? Or will all students just learn Spanish and the politically hot language of the time (now Chinese)? We identified the fact that we are having two separate conversations: 1) boosting Italian enrollment and 2) safeguarding world languages as a valuable part of education.

Action Item: Rather than feed into competition with the languages within the department, focus on working together with all languages to defend world languages as a valuable part of curriculum. Improve on career speaker offerings. Discuss how much Italian and other languages are valid as components of major career options. In addition, highlight the fact that there is currently a

national crisis in that the US is trailing behind most countries, including Europe and China, in the number of people who have knowledge of a world language. Highlight to students how special they are if they have learned intercultural competence and foreign language skills.

Resource: Canton HS Global Scholars Program can be used as a model. Local businesses come to speak with students once a month.

Discussed: Every teacher is the ambassador of the subject matter he or she teaches. If it's fun, students will attend. However, if there is one enthusiastic, passionate teacher that makes a program a success, and that person retires or leaves, what happens? Sustainability is an issue at all levels of instruction. Often a retirement is used as an excuse to eliminate the program. Strong support from parents keeps a program alive because parents have a lot of power with the administration of the high school and the Board of Education.

Suggestion: Prior to open house, ask students to articulate why students should take Italian.

Collect all statements and remove the ones that praise you and your teaching. Use the remaining statements as a handout during open house. Support of the parents is key.

Suggestion: Leverage the military - KWLA (Kentucky World Language Association) military officers come to the school and say that those who want advanced careers in the military need language fluency.

Action Item: Change the narrative school/university-wide. Join influential committees, learn how the administration works, and learn their language. Work to change the approach that the administration takes to world language education. Be an advocate for the learning of world languages and intercultural communication. Learn about the new can-do statements for intercultural communication (<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Foreign-Language/World-Languages-Model-Curriculum/World-Languages-Model->

[Curriculum-Framework/Expectations-for-Learning/Intercultural-Can-](#)

[Do_MC_dec2017.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US](#)) and reiterate to colleagues and administrators that true intercultural communication skills can only happen in the foreign language classroom. These are not skills that can be taught in English. This is a grass-roots effort. Spreading the word through parents and colleagues; changing the discourse around world languages.

3. The AP test

Discussed: Teachers often have difficulty securing financial resources to attend AP conferences and training. Dr. Corso seemed interested in finding a way to help with that. There is also support for students through the FREE course created by Wellesley. See:

<https://www.edx.org/course/apr-italian-language-culture-wellesleyx-apita-x>

Contact Daniela Bartalesi-Graf: dbartale@wellesley.edu or apitalian@wellesley.edu

Discussed: Many teachers don't like to push students to take the exam if they know the students won't perform well. Some students do not want to take the exam if they know that Italian is not offered at the university that they will be attending.

How do we remove the intimidation factor of the test?

Suggestion: Think of the exam as an exercise in Italian. It's not a test, it is another activity to do in Italian. Try to get students to see it as a fun challenge. The NOI Foundation is a huge ally for teachers. They reimburse the students for the exam, so it is free and risk free. Students may also go to the AP College Board website and find out how many credits they could earn at their college of choice, and what that translates to in dollars. Most importantly, you can tell them that if they take the test and earn credits, they can have more time to do things like study abroad and further their studies. Send them to the OSU website to see the opportunities we offer, or send

them to the university that they plan to attend. Support for the AP and for teachers of Italian can also be found here: <http://italianlanguagefoundation.org/>