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TalkAbroad Proposal

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TalkAbroad

In *La Francophonie*, students expand their horizons and learn about the diversity of socio-linguistic situations where French is spoken outside of France. In particular, we use City as Text methodology to introduce students to local Francophone populations – Québécois snowbirds in Hollywood and Haitians in Little Haiti. Last Spring, however, we included a new component thanks to a *TalkAbroad* Curriculum Development Grant. Students had three individualized 30-minute video conversations with Francophones from around the world and afterwards wrote reflections. The student and professor have access to an audio recording for post-assignments.

The individualized *TalkAbroad* discussions with native speakers replaced some face-to-face class time with more authentic conversations and interviews. The post assignments where students analyzed their conversations were used in place of written homework that previously focused on articles and chapters. These modifications helped reduce answer sharing, since every student's *TalkAbroad* experience was different and demanded personal reflection on their part.

Throughout the semester, they spoke to a French speaker from Europe, a Québécois(e), and a Francophone from North or West Africa. The assignments helped reinforce the global awareness and engagement outcomes, since students were not just reading about some facet of French, but actually talking to native speakers. Even if some students had the same *TalkAbroad* partner, every conversation and post-assignment was completely different. Overall, this created a relaxed, individualized environment for learning.

The best aspect was that the professor had access to the audio recording of the conversation for additional feedback. Students exchanged ideas on bilingualism, the openness of French to variation, the effects of Quebec's Law 101, and feelings about colonization with North African partners.

This semester, we're using *TalkAbroad* in French Phonetics, thanks to a subsequent grant. The goal of these conversations is to highlight the linguistic and cultural topics of the textbook and help students improve their personal pronunciation. Students transcribe some words their *TalkAbroad* partner say in IPA, and also analyze their own progress in French pronunciation. The one thing I'd do next time is to walk students through the sign-on process during face-to-face class time.