

NEH Support for Foreign Language Teaching

As part of its commitment to improving the content and quality of education at all levels, the National Endowment for the Humanities encourages proposals to strengthen the teaching of foreign languages in the nation's schools, colleges, and universities.

Whatever their level, purpose, format, or audience, Endowment-supported foreign language projects are designed to lead participants to a greater mastery of a language by integrating its acquisition with the study and discussion of significant literature, history, philosophy, and art related to it. By encouraging intensive work beyond the basic level, NEH-funded projects seek to relate a growing command of a foreign language to a deepening awareness of the culture and history it reflects.

Opportunities in the Division of Education Programs

Under its Higher Education Program, the Division of Education Programs funds (a) curricular and faculty development projects for individual institutions, (b) summer institutes for college and university faculty, (c) collaborative projects for two or more institutions working together, (d) conferences on issues in higher education, and (e) planning grants for the conception of large-scale or long-term projects in higher education.

Under its Elementary and Secondary Education Program, the division funds (a) summer institutes for elementary and secondary school

teachers, (b) multi-year collaborative projects that link the schools and colleges within a geographic area, (c) year-long masterwork study grants for individual schools and school systems, (d) conferences on major issues in elementary and secondary education, and (e) planning grants to assist the development of cooperative efforts between schools and colleges.

In addition to the opportunities it provides for strengthening the work of teachers and educational leaders already in positions of responsibility, the Division of Education Programs also supports efforts to prepare new teachers at all levels. Like projects designed to help experienced educators, these efforts can take many forms, from the restructuring of curricula to summer institutes for teacher educators.

Examples of Foreign Language Projects

A few hypothetical examples may suggest the range of possibilities.

Foreign language faculty at a university with a two-year language requirement have concluded that important literary and historical texts should be taught at an earlier point in the university's foreign language programs, and that the texts should be coordinated with themes in a required sequence on Western culture. The university requests funding for a series of workshops in which language faculty and faculty from history, philosophy, literature, and political science would meet to study these texts under the guidance of visiting scholars. By integrating its foreign language offerings with its general education program, the university hopes to give its stu-

dents a greater appreciation of the historical and cultural contexts of the works they read in their language courses.

In response to a growing recognition of the Japanese contribution to contemporary literature, a West Coast university proposes a summer institute in which Japanese language teachers would read novels in Japanese and in English translation. Participants would study and discuss twentieth-century authors such as Yasunari Kawabata, Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, Yukio Mishima, Kobo Abe, Fumiko Enchi, Soseki Natsume, and Sawako Ariyoshi. They would also consider advanced courses in Japanese literature that might be added to the language programs at their schools and design courses on Japanese literature in translation for their programs in comparative literature and Asian studies.

Recognizing that there are only a few secondary school Russian programs in its region, a large private university proposes to offer a summer institute on Russian language and culture for twenty-five teachers who would like to begin teaching this subject in their schools. Participants would read Russian texts by Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Solzhenitsyn and improve their language proficiency through six weeks of speaking and writing about these works in Russian. During the following academic year they would attend two workshops and a symposium designed to build on the summer's work and help them apply what they have learned to their classroom settings.

In a proposed masterwork study grant, the five Spanish teachers in a junior high school would meet once a month under the guidance of a faculty member from a nearby state uni-

versity to study the history of Latin America. During the course of the year the teachers would devote two weekends each semester to an immersion retreat where they would improve their interpretive skills by reading and discussing Latin American short stories.

How to Apply

To request guidelines and application forms or further information about NEH support for foreign language teaching, please write or call

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Equal Opportunity

Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age. For further information, write to the director, Office of Equal Opportunity, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506.

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