



Texas Tech Doubles Enrollments with Creation of High Quality Large Enrollment Online Courses and *Contraseña* and *LinguaMeeting*



Kate Brooke, MA

Basic Language Program Director: Kate Brooke, MA

Courses: SPAN 1501/1502, SPAN 1507, SPAN 2301/2302, SPAN 2607 Intermediate

Total Sections Taught Annually: 100

Instructors: 30

Estimated Annual Enrollment: 3500 students

First implementation: Fall 2021

Prior to her appointment as Director of Spanish Foundations, Kate coordinated Online Spanish (100% asynchronous program) and was a member of the departmental Strategic Growth Team. The department faced enormous challenges that required immediate attention. Kate co-led a team that quickly realized they could break through many of the challenges, at least in part, by a redesign of the first- and second-year Spanish program.

The Challenge

- Unable to meet demand for first- and second- year Spanish (a language requirement for many students).
- Students were unable to complete required courses during their first two years.
- First- and second-year courses were filled with juniors and seniors, making it difficult to recruit majors, minors, or participants in Study Abroad programs in Seville.
- Frustration with the department from College of Arts & Sciences Advisors
- The department faced a reduction or elimination of the language requirement.

The Solution

A Thoughtful Redesign

To solve the problem, Kate's team proposed large-enrollment online courses for first- and second-year Spanish. Asynchronous online classes in place at the time appeared to fulfill the needs of students but were not scalable.

Rethinking Capacity + Workload

Prior to the redesign, asynchronous courses were capped at 35 students/section; courses were time consuming to grade and teach.

A Need for Spontaneity

Asynchronous speaking activities were limited to rehearsed, presentational-style activities. Speaking activities were instructor-graded and time consuming to review.



Making Conversation a Priority

Previous courses lacked an authentic, interactive conversational component. There were too few opportunities for students to respond “in the moment” in a conversational setting.

Discovering Lingro, Contraseña, and LinguaMeeting

The large-enrollment solution dictated that the department redefine its relationship with the learning company. They sought true partners that could bring expertise, energy, and commitment to our program. Of considerable design influence, was the Three Pillars Model, outlined by Marull and Kumar, 2020.

The Results

Lingro, Contraseña, and LinguaMeeting have quickly become integral to our program's success.

- Minimal instructor prep and grading are required. All program and course-related building and set up is handled by Lingro. This is made possible by the Lingro team's experience in teaching and course design.
- The affordable interactive experience includes carefully scaffolded independent video lessons with accompanying “instructional sets” that pace students through their learning and ensure success.
- Work in all modules is purposeful and there are no longer complaints from students about busy work.
- Conversation guides help learners engage with highly skilled, empathic native speakers from around the world.
- The experience is customizable; content has been modified or created fresh, geared toward helping students articulate the value of language study, a key student learning outcome in the Foundations program.
- Weekly virtual conversations with language coaches are cited in student course evaluations as highlights of the course experience.
- Feedback does not focus on correcting grammar and vocabulary errors so that students stay motivated to produce comprehensible Spanish with their coaches as they participate in cultural exchanges.
- No instructor grading is required. Instructors use the coach's feedback to assess and grade; assessment focuses on motivation, participation, and preparedness.
- Capacity in the First- and Second-year Spanish program doubled, from 2000 students to 4000 students annually.
- Students are less anxious about speaking Spanish.
- Students can produce Spanish spontaneously, engaging in 30-minute conversations each week.
- The realistic goals and achievable learning modules combined with connections to highly skilled native speakers are delivering improved course evaluations.
- Relationship-based learning is contributing to increased student fulfillment.
- Very few students realize they are participating in a large-enrollment course.