DePaul University
CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

SoTL Grant Proposal Form

To be considered for funding, your research proposal must align with the following definition of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, SoTL, endorsed by the University Faculty Council (January 2014):

"*The rigorous investigation of student learning, with the purpose of developing novel teaching methodologies and practices that can lead to the measurable enhancement of student learning. The results of the investigation are made public through quality scholarly outlets and widely-accepted conferences and general or discipline-specific journals.*"

I. Basic Information

Title of Project: <u>College-level</u> World Language Educators' Perceptions of Online Language Teaching and Practices in the wake of Emergency Remote Teaching
Date of Application: September 17, 2021

Investigator(s) Information

Principal Investigator:
Name: Li Jin
College: College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Department: Department of Modern Languages
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Other Investigators (Co-Pi):

Name	College	Department
Yi Xu	University of Pittsburgh	East Asian Languages & Literature
Elizabeth Deifell	Appalachian State University	Languages, Literatures, & Cultures

For each investigator, please include an abbreviated CV using the SoTL grant CV template.

Will your project involve human subjects?   X Yes   ☐ No
If Yes, you must include evidence of IRB approval or exemption, or of having applied for IRB approval or exemption. Please note that before any granted funding can be made available, you will be required to provide evidence of IRB approval or exemption.

        We have submitted our IRB exemption request and will forward the approval letter as soon as we receive it.

Requested Funds

Amount Requested (up to $2,500): $1,840

II. Project Abstract (250 words or less)

This research project will investigate college-level foreign language educators' perceptions of online language teaching as well as their language teaching practices after more than one year of emergency remote teaching. Two primary research questions will be answered in this project: 1) What are college-level foreign language educators' perceptions about online language teaching including its values, their self-confidence in and knowledge about online language teaching, and student readiness for online language teaching after more than one year's emergency remote language teaching? 2) How has more than one year of emergency remote teaching impacted college-level foreign language educators' teaching practices upon return to campus? Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected. Data collection methods include an online questionnaire and follow-up interviews with select participants who have completed the online questionnaire. The online questionnaire will be distributed to all major professional networks for foreign language educators such as the listservs for American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages, Midwest Association of Foreign Language Education. Participants who indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview when filling out the online questionnaire will be contacted to confirm a Zoom interview after the online questionnaire data collection has been completed. Findings from this project will deepen our understanding of the impact the prolonged emergency remote language teaching has made on college-level foreign language educators such as perceived pedagogical changes that may have occurred or will happen in the field of foreign language education. The insights gained from this project will shape what and how training on computer-assisted language pedagogy should be conducted in both professional development sessions and teacher education programs.

III. Project Description (1000 words or less)

Purpose of Project

Describe your research project.

1. Please provide a clear statement of the teaching-learning issue that you want to investigate, and explain briefly why this issue warrants a systematic and rigorous investigation.
2. State, in clear and measurable terms, a *Research Question* to indicate specifically what it is that you want to know as a result of this investigation.

Whether language teachers were ready or not, they had to move their courses online in spring 2020. Although many universities in the U.S. have decided to return to on-campus teaching in autumn 2021 after more than one year of remote teaching, the possibility of switching teaching back online due to the unpredictable development of COVID-19 variants is still on the table. Preparing teachers for effective online teaching due to either the new development of the COVID-19 pandemic or other future crises seems not only inevitable but urgent for education continuity. As a discipline well documented for teachers' reluctance to and even rejection of online teaching, it is imperative to understand whether and how the prolonged remote language teaching has changed foreign language educators' perceptions and practices in terms of online language teaching, which will provide important implications for language teacher education programs and professional development efforts. Thus, the impact of more than one year's remote teaching on foreign language educators' perceptions and practices related to online language teaching merits further systematic and rigorous investigation.

The overarching research question to be examined in this project is-- What are foreign language educators' perceptions of online language teaching and their language teaching practices after more than one year of remote language teaching?

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

Explain how your proposed research builds on or fits into existing relevant literature. Provide a brief but comprehensive bibliography as an appendix.

To maintain education continuity in disruptive times such as national disasters or pandemics, emergency remote teaching (ERT) has been practiced around the globe for decades (e.g., Gordon, Weiner, McNew & Trangensterin, 2010; Houston, 2016; Lorenzo, 2008). This term gained prominence in spring 2020 due to the academic interruptions at the global level caused by COVID-19. Instructional technology researchers (Hodges et al., 2020) stress the differences between ERT and regular online education. In the field of language education, experts in online language education (e.g., Gacs et al, 2020; Paesani, 2020) also highlight the differences between well-planned online language education and crisis-prompted remote language teaching. Prior to the pandemic, research demonstrated an upward trajectory of online language education at K–16 institutions across the United States (Murphy-Judy & Johnshoy, 2017). In the past decade, online language instruction has been adopted for a variety of reasons such as financial and enrollment concerns, technological advancement and accessibility, student demographic change, as well as empirically proven pedagogical effectiveness (Blake & Guillén, 2020; Hubbard, 2019; Kessler, 2017; Plonsky & Ziegler, 2016; Sanz–Sánchez et al, 2017). Despite the enthusiasm for online language education by researchers and administrators, research consistently uncovers reluctance and unpreparedness among language educators (e.g., Kessler, 2017; Winke et al., 2010). In addition, researchers (e.g., Goertler et al, 2012; Hubbard, 2013, 2019) have also cautioned about student unpreparedness for effective online language learning. The digital divide is another perpetual issue causing more equity issues in increasingly digitized educational contexts (Ortega, 2017, 2020). Therefore, it was foreseeable that language educators and students would largely experience chaos, anxiety, and stress when schools around the world asked face-to-face classes to transition online swiftly upon the COVID-19 outbreak. After the chaotic transition to remote teaching, many universities and colleges have taken efforts to provide training sessions to support online teaching in the past one year. However, it is largely reported that most of the university-sponsored workshops and training sessions were not tailor-designed for language educators who ended up feeling technological support was not helpful (Jin et al, 2021). However, language faculty still managed to seek resources and support from either their own colleagues or computer-assisted language learning (CALL) workshops provided by professional organizations in language education (Xu et al., 2021a).

Previous studies (e.g., Hubbard, 2008; Shelley et al., 2013; Winke et al., 2010) have uncovered that language educators' past experience with technology influences their future technology use. Many CALL researchers (e.g., Gacs et al., 2020; Oskoz & Smith, 2020) have predicted that the field of language education may be forever changed after the pandemic which enabled questionable but unprecedented scale of online teaching experience. A few empirical studies have uncovered how language educators adapted their teaching to diverse remote teaching environments and how they perceived their ERT at or immediately after the onset of the pandemic (e.g., Moser et al, 2020; Wang & Zhao, 2020; Xu et al., 2021a, 2021b). Now after more than one year of remote teaching, it is imperative for CALL researchers and language educators to document and understand whether and how the prolonged remote teaching has impacted language educators' perceptions of online language teaching and how it may shape their current teaching practices.

Research Methodology

Describe the research design you have chosen to answer your research question, and briefly explain why it is appropriate for this project. Make sure to indicate the kind of data that will be collected, how it will be collected, and how it will be analyzed.

Two primary data collection instruments will be adopted in this project. The first one is an online (Qualtrics) questionnaire which contains both Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. This instrument will allow us to reach a large number of language educator participants across the nation and collect a large amount of data. We plan to collect 400~500 sets of questionnaire data. The Likert-scale data collected from the online questionnaire will go through quantitative data analysis including descriptive analysis and correlation analysis. The second instrument is a follow-up interview. 15~20 participants who indicate in the questionnaire they are willing to participate in a follow-up interview will be invited to have a Zoom interview after the online questionnaire phase is completed. Each interview will be about 30-45 minutes long. All questions in the interview are semi-structured that are designed to prompt interviewees to deeply reflect on how the past one year of remote teaching has shaped their views about online language teaching as well as their teaching upon return to on-campus teaching in autumn 2021. All interview data will be transcribed into text which will go through content analysis.

Impact of Project

Assuming successful completion of this project, please describe how the results of the proposed research could help in the development of teaching methodologies or practices aimed at improving student learning in measurable ways.

The results of the proposed research will provide much needed information about college-level foreign language educators' perceptions about online language teaching and teaching practices after more than one year of remote language teaching. A clear understanding of what language educators have gained about online language teaching through required remote teaching will help CALL researchers, teacher educators, and administrators understand what resources and support should be further provided to help language educators develop and expand requisite knowledge and skills (e.g., clear understanding of the affordances and limitations of various technologies and online language teaching modalities, how to build online learning community and conduct online assessments) to prepare for future crisis-prompted remote teaching and possibly a forever-changed language teaching profession in which CALL is an integral part. Appropriate and effective teacher training and support will ultimately support student learning that is increasingly situated in a digitized world.

Dissemination of Results

Describe how you plan to share the results of your project, within and/or outside of the DePaul community.

We will plan to present our research findings at major annual professional conventions, e.g., American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages annual convention and publish a couple of manuscripts in major referred academic journals. Inside DePaul community, I plan to present the research findings both at the department of modern languages research forum and at the university's Teaching and Learning Conference.

IV. Project Plan and Timeline

Describe the proposed project plan and timeline. *Please note grant funds need to be used by the end of the fiscal year.

Timeline	Project Plan
September 15-October 15, 2021	IRB Review
October 15-Novermber 15, 2021	Online Questionnaire Data Collection
November 15-30, 2021	- Preliminary Quantitative Analysis - Send out Interviewee Invitations
December 1-20, 2021	Zoom Interviews
January-February, 2022	- Further Quantitative Data Analysis; - Interview Data Transcription; - Qualitative Data Analysis: opened-ended question results from the online questionnaire and interview transcripts
March-June, 2022	- Manuscript Drafting

V. Budget

Provide a detailed, itemized budget of how proposed funds will be used. If applicable, provide information about any external funds you have secured for this project and/or matching funds from DePaul University (including in-kind contributions).

The total requested budget: $1,840

1. Research Participant Incentives:

- Online Questionnaire Participant Incentive $25/personx6=$150 (6 participants who complete the online questionnaire will be picked through random drawing and receive a $25 gift card);

- Interviewee Incentives: $20/personx20=$400 (20 interviewees will be paid with a $20 gift card for participating in the follow-up interview)

2. Student Research Assistant: $16/hour x80 hours=$1,280 (a student research assistant will be hired to assist with data analysis including organizing quantitative data into Excel files, transcribing interview recordings, and conducting simple qualitative data analysis.)

3. Interview Transcription Software Subscription Fee (https://otter.ai): $5.00/month x2=$10.00

Appendix A:

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