STARTALK: Our mission, accomplishments and direction

ILR
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Faces of STARTALK
Presenters

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Presentation Overview

- What is STARTALK?
- What is STARTALK’s impact on language teaching and learning?
- What has STARTALK learned about implementing short-term language programs?
- What STARTALK resources are available?
What is STARTALK?

• Mission
• Goals
• Vision
• Content
Mission

to provide summer language learning opportunities for students and professional development opportunities for teachers in critical languages
Goals

• To have programs in all 50 states by 2011, offering up to 10 languages

• To increase the quality and supply of teachers of critical languages throughout the nation

• To stimulate significant increases in the number of students enrolled in the study of critical languages

• To improve the quality and effectiveness of critical language curriculum
STARTALK Vision

- Learners
  - More students studying critical languages
  - Longer sequences of instruction
  - More meaningful language learning outcomes
  - Effective use of technology
STARTALK Vision

Teachers

- Increased number of highly effective and certified world language teachers
- A better system for preparing and certifying world language teachers
  - rigorous preparation
  - Demonstrated skills and knowledge
  - Continued opportunities for professional development
- Increased leadership, coordination and incentives from federal and state agencies
STARTALK Vision

- Programs
  - Technical assistance to local and regional programs
  - Academic year programs adopting the STARTALK models
Current STARTALK Languages

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Dari
- Hindi
- Portuguese
- Persian
- Russian
- Swahili
- Turkish
- Urdu
What is STARTALK’s impact on language teaching and learning?

• Capacity
• Infrastructure
• Participants
• Research
Enrollments: 2007 - 2010
Number of Students

- 2007: 1000
- 2008: 2000
- 2009: 4000
- 2010: 5000
Student Programs by Grade Level

- Post Secondary
- High School (9-12)
- Middle School (6-8)
- Elementary (3-5)
- Early Elementary (K-2)

Legend:
- Red: 2010
- Blue: 2009
States where participants resided
Impact: Capacity

• New Academic Year Programs
• Additional Opportunities for Students
• More Effective Programs for Students
Impact: Infrastructure for Critical Languages

- Increased number of highly effective teachers
- Improved resources for language instruction and assessment
- Innovative online resources for teacher development
Affective Impact: Students

- 96% enjoy learning languages
- 98% think it important to learn about other people and places
- 78% plan to continue studying the STARTALK language
Affective Impact: Teachers

• Increased confidence in teaching
• Increased willingness to implement effective strategies
• Increased collaboration among STARTALK trainees
What has STARTALK learned about short-term language programs?

• Implementing quality assurance measures
• Developing best practices
Challenges

• Duration
• Program variety (length, level, focus)
• Teacher experience
• Standardization and flexibility across programs
• Assessment
Quality Assurance (1 of 3)

• National competition
  – Eligibility requirements:
    • demonstrate the capability to offer age-appropriate standards-based language learning summer programs in a culturally rich environment for students in K-16 levels
    • have prior experience with summer foreign language camps, programs, courses or academies for students to gain and improve their linguistic and cultural competence

• Review process
  – Review criteria include:
    • Clearly stated goals with measurable outcomes and performance indicators
    • Assessment plan
    • Qualified staff
Quality Assurance (2 of 3)

• Spring Conference: Expectation Setting
  – Networking opportunities
  – Team meetings and team leader support

• Curriculum Approval
  – Improvements to the curriculum template
  – Approval process
Quality Assurance (3 of 3)

• Site Visit
  – Purpose and procedures
  – Feedback to programs

• Fall Conference: Sharing
  – Plenary sessions
  – Training sessions
  – Networking opportunities
STARTALK-endorsed best practices

1. Implementing standards-based and thematically organized curriculum
2. Facilitating a student-centered classroom
3. Using target language for instruction
4. Integrating culture into language instruction
5. Adopting and using authentic materials
6. Conducting performance-based assessment
(1) Standards-based curriculum

• Implementing standards-based and thematically organized curriculum
  – Defining expected outcomes for all five Standards (“Students can…”)
  – Developing themes and unit subthemes
(2) Student-centered classrooms

• *Facilitating a student-centered classroom*
  – Professional development (STARTALK conferences; multimedia tools)
  – Site visit feedback
(3) Target language instruction

- *Using target language for instruction*
  - Differences between teacher perceptions and actual practices
  - Professional development for teachers using the target language with Novice-level students
  - Importance of visual support and active response
(4) Integrating culture

• Integrating culture into language instruction
  – Selecting culturally appropriate themes
  – Defining clear outcomes for the Culture Standard
  – Incorporating field trips
  – Developing tools for assessing culture
(5) Authentic materials

Adopting and using authentic materials.

- Emphasis on using materials in an appropriate way (proficiency and grade level)
- Collaboration across programs (teams and online)
- Need for expanded online resources and venues for sharing materials
(6) Performance-based assessment

Conducting *performance-based assessment*.

- Authentic, contextualized task-based assessment
- Backward design
- Formative and summative assessment
- Multiple methods (Linguafolio, teacher assessment, language tests)
Program Priorities

• Additional features of successful short-term programs
• Priority given to applicants with the following features:
  – Distance learning
  – Collaboration with other programs
  – Teacher professional development (student programs)
  – Plan to integrate language and culture;
  – Opportunities for continued student learning beyond the summer program
  – Opportunities for earning academic credit
Stakeholder Feedback

• Importance of continually gathering feedback from stakeholders (program directors, instructors, students)
  – Surveys
  – Focus groups
What STARTALK resources are available?

• STARTALK Multimedia Workshop Collection
• STARTALK Classroom Video Collection
• Online Curriculum Template Development Guide
• Sample Planning and Classroom Materials

www.startalk.umd.edu
The STARTALK Legacy

<table>
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<th>Did former students or teacher trainees come to work in your program.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, at least one former STARTALK student program participant came back this year as a teacher, assistant or tutor in a student program</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, at least one former STARTALK teacher development program participant came back this year as a teacher, assistant or tutor in a teacher program</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
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<td>Yes, at least one former STARTALK teacher development program participant came back this year as a teacher, assistant or tutor in a student program</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
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Next steps

• Research with CASL
  – Pre-pilot 2009
    • How can student results be assessed in short-term programs?
    • N= 96
  – Pilot 2010
    • How can student results be assessed in short-term programs?
    • Three instruments
    • On-site observations
    • M-393

• STARTALK 2011
Reflections & Conclusions

• Continual process of feedback and improvements
• STARTALK’s impact and future directions
• Support needed for short-term language programs
• Professional development needs of LCTL teachers