



Figure 2. Canvas Business Model Template Adapted for the Arts and Humanities

The largest revenue streams in undergraduate education are tuition and fiscal income. Higher education then channels resources from grants, sponsored research, gifts, links with commerce in the form of patents, copyrights, products or services, and by maximizing the use of endowments and assets through investments, and lease of unused capacity. The sciences have a long grant-seeking tradition, engineering benefit from extensive sponsored-research programs, and professional disciplines rely on terminal masters with high market value and costly tuitions. The budget for the humanities has been linked to number of majors and to the assumption that their importance justified being subsidized by other more lucrative enterprises within the institution. A new generation of administrators has challenged that assumption, and followed a model consisting of breaking the productive process into cost units, forcing each of them to compete within the firm in an artificial market setting.

Language departments are caught in the middle of this perfect storm. Their tuition funds have dropped, but now that the subsidy and major-based formula is being revisited, they have the opportunity to negotiate a participation from the revenues of study abroad programs, and from the increasing roles those centers abroad are set to perform in the internationalization of higher education. To be taken seriously, departments will have to make a credible claim of their administrative expertise. Establishing a grant-seeking culture and fundraising autonomy will also require training, and weaving delicate alliances with internal units such as resource development, foundation and corporate relationships, or sponsored research. These alliances are complex and require overcoming misaligned incentives (Bauer 2015) and difficult problem of “economic matching” as addressed in the works of Alvin Roth (2015). On the other hand, graduate programs that

prepare students to face these challenges will be popular, generate income, and provide universities with controlled environments to test new operational models.

Deciding to follow this path is not trivial. It implies strategic recalibrations that will challenge deeply rooted practices and assumptions, necessitates capacity building, and claiming the subfield of humanities administration and the stewardship of its narrative. In summary, a bright future may be at hand, but it will not be accessible without painstaking effort.

### Cooking the Books: Making a Case for Writing Your Own Textbooks

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In the wake of the “Great Recession” (2007-2009), higher education was forced to publicly confront issues of value and defend the ROI (Return on Investment)<sup>6</sup> of our majors, especially those of us at expensive, private liberal arts colleges like the one where I work.<sup>7</sup> The humanities in particular are a convenient scapegoat in times of financial stress and over the past few years, departments of Modern Languages, Classics, English, History, Philosophy, and Religion have been repeatedly forced to attempt to quantify and measure our “utility,” address our “value” in the “market,” and cut back on our already stingy budgets. Competition for tuition dollars has become fiercer than ever and colleges and universities now routinely promote themselves on billboards and through sophisticatedly targeted Internet advertisements. In short, all of these pressures have caused students, parents, administrators, and faculty members to think long and hard on what our

<sup>6</sup> Examples abound in publications such as the *Inside Higher Ed*, *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and mainstream media. A piece like “What is a Master’s Degree Worth?” from the *New York Times*’ “Room for Debate” series (June 30, 2009) touches on many of the main issues.

<sup>7</sup> A popular metric in recent years has been Payscale.com’s ranking of schools by future salary potential (<http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report-2015>).

particular institutions offer students that they cannot get elsewhere. Much like defending the humanities in an age of soaring debt from student loans, articulating questions of institutional or department identity is a hard but relevant and important task.<sup>8</sup> Hopefully, some of the urgency that has surfaced in this recent time of crisis can help inform, though certainly not dominate, the pedagogical decisions we make going forward.

What makes my university unique, for me, is our students, our faculty, and our dedication to undergraduate teaching—especially since many of my colleagues and I teach almost entirely from materials written for and tested in our classrooms. My contribution to the debate about the future of the profession is to examine the advantages that individual instructors and entire language departments can gain by developing their own language teaching materials in-house. These observations are by no means complete and mostly relevant to the one semester (mostly terminal) intermediate Spanish course I teach regularly. Since one of the most successful contexts that I use in this class is Hispanic food, I will also reference the “locavore” (locally-produced food) movement, since it is timely and relevant to my position.

Just as it is unfair to compare a family’s home-cooked Thanksgiving feast to eating at, say, the Olive Garden, I am going to avoid enumerating the drawbacks to using corporate textbooks. Many of us on this panel have written them and certainly all have used them, so I’m sure that together we could write a long list of their many pros and cons.<sup>9</sup> Textbooks contain the scaffolding, technologies, and cultural resources many new teachers or Teaching Assistants (TAs) need. Mainstream instructional materials can help large Spanish programs maintain uniformity across introductory courses taught by instructors with varying degrees of experience. It is important to remember, however, that the decisions that determine the content of these textbooks are often driven by formatting, budgeting, copyright, and design constraints that do not exist for individuals making lesson plans. Indeed, editorial decisions are often made by non-teachers attempting to apply business models to products in an educational setting. When, on the other hand, an instructor writes his or her own materials, she or

<sup>8</sup> According to a recent piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, the average graduating senior from the class of 2015 will be burdened with some \$35,000 in debt.

<sup>9</sup> Friis is the author of a textbook with Heinle Cengage publishers.

he designs the length, depth, format, wording, breadth, context, and sequencing of activities that surround the explanation of a language structure. Clearly, control is what is at stake.

Local and organic are hot topics these days. The locavore movement teaches consumers to grow heirloom produce from their own seeds or to purchase food directly from farmers’ markets. Food writers such as Jessica Prentice, Carlo Petrini, Alice Waters, and Michael Pollan contend that when we shake the hand that feeds us, consumers gain a clearer understanding of the entire transaction they participate in and get a chance to ask important questions about sourcing and topics as vital as pesticide use or the presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). When farmers produce food for the area in which they live, crops can be harvested at their peak moment of nutrition and transported short distances to market. Keeping things local helps eliminate food waste, reduces carbon emissions, and cuts down on the need to genetically engineer vegetables for non-nutritional reasons such as durability or color. A local farmer understands what grows well and is sustainable in their climate and for whom they are growing.

There are many parallels here with what happens when experienced instructors develop their own materials. Firstly, they do so with the benefit of really understanding their particular audience. Only instructors know how many heritage speakers, first-generation learners, married, adult, or returning students are in their classrooms. Teachers know better than editors or sales reps if their campus is urban or rural, residential or commuter-fed and, more importantly, what those facts mean when teaching. Different institutions obviously have different needs for specialized vocabulary or contexts such as medical or business Spanish. Should an intermediate text for non-majors also be used by students planning to go on with Spanish? Can a distant company really create a hybrid text that will fit the particular style of blended learning at your school? Probably not, however, you and your colleagues can and should. The decisions that affect your classes need to begin with your local pedagogical needs rather than those of an imaginary university compiled by market research.

Spanish is especially well suited to service learning and locally developed materials can help address the issues facing the Latino community of a particular town in concrete rather than broad or vague ways. Is your Hispanic community *dominicano* or *colombiano*?

*Cubano or salvadoreño?* When instructors customize cultural content to their particular communities it creates more streamlined and relevant experiences that help students become better citizens and volunteers in the towns where they live. Locally focused materials also teach a valuable lesson about civic engagement to students (and faculty) sometimes reluctant to leave the protective bubble of a campus.

Personalized cultural materials allow instructors to regain control over what students see, how that material is shared, what students do with it, and, last but not least, how culture synchronizes with the target language. When a professor creates his or her own language course, there is no need to modify a pre-existing pedagogical framework or break with context to integrate the cultural material that she or he may know best. Additionally, instructors can whet students' appetites for the Spanish major by populating introductory and intermediate instructional materials with study away photos from their own university's trips. Seeing images of teachers, other students or a friend studying in Madrid or Buenos Aires may help an undergraduate realize that study abroad or maybe even a double major is more realistic than they may have imagined at first.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, international study away is a luxury many students and faculty cannot afford. Luckily, instructors in the U.S. have the advantage of living in the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world with many cultural resources close to home. How about a trip to Miami, San Antonio, Los Angeles, Chicago, or New York to gather material for class? Familiar Tex-Mex dishes, for example, can serve as an easy point of entry for discussing Mexican-American or Mexican cultures. Even more surprising than how commonly our national resources are overlooked is the lack of intra-departmental collaboration between colleagues or international faculty at our colleges and universities. Many departments have native speakers from different countries or with diverse cultural backgrounds that can inform and enrich our classes. A final place author-instructors can go to develop and share teaching materials is important regional and national professional meetings such as the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language

<sup>10</sup> According to Del Rossi and Hirsh, foreign languages are the most popular "second major" for double majors though the return on investment for students majoring in science, engineering, business, or math with a second major in the humanities is negligible.

Conference (MIFLC) or the annual convention of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

One of the key elements of the locavore movement is seasonality and when instructors create their own texts, they control all aspects of sequencing. Let's say a professor has great materials that he or she wants to use during the fall semester to talk about *El día de los muertos*. Preparing one's own course materials allows the instructor to sequence and linguistically contextualize holidays or elections or independence days or religious feasts in ways that pre-packaged textbooks simply cannot. This is not to even mention the numbering of chapters! (Has any book ever fit any academic calendar perfectly?) In addition, writing one's own materials also allows more nimble sequencing of the language structures themselves. Experienced professors have strong opinions about the order in which grammar should be presented, reviewed, or recycled. Even when working within a departmentally agreed upon framework of material, creating one's own text allows an instructor to customize the order of presentation of, say, commands and the subjunctive or the controversial perfect tenses to his or her own pedagogical needs.<sup>11</sup> Skipping around a pre-packaged text causes unnecessary work for an instructor, forces students to leave context behind, and often creates future problems if the instructor then uses a pre-contextualized test bank. When an instructor designs a scope and sequence for a class from scratch, he or she gains a macro-view of the interrelation of language structures that really helps define his or her unique teaching philosophy in terms both real and personal.

One of the most satisfying seasons this kind of writing affords is the one that comes for me each August and January when I sit down to edit, update, and correct my materials for a new term. Do self-developed materials contain more typos than well-edited texts? They probably do. But when my students or I see a mistake or typo during the term, it can be corrected quickly and easily in my office right after class. Like a recipe handed down from a family member, a self-authored text becomes a living document that evolves with you as you mature in the profession. The desire to improve is more personal when your name is on the cover and the results are most satisfying when your

<sup>11</sup> While I am clearly advocating for certain levels of creative control, all departments/divisions/programs need to have an agreed upon amount of material for each course. Once again, though, the discussions that lead to these decisions can be very constructive and should be made by departments rather than textbooks.

creativity and expertise and experience are right there on the page for the benefit of your classes. Just think of the model of lifelong learning this provides for students—it is as satisfying as perfecting that flip of the *tortilla española*.

To conclude, the palate numbing effects of globalization are visible in all aspects of our culture. So as we make proposals about the future of our profession, why not opt for tastier, more nutritious, home-grown solutions that reject the standardization and uniformity that corporate textbooks offer? In-house language materials help institutions stand out in a market, personalize the student experience, and provide a creative outlet for faculty at all stages of their careers. While we would not want TAs creating materials without supervision, what twenty-year veteran Spanish instructor could not write a clear and accurate explanation of even the most challenging of grammatical structures and then create mechanical, meaningful, and communicative activities around it?<sup>12</sup>

One of the most convincing arguments for the importance of the humanities is found in the recognition that we need spaces and activities that fall outside the corporate realm. When a team of highly qualified and thoughtful colleagues works together to take control of all aspects of the language and cultural content, it creates a unique pedagogical philosophy and experience with palpable benefits for students, institutions, and individual faculty as well.

### ***Hispania's* Publication Trends and the Spanish Undergraduate Curriculum**

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Alongside the ongoing evolution of the Spanish undergraduate curriculum, consider curricular change and its overall relationship to academic scholarship and publication. In particular, how does shifting subject matter affect journal content in Hispanic Studies? Undoubtedly, there is abundant published research in Hispanic Studies that assumes

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the ability to write one's own instructional materials could be a perk of tenure or tied to a milestone of service at a college.

no direct relationship to the Spanish undergraduate curriculum. On the other hand, many professors link their teaching and their research. Research journals exist that tie their submissions to the notion of teaching. One of these journals is *Hispania*, the flagship journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP). Besides publishing in areas of literature, film, cultural studies, language science, and linguistics, issues of *Hispania* also regularly include scholarly research on the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese.

I have served as *Hispania's* Editor-in-Chief since 2010. This role offers a bird's-eye view that facilitates sharing some observations about content trends in submissions to *Hispania*. The journal's scope is comprehensive and includes the publication of language, linguistics, literature, literary criticism, film, culture, cultural studies, applied linguistics, and pedagogy having to do with Spanish and Portuguese (*Hispania*). Besides *Hispania's* broad mission, the journal publishes four times annually and each issue typically contains 10-12 original, full-length articles. Due to submission volume and breadth, manuscripts submitted for evaluation in *Hispania* suggest curricular vectors. Since 2010, there has been a decline in submissions exclusively focusing on literature of the Spanish-speaking world. The decrease parallels enrollment trends in the humanities, including literature courses (Tworek).<sup>13</sup> The information shared in this current study makes no claims to being comprehensive or scientific. However, *Hispania* is the most comprehensive and widely circulated journal in Spanish and Portuguese. I posit that what populates the pages of *Hispania* tells the story of the evolving Spanish curriculum.

Before examining trends in *Hispania's* submissions, it is important to acknowledge societal and educational context, and to recognize that the language profession and the Spanish curriculum are in a state of change. Over the last few decades, Spanish curricula has broadened to incorporate culture in order to prepare global citizens, workplace/career skills, varieties of spoken Spanish to highlight regional variation, and community engagement (Long 29-37). The Spanish curriculum has also responded to the proficiency movement (ACTFL Guidelines), the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996), and the more recent demand for differentiated teaching/learning. Worldwide immigration

<sup>13</sup> Tworek's main argument is that the decline in enrollment in the humanities is because women began moving away from humanities majors decades ago.