

# Spanish 312: Composition

Linda Ledford-Miller, Professor  
**Foreign Languages**

Library Consultante: Kevin Norris

*I address each of the goals of the proposed project below, and provide a summary at the end of this document. Beyond that you will find a document used in all sections of Spanish 312. Though in Spanish, it addresses exactly what this project proposed. Fifty-four students in three sections of Spanish Composition engaged in this project.*

**Purpose:** To develop appropriate, language-specific, information literacy skills for students in Spanish 312, a composition course that requires that all students write a research paper in Spanish, using print, media, and Internet Spanish language sources.

## Specific Plans

Students will complete a series of exercise/activities designed to teach them the necessary information literacy skills for completion of a research paper in Spanish worth 40% of the final grade in the course. As they perform these activities they will simultaneously be doing the research needed to complete their own papers, so all learning will be immediately applied. Because past experience has shown that students often have trouble finding and then researching topics, we will limit the range of topics to

1. Artists
2. Early indigenous groups
3. Revolutionary historical figures

These are topics for which we know the library has sufficient Spanish-language holdings to support the research needed, and, in the case of Artists, for which the librarians and I have made a concerted effort to improve the collection.

Exercises/activities will include:

1. General bibliographic session for each section of 312
2. How to use the on-line catalog appropriately. [Standards One, Two, Three]  
Over the years students have often come to my office to say they couldn't find anything on X subject, while I have immediately located materials for them with a quick search. They clearly do not know how to search properly. So, students will learn how to do a subject search in OPC; they will learn how to ascertain if we hold a journal and to locate a journal B current, bound, and microform.
3. Students will learn to use Lexis-Nexis, limiting by language and dates. [Standards One, Two, Three]
4. Students will learn to use HAPI. [Standards One, Two, Three]
5. Students will learn to use Project Muse. [Standards One, Two, Three]
6. Students will learn to use Clase Periodica. [Standards One, Two, Three]

*I created the "Library exercise for the Research Essay" in conjunction with Kevin Norris. This exercise required students to choose one of the three broad areas listed above, then*

asked them to narrow the topic to a manageable one. They were required to find the following sources on their topic: 1) an encyclopedia article; 2) a book (if unable to find one in Spanish in our library, they were to use World Cat to locate one); 3) an article from a periodical—journal or newspaper; 4) a reliable web source. They were required to turn in photocopies of part or all of the references they found. In addition, the three sections registered with turnitin.com early in the semester and used that for their compositions throughout the semester.

Results: not perfect but quite good. The main problem arose with Kevin Norris's unexpected illness, which caused a delay of several weeks in the implementation of this project, since Kevin is the Romance languages librarian and my partner in this endeavor. For example, I believe a longer time span between library instruction and actual production of the final paper will give students more time to come to terms with "reliable" web sources and to request books through ILL if necessary, not to mention the major issue of narrowing an area down to a manageable and supportable topic with thesis.

A further issue is that this is a multi section course, and not all instructors used turnitin.com at all times for all work. This came to my attention because of plagiarism issues the faculty brought to me to deal with. I believe this weakness can be addressed by specific additions to the common syllabus for all sections. And turnitin.com was a first time experience for the foreign language department.

End Result:

Fifty-four students took all the necessary steps to complete a well-documented research paper using a variety of reliable sources.

Span 312 Nombre

### Ejercicio bibliotecario para el Trabajo de investigación

A. De la lista de tres posibilidades, seleccione una:

1. Artistas
2. Civilizaciones indígenas antiguas
3. Figuras revolucionarias histórica

A. Su selección: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Ahora, haga su tema más específico, escogiendo UN artista, UNA civilización indígena, o UNA figura revolucionaria. Si no tiene ni idea de cómo escoger, escoja un país y consulte una enciclopedia sobre este país, o un ensayo sobre este país en una enciclopedia general.

B. Su selección \_\_\_\_\_

C. Ahora, busque y encuentre los siguientes recursos **en español** sobre B:

1. Un ensayo en una enciclopedia
2. Un libro Si no tenemos nada en nuestra biblioteca, encuentre algo por World Cat.
3. Un artículo de un periódico --revista o diario.
4. Una fuente **de confianza** de la WWW.
5. Debe hacer una fotocopia del ensayo (1) y el artículo (3), de las páginas del título y de la

información bibliográfica del libro (2) y de la primera página del sitio de la telaraña mundial (4).

6. Si no puede encontrar la fuente en nuestra biblioteca, escriba la información bibliográfica y dónde la encontró. Entregue todo, con esta hoja, a su profesor **antes del 27 de marzo**.
7. Students will learn to use World Cat, Palci, and Interlibrary loan. [Standards One, Two, Three]
8. Students will learn to evaluate Websites for legitimacy. [Standards Four and Five]
9. Issues of Plagiarism will be reviewed. A workshop is given in every section of Spanish 311 in the Fall semester, but we will revisit the issue prior to beginning the project. [Standard Five]
10. Students will learn to cite sources properly, accessing the Library's website for MLA citations, print and electronic. [Standards Four and Five]
11. Students and professor will learn to use Turnitin.com [[Standard Five; Katie Duke]

### **Projected timeline:**

Spring 2006. I expect Kevin and I will work on developing topic specific activities during Intersession and very early Spring. Students will begin with the bibliographic session in early March, as their research paper is a staged activity, with dates (not yet determined for spring 2006) set for each of the following stages:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. Topic chosen, thesis statement written | 6%  |
| 2. Bibliography                           | 4%  |
| 3. Outline                                | 5%  |
| 4. First draft                            | 10% |
| 5. Revised final version                  | 15% |

Total 40%

The above research project meets all five of the Standards.

### **Impact:**

This project will affect the teaching of all sections of Spanish 312 for 2006 and the future, as the exercises and activities developed will be incorporated into the syllabus for the course, under my supervision. That is, I design the syllabus for all sections and all instructors. I would hope that what the students learn would transfer to other courses as well.