

Creating a More Interactive Undergraduate Linguistics Curriculum

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Current challenges

Linguistics is an exciting discipline to introduce to undergraduates because language permeates so much of human experience. Understanding the intricacies of language requires a **unique level of abstraction**, which students are not used to adopting when they think about language.

For this project, we selected three core undergraduate courses— LING 106: Introductory Linguistics, LING 438: Neurolinguistics I, and LING 325: Syntax I—where abstract theoretical concepts make it more challenging to engage students. By modifying, expanding, and restructuring these courses, we sought to provide more **active and collaborative learning experiences** built on **better scaffolding and process-driven content**.

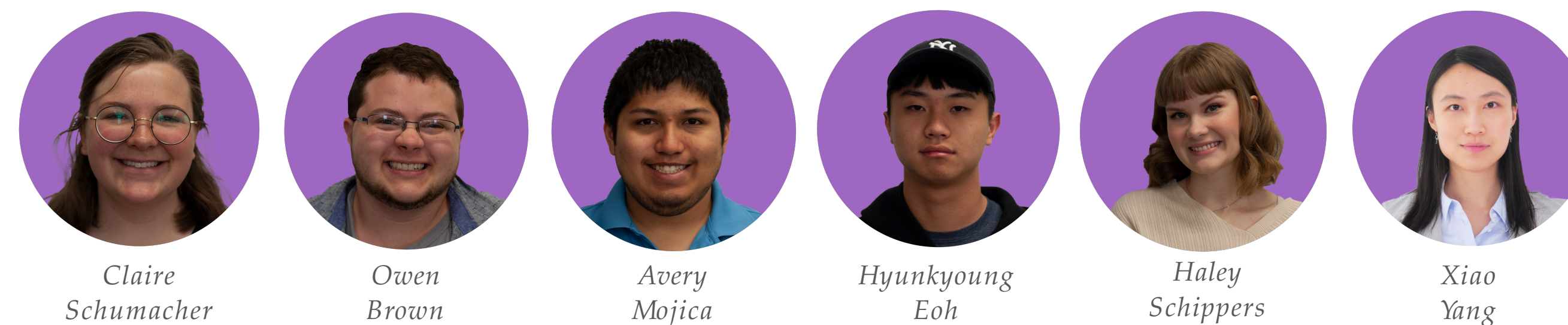
Solutions

Our course transformations:

- **Student-centered** instruction & design
- **Active learning** with hands-on engaging content
- **Process-oriented** discovery

The Curriculum Innovation Program grant enabled us to **partner undergraduate & graduate students**, who were hired as Curriculum Innovation Specialists. These students were responsible for:

- Curating new content
- Developing learning modules & lesson plans



Implementation

① Ling 106 - Introductory Linguistics

- Implement active learning in discussion sections
- Scaffold capstone assignment

② Ling 438 - Neurolinguistics I

- New materials & hands-on activities to illustrate brain-imaging methods, stimulate research
- New learning opportunities through online video content

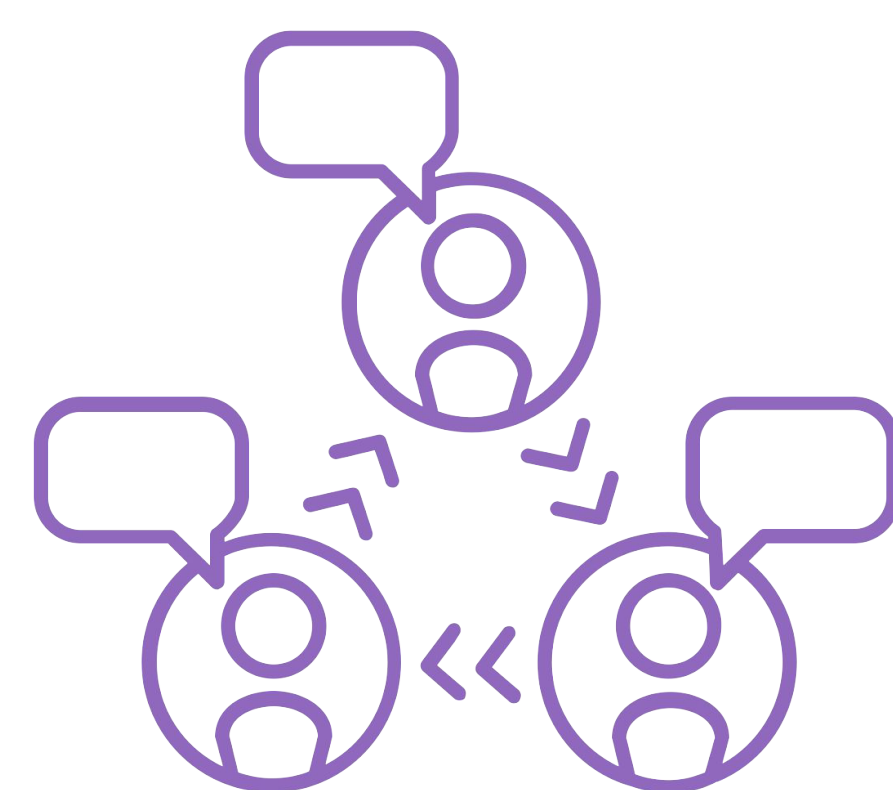
③ Ling 325 - Syntax I

- Reworked, flipped lecture: Emphasize the scientific method through engaging data, leading into lecture
- New online videos reinforce/exemplify core concepts

Course transformations

1 Create new, engaging content

- Reduce amount of lecture during discussion sections
- Increase collaborative work
- Provide interaction with multimedia content to explore the process of linguistic inquiry



Scaffold capstone assignment

- Language activities for capstone assignment integrated throughout the course
- In-class exercises & conversations explore diverse grammatical features and invite application of linguistic theory
- Make processes explicit & demonstrate skills using diverse languages as examples

2 Develop new activities

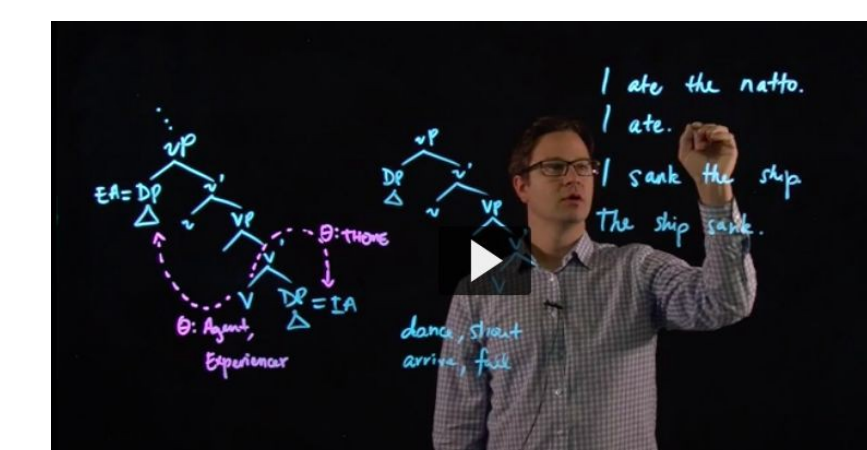
- Activities introduce research process, provide engagement with brain-imaging techniques
- Research development modeled



Introduce hybrid content

3 Leading into lecture

- Datasets curated to raise specific theoretical questions
- Students discover insights further expounded in lecture



Online supplements

Reflections

Linguistics has been able to successfully transform 3 classes that form the core of our curriculum. By focusing on linguistic inquiry as a process and making these courses a space for active learning, our instruction now leans less on traditional lecture, and more on **interactive, hands-on exercises that increase student engagement, encourage collaboration and interaction, and make abstract concepts more approachable**.

New in-class materials allow for demonstration instead of “talking at students,” and new online supplements provide additional opportunities to interact with technological resources and offer extra support for key concepts and skills. **Partnering with students enabled our success** by increasing ideas, resources, and allowing faculty to focus on broader structure.

We are especially grateful to Nathan Schellenberg (a master’s student who assisted with developing new content for LING 106), and the supportive faculty in the Linguistics Department.

