

LAC WORKSHOP, 02/09/02
“Student Recruitment and Retention”
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1. STUDENT RECRUITMENT:

Students’ mastery of the target language is one of the key elements to a successful LAC section that is in large part beyond the instructor’s control. However, LAC instructors can defray some potential problems before the course ever begins by carefully monitoring and guiding student recruitment into the LAC section. Personally participating in the publicity for your LAC section is a time-intensive, but effective method of shaping the profile of students attracted to your course. No one will be a better lobbyist for a LAC course than the person who will be instructing it. These publicity strategies include brief in-person presentation in appropriate level language course during the registration period of the semester prior to LAC course (most effective), making informal presentations to campus clubs or posting fliers in foreign language department. I also suggest contacting the UNC Study Abroad office and asking them to forward email announcements to their students who are away during the preceding semester, since these students often have appropriate language proficiency for LAC courses and are also unaware of course opportunities on the UNC home campus. Additional targets for marketing your LAC course could include students living in La Maison Française, La Casa Espanola or Das Deutsche Haus. All of these recruitment efforts will increase the likelihood of attracting a student whose profile (and language abilities) closely matches those necessary to successfully complete a LAC course.

2. STUDENT RETENTION:

This in turn begs the questions: What do you do when students’ language abilities lag besides your expectations? How can instructors adjust to students’ language abilities when they don’t meet your pre-conceptions? Some adjustments may be needed during the course of the LAC section if the materials that were prepared in advance of the course are too difficult or easy. We want LAC students to stay in these courses, as LAC courses can only draw from a limited pool of undergraduate students with sufficient interest and adequate language abilities. This last point speaks to the importance of student retention, another key element to a successful LAC section. In sum, LAC instructors are compelled to be more actively involved in both the recruitment and retention of students than in comparable non-LAC courses.