

How to Market Your LAC Experience¹
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I'd like to talk briefly about how to market your LAC experience during your job search. Whether you've taught several LAC courses or this is your first workshop, this is a program that you can use to your advantage when you're on the job market. As you've heard, LAC is finally catching on, but at many universities and colleges it's still unknown or hard to envision implementing, as there may be no established models or faculty with experience. When I went on the job market a few years ago, I found interviewers were often very interested in finding out about the program, particularly when I approached it from the standpoint of increasing enrollments and creating inter- and cross-disciplinary programs.

I. Market your experience!

On your cv, be sure to highlight your involvement with LAC. If you've taught a class, set this experience apart from your other teaching responsibilities – you might subtitle a section “interdisciplinary courses” and mention this in your job letter. Or if you've attended an intensive workshop, write that you participated in the workshop (most are hands-on); this will show that you have knowledge of the program. What your LAC experience should emphasize on the cv is that you are:

- familiar with the principles of the program and how to implement it; and
- that you have an interest in interdisciplinarity (i.e., collegiality, growth of the department, concerned with raising enrollment, raising the presence of foreign languages on campus, etc.).

This is esp. relevant to those working at smaller colleges and universities.

II. Be able to describe the program in detail

LAC is still new enough that it's not well-known to many faculty members – and it's yet another acronym that can confuse people. A smart interviewer will ask you to talk about LAC, which will of course be highlighted on your cv, but you may have to bring it up yourself.

III. Be ready to promote LAC

When you do, be ready to promote it! It provides a fantastic opportunity when you're asked about falling enrollments in language courses, about retaining non-literature students in language departments, about doing community projects, about writing across the curriculum, and about team-teaching courses.

its interdisciplinarity

- brings together faculty of different disciplines: (you might ask: “if this the kind of environment where ...?”)
- integrates language with other disciplines, enriching both fields

its role in language departments

- makes foreign language study more central to the goals of the college/university
- allows undergraduate majors to enhance their proficiency
- allows non-majors to continue in the language without being confined to a traditional curriculum
- encourages students to return to language classes at all levels
- provides more reason to study: no longer just a requirement, but a real application of linguistic competence

its role in language teaching

- addresses the 5 Cs of National Standards (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, communities)
- uses authentic texts rather than contrived situations and language
- grammar is linked to meaning not to random rules

IV. Be prepared to address detractors

When preparing for interviews, it's helpful not only to consider the positive aspects of LAC, but – perhaps more importantly – to be able to address its dissenters and detractors (and they do exist). A good interviewer will ask you about this anyway.

By addressing these concerns with enthusiasm and confidence, you further prove your candidacy. After all, if you're not able to convince the 2 interviewers at your table, you'll never get past the liberal arts dean. Departments need to be sold, which is something academics too often forget – LAC needs a marketing campaign! Ex:

- “we don't have funding for this kind of program” (Title VI grants, ...)
- “our faculty members don't speak [language of choice]” (you can work with grad students)
- “students will stop taking courses in our department” (research does not bear this out)

¹ This handout was adapted from a panel presented at UNC's Center for European Studies 2002 LAC pedagogy workshop.

V. Don't give up!