

# WISCONSIN INTENSIVE SUMMER LANGUAGE INSTITUTES

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes (WISLI) Remote Synchronous & Asynchronous Teaching

### Remote Language Instruction for Summer 2021

#### University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes (WISLI) will be offering courses remotely in Summer 2021, with plans to return to face-to-face instruction in Summer 2022.

The following preparations outline the structure for implementing intensive language instruction for the Wisconsin Intensive Summer Language Institutes (WISLI), which hosts the Regional Flagship Language Initiatives (RFLIs) and Project Global Officer (PGO) programs, during the Summer 2021 session. WISLI courses will use digital platforms and tools to employ a blended synchronous/asynchronous approach to ensure that intensive language courses continue to offer participants the highest quality of instruction possible and yield the highest proficiency outcomes attainable.

#### Synchronous Instruction

Synchronous instruction enables students to practice using the language spontaneously, receive immediate feedback, and ask questions. Synchronous instruction is also critical to creating and sustaining a community of learners who are engaged and remain motivated, and who have opportunities to use the language in spontaneous interactions with their instructors, peers and guests. Synchronous instruction is also critical for the purposes of formative assessment. The main technology that WISLI programs will use to enable synchronous instruction are:

- Virtual Classrooms via UW-Madison Zoom: instructor-facilitated classes that are held in real time to remote students over an Internet connection. UW-Madison Zoom (<https://it.wisc.edu/services/web-conferencing-zoom/>) is the primary web conferencing and distance learning application to be used for synchronous instruction, with Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (<https://it.wisc.edu/services/web-conferencing/>) as the secondary back-up tool. These classes will focus primarily on providing students with opportunities to actively participate in language learning activities but may also include some formal presentation by the instructor.

- Shared Whiteboards: a shared environment that allows multiple students/instructors to collaborate in real time on a language learning activity or discussion.

**Synchronous Assessments.** Instructors may choose to administer exams online at specific times and dates. The exams may be open book or monitored.

### **Asynchronous Instruction**

Asynchronous instruction presents new material to students and provides them opportunities to complete learning tasks on their own with instructor guidance. Asynchronous learning will be enabled by Canvas, the Learning Management System supported by UW-Madison. (Canvas is optimized for Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BBCU). Students will access synchronous class meetings on Zoom or BBCU through the Canvas course). Common features of asynchronous instruction are:

- Self-Paced Learning: learning materials that students can complete at their own pace and on their own schedule. Instructors will create due dates for assignments; however, students will be able to access instructor presentations, learning activities, and assessment materials (text, audio, PowerPoints, videos, comprehension checks, etc.) on their own time within the designated assignment period.
- Discussion Groups/Message Boards: forums that allow instructors and students to post questions to the full class, brainstorm materials, and discuss course topics in a central board that everyone in the class has access to.

### **Intensity of Courses**

WISLI courses are intensive, guaranteeing students one year of language study over the eight-week program. In addition to 4-5 hours of class time, there are co-curricular activities to enhance language and cultural learning, and work to prepare outside of class, including homework, papers, and projects. It is highly recommended that participants **not** take additional coursework while enrolled in a WISLI language course and should consider the time necessary to devote to study and learning. WISLI will provide learners with tips and suggestions for maximizing their learning experience and learning from a home environment.

### **Courses, Technology, and Pedagogy Support**

Various digital platforms are available for UW-Madison staff to offer classroom resources to WISLI students (<https://at.doit.wisc.edu/learn-uw>). WISLI will focus on using Zoom for the virtual synchronous sessions and Canvas as the primary Learning Management System. However, UW-Madison supports other platforms that can be adopted (while keeping student data protected) should there be technical issues with Zoom. UW supports Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Google Docs, Box and many more document sharing platforms that can be utilized to share class materials and teacher information. With these tools and support, and as demonstrated by Summer 2020, UW-Madison can be agile in meeting the needs of remote students.

WISLI provides all instructors with a template Canvas course package that includes built-in features for populating the syllabus, course deadlines and content materials with fillable learning outcomes. WISLI pedagogy coordinators will lead virtual training sessions for instructors the week prior to the beginning of instruction. Instructors will learn the required technology and remote teaching strategies, in addition to becoming FERPA compliant and knowledgeable in basic security measures using UW-Madison supported sites and accessing those sites through the UW-Madison Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Throughout the program, a team of experts in language pedagogy, Dr. Felecia Lucht (WISLI Director), Dr. Sarah Beckham (SASLI Academic Director), and Dr. Erlin Barnard (SEASSI Language Director) will conduct online course observations with follow-up conferencing for feedback.

### **Blended Model**

Instruction for the WISLI summer programs will use a blended model of synchronous and asynchronous methods. Remote/distance courses will focus on the development of students' proficiency, basing the evaluation of students' development on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Instruction will have a special focus on the development of the three modes of communication of the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication), as well as facilitating cultural interaction, developing discipline-specific connections, providing insight into language and cultural comparisons, and creating opportunities to communicate with target language communities via online tools. These courses will be designed to comply with the FLAS, RFLIs, and Project GO performance and proficiency goals. Synchronous communication tools are employed in order to support social interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchange. These resources and strategies aim to create an integrated course through the design and delivery of differentiated language instruction that is tailored to increase the proficiency level of all students.

The remote learning platforms feature a wide array of tools for instructors to share and for students to access course materials. Students will be present for the real-time, synchronous discussion and language practice, which includes 'breakout group' sessions to practice in pairs or small groups. This synchronous mode of teaching and learning continues to provide a sense of classroom community and engagement even though students are not face-to-face in a physical classroom. Synchronous teaching also offers instructors and students ways to give and receive live feedback, creating a positive and focused environment for improvement and achievement of goals. Lectures and synchronous meetings can be recorded on these platforms and linked to from the courses' Canvas sites, so students can review the sessions afterwards for practice, as well as review complex material on their own time. Using asynchronous techniques with teacher-moderated activities (pre-, during, and post-activity) such as video, audio, slide presentations, text references, worksheets, and discussion boards will provide students with self-paced course materials while also accommodating different learning styles.

WISLI courses align with ACTFL's statement on the use of technology, as they are instructor-facilitated, student-centered and aligned with the World-Readiness Standards. A blended synchronous and asynchronous model is the most effective course of action for remote classes. Creating avenues for students to proactively participate on their own time, as well as virtually engage in real-time, helps foster a sense of ownership of the learning structure as well as creating an atmosphere of support from their instructors and peers. Many professionals in the field of remote, distance teaching advocate for a blended modality because it allows students to both interact with the instructor and peers through virtual class sessions and provides them access and structured control over their schedule and pace.

Instructors will create instructional content and synchronous learning opportunities to engage students in the target language for at least 20 hours per week. These instructors are native/near native speakers of the WISLI target languages. Instructors will teach language through a communicative, student-centered approach in social context with cultural components interwoven into the curriculum, thus preparing WISLI students for study overseas. Daily office hours will be posted on Canvas and BBCU, allowing students to chat, video, or telephone conference with their instructors outside of class time. Email can also be used by teachers and students for routine communication and for forwarding important information.

WISLI instructors will work with the pedagogy coordinators to create a plan regarding synchronous class meetings, virtual office hours, and course content to enable students to achieve learning goals. Classes have synchronous meeting times, and students are expected to be in attendance during these class times. As in the face-to-face classroom environment, activities will be teacher-moderated and student-centered. The four hours of instruction each weekday will include elements of synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

The following is an example of how class time and materials may be distributed between synchronous methods and asynchronous delivery while meeting the requirements for course content hours during the scheduled class time and as part of regular homework activities.

- Synchronous All-Class Meetings/ “Breakout” Pairs & Small Groups
- Daily Reflective Questions with Feedback from Instructors
- Lectures/PowerPoints/Videos/Audio with pre- and post-activities moderated by the instructor
- Readings (Textbook)/Articles with pre- and post-activities moderated by the instructor
- Assignments & Tasks with instructor guidance and feedback
- Student Presentations/Interviews/ Recordings of Speech with feedback from instructors and peers (presentations)
- Regular Formative and Summative assessments

As described above, all activities, whether synchronous or asynchronous will be teacher-led, facilitated or moderated.

Following the tenets of flipped learning, instructors will be encouraged to introduce concepts prior to synchronous sessions, then design structured learning activities for students to apply and practice the new concepts when together in the synchronous sessions. In order to track achievement of learning objectives as well as participation, instructors will have the option to design concept checks after many (if not all) of the presentational materials that they develop to introduce new material through PowerPoints, videos, reading, etc. These checks will provide instructors with immediate information on the concepts that are difficult for students, which can then be used to inform adjustments to the lesson plan for the following synchronous class meeting.

### **Language Script Instruction**

Script writing by hand is an important component to the language learning process for summer language participants in introductory courses in many of the WISLI languages. In addition to posting pre-recorded videos detailing script stroke sequences and corresponding sounds/usages, instructors will also have access to whiteboards for use in synchronous sessions. Students will complete script-writing assignments by hand, on paper, and then take pictures of their work to submit to the instructor through Canvas. Students will also be able to practice writing in script on the course whiteboards.

Students will also be taught how to install (if necessary) or configure their local computer to be able to keyboard in the language.

### **Assessment**

As mentioned above, by using these online tools, WISLI participants will receive real-time, formative feedback on their learning from their instructors. Frequent and varied assessments are essential as the instructors evaluate goals and learning outcomes. Live, synchronous sessions can be

recorded for the teacher to review and create even more personalized evaluations. Additionally, concept checks can be included in asynchronous learning activities for students to assess their own comprehension or achievement of learning objectives. Formal assessments such as quizzes and exams, projects, portfolios, and self-assessments drawing from the ACTFL Can-Do Statements (<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>) built into the lesson plans will prompt the students to think critically about their engagement and learning, and help the teachers understand how lessons can be improved. Project-based and portfolio assessments will provide students opportunities to practice and to demonstrate their developing language abilities in simulated, real-world scenarios.

WISLI will continue to support Language Portfolio initiatives, which will not be affected by distance learning. Student performance (presentations, writings, audio, etc.) will continue to be uploaded to the learning management system during the summer and added to during the abroad program in the fall.

### **Regional Flagship Languages Initiatives (RFLIs) and Project GO (PGO) Assessments**

For SAFLI and TURFLI, proficiency-based assessments in reading and listening (aka, Flagship Testing) will be scheduled and administered by American Councils. American Councils is working on creating authentication measures to ensure a secure connection to the students and the test. They are currently working on how to resolve potential issues related to low bandwidth connections and preparing contingency plans if issues arise. All pre- and post- Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) for FLI and PGO students are administered through Language Testing International (LTI) and will be remotely proctored via LTI's third-party vendor.

### **Language Partners**

WISLI will recommend that all programs provide language partners to assist in the speaking proficiency of language students to develop their interpersonal communication skills and their intercultural learning, and to build community. Language partner sessions will be student-driven in terms of topics and themes; however, the instructional staff and pedagogy coordinators will work with language partners to ensure reinforcement of the functions taught during class maintain best practices in the language partner sessions.

### **RFLI Language Partners**

RFLI Language Partner sessions will take place remotely, 2 days per week for 1 hour per meeting. Language partners and students will coordinate which virtual communication platforms that they prefer to use, as well as when the sessions will take place throughout the week.

### **Cultural Activities**

In addition to cultural learning in the class period, students will have the opportunity to explore additional, co-curricular cultural activities, which take places outside of class hours. Speakers, guest lecturers, and demonstrations can be presented as recordings or livestreamed. Instructors will provide opportunities for virtual experiences, such as museum visits, virtual city/country tours, and other regional-specific exploration. Students will have access to videos and films, via UW-Madison streaming services, for receptive language practice and cultural learning. Interactive cooking classes in the target language can be taught where instructors and students make and “share” target culture meals.

### **Access**

The main challenge to teaching remotely is the reliance on technology. UW-Madison provides comprehensive support for students learning remotely (<https://kb.wisc.edu/helpdesk/98876>), but we must consider the possibility that not all of the WISLI participants will have reliable access to a personal computer or high Internet bandwidth. When available, it is advised for teachers and students to connect to the Internet using an ethernet cable to ensure stability of the connection. Otherwise, Wi-Fi or hotspot data will be required. In addition, students should check with their home institutions if it is possible to rent/check-out laptops or tablets from their local university or library. Additional information on recommendations for the best Internet connectivity will be included in student handbooks and will be clearly posted on websites for all language courses at UW-Madison (WISLI, APTLI, CESSI, SASLI, and SEASSI sites).

Staff from both the UW-Madison Division of Information Technology (DoIT) and WISLI will work with individual students to problem solve technology and be available to assist with issues related to remote teaching and learning, but especially for those with limited resources. Understanding, flexibility, and patience will be crucial tools implemented throughout the program for WISLI students and instructors.

WISLI coordinators will work with students to ensure that they have the prerequisite basic technology setup to successfully participate in courses.

## **TRAINING**

### **Remote Instruction**

The WISLI Pre-Service Orientation Week for instructors will cover best practices in remote intensive language instruction, using the resources and tools provided by WISLI and UW-Madison, and institute-specific trainings.

### **Outcomes**

The WISLI Director and Pedagogy Coordinators will work with WISLI instructors to ensure that language training will reach the goals of the various programs that send students to UW-Madison for summer language training (FLAS, Project GO, IFLI, SAFLI, and TURFLI). WISLI is committed to creating an environment for remote teaching that can support appropriate proficiency outcomes. Typically, an Elementary-level student achieves a proficiency level of Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid in speaking on the ACTFL scale (equivalent to ILR 1) after completion of the intensive summer program. Correspondingly, incoming students with Intermediate-level proficiency or above will be expected to minimally achieve an Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High rating on the ACTFL scale (equivalent to ILR 1+) by the end of summer. WISLI anticipates that students will achieve similar outcomes this summer.