

Program Design for Inclusion and Belonging in Virtual Spaces

CLS Spark and NSLI-Y



Introductions

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Outline

- Program Introductions
- Role of Staff in Promoting Belonging
- Creating Inclusivity in Classrooms and Co-Curricular Spaces
- Conclusion



Study abroad is citizen diplomacy



Ali Bhatti

- The State Department wants authentic Americans
- From all walks of life
- To work, study, or intern in diverse locations
- Form meaningful relationships on their travels
- Share their experiences when they return home
- And get great jobs



- Founded in 1979
- International **nonprofit** focused on creating educational opportunities
- Administers innovative programs that broaden individual perspectives, **increase knowledge, and deepen understanding of our world**
- Under competitive processes with the U.S. Department of State, have administered **NSLI-Y since 2009** and **CLS since 2013**

What is CLS Spark?



- **Immersive summer opportunity** to study languages and cultures essential to America's engagement with the world
- **Funded** by the U.S. Government
- For U.S. undergraduate students in **all fields** to study Arabic, Chinese, and Russian at the **beginner level**



Structure

- Students participate as a **cohort** and share the same weekly schedule
 - 10 hours of live, synchronous class per week
 - **Individual consultations**
 - All students have a **language partner**
 - Virtual **cultural activities**
- Optional **career development** workshops and **networking**



Why CLS Spark?



Language	Experience Level
Azerbaijani	None required
Hindi	None required
Indonesian	None required
Persian	None required
Portuguese	None required
Swahili	None required
Turkish	None required
Urdu	None required
Arabic	One year
Korean	One year
Russian	One year
Chinese	One year
Japanese	Two years

- Provide American students the opportunity to study critical languages virtually when they may not have access to studying these languages on their campuses
 - Help students meet the prerequisites for the overseas program

Recruitment and Outreach



- Community colleges, HBCUs, and small MSIs
- Identified staff at each institution in language departments, advising, financial aid, and contacted them directly
- Focus on expanding connections in our advisor network



What is Virtual NSLI-Y?



- **Introductory** foreign language and culture experience for languages critical to U.S. national security in an interactive online format
- Program of the **U.S. Department of State**
- U.S. high school students
- Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Turkish
- ACTFL: World Readiness Standard
- Asia Society's Four Domains of Global Competence



Why Virtual NSLI-Y?

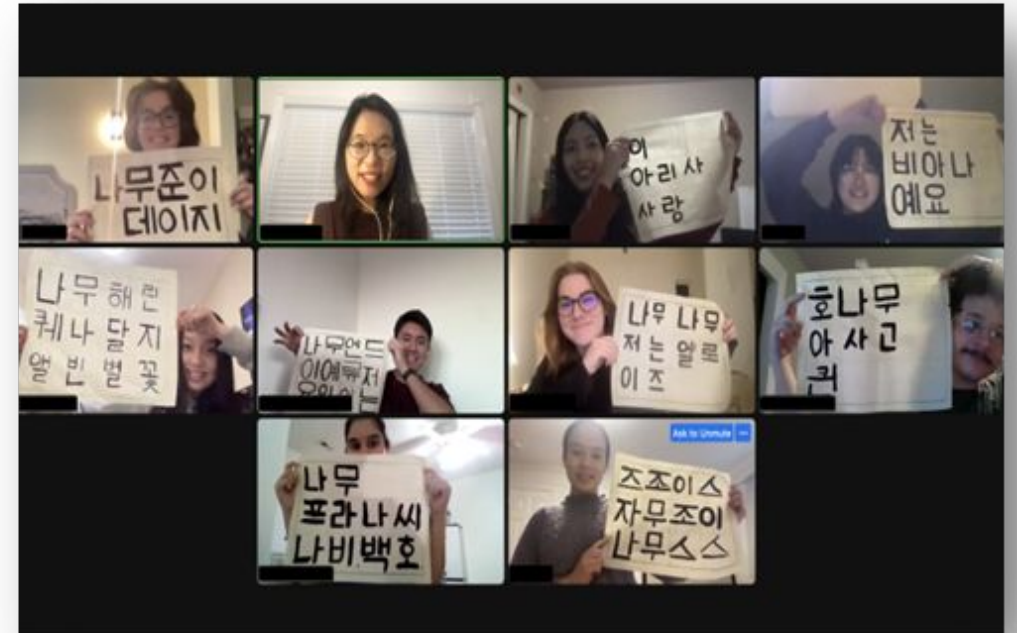


- **Piloted in 2019**
- Broaden the reach of the NSLI-Y program:
 - Support U.S. who **might not be able to travel abroad**, but are interested in languages and cultures
 - Excite and **prepare** U.S. students for study and travel abroad
 - **Demystify language learning and study abroad**



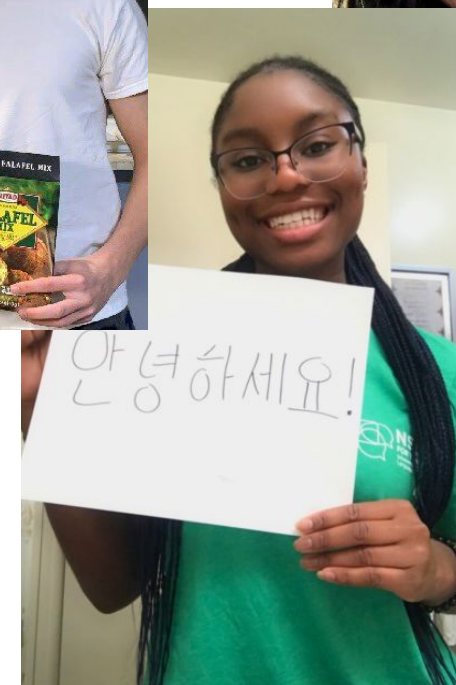
Structure

- Students participate as a **cohort of 10 students** and share the same schedule/teacher
 - 10 weeks (Fall, Winter terms)
 - 3 hours of live, synchronous class per week
 - Led by language teacher based in U.S. or abroad
 - Asynchronous collaboration activities
- Optional workshops and meetings
- Shipments of class materials



Recruitment and Outreach

- Community-based organizations
- College access programs
- Direct student engagement
- Technology assistance
- Selection process prioritizes students without:
 - Significant overseas experience
 - Formal language learning opportunities, particularly for NSLI-Y languages



Mentimeter on Virtual Exchange Experience

Instructors

“[My teacher] was just a very kind and supportive teacher who made all of us feel welcome, important, and excited to learn.”

– VNSLI-Y Arabic Fall 2022 Alum

“My teacher not only provided me with instruction about Hindi language and culture, but also helped me become more confident in my own self and identity. The teacher also made classes very enjoyable and made sure that students were engaged.”

– Fall 2022 VNSLI-Y Hindi Alum

Advising

“Dr. Wu was able to assist me with personalized questions I had throughout the semester.”

– Fall 2022 Virtual NSLI-Y Chinese Alum

Language partners

“Being able to connect directly with an individual closer to our age and freely discuss similarities and differences between our experiences made all of us feel much more immersed in the cultures, and our conversations with our partners were often a source of discussion among the CLS Spark Participants.”

–2023 CLS Spark Alum

Cultural Activities

“[The component of Virtual NSLI-Y I enjoyed most was the] the discussions and guest speakers. I was able to meet people who spoke different dialects of Arabic and experience different cultures within it.”

– Winter 2023 VNSLI-Y Arabic Alum

Cultural Activities

“[Though being in Moldova would have been best,] the weekly videos gave me a great idea of what is important to Moldovans and has sparked a great interest in visiting the country. I feel much more connected to the country and its people now that I understand a bit more about it.”

– 2023 CLS Spark Alum

Community Building

“The student group meetings were a lovely opportunity to meet other participants. I found them to be a key part of the program, as they allowed me to discuss my language learning experience with others, and learn from fellow students.”

– Winter 2023 Virtual NSLI-Y Russian Alum

Community Building

“Even though the program was virtual, I looked forward to meeting with my classmates. I always left [...] discovering something unexpected culturally and about myself. By the end of the program, there was a strong camaraderie which was the best takeaway.”

– Fall 2022 Virtual NSLI-Y Korean Alum

Professional Development

"I enjoyed practicing my resilience. A lot of the time I felt like I wasn't good at my language or at studying, but that wasn't the point. The main accomplishment I was able to achieve this summer was to be excited, curious, and happy to learn day in and day out. It was difficult, but there was nothing better than trying alongside members of my cohort and realizing that I could do all the things I was afraid of."

– 2023 CLS Spark Alum

Mentimeter on Inclusion and Belonging

Conclusion – Findings from VNSLI-Y Alumni

- **96%** – Virtual NSLI-Y was somewhat to extremely significant for their **educational goals**.
- **75%** – **continued to study** their Virtual NSLI-Y language after the program.
- **79%** – Virtual NSLI-Y helped them recognize similarities and differences between cultures and encouraged them to **seek opportunities** to learn about different cultures.

Questions?



Critical Language Scholarship Program and CLS Spark

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