



# Teaching Quechua Using Features of Online Instruction and Community Learning

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The Ohio State University, Indiana University and Oberlin College are utilizing video conferencing to teach the most spoken indigenous language of the Americas: Quechua. An innovative vision that opens doors to indigenous and minority languages, this method allows for a larger base of students to interact with those at other universities, forming a Quechua Learning Community that surpasses the boundaries of the traditional classroom setting. Classes take place in person on the Columbus Campus of Ohio State and are broadcast in real-time to Indiana and Oberlin. Essential to the success of this program is the mutual support between institutions in sharing roles and activities in order to furnish a common classroom space between them. Other vital features that make this program unique


include methodological planning that strengthens the teaching of Quechua with a variety of written, visual and audio materials; and constant classroom and pedagogical support to maximize the linguistic competence of the participants. The active participation of those involved in this process demonstrates a collaborative effort that creates not just a classroom of students, but a tightly-knit group based on mutual support and partnerships. Through the presence of a screen in the classroom, the pseudo-barrier of distance is eliminated and the distinct classrooms are converted into a single one that encourages learning using the frequent communication of each student to create its community-based atmosphere. Here, everyone knows each other as a fellow student and colleague with the same goal of learning the Quechua language. The language itself exhibits this neighborly quality as it possesses the following principles that serve as the linchpin of the class: **yanapakuy** (mutual help), **ayñi** (giving and taking while recognizing a reciprocal action) and **mik'a** (continuous work, communal equality). All of these attitudes are brought into the present space and time through this Quechua collective as every person is a significant, important part of the Quechua Learning Community. These principles and their execution in the classroom result in the knowledge of and respect for an indigenous language and its associated cultural underpinnings. With this sort of language instruction, we hope to see an increased number of students interested in this Andean language who study with us, either in person in Columbus, or at one of our partner institutions. 



Photo credit: Spanish department