Southwestern College request $13,570 in FII funds to develop a Graphics Communication Course: Emphasizing Visual Thinking Techniques to Support ESL Students. Southwestern Community College attracts students of a wide ethnic group because of its location adjacent to the U.S./Mexico border. Many of these students have a limited proficiency in English. The SWC architecture program enrolls approximately 50% ESL or limited English speaking students that require instructional support in order to succeed in classes. This project proposes to develop strategies, materials and activities to assist this population.

The overall goal of this project to develop a curriculum that is successful in teaching the use of visual thinking techniques to solve architectural and general problems. Emphasis will be placed on introducing graphic communication skills to make the process of problem-solving and the acquisition of English skills more accessible to ESL students. The objectives of the project are to (1) Select and form a representative project advisory committee that includes representatives from Vocational Education, ESL faculty and postsecondary providers; (2) Form a "partnership of ESL and Vocational Education faculty to develop teaching strategies, materials and activities. This includes; instituting an interdepartmental support system to assist ESL students; (3) Identify co-teaching units and language acquisition needs of students for follow-up basic skills’ areas. Develop model curriculum for a "Graphic Communications" course. The model curriculum will be in the form of a portfolio containing a bibliography, lectures and readings on theory, and exercises and projects; (4) Disseminate model curriculum and materials.