Cultural Knowledge
By the time students complete the BA in French (FLFR or FLFT), it is expected that students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of French culture. We expect that any student who has taken the sufficient number of courses required in the major will be able to discuss literature, current events or business topics related to culture in a way that demonstrates their understanding in a manner which would be easily understood by a native speaker of French.

Assessment Method 1: Exit interview/Cultural questions

Assessment Method Description
The French faculty formally assesses students' proficiency in cultural knowledge through a Senior Capstone course. This is a one-credit hour course in which students receive only a letter grade of either S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). In order to assess the level of proficiency and accuracy of students' cultural knowledge, students meet with two faculty members and are asked to respond to a total of five cultural questions. These questions are chosen at random by the student from a list of cultural questions that the student receives at the start of the Capstone project. These questions are grouped into five categories: art, history and politics, literature, geography and economy. This process began in Fall 2013, and, overall, the French faculty is pleased with the process since it is, in our view, a more “real” and meaningful measure of assessing students’ cultural knowledge. At the time of this exit interview, students are assessed simultaneously on oral expression and on cultural knowledge. These scores range from 0 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (excellent).

Findings
In Fall 2013, one student (FLFR) was evaluated for competency in the
area of cultural knowledge. This student far exceeded our expectations and received a score of 4. In Spring 2013, nine students (all of whom received the BA in French) were evaluated for their competency in the area of cultural knowledge. Individual scores for these nine students (FLFR majors), are as follows: (See “Assessment Scores Fall 2013” and “Assessment Scores Spring 2014” attached.)

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This year’s overall average in the area of cultural knowledge (3.05) was only very slightly lower than the previous overall average of 3.09. With exactly half of our students receiving scores of 4 in this area, we believe that the area of cultural knowledge is the strongest point of our curriculum.

A common area of student strength in the outcome of cultural knowledge, scores which are reflected in the scores of 4 (“excellent”) and 3 (“good”) is students’ demonstration of general knowledge about French and francophone culture. For example, with the exception of the four lower scores, students were able to accurately discuss historical facts and aspects of the economy and of literature. The students who received scores of 4 also had study abroad experience.

A common area of student weakness, as reflected by scores in the range of 1 and 2, seems to be unfamiliarity with certain aspects of culture or inability to talk specifically about the topic that was chosen. We are not sure how to interpret these low scores since the questions we ask are, generally, taken from the course material. This might be explained by students not having taken certain courses before we put this implementation measure into place. Therefore, while we continue to incorporate cultural material across all of our upper-level courses, it might take another cycle of Capstone students to demonstrate measurable improvement across the board.

- Assessment Scores Fall 2013
- Assessment Scores Spring 2014
How did you use findings for improvement?
As mentioned in our findings from the oral communication outcome assessment, our findings for improvement of results in this outcome—cultural knowledge—also overlap with our outcome of oral communication. In last year’s assessment goals, we focused especially on honing the curriculum to focus on oral communication. The way in which we proceeded—and continue to proceed—is to create class discussions about relevant aspects of French and francophone culture and history. From a cultural perspective, the French faculty are of the opinion that regular exposure to news articles or other media coverage of sports, art, literature, food, health, politics and the economy, to name but a few categories, will enhance students’ knowledge of items of cultural importance in France and also in Francophone countries.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 2: Oral Communication
By the time students complete the BA in French (FLFR or FLFT), it is expected that students will be able to communicate coherently and effectively in their oral expression. We expect that any student who has taken the sufficient number of courses required in the major will be able to express general opinions, carry on informed arguments, participate in conversations about French and Francophone culture and their understanding and engagement with it, and, in the case of those students graduating with a BA degree in FLFT, be confident and prepared to negotiate and to interact with speakers in scenarios that are pertinent to the business world. It is expected that any graduating student with a major in either French or French for International Trade will be able to speak in a way that would be easily understood by a native speaker of French.

Assessment Method 1: Exit interview

Assessment Method Description
The French faculty formally assesses students' proficiency in oral expression through a Senior Capstone course. This is a one-credit hour course in which students receive only a letter grade of either S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). In order to assess the level of proficiency and accuracy of students' oral expression and communication, students meet with two faculty members and are asked to respond to a total of five cultural questions. These questions are chosen at random by the student from a list of cultural questions that the student receives at the start of the Capstone project. These questions are grouped into five
categories: art, history and politics, literature, geography and economy. This process began in Fall 2013, and, overall, the French faculty is pleased with the process since it is, in our view, a more “real” and meaningful measure of assessing students’ oral communication. For example, this interview allows us to assess not only the students’ cultural knowledge but especially the students’ reactions or responses to certain secondary questions that the faculty might ask during the interview. We usually start the interview by asking informal questions and asking the student about his/her career plans after Auburn. At the time of this exit interview, students are assessed simultaneously on oral expression and on cultural knowledge. These scores range from 0 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (excellent). All oral samples are assessed on the basis of the student’s oral proficiency, the depth of his or her vocabulary as pertains to the topic discussed, adequate and appropriate use of grammatical forms and a native speaker’s ability to understand what the student is saying. In order for a student to receive a 4, the student must not only have only very minor errors, but the student must also express thoughts and ideas using syntax and vocabulary choices that would be most natural to a native speaker of French. It should be noted that the French faculty has met and discussed the development of a standard of assessment that is more in line with the standards and rubrics put forth by ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) so as to move away from the subjective wording (e.g. “excellent,” “good,” etc.) of our current assessment guidelines.

Findings
In Fall 2013, one student (FLFR) was evaluated for competency in the area of oral communication. This student far exceeded our expectations and received a score of 4. In Spring 2014, nine students (all of whom received the BA in French) were evaluated for their competency in the area of oral communication. Individual scores for these nine students (FLFR majors), are as follows: (See “Assessment Scores Fall 2013” and “Assessment Scores Spring 2014” attached.)

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In comparison to last year’s scores in the area of oral communication with the overall average for eight students being a 2.92, this year’s overall average is slightly higher at 3.05. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact reason to explain this improvement, it might be explained by the change in format of our assessment of oral communication. This is potentially a positive aspect since we can all now see concretely (in a face-to-face interview) how our students perform orally in a more natural setting. We are pleased to see that the overall average score is higher than last year’s, and it should also be noted that a total of three students (one from Fall 2013 and two from Spring 2014) exceeded our expectations. This is reflected in 4 scores. These students also had study abroad experiences. On the other hand, three students received much lower scores that we had anticipated (1.5, 2.0 and 2.0).

A common area of student strength in the outcome of oral communication stems from the use of vocabulary and their overall success in their expression of general opinions. However, a common area of student weakness, as reflected by these lower scores remains the improper use of verb tenses, especially problems narrating events in the past. These areas of common student weakness prevent students from carrying on informed arguments and potentially participating in conversations about French and Francophone cultures and their understanding and engagement with it.

- [Assessment Scores Fall 2013](#)
- [Assessment Scores Spring 2014](#)

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

Although over the past two years, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has focused foremost on strengthening students’ oral expression and also on finding ways to incorporate oral activities in the classroom, these findings are not as high on the four-point scale as we had hoped. These findings indicate that it is essential that French faculty continue to increase the number and type of verbal activities in the classroom in order to give students more opportunities to develop their oral expression and also to receive more feedback from faculty with greater frequency. In our advanced classes we now require students to read French-language media articles and to present their findings in class. Also, in the French Conversation course (FLFR 3030) students complete twelve oral responses based on a variety of topics. Additionally in other upper level classes students are required to make short (5-10-minute presentations). Although it may be premature to see our efforts reflected in the scores, the French faculty is confident that our efforts to increase oral production in class (and also in extracurricular opportunities such as the
French Club and the French conversation table) will be reflected by the time students continuing with coursework complete the Capstone project.

Additional Comments

**Expected Outcome 3: Student Satisfaction**

By the time students complete the BA in French (FLFR or FLFT), it is expected that students will be able to offer a well-informed opinion about their sense that the French language program was well designed and coordinated and beneficial to their undergraduate education. This outcome, thus, is designed to measure student satisfaction in terms of the array of courses offered, the instruction and feedback students received and their sense that they are well prepared for their post-graduation goals and objectives. (See “Questionnaire” attached.)

**Assessment Method 1: Student Satisfaction Survey**

**Assessment Method Description**
The French faculty receives feedback from graduating seniors about student satisfaction in the form of a student/alumni questionnaire. (See “Questionnaire” attached.) This questionnaire is completed before the end of the semester in which the students graduate and remains anonymous. Students do not indicate their name anywhere on this questionnaire, and they submit it to the department administrative assistants who then put it in the locked mailbox of the Undergraduate Director. The questionnaire asks students about their experience as a whole in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and asks them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the French program and courses that they would like to see developed in the future.

**Findings**

In Fall 2013, one student was evaluated but did not respond to the survey.
In Spring 2014, nine FLFR students were evaluated, and seven students completed the student/alumni questionnaire; therefore, we did not receive feedback from every student.

Overall, we have received positive feedback from our graduating seniors about their experiences in the classroom.
Among FLFR students who completed the survey, students have identified the following as strengths of the program:
--“I have enjoyed all of my French classes at Auburn... The topics were interesting and presented in an understandable way.”
--“The enthusiasm of the professors in the French major is a big strength of the program.”
--“Helpful professors...Most beneficial classes French Civilization and French Phonetics/Diction”
--“Every French course I took was very beneficial and I appreciate the fact that the majority of the class instruction was in French.”
--“The phonetics course was the most useful to me.”

Students have commented on weaknesses of the program related to lack of variety in upper-course offerings and mixed-proficiency levels in the classroom, which can be distracting or frustrating from a student perspective as follows:
--“More variations of classes [are needed].”
--“I believe there should be more emphasis on listening and speaking in Auburn’s French courses... I would especially dedicate at least a little bit of time to modern vocabulary and language tendencies.”
--“I would appreciate a course dedicated to French history.”
--“Please add a creative writing in French course!”
--“I would have really liked to be offered several advanced grammar courses. When it was offered, I had no room to fill it in my schedule and I haven’t seen it offered since.”
--“Maybe we could do more peer review ...The different motivation levels of students can sometimes hinder progress in class.”
--“I would have liked to seen ... a history course, a politics course, a class devoted to art, and to poetry.”
--“I would love more cultural classes to be available.”

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
The French faculty aims to offer a variety of upper-level classes. In Spring 2015, we have six advanced classes, one of which is a special topics course focusing on the fairy tale tradition. This is a new course that has never been taught before. Also in Spring 2015, the course in French phonetics will be offered again, and in this course students will have ample opportunity to work on speaking and listening skills.
Also, as mentioned above in the assessment of Outcomes 1, 2, and 3, the faculty has met and agreed to take measures to increase writing opportunities (and evaluation of written assignments), increase in-class presentations (to give students more opportunities to develop oral communication) and incorporate cultural knowledge in the coursework to be assessed through the cultural questions during the students’ face-to-
face exit interview in our new strategy of assessment.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 4: Written Communication
By the time students complete the BA in French (FLFR or FLFT), it is expected that students will be able to communicate coherently in writing. We expect that any student who has taken the sufficient number of courses required in the major will be able to express general opinions, to write informed essays and research papers and, in the case of those students graduating with a BA degree in FLFT, to write business correspondence in a way that would be easily understood by a native speaker of French.

Assessment Method 1: Writing Samples

Assessment Method Description
The French faculty formally assesses students' writing through a Senior Capstone course. This is a one-credit hour course in which students receive only a letter grade of either S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory). In order to assess the level of proficiency and accuracy of students' written expression and communication, students submit a minimum sample of six pages of their written work—writing samples that the students feel are most representative of their written expression. These submissions are uploaded electronically to Canvas—a course development software website—and are then made available to all French professors who read the students' work for accuracy, substance and effective communication. Students are not obligated to turn in work on any specific theme. In other words, students do not write a separate paper for this assignment. Students are instructed to submit work which they feel best exemplifies their academic focus—be it literary analysis, creative writing or analysis of business texts or response papers in reaction to a cultural text or experience. At the end of each term (Fall or Spring), the faculty evaluates these writing samples of our graduating seniors on a scale ranging from 0 (unsatisfactory) to 4 (excellent). In order for a student to receive a 4, the student must not only have only very minor errors (such as the omission of a diacritical mark or perhaps misspelling of one or two words), but the student must express thoughts and ideas using syntax and vocabulary choices that would be most natural to a native speaker of French. It should be noted that the French faculty has met and discussed the development of a standard of
assessment that is more in line with the standards and rubrics put forth by ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) so as to move away from the subjective wording (e.g. “excellent,” “good,” etc.) of our current assessment guidelines.

Findings
In Fall 2013, one FLFR student was evaluated for competency in the area of written communication. We were extremely impressed with the quality of the student’s writing which was reflected in the score of 4 in this category. In Spring 2014, nine students (all of whom received the BA in French) were evaluated for their competency in the area of written communication. These nine FLFR students, received average individual scores as follows: (See “Assessment Scores Fall 2013” and “Assessment Scores Spring 2014” attached.)

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In comparison to last year’s scores in the area of written communication with the overall average for eight students being a 3.04, this year’s overall average is slightly higher at 3.05 but largely shows no major improvement. On a positive note, in contrast to last year’s scores, no student received a score in the “1” (or deficient) range. In the writing samples that we assessed, we continue to see common errors relating to verbal tenses and, especially, the misuse of the subjunctive mood. At least half of these scores reflect a common area of student strength: the accuracy and use of vocabulary

- [Assessment Scores Fall 2013]
- [Assessment Scores Spring 2014]

How did you use findings for improvement?
Although some of our students demonstrated accuracy and fluency in written expression, the common student weakness areas related to grammar and syntax indicate that we will need to continue our efforts to increase opportunities for students to write in class, thus before students
submit written assignments for evaluation in the Senior Capstone project. With the exception of one of our courses solely dedicated to written expression--FLFR 3040 (French Composition)--the frequency of written assignments in our upper level classes (3000 or 4000 level) varies greatly. Therefore, during a French faculty section meeting, the faculty decided to increase the frequency of written assignments in upper-level French courses in order to give students feedback about their writing earlier—specifically with comments directed to grammar and syntax usage—and more often over the semester rather than, for example, assigning only one major paper that is usually turned in near the end of the term. These regular writing assignments are, for example, already in place in our elementary level (FLFR 1010 and FLFR 1020) and intermediate level (FLFR 2010 and FLFR 2020).

We have, as a French section, decided to focus on honing writing skills and have turned our attention to focus on creating assignments (including written homework in addition to essays in the upper-level classes) that will generate more samples that we can assess. In the French literature class (FLFR 3140) for example, students write drafts of their papers so that they can get feedback before turning in the completed work. While we have already begun the process of increasing writing opportunities and assessment, it is perhaps too early to see these efforts reflected in the outcome of written communication. We anticipate that students currently enrolled in classes will demonstrate higher scores when they complete the Capstone project.

Also, the French faculty has met and discussed the development of a standard of assessment that is more in line with the standards and rubrics put forth by ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) so as to move away from the subjective wording (e.g. “excellent,” “good,” etc.) of our current assessment guidelines.

During the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures assessment meeting (on September 24, 2014) the French faculty present at this meeting also discussed the possibility of changing the way in which students submit writing samples for the Capstone project. We question the validity of assessing students’ effectiveness in written communication based on their submission of writing samples that—in many cases—have merely been reworked after receiving feedback from instructors. Therefore, beginning in Spring 2015, we will implement a new measure to collect the writing sample in more of a “live” way. Students will have either a one-hour or two-hour window to read a brief literary text, a news article, or a business text and will then need to write a brief summary of the written work. The student will then be asked to respond in writing to some questions about the text.

Additional Comments