College of Liberal Arts

Foreign Languages & Literatures

Spanish, BA

Expected Outcome 1: Cultural Knowledge
Graduating seniors in Spanish will demonstrate broad knowledge of Hispanic culture.

Assessment Method 1: Culture Quiz

Assessment Method Description
Graduating seniors take a quiz on Hispanic culture consisting of 100 multiple choice questions randomly selected from the more than 140 questions in the culture-question bank that the Spanish faculty contributed from each of their respective specialties. The average score of the entire group of graduating seniors in the major is noted and compared to that of previous years. Results are stored in the department's Sharepoint site.

Findings
As part of their requirements for the senior capstone course, the 34 graduating seniors in Spanish took a quiz to test their cultural knowledge of the Hispanic world. The average score was 68.94% for the FLSP group, which is slightly below the 72.26% recorded last year. This means that out of 100 questions, they got an average of around 70 correct. While not as strong as last year, given that the questions come from the ten different fields represented in the Spanish section, and students never take classes from all the faculty, 69 out of 100 correct is not bad. And the similarity to last year's number, which was the first time we administered the quiz, lends some validity to the results.

Topics with which more than half of our students had difficulty were:
- identifying geographical features of Spain (rivers, mountain chains, location of cities)
- basic knowledge of Medieval Spain such as famous literary works, cultural groups, and political organization
- basic knowledge of 19th century Spain, such as its wars and its first constituion
- Latin American independence movements and their relation to the US and French independence
- Latin American heroes of the independence movements such as José Martí and Simón Bolivar
- Latin American literary knowledge: common terms such as the term *Boom*, and famous works like Pablo Neruda’s poem “Canto general”
- Latin American Colonial period (early political divisions, early exploration of the US)
- The current political status of Puerto Rico (commonwealth)
- The historical meaning of the 5 de Mayo celebration in Mexico
- Political parties in Mexican contemporary politics (PRI and PAN)
- Terminology related to Latin America, such as América, latinoamericano, sincretismo, mestizo, criollo
- Names of popular foods in Latin America and Spain (i.e., casados, ropa vieja, moros y cristianos)
- Names of dances in Latin America and Spain
- Spanish painting
- The voseo form, which was not frequently taught previously, but is becoming more mainstream.

For the results tabulated per content area see the Culture Quiz Results Rubric below. This table contains the percentage of students who answered questions correctly for each category.

**RESULTADOS CULTURE QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorías</th>
<th>F2012</th>
<th>S2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art / Architecture</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary history</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuisine</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current affaires</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did you use findings for improvement?

We spread the word among the instructors of Spanish that our students perform at approximately the 70% mark on the one hundred question culture test, and that to improve this the students need to get culture in all classes at all levels. To facilitate this, as agreed upon at our annual assessment meeting of the department this fall, we distributed a list of topics on the exam (not the questions themselves) for which at least fifty percent of the students were deficient. These topics, and a suggestion to teach them at opportune moments, went to the first and second year coordinators of Spanish, as well as to the Spanish faculty and lecturers. The list of culture topics is attached.

- Main rivers in Spain and their location with respect to Spanish cities.
- The meaning of the Mozarabs.
- The first Spanish Kingdom at the beginning of the Reconquista (Asturias)
- Libro de buen amor and Libro de Alexandre as examples of medieval Spanish poetry.
- The Guerra de la Independencia (1808-1814) in Spain
- The Carlista Wars in XIX century Spain
- The Spanish Constitution of 1812
- Importance of the year 1898 for Cuban Independence and the Generación del 98.
- The national identity of José Martí.
- Significance of the “Sleep of Reason” by Goya
- The year 1992 and its significance for Spain’s return to cultural prominence.
- Significance of the literary Boom in XX century Latin American literature.
- Early exploration of California. Originally thought to be an Island.
- First European to visit the US (Juan Ponce de León)
- First Europeans to visit the southern US (Juan Ponce de León).
- Early political divisions of Spanish America (Nueva España y el Virreinato del Perú).
- True meaning of the 5 de Mayo celebration.
- The current status of Puerto Rico as a commonwealth (as of 1947)
- What is included and what is not included in the term Latin America.
- What is meant by the term “América” in Spanish.
- What voseo means.
- Mexican political parties such as the PRI and the PAN
- Immigration patterns from the Old World to the New World (African slaves, European immigrants)
- The importance of Pablo Neruda’s epic poem “Canto General”
- The meaning of sincretismo in Latin American culture.
- Popular Latin American and Spanish foods.
- Popular Spanish and Latin American dances.

**Expected Outcome 2: Oral Proficiency**
Graduating seniors in Spanish will demonstrate competence in oral communication.

**Assessment Method 1: Speaking Samples**

**Assessment Method Description**
The Director of Undergraduate Studies for Spanish collects two independent samples of student speech consisting of one five-minute extemporaneous recording and one five-minute prepared recitation, both recordings submitted electronically and made during the last semester of the student's Auburn undergraduate career each Fall and Spring via a Canvas site linked to FLSP 4980, our Senior Capstone assessment course. This happens in the Fall and the Spring. Summer graduates do not currently submit oral assessment materials. Then faculty reviewers listen to the samples independently and give their evaluation of the subjects' oral proficiency on the Excel Assessment worksheet for Outcome Two: Oral Communication. The results are tabulated, announced to the Spanish faculty at the annual assessment meeting, and reported to OIRA. See Appendix A for Guidelines for Assessment Evaluators in FLSP and FLST.

**Findings**
There were 34 graduating seniors that provided samples, with each student submitting two independent recordings: a prepared reading out loud (5 min.) as well as an improvised speech (5 min.). Their average score for 2013 was 3.12/4.0. This is significantly better than last year's score of 2.9 and also better than 2.83 (2011), 2.74 (2010) and 2.85 (2009) and 2.7 (2008). The score of 3.12 suggests that the current group of students performs at the Intermediate Low level of proficiency according to the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) scale. The rubric that was distributed to the evaluators is attached to this document. This performance is about where one would expect undergraduates to be upon leaving the university setting. It is above the departmental target of 2.7 that we set when we began doing assessment (circa 2005) and shows that students are responding to the many opportunities with which we provide them to speak Spanish and that their proficiency is steadily improving. The improved proficiency is also attributable to the continued growth of our abroad programs.

Students still show some weakness in the pronunciation of the "Spanish rolling 'r'"; and show interference of English pronunciation of consonants and
vowels in their Spanish, but these errors almost never obstructed comprehension. Occasionally, they also get the accent wrong in unfamiliar words they draw on for their improvised speech. This is OK and to be expected. It is not problematic for comprehension. It would be nice if this pronunciation limited itself to unfamiliar words, but the weakest students also have difficulty with familiar words such as (graduarse!).

In the area of speech strategies, students do not apply proper Spanish methods of pausing speech, such as using the "este este este," while they think of the next thing they want to say: "umm" is not Spanish. However, at least one student did appropriately use "pues".

Generally, vocabulary is still limited, and often students do not seek to vary word choice in the course of a presentation. The weaker or less ambitious students do not speak creatively during their five minutes of improvised speech and do not wander into unfamiliar territory; instead they prefer to stay in safe zones (their AU classes, the family they lived with in Spain, etc.). There is still a lingering difficulty among the weaker students to make agreement. These students also have problems with grammar (ser vs. estar, tan vs. tanto, por vs. para, preterite vs. imperfect etc.). The weakest students will even say "yo estudiar"(note that this student in particular says she was about to leave for a semester abroad!!). At the same time, as many as three quarters of the students have worked through these problems of basic grammar and speak comfortably in Spanish, albeit slowly.

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

At last year's annual assessment meeting (Oct. 2013), the faculty decided that they wanted to continue to work on oral proficiency as a group goal for the academic year that we are assessing now. We did not know it then, but this is in perfect alignment with what students said during this year's student satisfaction survey. It should be noted that at that time, the guidance from the CLA Assessment Committee was to pick out one aspect of the major program to work on.

As a preliminary observation, one might point to our very strict attendance policy in the first and second year of Spanish, which the faculty recently voted to reaffirm. Whereas, one might question the pertinence of class attendance to oral proficiency, it must be noted that if students are not in class, then they are not practicing their speaking. The classroom setting provides the main source of practice for speaking in Spanish for students living in Auburn. In light of this fact, at the upper levels a number of us are using Canvas' new attendance feature, which lowers students' grades each time they are absent; they are quick to notice this and we have noticed that attendance has improved so far this term. Their ability to speak Spanish should in theory improve as well.
The following comments are divided into First Year, Second Year, and Upper-Level.

In our **First Year Program** we have included some new conversation activities:

**Pronunciation Recordings submitted though Canvas.** Some require repetition of a native speaker and some are more personalized where the students respond to prompts. In other pronunciation activities, students must work together with a partner to produce a recording of an original dialogue.

**Oral Assignments submitted through Canvas.** A new component here is the group video project. Groups of three students are assigned one of ten situations (hospital, restaurant, roommates, etc.). They then must role-play their situation and record a video of 5 - 8 minutes in length.

The First Year program continues to promote student participation in the extracurricular **Mesa Española** by awarding small amounts of extra credit for attending and speaking in Spanish in this informal setting.

As an area of improvement to work on over the next year in the Elementary Spanish Program, we have chosen student preparation for class. Students must study the grammar concepts at home the night before, and they should do the assigned short activities associated with the grammar. In doing so, the students will be able to more effectively practice/produce the target language than is currently the case, especially in group work. Lack of practice in class means little or no development in oral proficiency. We identified this weakness because instructors in this program get the impression that on the whole students do not adequately prepare the lesson ahead of time. After speaking with several of the instructors/lecturers, they agree that a simple daily pop quiz on the grammar studied the night before might be enough to encourage the students into preparing correctly for class. Another solution could be to give a grade for completing the short everyday assignments.

For the **Second Year Program**, the coordinator has implemented a new speaking assignment in both courses (FLSP 2010 and 2020) that extends the learning community beyond Auburn and beyond the US into Latin America, so that students can interact with real people abroad. TalkAbroad is an online platform that provides opportunities to converse, one-on-one, with native-Spanish speakers in Latin America for 30-minute sessions. Conversation takes place through video conferencing (Skype), and partners are available from at least five different countries. The TalkAbroad assignment consists of a completed conversation and a writing task (for example, written interview questions and responses). This new conversational tool also takes full
advantage of the department's Multimedia Center in Haley 3230, which is equipped with all the microphones, cameras, and software that the students need.

The Second Year Program Coordinator has identified one area that can be improved over the next academic year: uniform grading across the sections. This will streamline administration of this new speaking component and in general motivate students in sections they perceive to be "easier" to study harder to get the grade they want. Studying harder for grades enhances all areas of language development, including speaking. Similar grading standards across the sections can be achieved by means of a common rubric for all components of the course. Specifically, the Coordinator plans to refine the current grading rubric for TalkAbroad so that instructors can better convey their expectations to the students.

In our **Upper-level courses**, we worked to provide students with more opportunities to speak Spanish in the classroom setting by implementing a policy of Spanish only in the classroom. We also successfully promoted the abroad programs in Costa Rica, Salamanca, Madrid, and Alcalá, which we find to be the best way to push students towards improved oral proficiency. Students also tell us in the Student Survey that the abroad experience gives them the boost they need in speaking. We have extended the classroom to provide more exposure to spoken Spanish with last year's Hispanic Film Festival for which we received a grant to help pay for five films. The festival was very well attended and students heard Spanish and met members of Latino community in Auburn with whom they had the opportunity to practice their speaking in an informal, comfortable setting. With regards to our course offerings, the department currently offers four sections of Spanish Conversation because students in the past have complained about not being able to enroll in Conversation. In total, the department offers ten different upper-level courses, most of which have multiple sections, which we believe addresses student concerns about not being able to practice their Spanish because they cannot get into a course. Among our new offerings is *Spanish for the Healthcare Professions*, given as FLSP 4030 (Spring 2013), which gives students in the ability to practice their speaking in a setting tailored to their career needs. This course is scheduled to be offered again this Spring 2014. We have developed a new course in *Topics in Hispanic Music* to give students the tool of music as a means to access natural language in context inside and outside the university setting. Singing along with Spanish lyrics gives a tremendous boost to language cadence and articulation. Similarly, we received approval for the offering of FLSP 3140 *Topics in Hispanic Film*, which also encourages students to listen to native speakers in a context outside of the university, and to talk about films in Spanish. Since there is a close connection between what one hears and what one is able to say, we hope...
that by taking advantage of the mediums of music and film, oral proficiency in Spanish will improve in our program, and continue to develop after students graduate.

From an enrollment management perspective, this is the second year that we have made use of a new placement test that seeks to move appropriate-level students from high school directly into more advanced courses than FLSP 1010 or 1020. The hope is that these students will be able to take more of our upper-level courses and improve their oral proficiency.

At our annual assessment meeting this Fall 2013, the Spanish faculty chose to continue to work on oral proficiency as one of its areas of focus over the next year.

Finally, two professors in our department received a grant to train department faculty in language proficiency. They brought an ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) specialist to campus and trained eight faculty members in Spanish and other languages on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines as well as on the administering of the ACTFL oral proficiency exam. The newly trained faculty put together a a very well attended faculty development workshop during September 2013 to suggest ways in which we could improve our teaching and assessment of oral proficiency through familiarity with the ACTFL standards.

**Expected Outcome 3: Student satisfaction**

Graduating seniors will leave Auburn with a sense that their major program was well designed, well managed, and beneficial.

**Assessment Method 1: Student Survey**

**Assessment Method Description**
The instructor of FLSP 4980 administers an anonymous questionnaire to the enrolled students. In a series questions, the survey asks about strengths and weaknesses in our program and suggestions for future courses. Responses are gathered, summarized, shared with the Spanish faculty, stored in Qualtrics, and reported to OIRA

**Findings**
Student response rates were high, around 90% of graduating seniors of F2012 and S2013. Strengths of the program were the small class sizes, the section-wide insistence on the use of Spanish in class, the diversity of the faculty, and many of the courses, including Spanish Phonetics, without doubt the most celebrated course we offer, as well as Syntax, and many of the upper level
courses, too many to list here. Also, many many students speak to how beneficial their abroad experience was. Among the weaknesses was the desire for more grammar and an overwhelming feeling that we need to do more to promote fluency in speaking. Numerous students mentioned that they found our program to be disorganized, both at the level of the individual class and as an orderly program, that is, one in which the student proceeds through a logical sequence of coursework. Some students were still frustrated at the lack of availability of classes, even though majors should not have difficulty enrolling in upper-level classes. Among the courses they wish there were more of were "fun" electives, linguistics and "practical" Spanish courses such Spanish as for the health care profession.

How did you use findings for improvement?
We distributed the findings to the Spanish faculty and also opened up access to the Qualtrics site housing the survey results so that individual faculty can see for themselves what the students say. We offered a course in Spanish for the Health Care Professions. To address the students’ desire for more grammar-oriented courses, the Spanish section just approved a proposal for a new minor in Spanish linguistics, which still needs to be approved at the college and university levels. To appear more organized, I am going to suggest to the Spanish faculty at a meeting scheduled for Oct. 16, 2013 that we add a measure of sequence to the program, and require all students entering the third year to take FLSP 3020, Spanish Syntax. However, I cannot guarantee that they (or the Chair) will approve it. We agreed at our annual assessment meeting this fall that, as a section, we are going to use Canvas to present our courses in a more orderly fashion, by posting the syllabus and assignments on Canvas before the course starts. Many of the faculty are younger and are teaching courses for the first or second time, so they have not perfected the curriculum. We feel that over time this faculty will mature and hammer out the kinks in their courses from the beginning so as to not have to make modifications to the existing syllabus, which we believe gives an appearance of not being organized. Finally, regarding the desire for more grammar, we are going to offer a course in Advanced Spanish Syntax (FLSP 5020), which was previously reserved only for the summer semester. This new offering is pending the availability of a faculty member (specialist in linguistics) to teach it and student interest to make sufficient enrollment. For measures taken to address student concerns about their own fluency, see the section in this report on Oral Proficiency.

Expected Outcome 4: Writing

Graduating seniors will communicate coherently in writing

Assessment Method 1: writing samples
Assessment Method Description
The Director of Undergraduate Studies in Spanish gathers student writing samples of five-typed pages of the student’s own work from the previous
twelve months from all graduating seniors via a Canvas site linked to FLSP 4980 Senior Capstone assessment course. This happens in the Fall and in the Spring. Summer graduates do not currently submit written assessment materials. Faculty reviewers independently read the samples and give their evaluation of the subjects' written proficiency in the Excel Assessment worksheet for Outcome One: Writing. The results are tabulated, announced to the Spanish faculty at the annual assessment meeting, and reported to OIRA.

Rubric for the Assessment of Student Writing: Graduating Seniors

Put a percentage grade (0%-100%) in each category. Where appropriate, use the ACTFL writing standards for Upper-Intermediate. If a student achieves the Upper-Intermediate level in the writing category, then his/her percentage would be 90%+.

| Student Name: |
| Major |
| Clear Thesis or Main Idea |
| Apparent and Logical Structure |
| Depth of Thought and Analysis |
| Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, format, etc.) |
| Agreement (verbs, nouns, adjectives) |
| Vocabulary (appropriate, non-repetitive) |
| Transitional Words and Phrases |
| Verb Tenses and Conjugation |
| Verb Mood |
| Prepositions |
| Determiners |

This student’s strengths are:

This student’s weaknesses are:

Findings

The number of graduates this year was 34, which marks a 20% drop from last year’s 42. Surprisingly, we also noted in the 2012 report that 42 marked a 20% drop from the 2011 level of graduates noted as 53. Clearly, we need to study this trend over a longer period of time and determine why. For the 34 graduating seniors, the average score reported for Writing was 3.45/4.0, much better than last year's worrisome score of 2.86/4.0, and better than previous years: 2.92 (2011) and 3.0 (2010), and 2.76 (2009), and 2.32 (2008). I think that faculty took to heart last year's red flag that we had
dropped in writing over two years and that we need to write at all levels of our curriculum.
Among the strengths our students demonstrated in written expression is the ability to express themselves in a way that is fully comprehensible to readers despite grammar errors. Also, one finds that the students, on the whole (at least 75%), organize their thoughts and present them in a logical and coherent narrative.
Among the weaknesses of our graduating seniors one notes the following categories of errors:
--Prepositions: e.g. deciden a vivir (very common), “ayudó España formar” (also common), los territorios bajos de su control
--Determiners: e.g. esto amigo, la área, “la motociclista, Juan”, “Temas del amor son los arquetipos más profundos del mundo” etc.
--Numbers: e.g. los setentas, 700 millón
--Relative pronouns: “ella sabe todo que ocurre” (common), “Pepe el Romano quien todas las mujeres están enamoradas”; “una historia de colonización cual afectó”
--Gender agreement: otros personas, nuestros sillas, la pagamiento de tasas, etc. (far too common)
--Verb agreement: “el conductor involucrase”, “Cuando examinar mi propio uso, yo...”, “El mayorista compran”
--Reciprocal action: comunicar “el uno del otro” vs. comunicarse
--Verbs: se parece vs. parece; Ser vs. Estar: eran usándolo; perfect tenses: “hemos encontrados”; passive voice: “estas acciones fueron prohibidos”
--Comparisons/superlatives: “el hombre y la mujer estarán la más contentos”
--Mechanics: “las islas canarias”, Como Agua para Chocolate (capitalization is a problem in general), “sentamientos” for sentimientos, responsible, “personas actuales” for real people

In short, despite the fact that majors who have completed the FLSP curriculum have taken grammar in first year, second year (if they did not place out of either or both of these sequences), and in at least two courses at the third year level (Syntax and Composition), it is apparent that this is not enough. In the Student Survey, several students commented that they felt that they needed more practice with grammar and wished there were offerings at the 4000 level specifically in grammar.

To get more specific data on student strengths and weaknesses in writing, we have created the attached Rubric for Student Writing that the reviewers will use when assessing student writing in the next assessment cycle (F2013-S2014). The data in the rubrics for graduating seniors will be tabulated to identify trends in student writing.
How did you use findings for improvement?

The Spanish faculty has participated actively in the university-wide mission of improving student writing. We require students to write at all levels of our curriculum, from paragraph-length assignments in first-year, to five-page research papers in the senior level literature, culture, and Business courses. In FLSP 3020 Spanish Syntax, essentially a straightforward grammar course, students write two papers, one an interpretation of a short story, and the second a film review. Another section of this course requires students to do a written analysis (four pages) of a speech sample to determine the level of proficiency of the speaker. In our Composition class (3040) students write eleven papers that include all types of writing: description, narrative, argumentative, editorial, etc. In Introduction to Literature they write short interpretations of literary texts and a longer term paper. In Business Spanish 1 (FLSP 4310), the students do a project that consists of eight written reports. Business Spanish 2 (4320) requires an extensive written investigation of a Spanish speaking country, in addition to many shorter written translation activities. The Masterpieces of Spanish literature and the Topics in Literature, Culture, and Language, as well as the film course require research papers. In short, nearly every course in the FLSP curriculum requires student writing. Additionally, the Spanish section is a strong proponent of requiring rewrites of papers. At our annual assessment meeting this fall, the faculty agreed to follow the initiative of some of its members to begin to use the Canvas speed grader to give quick on-line feedback of student writing and to require our students to make corrections and to resubmit written assignments. This has already been implemented in some of our courses, such as Composition (3040), Syntax (3020), and Business Spanish (4310) where students do three versions of a given assignment before they are done.

To address the grammar deficiency in student writing, as I mention elsewhere in this assessment report, we will attempt to require all students to take Spanish Syntax (FLSP 3020) as soon as they enter the third year. It is hoped that this will give them a solid basis from the start, which they can then apply in their remaining FLSP coursework. We discussed grammar difficulty at our annual assessment meeting, so faculty are aware of the need to dedicate classtime to review grammar at all levels of the program. However, frankly, grammar has fallen out of favor, as the trend in foreign language education over the last two decades has been to promote speaking at the expense of grammar, and most of our faculty adheres to this new “communicative method.”

Concerning our assessment model for written expression, the Spanish faculty will require students produce another writing sample, which will involve writing about an unfamiliar topic in a controlled setting. It is hoped that this will give us a more accurate picture of student writing by eliminating the risk students use on-line translators in their writing, and that they turn in papers that have already been corrected by faculty members. This will be implemented in S2014.
Appendix A

Guidelines for Assessment Evaluators in FLSP and FLST

Speaking:

The following standards for speaking can be viewed at this website with samples: http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/speaking

Intermediate High- 4*

Intermediate High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with the routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to their work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence.

Intermediate High speakers can handle a substantial number of tasks associated with the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance of all of these tasks all of the time. Intermediate High speakers can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time. Typically, when Intermediate High speakers attempt to perform Advanced-level tasks, their speech exhibits one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to carry out fully the narration or description in the appropriate major time frame, an inability to maintain paragraph-length discourse, or a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary.

Intermediate High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident (e.g., use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations), and a pattern of gaps in communication may occur.

Intermediate Low- 3

Speakers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target-language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information; for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, and some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate Low sublevel, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests
for information. They are also able to ask a few appropriate questions. Intermediate Low speakers manage to sustain the functions of the Intermediate level, although just barely.

Intermediate Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors into short statements and discrete sentences. Their responses are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language. In spite of frequent misunderstandings that may require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Novice Mid-2

Speakers at the Novice Mid sublevel communicate minimally by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may say only two or three words at a time or give an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor’s words. Novice Mid speakers may be understood with difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics and perform functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.

Novice Low-1

Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

Writing:

The following standards for writing can be viewed at this website with samples: http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/writing

Intermediate High-4

Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often but not always of paragraph length, and they typically contain some evidence of breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of
appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of Intermediate High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension.

**Intermediate Low-3**

Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete.

**Novice Mid-2**

Writers at the Novice Mid sublevel can reproduce from memory a modest number of words and phrases in context. They can supply limited information on simple forms and documents, and other basic biographical information, such as names, numbers, and nationality. Novice Mid writers exhibit a high degree of accuracy when writing on well-practiced, familiar topics using limited formulaic language. With less familiar topics, there is a marked decrease in accuracy. Errors in spelling or in the representation of symbols may be frequent. There is little evidence of functional writing skills. At this level, the writing may be difficult to understand even by those accustomed to non-native writers.

**Novice Low-1**

Writers at the Novice Low sublevel are able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases, form letters in an alphabetic system, and copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.

*Corresponds to the number rating on the assessment worksheet*