2013-2014 Assessment Report

College of Liberal Arts

Foreign Languages & Literatures

Spanish-International Trade, BA

Expected Outcome 1: Cultural/Business Knowledge
Graduating seniors in Spanish for International Trade will be able to understand Hispanic culture/business texts.

Assessment Method 1: Culture / Business Quiz

Assessment Method Description
Graduating FLST 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 generated from each of their respective specialties. These students then take a business specific exam consisting of 67 questions based on the required textbook from the senior-level sequence in Business Spanish (FLSP 4310 & 4320). The average scores of the entire group of graduating seniors in the FLST major is noted and compared to that of previous years. Results are stored in the department's Sharepoint site.

- Evaluators Averages 2014

Findings
For the FLST majors, the average score on the Culture Quiz was 61%. This is surprisingly lower than last year's score of 70.25%, and lower than 72.26% (2012). The FLST majors did slightly better than the FLSP majors whose score this year for the culture quiz was 66%. For the Business Quiz the average score was also 61%. Since we have only given this quiz for one semester, the score cannot be compared to results from past students.

On the Culture Quiz, the 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 constitution
- Latin American independence movements and their relation to the US and French independence
- Latin American heroes of the independence movements such as José Martí
- 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 chicano
- Names of dances in Latin America and Spain
- Spanish painting (Goya and Dali)
- The voseo form, which was not frequently taught previously, but is becoming more mainstream

Again, with respect to the culture quiz, nearly all students know who wrote Don Quijote and who the Catholic Kings were. They are able to identify the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, the Venezuelan Liberator Simon Bolivar, and the conquistador Hernan Cortes, as well as the year Columbus discovered America. They identified the famous painting Guernica by Picasso, and they recognized famous dishes in Hispanic cuisine, and named the advanced civilizations of American indigenous peoples, among other things. However, when they are asked about the first European to visit what is now the United States, the true meaning of the Cinco de Mayo celebration, the beginnings of the Reconquista in medieval Spain, and the first constitution in Spain, the students overwhelmingly answer incorrectly. One could say that with common knowledge of Hispanic culture that we present to students in first and second year Spanish, as well as in their required classes (FLSP 3010, 3020, 3030, 3040, 3100), most students assimilate what they are supposed to learn. However, since many students do not take the civilization sequences (3110, 3120 and 3210, 3220) from where a lot of the culture quiz questions derive, they never learn about Spanish and Spanish American history/civilization in enough depth to score well on this type of quiz. At our annual assessment meeting, Sept. 24, the faculty showed some interest in requiring students enrolled in FLSP 4980 to work three hours per week to acquire more specific knowledge of Spanish and Latin American history and earn the one credit for this course. This proposal is on the agenda for the next Spanish faculty meeting, because it will need the approval of the Spanish faculty. See the attached Excel spreadsheets for the Culture Quiz and Business
Quiz complete results.

- Business Quiz Results by Student
- Business Quiz Results F2014
- Culture Quiz by question F2013
- Culture Quiz by question S2014
- Culture Quiz Individual Results

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
The Spanish faculty is not quite sure how to interpret these results. Several members of the faculty are not convinced that they provide any valuable information about student achievement, especially with respect to the small group of FLST majors, as the margin of error is large. At the same time, the business quiz has only been taken by four students, whose score varied from 39% to 76%. We need to accumulate more data. As a means to approach these quiz results, the faculty has proposed to map the new curriculum we are developing to the stated objectives of the major. How this will be done should be decided in Fall 2014 and then carried out in the spring of 2015. In the mean time, the faculty teaching the business classes has been made aware of the quiz questions to make sure they cover the material.

**Additional Comments**

**Expected Outcome 2: Oral Proficiency**
Students 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.
Findings
We had six graduating seniors in FLST for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. Three faculty members assessed the collected samples and determined that their average score was 2.94/4.0. This is lower than last year's score of 3.34/4.0, but about in line with or better than previous years: 2.9 (2012), 2.5 (2011), 2.75 (2010), and 2.78 (2009). The score of 2.94 suggests that the average graduating senior in FLST is speaking at near the Intermediate Low level according to the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) scale. This is what we might expect the average non-native to achieve, although some might argue that the better students are capable of reaching Intermediate Mid and Intermediate High. In fact we had one out of six majors who all three evaluators said attained a 4.0 (Intermediate High), which is an achievement for an English native. Two of three evaluators believed a second student was also at the 4.0 (Intermediate High) level (see the attached Excel worksheet). It should be noted that this group performs similarly to the FLSP group, and also that it is a much smaller group, with a larger margin of statistical error.

- Evaluators Averages 2014
- Standards ACTFL Guidelines 2012
- standards correlation between ACTFL and our Rubric

How did you use findings for improvement?
The Spanish section of Foreign Languages and Literatures has taken two important steps in addressing student performance in oral proficiency. First, many of us attended a two-day workshop in August 2014 given by an ACTFL proficiency officer. We immersed ourselves in the ACTFL standards in order to more accurately evaluate our students. At the same time we looked at ways to move students to the next level of proficiency. Secondly, the Spanish section is revising its undergraduate curriculum. In the new model that we are looking at, Conversation would go from being a single course to being part of a two-semester sequence, called Conversation and Composition. We believe that in this way we will be able to work with students over the course of two semesters on their speaking. Additionally, we are considering creating a required senior level course in conversation that would serve as our assessment mechanism. Decisions about our major requirements will be finalized later in fall semester.

We have continued to take students abroad to work on their speaking proficiency because those that go abroad learn how to speak. It total we sent over 120 undergraduate students abroad. Additionally, we continue to build the semester internship program in Seville, which is a huge boost to oral proficiency for those who participate.

Additional Comments
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 of 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
Strengths of the Spanish majors according to our graduating seniors were the focus on grammar, the knowledgeable and enthusiastic faculty and staff, the small class sizes. Students favorite classes were phonetics, Introduction to Literature, Spanish for the Health Professions, Hispanic Film, Civilization, and Commercial Spanish Translation.

Weaknesses identified by graduating seniors were not enough conversation classes and focus on conversation in general (overwhelming number of students mention this), varying levels among the students in a given class, and miscommunication between instructors and students, among other things (See the attached Survey). Several students said they thought that abroad study should be mandatory. Students also mentioned too much reliance on technology. A number of students found no weaknesses.

For the courses the students would like to see added, most common suggestions relate to conversation and additional grammar. Students also felt there should be more of an emphasis in the program on Hispanic culture.

In general, most students found their FLSP and FLST major to be beneficial to them.

- Survey Complete 2013-2014

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. Based on student
preference for the Spanish for the Healthcare professions, we decided to continue to offer this course this year, and to get the course approved as a catalog course. To address student desire for more grammar-oriented courses, the faculty is considering a linguistics track for the major with the creation of a course in Intro to Spanish Linguistics, as well as a course in formal Spanish Syntax, taught by a linguist. This new track for the major will need to be finalized later this fall 2014, as we continue with curriculum reform of the major(s). To address student concerns about a disorganized curriculum, we have voted to make FLSP 3020, a required "gateway" course for all upper-level classes. At this point it is not clear how this will play out as we redesign our curriculum, but certainly the idea to have a more prescribed and sequenced curriculum is fundamental to our curriculum redesign. In response to student requests for more conversation, the Spanish faculty is planning to create a senior level course in Spanish conversation. Not only would this course provide more practice in speaking as the students are about to leave the our undergraduate program, it would also serve as an assessment mechanism to gather materials and assess speaking proficiency.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 4: Writing
Students 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.

- Worksheet Writing and Speech 2014
Findings
Three faculty members evaluated the written submissions of 6 graduating FLST seniors for Fall 2013, Spring 2014. Their average written score was 3.16/4.0. This is significantly lower than last year's score of 3.5, but significantly better than previous years: 2.86 (2012), 2.26 (2011), 2.78 (2009), with the exception of 3.27 (2010). The small sample may help to explain the extreme variation in student performance due to a larger margin of statistical error in the results. The faculty evaluated specific areas of student writing, and found the strongest scores were in the areas of "Clear thesis or main idea" (3.56) and "Apparent and logical structure" (3.56), and the weakest were in "Agreement" (3.0), and "Determiners" (3.12). See the attached Excel worksheet for the evaluators complete reports. On the whole, according to the ACTFL standards, the writing proficiency of the average graduating FLST senior is between Intermediate Low (3.0) and Intermediate Mid (3.5), which is about what we would expect for a non-native student of Spanish. Some might argue that the better students are capable of achieving Intermediate Mid or even Intermediate High, and in fact, one FLSP students scored at Intermediate High according to all three evaluators, and another received a score of 4.0 according to two evaluators (and a 3.0 from the third evaluator).

• Evaluators Averages 2014
• Standards ACTFL Guidelines 2012
• standards correlation between ACTFL and our Rubric

How did you use findings for improvement?
From the feedback we received from the Office of Institutional Research in the spring of 2014, we modified our evaluator form to include a breakdown of writing components (see attached). This allows us to identify specific strengths and weakness in student writing. From this year's pool, we observed that the weakest part of student writing is in basic Spanish grammar particularly the verbs, and agreement. As part of our curriculum revision, we are expanding the study of Spanish grammar from the current one-semester course in Syntax (FLSP 3020) into a two-semester sequence to cover grammar over a year's time, thus providing more input and more practice. The Spanish faculty is also considering a senior-level course in advanced grammar to refresh and refine students' skills before graduation. It is not certain whether the advanced grammar will be a requirement or an elective. Final decisions regarding the proposed new curriculum will come in late fall 2014.
The Spanish faculty also attended a two-day workshop in August 2014 to improve their familiarity with the ACTFL writing standards. It is hoped that we are more capable of accurate assessment of student writing level, and that we are more aware of teaching methods that will move students up to their next level.
Finally, the Spanish faculty is concerned that the writing samples we have been collecting may already contain feedback/corrections from our staff. Thus this fall 2014 in our senior capstone course FLSP 4980 we are implementing a sit-down
proctored writing session to be sure that the work that students give us accurate reflects their individual ability. The questions that we pose to the students for them to develop into essays, will also help us to identify the types of writing we expect them to do. Thus we can be sure to include these topics, styles, and skills in class writing.

Additional Comments