

Assessment Reports 2016-17

Department of World Languages (WLLC)

August 2017

WLLC 2003 Assessments

Spanish 2003 Assessment

During the Spring 2017 semester, our department administered pre- and post-test exams in our Spanish 2003 (Intermediate Spanish I) courses. These exams were designed so that we could analyze students' knowledge of the Spanish language at the start of the semester (pre-test) and then again at the end of the semester (post-test).

Students completed the two exams individually by visiting the Language Learning Center during the first week of class (pre-test), and then at the end of the semester (post-test). The Language Center was used to ensure that students completed the two exams in a controlled environment. Pursuant to our assessment procedures, we examined 6 major skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary/grammar, and culture) so as to gain the best possible view of where students stood at the start of the semester, and then where they stood at the end of the semester. Our statistical results, based on an average of 25 students, were as follows:

Pre to Post

Language Skill	Pre-Test Avg. (100%)	Post-Test Avg. (100%)	Amount of Increase
Listening Comprehension	69.28	76.4	+7%
Reading	55.71	66.4	+11%
Vocabulary/Grammar	41.2	47.66	+6.5%
Writing	75.9	78.67	+3%
Speaking	71.77	89.2	+18%
Cultural Knowledge	43.46	52.3	+9%
Total average	60.56	69.12	+9%

We are pleased that students increased their knowledge of the Spanish language in all six skills, from pre-test to post-test. Overall, their average increased from a low D level, to a low C level (average). Of the six areas, the greatest increase came in reading (a receptive skill) and speaking (a production skill). This is not terribly surprising as these two skills receive the greatest amount of attention over the course of the semester – reading, as they prepare their work; speaking as they are encouraged to interact within the

classroom environment. That said, while satisfied that students increased in all areas, there is certainly room to make adjustments to help further enhance their language skills. We propose the following:

- a) Certainly, in the case of speaking, listening comprehension is an important part of the interaction process. To address this concern, we propose to make some pedagogical adjustments to help increase students' contact with audio-based materials (digital video and audio) to better develop their ear for languages. Since we do teach Spanish in context, these same video/audio files could also contain cultural components to help bolster their knowledge of Spanish culture as well. In terms of activities that coincide with these culturally based videos, our pedagogical designs could emphasize written summaries of what they have learned, utilizing the important vocabulary and grammar that coincides with the video in question. Thus, all four of the "lesser" changed skills could be greatly accommodated just through the increase in audio-based activities throughout the course of the semester.
- b) Research shows that learning in context is far more beneficial and revealing of the extent to which students learn a language than is a focus on individual word items. That said, examining students' vocabulary and grammar based on individual word items and activities may not be the best approach to take. Instead, we would argue that through listening, speaking, reading, and writing, we can better examine the overall quality of their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Thus, we propose eliminating this section and or skill and consider it a part of the five remaining items.
- c) Overall, we received an insufficient number of participants in this assessment. Students only voluntarily participated, and between the different sections, we could only tally a total of 25 students on average. And too, based on anecdotal evidence of lab monitors, some students simply selected numbers at random rather than giving us a more precise view of their learning. Consequently, we do not believe that we have as accurate a result as we would like, though we are confident that the increase from pre-test to post-test is a true portrayal of our students' growth. One way to increase the number of participants, and to get a more accurate picture of their knowledge, would be to accompany each class to the Language Center (pre and post) to complete the exams together.

This is our first attempt at an assessment within a computer environment. Overall, we are satisfied that we are helping our students to develop their language skills in Spanish 2003, confident that our instruction is meeting our proposed learning outcomes.

French 2003 Assessment

FREN 2003 ASSESSMENT EXAM RESULTS, Spring 2017

Students in every section of 2003 were given the same exam at the beginning and end of the semester. This exam included multiple choice exercises on a wide range of grammar points:

interrogative pronouns and adjectives, definite and indefinite articles, the imperative mode, the near future, the passé composé, present tense, adjective formation and placement, possessive adjectives, partitive articles, pronominal verbs, passé composé vs. imparfait, relative pronouns, object pronouns, subjunctive, negative expressions, and *si* clauses.

Pre-test results:

2003 Section 1

A 0
B 2
C 2
D 5
F 14

2003 Section 2

A 1
B 1
C 2
D 3
F 16

2003 Section 3

A 0
B 0
C 3
D 3
F 6

2003 Section 7

A 0
B 1
C 4
D 2
F 7

Post-test results:

2003 Section 1

A 0
B 3
C 3
D 4
F 11

2003 Section 2

A 1
B 2
C 4
D 4
F 10

Unfortunately the sections 3 and 7 exams were combined in one envelope, so there is no way to tell which section is which (there is a space at the top of the exam for students to write which section they're in, but most didn't know and left it blank; there's no way they would have known. We can police this better in the future).

All the same, here are the results for those sections combined:

A 1
 B 2
 C 5
 D 8
 F 10

It should be noted that students are required to take this exam both times (this is spelled out in the 2003 syllabus and reflected in the grade breakdown for the course).

Focusing solely on the results of sections 1 and 2, for the reason stated above, then:

Pre-test section 1 average: 54.82
 Post-test section 1 average: 62.19
 A difference of 7.37

Pre-test section 2 average: 54.52
 Post-test section 2 average: 62.28
 A difference of 7.76

Obviously the averages are not good! But at least there is improvement.

Italian 2003 Assessment

Spring 2017 Assessment

A short True/ False and Multiple Choice pre-assessment test was administered on Wednesday, January 25th and the post-assessment test on Monday, May 8th by Mr. Anthony Sargenti. All 12 students were given listening comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing (T/F and short answers), and culture exercises to complete. The biggest overall improvement was in vocabulary; the smallest improvement was in listening comprehension. We believe that some of the results may be attributed to students guessing on T/F exercises. Here is a further breakdown of the results:

Pre-assessment results:

Listening: 12 A's

Vocabulary: 1 B, 2 D's, 9 F's

Grammar: 1 D, 11 F's

Reading and writing: 1 C, 1 D, 10 F's

Culture: 2 A's, 4 C's, 6 F's

Post-assessment results with average improvement rates:

Listening: 12 A's; 0%

Vocabulary: 6 A's, 5 B's, 1 D; 51%

Grammar: 1 B, 2 D's, 9 F's; 18%

Reading and writing: 5 A's, 2 B's, 2 C's, 1 D, 2 F's; 29%

Culture: 3 A's, 2 C's, 7 F's; 10%

Based on the first pre-assessment results, we will focus more on developing the listening and grammatical skills of our students and place more emphasis on the cultural component. It may also be worthwhile to change parts of the assessment, requiring students to write discrete sentences and/or respond to questions.

BA Program Assessments

Classical Studies BA

Program Goals and Learning Outcomes:

CLST majors and minors have been meeting the program goals of a broad knowledge and critical understanding of classical culture, language, and literature. They have developed communication skills and critical problem solving, and they have gained a basic proficiency in Latin and/or ancient Greek language.

Assessment Results:

The CLST faculty have monitored the process of our students. CLST majors have produced in-depth research papers for their capstone course (CLST 4003H), have written Latin and Greek examinations in their upper-level courses, and have been graduating with high grade-point averages. CLST faculty have evaluated students' papers, projects, and language examinations, and have determined that CLST students have achieved the desired program goals and learning outcomes.

The pre- and post-tests in Latin 2003 (fall, 2016) provide numerical evidence of student improvement: in that semester, student translation scores improved 51% (41% to 96%), and grammar scores rose 35% (45% to 80%).

Furthermore, we have pre- and post-test survey results for CLST 1013 (Intro: CLST, Rome) and CLST 2323 (Mythology). These also show solid advances in student learning.

Data are available upon request.

French BA Assessment

French Undergraduate Assessment 2016-17

The French faculty regularly meet to discuss the progress and performance of the students in the French major, and make adjustments to their curriculum and instruction as indicated by the results. Retention and graduation rates in the French program are routinely strong and well above the College average. Results for 2016-17 on the measures described in the FRENBA assessment plan are as follows:

Results from FREN 4003 (Grammar & Composition)

Fall 2016:

advanced mid: 9

advanced low: 6

intermediate high: 7

intermediate mid: 1

intermediate low/novice high: 0

Spring 2017

advanced mid: 5

advanced low 8

intermediate high 4

intermediate mid 3

intermediate low/novice high 1

Results of FREN 4033 (Oral Proficiency):

Fall 2016:

advanced mid 7

advanced low 3

intermediate high 2

intermediate mid 0

intermediate low/novice high 0

Spring 2017:

advanced mid 3

advanced low 6

intermediate high 2

intermediate mid 1

intermediate low/novice high 0

Assessment of Critical Writing Skills/Textual Analysis:

FREN 4243 (Francophone Lit): Fall 2016

11 out of 11 students earned a C or better (requirement for major)

FREN 4663 (Short Story): Spring 2017

9 out of 10 students earned a C or better (requirement for major)

Conclusion:

Our majors continue to meet our expectations with regards to their learning outcomes. We do not foresee any changes to our assessment process in the immediate future.

German BA

2017 Goethe Institute German Proficiency Exams

Summary: Each year, the German program at the University of Arkansas makes Goethe Institute German Proficiency Exams (B1, B2, C1 levels) available to our majors, minors, and graduate students (as well as interested others). We are a certified testing center; examiners must undergo rigorous certification every five years, and retrain for each exam every three years. Every two years, we renew our exam license. This year, thirteen of our students sat for a B1 exam (two sat for a B2 exam, and passed), and the data (see below) reveal both the shifting emphasis of the exam and areas of improvement in preparing our students. The exam recently shifted away from a grammar emphasis to communication modes emphasis. Because our program has typically been grammar oriented, our students did well in passive skills and struggled somewhat with productive skills. We took steps to increase the amount of production, and the results are clear from the exams: across the board, our students now excel at speaking and writing; the scores clearly show that we need to increase our focus on reading and listening, however. We have discussed introducing more sustained reading at all levels, and listening incrementally at each level. We will moreover be taking steps for the 2017-2018 year to implement more contextualized grammar, so that accuracy comes not only through rote learning but also through reading and listening comprehension. Below is a thorough description of the exam, followed by a brief analysis of the spring 2017 results.

As noted in the German assessment document, the German program asks that majors and minors sit for a Goethe Institute Proficiency Exam, typically in the sixth-semester German course (GERM 4003). This course is geared toward preparing students to pass the basic proficiency exam, described below. The Goethe Institute Proficiency Exam is an internationally-recognized assessment tool. We make the exam at the B1 level (basic proficiency) available to our majors and minors in the spring of each year. Most students who sit for the exam have completed a minimum of six semesters of college German. While it is not a requirement to take the exam (owing to the cost--\$100 per exam), we encourage our majors and minors to do so, because their performance on the exam gives a thorough and impartial assessment of their skills in the German language. They receive an official certificate listing their scores and the meaning of those scores, which they can use as part of applications for jobs or further study.

Basic description of the B1 is found here:

<https://www.goethe.de/en/spr/kup/prf/prf/gb1.html>

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, B1 level (copied from the self assessment grid):

Reading: >> I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.<<

Listening: >> I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.<<

Writing: >> I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.<<

Speaking:

Interactive: >> I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).<<

Production: >> I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.<<

The exam tests all four modalities, and the different modes of communication in each modality.

13 students sat for the B1 exam on April 8th, 2017. This represents about half of the spring 2017 sixth-semester German class; many students will defer the exam until they have had further 3xxx- and 4xxx-level German courses.

9 passed all four sections of the exam.

1 student failed all four sections of the exam.

1 student failed two of the four sections of the exam (reading and listening).

2 students failed one of the four sections of the exam (one reading, one listening).

Of those who failed one or more sections, only one achieved a score below 50%. The student in question did not complete the writing section and thus scored lower.

In total: 52 exam units (13x4); 44/52 successfully completed = 85% pass rate.

Spanish BA Assessment

Spanish did not conduct a full BA Assessment this year, primarily because, in response to the poor return rate on exit surveys and portfolios, we are in the process of exploring alternative assessment plans and instruments. This includes in the near future we hope, as noted last year, the implementation of some nationally standardized instruments. To this end, in August 2017, we conducted an American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) training workshop for their Oral Proficiency Interview standard for 10 of our WLLC faculty members on campus (funding from ARSC Dean). We are happy to report that this is an important first step towards that implementation.

Data was collected this year, as per our assessment plan, as follows:

SPAN 3033: In Spring 2017, 33 students took SPAN 3033 (Conversation), the final oral examination of which we have used as a demonstration of oral achievement, with the following proficiency level results (ACTFL standards). 61% of the students achieved a rating of Intermediate High or above. This is the first time we are reporting these results following a national standardized rubric, which should allow us to do more effective year-to-year comparisons going forward:

Advanced/Superior: 9

Intermediate High: 12

Intermediate Mid: 10

Novice High: 2

SPAN 4003: In Spring 2017, 53 students took SPAN 4003 (Advanced Grammar), which assesses knowledge of grammar, necessary for the achievement of both oral and written proficiency. Last year we reported final grades; this year we are reporting scores on the final exam only, which will give us more standardized comparisons going forward. Grades on the final exam as follows.

90+ = 11 students

80+ = 18 students

70+ = 15 students

60+ = 7 students

Below 60 = 2 student

These numbers are very similar to last year's numbers.

Evaluations of data from last year's report still relevant for the current year would include the following:

In response to perceived deficiencies in proficiency in a significant number of our graduating seniors (some of which have come to light in the low proficiency scores on the ACTFL exam that entering MAT students in Spanish are required to take), the Spanish faculty has implemented several curricular changes in recent years, including the following: increasing the writing component in 3033 courses, and also revising the curriculum in span 3103 to include more rigorous reading, writing, and analytical requirements. And quite specifically, we have added a new post-span 4003 option for majors, Advanced Proficiency in Spanish, which will be offered for the third time in Fall 2016, and which continues to be revised and fine-tuned in its contents and methods. This course was mentioned in one of the exit surveys, as one of the courses positively signaled out by non-native-speaking Spanish majors as one that focuses more on needed practical skills in speaking and listening.

To date, we have had difficulty achieving compliance with portfolios and exit surveys, and have begun to explore alternative assessment measures that we will work to implement for next year. It is our intention in the near future to have all Spanish majors take a national test that will allow us to compare our student outcomes with those of Spanish majors at bench-mark institutions.

WLLC MA Assessments

French MA assessment

We have graduated four students (Kelsey Berkel, Ginny Ogle, Jo Potts, Cécile Lebleu) with MA degrees this year.

Their ability to pass this exam attests to their broad knowledge and advanced critical understanding of French and Francophone culture, civilization, and literature, as described in our first Program Goal. Our MA reading list is lengthy and students are responsible for a number of texts that are not taught in classes. We are adamant about their developing the ability to read and analyze independently of our classes. It bears mentioning that our MA candidates are responsible for every period in the history of French literature, medieval through twenty-first century; they are not allowed to narrow their focus on certain periods for their comprehensive exams.

Thanks to our emphasis on discussions in graduate classes and on using the target language in the classes they teach, not to mention a course that includes a heavy phonetics component, these students are able to correctly pronounce French and to expressive themselves effectively in that language. The pedagogy and technology classes they have taken as part of their graduate curriculum have exposed them to a wide range of teaching methods and language teaching-related technologies. Those who complete our degree are effective oral and written communicators and problem-solvers (Program Goals 2 and 3).

Our MA students write lengthy (10-page) analytical papers in every one of our literature courses; we work with them closely on these, from the choice of a topic through the remaining stages (outline, first draft, subsequent drafts). These papers are entirely in French (as are their comprehensive exams), which is apparently not the case in German, for example.

The French faculty meet frequently to discuss every individual student's progress through the curriculum. We share our impressions about this and about their teaching with the students during the spring graduate reviews. We are very pleased with our students' achievements and feel strongly that we are more than meeting our program goals. Our students are well prepared to go on to PhD programs, to continue teaching in other contexts, or to work in the business world.

At this juncture we believe that our student learning outcomes are right where they should be; we foresee no changes to our process of assessment. The only thing I plan to do as we embark upon the new academic year is to ask the Teaching Supervisor (Doug Miller) to provide me with copies of observation reports from last year so that we can assess what our general problem areas are in TA teaching and address them at the outset of the fall semester.

German MA assessment

Overview:

Number of students enrolled in Fall 2016: 4

Number of graduating students in Fall 2017: 1

Number of new students accepted for 2017-18: 0

Projected number of students for Fall 2017: 3

Graduate courses offered in Fall 2016: 3

Graduate courses offered in Spring 2017: 3

Number of students taking the comprehensive exam in the Fall 2016: 1

Number of students pending: 0

Number of students who passed the comprehensive exams: 1

Program Description:

The German MA program is one centered on the traditional literature canon, and it provides an excellent foundation both for those of our graduates going on for study in a Ph.D. program and for those who will be teaching upon completion of the program. Students should gain in-depth knowledge of the masterpieces of German literature from the Middle Ages through the present day. Reading works in the original German and participating in seminars conducted entirely in German also allow our MA candidates to improve their language skills substantially. At the beginning of their studies, students are given a reading list in preparation for the MA exam; most of these works are also read and discussed in the 36 hours of graduate coursework taken in the program. Students additionally take six hours of technology/pedagogy classes selected from WLLC 4023--Language, Culture and Web 2.0 Technologies; WLLC 4033--Language, Culture and Video Development; WLLC 5063--Teaching Foreign Languages on the College Level), which allows them to be both more effective in the classroom and to offer more to potential employers in technology skills.

Assessment Results:

Students are required to maintain a C average in their graduate coursework in order to remain enrolled in the MA program. In their last semester of study, MA candidates sit for six hours of written exams. One hour is composed of the brief identification of important terms,

time periods, and authors. The remaining exams consist of five essays (one hour allotted for each), in which students discuss both literary periods and the works of specific authors. Students are also required to take part in a one hour oral exam after the examining committee has had the opportunity to read over the written portion of the exam in order to further discuss and elucidate their answers.

Additionally, MA candidates are encouraged but not required to take the C1 level of the Goethe Institute Exams, which is an international standardized proficiency exam given by the German government in 118 countries around the world as part of the Common European Framework.

AY 2016-17:

During the academic year 2016-17, the German MA program (MLANMA, German track) included four graduate students. These four students (John Huber, Rocio Behler, Caroline Potts, and Magdalena Viktora-Jones) all received teaching assistantships from the department, with each graduate student teaching two courses at the beginning and/or intermediate level (GERM1003-2013) while enrolled in three courses offered within the MA program. All four graduate students met weekly with faculty to coordinate their language teaching, which included in-course observations administered by the faculty members responsible for language program coordination. On the basis of these observations, as well as the course evaluations for the teaching assistants' courses, the faculty judged each student to be successful teachers in the classroom.

Our four graduate students also completed coursework within the program, covering a wide variety of topics within German literature, history, culture, and media. All of the students performed well and have made good progress toward the MA. In December 2016, John Huber completed the written and oral comprehensive examination with good marks, and received the MA during Winter Commencement. The three remaining graduate students—Behler, Potts, and Viktora-Jones—have been active in raising the profile of German Studies on campus, most notably through their organization of a German Film festival showcasing three films for the campus community in Spring 2017. These graduate students have also vigorously pursued opportunities to improve their pedagogy: all three were selected to participate in the DAAD's (German Academic Exchange Service) Language Teaching Methodology workshop at the University of California Berkeley in Fall 2016. In addition to improving pedagogy, Rocio Behler also presented original research on the role of literary texts in inspiring and shaping their musical interpretations, on which she held a talk at the Graduate Student Conference at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Over the summer of 2016, several of our previous graduate students also secured employment as German language teachers. James Russell has taken over the German program at Fayetteville High School, where he has been employed since Fall 2016, while Jessica Burk recently accepted a position at Midland High School in Midland, Texas. Our current graduate students are all making good progress toward the degree, and each shows the potential to succeed

in their chosen career paths (secondary language teaching, post-secondary language teaching for business students, and an advanced degree program in music).

Spanish MA Assessment

Comprehensive exams are one of our main tools to assess MA Spanish students. Exams are taken at the end of their fourth semester. It consists of an exhaustive evaluation of all the competencies qualifying them as Masters in the five areas of concentration they choose including literature and pedagogy. This exam consists of two parts: an eight-hour written exam in which they write three essay questions and answer twenty five short identifications, and an hour-long oral exam over weakness in the written exam and/or other questions posed by a committee of three or four faculty members.

Number of students who took the comprehensive exams in the Spring 2017: 10 (four in literature and six in pedagogy)

Outcome: 2 students high pass; 7 students pass; 1 student fail. Students with high pass were accepted in PhD programs at Texas A&M and the University of Florida.

The Spanish MA program also assesses students in each graduate seminar where they are required to produce research papers and oral presentations, and to develop research strategies according to the standards of the Graduate School and the professional field.

At the end of the academic year, the Spanish MA adviser asks for feedback from other faculty members concerning the student's performance, meets with the students to discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and submits an academic review to the Graduate School.

In the Fall 2016 eight new students were accepted in the MA program. Six of them have performed satisfactorily with an average grade point of 3.5 or higher. Two students have been on academic warning due to a low GPA. They have justified different reasons for their performance and both of them have been given the opportunity to remain in the program as it has been approved by the Graduate School. They will be monitored in their progress and provided with the help they need to succeed.