

Weber State University
Annual Assessment of Evidence of Learning

Department of Foreign Languages
2014-2015

Date Submitted: November 30, 2015

Department Assessment Committee

Kacy Peckenpaugh, Chair

Cheryl Hansen

Tom Mathews

Report authors:

Tom Mathews

Kacy Peckenpaugh

Contact Information: Phone (801) 626-6345

(801) 626-6183

Email tmathews@weber.edu

kacypeckenpaugh@weber.edu

Table of Contents

I. Verification of Information.....	3
A. Introductory Statement:.....	3
B. Mission Statement.....	3
C. Student Learning Outcomes	3
D. Curriculum Grid.....	4
E. Assessment Plan.....	5
General Education Assessment	5
II. Results of 2013-14 Assessment.....	6
A. General Education Courses.....	6
B. Major Courses.....	9
C. High-impact Learning Courses	13
III. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure.....	14
IV. Responses to questions.....	15
Appendix	18

I. Verification of Information

A. Introductory Statement:

The information online is current and correct.

B. Mission Statement

The information online is current.

C. Student Learning Outcomes

The Department has established five learning outcomes and made some changes to them in 2013-14; they are presented below with expected student documentation:

Student Learning Outcomes	Evidence
Graduating majors will:	Students will:
1. Demonstrate speaking and listening proficiency in the language they are studying.	Take an oral test administered on a computer.
2. Demonstrate writing ability, including a command of grammar and appropriate usage to express their ideas.	(This skill will be evaluated based on documents submitted for outcomes 3, 4 and 5).
3. Demonstrate the ability to write in different styles.	Submit at least three documents written in at least three different styles. Students will label each document with their determination of its style.
4. Write an analysis or a literary or cultural work in the language.	Submit a written analysis of a literary or cultural work. (What qualifies as a "literary work" may be interpreted broadly).
5. Describe and explain aspects of the culture(s) of the language being studied.	Submit one sample of their work (written paper, film, pamphlet, etc.) in which they describe or explain an aspect of a target culture.

D. Curriculum Grid

Gaining proficiency in a foreign or second language is largely a matter of guided exposure and practice; therefore, each of our upper-division courses includes assignments and activities that focus on several of our Student Learning Outcomes.

	Course		Outcomes				
			1: Oral	2: Grammar	3: Styles	4: Analysis	5: Culture
Core	3060	Grammar & Comp	x	x	x		x
	3160	Into to Literature	x	x	x	x	x
Lang.	3220	Phonetics & Phonology	x	x			x
	3360	Advanced Grammar	x	x	x		
	4220	Topics in Linguistics	x	x			x
Culture	3550	Cultural Heritage I	x	x	x		x
	3560	Cultural Heritage II	x	x	x		x
	3570	Topics in Culture	x	x	x		x
Literature	3610	Lit. Survey I	x	x	x	x	
	3620	Lit. Survey II	x	x	x	x	
	3630	Lit. Genres	x	x	x	x	
	3650	Lit. Periods	x	x	x	x	
	3670	Lit. Authors	x	x	x	x	
	3690	Topics in Lit.	x	x	x	x	
	4620	Survey of Lit. I	x	x	x	x	
	4630	Survey of Lit. II	x	x	x	x	
	4690	Topics in Lit.	x	x	x	x	
Specific Purposes (business, community engagement, medical, translation, etc.)	3320	Applied Language	x	x			x
	3710	Business Lang. I	x	x	x	x	x
	3720	Specific Purposes I	x	x			x
	3730	Specific Purposes II	x	x			x
	3740	Trans/Interp I	x	x			x
	4710	Business Lang. II	x	x	x	x	x
Study Abroad	4740	Trans/Interp II	x	x			x
	3850	Study Abroad	x	x			x
	4850	Study Abroad	x	x			x

E. Assessment Plan

Assessment of Majors

The Department of Foreign Languages began assessment of our Student Learning Outcomes in 1999 and established FL 4990 "Senior Assessment" in Fall 2000. This past year we made a number of changes to the Student Learning Outcomes and to the assessment process; namely:

- FL 4990 is now conducted completely online. Through modules in Canvas, students compile their portfolio and take an oral test.
- We are no longer collecting separate evidence for Outcome 2 (Grammar) but are evaluating the documents submitted for outcomes 3, 4 and 5.
- We now require students to submit three rather than two documents as evidence of Outcome 3 (Styles).
- We have redefined the criteria for evaluation of Outcome 5 (Culture).
- We have established a departmental threshold of 75% for each outcome; we hope that 75% of our graduates will reach the standard for each outcome.

Plans for the future include the following:

- We require that all new courses or variable-title courses complete an Outcome Assessment Plan so that they may be included in the Curriculum Grid.
- We hope to show evidence of learning by comparing students at the beginning of our major sequence with others as they graduate. We have already gathered oral and written data in French and Spanish courses (FRCH 3060 and SPAN 3060) with which to establish a baseline for students beginning work on a foreign language major. The oral data is based on the same test given in FL 4990, and the written data will be evaluated using the rubric for our third learning objective.

General Education Assessment

During the Spring-2015 semester, we gathered data from sections of FL 2020 in German, French, Japanese and Spanish. All students from each class were required to participate and the data was assessed against the three Humanities Outcomes. Our threshold was met since more than 65% of students assessed "Meet Expectations". A complete report of our GenEd Assessment is in the next section.

II. Results of 2014-15 Assessment

A. General Education Courses

The only General Education course regularly taught in the Department of Foreign Languages is FL HU2020 (in French, German, Japanese, Spanish, ASL and Chinese).

At the end of Spring Semester 2015, the Department of Foreign Languages administered two tasks to FL 2020 students enrolled in French, German, Japanese and Spanish. Each of these tasks permits students to display their knowledge and abilities in all three outcomes. Administered on Canvas, each student was required to respond, in writing to two separate prompts for about 15 minutes each.

- Prompt 1: Students were shown a number of photographs of related cultural activities and asked to respond to questions about the activities.
- Prompt 2: Students read a text (one page) in the target language and were asked to respond to a number of questions.

During the Fall Semester 2105, faculty reviewed the responses and rated the students on each of the Humanities Gen Ed Outcomes.

- 1: Demonstrate Knowledge
Students will demonstrate knowledge of diverse philosophical, communicative, linguistic, or literary traditions, as well as of key themes, concepts, issues, terminology, and ethical standards in humanities disciplines.
- 2: Analyze Artifacts
Students will analyze cultural artifacts within a given discipline, and, when appropriate, across disciplines, time periods, and cultures.
- 3: Effective Communication
Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of humanities materials in written, oral, or graphic forms.

Ratings were made using the following rubric:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 0 | Not observed |
| 1 | Does not meet expectation |
| 2 | Developing |
| 3 | Approaching mastery |
| 4 | Meets expectation |
| 5 | Exceeds expectation |

The expectation was further defined using our department's benchmarks of expected performance which have been developed for the lower-division course sequence (1010 through 2020). A sample of the benchmarks for SPAN 2020 courses are attached.

Data and Analysis

The data gathered are reported in Table 1. The number indicates the average score for the language group, Two sections of SPAN 2020 were assessed, while one section was assessed in both French and German.

Table 1

Language	N	Outcomes			Average
		1: Knowledge	2: Analysis	3: Communication	
French 2020	20	4.10	4.05	3.75	3.97
German 2020	11	3.91	3.73	3.64	3.76
Spanish 2020	31	3.81	3.84	3.84	3.83
All languages	62	3.74	3.76	3.66	3.72

Table 2 shows the percentage of students in each language that met expectations for all three outcomes (with average score of 3.5 or higher).

Table 2

Language	N	Met	%
French	20	16	80 %
German	11	7	64 %
Spanish	31	22	71 %
All languages	62	45	73 %

A t-test was performed to determine if the differences between the languages is statistically significant. The results are shown in Table 3. None of the language sections performed in a significantly different way from one another.

Table 3

Variables	df	t	p
French cf. Spanish	49	0.61	0.548
French cf. German	29	0.68	0.500

Spanish cf. German 40 0.24 0.809

Conclusions

Since a rating of 4 on the Humanities Gen Ed Outcomes has been defined by the college as "meets expectation", there are two ways in which we may, as a department, judge whether or not we have met our goals.

First, we can look at the average rating for each language and claim that our courses met the outcomes or that they did not (the numbers shown in Table 1). We have determined that an average class score of 3.5 or higher will indicate that we have met our assessment goals. A class rating of less than 3.5 indicates that we have not yet met our goals. Using this analysis, it becomes clear with this year's data that all three language courses are meeting the goals for Humanities General Education.

Second, we can look at the percentage of students who have met the outcomes in each language (the numbers shown in Table 2). Since a student "passes" a GenEd course (that is the course will count towards graduation and fulfilment of GenEd requirements) with a "D" grade, we believe that if 65% or more of our students met the outcomes, our department has likewise met its goals. Using this analysis, French and Spanish have met this goal and German is very nearly there (at 64%).

The Department of Foreign Languages will discuss this assessment through the coming semester. A few preliminary ideas include:

1. The Humanities Gen Ed rubric is not clear and the difference may be due to inter-rater reliability. We suggest that the rubric for rating outcomes be redefined as:
 - 0 Not observed (no submission)
 - 1 Developing
 - 2 Meets expectations
 - 3 Exceeds expectations

In addition, next year we will do a more thorough job of defining the types of performance, in each language, that will result in a particular rating.

2. Since FL HU2020 is the fourth in a sequence of courses, we may need to revisit the Humanities Outcomes in the earlier courses so that students are better prepared at the end of the sequence.

B. Major Courses

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

The Department has established five learning outcomes. For each outcome we have listed the expected documentation that each student must provide, a description of the rubric or method used to evaluate student proficiency and the level (standard) that we expect our graduating majors to meet. Our departmental goal (threshold) is that, on each learning outcome, at least 75% of our students will meet or exceed our standard.

First Outcome

Evidence	Assessment	Standard
1. Students will demonstrate speaking and listening proficiency in the language they are studying.		
Students will take an oral test administered on a computer while enrolled in FL 4990.	Tests will be rated using the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines. These ratings are: Novice-Low Novice-Mid Novice-High Intermediate-Low Intermediate-Mid Intermediate-High Advanced-Low Advanced-Mid Advanced-High Superior All full time faculty in the department are trained by our national professional organization in the use of the Proficiency Guidelines.	Students will have met the department standard if they rate an Advanced-Low or higher.

Second Outcome

2. Students will demonstrate writing ability, including a command of grammar and appropriate usage, to express their ideas.		
<i>(This outcome involves the documents submitted for Outcomes 3, 4 and 5.)</i>	Documents will be rated using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Papers; however, attention is focused on grammar as well as on text type or function.	Students will have met this standard if they demonstrate the usage of an Advanced Low speaker/writer.

--	--	--

Third Outcome

3. Students will demonstrate the ability to write in different styles.

While enrolled in FL 4990, students will submit at least three documents written in at least three different styles; they will label each document with their determination of its style. Generally, these will be documents they have prepared while completing the courses required for the major.	Writing styles will be tallied if students demonstrate a basic understanding of the styles they have submitted.	The standard will be met if the student submits three different documents written in different styles and shows a basic understanding of the styles submitted.
--	---	--

Fourth Outcome

4. Students will write an analysis of a literary or cultural work in the language.

While enrolled in FL 4990, students will submit a written analysis of a literary work or cultural product. (What qualifies as a “literary work” may be interpreted broadly).	Raters will check for the following: <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis or main idea <input type="checkbox"/> Support of defense of the main idea with evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of a plot or idea presented in the work	The standard will be met with two of the criteria.
--	--	--

Fifth Outcome

5. Students will describe and explain aspects of the culture(s) of the language being studied.

While enrolled in FL 4990, students will submit one sample of their work (written paper, film, pamphlet, etc.) in which they describe or explain an aspect of a target culture.	Raters will check for at least two of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> Description of a cultural product <input type="checkbox"/> Description of a cultural practice <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of cultural perspective: how the product or practice connects to a larger social context.	The standard will be met with two of the criteria.
---	---	--

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

For each of our outcomes, the threshold level we aim for is 75%; that is, we hope that at least 75% of our graduating majors will meet the standard. In each of the tables below, language sections that did not meet this threshold are shaded in grey. Under each table is a graph that shows overall scores for the past five years.

Outcome 1:

During the in 2014-15 academic year, majors in French and Spanish reached or exceeded our 75% threshold. Overall, 87% of our students met this standard. Last year we were slightly below our goal for this outcome and we are pleased to see this progress.

	French			German			Spanish			Total		
	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
Oral proficiency	2	2	100%	2	0	0%	41	37	90%	45	39	87%

Outcome 2:

This year, majors in all three languages met or exceeded our standard.

	French			German			Spanish			Total		
	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
Writing proficiency	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	42	42	100%	46	46	100%

Outcome 3:

This year, majors in all three languages met or exceeded our standard.

	French			German			Spanish			Total		
	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
Writing in different styles	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	42	34	81%	46	34	81%

Outcome 4:

Overall, we modestly exceeded the threshold for this outcome; however, the threshold was not met by majors in French or Spanish.

	French			German			Spanish			Total		
	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
Written analysis	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	42	36	86%	46	40	87%

Outcome 5:

Overall, we met the threshold for this outcome; however, the threshold was not met by majors in Spanish.

Description or explanation of culture	French			German			Spanish			Total		
	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
Description or explanation of culture	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	42	25	60%	46	29	63%

Action Plan

In the coming years, the Department (and specifically some language sections) will need to work on improving the percentage of majors who meet standards for outcomes 1, 4 and 5. We do not believe that there are serious or systemic problems with the experiences our students are having in classes nor in the way we are approaching the teaching or assessment of our outcomes.

Because Outcomes 4 and 5 are not consistently meeting our threshold, the Department Assessment Committee will recommend that at some time, before student portfolios are next evaluated, the Department Chair schedule a training session to review outcomes and assessment rubrics and to encourage instructors to help their students gain the proficiencies needed to meet each outcome's standard.

C. High-impact Learning Courses

The five learning objectives of the Department of Foreign Languages do not vary significantly across courses. Our objectives are proficiency based; that is, their goal is to increase spoken and written proficiency in the language being studied as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (see the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines here: <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>).

Although we have a number of courses listed as Community Engaged Learning, we do not evaluate or assess our departmental learning objectives differently in these courses. However, the faculty teaching these courses are collecting data which will likely be included in next year's assessment report.

III. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure

Artifact	Learning Outcome Measured	When/How Collected?	Where Stored?
Six student recordings. These are responses to written prompts in the language of study.	Outcome 1: Oral proficiency	As an exam administered during FL 4990—Senior Assessment.	In Canvas
Three or more samples reflecting different writing styles.	Outcome 3: Writing in different styles	Saved by students as work done in several classes. Submitted during FL 4990.	In Canvas
A written analysis of a literary or cultural work.	Outcome 4: Literary or Cultural Analysis	Saved by students as work done in at least two course. Submitted during FL 4990.	In Canvas
A written description of a cultural product or practice	Outcome 5: Appreciation of Culture	Saved by students as work done in several courses. Submitted during FL 4990.	In Canvas

IV. Responses to questions

A. Reflecting on this year's assessment(s), how does the evidence of student learning impact your faculty's confidence in the program being reviewed; how does that analysis change when compared with previous assessment evidence?

Data from the past four years, representing our students' performance on our five Learning Outcomes, are represented in the table below. For each outcome, data are also broken down to represent the languages in which our students can major. Outcomes with fewer than 75% our graduating majors met the standard are shaded in grey.

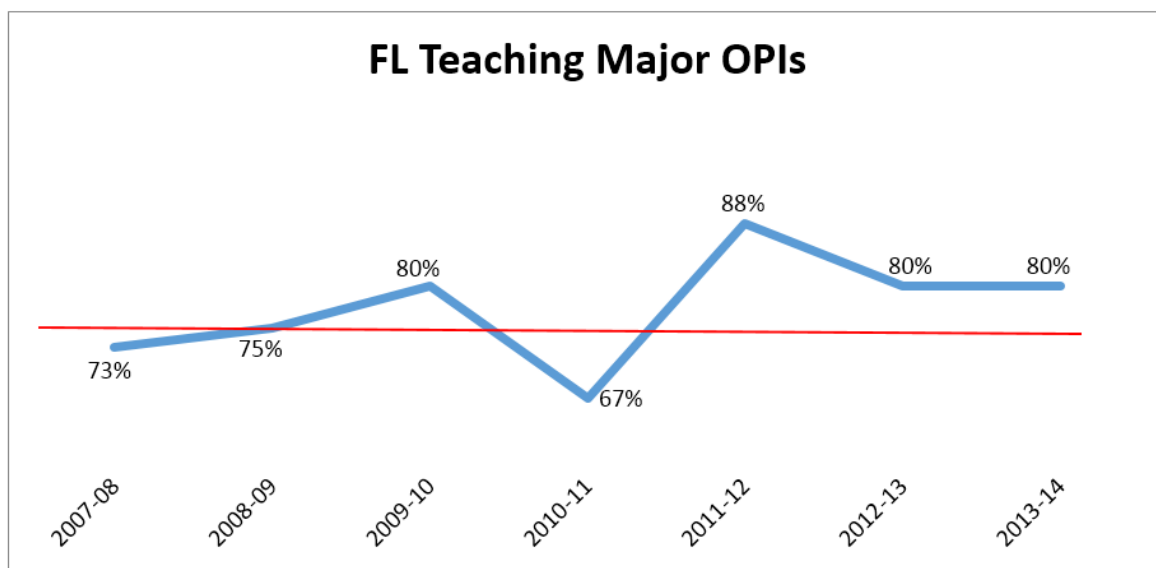
		1: Oral			2: Written			3: Styles			4: Analysis			5: Culture		
		N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%	N	Met	%
2010	French	1	0	0%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
	German	8	7	88%	7	4	57%	7	7	100%	7	3	43%	7	7	100%
	Spanish	24	18	75%	24	18	75%	25	21	84%	25	18	72%	22	19	86%
	ALL	33	25	76%	32	23	72%	33	29	88%	33	22	67%	30	27	90%
2011	French	0			0			0			0			0		
	German	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	2	2	100%
	Spanish	23	23	100%	21	21	100%	21	21	100%	20	16	80%	20	18	90%
	ALL	25	25	100%	23	23	100%	23	23	100%	22	18	82%	22	20	91%
2012	French	7	4	57%	6	5	83%	7	6	86%	7	5	71%	7	6	86%
	German	6	2	33%	6	3	50%	6	6	100%	6	4	67%	6	6	100%
	Spanish	27	24	89%	27	20	74%	27	25	93%	27	13	48%	27	25	93%
	ALL	40	30	75%	39	28	72%	40	37	93%	40	22	55%	40	37	93%
2013	French	6	5	83%	6	6	100%	6	6	100%	6	4	67%	6	5	83%
	German	5	2	40%	6	6	100%	6	5	83%	6	6	100%	6	6	100%
	Spanish	35	27	77%	36	34	94%	36	35	97%	33	24	73%	36	25	69%
	ALL	46	34	74%	48	46	96%	48	46	96%	45	34	76%	48	36	75%

No clear trend is visible. It is quite obvious that our best performance was in 2011-12; however, it is also clear that we had a smaller cohort of students graduating that year, with no majors in French and only two in German. With the exception of 2011-12, this past year was our best. We met or exceeded our threshold of 75% on all but the first Outcome, and that was very close at 74%.

Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. Outcome 1 shows a nearly flat progression in which our students are performing at or slightly over the threshold. It may be meaningful that our German majors have not met or exceeded the standard in two of the four years. This may be due to a relatively small number of majors (compared, for example, to Spanish) but may also reflect the relative difficulty involved in achieving the Advanced-Low level in German for native speakers of English. (The Foreign Service Institute points out that of Category 1 languages, German takes significantly longer to master than the others).

In addition to the Oral Test that our majors complete for Outcome 1 in FL 4990, all of our foreign language teaching majors and minors must complete a national test, the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), administered by ACTFL. Utah State licensure requires that they achieve an Advanced-Low rating or higher. Students who receive a lower rating are not permitted to complete the teaching major and we generally counsel them to declare a 'regular' degree in French, German or Spanish.

The table below shows the percentage of foreign language teaching majors and minors who rated Advanced Low or higher on the OPI. For the past three years, all of our students have either met or exceeded this national standard. During the four years previous to that, we met our threshold (75%) only half the time. We are very pleased with this progress.



Outcomes 2 and 3 both show some improvement over the past four years. This is likely due to better collection of documents in FL 4990. Two years ago we began asking students to label their submitted documents as to genre or style.

With the exception of 2011-12, our students have not generally met or exceeded our standard for Outcome 4. The department will need to better communicate our expectations with instructors and particularly define the kinds of writing expected from students in literature classes (FL 3610-3690) and culture classes (FL 3550-3570).

Outcome 5, dealing with students' perspectives on cultural products and practices, was redefined this past year. Predictably, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the newly defined standard went down—although we still met our threshold of 75%. This fall may be due to student performance but is also likely due, in part, to a weakness in rater reliability.

B. With whom did you share the results of the year's assessment efforts?

This report will be shared with all faculty in the Department of Foreign Languages, with the Dean of the Telitha E. Linquist College of Arts and Humanities, and with the University Office of Institution Effectiveness.

C. Based on your program's assessment findings, what subsequent action will your program take?

To remediate the weaknesses seen in Outcomes 4 and 5, we recommend that the Department schedule some time, before student portfolios are next evaluated, to review the standards' rubrics and encourage instructors to help their students gain the proficiencies needed to meet each outcome's standard.

Appendix

Information about the full-time and adjunct faculty contracted by your department: 2013-14

Faculty	
With Doctoral Degrees	11
Full-time Tenured	7
Full-time Non-Tenured (includes tenure-track)	4
Part-time	-
With Master's Degrees	12
Full-time Tenured	-
Full-time Non-Tenured	-
Part-time	12
With Bachelor's Degrees	4
Full-time Tenured	-
Full-time Non-tenured	-
Part-time	4
Total Headcount Faculty	27
Full-time Tenured	7
Full-time Non-tenured	4
Part-time	16