

**Department of Modern Languages  
Full Assessment Report 2015-2016  
Submitted by: Carmela Pesca, Chair  
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**BA programs in French, German, Italian and Spanish,  
and BS programs in French, Italian and Spanish**

**Preamble**

The Department of Modern Languages offers both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree leading to Certification to teach languages. Since students in both degree programs take the same courses in language, culture and literature, learning outcomes are identical and are assessed together.

The Department has continued to implement its assessment plan, which includes goals, instruments and rubrics for all undergraduate assessments. The assessment plan is attached to this report. All of our assessments are conducted by Modern Language faculty as an integrated part of their regular class work. We have adjusted course cycling and pre-requisites for advanced courses, in order to better coordinate offerings, while providing students with more opportunities to use acquired knowledge and language skills.

**Section 1) Learning Outcomes**

The Department has established the following four learning outcomes for all the languages taught that lead to an undergraduate degree.

Students are expected to:

- Speak at an Advanced Low oral proficiency level in the target language.
- Write at an Advanced Low written proficiency level in the target language.
- Use the target language to discuss major topics related to the cultures of countries and communities where the target language is spoken.
- Use the target language to discuss the literary works of major authors of countries where the target language is spoken.

**Section 2) Findings**

**2.1. Outcome #1: Advanced Low in Oral Proficiency**

The Department uses several instruments to assess Oral Proficiency. These instruments include Oral Presentations in courses with a focus on the oral component, as well as in Culture courses. These assessments are evaluated according to rubrics prepared by the Department.

These rubrics are keyed to the Oral Proficiency Guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Graduating seniors in the BS program are required by the State to take an independently conducted Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The Department offers advisory OPIs to Professional Studies candidates.

See Rubric associated with this outcome in the attached Assessment plan, Appendix B, page 12.

Data for this outcome is usually collected by instructors in the fall, because most orally oriented courses are taught in the fall. We also include an oral assessment in culture courses, which may be taught either in the spring or in the fall semester, depending on each language's cycling. However, due to the closure of the School of Education database, we were unable to collect data in the Fall 2015 semester. In the Spring 2016, the department's Assessment Committee, chaired by Prof. Gustavo Mejía, developed a new assessment submission procedure, which has allowed us to collect data again. The majority of students perform at either the acceptable or the target level.

Outcome	Spring 2016			Fall 2015			Spring 2015			Fall 2014		
	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T
Oral Proficiency: Adv. Low												
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Spanish</b>	1	11	9	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			7	6	13	8	7	13
Oral Presentations in <b>Spanish</b> classes	4	2	6	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	3	14
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Italian</b>	0	8	3	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			0	7	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentations in <b>Italian</b> classes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			N/A	N/A	N/A	0	3	0
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>French</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Offered by SCSU</b> as Distance Learning course for first time. Collection of data needs to be coordinated.			0	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentations in <b>French</b> classes	Data not submitted			Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			N/A	N/A	N/A	1	0	2
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>German</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not offered</b>			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentations in <b>German</b> classes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*DNM = Do not meet; ACC = Acceptable; T = Target

Outcome	Fall 2013			Spring 2013			Fall 2012			Fall 2011			Spring 2011		
	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T
Oral Proficiency: Adv. Low															
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Spanish</b>	2	25	10	3	12	9	2	8	10	0	2	17	5	11	9
Oral Presentations in <b>Spanish</b> classes	0	13	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	5	2	11	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Italian</b>	0	9	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	7
Oral Presentations in <b>Italian</b> classes	0	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	1	0	0	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>French</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	9	7
Oral Presentations in <b>French</b> classes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	2	0	3	2	N/A	N/A	2
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>German</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	4	0	N/A	N/A	1
Oral Presentations in <b>German</b> classes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

DNM = Do not meet; ACC = Acceptable; T = Target

## 2.2. Outcome #2: Advanced Low in Writing Proficiency

The Department uses essays and other forms of student written compositions to assess writing proficiency. This outcome is assessed by instructors in the Spring, because most writing courses are taught in the Spring. These assessments are evaluated by means of rubrics designed by the Department and keyed to the Writing Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Graduating Seniors in the BS Program are required by the State to take an independently conducted Writing Proficiency Exam. The majority of students perform at either the acceptable or the target level.

The rubric associated with this outcome can be found in the attached Assessment plan, Appendix C, pages 15-16.

Outcome	Spring 2016			Spring 2014			Spring 2015			Spring 2013			Spring 2012	Spring 2011			
	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T		DNM	ACC	T	
Written Proficiency: Adv. Low																	
Written Portfolio in Spanish 336	4	2	6	2	14	3	4	1	8	0	0	5	Data not available	0	3	23	
Written Portfolio in Italian 336	0	2	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available	0	0	2	
Written Portfolio in French 336	Data not submitted			Data not submitted			1	0	1	0	1	1	Data not available	0	1	4	
Written Portfolio in German 336	Not offered			Data not submitted			Not offered			0	0	1	Data not available	1	3	2	

DNM = Do not meet; ACC = Acceptable; T = Target

### 2.3. Outcome #3: Discussion of Cultures in Target Language

The Department uses Oral Presentations to assess this outcome. This outcome is assessed mostly in the spring. These assessments are evaluated by means of rubrics designed by the Department and keyed to National Standards. The majority of students performed at either the acceptable or the target level.

The rubric associated with this outcome can be found in the attached Assessment plan, Appendix E, pages 22-23.

Outcome	Spring 2016			Fall 2015			Spring 2015			Fall 2014			Spring 2014
Culture knowledge	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Spanish</b>	1	11	9	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			7	6	13	8	7	13	Data not available
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Italian</b>	0	8	3	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			0	7	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>French</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Offered by SCSU</b> as Distance Learning course for first time. Collection of data needs to be coordinated.			0	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>German</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>Not offered</b>			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available

Outcome	Fall 2013			Spring 2013			Fall 2012			Spring 2012	Fall 2011			Spring 2011		
Culture knowledge	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T		DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Spanish</b>	2	25	10	2	8	10	3	5	7	Data not available	2	11	8	5	11	9
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>Italian</b>	0	9	2	0	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>French</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	9	2
Oral Presentation in Culture classes in <b>German</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	Data not available	0	4	0	0	0	1

DNM = Do not meet; ACC = Acceptable; T = Target

## 2.4. Outcome #4: Discussion of Literary authors in Target Language

The Department uses Written Essays in literature classes to assess this outcome. These assessments are evaluated by means of rubrics designed by the Department and keyed to National Standards. The majority of students performed at either the acceptable or the target level.

The rubric associated with this outcome can be found in the attached Assessment plan, Appendix D, pages 18-19.

Outcome	Spring 2016			Fall 2015			Spring 2015			Fall 2014			Spring 2014		
	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T
Literature knowledge	5	23	13				5	10	11	6	9	10	1	5	5
Essays in Spanish				Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system											
Essays in Italian	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			1	4	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not offered		
Essays in French	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available		
Essays in German	Not offered			Data not collected due to closure of Sch. of Ed. database and change in information system			N/A	N/A	N/A	Not offered			Not offered		

Outcome	Fall 2013			Spring 2013			Fall 2012			Spring 2012	Fall 2011			Spring 2011		
	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T		DNM	ACC	T	DNM	ACC	T
Literature knowledge	1	10	0	9	12	14	3	16	10		4	21	9	4	17	8
Essays in Spanish										Data not available						
Essays in Italian	0	2	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Data not available	0	5	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Essays in French	N/A	N/A	N/A							Data not available	0	9	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Essays in German	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	1	Data not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	3	2

DNM = Do not meet; ACC = Acceptable; T = Target

### Section 3) Analysis

The Department has significantly expanded data collection in recent years. However, the information about student performance is still partial, especially in German and French. We do not have a full-time faculty member in German, which makes it difficult to offer advanced courses and collect data on them. Our full-time instructor in French has been hired only last year, and is starting to collect assessment data this year. We have created standardized instruments across languages, and developed common rubrics. We made cycling changes to the literature courses offered in Italian, German, and French so that at least one literature course in the target language is offered each academic year. Unfortunately, some semesters we don't have enough enrolment in these courses to allow us to make judicious comments. In general, the majority of students perform at either the acceptable or the target level, a result that has not changed significantly over time. However, not all data was submitted or available. In the Fall 2015 semester, data was not collected due to the closure of the database maintained by the School of Education and the change in the information system previously used.

Also in the case of data collected for *the oral* and *writing assessment* learning outcome, results show that the majority of our students have performed at either the acceptable or the target levels, although only a minority of them performs at the target level. Numbers of students who do not meet the requirement are consistently smaller than the rest.

Students at the acceptable level of *oral performance* show the following strengths: demonstrate some capacity to narrate and describe in major timeframes using connected discourse of paragraph length; perform successfully in many uncomplicated tasks requiring an exchange of basic information; show evidence of control of syntax in non-complex sentences. Areas of improvement at this level include their ability to consistently narrate and describe in major timeframes using well organized paragraphs; to be understood by listeners not used to interacting with non-native speakers, and to use rich and varied vocabulary.

Students at the acceptable level of *writing performance* show ability to write compositions in a well-integrated text presenting the most relevant points with good paragraph organization. Adequate evidence of understanding of complex syntax is one main area that needs improvement.

The chart including data for the *culture assessment* in the target languages shows that most of the Modern Language students fulfill the stated learning outcomes at either the acceptable or the target level. The strengths of these students include their ability to give a presentation that summarizes the main arguments with clarity and adequate formality; developing the topic thoroughly within the specified length of time; answering questions from both the instructor and other classmates accurately; and discussing the target culture making some comparisons to his/her own culture. Areas of improvement for students in this category include their ability to give a presentation that goes beyond the summary of main points and that includes a well supported personal opinion; their capacity to treat the topic reflecting a wider, stronger and more accurate knowledge base that also gives evidence of student's familiarity with cultural products, practices and perspectives that pose significant questions or that illustrate cultural changes; their ability to provide critical interpretations or comparisons; and their ability to present using well connected sentences that are clearly organized in a paragraph format.

As shown in the chart above, the majority of students taking Spanish and Italian *literature courses* are at either the acceptable or the target level. Their strength is their ability to write essays in a well integrated text presenting the most relevant points with good paragraph organization; identifying themes, genre and style correctly; correlating the literary work with its social and political context. Areas of improvement for students in this category include their ability to support arguments with relevant evidence and documentation, inclusion of pertinent sources and appropriate documentation through parenthetical citations.



The data collected in Chinese, German, French, Japanese, Italian and Spanish 112 sessions show that the majority of the students do meet the expected level of proficiency at either the Target or Acceptable levels. An improvement will be future extending data collection to all other languages offered at the 112 level, although they are mostly taught by part-time faculty members, in American Sign Language, Arabic, Latin and Polish. Additional 112 courses taught by part-time members in Spanish and Italian will be included, as well. Moreover, as part of our plans to expand assessment of the courses we offer, the department has started to work on identifying learning outcomes for the Humanities courses offered regularly as part of students' completion of Gen Ed requirements. We expect to create rubrics and assess these courses by next cycle.

Students who fulfill this learning outcome are able to communicate in the target language in a basic way, using simple sentences and some strings of sentences. Their vocabulary conveys general information on themselves and everyday situations. They are understood by those accustomed to the speaking of language learners.

The Department uses Oral Interviews in second-semester classes to assess this outcome. These assessments are evaluated by means of rubrics designed by the Department and keyed to National Standards. The majority of students performed at either the acceptable or the target level, with no significant changes in percentages over the years. We have regularly used the results of oral performances to improve the interview format and preparation. In an effort to improve the teaching of General Education courses, we have introduced online workbooks that expand the availability of tutorials and trial tests and can be accessed from off campus over the internet. Please note that only Spanish 112 is offered in the fall semesters, while all languages offer it in spring due to enrollment and cycling constraints.

The rubric associated with this outcome can be found in the attached Assessment plan, Appendix A, page 9.

## **Section 6.) Assessment Plan**

The Assessment Plan adopted by the Department of Modern Languages is attached to this Report in a separate document.

A detailed and comprehensive Assessment Plan was developed by the Department in 2008 and revised in 2009. Since then, it has been implemented in all related courses and programs, and systematically used yearly. It has proven to be highly effective for teaching and assessing language courses, since it applies both the results of research in the field and ACTFL National Standards. Faculty members have referred to such a plan for any changes needed to their teaching style, instructional materials and expectations. On the other side, many questions arise in the Department about the need for Interim Assessment Reports and for this lengthy Full Assessment Report. In fact, while we continue to assess students' performance yearly anyway, we have a large number of programs, some of which have few students in a given year, producing no meaningful information. Therefore, the Department proposed an alternate reporting plan to the Academic Assessment Committee, first proposed by Prof. Mejía at a meeting of the Faculty Senate. The proposal has been rejected. The attached Assessment Plan and rubrics keyed to national standards should be enough proof that the Department is both knowledgeable and active in Assessment. We are aware that it is our obligation to address the challenges of data collections in under-enrolled courses and in courses taught by part-time faculty members, but we do not see how the burden of reporting is going to be part of the solution, since improving the implementation of our assessment plan is already one of our Department's main responsibilities.