

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): Spanish B.A.

Degree or Certificate Level: Major

Department: Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

College/School: College Arts & Sciences

Date: June, 2020

Primary Assessment Contact: Ana M. Montero

In what year was the date upon which this report is based collected?

Academic year 2019-2020

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/ updated?

Several members of the program faculty were involved in the development of this plan in the Spring of 2018. All program faculty participated in the discussion, evaluation and adoption of this plan.

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Learning Outcomes for the Spanish B.A. Program

<https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/languages-literatures-cultures/spanish-ba/#learningoutcomestext>

1. Graduates will be able to articulate complex ideas and have meaningful interactions in Spanish, both orally and in writing (only measured in writing)
2. Graduates will be able to interpret texts and artifacts produced in Spanish.
3. Graduates will be able to engage with Spanish-speaking cultures. They will be able to explain similarities and differences between cultures (partially measured).

They were assessed according to the following ACTFL modes:

Interpersonal Communication–Written Mode

Intercultural Competence–Written Mode

2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts

Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

Written essay during final semester of Spanish studies. The five final collected papers were written by our graduating Spanish majors in the following 4000-level Spanish courses: *SPAN 4030 Introduction to Spanish Linguistics*, and *SPAN 4090 Spanish Sociolinguistics* offered in St Louis campus. Due to the impact of coronavirus and the need for confinement measures, these two courses were offered online during the second half of the semester.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

Two full-time faculty members in Spanish evaluated the papers according to the program assessment rubric provided by the ACTFL proficiency guidelines at the Advanced Low Level. Scores submitted are the average of those provided by the two faculty members. Student names were removed from the papers for the sake of objectivity. The rubric and scoresheet are submitted with this report.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Meaning of scale

- 4 = exceeds expectations
- 3 = meets expectations (strong)
- 2 = meets expectations (minimal)
- 1 = does not meet expectations

Number of assessed papers: 5

Conclusions

→ assessed students meet expectations comfortably (strong, or beyond 2.5) in the following areas:

- a. Text Type (3)
- b. Cultural Self-Awareness (2.8)
- c. Cultural Knowledge (2.76)
- d. Empathy (2.75)

→ assessed students meet expectations (minimal: 2- 2.5) in the following areas:

- a. Language Function (2.48)
- b. Comprehensibility (2.4)
- c. Language Control (2.28)

→ in the following categories there was not general agreement on their impact and how to detect them:

- d. Attitude of Openness
- e. Curiosity

Summary

→ Overall, results are satisfactory since scores show that expectations are met (2.63 is the average score).

→ The highest category is *Text Type* which signals that students are able to construct and defend a critical argument on a specific topic (in the field of linguistics in all papers). Being able to assess evidence, draw reasoned conclusions and put them forward in a convincing manner in a second language is a noteworthy achievement, and part of the expectations to be achieved by SLU graduates

→ *Cultural Self-Awareness*, *Cultural Knowledge* and *Empathy* also scored high. This sample of students demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the complexity of culture important to members of the target language culture, and the ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of the target language culture(s). They are also able to articulate insights into their own cultural rules and biases—that is, they can analyze their own culture critically (though as a rule the content of papers do not have to do with American culture but a certain amount of criticism can be inferred).

→ Scores are lower, though they still meet expectations, for the following skills: *Language Function*, *Comprehensibility* and *Language-Control*. *Comprehensibility* signals that students are able to make themselves understood by native audiences unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives. This is a main goal in the program and translates into the ability to connect with other speakers, establish

communication, and advance ideas. Furthermore, *Language Function* (or the ability to handle language tasks, which can range from narration or description to construction of hypotheses in Spanish, in an accurate manner) also scored satisfactorily, showing that students are able to communicate effectively in writing.

Note: it is not easy to measure *Language Control*—that is, students used precise vocabulary and correct grammar in general, but many of the papers were mainly written in present tense, which provided a limited pool of cases of aspect. This tends to circumscribe the analysis of *Language Control* to a small supply of cases.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Program assessment results are important markers to show the success of the program in leading students to achieve proficiency in Spanish at an advanced level. Specifically, findings are satisfactory since they show that expectations are met and students are able to communicate effectively in Spanish and show an important degree of intercultural competence.

A specific finding this year (when for the first time two colleagues instead of one have completed this assessment) is the need for calibration of the categories implemented. This should be part of the review process of the assessment method and it would increase its coherence and efficiency.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Results and findings are discussed at one of the first program meetings every Fall. Recommendations for changes or adjustments are evaluated by all members of the faculty Spanish program.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the
Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Student artifacts collected
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

Findings are used to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement. Having this tool and categories to measure students' success by itself creates a set of guidelines that should inform the goals for SPAN 3XXX and 4XXX courses. Discussion of these guidelines and of how to integrate them in our curriculum and classroom practices is important.

Evaluation process should be reassessed this coming year, since this is the third year in a row that this assessment method is being implemented. In this review of current assessment plan and accompanying rubrics the goals should be:

- a. to develop a reliable, well-calibrated rubric for current method; and/or,
- b. to decide one or two preferred methods of assessment for the future;
- c. to reflect on how to integrate the assessed categories within our curriculum practices and goals

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

- A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Faculty members in Spanish have been invited to design their courses more intentionally with this assessment and its categories in mind, and to find ways to integrate the assessed categories or some of them in exercises regularly within their courses.

- B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

It is too early to assess them. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the Spanish program is solid enough, as it is. The assessment process should help to tweak areas that can be improved and as a reminder of common goals.

- c. What were the findings of the assessment?

Findings overall are satisfactory since they show the success of the Spanish program in helping students achieve a higher proficiency. Assessment also translate into conversations, when needed, involving all faculty members to increase coherence of the program.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Assessment plan and its findings are discussed at one of the first program meetings every Fall. Recommendations for changes or adjustments are evaluated and decided by all members of the faculty Spanish program.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

Languages, Literatures and Cultures

Spanish Program

ASSESSMENT TOOLS: FINAL ESSAY

ACTFL Proficiency: at least Advanced Low

AY 2017-2020

Name: _____ Essay # _____

*Please assess the following on a scale of 1-4, where 4 is **Exceeds Expectations**, 3 is **Meets Expectations**, 2 is **Meets expectations**, 1 is **Does not meet expectations**.*

- First **check** (circle) the items under each heading that are applicable.
- Then **assign a number** to the right.
- Use space below questions for brief **comments**.
- If a paper *Exceeds Expectations* means that the level of proficiency is higher than *Advanced Low*.
- When assigning numerical values, please refer to the general rubric for a description of the categories used in this form.

Since these assessments are of the Program, not of the individual students, they will not see your markings. To guarantee the anonymity of the process, student's names will be removed from the final essays before they are distributed for assessment to the Faculty. Each essay will be assigned an individual number

Language Function:

- Narrates and describes fully and accurately in all major time frames.

- Can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those related to particular interests and expertise.

- Provides a structured argument to support opinions and may construct hypotheses.

Text Type:

- Uses appropriately formal language in an extended discourse.

- Is able to construct and defend a critical argument on the assigned topic.

Comprehensibility:

- Is readily understood by native audiences (writing) unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives.

Language Control:

- Demonstrates full control of aspect in narration on prepared topic.

- Uses precise vocabulary and intonation, great fluency, and ease of speech.

- Accuracy may break down when attempting to perform complex tasks over a variety of topics.

Cultural Self-awareness:

- Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases as compared to the target language culture(s).

Cultural Knowledge:

- Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of culture important to members of the target language culture(s).

Empathy:

- Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.

Communication Skills:

- Articulates a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal communication.

- Is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.

Curiosity:

- Asks complex questions about the target language culture(s).

- Seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

Attitude of Openness:

- Initiates and develops interactions with others from the target language culture(s).

- Suspends judgment in valuing her/his interactions with culturally different others.

Comments:

Letter 'X' means that the question does not apply to the paper under evaluation.