

Annual Assessment-Department of World Languages and Cultures  
Fall 2013-Spring 2014

In accordance with the revised assessment plan, approved in January, 2015, the Department of World Languages and Cultures assessed student progress in three key areas of the program during the academic year 2013-2014. These areas were: 1) initial oral proficiency development; 2) final oral proficiency level and 3) development of a competency in linguistics.

### I. Initial Oral Proficiency Development

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' Oral Proficiency Interview (ACTFL OPI) is the nationally recognized assessment for oral proficiency. Students begin their intermediate language development in Spanish 203 (Intermediate Oral Proficiency). The goal of this course is to assist students in developing their oral proficiency to an Intermediate Mid level. Statistics suggest that students who major in Spanish and achieve this level in their first year of language study, can successfully reach Advanced Low by the time they graduate if they also spend one semester abroad. Advanced Low is the recognized level for a "fluent" speaker. (Please see below for a full description of this level.) Students who minor in Spanish and achieve this level during their first or second year, typically reach the Intermediate High level by graduation.

Students at the Intermediate Mid level are able to speak in complete sentences about themselves, their activities, their interests, their friends, etc. They are able to ask and answer questions and interact with a sympathetic native speaker/listener (one who is not bilingual but who is accustomed to dealing with foreigners.) They are able to manage a simple survival or tourist situation (in a hotel, restaurant, museum etc.) Their grammatical accuracy is good when speaking in the present or future. They are occasionally able to narrate and describe in the past but are unable to do so effectively on a regular basis.

The final exam in SPA 203, a required course for all Spanish majors, is an ACTFL advisory OPI given by one of six ACTFL OPI trained testers in the department. In the academic year, 2013-2014, the results of the OPI were as follows:

TOTALS N=88

Novice High	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate High	Advanced Low
1%	17%	69%	11%	1%

These results demonstrate that fully 81% of the students in SPA 203 developed at least an Intermediate Mid level of oral proficiency. This percentage is typical for our program. In our regular NCATE report, we have been commended for assessing our freshmen Spanish/Education majors and for these strong results. The Spanish majors and minors who fail to earn this level are counseled to either do remedial work or choose a more appropriate field of interest. Indeed, students earning below a B- in SPA 203 must repeat the course before proceeding to more advanced level courses to ensure competency in this area.

## II. Final Oral Proficiency Level

Before graduation teacher candidates in Spanish take an official ACTFL OPI in order to obtain licensure. This assessment is given by an outside ACTFL OPI Tester. For licensure as a K-12, Spanish teacher in the state of New Jersey, students must earn an Advanced Low (or higher) rating on the ACTFL OPI. Advanced Low speakers are able to narrate and describe in all three time frames in paragraph level speech. They are able to compare and contrast and interact with a non-sympathetic native speaker/listener (one who is not accustomed to dealing with foreigners and therefore is less patient and unwilling to repeat oneself and forgive grammatical errors.) They are also able to discuss a specific field of interest in depth and at an abstract level. Finally, they are able to manage situations with additional complications.

*Given the very small number of students this academic year, this section has been redacted for reasons of privacy.*

## III. A Competency in Linguistics

In order to assess content knowledge in Linguistics, all candidates submit linguistic journals in Spanish 215 (Spanish Phonetics). This course is a required course in the major and is always taken on the TCNJ campus. Therefore, we are able to consistently collect all of the data. The Linguistics Journal Rubric assesses students' understanding of Spanish linguistics with emphasis on phonology and morphology. All journals were evaluated by the professor who gives this course each semester. The assessment rubric can be found in Appendix A.

All students were assessed on their overall accuracy of analysis, their grammatical accuracy, their knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences and on their knowledge of the phonology/morphology interface. 72% of the students earned ratings of Exemplary or Proficient in their overall analysis. That percentage fell to 62% in the sound/spelling correspondences and 59% in the final two areas. Students earned strong ratings of Exemplary or Proficient in the following chosen areas: Syllable Structure (72%), Oral and Written Accentuation (84%) and Phonological Processes (86%). These areas are part of the foundation of Spanish linguistics and the students scored well. In two areas, less than half the students earned ratings of Exemplary or Proficient: Minimal Pairs (33%) and the Changing Nature of Language (45%). These areas are typically more challenging because they involve more theoretical concepts. The professor is currently examining ways to provide increased emphasis on these areas.

In general, these numbers are lower than the averages recorded for earlier semesters and were supported by lower class grades during these two semesters. It should also be pointed out that these students are typically sophomores who are taking their first course in Spanish linguistics. They usually take at least one additional course in the field and even in this weaker year, 90% of the students are Developing a linguistic base or are already Proficient or Exemplary in all but one category. The category of Comparisons Between Different Varieties of the Target Language was the only element in which more than 9% of the students earned a rating of Serious Concern. The N of only 3 may well explain this result in that the 33% means one student. Additionally, this area is covered in greater depth in more advanced linguistic courses. Students who choose to

explore this topic in their linguistic journals are free to do so, but in general they do not have the advantage of the extensive classroom practice they receive in the other areas.

In these three assessments, the students in our department appear to be successfully developing the knowledge and skills the department seeks to instill in our students. Additional years will increase the number of students assessed and reduce the effect of the low number of students this year.

## Appendix A: KEY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: LINGUISTIC JOURNAL

*Fall 2013-Spring 2014*

*Total: 32 linguistic journals*

*ALL journals were evaluated for overall accuracy of analysis, grammatical accuracy, knowledge of sound/spelling correspondences and the phonology/morphology interface.*

*Students choose among remaining areas – some are addressed in all or most of the journals, a few are addressed in only 1 or 2- no area other than morphology is a required component.*

	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Serious Concern
Overall accuracy of analysis  <i>Applies to 32 journals</i>	Analysis consistently demonstrates a full understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax. <b>25%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax. <b>47%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax <b>22%</b>	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax. <b>6%</b>
Syllable structure  <i>Applies to 32 journals</i>	Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish <b>38%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish <b>34%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish <b>22%</b>	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish <b>6%</b>
Oral and written accentuation  <i>Applies to 26 journals</i>	Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the types of accentuation and the relationship between written and oral accentuation. Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the phonemic nature of oral accentuation in Spanish. <b>38%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the types of accentuation and the relationship between written and oral accentuation. Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the phonemic nature of oral accentuation in Spanish. <b>46%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the types of accentuation and the relationship between written and oral accentuation. Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the phonemic nature of oral accentuation in Spanish. <b>12%</b>	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the types of accentuation and the relationship between written and oral accentuation. Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the phonemic nature of oral accentuation in Spanish. <b>4%</b>
Minimal pairs  <i>Applies to 30 journals</i>	Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the role of minimal pairs as proof of the phonemic versus allophonic nature of sound segments in spoken language. <b>20%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the role of minimal pairs as proof of the phonemic versus allophonic nature of sound segments in spoken language. <b>13%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the role of minimal pairs as proof of the phonemic versus allophonic nature of sound segments in spoken language. <b>57%</b>	Analysis demonstrates little of no understanding of the role of minimal pairs as proof of the phonemic versus allophonic nature of sound segments in spoken language. <b>0%</b>
Phonological processes  <i>Applies to 7 journals</i>	Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of phonological processes such as sonorization, spirantization of Spanish stops and nasal assimilation. Analysis demonstrates full understanding of the occurrence of these phonological processes in standard norms of spoken Spanish. <b>43%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of phonological processes such as sonorization, spirantization of Spanish stops and nasal assimilation. Analysis demonstrates good understanding of the occurrence of these phonological processes in standard norms of spoken Spanish. <b>43%</b>	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of phonological processes such as sonorization, spirantization of Spanish stops and nasal assimilation. Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the occurrence of these phonological processes in standard norms of spoken Spanish. <b>14%</b>	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of phonological processes such as sonorization, spirantization of Spanish stops and nasal assimilation. Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the occurrence of these phonological processes in standard norms of spoken Spanish. <b>0%</b>

<p>Sound/spelling correspondences</p> <p><b>Applies to 32 journals</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of sound/spelling relationships. Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the basic concept that a sound is not a letter and a letter is not a sound. Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. <b>28%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of sound/spelling relationships. Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the basic concept that a sound is not a letter and a letter is not a sound. Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. <b>34%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of sound/spelling relationships. Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the basic concept that a sound is not a letter and a letter is not a sound. Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. <b>31%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of sound/spelling relationships. Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the basic concept that a sound is not a letter and a letter is not a sound. Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. <b>6%</b></p>
<p>The changing nature of language</p> <p><b>Applies to 27 journals</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the role of cognates and linguistic borrowing in enhancing the lexicon of the target language, of the differences between cognates and borrowings, and of how cognates and borrowings evolve or become adapted phonologically, morphologically and orthographically to the target language. <b>4%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the role of cognates and linguistic borrowing in enhancing the lexicon of the target language, of the differences between cognates and borrowings, and of how cognates and borrowings evolve or become adapted phonologically, morphologically and orthographically to the target language. <b>41%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the role of cognates and linguistic borrowing in enhancing the lexicon of the target language, of the differences between cognates and borrowings, and of how cognates and borrowings evolve or become adapted phonologically, morphologically and orthographically to the target language. <b>19%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the role of cognates and linguistic borrowing in enhancing the lexicon of the target language, of the differences between cognates and borrowings, and of how cognates and borrowings evolve or become adapted phonologically, morphologically and orthographically to the target language. <b>0%</b></p>
<p>Comparisons between different varieties of the target language</p> <p><b>Applies to 3 journals</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of phonemic and phonetic characteristics (e.g. <i>yeísmo/lleísmo</i>, <i>distinción/seseo</i>, syllable-final aspiration) that define the major geographical variations (dialects) of spoken Spanish. <b>0%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of phonemic and phonetic characteristics (e.g. <i>yeísmo/lleísmo</i>, <i>distinción/seseo</i>, syllable-final aspiration) that define the major geographical variations (dialects) of spoken Spanish. <b>67%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of phonemic and phonetic characteristics (e.g. <i>yeísmo/lleísmo</i>, <i>distinción/seseo</i>, syllable-final aspiration) that define the major geographical variations (dialects) of spoken Spanish. <b>0%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of phonemic and phonetic characteristics (e.g. <i>yeísmo/lleísmo</i>, <i>distinción/seseo</i>, syllable-final aspiration) that define the major geographical variations (dialects) of spoken Spanish. <b>33%</b></p>
<p>The phonology /morphology interface</p> <p><b>Applies to 32 journals</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. <b>34%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. <b>25%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. <b>38%</b></p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. <b>3%</b></p>
<p>Grammatical accuracy</p> <p><b>Applies to 32 journals</b></p>	<p>Journal consistently uses correct grammatical structures and punctuation. Can be read and readily understood by a sympathetic native speaker. <b>9%</b></p>	<p>Journal has a few errors in grammatical structures and/or punctuation. Can be read and largely understood by a sympathetic native speaker. <b>50%</b></p>	<p>Journal has several patterns of errors in grammar structures and/or punctuation. Parts may not be well understood even by a sympathetic native speaker. <b>31%</b></p>	<p>The errors in grammatical structures and/or punctuation significantly affect the comprehensibility of the journal even for a sympathetic native speaker. <b>9%</b></p>