

Annual Assessment-Department of World Languages and Cultures
Fall 2020-Spring 2021

In accordance with the revised assessment plan, approved in January, 2015, the Department of World Languages and Cultures assessed student progress in numerous key areas of the program during the academic year Fall, 2020-Spring, 2021. These areas were: 1) initial oral proficiency development; 2) advanced oral proficiency development, 3) development of a competency in linguistics, and 4) writing proficiency and comprehension of cultural products, practices and perspectives.

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 and the level required for teacher certification in New Jersey.) 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 Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) given by one of six ACTFL OPI trained testers in the department. Faculty assess the oral proficiency of students in other class sections, not their own. In the academic year 2020-2021, the results of the OPI were as follows:

N=67

Advanced Mid	Intermediate High	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate Low	Novice High
2%	16%	52%	25%	4%

These results demonstrate that 70% of the students in SPA 203 developed at least an Intermediate Mid level of oral proficiency. This percentage is typical for our program. In previous years, 70-80% of the students earned this rating. The 25% who earned Intermediate Low were approaching the expected level and only 4% (3 students) were unable to manage at the Intermediate level. This course continues to prepare almost all of our incoming class with either the desired level or approaching the desired level from which they can continue to develop their oral proficiency.

II. Advanced Oral Proficiency Development

While SPA 203 is a required course, the WLC offers an optional second course entitled SPA 302 (Advanced Oral Proficiency.) This course is typically taken by juniors and seniors who are either majors or minors. 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. Research suggests that only

students that have spent at least a semester abroad can achieve this level although all students benefit from advanced level oral practice in the language.

The final exam in SPA 302, is an ACTFL advisory Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) given by one of six ACTFL OPI trained testers in the department. Faculty assess the oral proficiency of students in other class sections, not their own. In the academic year 2020-2021, the results of the OPI were as follows:

N=27

	Advanced Mid	Advanced Low	Intermediate High	Intermediate Mid
	26%	30%	37%	7%

About one third of the students (30%) achieved a rating of Advanced Low, the goal of the class. Happily, about another quarter of the class exceeded that goal with seven students earning Advanced Mid. This is an improvement of 22% over last year! Approximately one third of the students (37%) were able to function at the Advanced level eighty to ninety percent of the time but unable to maintain it (Intermediate High=37%). Finally, only 7% (two students) rated Intermediate Mid.

III. 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. Our challenge has been to convince students to report their scores as this is not required for the major.

In the academic year, 2020-2021, 100 % of the students reporting earned a rating of Advanced Low or higher.
N=6

Advanced High	Advanced Mid	Advanced Low
33%	0%	67%

These results attest to the quality of our program. In addition, undergraduates are seldom capable of earning a rating of Advanced High.

IV. 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 rubric can be found in the appendix. (N=33)

An overview of the results clearly demonstrates the high level of proficiency that this group of students achieved! In four of the ten categories 91%-100% of the students earned ratings of Exemplary or Proficient. In five of the ten categories 83%-89% of the students earned ratings of Exemplary or Proficient This is an extraordinarily strong performance on the part of the students, especially given that in Fall, 2020 TCNJ was still operating virtually. It is also an indication of the strength of the professor who has modified the course over the years to improve student success with the learning outcomes and her work has yielded excellent results.

The lowest percentage of Exemplary and Proficient students was in the category of Minimal Pairs (58%.) This is a challenging concept for an introductory linguistics class and even given the challenge, the remaining 42% earned rating of Developing. This category is historically the most challenging to our students.

V. Writing Proficiency and Knowledge of Cultural Products, Practices and Perspectives

The first two national standards in world languages are Communication and Culture. Therefore, it is important to periodically examine student performance in both the ability to express their ideas in written Spanish and their understanding of Hispanic cultural products, practices and perspectives. Students' term papers in SPA 499 (Spanish Senior Capstone) were evaluated based upon the rubric found in Appendix B.

The results in this assessment were extraordinary. Fourteen of the fifteen students earned ratings of Exemplary in the content areas (Cultural Relevance, Objective/Thesis, Amount of Information/Sentence Structure and Use of Supporting Details) as well as in the components assessing their writing skills in Spanish (Organization, Mechanics, MLA Format.). One student was proficient in most of the categories. These results were impressive even for a Senior Capstone course.

Conclusion

In all of these assessments, the students in our department appear to be successfully developing the knowledge and skills the department seeks to instill in our students. In the next rotation, we will consider modifications and improvements in our regular assessments and our curriculum.

KEY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: LINGUISTIC JOURNAL

Fall 2020 Total: 16 linguistic journals

Spring 2021 Total: 17 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.

Some of the analyses address two areas- for example, an analysis of the three sounds represented by the letter “y” is syllable structure, but it can also be included under phonological processes, because position in the syllable is related to the vocalic quality of the segment (either “vocal fuerte” or deslizada”).

With minimal pairs, many of the analyses show gaps because in general, the learners understand that minimal pairs show that a segment is a phoneme, i.e., it affects meaning, but they don’t quite know how to demonstrate that a segment is NOT a phoneme, i.e., it affects pronunciation but not meaning.

In Fall 2020 the entire semester was remote teaching, which affected the effectiveness of the classroom presentations. In addition, the Fall 2020 class had many students who were not Spanish majors and had an overall lower level of proficiency, both written and oral. In the Fall 2020 semester it was difficult for the students to master the concepts because of the teaching modality and their overall lower level of spoken and written proficiency.

In SPR 2021 there were a number of strong heritage speakers as well as students majoring in WLL. The overall level of the “diarios” was far superior to what I have seen in recent semesters, and much higher than the overall level of “diarios” in Fall 2020. There was only 1 student in the SPR 2021 class whose understanding could be described as “developing”. All of the other students displayed understanding that was proficient or exemplary.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Serious Concern
Overall accuracy of analysis <i>Applies to 33 journals</i>	Analysis consistently demonstrates a full understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax. 12	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax. 17	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax 4	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the interaction of the rules of Spanish phonology and morphology or syntax.
Grammatical accuracy <i>Applies to 33 journals</i>	Journal consistently uses correct grammatical structures and punctuation. Can be read and readily understood by a sympathetic native speaker. 10	Journal has a few errors in grammatical structures and/or punctuation. Can be read and largely understood by a sympathetic native speaker. 18	Journal has several patterns of errors in grammar structures and/or punctuation. Parts may not be well understood even by a sympathetic native speaker. 2	The errors in grammatical structures and/or punctuation significantly affect the comprehensibility of the journal even for a sympathetic native speaker. 3
Sound/spelling correspondences <i>Applies to 33 journals</i>	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	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	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	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. 9	a good understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. 20	demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems. 4	understanding of the primarily oral nature of language and the secondary importance and arbitrariness of written systems.
Syllable structure Applies to 29 journals	Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish. 11	Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish. 15	Analysis demonstrates a few gaps in the understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish. 2	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the suprasegmental role of syllable structure in establishing the rhythm of spoken Spanish
Oral and written accentuation Applies to 18 journals	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. 6	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. 10	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. 2	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.
Minimal pairs Applies to 26 journals	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. 7	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. 8	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. 11	Analysis demonstrates little or no understanding of the role of minimal pairs as proof of the phonemic versus allophonic nature of sound segments in spoken language.
Phonological processes Applies to 12 journals	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. 4	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. 6	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. 2	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.
The changing nature of language Applies to 26 journals	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	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,	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	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. 12	morphologically and orthographically to the target language. 12	orthographically to the target language. 2	target language.
<p>Comparisons between different varieties of the target language</p> <p>Applies to 3 journals</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. 1</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. 2</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.</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.</p>
<p>The phonology /morphology interface</p> <p>Applies to 33 journals</p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a full understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. 9</p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the relationship between word formation and the sound system, and how this relationship is reflected orthographically. 21</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. 2</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. 1</p>

KEY ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: Writing Proficiency and Knowledge of Cultural Products, Practices and Perspectives

	Cultural relevance	Objective/ Thesis	Amount of Information/ Sentence Structure	Use of supporting details	Organization	Mechanics	MLA format
4: Exemplary	Very high. Clearly justified or defended. Explicitly and persuasively linked to a specific or general part of the course. Thorough analysis of cultural products, practices and perspectives, as they relate to one another. 14	Clearly stated and well-focused. Thesis is student's own original idea. It is neither too general nor too obvious. Its scope is appropriate for the length of the paper. 14	All relevant topics are addressed and all questions answered satisfactorily. Variety of sentence length and structure. Essay is fully comprehensible and easy to read. 15	Variety of supporting details, all of them relevant and clearly justified. Details well integrated into the main text. Details and evidence well synthesized. 14	Ideas connected. Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings. Strong beginning, middle, end. Sequenced & logical. Focuses on topic. 14	Practically no errors in grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation. 14	Paper consistently adheres to MLA rules for format, page numbering, citations, notes and list of works cited. 15
3: Proficient	High. Well justified or defended. Generally linked to a part of the course. Good discussion of products, practices, perspectives, but paper needs to relate the three to one another more closely. 1	Clearly stated but focus could have been sharper. Thesis is student's own idea. It is neither too general nor too obvious. However, its scope is not appropriate for the length of the paper. 1	All relevant topics are addressed and most questions answered satisfactorily. Simple sentences structure. Some variety of length. Essay is mostly comprehensible and easy to read.	Most details are relevant and justified. Details mostly well integrated into the main text. Mostly well synthesized. 1	Most ideas connected. Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs. Good beginning, middle, end. Most ideas sequenced & logical. General focus on topic. 1	Few errors in grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation. 1	Paper deviates in a few areas from the MLA rules for format, page numbering, citations, notes and list of works cited.

	Low. Not very clearly justified. Only implicitly linked to a part of the course, whether specific or general. Some discussion of products, practices, perspectives; may focus on only one of these areas.	Thesis not clearly stated and / or not well focused. It is student's own original idea, but does not clearly state the main idea and / or is not of an appropriate scope for the length of the paper.	Most relevant topics are addressed and most questions answered satisfactorily. Some inappropriate word choices. Little use of descriptive words. Some unclear sentences. Run-on, fragmented, sentences. Little variety. Essay is generally comprehensible.	Only some details are really relevant or justified. Details (or supporting evidence) are not smoothly integrated into the main text. Little synthesis.	Some ideas connected. Information is organized with but paragraphs are not well-constructed. Attempts beginning, middle, end. Not always sequenced & logical. Moves away from focus.	Many errors in spelling and/ or punctuation errors. Few errors in grammatical structures or vocabulary.	Paper often deviates in a few areas from the MLA rules for format, page numbering, citations, notes and list of works cited.
1: Serious concern	Very low. Not justified. No clear connection to any part of the course, whether specific or general. Little or faulty discussion of cultural products, practices, perspectives.	Thesis is not student's original idea, or thesis is too general or obvious.	Several relevant topics were not addressed. Several questions are left unanswered. Many inappropriate word choices. No attempt at descriptive words. Sentences not clear. Frequent fragmented sentences. No variety. Paper is often difficult to comprehend.	Lacks details or details are not clearly relevant or justified. Supporting evidence or details are awkwardly or carelessly integrated into the main text. No synthesis.	Few ideas connected. The information appears to be disorganized. Lacks beginning, middle, end. Little sequence & logic. Unfocused.	Many errors in grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling and/ or punctuation.	Paper shows little evidence that student consulted MLA rules for writing of research papers.