

Current and future assessment work in Spanish

2013-2014

This year we authored a project for our 101 and 102 level courses. We created 9 study guides with 9 accompanying in-class exams. Together, the study guides and exams provide our students and faculty tools for both formative and summative assessment. The study guides assist students in targeting where they most need to focus attention as they assess both their strengths and weaknesses with current course material. Students are provided the guides far in advance of the corresponding exams so that they may make a proactive plan to consult with program tutors, faculty and peer group members in study groups. The guides are excellent resources for learners who are non-self-directed in their study as they provide a roadmap to the textbook and ancillary resources that students will need to consult to review class material and to then spiral (review actively) with that material through a variety of exercise types. These study guides and tests help prepare students for the rigor of college level language learning and provide opportunities to apply language learning strategies during home study and during test taking.

The accompanying exams are resources for summative assessment both in terms of achievement and developing proficiencies. They are used to evaluate student learning at the close of a textbook lesson or after completing multiple lessons.

One of the features of the exams is a dictation exercise to which students have not been previously exposed. The dictations are crafted to include multiple language elements such as time, weather, color, spatial relationships, etc. The dictation portion corresponds to these CLOs: Communicate Effectively and Apply. They test: 1. Auditory understanding with contextually appropriate written graphics; 2. How well students attend to aural input through writing, checking for meaning and demonstrating comprehension; 3) How well students are able to apply skills and abilities gained in multiple situations to new situations.

Another feature of the dictation portion of exams is an accompanying pictorial representation that students must create. This pictorial representation corresponds to these CLOs: Think Critically, Communicate Effectively and Apply.

During fall and winter terms, we collected a large sample of exams (artifacts) in order to review them for possible edits and to retain them for use with a rubric to assess the dictation/pictorial representation portion of the exam. A team of contracted faculty (Roma Cusimano, Sylvie Matalon, Bojana Stefanovska and Matt Luke) worked with A-Team coordinator Kate Sullivan to design the rubric. The rubric was completed at the close of spring term and will be used by a team of Full Time and Part Time faculty to assess the dictation portion of the test beginning fall term 2014. It will be a grading/assessment rubric that all faculty can use to frame discussions of their expectations for student performance. This will help our team to increase program coherency. The rubric, like the dictation and pictorial representation they are used to assess, focus on these CLOs: Communicate Effectively, Apply and Think Critically.

2014-2015 and beyond**Rubric**

The rubric described above will be used during fall and winter terms. We will implement it with artifacts collected during both 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. This will be a pilot project that will allow us to test the efficacy of both the exams and the rubric so that we can author changes and develop an implementable grading rubric for future use and to help us to increase our program coherency with regard to grading.

Study Guides and Exams

A series of study guides and exams will be designed for Spanish 103 during spring term 2015. Like the study guides and exams recently authored, they will provide opportunities for both formative and summative assessment.

Surveys

- A. Student survey. Beginning early summer term, contracted faculty will meet with A-Team Coordinator Kate Sullivan to outline a student survey for use beginning fall term 2014. The student cohort will be end of term 101 students. The purpose will be to assess the program in terms of reaching specific learning outcomes and will include questions on a variety of additional issues.
- B. Faculty survey. Beginning fall term, contracted faculty will meet with A-Team Coordinator Kate Sullivan to outline a faculty survey. The faculty cohort will receive the survey at the end of 101 during fall term 2014. In addition to various types of issues covered in this survey, faculty will be asked to address course objectives in a variety of ways.

For both surveys, we will likely use "Survey Monkey", an online resource. Student and Faculty cohorts will receive cover letters to introduce the survey and to explain the goals/purpose of the survey.

Student Reflective Essay

During fall term of 2014, a team of Full and Part Time faculty will meet with A-Team Coordinator Kate Sullivan to outline and draft a meta-cognitive essay to be completed by late term 101 students. This self-reflective piece will help students to frame the 101 portfolio. The CLO's chosen for this piece are Engage, Think and Apply. Student will have the opportunity to evaluate their proficiency with various course outcomes and to comment on their use of metacognition strategies.

CLO Mapping

At a future date to be determined will design and implement a project to map CLO's to the learning outcomes for the entire first year course sequence (101, 102, and 103).

Oral and Listening Skills

- A. First year Spanish. Sylvie Matalon will research oral skills development at the UO and at institutions of higher learning in both France and Spain during her spring sabbatical 2015. She will report back to faculty so that we can begin work as a team to either design 1-credit courses for first year students to supplement the core program and/or to design a listening & speaking component for the core program to increase and to assess proficiencies in speaking and listening.
- B. Second year Spanish. Matt Luke will pilot an oral and listening skills proficiency development and assessment piece for the 201 curriculum. Using work he carried out during the last two years in the Conversational Spanish sequence, he will incorporate his work into the 201 curriculum.
- C. Second year Spanish. Matt Luke will pilot a multiple skills development and assessment project which will allow Honors Option students to develop skill through the study of poetry and short narrative fiction. He will likely pilot this work with 2 or 3 students during fall term.

Avant Assessment Placement Test

During 2014-2015, first and second year students were administered the Avant Assessment Placement Test for norming purposes and to establish cut scores. A bonus feature of this pilot work is that we know our students are performing very well in comparison to other schools from across the nation. The test will be available on demand beginning fall term 2014.

Barriers

Past barriers involving time, communication, and support have not yet been adequately addressed and continue to impede our program's ability to advance assessment goals.

Finding the time and open hours to meet is difficult. Class scheduling restricts availability to attend meetings for both full and part time instructors. At least one of the four full time faculty is on a medically reduced work load; one will be on sabbatical leave for Spring term; and one has opted not to teach Winter term but instead work summer term and, therefore, will not be available to participate in program obligations. Winter term is especially busy for our program due to unit planning needs and the primary start up of off-sequence course offerings. Because of the contractually agreed to increased maximum enrollment in our courses we will be spending more time correcting student work and attending to individual student needs outside of class. This situation will limit the amount of time available for assessment projects.

Communication among all the faculty will be difficult due to our time constraints. The opportunity to correct past misunderstandings and miscommunications will not be available, nor will the opportunity to assure open, clear discussion and flow of information.

Think

Engage

Create

Communicate

Apply

Without support for a fully funded permanent program coordinator who receives a course reassignment for each of the three terms (Fall, Winter, Spring) we cannot guarantee the success of this, or future, assessment plans. The coordinator position is what has allowed us the past forward movement of our assessment goals and the on-going attention to the program necessary to provide students quality 100 and 200 college level Spanish-language courses. Without this position our ability to present our series of courses while continuing to attend to assessment and other college-wide needs is impeded.