

Assessment Report of Washburn University Department of Modern Languages, Academic Year 2008-2009

Mission: In keeping with the mission of Washburn University and the College of Arts and Sciences to provide a liberal education as a force for continual learning, the Department of Modern Languages seeks to prepare students to be linguistically competent and literate in the culture(s) of the countries studied. It offers majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish as well as two years in Japanese and Arabic, and one year in Chinese and Russian, in order to meet the goals of our various constituencies.

GOALS: Educational outcomes to be demonstrated by students in the major or program.	OBJECTIVES: Measurable educational outcomes / objectives to be demonstrated by students in the major or program.	ASSESSMENT METHODS: Technique/strategy used to determine if the program or major is successful in producing intended outcomes of the program or major.	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: Date begun, date of first review and follow up.
(A) Students majoring in French, German or Spanish should be linguistically competent in the target language.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express ideas and emotions, and exchange opinions in the target language on a wide variety of topics with accurate pronunciation and intonation. 2. Ability to understand, interpret, discuss and explain a variety of written and spoken non-technical topics. 3. Ability to use with accuracy the grammar, syntax, basic 	<p>In order to assess the goals of our majors, students majoring in any of the program major languages (French, German, or Spanish) are required to maintain and submit at regular intervals a portfolio which addresses the course work the student pursues in completion of the major.</p> <p>Materials included in the portfolios demonstrate the students' growth in the mastery of the language skills and the content of the course work.</p> <p>Students participating in study abroad programs endorsed by the department or the university</p>	<p>The portfolio method of assessment was implemented for students beginning in or after Fall 2001. We used an exit exam before, with disastrous consequences.</p> <p>Materials for the portfolios begin with the class numbered 212, and are collected in every class above that level; the portfolios are cumulative in nature.</p> <p>Portfolios are collected at the completion of each course and returned to the student after evaluation by the instructor. Portfolios are not part of the semester grade in the individual</p>

	<p>vocabulary and idioms of the target language.</p> <p>4. A functional contrastive knowledge of the grammar, syntax and basic idiom of the target language and English.</p>	<p>must include in their portfolios materials demonstrating the academic accomplishments from their study abroad experience.</p>	<p>courses.</p> <p>Students are responsible for maintaining their individual portfolios with guidance from the instructor at the start of each class as to the types of materials which should be included from that course.</p>
<p>(B) Students majoring in the target language should be literate in the culture(s) of the countries studied.</p>	<p>1. Understand relationships between historical and current practices and perspectives of the culture(s) where the language is spoken.</p> <p>2. Understand the institutions, history, social practices and literary tradition(s) of the country(ies) and culture(s) in which the language is spoken in their socio-historical background and/or their literary significance.</p>		<p>Language majors are required to submit the completed portfolio as part as fulfilling their major requirements. Portfolios must be submitted to the major advisors no later than the end of final exam week in the semester in which the student is scheduled to graduate or complete the major.</p>
<p>(C) Students majoring in the target language will have the tools for continual learning.</p>	<p>1. Functional knowledge of the strategies for independent and continuing learning of the foreign language.</p>		

<p>A. Results: A report indicating the data collected from the assessment strategy.</p>	<p>9 portfolios were evaluated, 2 in French, 2 in German and 5 in Spanish. 3 other students graduated 1 in German and 2 in Spanish, but because of several reasons (internal miscommunication—two were transfer students and we didn't catch them on time, the other one claimed he lost his due to problems at home) they didn't have a portfolio ready and were allowed to graduate without turning it in.</p> <p>Of the 9 portfolios assessed, 7 studied abroad through Washburn at one point in their studies (1 in Austria, 2 in France, 1 in Costa Rica and 3 in Spain) and the other two not, but have spent time in the countries where the target language was spoken (one in Mexico and Spain, and the other in Germany). As a note, of the 3 students who didn't submit the portfolio, 1 has also study abroad in Spain with Washburn, but the other two didn't.</p> <p>We graded the 7 objectives corresponding to the 3 main goals along the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *In French and Spanish: Proficient, Advanced, Intermediate, and Beginner. *In German: Excellent, Good, and Fair. <p>7 students were considered proficient/advanced/excellent, and 2 intermediate/good. Overall the 9 were above Beginner at the graduation level. Therefore, based on the results, we consider our program goals met.</p>
<p>B. Continuous improvement: Responses based on the assessment data received.</p>	<p>*This year we have implemented a different assessment on our portfolio in German, and we plan to implement it in all languages beginning next year. We are keeping our 7 outcomes/objectives, but in terms of assessment, we have changed in German our previous 4-tier assessment (proficient, advanced, intermediate, and beginning) to a 3-tier assessment (excellent, good, fair). The rationale is that, after a few years, we noticed that nobody is graduating at the beginning level, and only some special cases can meet the proficient (which, for us, makes perfect sense). So we considered the other three categories, and rearranged a little the criteria, so now excellent contains advanced (and the occasional proficient), good would be a high-intermediate, and fair a low-intermediate. It makes sense to us and this model, tried in German this year (while we kept our traditional one in French and Spanish), will become the norm next year.</p> <p>The result from these 9 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes. We need to make some modifications for next year, since we have changed our course numbering and 212, the entry class for our portfolio, will be an upper division beginning next academic year. We would like to begin our portfolio while students are in the intermediate level, and we are considering 201 as the entry point right now.</p> <p>Our portfolios kept showing that most of the students who studied or spent time abroad jumped</p>

from their previous level to the next. Therefore, at this point, and based on these results we will continue to encourage our majors to make study abroad an integral part of their studies at Washburn, supporting their efforts with generous scholarships and direct exchange or faculty-led programs. We are satisfied to report that almost all our majors spent time abroad at least for a summer, activity that also benefits the transformational experience in international education.

We are considering also other options at this point to complement our portfolio assessment:

- Implemented, but with results coming in two to three years (it will affect students who enter the program in or after Fall 2006), is the requirement of a Senior Seminar (400 level course) to our graduating seniors.
- We were considering administering a national exam, STAMP, through an external source. We had initiated contacts with Donna LaLonde to request funding for the test, but unfortunately it seems her budget has been trimmed due to our current financial situation, and that objective has been postponed until further notice. It is really bad, because we don't have, unlike other departments, a good measure of how we are doing compared to our peer institutions. We are considering administering a test to our students at the beginning of the intermediate level (201) and another one while they take the capstone (400) to compare and observe the evolution. However, this is not the same as having an external, national test.
- We take some data of the success of our graduates in order to complement our assessment. This year, one of our graduates has finished a MA in Spanish at the University of Kansas, one of the best programs in the nation. We consider that she left Washburn with a very good preparation to succeed in that program. Another Spanish graduate has been admitted and is presently studying Spanish at Georgetown University, and two graduates in German are also doing graduate work in the language. Needless to say, we have something to do in their success. We have also prepared some high school teachers that are currently working not only in the Topeka area, but also in Lawrence and Kansas City. Therefore, we consider that, overall, we are alive and doing well.