

Assessment Plan

Western Michigan University

Foreign Languages

Mission Statement: The mission of the Department of Foreign Languages is to provide the university and the community with an authentic experience of non-anglophone languages, literatures, and cultures. In the classical languages of Latin and ancient Greek this experience emphasizes reading. The modern languages of Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian are taught with emphasis on four skills: comprehension of the spoken language, speaking, reading, and writing. In all languages, classical and modern, students examine the literary and cultural achievements of various language communities in the light of those languages. With these linguistic skills and insights into other cultures, students communicate and participate in a society of increasing diversity with greater interest and understanding.

As far as assessment is concerned, we have focused to date on the programs in which we have majors: French, German, and Latin.

In our plan for French and German, we have chosen to focus on the tasks of writing and speaking. Doing so gives an indication of the student's proficiency in the other two skills, reading and oral comprehension, as well. This is because there is a high degree of correlation between proficiency in writing and reading, and between speaking and oral comprehension. In addition, effective communication in the language depends upon sufficient cultural knowledge integrated by the speaker during his or her years of study. As a pilot project this year, with the goal of increasing the comprehensiveness and consistency of our results, we are testing an assessment of listening skills (oral comprehension) and reading comprehension.

In Latin, the students are tested for their reading skills and the cultural knowledge that such skills include. These are key elements for future teachers of the language and for those who may enter graduate programs in Classics.

Outcome: Proficiency in Writing (French and German) / Proficiency in Reading (French)

Students of French and German will be able to (1) write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics, (2) write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature.

(3) demonstrate writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution.

As a pilot test in French this year, we are testing reading comprehension and grammar. At a minimum, students will be able to show understanding of descriptions and narrations such as short stories, news items, bibliographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters, and technical material written for the general reader. The students will understand main ideas and facts, with comprehension deriving not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language.

(See ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Writing and Reading, Advanced level.)

Track: French Major

Start Date: 04/06/2009

Outcome Status: Active

Means of Assessment			
Assessment Method	Criterion	Schedule	Active
Students will be given thirty minutes to write an appropriately-themed, content-related composition of approximately 200 words. Assessment Method Category: Course-Embedded Measure Related Documents: Writing_rubric_FL.doc	At least a "5" on a 9-point scale		Yes

Outcome: Proficiency in Speaking (French and German) / Proficiency in Oral Comprehension (French)

Students of French and German will be able to (1) converse in a clearly participatory fashion, (2) initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events, (3) satisfy the requirements of school and work situations, and (4) narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

As a pilot test in French this year, we are testing oral comprehension. At a minimum, students will be able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. These oral texts frequently involve description and narration in different time frames or aspects. Texts may include interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news items and reports, as well as conversation.

(See ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking and Listening, Advanced level.)

Track: French Major
 German Major
 German Minor--Education Curriculum

Start Date: 04/06/2009

Outcome Status: Active

Means of Assessment			
Assessment Method	Criterion	Schedule	Active
<p>This exercise will be based on a picture sequence and will be recorded on audiotape. Students will be given two minutes to look at a picture sequence. During this time the students can note any words or expressions that they think they might use in order to describe the pictures. They will then be given two minutes in which to record a narrative description of what they see in the sequence.</p> <p>Assessment Method Category: Course-Embedded Measure</p> <p>Related Documents: Speaking_rubric_FL.doc</p>	<p>This will be measured on a 9-point scale. A score of 5 is the minimum for achieving an ?Advanced-Low? rating.</p>		Yes

Outcome: Proficiency in Reading the Target Language (Latin)

Students of Latin will be able (1) analyze highly complex sentences by ancient authors, identifying all words in terms of morphology and syntax, (2) translate with 80% accuracy a Latin passage read in the student's program of study. It is evident that given more time and a dictionary the student would have produced a near-perfect translation, (3) read a previously unseen Latin passage with near-perfect pronunciation of vowels, diphthongs, and consonants, and with phrasing of cola and commata, at good fluency. Pronounce words with near-perfect accentuation of syllables, (4) read lines of verse in both dactylic hexameter and hendecasyllabic meters with traditional scansion technique. Near-perfect accuracy in scansion will be expected with good fluency, (5) recognize, explain, and interpret content and features of style and meter of the authors they read.

Track: Latin Major

Start Date: 04/06/2009

Outcome Status: Active

Means of Assessment			
Assessment Method	Criterion	Schedule	Active
<p>Exam</p> <p>Assessment Method Category: Course-Embedded Measure</p> <p>Related Documents: Reading_Latin_rub.doc</p>	<p>Score of "5" on 9-point scale</p>		Yes