Department of Foreign Languages Planning Website

Learning and Program Outcome Goals and Assessment

Program: B.A. Foreign Languages

• Concentrations and Options (abbreviations):
  French (FREN)
  German (GERM)
  Spanish (SPAN)
  These concentrations and options are considered "content pathways" to the same set of outcomes; these outcomes are listed below.

Departmental Mission and Student Learning Outcomes

The Department of Foreign Languages has an important role in the overall University mission of providing a "liberal education for all students" and of preparing students for the careers in the global community of the 21st century. The Department offers instruction at the appropriate level in the language proficiencies of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cross-cultural understanding. The Department also offers English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to assist international students/non-native speakers of English in their academic careers. Since the University mission also emphasizes "strong technical and professional education," the Department offers appropriate advanced instruction for majors and/or minors in French, German, Spanish, and World Cultures & Business, as well as secondary school licensure in foreign languages and K-12 licensure in ESL. In order to facilitate instruction in these areas, the Department incorporates new technology into instructional methods and provides students opportunities to use technology to enhance learning. The Department also supports study abroad experiences for our majors as well as students throughout the campus in light of trends throughout the country such as Harvard's initiative to have all students study abroad.

Learning Outcomes

• 1. Foreign language majors will be able to achieve the appropriate level of language and cultural proficiency required for beginning graduate studies and to compete effectively for jobs in the fields of foreign languages. Department of Foreign Languages graduates will be able to speak using correct pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar so as to be understandable to a native speaker. They will be able to write on a variety of topics using correct grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. In addition they will be able to comprehend the speech of native speakers and different types of authentic text in the target language including but not limited to literary works, professional articles, and print media. In addition, students will be able to respond in culturally appropriate ways in spoken and written communications.

• 2. Students will be able to describe aspects of the target culture and explain how and why this culture differs from their own and other cultures. Students will enhance their cultural knowledge through activities and resources available outside of class (i.e. movies in the target language, language lab assignments, club activities, international festivals and other events, volunteer work in which the target language is used).

• 3. Students will be able to research topics related to the target culture using print, internet, audio, and other multimedia resources; organize these materials into a coherent and well-written research paper with correct citations; present the results of their research in the target language in a comprehensible manner and answer questions.

• 4. Students majoring in World Cultures and Business will achieve the appropriate levels of proficiency in the target language to compete effectively for jobs in international business.
Assessment Methods

1. A. While each student’s skills are not assessed by means of the ACTFL assessment exam, faculty members use ACTFL national norms for student outcomes to assess student outcomes in classes at all levels and for assessing portfolios and the capstone research project and presentations.

B. Each student following the 120-hour curriculum is required to take the capstone course (4920) in which the faculty advisor helps the student identify and improve upon any deficiencies in the five skills and will, in conjunction with all faculty members in the student’s target language, assess student learning in these five areas. The capstone course was added to the curriculum in response to peer review results. Faculty members identified comparable institutions as benchmarks and adapted their best practices.

C. Also in response to recommendations by the peer evaluator, the department has designed upper-level content courses in which students continue to develop further the five skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cultural understanding). Again the special topics courses are the result of identifying benchmark institutions and adapting best practices. In these courses, faculty continue to assess each student’s proficiency level in the target language based on national norms as well as their success in achieving the learning outcomes.

D. For each upper-level course the department maintains a portfolio with writing samples and, where appropriate, audio files for each student who majors in French, German, Spanish or World Cultures and Business in order to assess each student's progress as they complete the major program.

E. The Praxis II test scores provide further evidence of successful completion of learning outcomes for those students entering teaching professions with secondary licensure in foreign languages.

F. Learning outcome results are also tracked by means of the I.D.E.A. teaching evaluations, the individual Course Self-Assessment Survey, an instrument designed to track the degree to which students are given the opportunity to meet the course outcome goals and the degree to which they actually achieved these goals, and the Alumni Web Page of the departmental website. Letters to alumni serve to gather data on student activities after graduation and the alumni page includes post-graduation successes in jobs and graduate school that are reported by alumni.

2. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of the target culture and the differences between this culture and their own at all levels of language study through class discussions, reports, written assignments, and projects. Students also demonstrate how they have enhanced their knowledge of various aspects of the target culture through extra-curricular activities and study abroad experiences through their performance in culture, literature, special topics, and French, German, or Spanish for Business courses. Informal interviews with students who have studied abroad as well as presentations of their experiences at meetings organized by the International Student Affairs Office also serve as indicators of whether student learning outcomes have been met in these programs. A comparison of students’ language proficiency before and after their study abroad program indicates the degree to which these experiences have enhanced their language and culture studies. The statement “It is strongly advised that at least 6 hrs. be taken in a study-abroad program” is included in the Advisement Worksheet and the Undergraduate Catalog.

3. Students demonstrate their ability to find resources through the various short assignments and the research paper for the capstone course. These assignments require students to listen to audio or video resources, read various types of authentic texts, give oral reports, and write short summaries of the information learned in these projects. In the final project, the student demonstrates his or her ability to write a research paper of 10-15 pages in the target language using the appropriate style for format and citations. In addition the student demonstrates his/her ability to present the research topic using correct pronunciation, correct grammar and vocabulary, and also demonstrates his/her ability to comprehend questions about the project and answer them in the target language. All faculty in the target language assess the student’s work. These results are tabulated and consulted when assessing the student’s overall success in achieving the goals of the capstone course and consequently the learning outcome goals of the foreign language program.

4. In addition to the assessments described in #1, assessment of learning outcomes for students in World Cultures and
Business consists of their performance in French, German, or Spanish for Business courses, results of a trial four-hour exam of the Zertifikat Deutsch for WCB majors with a German concentration, as well as other indicators of student success in business such as the Alumni Web Page of the Department of Foreign Languages and anecdotal/informal evidence from employers.

5. The College Base Exam is administered to assess each student's overall achievement.

Assessment Results

1. A.B.C.D. Portfolios, performance in Capstone course, assessment in individual classes, participation in conversation hour as well as other co-curricular activities indicate that students’ skills and proficiency have improved significantly during the course of their program of study.

E. Since Spring 2003, all secondary education majors with a specialty area in foreign languages have passed the Praxis II test in the subject area. The table below contains results of the exam for all graduates since Fall 2001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Licensed Completers</th>
<th>Currently enrolled</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Principles of Learning and Teaching</th>
<th>Subject/ Specialty Area Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Principles of Learning and Teaching | | | | | }

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Attempt</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Not attempted</td>
<td>Completed and passed one test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Students maintain contact with the department by responding to requests for information about their activities after graduation and report success in their careers or graduate studies. These testimonies, which are posted on the Alumni Page of the departmental website, indicate student success in fields requiring foreign languages and in graduate school.

2. The number of students studying abroad has increased from 16 for the academic years 2003-2004 (including summer 2003) to 20 for the academic year 2004-2005 (including summer 2004). It is not known what percentage is due to the efforts of the Department of Foreign Languages.

3. The Capstone course was offered for the first time in Fall 2004, with two students completing the course (one in Spanish and one in French). While their oral performance was satisfactory, the written papers did not reflect the level of research that was expected. One German four Spanish and majors are currently enrolled in the capstone course.

4. Alumni responses to letters asking about their activities since graduation indicate a high level of success in obtaining employment in the foreign language fields and in graduate school.

5. Department of Foreign Languages students’ scores for the College Base Exam have generally been higher than one or both the College of Arts and Sciences scores and the overall university scores. For the five years in which data for the department, the college and the university are all available, students scored higher than both the college or the university average for two years and higher than either the college or the university average another two years.
Process for Analyzing and Using Assessment Results for Program Improvement

1. All of the faculty members meet to discuss the results of both the program and student learning outcomes, either during regular departmental meetings or at meetings dedicated to program improvements. The results of the discussion at the departmental level are then discussed during the chair’s yearly evaluation meeting with the dean. Individual faculty also review the results of the Student Self-Assessment instrument and the I.D.E.A. faculty evaluation and make appropriate changes to their individual classes.

2. Results of each Self Study are also analyzed and the results are used for program improvement. After each Self Study, faculty members discuss the results of the review with the outside evaluator and, at subsequent meetings, design a plan of action to improve the program.

Improvements Based on Results

1. Two major changes were made in the French curriculum in response to results in the student portfolio. While students were making progress in their written work, more improvement was needed. As a result, all upper level-level courses now require students to write more than previously, and writing has become a component in the Conversational French course, which will be renamed Communication in French to reflect this change. In addition students in upper German and Spanish content classes are focusing on all skills. The results of the first Capstone courses, offered in Fall 2004, were discussed extensively in a departmental meeting, and changes were made to the course requirements in order to address the problems that were noted. The results at mid-semester indicate that student outcomes have improved significantly in comparison to the previous semester.

2. Significant changes were made to the program after each of the last two reviews. As a result of the last Self Study (2002), the Department discussed strategies for raising students’ proficiency levels in response to the higher proficiency levels required by NCATE and for assessing program and student learning outcome goals more effectively. This plan included:
   1. creating the Capstone and the special topics courses. This process included researching benchmark institutions to determine best practices
   2. including practice in all five skills (aural, oral, reading comprehension, writing, and cultural understanding) to all content courses including the two new courses
   3. formalizing the process for creating student portfolios
   4. creating a process for using the portfolios to assess both program goals and student learning outcomes. (This process included researching portfolio requirements and assessment rubrics at other institutions.)
   5. formalizing the process for assessing program goals and student learning outcomes by tabulating data.

Program Outcomes

1. The Department of Foreign Languages maintains effective communication and collaboration with foreign language teachers in the Upper Cumberland in response to the P-16 initiative to improve the transition between secondary and higher education in foreign languages.
2. The Department of Foreign Languages is increasing the use of appropriate learning technologies to enhance foreign language learning.
3. The Department of Foreign Languages will determine appropriate cutoff scores for the placement test in order to ensure that students are placed in the appropriate level in order to improve student success in foreign language study.
4. The Department will develop a standardized rubric for assessing students portfolios.

Assessment Methods
1. Assessment of collaboration with high school teachers will be based on the number of faculty and high school teachers participating in R.E.A.L. (Rural Educators' Alliance for Languages), the Upper Cumberland Teachers’ Alliance, and TFLTA (Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association). Assessment is also through participants informal assessment of the R.E.A.L. collaborative.

2. Assessment of learning technologies will be based on number of courses in which learning technologies are used in class or for assignments outside of class.

3. Assessment of progress on establishing cutoffs and on correct placement of students will be determined by the number of first and second year classes in which the test is administered and, after cutoffs are established, by the number of students’ assessment of the appropriateness of their placement by the end of the first three weeks.

4. Assessment will be determined by the creation of a standardized rubric and the consistent application of this rubric to all portfolios followed by an analysis of students’ score using the assessment rubric.

**Assessment Results**

1. High school teacher participation in the R.E.A.L. had declined in the past two years. The Department requested and received funds to invite Dr. James Davidheiser (Professor of German, University of the South) and his wife, Ms. Marilyn Davisheiser (Teacher of Spanish and German, franklin Co. H.S.) to present their successful workshop on Total Physical Response Storytelling, and attendance increased from 6 to 20. Attendees gave very positive feedback. Participation in the Fall 2004 collaborative dropped to 4 attendees, reflecting a significant drop in high school teacher and Department of Foreign Languages faculty participation.

2. The number of courses that are Web enhanced increased from two in Fall 2003 to four in Fall 2004. Other classes in both Fall 2003 and Fall 2004 included an on-line component. In Spring 2003, a faculty member received the innovative teaching award for use of technology in foreign language teaching and in Fall 2004, another faculty member became involved in a tablet-PC project. Several faculty are also creating files for the Sony Soloist software in the departmental Language Lab to be used for oral/aural testing and assignments outside of class. The Department of Foreign Languages has been involved in a faculty search, the SACS accreditation, and other projects and has also been short staffed due to retirements and illnesses. As a result, the Department has not been able to spend time on the planned workshops on options for learning technologies. The Department intends to pursue these workshops during the academic year 2005-2006.

3. The placement exam had not been administered consistently in all first and second year courses and, as a result, the Department had not collected sufficient data to determine appropriate cutoff scores at this time.

4. One faculty member has researched best practices for assessment of portfolios at benchmark institutions and has collected copies of their assessment tool. The Department intends to review these samples and develop its own rubric during the academic year 2005-2006.

**Analyzing and Using Assessment Results for Program Improvement**

Faculty members discuss assessment results in regular departmental meetings and adjust strategies based on these results.

**Improvements Based on Results**

After participation in R.E.A.L. had dropped significantly, faculty members decided a more focused program, the TPRS workshop, would attract more participants. The workshop meeting was very successful with a significant increase in participation by high school teachers and Department of Foreign Languages faculty. In the subsequent semester,
participation by both groups dropped significantly. Faculty members also discussed the lack of progress in collecting data for placement cutoff scores and decided that completion of the placement test at the end of the semester would be a requirement in all first- and second-year language classes. Faculty members agreed to include this requirement in their syllabi. The Department has made initial steps toward developing a portfolio assessment rubric by collecting sample from benchmark institutions and will discuss these samples at future meetings.