

Assessment Report 2012 - 2013

Foreign Language Department

June 20th, 2013

The Assessment Committee is formed by Professors Kevin Elstob, Barbara Carle, Kazue Masuyama, and María Mayberry.

What follows is the report for the Spanish section:

Option 1: Narrative Submission: please address the following questions.

1. What goals or learning objectives/outcomes were assessed in AYs 2012-2013.

In AY 2012-2013, the Spanish area assessed the following learning objective for three programs (Spanish M. A., Spanish B.A., and Minor in Spanish):

- Learning objective: Students can communicate effectively in written language.

The last time this outcome was assessed was in the AY 2008-2009. At that time, the report only included assessment work for the two B.A. programs in the department (French and Spanish.) This is the first time that assessment data for the Minor and the M.A. in Spanish are included in the report.

This report uses the following legend to describe the levels of proficiency of the appropriate assessed skills depending on the program:

I= Introduced:

beginning = 1 (score of 64 or lower)

D= Developed & Practiced with Feedback:

developing = 2 (score of 65 to 74); or

good = 3 (score of 75 to 84)

M= Demonstrated at the Mastery Level Appropriate for Graduation:

competent = 4 (score of 85 to 94); or

accomplished = 5 (score of 95 or higher)

This work will include formative assessment (from coursework) for the three programs (M.A., B. A. and Minor in Spanish). However, although the same learning outcomes are used for all three programs, different levels of achievement are expected at each level. Moreover, following the recommendations from the “Feedback for the 2011-2012 Annual Assessment Report”, this report indicates benchmark levels of achievement expected for students at each level of complexity (Introduction, Development and Mastery) and maps the benchmark levels of achievement for students at different levels in the curriculum as follows:

- a. Students in the Minor program are expected to demonstrate knowledge at the Developed level (D), with a score of 2 or 3 in the writing rubric.

- b. Students in the B. A. program, depending on their class level (sophomore, junior or senior), are expected to demonstrate achieved skills at the Developed (D) level in coursework assignments (with a score of 2 or 3) or Mastery level (M) with a score of 4 in coursework at the senior class level.
- c. Students in the M.A. program are expected to demonstrate skills at the Developed (D) level in coursework assignments (with a score no lower than a 3) or Mastery (M) level, with a score of 4 or 5 in writing work in the Comprehensive Exams.

2. How did you assess these learning outcomes?

a. Describe the measures you used and the information gathered? (Description, date administered, results)

The learning outcome was assessed through the evaluation of compositions (direct measure) collected during the Spring 2013, and students' unofficial transcripts (indirect measure). Using the "Rubric for Writing" (see Appendix A), each composition was evaluated for general proficiency and language competence—broken down into the following five components:

- i. clarity of thesis
- ii. knowledge of writing conventions (grammar; spelling, accent marks, etc.)
- iii. organization and coherence
- iv. sentence fluency
- v. vocabulary

ASSESSMENT OF BA AND MINOR IN SPANISH

1. **Compositions.** Assessment included evaluation of one short composition that was part of the final exam in the Phonetics and Pronunciation course, Spanish 102. Although this is not a writing or grammar course, Spanish 102 was chosen to gather data for direct assessment to serve as a baseline of students' writing skills. The requirement for Spanish 102 is Spanish 2B, an Intermediate course; some students, however, have already taken Spanish 47 and Spanish 103—an Introduction to Grammar and Advanced Grammar courses, respectively. By assessing the writing skills of students in Spanish 102, we were able to compare the impact of having taken (or not) one or two of these grammar courses (47 and 103). Moreover, Spanish 102 is a requirement of students majoring in Spanish and there are several students who take it as part of their minor in Spanish.

The Assessment Report for the B.A. includes compositions of seven students (five in their junior year and two, sophomore); the Assessment report for the Minor includes compositions of four students (one senior and three students in their junior year).

Data analysis of the **compositions** yielded the following results:

B. A. in Spanish (achievement expected levels: 2, 3, 4)

- Average score (Total: 100 points) 83
- Students scoring 85-94 (competent-4) 57.1% (4 students)

- Students scoring 75-84 (good-3) 28.6% (2 students)
- Students scoring 65-74 (developing-2) 14.3% (1 student)

Minor in Spanish (achievement expected levels: 2, 3)

- Average score (Total: 100 points) 71
- Students scoring 75-84 (good-3) 50% (2 students)
- Students scoring 65-74 (developing-2) 25% (1 student)
- Students scoring ≥ 64 (beginning-1) 25% (1 student) *** below expectations

A. (Thesis out of 20 points)

- Average score – B. A. students 16.07 (good-3)
- Average score – Minor students 13.50 (developing-2)

B. (Conventions out of 20 points)

- Average score – B. A. students 16.21 (good-3)
- Average score – Minor students 14.88 (between developing and good- 2 and 3)

C. (Organization out of 20 points)

- Average score – B. A. students 16.64 (good-3)
- Average score – Minor students 14.25 (developing-2)

D. (Sentence Fluency out of 20 points)

- Average score – B. A. students 16.64 (good-3)
- Average score – Minor students 14.63 (between developing and good-2 and 3)

E. (Vocabulary out of 20 points)

- Average score – B. A. students 17.43 (competent-4)
- Average score – Minor students 16.25 (good-3)

Students' Transcripts. In order to form a clearer picture of the development of students' writing skills with respect to our programs, the students' progress in the program (B. A. or Minor) was examined.

Analysis of the students' transcripts show that most students—except for one student in the minor who had not taken any Spanish class before and one in the B.A.—have taken at least the Introduction to Grammar course, Spanish 47. The learner in the B.A., however, had taken three literature upper division courses which provide plenty of writing experience. Analysis of the transcripts also show that two of the learners in the B. A. who obtained a score at the 'competent' level (student 3, with a score of 88; and student 4, with a score of 85.5) and one student in the Minor (student 4 with a score of 76.5 or 'good') have taken the Advance Grammar course, Spanish 103, and the Advance Composition course, Spanish 106.

ASSESSMENT OF M A IN SPANISH

Compositions. Assessment of the learning outcomes was carried out during the Spring 2013 by evaluating two compositions submitted in the Applied Spanish Linguistics graduate seminar, Spanish 201D. In the data analysis section below these two sets of writings are identified as Composition 1 and Composition 2. The Assessment Report for the M.A. includes the compositions for eight students.

Data analysis of the **compositions** yielded the following results:

Composition 1 (achievement expected levels: 3, 4, 5)

- Average score (Total: 100 points) 90.31
- Students scoring 95< (accomplished-5) 12.5% (1 student)
- Students scoring 85-94 (competent-4) 87.5% (7 students)

Composition 2 (achievement expected levels: 3, 4, 5)

- Average score (Total: 100 points) 91.06
- Students scoring 95< (accomplished-5) 37.5% (3 students)
- Students scoring 85-94 (competent-4) 50% (4 students)
- Students scoring 75-84 (good-3) 12.5% (1 student)

A. (Thesis out of 20 points)

- Average score Composition 1 19.63 (competent-5)
- Average score Composition 2 18.81 (between competent and accomplished-4 and 5)

B. (Conventions out of 20 points)

- Average score Composition 1 17.69 (competent-4)
- Average score Composition 2 17.81 (competent-4)

C. (Organization out of 20 points)

- Average score Composition 1 17.56 (competent-4)
- Average score Composition 2 18.13 (competent-4)

D. (Sentence Fluency out of 20 points)

- Average score Composition 1 17.25 (competent-4)
- Average score Composition 2 17.75 (competent-4)
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E. (Vocabulary out of 20 points)

- Average score Composition 1 18.19 (competent-4)
- Average score Composition 2 18.56 (between competent and accomplished-4 and 5)

The results show that there was an improvement in the overall average score in the second composition (i.e., 90.31 in Composition 1 compared to 91.06 in Composition 2). Also, the results

show that six of the eight of the students improved in the second composition, even if the difference of means **within subjects** (e.g., the change of means observed between the first and second composition) did not show statistical significance ($p = 0.70$) in the t-test. The data also show that while in the first composition only one student achieve the ‘accomplishment’ level (95 or above), in the second composition, three of the learners wrote an essay at the ‘accomplishment’ level.

Moreover, although student 1 and student 4 obtained a lower score in the second composition, their score was still at the expected level (remember that the writing skills of learners in the M. A. program are expected to be at level 3, minimum, for formative assessment—i.e., data collected in writing assignments in classes). An apparent lack of consistency in writing skills (i.e., scoring lower in the more recent composition) is a normal occurrence even at the master’s level, considering that the development of academic writing skills is a long process (in first and second language) that may take between four and seven years (Hakuta, et al, 2000.)

b. As a result of these assessments what did you learn about the program’s success in helping its students achieve these learning outcomes?

B.A AND MINOR IN SPANISH Currently, there are three courses that are required for the B.A. program in Spanish: Spanish 47, Introduction to Grammar; Spanish 103, Advanced Grammar; and Spanish 106, Advanced Composition. By assessing the writing skills of students in Spanish 102, we were able to compare the impact of having taken (or not) one or two of the grammar courses (47 and 103) and the composition class (Spanish 106) in the Spanish programs.

Assessment data suggest that this sequence of courses helps learners to achieve this learning objective in order to communicate effectively in written language.

MA IN SPANISH Assessment work at the M.A. level indicates that the program is successful in helping students achieve the writing learning objective. An analysis of the students’ progress in the M.A. program suggests, as expected, that the number of semesters students have been in the program influence positively in the development of their writing proficiency, indicating program impact. The data seen in Appendix C show that students 5 and 7 have been in the program the longest (7 and 5 terms, respectively), and their scores suggest a more advanced written proficiency (both of them scored in the 90’s in both essays). On the other hand, four of the students assessed were in their second semester in the program: two of them (students 3 and 6) scored in the upper 80’s in both essays; student 2 scored in the 90’s in both essays; and student 4 scored lower in the second essay, although still at the ‘competent’ level.

c. In what areas are students doing well and achieving expectations?

Overall, analysis of the compositions indicates that most students in the different programs (Minor, B.A. and M.A.) can express themselves correctly in writing under testing conditions and are achieving expectations in Written Communication.

B. A. AND MINOR IN SPANISH. The data (seen in Appendix B) show that almost all the students achieved the expected scores according to their class level (that is, 2, 3, 4 for the B. A. and 2, 3 for the Minor), except for one student in the minor, who scored 64 (beginning level = 1). An examination of this student’s transcript showed that the learner had not taken any Spanish class before enrolling in the Spanish 102 course.

This assessment work shows that students in the B. A. tend to have a higher level of proficiency in writing than students in the minor program, which is expected considering that the curriculum for the minor in Spanish consists of four upper division courses in Spanish compared to the requirement of 12 upper division courses for the B. A.

Furthermore, the data indicate that students in the Spanish B.A. and in the Minor in Spanish program effectively present ideas in a clear and logical order in writing, even at the junior and sophomore level although some learners may still have difficulties with transitions and the development of some ideas.

M. A. IN SPANISH. In general, assessment results indicate that the writing of students at the M.A. level is more focused and coherent; also, transitions from one idea to the next seem in general more fluid, although there are still some rough spots, in particular among students who are still in the beginning of the program.

d. What areas are seen as needing improvement within your program?

B.A. AND MINOR IN SPANISH. As it was observed in previous reports, the main difficulty faced by students is with the formal conventions of the language (accents, spelling, and grammar) as well as with the development of a clear and original thesis that matches the writing assignment. It was also noticed that some students did not include a clear introduction or a conclusion. This difficulty may have stemmed from the fact that the essay consisted of a short essay; thus, it did not allow for a more extensive writing sample with a well-developed thesis and relevant evidence, despite the fact that the instructions clearly requested an introduction and a conclusion.

M. A. IN SPANISH. As it was observed in the report for students in the B.A. and Minor programs, the formal conventions of the language (accents, spelling, and grammar) is still one of the difficulties faced by students at the Master's level, although to a lesser extent.

**3. As a result of faculty reflection on these results, are there any program changes anticipated?
a. If so, what are those changes?**

BA AND MINOR IN SPANISH. The data indicates that although the majority of learners are achieving expectations in the writing learning objective, many still need to improve their knowledge of grammar and their writing skills before advancing to senior courses. However, although the faculty have approved to have Spanish 47 (Introduction to Composition and Grammar Review) as a required course in the B.A. program **before** students enroll in SPAN 103 (Advanced Spanish Grammar), several factors have made it a challenge to implement this change. It has been difficult to offer more than one section of Spanish 47 and Spanish 103 because of the reduction in workforce in the Spanish area due to retirements (the Spanish area has three positions less since spring 2009). As a result of this, many learners find it difficult to enroll in these courses in the recommended sequence.

Another challenge is related to the curriculum of the Minor in Spanish, for which only the Advanced Grammar course (Spanish 103) is a requirement, while the other two courses (Spanish 47 and 106) are electives. Therefore, in order to avoid increasing the units required with the

addition of Spanish 47 as a requirement for the Minor in Spanish, the curriculum for the program needs to be examined.

MA IN SPANISH. There are not changes anticipated to the M.A. program at the moment. However, as mentioned earlier, the data from this report provides a formative assessment that will be compared with writing samples collected in the comprehensive exam (summative assessment) in order to further assess program impact.

b. How will you know if these changes achieve the anticipated results?

BA AND MINOR IN SPANISH. Although there are not changes anticipated, the committee will collect essays from senior courses in order to further assess program impact.

MA IN SPANISH. There are not changes anticipated to the M.A. program at the moment.

4. Did your department engage in any other assessment activities such as the development of rubrics, course alignment?

Yes. The "Rubric for Writing" (see Appendix A) has been updated with new 'labels' that reflect the developmental nature of the writing proficiency (beginning, developed, good, competent and accomplished). For the upcoming academic year, we propose to revise the "Rubric for Writing" in order to incorporate criteria for the assessment of critical thinking skills and subject matter.

5. What assessment activities are planned for the upcoming academic year?

a. The following is a tentative Assessment Plan for the Spanish programs:

Year 2013-2014. Learning Outcome: **Students discuss literary and intellectual (history and current social and political) developments in the target culture.**

Year 2014-2015. Learning Outcomes:

- i. **Students can engage in oral communications as evidenced by their ability to present an oral report on a given topic under testing conditions; or**
- ii. **Students engage in conversations in the target language in a variety of topics under testing conditions.**

Year 2015-2016. Learning Outcome: **Students describe and/ or discuss linguistic similarities and differences between the target language and their own.**

Year 2016-2017. Learning Outcome: **Students can communicate effectively in written language.**

Bibliography

Hakuta, Kenji, Yuko Goto Butler, and Daria Witt. 2000. "How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency? The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Policy report 2000-1."

Rubric for Essays (Appendix A)
California State University, Sacramento

STUDENT _____

DATE _____

TOPIC _____

	1 Beginning	2 Developing	3 Good	4 Competent	5 Accomplished	Rating
Thesis: the extent to which the writing establishes a clear thesis to the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is missing and/or absence of relevant evidence and details. (12.5 or below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is ambiguous or very vague or ignores the purpose of the assignment; evidence loosely related to the writing task. Details are not clear. (13-14.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is somewhat clear but evidence sometimes is inadequate to support all statements. Details are general and not specific. Topic may be too big (15-16.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although not original, thesis is fairly clear and matches the writing task. , although evidence supports all statements. Details are present but not developed. (17-18.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is original, clear and closely matches the writing assignment; evidence is relevant and adequately supports the thesis. Writing is full of details for support what is important about the topic. (19-20) 	
Knowledge of Conventions: the extent to which the writing exhibits conventional spelling, accent marks; punctuation, and grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows no mastery of conventions; poor grammar; virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules; does not communicate. Dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, and accent marks; <i>meaning is lost</i>. (12.5 or below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major weaknesses in grammar that cause significant distraction; frequent errors in word order, agreement, tense, number, articles, pronouns, prepositions; reads like a translation from English.. Frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, and accent marks; <i>meaning is confused or obscured</i>. (13-14.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More frequent errors in word order, agreement, tense, number, articles, pronouns, prepositions. More errors of spelling, punctuation, and accent marks; <i>meaning is obscured in some areas</i>. (15-16.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few grammatical errors that cause the reader some distraction; effective but simple constructions; several errors in word order, agreement, tense, number, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, and accent marks; <i>meaning seldom obscured</i>. (17-18.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows mastery of conventions of construction of sentences (word order, agreement, tense, number, articles, pronouns, prepositions);. Mastery of conventions of spelling, punctuation, and accent marks. (19-20) 	
Organization and Coherence: the extent to which the writing maintains direction, focus, and coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little no organization to the paper. No explicit relationships among ideas in the paper. Many one-sentence paragraphs. Writer makes no attempt to use transition words and phrases. There is no beginning or end to the paper. Ideas seem scrambled, jumbled, disconnected. Paper is confusing. The details do not fit with the main idea or story. Many unnecessary ideas are included. (12.5 or below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little organization to the paper. Frequent digressions; loose connection of ideas. Serious omissions or underdevelopment. Writer makes littler attempt to use transition words and phrases. A lot of the writing does not connect to the main idea or story. Ending is missing or does not connect to the story or main idea. A lot of unnecessary ideas are included. (13-14.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A title is present. The paper is somewhat organized, but seems unfinished. Many irrelevant ideas/paragraphs included; many ideas omitted or not fully developed. Writer makes an inconsistent attempt to use some basic transition words or phrases. It is not clear how some details are connected to the main idea or story. Some of the details are not in the right spot or are unnecessary. (15-16.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An appropriate title is present. The ideas and details are mostly presented in logical order. Some irrelevant ideas/paragraphs included; some ideas are omitted or not fully developed. Writer makes a consistent attempt to use some transitions words and phrases to show the relationships among ideas. Transition from one idea to next somewhat fluid. Paper seems complete. Few ideas are unnecessary. (17-18.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An original title is present. The paper has a clear beginning, middle & ending. Ideas & details are presented in logical order. Writer makes skillful use of transition words and phrases to show the relationships among ideas. Transitions are internally coherent. Paper is complete. It does not have unnecessary information. (19-20) 	
Sentence/fluency: the extent to which the writing incorporates a variety of sentence patterns and flows smoothly from one idea to the next	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer uses simple sentences. Most of the sentences are unclear. Paper is difficult to read. Difficult time identifying where one idea ends and the next begins. (12.5 or below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer makes some attempt to include different sentence patterns but with awkward or uneven success. Paper does not flow smoothly. Sentences are choppy or awkward and many parts are difficult to read (13-14.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer makes some attempt to include a range of varied sentence patterns. Some parts of the paper are difficult to read. (15-16.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer effectively incorporates a range of varied sentence patterns to reveal syntactic fluency. Paper flows smoothly, but has some rough spots. (17-18.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer consistently and effectively incorporates a range of varied sentence patterns to reveal syntactic fluency. The writing is natural and flows smoothly. (19-20) 	
Vocabulary: the extent to which the writing incorporates precise and extensive range of words and idioms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary is essentially translation; invented words; clear projection from English. Word choices are confusing, unclear, or inappropriate. <i>Meaning is unclear</i>. (12.5 or below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although vocabulary is not all translation, Word choices make the writing unclear to the reader. <i>Word choices confuse the meaning</i> (13-14.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate range of vocabulary. Word choices get the message across but frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, and usage. <i>Meaning is not obscured</i>. (15-16.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate range of vocabulary. Occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, and usage, <i>but meaning is not obscured</i>. The writer uses some interesting words and phrases that are clear. (17-18.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive and sophisticated range of vocabulary. Word choices are precise, effective use of idioms, appropriate register. <i>Meaning is clear</i>. The writing is interesting to read. (19-20) 	

> 64

65-74

75-84

85-94

95-100

TOT: _____

mm-6-06-2011

Assessment Scores and average – Spanish B. A. and Spanish Minor (Appendix B)

Spanish B.A.

	Total-Grade	Thesis	Convent.	Org	Fluency	Vocab
student 1	78.5	14	17	15.5	16	16
student 2	90.5	18.5	17.5	18	18	18.5
student 3	88	17	17.5	18	17.5	18
student 4	85.5	17	15	18	17.5	18
student 5	71	14	14	14	14	15
student 6	78.5	14	15.5	15	15.5	18.5
student 7	89	18	17	18	18	18
AVERAGE	83.00	16.07	16.21	16.64	16.64	17.43

Spanish Minor

	Total-Grade	Thesis	Convent.	Org	Fluency	Vocab
student 1	67	13	13	13	13	15
student 2	76.5	14	15	14	15.5	18
student 3	64	13	15	15	15	16
student 4	76.5	14	16.5	15	15	16
AVERAGE	71.00	13.50	14.88	14.25	14.63	16.25

Assessment Scores and average – Spanish M. A. (Appendix C)

Spanish M.A.

	# of sem	Total-Grade	
		Essay 1	Essay 2
student 1	4	86	83
student 2	3	94	96.5
student 3	2	86	86
student 4	2	95	86
student 5	7	91	91
student 6	2	88.5	89.5
student 7	2	91	98
student 8	5	91	98.5
AVERAGE		90.31	91.06
paired t-test		0.7018824	

	Thesis		Convent.		Org		Fluency		Vocab	
	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 1	Essay 2
student 1	18.5	17	16	16	16	16	17	16	18.5	18
student 2	20	20	18.5	19	18.5	19.5	18	19	19	19
student 3	18.5	17	17.5	17	16	17	16	17	18	18
student 4	20	18	18	16	18.5	16.5	18.5	16.5	20	19
student 5	20	20	17	18	19	18	17	17	18	18
student 6	20	18.5	18.5	18.5	16.5	18	16.5	17.5	17	17
student 7	20	20	18	19.5	18	20	18	19	17	19.5
student 8	20	20	18	18.5	18	20	17	20	18	20
AVERAGE	19.63	18.81	17.69	17.81	17.56	18.13	17.25	17.75	18.19	18.56
paired t-test	0.02		0.75		0.31		0.38		0.41251	