

Wright College Academic Department/Program Assessment Project

Fall 2015

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WHAT?

Describe the purpose of this assessment project.

The purpose of this project was to assess students' speaking abilities and determine if having ungraded oral exams allowed students to feel more at ease and hold higher-level conversations versus those students whose oral exams were always graded.

WHY?

Describe your department/program's reasons for taking on this project and the areas of your department/program that are involved.

As part of my tenure process and as a way to improve my assessment cycle of oral and aural Spanish skills, I planned this project incorporating more formative assessment alongside the principally summative assessment I had already been using. While it was limited to two classes (one control group and one experimental group), this assessment could be replicated in my and others' language classes of any level. Even if the assessment is not replicated, the results can inform not only my sections but other instructors' classes as well.

HOW?

Describe the participants, methods, and the timeline for this project.

The participants were students in two sections of Spanish 103. One class was given two graded oral exams; the other class was given one ungraded and one graded oral exam. The timeline was an entire semester with one oral exam given close to midterm and the other in the last weeks of class. The control group took place a different semester. The total time was one year.

WHAT WE FOUND

1. Describe the way in which your department/program will collect results. 2. Provide the results. 3. Describe how these results will be used for improvements.

1. I collected the results by grading students during the oral exams, posting the results on Blackboard, and running a column statistics analysis to find the mean scores or compare column information.

2. Students in the control class scored an average of 42.44/50 points on the midterm oral. Students in the experimental class scored an average of 48.31/50 points. This would point to a significant improvement when students knew the oral exam would not be graded.

Also, when comparing the midterm oral exam (ungraded) to the final oral exam (graded) within the same class, the midterm grades were higher in 2 out of 15 cases. This would also seem to indicate the benefits of having an oral exam count as an ungraded conversation rather than a summative assessment.

Other factors, such as changes in student preparation or different topics could certainly have caused differences but the data seem to indicate significant improvements in students' oral production when formative oral assessments were given.

3. I will report these findings to my department and explain the results above. Other instructors can choose to implement similar formative assessments in their classes to check oral/aural skills in Spanish or other language classes.

It might be beneficial to run this same project in additional classes to further confirm the results obtained here.

I will be changing my oral "exam" structure and now provide ungraded oral "checks" at both midterm and final periods to gain knowledge of students' performance and obtain additional information as to how well the assessment project works.

ACTFL STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages has devised a five-point set of standards for foreign language learning. These are: (1) communication; (2) cultures; (3) connections; (4) comparisons; and (5) communities.



Departmental goals.

1. To introduce students to the disciplines within the Humanities
2. To introduce students to a foreign language: French, Polish, or Spanish
3. To improve the speaking and writing abilities of native and near-native speakers of a foreign language
4. To help students appreciate other cultures than their own
5. To introduce students to the history of art
6. To enable students to understand art and ideas within cultural and historical contexts

Student Outcomes

Students who complete Foreign Language courses should be able to:

[the school wide general education SLOs are in parenthesis]

1. Demonstrate oral and written proficiency at the appropriate level of instruction in the target language. [2, 4, 5]
2. Demonstrate reading and writing comprehension at the appropriate level of instruction in the target language. [2, 4, 5]
3. Demonstrate understanding of literary, historical, geographical, artistic foundations and trends of the various cultures and traditions being studied. [2, 4, 5]

General Education Abilities

1. Contemplate and read critically to solve problems using appropriate resources and reasoning processes
2. Read, write, speak, and listen effectively so that the expectations of appropriate audiences in the academic, public, and private sectors are met
3. Demonstrate quantitative and technological literacy, especially computer literacy, for interpreting data, reasoning, and problem-solving
4. Understand and appreciate diversity in gender, race, age, class, and culture as well as differences in physical abilities in a global society
5. Understand and develop ethical values, life goals, and interpersonal skills that will prepare them for lifelong learning, employability, and effective citizenship

Measureable Student Learning Outcomes – French 104.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to

1. Demonstrate proficiency orally and in written form the Future simple tense, Conditional and Subjunctive Moods;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of French geography;
3. Describe certain French regions: Provence, Brittany, Alsace, Normandy, their geography, economy, history, costumes, and famous people.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of geography, economy, history, culture of French DOM and TOM.
5. Demonstrate understanding of various topics related to French speaking world; colonization and decolonization;

6. Compare and contrast cultural similarities and differences of French/Francophone cultures with their own;

1. The purpose of the assessment project.

Course: French 104. Topic: Tour de France. Chapter 19, Voila! 6th edition, p.439.

Purpose: Students learn geography of France, its regions, history the Tour de France which is one of the most popular sport completions.

2. Assessment project vis-à-vis ACTFL Standards, Departmental and GE goals, student outcomes, and MLSO.

This assessment project is aligned with five ACTFL standards, departmental goals (2,3,4), SO (1,2,3), GE (2,3,4,5), SLO (1,2,3,4,5,6).

3. Method:

Group and individual PowerPoint presentations included topics:

1. History of Le Tour de France
2. Le Tour de France 2015 – its itinerary, stages, champions.
3. French regions of the Tour 2015 (geography, history, famous people, presentation in art, songs or movies).
4. Planning a trip to France including a short staying in Paris and visit of a region(s) of students' s choice. Project included places to see, activities during the trip, itinerary, means of transportation, finances.

Students were given the assessment after Mid-term. The assessment was completed on November 19, 2015.

Students' performance has been evaluated using a rubric designed to evaluate that particular assignment.

Oral presentation Rubric. French 103/104

Quality of oral presentation in French	Excellent 20 points	Good 15 points	Fair 10 points
Eye contact	Maintains eye contact	Some eye contact	Minimal eye contact
Preparation	Reads very little from notes. Answers questions appropriately	Reads fair amount from note cards. Some hesitation in presenting. Makes grammar errors answering the questions	Reads entire presentation from the note cards. Unable to answer questions in French
Pronunciation	Uses the correct pronunciation	Mispronounces some words – does not impede comprehension	Mispronounces a lot of words. Sometimes pronunciation errors impede comprehension
Content	Topic is covered fully, includes details; uses appropriate vocab.	In some areas information is lacking.	Provided partial information using limited vocab
Grammatical correctness	Verb tenses correct. Good use of language. Uses all tenses appropriately.	Some errors in use of grammar tenses and in sentence formation	Multiple errors in sentence formation; errors in verb conjugation.
Evidence of meeting guidelines	Fully meets guidelines regarding length, topic, and format	Presentation is within 3 minutes of meeting length guideline. Generally meets guidelines regarding topic, and/or format.	Presentation is more than 4 minutes of meeting guidelines; deviates from the topic and format guidelines.

4. What we found.

Average scores show that students on average approached 15 points most of the assessed areas.

Use of grammar tenses needs more practice during the semester.

Teaching pronunciation is fairly challenging since we do not have a FL lab.