

UW Colleges Assessment Planning and Reporting Form

Email your reports to SAC@uwc.edu

2003 - 2004

Department	Foreign Language
Assessment Coordinator(s)	Nancy Waldman, DAC, Mary Kasum, Cecilia Rodriguez

NOTE: Please attach relevant supporting information used to complete the Report Summary Sheet.

PART 1: Assessment of General Education Outcomes

Section 1: Identify the Proficiencies/Performance Indicators Assessed

- at the *Planning* stage, mark the performance indicators to be assessed in the left hand column below
- at the *Reporting* stage, report the numbers of students who did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations

	Proficiency	Performance Indicators	# Do Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
	A. Analytical Skills	1. Analyze, synthesize, evaluate and interpret information and ideas	5	33	11

Section 3: Use of Results

1. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?

The instructors assessing these courses for the Assessment of General Outcomes stressed the fact that the assessment the student received based on the rubric to be used will not be used as part of the students' grade. Instead, they will be used to evaluate whether students did meet campus wide expectations in the analysis, synthesis, evaluation and interpretation of information and ideas based on the campus wide rubric. Their normal assessment for grading purposes would have used grammar, composition structure, logical presentation of ideas and language ability in general to assess their grade. Applying the rubric will be interesting to see whether the students meet campus wide expectations. We will discuss the results to determine how to increase instruction of analytical skills if the students do not meet expectations.

2. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?

The application of the rubric will be discussed and it will be determined if the papers need to be brought to department meetings to assess as a group. At the spring meeting, one of our department members is also a member of another department. She described an experience that involved all members evaluating several compositions. The resulting conflict of opinion was very lively. Evaluators had different ideas of standards at each level and additional comments regarding topic, focus of student, and grading a draft vs. a final version.

3. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?

During the Spring meeting, 2004, no decision was made to share student compositions and engage in an assessment activity as described above, since the data regarding outcomes indicates a consistency in the application of the rubrics. The results of the assessment indicate a vast majority of students meeting or exceeding department expectations.

4. Have you assessed this proficiency/performance indicator previously? Did you make changes to your teaching and/or the assessment tool based on that assessment? Describe the impact those changes had on student learning.

Analytical skills had never been assessed in this level in these foreign language classes. However, we will continue to assess these higher level courses typically enrolling sophomore level students to assess skills unrelated specifically to language acquisition.

**PART 2: Assessment of Department-Specific Outcomes
FALL 2003**

Section 1: Identify department-specific outcomes/performance indicators.

Outcomes/Performance Indicators
1. After completion of Foreign Language 101 a student will be able to speak about a number of topics: daily activities, weather, seasons, weekend leisure activities, e.g.

Section 2: Attach the rubric/standards used to assess each outcome/performance indicator.

Analytic Rubric for Assessment of Speaking Task

	Task Completion	Comprehensibility	Fluency	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar
Exceeds Expectations	Superior completion of task, responses appropriate and with elaboration 6 5	Responses readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation on the part of the listener 6 5	Speech continuous with few pauses or stumbling 6 5	Enhances communication 6 5	Rich use of vocabulary 6 5	Control of basic language structures 6 5
Meets Expectations	Partial completion of the task, responses mostly appropriate 4 3	Responses mostly comprehensible, requiring minimal interpretation on the part of the listener. 4 3	Some hesitation and pauses but few or no incomplete thought, manages to continue and complete thoughts. 4 3	Does not or occasionally interferes with communication 4 3	Some inaccuracies, but adequate use of vocabulary for this level 4 3	Emerging use and control of basic language structures 4 3
Fails to Meet Expectations	Minimal completion of task. Responses frequently inappropriate 2 1	Responses barely comprehensible 2 1	Speech halting and uneven with long pause4s or incomplete thought 2 1	Frequently interferes with communication, or incomprehensible. 2 1	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary 2 1	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use and control of basic language structures 2 1

Calculation of Score: Add totals and see chart below:

Exceeds: 28-36 Meets: 15-27 Fails: 6 - 14

Section 3: Assessment Results

Departmental Outcome/Performance Indicator	# Do Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
1. Speaking	16	117	98

SPRING 2004

Section 1: Identify department-specific outcomes/performance indicators.

Outcomes/Performance Indicators
1. After completion of Foreign Language 105 a student will be able to speak about a number of topics: shopping, free time activities, travel, vacations and school, for e.g. and use a variety of tenses: the past, future, subjunctive and conditional.

Spring 2004

Section 2: Attach the rubric/standards used to assess each outcome/performance indicator.

*****Please note the rubric has been simplified to a simpler three-tiered system.*****

Analytic Rubric for Assessment of Speaking Task 105

	Task Completion	Comprehensibility	Fluency	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar
Exceeds Expectations	Superior completion of task, responses appropriate and with elaboration 3	Responses readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation on the part of the listener 3	Speech continuous with few pauses or stumbling 3	Enhances communication 3	Rich use of vocabulary 3	Control of basic language structures 3
Meets Expectations	Partial completion of the task, responses mostly appropriate 2	Responses mostly comprehensible, requiring minimal interpretation on the part of the listener. 2	Some hesitation and pauses but few or no incomplete thoughts, manages to continue and complete thoughts. 2	Does not or occasionally interferes with communication 2	Some inaccuracies, but adequate use of vocabulary for this level 2	Emerging use and control of basic language structures 2
Fails to Meet Expectations	Minimal completion of task. Responses frequently inappropriate 1	Responses barely comprehensible 1	Speech halting and uneven with long pause4s or incomplete thought 1	Frequently interferes with communication, or incomprehensible. 1	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary 1	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use and control of basic language structures 1

Calculation of Score: Add totals and see chart below: Exceeds: 14--18 Meets: 8-13 Fails: 0-7

SPRING 2004

Section 3: Assessment Results Speaking 105

Departmental Outcome/Performance Indicator	# Do Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
1. Speaking	14	58	57

Section 5: Use of results

1. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?

The focus of many world language courses is effective communication with an effort to include all skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Perhaps speaking is the most difficult to master. Results will show whether we are creating students with effective speaking skills for their level or whether more emphasis needs to be placed on opportunities for conversation in class.

Instructor comments include: We need to consider a departmental listing of topics all languages should cover in beginning languages.

2. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?

The development of the rubric itself created a healthy discussion about the difficulty of assessing speaking. The need for videotaping or cassettes in a permanent record may arise. Our committee simplified the first version of the rubric to two levels, high and low within each category.

After using the speaking rubric, instructor comments include: a.) we need some training on how to use the rubric, b.) I gave my students a copy of the rubric before the assessment so that they would know how they would be assessed. I talked to each student after the oral assessment indicating to them how they scored. I think it would be a good idea to record the assessment of each student & have the opportunity to playback the conversation for them. c.) How do we handle the situation of a student who didn't participate? As a fails to meet? d.) I enjoyed the assessment e.) I did have some struggles using the rubric—I'm not sure I completely understood the Foreign Language departments understanding of exceeds/meets expectations. Also, would it be more useful if students DIDN'T have the topics beforehand? Then again, the speaking vs. conversation distinction may be important.

Additional comments included: I gave the questions to the students beforehand and they did some brainstorming in class with me and in groups of three. They set up individual appointments to meet with me in my office. I asked the questions in English and they presented what they had prepared. I then made comments and asked questions in Spanish elaborating on what they had said, hoping to have a more spontaneous conversation. I enjoy the whole process and think it is valuable for I have the opportunity to spend some 15-20 minutes with each student evaluating speaking skills. I find the rubric clear and practical.

Detailed description of one instructor's procedure: Students were advised that as a part of the final oral assessment for this course, they would meet individually with the Instructor to discuss in French one of three given topics. Students were given the Assessment Rubric in advance so that they would understand how they would be assessed. The general topics for the assessment, which covered a variety of vocabulary and grammar, were School, Travel and Summer Vacation Plans. At the scheduled appointment time, students came individually to the Instructor's office, randomly selected a topic & began discussing the topic in French. During the conversation with the student, the Instructor asked questions that necessitated the use of various tenses: present, imperfect, passé composé, future, subjunctive.

Reflection on this assessment:

Pros: - Meeting with students face to face to have a conversation in French to assess individual performance

- Giving students the theme or topic in advance which reduces anxiety about the process
- Conversational format allows assessment of a variety of vocabulary and tenses
- Gives Instructor & student a chance to review briefly student progress in the course

Cons: - This type of assessment is time intensive & is difficult to do with my larger classes

- Some students have increased anxiety & fear they will not do well
- To compare accurately students across all sections and languages of 105, we would need to have similar assessment tasks & procedures
- If student does not readily speak in the language, there is a danger that the Instructor will "lead" the conversation by asking questions

Suggestions for future oral assessments:

- Agree on general topics for assessments well in advance of the assessment
- Have the opportunity to use the assessment rubric with students at least once before final oral assessment
- Agree on an assessment procedure that each Instructor will follow
- Agree to assess either individual students or groups of students

Another instructor notes: "I prefer to have students tape their responses because I can listen to the tape several times, stopping it to make written comments, rewinding it to make sure that I heard correctly what the student said. I believe that this method gives a more objective assessment than making a snap judgment after hearing the response just once."

And another: The students got the questions approximately two weeks before the oral exam was administered. It was a part of the final exam but point-wise not too significant—10 points out of 77 total. We spent about a half hour in class one day with them working in groups brainstorming on what the questions could sound like in different ways and what vocabulary they would need to respond. I encouraged them to see this as a real conversation and not a time to memorize answers. We also talked about how "meets expectations" is a good thing—not a negative!

Over the two week period I did see students practicing with each other in the lab, with the second-year Spanish student/Spanish tutor, and on their own. I felt this semester went much better than last fall's assessment, in part because we included the follow-up questions. That really gave me a better idea of where the students are at in terms of "real" communication—and I was happy with the results. I would have been surprised if someone in 105 at this point failed to meet expectations just because most of the students not ready to put in the time to learn a language either didn't pass 101 or passed but chose not to continue at this point.

Anyway, I liked the set-up we had this semester and I also liked that it showed me the progress students have made from the end of 101 to the end of 201. Everyone was much more comfortable, handled follow-up questions pretty easily, and we had actual little conversations, albeit about simple topics! ☺ I also think that this process (the assessment of conversation) helped me get a better feel for where the department wants students to be at this time and it also proved to me once again the benefits of a smaller class where all students have so much time each day when they're speaking.

3. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency? To be discussed at Spring meeting, 2004.

In general, open-ended speaking opportunities need to be provided for students to develop this skill of “speaking” We discussed the ‘globality’ of conversation—it is listening, translation, grammar, pronunciation, etc. There is a myriad of ways to incorporate conversation into the classroom, such as using dialog starter cards; situation cards in English or in target language; topics only given, lists of questions to be answered, etc. All methods may be appropriate to assess “speaking” skills.

One instructor commented “I would like to know about successful teaching techniques used by you or any of the others to promote speaking skills. I feel there is a lot more I could be doing”. The FLG department website being developed, as described below will address this question.

4. Have you assessed this proficiency/performance indicator previously? Did you make changes to your teaching and/or the assessment tool based on that assessment? Describe the impact those changes had on student learning.

Some instructors (but not all) routinely include a speaking portion on their final exam, involving an oral interview or taping process. Hence, including the speaking assessment in our department plan allowed the department as a whole to become involved in a discussion of the entire learning process, focusing on speaking skills. We discussed different styles of learning and abilities in the classroom, teaching and examination styles, and the complexities of assessing speaking skills. Since speech includes comprehension of new information, formation of grammatical sentences and vocabulary retention to be able to respond, we really focused on breaking down the skill into its simplest essence. Of course, there is no assurance that we were really able to do this, but tried to prepare students with the necessary tools at hand: anticipation of the possible questions and vocabulary to be able to respond. We will continue to assess the skills in the next two higher levels of language and will follow our same philosophy of forming the task and developing the rubric.

PART 3: Additional Assessment and Contributions

Please ask for and include in the report information from Department members about any other assessment activities they have conducted, particularly in conjunction with grant-funded innovations. Also ask for and describe briefly any additional contributions to assessment such as publications, presentations, qualitative classroom innovations (such as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities), and other items relating to assessment that the department wishes to note.

1. The Foreign Language Department (Cecilia Rodriguez) publishes a newsletter (Babel) each semester outlining instructors’ and campus activities, articles on assessment and professional development endeavors. We plan to increase our use of this newsletter to include articles on second language learning and research, teaching methodology and professional development opportunities.
2. The Foreign Language Department will begin the creation and implementation of a departmental website to include activities, resources, class descriptions, books used, schedules, classes taught and other departmentally related issues. We will certainly include assessment, and will have our plan, list of assessment committee members and results available.
3. At the spring departmental meeting Tony Cicionne, Director of the Center for Instructional and Professional Development gave a presentation on SoTL—The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning. Briefly, Tony urged us to consider our classes as live experiments and the opportunity to gather data on learning every day. We must train ourselves to evaluate useful evidence gained in

the classroom to understand student learning, and to advance our knowledge of how we can best facilitate student learning. Because of this motivating speaker, we are urging department members to forward any research to Cecelia to include in our department newsletter.