

**Academic Degree Programs Assessment
Status Report**



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Department of World
Languages and Cultures**

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

B.A. in World Languages and Cultures

formerly

B.A. in French

B.A. in German

B.A. in Spanish

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1. Introduction

The Department of World Languages and Cultures (formerly, Foreign Languages and Literatures), is committed to quality teaching, research, engagement, and outreach. In our classrooms and the Language Learning and Teaching Center, students work on achieving proficiency in the target language according to the standards of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). At the same time, students develop a deeper understanding of and an appreciation for cultural, linguistic, and literary differences in the regions where these languages are spoken, thus preparing them to be informed and engaged citizens in a global society. Given the variety of fields represented in the Department, issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and internationalization lie at the center of WLC's curriculum and scholarly activities.

In order to fulfill this mission, WLC is committed to

- advancing foreign/second language proficiency, cross-cultural competency, and global awareness.
- providing high quality instruction in language, literature, culture, translation, and linguistics.
- providing opportunities for students to interact in their chosen language(s) outside of the traditional classroom setting.
- contributing to scholarship in relevant fields of literature, cultural studies, language pedagogy, instructional technology, language acquisition, linguistics, translation studies, and other related fields.
- contributing to the mission of the University.

Please note:

The department has recently undergone a major change as suggested by our findings during Program Prioritization: We have changed our name from “Foreign Languages and Literatures” to the more inclusive “World Languages and Cultures” and have combined three majors into one single major, namely the **B.A. in World Languages and Cultures**, with three emphases:

Emphasis I – French and Francophone Studies

Emphasis II – German Studies

Emphasis III – Spanish and Hispanic Studies

This action led us to revisit and adjust our SLOs and Methods of Assessment. The pre- and post-tests, for example, are in the process of being revised. One initial change is the removal of the cloze test. We are also in the process of setting the pre- and post-tests up so that they can be completed online in our Language Learning Center, which will help with the collection of the artifacts, as so far, the university does not have an operational assessment collection system.

At this point, we do not have any data for the new program. The data we will report here has been collected over the last four years. The response rate on the Alumni questionnaire has been very low, thus, we will no longer use it as the results are statistically insignificant.

Moreover, most of the changes that we have made to the program were made on the basis of getting together and discussing our program, our students and issues that may arise. For example, through those kinds of conversations we decided to add an advanced grammar class for heritage speakers of Spanish (FLSP 315) that will run parallel to an advanced grammar class for non-native speakers (FLSP 301), that means that the heritage speakers take 315 only and not 301. These types of conversations are very valuable to our department's process, but not measurable.

In accordance with suggestions following Program Prioritization and with the associated major changes of the department, we have instituted a new course, FLAL 300 (APPENDIX IV), required of all students pursuing a degree. In this course our students learn basics of practical linguistics and research and also have the opportunity to

hear guest lecturers from inside and outside WLC and to meet fellow students. In addition, this class is also used to gather assessment information on beginning majors through pre-tests and questionnaires (Appendix I).

Our FLAL 400 course, required of all majors to be taken at or near the end of studies, provides students guidance in pursuing employment in degree-related fields (they learn how to write a resume in the Target Language) or in applying for graduate studies. As part of this course, students prepare an electronic portfolio containing 'artifacts' of their studies and experience (papers, projects, presentations, etc.) at NIU and also re-take the pre-tests of FLAL 300 as post-tests in FLAL 400. These pre-/post-tests are designed to be difficult and to test students for higher-level knowledge of language that one would hope they would acquire between the beginning and the end of their studies. At the end of each academic year, two professors from each language group review the portfolios and the post-tests of the graduating students of that year. Due to the number of graduates in Spanish, we make a random selection of 12-15 Spanish students for whom we have complete materials. The professors assess the skills and accomplishments of the students using the Department's guides and rubrics.

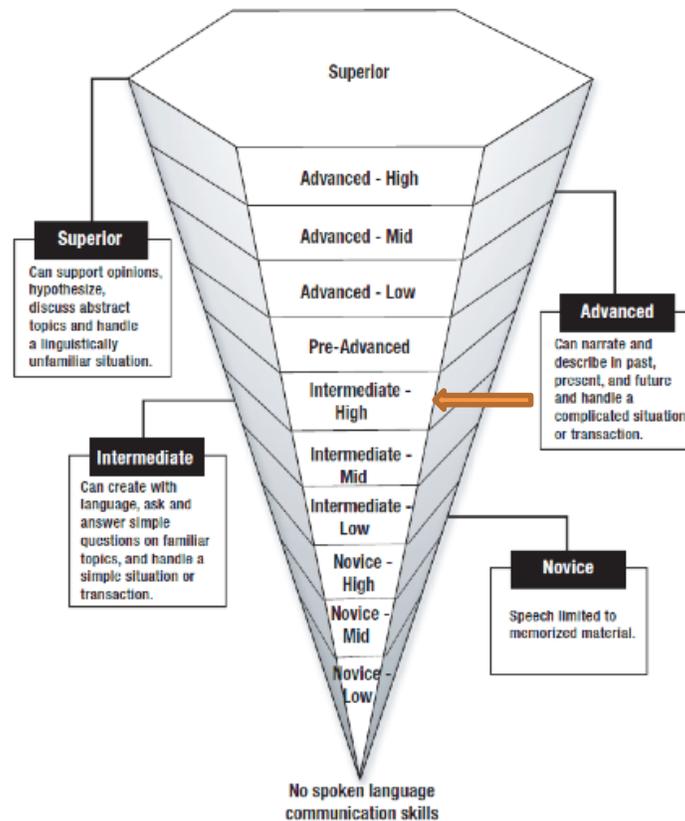
At this point we are planning to put all of our pre-/post-tests as well as the Language Self-Assessment (APPENIX I) into an electronic form like Qualtrics. For this, we want to hire a graduate student and we would like to request \$ 1,500..

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

	Student Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
	In the target language, majors in WLC will demonstrate	
1.	writing proficiency to articulate independent ideas in standard written language at the IH level or above.	(a) Pre- and Post - Skills Tests (1, 2)
2.	understanding of a wide range of written materials at the IH level or above, i.e., reading for comprehension, critical thinking, textual analysis and developing a compelling argument.	(b) Pre and Post Language Self-Assessment (1-4) (c) Electronic Portfolio (1,4) (d) Oral Assessment (3)
3	oral proficiency in a variety of speaking situations at the Intermediate High (IH) level (as defined by the ACTFL guidelines) or above. Students will be able to express themselves in a grammatically correct and phonetically understandable fashion at the required level.	(e) Culture Assessment (4) (f) Exit Questionnaire (1-4)
4.	an understanding of the target culture(s) related to the language studied. This will include demonstrating knowledge of cultural norms and differences, historical, social, economic, political, artistic expression or other aspects of culture.	

Explanation - ACTFL Standards

ACTFL Performance and Proficiency Guidelines for Language Learners



3. Program-by-Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes Matrix

Program Student Learning Outcome	Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes							
	A. Global inter-connections and inter-dependencies	B. Intercultural competencies	C. Analyze human life and natural world inter-connections	D. Critical, creative, and independent thought	E. Communicate clearly and effectively	F. Collaborate with others	G. Quantitative and qualitative reasoning	H. Creative application of knowledge/skills
I. Writing proficiency at the IH level or above	M	S		S	S	M		S
II. Reading proficiency at the IH level or above	M	S		S	S			S
III. Oral Proficiency at the IH level or above	M	S		S	S	M		S
IV. Understanding of the target culture(s)	S	S	S	S		S	S	S
<i>Note.</i> Gauge whether each program outcome strongly supports (S), moderately supports (M), or doesn't support (leave blank) each baccalaureate learning outcome								

4. Curriculum Map

Courses Focus on	Program Student Learning Outcomes			
	I. Writing proficiency at the IH level or above	II. Reading proficiency at the IH level or above	III. Oral Proficiency at the IH level	IV. Understanding of the target culture(s)
FLAL 300 – Introduction to WLC				D
Conversation (FLFR / FLGE / FLSP 311)			D	D
Grammar FLFR / FLGE / FLSP 301 / FLSP 315 (Grammar-focus)	B	D		
Writing (FLFR / FLGE / FLSP 302)	B	P		D
Analysis of Texts and Media (FLFR 321/322, FLGE 320, FLSP 320)	D	B		D
Business Language (FLFR 412, FLGE 412/414, FLSP 414)	P	P	P	P
Culture (FLFR 463/464, FLGE 461/463, FLSP 461/462)				P
Translation (FLFR 483/484, FLGE 482/484, FLSP 482/484)	P	P	D	P
<i>Note.</i> Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.				

5. Assessment Methods - EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement ^a	Program-Level Target ^b	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
(a) Pre- and Post-Language Self-Assessment	Students complete a self-assessment with ACTFL's Can-Do descriptors covering Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, and Writing.	In FLAL 300, we expect that students answer predominantly "I can do this somewhat" and "I still want to learn this"	In FLAL 400, we expect that at least 80% of the students" will answer "I can do this well"	FLAL 300 and FLAL 400	instructors	1-4
(b) Pre- and Post-Skills Assessment	Students complete a grammar/usage multiple-choice assessment	In FLAL 300, we expect that students score between 35-40%. These are more mostly difficult items requiring a higher-level knowledge of the language.	In FLAL 400, we expect the students to show a significant improvement, scoring an improvement of 20% or more.	FLAL 300 and FLAL 400	instructors	1, 2
(c) Electronic Portfolio for Language Majors	Students develop an electronic portfolio for use for WLC assessment and also for their own use (includes resume in English and the TL)	Students show IH to AL proficiency	All of the portfolios show that students are at least at the IH level	FLAL 400	instructor	1
(d) Oral Assessment	Students are evaluated on their Oral Proficiency	Students approach IH level	80% of the students approach IH	FL__ 311	instructors	3
(e) Culture Assessment	Students are evaluated on their understanding of cultural perspectives and the prospect of interacting with others in and from another culture	Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives, and understand aspects of history and geography of the culture studied.	At least 80% of the students demonstrate cultural understanding	FLFR 463/464 FLGE 461/463 FLSP 461/462	instructors	4
(f) Exit Questionnaire	Query of majors (and minors) to assess our programs overall and to get ideas of possible improvements	n/a	see description	FLAL 400	instructors	1-4

Note. ^a Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome.

^b Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome In the TL, majors will demonstrate ...			
	1. ... writing proficiency to articulate independent ideas in standard written language at the IH level or above.	2. ... understanding of a wide range of written materials at the IH level or above, i.e., reading for comprehension, critical thinking, textual analysis and developing a compelling argument.	3. ... oral proficiency in a variety of speaking situations at the Intermediate High (IH) level (as defined by the ACTFL guidelines) or above. They will be able to express themselves grammatically correct and phonetically understandable at the required level. Insert brief description of third outcome	4. ... an understanding of the target culture(s) related to the language studied. This will include demonstrating knowledge of cultural norms and differences, historical, social, economic, political, artistic expression or other aspects of culture....
Pre (FLAL 300) Language Self-Assessment (3)			I	
Post (FLAL 400) Language Self-Assessment (3)			I	
Pre- (FLAL 300) Skills Tests (1, 2)	D, F	D, F		
Post- Skills Tests (FLAL 400) (1, 2)	D, S	D, S		
Electronic Portfolio for Language Majors (1)	D, S	D, S		D, S
Exit Questionnaire (1-4)	I	I	I	I
<i>Note.</i> F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment.				