

To: Hugh Ruppensburg, Associate Dean
From: Jan Pendergrass
Date: 16 December 2002
Re: Assessment Plan for Romance Languages

Our department has chosen to revise our assessment plan based on the information and guidelines provided by the Franklin College Program Review and Assessment Committee.

In particular, our department's revised plan seeks to obtain data that will be more useful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of our major programs of study.

Sincerely,

Jan Pendergrass, chair R. L. Outcomes Assessment Committee

Noel Fallows, Department Head Romance Languages

Outcomes Assessment Plan for Romance Languages

Submission date: 16 December 2002

A. Learning Outcomes

Students majoring in French, Italian, Spanish, or Romance Languages will have the opportunity to explore the language, literature and culture of one or more target countries. Students in French and Spanish will receive instruction in the language, literature and culture of more than one target country. Students in Romance Languages will receive instruction in two languages and in the literature and culture of two or more countries.

Specifically, upon graduation, students should be able to:

- 1) Read and interpret sophisticated texts in a target language
- 2) Write a term paper in a target language displaying analytical skills and research skills appropriate to the discipline
- 3) Speak and understand educated speakers in one or more target languages
- 4) Demonstrate knowledge of the language, literature and culture of one or more target countries

B. Assessment Methods

The following assessment methods will be used to measure the extent to which the department is accomplishing its learning outcomes:

- 1) **Exit Interview:** The Exit Interview will be administered by members of the regular faculty and conducted in one of the target languages. This interview will help determine a student's proficiency in the language, literature and culture of a target country. In particular, the Exit Interview should indicate whether or not a student:

- i) has knowledge of more than one aspect of the language, literature and culture of a target country
 - ii) is able to recall specific material of past coursework and explain it in a target language
 - iii) has achieved proficiency in the language
 - iv) has achieved a level of proficiency needed for admission to graduate studies in the student's major area (not a required outcome, but a possible measure of success)
 - v) has had the opportunity to study abroad (not a required outcome, but a desirable one)
- 2) **Student Questionnaire:** Students complete an anonymous questionnaire and return it to their major language advisor. The questionnaire solicits information on the student's perceived proficiency in language, literature, linguistics and culture, and on his or her perceived ability to conduct research.
- 3) **Independent Faculty Assessment:** Individual members of the faculty identify problems or suggest improvements to the major programs of study based on their experience in the classroom. Faculty Assessment covers program-of-study-related agenda items submitted to the Steering Committee. When appropriate, the Steering Committee places submitted items on the agenda for general faculty discussion. This is one of our most effective tools for improving our major programs of study.
- 4) **Student Writing Samples:** [This measure is under consideration. The Outcomes Assessment Committee proposes the examination of student writing samples in order to measure each student's ability to write term papers using analytical skills and research skills appropriate to the discipline.]
- 5) **Miscellaneous Materials:** Collected Materials include ad hoc reports, statistics, printed materials and other information that can be used to assess a major

program of study. Individual data in this category may not be available for consideration more than once.

C. Faculty Involvement

The Faculty are involved in the collection and interpretation of data used to measure learning outcomes in Romance Languages. The Steering Committee places Faculty Assessment items on the agenda for discussion at general faculty meetings at various times during the academic year. Undergraduate advisors in French and Spanish conduct Exit Interviews with majors before graduation. Faculty in Italian conduct Exit Interviews in the Italian major, and faculty in Portuguese conduct interviews with Romance Language majors whose primary language is Portuguese.

D. Analysis of Data

The Outcomes Assessment Committee uses different measures to determine if each learning outcome has been attained. Students are not expected to master a determined body of knowledge (specific dates, names, or works), but rather to possess a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities related to the discipline. Hence weaknesses or deficiencies in some areas may be expected.

- 1) **Analysis of data from the Exit Interview:** For the Exit Interview, we will apply a "Cultural Proficiency Scale" to measure a student's knowledge of language, literature or culture in a target country and a "Language Ability Scale" to measure a student's proficiency in the language. Copies of both scales are provided below, in section F.
 - i) Cultural Proficiency: Students are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 according to the "Cultural Proficiency Scale" (see attachments in Section F, below). Successful students should score 3 or higher, but we expect to discover a majority of students in the range 4 to 5. Students scoring only 3 exhibit at least one noteworthy deficiency. Interviewing faculty are asked to identify "noteworthy deficiencies" displayed by students scoring in this range so that the

department can consider ways to improve the program of study. Students who receive scores of 1 or 2 are deemed to perform below departmental expectations.

- ii) Proficiency in Language: Students are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 according to the Language Proficiency Scale (see attachments in Section F, below). Successful students should score 3 or higher, but we expect to discover a majority of students in the range 4 to 5.
- 2) **Analysis of data from the Student Exit Questionnaire:** Questions on the Student Exit Questionnaire are designed to measure each student's perceived knowledge in language, literature and culture of a target country, the student's perceived acquisition of basic research skills and his or her overall satisfaction with the department. Students have the opportunity to formulate specific praise or criticism in narrative form. High scores and positive comments will suggest students' general satisfaction with a program of study. Low scores and negative comments will suggest dissatisfaction, a need to consider the reasons for student dissatisfaction, and when appropriate a need to improve the learning environment.
- 3) **Analysis of data from Independent Faculty Assessment:** Proposals, comments and/or suggestions for enhancing a program of study will be considered on an ad hoc basis and will be handled in a professional manner with a view to improving all programs of study in Romance Languages.
- 4) **Analysis of Student Writing Samples:** [This measure is under consideration. The Outcomes Assessment Committee proposes to examine a sample of each major student's writing in order to determine if s/he is able to write a 10-12 page term paper in a target language using analytical skills and research skills appropriate to the discipline. Criteria for analysis have not yet been developed.]
- 5) **Analysis of Miscellaneous Materials:** Data obtained from miscellaneous sources will be considered on an ad hoc basis and will be handled in a professional manner with a view to improving programs of study in Romance Languages.

E. Use of Results

The Outcomes Assessment Committee will collect and summarize all relevant assessment data. Preliminary findings will be submitted to the faculty at large and discussed annually at an appropriate faculty meeting. When appropriate, the committee will make recommendations to the faculty for enhancement of the learning outcomes and assessment practices. Poor results will suggest a need to improve the major program(s) of study, including changes in program requirements, changes to course content, the addition or deletion of courses. A lack of data relevant to specific learning outcomes will suggest a need to improve the assessment practices. At the end of each 3-year cycle, the Outcomes Assessment Committee will submit a complete report to the department head and faculty. Any remaining, unresolved recommendations will be submitted for discussion at an appropriate faculty meeting. The department head will forward the final report to the Dean's Office.

F. Attachments: The following are sample copies of the Exit Interview and Student Exit Questionnaires:

**DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES
EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE**

(for graduating majors in French, Italian, Spanish or Romance Languages)

Please complete this questionnaire anonymously. The information you provide in this questionnaire will help the Department of Romance Languages improve its undergraduate programs.

Major (check appropriate box or boxes):

French — Italian — Spanish
or Romance Languages
w/ major language in Fr — It — Port — Sp
w/ minor language in Fr — It — Port — Sp
Italian Studies Track ? Yes No

I expect to graduate (Semester / Year):

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by writing the appropriate number next to each question:

1=agree strongly, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=disagree strongly

- _____ 1. I am proficient in my major language of study.
- _____ 2. My experiences with the Department in and out of the classroom have improved my proficiency in my major language of study.
- _____ 3. I have basic knowledge of the culture of the country or countries where my major language is spoken.
- _____ 4. I have basic knowledge of the literature of the country or countries where my major language is spoken.
- _____ 5. I have general knowledge of linguistics in my major language.
- _____ 6. I have a basic understanding of how to conduct research in literature or linguistics in my major language.
- _____ 7. I feel well prepared for the next step in my life.
- _____ 8. I am satisfied with my experiences in the Department of Romance Languages.

Please list the means that have helped you acquire proficiency in your language of study (such as study abroad, experiences outside of class, family members)

Please comment on how the Department of Romance Languages could have improved your ability in any of the areas mentioned above.

Please comment on your overall satisfaction with your experiences in the Department.

Please offer any additional comments on how the Department might improve its undergraduate programs.

Do you have plans for the immediate future ? A job, for instance, or graduate studies ?

No

Yes, I plan _____

Cultural Proficiency Scale

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
<p>Displays no discernable knowledge of subject — student is unable to discuss the literature, linguistics or culture(s) of the target countries based on classes taken at UGA or abroad</p>	<p>Has only limited knowledge of subject — student has only limited knowledge of the literature, linguistics or culture of the target countries based on classes taken at UGA or abroad — student has had little or no exposure to authentic materials (film, art, news reports, literature, native speakers) of the target culture(s) — student lacks the ability to discuss literature, film, art, news reports, business practices, music, history or popular culture in a meaningful dialogue</p>	<p>Has basic knowledge of subject, despite noteworthy deficiencies — student has basic knowledge of the literature, linguistics or culture of the target countries based on classes taken at UGA or abroad — student is able to discuss material of past coursework, but fails to elaborate when probed on specifics — student can discuss simple topics in literature, film, art, news, business, music, history or popular culture at a basic level with educated speakers, but lacks fluency, precision, confidence — communication is hesitant, ill-defined</p>	<p>Has good knowledge of subject, despite minor deficiencies — student has good knowledge of literature, linguistics or culture of the target countries based on classes taken at UGA or abroad — student is able to discuss material of past coursework and is able to provide examples when given the opportunity — student has had exposure to authentic materials (film, art, news reports, literature, native speakers) in and/or outside the classroom — student can discuss general topics in literature, film, art, news, business, music, history, or popular culture with educated speakers — communication may be occasionally hesitant — student may "not remember" some specifics</p>	<p>Has broad knowledge of subject — student has clear knowledge of literature, linguistics or culture of the target countries based on classes taken at UGA or abroad — student is able to discuss and explain material of past coursework when given the opportunity — student has had exposure to authentic materials (film, art, news reports, literature, native speakers) in and/or outside the classroom and is able to elaborate on them when given the opportunity — student can effectively discuss literature, film, art, news reports, business practices, music, history or popular culture with educated speakers — student displays fluency, precision, confidence</p>

III. Please record your assessment of this student's language ability. Rate each category from 1 to 5 according to the *Language Ability Scale* provided below.

Accent	Grammar	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension

Any comments on the student's language ability:

Language Ability Scale

ACCENT	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY	FLUENCY	COMPREHENSION
1. Pronunciation frequently unintelligible	1. Grammar almost entirely inaccurate except in stock phrases.	1. Vocabulary inadequate for even the simplest conversation.	1. Speech is so halting that conversation is virtually impossible.	1. Understands too little for the simplest type of conversation.
2. Frequent gross errors and a very heavy accent make understanding difficult; requires frequent repetition.	2. Constant errors show control of very few major patterns and frequently preventing communication.	2. Vocabulary limited to basic personal needs and survival (time, food, transportation, family, etc.)	2. Speech is very slow and uneven except for short or routine sentences.	2. Understand only slow, very simple speech on common social and touristic topics; requires constant repetition and rephrasing.
3. 'Foreign accent' requires concentrated listening, and mispronunciations lead to occasional misunderstandings and apparent errors in grammar or vocabulary.	3. Frequent errors show some major patterns uncontrolled and causing occasional irritation and misunderstanding.	3. Choice of words sometimes inaccurate; limitations of vocabulary prevent discussion of some common professional and social topics.	3. Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be left uncompleted.	3. Understands careful, somewhat simplified speech when engaged in a dialogue, but may require considerable repetition and rephrasing.
4. Marked 'foreign accent' and occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.	4. Occasional errors show imperfect control of some patterns, but no weakness that causes misunderstanding.	4. Professional vocabulary adequate to discuss special interests; general vocabulary permits discussion of nontechnical subject with some circumlocution.	4. Speech is occasionally hesitant with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and groping for words.	4. Understands quite well normal educated speech when engaged in a dialogue, but may require occasional repetition and rephrasing
5. No conspicuous mispronunciations, but wouldn't be taken for a native speaker.	5. Few errors with no patterns of failure.	5. Professional vocabulary broad and precise; general vocabulary adequate to cope with complex practical problems and varied social situations.	5. Speech is effortless and smooth, but perceptibly non-native in speech and evenness.	5. Understands everything in normal educated conversation except for very colloquial or low-frequency items, or exceptionally rapid or slurred speech.

IV. Would you recommend this student for admission to our graduate program if s/he expressed an interest ? Yes No