

## #1. 2017 – 18 Undergraduate Program Assessment Plan: Gen Ed

**Department: Intercultural Studies and Modern Languages**

**Date: September 30, 2017**

**General Education Committee has selected the following area for the 2017-2018 assessment cycle:**

**COMMUNICATION: to demonstrate effective communication skills for personal, academic and professional purposes.**

**General Education Committee: Background: What factors caused the committee to choose this particular assessment outcome? If this outcome was selected because of a perceived problem, please explain.**

The committee selected this outcome based upon two criteria: 1) effective communication skills in a broad range of forms (including but not limited to written, oral, visual and technological media) is a key goal of our general education curriculum; 2) Difficulties specifically with written communication has become a concern of faculty across disciplines.

**Department:** *What student outcome will the department assess that addresses: "The student will be able to demonstrate effective communication skills for personal, academic and professional purposes?"* The language programs that are part of the Department of ISML share the goal of raising the second language communication competence of all students in those programs. This communicative competence involves acquiring language - specific pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics (understanding of culture - appropriate social behavior involving language). One desired outcome of the Department of ISML is that all General Education students will, after one year of language instruction in Spanish, ASL, or Mandarin, demonstrate language speaking and writing proficiency at the low intermediate ("Intermediate Low") level as determined by the benchmarks utilized in the ACTFL (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages) proficiency rating.

In order to determine whether students completing ISML's SPAN 102, CHNS 102, and ASL 102 courses are indeed gaining a language proficiency comparable to "low intermediate," each student who received an "A" on the final exam for ASL 102, CHNS 102, or SPAN 102 in the spring semester was rated by the course instructor for language proficiency level according to the proficiency benchmark indicators indicated in guidelines for the ASL Private Interview (ASLPI) [for ASL] or the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) [for Mandarin and Spanish]. The findings were that the best students in our language classes (those receiving an "A" on the final exam) are NOT consistently scoring at a proficiency level of "low intermediate" (ASLPI 2+; ACTFL "Intermediate Low") but rather are more often scoring as "high beginner" (ASLPI 2; ACTFL "Novice High"). Last year's ISML Department Gen Ed Executive Summary indicated that this might be due to a problem with the final exams themselves, or with the rigor of the language classes, or with both.

**Department:** *What specific question(s) are you attempting to answer through assessing this student outcome? What are you trying to find out? There may be more than one question, but no more than three.*

With the information in the background section above in mind, the Department of ISML would like to determine whether the student lack of proficiency noted last year is an artifact of the final exams, or the language class rigor, or both. In order to do this, the department would like to carefully review the content of its first year language courses in light of the ASLPI and ACTFL proficiency guidelines. It would also like to repeat last year's procedure of correlating final exam grades and student proficiency levels in order to see if similar results obtain (to make sure that last year's results were typical), or if some other insight can be

gained that will help us as a department to figure out if our final exams for the 102 level are good indicators or not of student language proficiency. Thus our specific questions are these:

1. Are our language course finals at the 102 level a good indicator of the language proficiency levels our students are achieving as a result of taking our language classes?
2. Are the students exiting our 102 classes attaining a language proficiency level comparable to "low intermediate" (ASPLI 2+), ACTFL "Intermediate Low"?)

**Methodology:**

1. *OBJECT\** - What data (i.e. artifact, exam score, detailed description of assignment) will be collected?

Final exam scores from SPAN 102, CHNS 102, and ASL 102

a.

How does this data address the assessment question?

We will know if the assessment instruments are an accurate measure of intermediate language proficiency if they are passed with scores of 90% or above by students previously determined (from interactions in class and other coursework assignments) who have achieved an Intermediate Low level as defined by the ACTFL benchmarks, and that students who did not receive a lesser score are indeed NOT at an intermediate Low level. These assessments of how well students meet the ACTFL benchmarks will be determined by Dr. Pfabe (Spanish), Josephine Chiu (Mandarin), and Margie Propp (ASL).

- a. *How does this data address the assessment question?* We will know if the assessment instruments are an accurate measure of low intermediate language proficiency if they are passed with scores of 90% or above by students previously determined (from interactions in class and other coursework assignments) who have achieved an Intermediate Low level as defined by the ACTFL benchmarks, and that students who did not receive a lesser score are indeed NOT at an intermediate Low level. These assessments of how well students meet the ACTFL benchmarks will be determined by Dr. Pfabe (Spanish), Josephine Chiu (Mandarin), and Margie Propp (ASL).

b.

- i. *Include/attach a description/example of assessment tool to be used.*

2. *How will data be collected?* Dr. Pfabe, Josephine Chiu, and Margie Propp will provide the department with two categories of data: A list of the names of students in SPAN 102/CHNS 102/ASL 102, grouped according to who are considered to be proficient at an Intermediate Low level (according to the ACTFL benchmark standards), plus the exam score for each SPAN/CHNS/ASL 102 student.

3.

**Analysis of Artifacts: PERFORMANCE CRITERIA\* -**

Discuss :

- 1) How the artifacts will be analyzed (attach rubrics/scoring tools if used): A representative in the department will take the data provided for students in SPAN 102/CHNS 102/ASL 102 and make a determination if there is a correlation between those membership in the "Intermediate Low" or "not Intermediate Low" categories and the achievement of test scores of over 90% on the final exam.

2) How you will know if it is good (i.e. score required by % of students): We will know that our instruments are demonstrating validity (here, ability to measure proficiency level) if we find a positive correlation between students who have attained an Intermediate Low proficiency rating and those who have scored a 90% or higher on the final exams.

**Submitted by: Vicki Anderson      Date: October 16, 2017      Reviewed by the Assessment  
Committee (Date): 10/18/17  
Department Chair notified approved or additional action needed: na**