

Department of Modern Languages  
Annual Assessment Update  
September 2010

I. Mission Statement and Student Learning Outcomes

- A. Graduates with a Westmont degree in Modern Languages are expected to be fluent in the language, critical-interdisciplinary thinkers, world Christians and life-long learners. (See Next Steps)

Fluent in the Language: Graduates attain near-native fluency in the foreign language (in all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing) and possess the tools necessary to interact gracefully with those of other cultures. Our graduates also write well in the target language, expressing themselves not only with grammatical accuracy, but also with clarity and elegance. (cf. Standard 4: Written and Oral Communication)

1. Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinkers: Our graduates are trained in how to read, interpret, contextualize, and analyze works of literature, and are knowledgeable in theories of literary analysis. They are familiar with the “great works” of their country of study, as well as the social, historical, and political context in which they were produced. Our graduates are capable of thinking critically, abstractly, and creatively. They also think broadly, making relevant connections between language and literature and other disciplines such as the arts, history, sociology, political science, and religious studies. (cf. Standard 2: Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking)
2. World Christians: Our graduates know and live the Christian faith, and are prepared to share it graciously with peoples of other languages and cultures. They have the understanding and skills necessary to engage people unlike them in terms that affirm the other as another person created in God’s image. They are sensitive to those from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds, respect alternative viewpoints, and understand and appreciate the diversity of God’s rich creation. (cf. Standard 3: Diversity; Standard 1: Christian Orientation)
3. Life-long Learners: When our majors graduate, they realize that their education is just beginning. Our graduates possess not only a love of their discipline, but of learning in general, and are motivated to continue seeking

opportunities for intellectual, social, and spiritual growth throughout their lives. They are informed citizens, ready and able to contribute to their community, their society, and their world. (cf. Standard 5: Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement)

## II. Follow up on Action Items identified in the PRC Report

- A. Language Fluency: We received the report in May 2010 and therefore we could not take action before the school year was finished. In May 2010, Elías met with Dr. Stern to go over the two-year assessment report. Comments during the meeting and on the report were positive (see Appendix). One item marked for improvement was that our report included elements that belong to the six year assessment. We were asked orally to include the results for the Oral Proficiency Interviews for the lower-division courses, and we have included them below.
- B. Critical Thinking: The product, which attests to the critical thinking of students in Spanish 100 was a research paper. Thus, the student learning objective for critical thinking was analyzed this year and the results are included below. The comment of placing the goals and objectives in the Program Review was helpful and will be included in the six-year review.
- C. World Christians: The PRC report affirmed our IDI assessment for SP/FR 150 students, stating that our assessment was in alignment with “effective practices” and that our benchmarks and process “are clearly articulated.” One question our reviewer asked was how typical were the results from the portfolio samples. The samples included were, as stated in our report, “representative of the vast majority of students who take 150.” Another question asked was, “do we place people in the same categories as the IDI based on their portfolio samples”? From our analysis of IDI results and portfolio essays, Dr. Montgomery and I indeed see parity. In other words, the IDI results are confirmed by the students’ writing samples (e.g. a student scoring in denial illustrates this clearly through his/her writing).

Because the sample was so small from last year we have decided to repeat this assessment again in 2010-11 to see if the trend continues or if new patterns arise. We have shared our initial insights and conclusions with Off-Campus Programs and President Beebe as well.

### III. 2009-10 Focus

- A. Summary for the Results of Oral Interview at the Various Levels.  
 To continue to assess the area of language fluency, we decided to examine student oral production of lower-division language courses. One additional assessment for language fluency was to administer oral exams/interviews based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) guidelines to students in SP 1 and SP 3 at the end of the semester. The oral proficiency guidelines, included in Appendix C, allowed us to evaluate student oral production in a uniform manner. Below we are including the statistical results of the 2008 to 2010 interviews as a whole.

#### Spanish 1

ACTFL Speaking Guidelines Levels	Spring 2009 (23 Students)	Fall 2009 (41 Students)	Spring 2010 (50 Students)	Totals (114 Students)	Total Percentages (99.97%)
Novice-Low	0	1	0	1	.87%
Novice-Mid	3	10	3	16	14.03%
Novice-High	2	15	7	24	21.05%
Intermediate-Low	4	9	16	29	25.43%
Intermediate-Mid	14	6	24	44	38.59 %

#### Spanish 3

ACTFL Speaking Guidelines Levels	Spring 2009 (21 Students)	Fall 2009 (24 Students)	Fall 2010 (17 Students)	Totals (62 Students)	Total Percentages (99.98%)
Novice	0	2	0	2	3.22%
Intermediate-Low	0	1	4	5	8.06%
Intermediate-Mid	3	3	6	12	19.35%
Intermediate-High	11	5	2	18	29.03%
Advanced	7	13	4	24	38.71%
Advanced-High	0	0	1	1	1.61%

- B. Interpretation of Data: Both professors who taught SP 1 and SP 3 were delighted with the oral production of the students at the end of the semester. According to the *ETS Oral Proficiency Testing Manual* by Judith Liskin Gasparro, the length of training to achieve an Intermediate (Mid to High) rating is 240 hours. We have 48.5 contact hours with SP 1 students and two thirds of them are achieving Intermediate proficiency after the first semester. If a student has taken SP 1-3 at Westmont, they have had 144.75 contact hours. Hence, for SP 3 the proficiency level is estimated to be at the Intermediate level. As a department we were very encouraged by student success. According to our results, Westmont students continue to place above the expected norms.
- C. Response: For the next year our goal is to implement the oral proficiency testing based on the ACTFL Guidelines for SP 2 and SP 4 and assess the results as well. According to the results For SP 1 and SP 3, we hypothesize that the majority of students finishing Sp 4 will test into Advanced. One drawback to our results is that the students who dropped out of the course are not included in these totals hence the grades seem to be high.
- D. Summary of the Results for SP 100: We are implementing strategies that help SP 100 students transition between language acquisition and the assimilation of content for higher order thinking. The skills necessary for critical thinking and research are taught in progressively more complex exercises that culminate in a final paper based on literary analysis. Advanced grammar and a series of compositions lead students from sentence structures to paragraph development and finally to the production of an original text. This is achieved through instruction from both the professor and a librarian as well as peer review and editing.

### Spanish 100

Fall 2009 Grades	Total Number of Students: 12	Total Percentages (99.99%)
A	1	8.33%
A-	1	8.33%
B+	4	33.33%
B	4	33.33%

B-	0	0%
C+	2	16.66%

Research Paper Grades	Total Number of Students: 12	Total Percentages
A	1	8.33%
A-	1	8.33%
B+	4	33.33%
B	4	33.33%
B-	0	0%
C+	2	16.66%

E. Interpretation: The rubric that we used to evaluate student work is included in the appendix (D). Unfortunately, we did not keep copies of the rubric for individual students' work. Hence we included the final grade for the essay. As can be gleaned from the table above, every student was capable of writing a critical analysis at the end of the course. This included the following skills: research, use of data bases, use of MLA style, adapting computer programs to the Spanish language, correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary. By writing a literary analysis they all demonstrated various degrees of critical thinking.

F. Response: As a department, we find the outcomes of this exercise encouraging. Since students write literary analysis for their upper division literature courses, we expect them to continue improving their critical thinking and writing skills in Spanish throughout the department's curriculum.

#### IV. Next steps:

##### A. Fall 2010 Spanish 150:

- The department will repeat the assessment given to SP 150 students this fall, administering the IDI during the first week of class and again at the end to see if the earlier results represent

a trend or an anomaly. Student portfolios, including an initial self-assessment and a final paper, will also be analyzed in combination with the IDI results. Dr. Docter will also participate in a webinar in September to become qualified to administer version 3 of the IDI.

- Dr. Docter will work with Dr. Montgomery to analyze the results. They will also work with data from other Westmont students who studied abroad without a prior orientation course to assess the value of the course itself.
  - They will share their results with Off-Campus Programs, the Global Initiatives Task Force, and President Beebe.
  - Dr. Docter & Dr. Montgomery will present their data at two national conferences this year: the IDI Conference this fall in Minneapolis and the AACU Conference next spring, accompanied by Pres. Beebe.
- B. Spring 2011 Spanish 100. The department will refine the rudimentary rubric that was used for evaluating student work so that it includes specific items for critical thinking. In addition, we shall meet with Sarah Skripsky in order to align our learning outcomes with the English Department's.
- C. The department is working on the mission statement. We are revising the current statement so that we separate goals from student learning outcomes.

V. Appendices

## Appendix A: Curriculum Alignment Matrix

Course	Learning Outcome I: Oral Fluency	Learning Outcome 2: Critical Interdisciplinary Thinkers	Learning Outcome 3: World Christians	Learning Outcome 4: Life-long Learners
SP 1	X			
SP 3	X			
SP 100		X		
SP 150			X	

## Appendix B: Last Year's Response from the PRC

A. Modern Languages Annual report response-09

To: Modern Languages/Leonor Elias

From: Program Review Committee/Lesa Stern

Thank you for your submission of your report. It appears that there are both program review and assessment items in here. In our one-on-one meeting, we discussed that for the annual report, the data and interpretations need to be presented only for those objectives you focused on that year (unless there are follow-up items). The revised reports (at PRC website and I also attached them in an email to you).

### ***Language fluency***

This was assessed in 2007 (and doesn't need to be in report). However, ***I am impressed with your oral language fluency plan.*** I particularly commend you on the ties to national guidelines and tests, and having Dr. Cardoso (who is trained in assessment by the ACFT) train the rest of your faculty on this assessment. I appreciate the complexity of the assessment (oral communication in groups, one-on-one, with students, with faculty) and hope the time and energy you put into this process is fruitful for your department.

### ***Critical Thinking***

I think this is NOT one of the objectives that you focused on for the year, from reading the report and speaking with you in person. It seems that SP 100 objectives

are important for the rest of the department. The thought put into articulating goals/objectives for this course is an important part of program review.

***World Christians (this was the focus of assessment for 2009)***

Your protocol for assessment of “World Christians” is in alignment with “effective practices.” That is, you include data over time as well as various data points. The inclusion of the IDI assessment, in addition to the portfolios and pre-post self-assessments, also allows for broader comparisons. This is great.

Your benchmarks and process are clearly articulated. I hope this assessment provides insight into what you can expect in a semester and even over the course of their tenure here at Westmont.

I found your IDI results fascinating... that study abroad without the cross-cultural class could actually lead to regression! If this data reflects a real trend, and is not an artifact of the sample/size, then it would definitely have implications for all our study abroad experiences.

The use of the portfolio sample was also useful. The next question is: how typical is this result? For those who take the course after their time abroad find it just as useful?

Just reading the excerpts made me want to take the class.

Do you place people into the same categories as the IDI based on their portfolio samples?

Do you plan on giving this assessment once again to your graduating seniors? I would expect their scores to move in the positive direction with each passing year (additional courses) in your program. What do you think?

Overall, your assessment activities are well thought out. Keep up the good work.

Once again, you are getting on the right track for the reporting process. I hope the revised annual assessment report (guideline) will be more clear for providing the appropriate information. If you have questions, you can contact me. Otherwise, Tatiana Nazarenko starts July 1<sup>st</sup> and you are also able to contact her.

## **Appendix C: ACTFL GUIDELINES: SPEAKING**

### **ACTFL Guidelines: Speaking**

#### **General Description for Novice**

The novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material

#### **Novice-Low**

Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.

#### **Novice-Mid**

Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need, although quantity is increased. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers will be understood only with great difficulty.

#### **Novice-High**

Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.

#### **General Description for Intermediate**

The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- \* create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode
- \* initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks
- \* ask and answer questions.

### **Intermediate-Low**

Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented, and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstandings frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

### **Intermediate-Mid**

Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic, and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs; e.g., personal history and leisure time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

### **Intermediate-High**

Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics, but errors are evident. Limited vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly unexpected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally be understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.

## **General Description for Advanced**

The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- \* converse in a clearly participatory fashion
- \* initiate, sustain, and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events
- \* satisfy the requirements of school and work situations, and
- \* narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

### Advanced

Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by communicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

### Advanced High

Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize. The Advanced-High speaker often shows a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-High speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under the demands of Superior-level complex tasks, language may break down or prove inadequate.

### General Description for Superior

Distinguishing characteristics

The Superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- \* participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics
- \* support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

### Description

Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical, and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur,

particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of error are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

## **Appendix D: Rubric for Grading the SP 100 Final Paper**

- I. Content (60 points)
  - A. Appropriate Title
  - B. Clear topics in each paragraph that develop the thesis
  - C. Concrete examples to support the topic of the paragraph
  - D. Scholarly research (no Wikipedia or random webpages).
  
- II. Style (20 points)
  - A. Grammar
  - B. Spelling
  - C. Diction: Vocabulary needs to be appropriate for the topic
  - D. Punctuation
  
- III. Organization (10 points)
  - A. Clearly defined thesis
  - B. Interesting introduction
  - C. Logical and clear exposition
  - D. Conclusion
  
- IV. MLA (10 points)
  - A. Works cited correctly
  - B. Format of quotes and correct documentation within the text
  - C. General MLA format of paper