

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): Spanish B.A.

Degree or Certificate Level: Major

Department: Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

College/School: College Arts & Sciences

Date: September 1, 2022

Primary Assessment Contact: Christina García

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected?

Academic year 2021-2022

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/ updated?

Academic year 2020-2021

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Learning Outcomes for the Spanish B.A. Program

<https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/languages-literatures-cultures/spanish-ba/#learningoutcomestext>

1. Graduates will be able to articulate complex ideas and have meaningful interactions in Spanish, both orally and in

- writing (Note: measured only orally; writing proficiency had been measured in the cycle period of 2017-2020)
2. Graduates will be able to engage with Spanish-speaking cultures. They will be able to explain similarities and differences between cultures (partially measured).

They were assessed according to the following ACTFL rubrics: 1) Interpersonal Communication–Oral Mode for Advanced Learners; 2) Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts

Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

The assessment method was an oral interview during Spring 2022, the final semester of Spanish studies for most students. Interviews were conducted by several full-timers, they were not requested as part of a course, and they aimed to measure SLO1 and 2. Each faculty member received a pool of questions and a recommended protocol for a successful interview that had been introduced and used last year. A calibration session, under the guidance of one member of the Reinert Center, was conducted in the Spring of 2022.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

Every interview was assessed by one full-time faculty member in the Spanish program (the same person who conducted the interview) following a common rubric provided by the ACTFL proficiency guidelines at the Advanced Low Level. The rubric is submitted with this report.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Meaning of scale (based on ACTFL rubrics – see attached)

5 = exceeds expectations

4 = meets expectations (strong)

3 = meets expectations (minimal)

2 = does not meet expectations

Number of assessed interviews: 9

Summary of assessment

→ assessed students meet expectations comfortably and exceed expectations (beyond 4) in the following areas:

- a. Empathy (4.61)
- b. Text Type (4.33)
- c. Cultural Self-Awareness (4.38)
- d. Curiosity (4.14)

→ assessed students meet expectations comfortably (approx. 4) in the following areas:

- e. Language Function (3.89)
- f. Communicative Strategies (4.00)
- g. Comprehensibility (3.86)
- h. Language Control (3.97)

Conclusions

→ Overall, results are satisfactory since scores show that expectations are met. This translates into major students “being able to articulate complex ideas and have meaningful interactions in Spanish orally” (SLO 1). Student interviews also showed that SLU majors “able to engage with Spanish-speaking cultures” and they are “able to explain similarities and differences between cultures” in a satisfactory way according to their level (SLO 2).

→ The highest category is *Empathy*. This score signals that students demonstrate an ability to recognize and understand the needs and wants of a diverse group of people, and ideally can act in a supportive manner towards another cultural group. Empathy—together with creativity—is a highly valued skill in the job market. Openness to other cultures is emphasized in every course within the Spanish program and it is a first step to achieve SLO2. Moreover, there

has been an increase in the service component in courses such as SPAN 4150 within the Spanish program which reinforces the achievement of empathy. Finally, the fact that we have lived two years under pandemic conditions may also contribute to explain that we all may be more attuned to this behavior.

→ All scores are satisfactory, especially scores for *Text type* and *Language Control*. *Text Type*, *Language control* and *Comprehensibility* are particular important to achieve SLO 1. *Text Type* signals that students engage in the discourse and are able to maintain communication in an organized, substantive way. *Language control* indicates appropriate mastery of grammar, vocabulary and fluency at the advanced level. *Comprehensibility* is also important since it signals that students are able to make themselves understood by native audiences unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives. These are main goals in the program and translates into the ability to connect with other speakers, establish communication, and advance ideas (SLO 1).

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Program assessment results are important markers to show the success of the program in leading students to achieve proficiency in Spanish at an advanced level. Specifically, findings are satisfactory since they show that expectations are met and students are able to communicate effectively in Spanish and show a noteworthy degree of intercultural competence.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Results and findings were discussed at our first program meeting in the Fall on Friday, August 19th.
Recommendations for changes or adjustments were evaluated by all members of the faculty Spanish program.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Student artifacts collected
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

Two set of actions were identified.

First, the assessment process will be strengthened in the following way:

- Assessment should be conducted earlier during the Spring semester (for instance, February), so that a conversation on how to improve the program can be tackled at the end of the Spring semester and changes can be implemented in the Fall. For pre-professional students (PT, OT), interviews should be conducted in spring of their junior year instead of senior year since that is the point in which they finish their Spanish major.
- A calibration session for the rubric was successfully held in April 2022; it should be considered whether a calibration session should be conducted regularly.
- More than one interview should be conducted by Spanish faculty mentors so that our majors are more aware of program goals and expectations; specifically questions for an entry interview in the major (in addition to an exit interview) were started last year and should be done regularly.

Second, findings are used to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement, and to make sure our students achieve the SLOs for the Spanish B.A. The following recommendations (from previous years) should be considered:

- Inclusion of the students learning outcomes for the B.A. in most syllabi (3000-level and 4000-level courses).

- Creation of specific activities and exercises that prepare students to achieve SLOs in Spanish.
- Inclusion of another interview at the beginning of the program (as mentioned above) in order to strengthen students' level of motivation and awareness of goals.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

Faculty members in Spanish are regularly invited to design their courses more intentionally with the SLOs in the program in mind. As mentioned earlier and for several reasons, there has been an increase in the service component in SPAN 4150 which helps strengthen communicative abilities (SLO 1), and intercultural competence (SLO2) in a more realistic setting than a classroom.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

The student interviews conducted this year for the second time did not only aim to measure students' oral proficiency but also students' intercultural abilities.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Findings overall (in the last 2 or 3 years) are satisfactory since they show the success of the Spanish program in helping students achieve an advanced proficiency in Spanish. Specific findings this year and last year show more empathetic attitudes in students.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

Assessment plan and its findings should be regularly discussed at a meeting every Fall. Recommendations for changes or adjustments are evaluated and decided by all members of the faculty Spanish program. We have decided to continue with the same method of evaluation for AY 2022-2023.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.