

# Spanish BA

## Language Proficiency

Goal Description:

The BA in Spanish at SHSU targets two student populations: 1) those seeking teacher certification (TC) for teaching Spanish at the secondary level in the Texas public school system and 2) those wishing to complete the BA without teacher certification (WTC). The language proficiency requirements are essentially the same for both the TC and WTC groups; however, TC students must complete additional requirements in the Faculty of Education and also pass a state certification exam.

The goal of the department of foreign language is to graduate TC and WTC students with a high level of oral and written proficiency in Spanish.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Oral Proficiency

Learning Objective Description:

Before graduating, all students (TC and WTC) will demonstrate an advanced level of oral proficiency in the target language system.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Performance On American Council Of Teachers Of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

Indicator Description:

Prior to graduation, all students will take the computuerized version of the OPI, admnistered by the SHSU Testing Center.

Criterion Description:

All students taking the OPI will obtain a minimum score of “advanced-low” on the proficiency rubric. Students will also be required to take an advisory OPI prior to enrolling in advanced Spanish courses in order to pinpoint areas of oral proficiency that can be improved through advanced-level course work.

Findings Description:

The department was unable to assess students’ oral proficiency using the computerized OPI, as this instrument proved to be too costly (\$60 per student).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Oral Proficiency

Action Description:

Due to the costs associated with the OPI interview, the department is training faculty to do an OPI interview as per ACTFL guidelines, which will enable assessment of students prior to graduation. This change in assessment procedures will begin in September 2016.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Training of Faculty for OPI Interviews

Action Description:

The department is training faculty to do an OPI interview as per ACTFL guidelines, which will enable assessment of students prior to graduation. Students will also be required to take an advisory OPI administered by department faculty prior to enrolling in advanced Spanish courses in order to pinpoint areas of oral proficiency that can be improved through advanced-level course work.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Written Proficiency

Learning Objective Description:

Before graduating, all students (TC and WTC) will demonstrate an advanced level of written proficiency (e.g. coherence, grammatical and lexical accuracy, and mechanics) in the target language system

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Performance On An Instrument Of Written Language Proficiency

Indicator Description:

The Department of Foreign Languages is currently reviewing options for an instrument to use in pursuit of this objective.

Criterion Description:

As with the OPI applied to student oral proficiency, all students assessed for written proficiency will display the equivalent of at least "advanced-low" on the written proficiency rubric.

**Findings Description:**

This assessment was not carried out given the lack of trained faculty to assess written skills using the specific ACTFL guidelines.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Written Proficiency**

**Action Description:**

As a result of the lack of trained faculty to carry out assessment, the assessment of written skill will take place over the 2016-2017 academic year.

**Teacher Certification Preparation**

**Goal Description:**

The goal of teacher certification will be to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to successfully teach Spanish in the secondary classroom.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Integration Of Standards Into Curriculum And Instruction**

**Learning Objective Description:**

- 1) TC students will demonstrate an understanding of the goal areas and standards of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and their state standards, and integrate these frameworks into curricular planning.
- 2) TC students will integrate the Standards for Foreign Language Learning and their state standards into language instruction.
- 3) TC students will use standards and curricular goals to evaluate, select, design, and adapt instructional resources.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Performance On State And Professional Proficiency Exams With Reference To Curriculum Competencies**

**Indicator Description:**

Students preparing for a career teaching Spanish will be assessed by their performance on the representative state certification exam (*TExES Languages Other than English* (LOTE)) and by performance on the ACTFL Focus Content Observer (FOC) for Spanish teachers.

**Criterion Description:**

Prior to graduation, all TC students will take the LOTE and will obtain a score of 80% or higher for *Domain I: Instruction and Assessment*. TC students’ actual classroom teaching will also be evaluated, and their overall teaching performance will minimally demonstrate ACTFL’s “world readiness standard for language learning”, as referenced by the FOC rubric.

**Findings Description:**

Four TC Spanish majors took the LOTE during in 2015-2016 and averaged 63% for Domain I (Instruction and Assessment). All four majors demonstrated successful teaching performance (“World readiness standard for language learning”), as referenced by the FOC rubric.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Professional Exam: Curriculum Competencies**

**Action Description:**

Use of the ACTFL "World Readiness Standard" for teaching performance proved to be a very efficient tool for assessing teaching skills. The department will therefore continue use of this instrument in 2016-2017, as it provides a valid measure for Spanish teaching candidates.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Language Acquisition Theories And Instructional Practices**

**Learning Objective Description:**

- 1) TC students will be able to demonstrate a good understanding of language acquisition at various developmental levels and use this knowledge to create a supportive classroom learning environment that includes target language input and opportunities for negotiation of meaning and meaningful interaction.
- 2) TC students will develop a variety of instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and articulated program models and address the needs of diverse language learners.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

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**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**LOTE Performance**

**Action Description:**

As a result of the low performance on the LOTE, a new course was created (“How Languages are Learned”), and all TC students will be required to successfully complete this course prior to taking the LOTE in 2016-2017.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**Teacher Candidate Professionalism**

**Learning Objective Description:**

- 1) TC students will engage in professional development opportunities that strengthen their own linguistic and cultural competence and promote reflection on practice.
- 2) TC students will know the value of foreign language learning to the overall success of all students and understand that they will need to become advocates with students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote the field.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**Teacher Candidate Oral Presentation (CAPSTONE) Rubric**

**Indicator Description:**

Prior to graduation, all TC students will perform an oral presentation before a panel of SPAN faculty.

**Criterion Description:**

At least 80% of business supervisors of interior design interns will give the intern a rating of 3.5 or higher on a 5.0 scale and 80% of business supervisors will indicate that they would hire the intern given the availability of a suitable entry-level interior design position in the company.

**Findings Description:**

Four TC Spanish majors did the Capstone Oral Presentation before a panel of faculty. All passed the Capstone and the group average was 4.44.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**CAPSTONE**

**Action Description:**

Use of the CAPSTONE to assess professionalism captured a performance of 4.44 on graduating seniors. It was decided to keep this instrument and target an overall average performance of 4.5 of Spanish majors prior to graduation.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement**

**Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

June 2015 brought the Department of Foreign Languages, home to the SPAN BA program, a permanent full-time chair for the first time in roughly a year. Accordingly, the new chair in consultation with the faculty has devised an overall strategy for program performance assessment.

**Three-Year Assessment Project for Oral Language Proficiency**

It is anticipated that all BA students will ultimately achieve an advanced-low level of language proficiency in Spanish (as indexed by ACTFL standards) by the end of their senior year. However, this expectation is based on anecdotal departmental evidence (e.g., formative class reports and professor perceptions), which makes it difficult to know to what extent students’ are reaching the advanced-low level, particularly with respect to oral proficiency, a key component of language development that is of central focus in the department. Moreover, within the department, it is also unclear to what extent the current language curriculum (both lower and upper division courses) contributes to the improvement of students’ oral skills. The present assessment project therefore proposes to systematically evaluate the development of students’ oral proficiency as they progress throughout their BA program in order to identify how the learning context (on-line, face-to-face, study abroad courses) and diverse course content (e.g., linguistics, literature, culture) impact the development of students’ oral skills over time. The findings from this project will be used to inform the department’s curriculum development and pedagogical practices and, ultimately, improve the oral proficiency outcomes of Spanish majors at SHSU.

The project consists of two overlapping assessment phases; data collection for Phase I will take place during the fall 2015 semester; data collection for Phase II is longitudinal, beginning in Fall 2015 and ending approximately 3.5 years later in Spring 2018. In addition, during Phase II, the project will independently target the department’s summer study abroad programs in Costa Rica and Spain, and will collect pre- and post-program data in June 2016 and 2017.

## Phase I: Cross-sectional analysis of 1000 level and 2000 level Spanish courses

The majority of Spanish majors in the department begin their language study by taking lower level courses (1411, 1412, 2311, and 2312); however, there is currently no placement exam or any other type of independent language assessment for new majors. Such a situation requires most students to self-place in lower level courses with different delivery methods (e.g., face-to-face versus online delivery), which not only creates heterogeneous language groups but, more importantly, makes it virtually impossible to assess students' level of pre- program proficiency and any subsequent improvement in the lower division courses.

Objective: To determine the degree to which oral proficiency improves in the lower level courses.

For this objective, a sample of students, including majors, from all four levels of Spanish (equal numbers from online and face-to-face courses) will be assessed during the first week of class on oral proficiency using an in-house diagnostic test designed to evaluate learners' accuracy and fluency in spoken discourse. Performance on this test will be compared across 1000 and 2000 levels and will therefore provide a snapshot of the level of oral proficiency development that is generally achieved after completing Spanish 2312.

### Expected Outcomes

- Empirical data about the growth of oral proficiency after 180 hours of formal language instruction
- Detailed account of how different delivery methods impact oral proficiency outcomes
- Data that can be used to create a department-wide placement test designed specifically to place students in groups based on the language reality/performance of SHSU students
- Data that can be used to create more homogenous 1000 and 2000 level groups
- Data that can inform curriculum content and pedagogical techniques for language teaching

## Phase II: Longitudinal Analysis of Spanish Majors

Phase II is an extension to Phase I and follows those majors previously assessed in Phase I throughout their entire BA program and will thus provide a longitudinal perspective of their oral proficiency development at the time of graduation. Phase II will also permit assessment of the impact of study abroad programs on oral proficiency, as a majority of the majors will have participated in study abroad, either in Costa Rica, Mexico or Spain, for a minimum of one month prior to graduating.

Objective: To determine the extent of Spanish majors' oral proficiency development over the course of their BA

For this objective, majors identified during Phase I will again be assessed on oral proficiency skill at two different points in time: after completing 12 credits of the major and then again at the end of their major (i.e., once all 22 credits in the major have been completed). At both points, students will take similar versions of the diagnostic test administered during Phase I and will also take the ACTFL OPI.

### Expected Outcomes

- Empirical data about how oral proficiency in Spanish develops over a 4-year period at SHSU
- Data that demonstrate how instruction and learning contexts interact with improvement in oral proficiency over a 4-year period.
- Data that reflect the overall outcome of oral proficiency development in the major. These data will then be used to determine whether ACTFL standards, particularly the notion of "advanced-low", are being met and whether the department's expectations for learning outcomes are realistic for its Spanish majors.

## Phase II: Assessment of Study Abroad (SA) Programs

The Department of Foreign Languages currently houses two SA programs in Spanish (one in Costa Rica and one in Spain) that are offered on a yearly basis each June for a four-week period. Both student and professor accounts of these programs strongly suggest that SA not only greatly benefits participants' awareness and understanding of the target language culture, but that it also increases their willingness to use the target language in authentic verbal exchanges. This, in turn, appears to positively impact the development of oral proficiency. Given the apparent benefits associated with a SA experience, Spanish majors are therefore encouraged to participate in SA as a means of increasing their language proficiency, particularly their oral production skills. However, since the creation of SA programs in the department, there has been no systematic pre- and post-program assessment in order to determine the actual impact of these programs on students' oral proficiency. As a result, during Phase II, each summer beginning June 2016, SA students' oral skills will be assessed before and after their SA experience using the same fluency and accuracy measure previously outlined above.

The objectives of the SA assessment will be to:

- 1) Determine the qualitative and quantitative impact of a short-term (4-week) study abroad program on students' oral proficiency development.

2) Determine the potential advantage of SA on overall oral proficiency outcomes by comparing SA students with non-SA students who are matched on number of major hours completed.

3) Based on 1 and 2 above, determine whether SA should become an integral part of the curriculum for the BA in Spanish and how the current on-campus curriculum might further enhance learning outcomes during the SA experience.

#### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

June 2015 brought the Department of Foreign Languages, home to the SPAN BA program, a permanent full-time chair for the first time in roughly a year. In 2015, an assessment plan was put into place that targeted Spanish oral proficiency outcomes in lower level course (1400 - 2312), the Spanish major as well as in Study Abroad programs in Costa Rica and Spain. However, upon implementing the program, it was found that the faculty lacked the necessary training to carry out assessment of oral proficiency using ACTFL standards. As a result, a good portion of the 2015-2016 was devoted to training faculty on the use of these standards. Consequently, the department assessment plan for Spanish has been adjusted for 2016-2017.

#### **Three-Year Assessment Project for Oral Language Proficiency**

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### **2015-16 Plan for Continuous Improvement**

#### **Closing Summary:**

WOLC has for the first time set tangible departmental goals for the BA in Spanish, and language minors in 2016-2017:

1. Assess samples of 1000 and 2000 level Spanish courses in oral production in order to set ACTFL benchmarks.
2. Compare learning outcomes (French, German and Spanish) between study abroad and domestic learning (face-to-face and online).
3. Increase first-time pass rate on LOTE for Spanish teaching minors.
4. Adopt a new Spanish textbook / curriculum to cover all four levels of Spanish (1411, 1412, 2311, 2312).