

MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Self Study

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) consists of 6 full time tenured faculty members, and between 5 and 9 lecturers, depending on the quarter. The Department offers B.A. degrees in French and Spanish. Presently there are 46 majors. MLL offers minors in American Sign Language, Chinese and Asian Cultural Studies, French, and Spanish. The Department also offers elementary courses in Japanese and Filipino. The French B.A. was re-established in 2008, and since then 5 students have completed their degree

We are not a department with a large number of majors, and a lot of our students do a double major. Nonetheless, we provide a valuable multicultural learning and skills that represent a potential career edge for CSUEB students through the study of world languages, cultures, and civilization. As a matter of fact, I often receive emails from employers in the Bay Area who are looking for employees who are also competent in other languages than English. Yet, the elimination of a language requirement has led to a steady decline in FTES, and is not in keeping with the Diversity ILOs of CSUEB.

It has also become increasingly difficult to sustain adequate administrative support for faculty and students. We had nobody during Fall 2012, and now we have one administrative assistant part-time, in the Department's office, and we share one full-time administrative assistant with the Department of English. Even though, we think that our department is central to our university's mission, I am not confident that the program prioritization process will recognize the essential role we play.

The outcomes of our programmatic goals stated in our last 5-year review have been partially met. We are creating more hybrid and online courses, and we have reinstated the French major, but our Spanish Certificate for the Professions is presently on hold because of budget woes, and we have not been able to implement it since it has been authorized. MLL has been revising its course content to put greater emphasis on cultural interdisciplinary work, and is working on an upper division GE cluster on Multicultural Cinema, and our department actively participates in a freshman GE cluster "Viewing diversity" with Ethnic Studies and Philosophy. We are slowly recovering from a devastating 2010-2011 academic year but this year's 17 CR unit limit is having an extremely negative impact on our department.

Our faculty's research agenda is prolific, and we consistently publish, apply for grants, and present papers at conferences.

2. Assessment.

2.1. Goals

Our goals are to enable students to communicate in one (or more) of the chosen language(s); to prepare future teachers of languages with proficiency in the target language and a deeper understanding of the cultures and literatures represented by those languages. We also want to enable them to do research in the target language and/or about topics as represented in the target language. Another important goal is to increase awareness of the international nature of the world in which we live, and prepare them with the academic knowledge and cultural understanding necessary for future pursuits in a variety of career options. We want provide an educational foundation that helps all students to develop their abilities to think critically and creatively and to communicate effectively in the chosen language; and we encourage students to participate in international programs enabling them to get first-hand experience with the people in other countries, their culture, attitudes, habits, customs, way-of-life and so forth; therefore, offering students a broad educational foundation as well as training for a successful professional life.

2.2. Outcomes

After completing undergraduate studies in the language of their choice, students should:

1. Feel comfortable listening to conversations, presentations, film dialogues, music, etc. in the target language.
2. Be able to read material in that language on a variety of topics and comprehend the majority of the ideas presented.
3. Be able to express themselves with sufficient accuracy and clarity to communicate in that language with others.
4. Be able to express themselves in the written language of their choice with a fair amount of sophistication.
5. Know how to use reference resources for the target language to supplement already acquired vocabulary and comprehend grammatical concepts; develop understanding of phonological, morphological and syntactic structures of that language.
6. Develop an appreciation of the culture represented by the literature, art, music, cinema, etc. of that language. Be aware of the significant contributions to the body of international culture made by the speakers of that language throughout the world.
7. Acquire knowledge of the cultural diversity of written and spoken texts in the language of their choice and of the speakers of that language.

8. Be able to develop his/her abilities to think critically and creatively in the chosen language and to assess its cultural values.

2.3. Assessment Instruments

- Through their presence and regular attendance in a class taught in a language other than English, students improve their listening skills and demonstrate their ability to comprehend information and ideas presented both by their professors and by fellow students in the language of their choice. Listening skills are assessed through class discussions exploring material presented and through examinations requiring a knowledge and understanding of this material.
- Through their active oral participation in class sessions, students demonstrate their ability to form sentences and ideas in a foreign language and to convey this information clearly and comprehensibly to their professors and their classmates. This ability is assessed through questions asked and suggestions made by those in attendance at the class session and through corrections of errors in grammar and vocabulary and rephrasing.
- Oral expression is assessed through individual interviews with the professor as well as specific assignments for in-class performance, for which general topics of discussion are provided ahead of time. Students may also be asked to make audio- or videotapes to be assessed by the professor.
- Written ability will be demonstrated through a series of compositions for which students are required to turn in a rough draft before putting together the final version to be handed in and are encouraged to rewrite the version corrected by the professor, and alternatively by fellow classmates, and to hand it in for extra credit. Written ability will also be tested through a series of quizzes and examinations for which study sheets will be provided and material will be reviewed in class, with ample time allowed for questions. The opportunity to rewrite an examination or quiz for extra credit may also be provided.
- In advanced language courses (i.e. literature and culture courses), students are able to understand and react critically to texts they have read in the chosen language. Faculty assess, in exams and written assignments, whether or not students are achieving these goals. If students are not meeting the goals, faculty discuss methods to aid students to communicate clearly and to improve analytical and critical skills. A sample of the student's best work in the courses where writing is required is examined by an assessment committee formed of regular faculty members.
- Cultural understanding is assessed through classroom discussions of literature, art, music, history, cinema, and customs, followed up by written and oral examinations verifying that the information thus explored has been comprehended and absorbed.

- In addition, a portfolio documenting the student's contributions and materials related to the agenda of the course is collected by the professor for inspection and assessed through careful consideration with those of other students in that class.
- Students are encouraged to participate in programs abroad conducted in the language of their choice, where assessment will be facilitated by class participation, placement tests, quizzes, and examinations conducted, for the most part, by teachers who are native speakers of the language involved.

Presently, our colleague, Dr. Amy June Rowley is participating in CLASS's Assessment task force, and she is focusing on how to use Turnitin as an assessment tool. Due to a lack of staff, resources, and time, we do not have enough assessment tools at the departmental level that would adequately provide reliable data.

3. Data

Since our institutional data is, for the most part extremely inaccurate, I do not have any data analysis. Because of the many inaccuracies, I am unable to draw any useful information.

At the Departmental level, we have been able to assess our students' cultural understanding and critical thinking skills thanks to portfolios and exit interviews questionnaires.

85% of our students in our lower-division courses have reported that their cultural and language skills have dramatically improved. 92% of our students in our upper-division courses are satisfied with the cultural understanding, language skills, and critical thinking skills they have acquired.