

MSU Departmental Assessment Update Spring 2007

Department: **Modern Languages and Literatures**

Department Head: **Doctor Bridget Kevane**

Assessment Coordinator: **Doctor John Patrick Thompson**

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Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by Department

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Japanese, French, German, and Spanish

Assessment Update
Modern Languages and Literatures
Spring 2007

John Thompson (Spanish professor), Assessment Coordinator

At the latter part of the Spring Semester of 2007, graduating majors and minors of Japanese, French, German, and Spanish filled out an exit questionnaire. In this document I provide an assessment of the feedback we received on these questionnaires. In advance, I will note that none of the language coordinators, including myself, feel that any changes need to be made to our assessment policy.

Japanese:

The Japan Studies program graduated 7 students in the major option this year. We received 2 questionnaire responses. Both rated their experiences in the Japan Studies program quite highly, but two issues in particular stand out: one requested higher level language courses in Japanese, and another, in response to the questions "What would you have changed about your education in Modern Languages, responded "I wish I had more support from the Department."

As a possible solution to the first request for higher level language courses in Japanese, Japan Studies eventually hopes to offer a fourth-year advanced reading course focusing on news, literary, and cultural materials in the target language. This goal cannot be met without additional staffing however, and since the major is still new, student demand for such a course is not high yet. Professor Marilyn Bolles believes that within the next 5 years, the numbers of students ready for such a course will be substantial enough to merit its development.

As for the comment "I wish I had more support from the Department," Professor Bolles can only make a guess as to the specific meaning. She thinks the faculty is available as possible for advising. If the student is speaking of financial support, a departmental goal of finding scholarship funds might help. Dept. Chair Kevane spoke of forming a department committee to seek more grant money; this committee could possibly expand its role into researching student funding sources.

Both students responded that they learned much from the language and culture courses. Japan Studies continues to work toward standardizing and improving our language program, in addition to offering more courses such as those taught by a new faculty member in anthropology hired this year. In addition, a capstone seminar course was offered for the first time in spring 2007.

French:

This year one student fill out the questionnaire. This student majored in French and

Finance. The student noted that the French curriculum enabled him/her "to completely meet my objectives" and that "the program is excellent and met all my expectations." The student did not make suggestions for improvement as he/she was clearly satisfied with the French curriculum. Professor Ada Giusti, therefore, is satisfied with this feedback and does not plan on making any changes to the French curriculum.

German:

Professor Patricia Simpson reported that the questionnaires for German indicate a high level of satisfaction with the program. According to the students responses (sixteen questionnaires will filled out), they have for the most part obtained their goals and agree that they have achieved the learning outcomes of the program. Several students suggested including History 362 as part of an overall German Studies major. This course will be incorporated into the requirements of the new curriculum, which will go into effect in Fall, 2008.

Spanish:

Nine students filled out the questionnaires while we had 22 graduating majors. The students expressed between moderate and high satisfaction of their general learning experience. Several students wrote that the writing courses helped them the most and others commented on their experiences abroad as having advanced their Spanish skills the most. Seven of the students believe they have substantially improved their proficiency in Spanish, while two think that they have "somewhat" improved their proficiency.

The biggest complaint expressed by the students was the oversized classes that made in class communication very difficult. Indeed, when asked if they had progressed in the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, most students said they did not progress in speaking. Three students claimed that their writing did not improve.

Most students said that they acquired substantial knowledge of culture/literature in the Spanish program, and enjoyed learning the history transmitted through the literature. Two students mentioned that they would have liked to learn more about current events in Spain and Latin America. One of my projects as Spanish coordinator is to create a new course that deals with current political and social events in Spain and Latin America. My goal is that this course be offered in the Fall of 2008.