Old Dominion University

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

SACS Review: Final Report

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**BACKGROUND**

This is the Final Report from the Department of Foreign Languages based on surveys and discussions for the 101 and 102 course levels during the fall 2011 semester and the spring 2012 semester. Surveys applied the measures addressed by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in order to obtain relevant student proficiency/performance information. This assessment provided a basis to carefully evaluate our teaching/learning methods across the different language groups. The data gathered were analyzed and provided to faculty for further review. Based on that review, faculty members were asked to provide suggestions for improvement in their teaching of the beginning level courses.

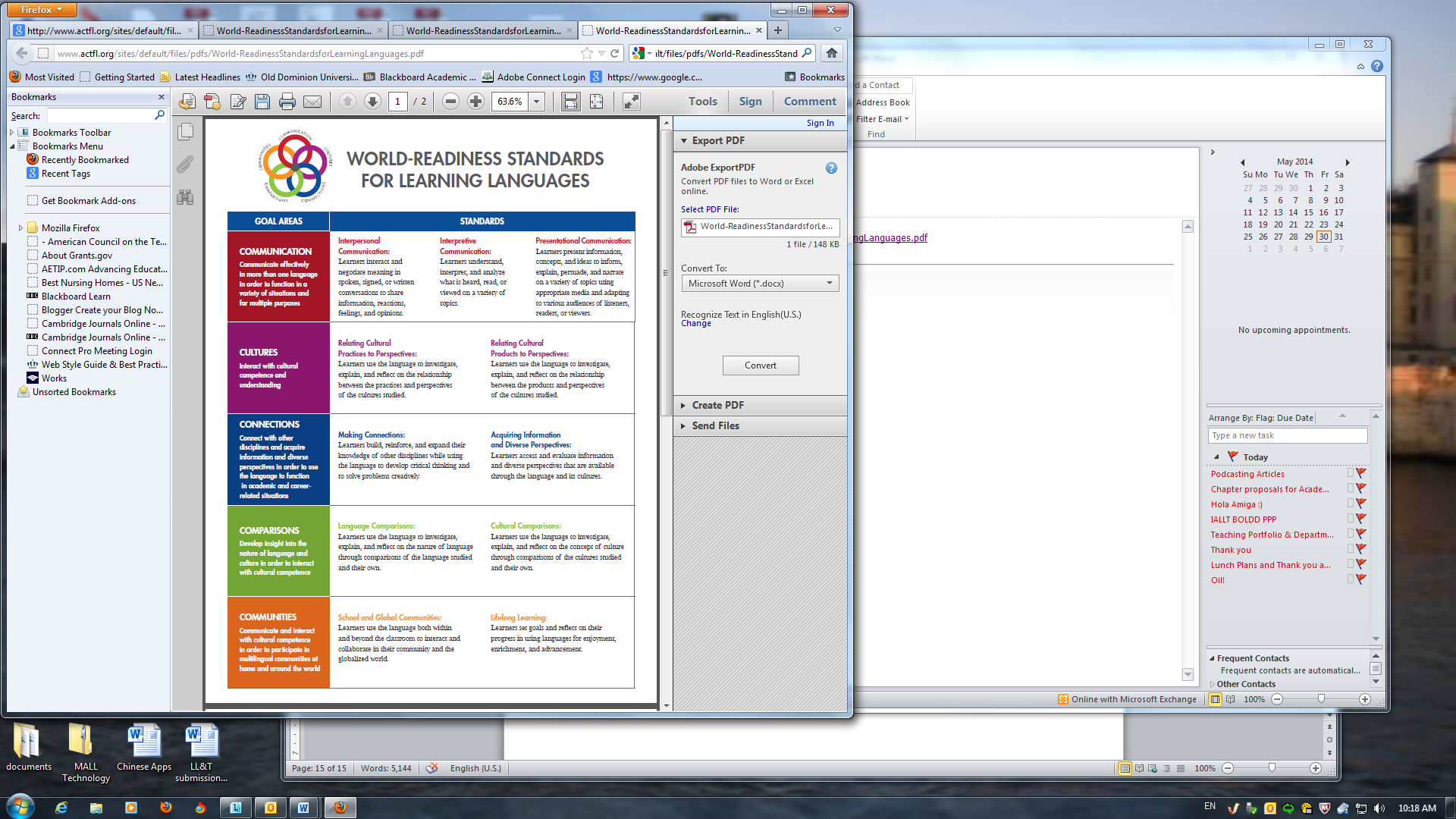
**PURPOSE**

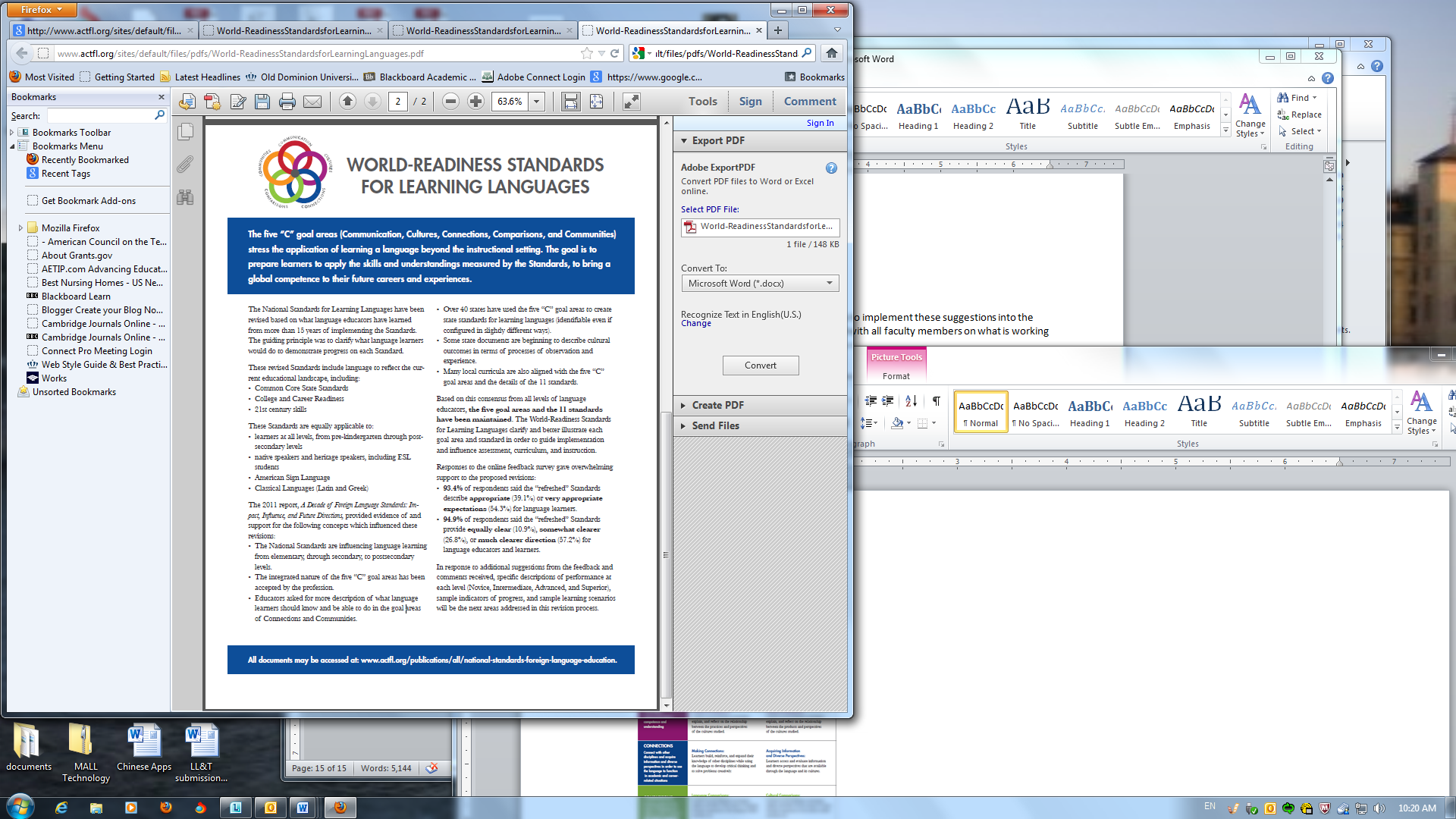
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The Commission’s mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and the improvement of the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that they meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,

Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Latin America, and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education. Accreditation by SACS Commission on Colleges signifies that the institution (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

**General Preface to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012**

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are a description of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels. The levels of the ACTFL Guidelines describe the continuum of proficiency from that of the highly articulate, well-educated language user to a level of little or no functional ability. These Guidelines present the levels of proficiency as ranges, and describe what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level subsumes all lower levels. The Guidelines are not based on any particular theory, pedagogical method, or educational curriculum. They neither describe how an individual learns a language nor prescribe how an individual should learn a language, and they should not be used for such purposes. They are an instrument for the evaluation of functional language ability. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were first published in 1986 as an adaptation for the academic community of the U.S. Government’s Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptions. This third edition marks the third edition of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines includes the first revisions of Listening and Reading since their original publication in 1986, and a second revision of the ACTFL Speaking and Writing Guidelines, which were revised to reflect real-world assessment needs in 1999 and 2001 respectively. New for the 2012 edition are the addition of the major level of Distinguished to the Speaking and Writing Guidelines, the division of the Advanced level into the three sublevels of High, Mid, and Low for the Listening and Reading Guidelines and the addition of general level description at the Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice levels for all skills. - See more at: <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012#sthash.1bZQGk7J.dpuf>





**DATA COLLECTION**

During the Fall 2011 semester and the Spring 2012 semester, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures surveyed students from the 101 and 102 level language courses in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Data collected over this period was for approximately 33 courses from some 660 students (4,620 documents). Full-time faculty members mentored adjunct faculty to provide support and to address concerns.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Languages Surveyed | Lead Faculty and Adjuncts |  |  |
|  | Fall semester 2011 |  |  |
| Arabic 111F | Gordus & Quraid |  |  |
| Chinese 111F | Ren |  |  |
| French 102F | Schulman & adjuncts |  |  |
| German 102F | Schlipphacke & adjuncts |  |  |
| Hebrew 111F  Japanese 111F | Lubich & Benmore-Piltch  Ishibashi |  |  |
|  | Spring semester 2012 |  |  |
| Italian 102F | O’Neal |  |  |
| Latin 102F | Daas & Ropetski |  |  |
| Russian 102F | Guandano & Grise |  |  |
| Spanish 102F | Minguez |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total | 33 classes/approximately 660 students x 7 measures = 4,620 |  |  |

Source: Data collection 2011, 2012

Each language coordinator or language specialist prepared exams for reading, listening and writing.

Passive skills:

1. Listening: multiple-choice, 10 questions on each of final three chapter tests or, if a chapter test is not appropriate, as part of a graded homework assignment, although the listening comprehension responses will minimally affect the homework or chapter test grade. All questions must be imbedded in all tests. No separate test is to be given; the imbedded questions may or may only partially affect the graded work. Latin would not submit to this test.
2. Reading: multiple-choice, 10 questions on each of final three chapter tests or, if a chapter test is not appropriate, as part of a graded homework assignment, although the reading comprehension responses will minimally affect the homework or chapter test grade. N.B. Listening and reading comprehension questions may be combined on either the chapter tests or the homework.

Active skills:

1. Three short writing assignments, the length of which is to be determined by the language studied but should include 50 characters or compounds in a character writing system and all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system, in three homework assignments after mid-term in 102F or 111F or in the final three chapter tests. A faculty member may choose any combination of chapter test or homework assignment for listening, reading and writing.
2. An unofficial OPI (oral proficiency interview) will be given by the faculty member to 20% of the targeted student group, i.e. about 4-5 students per class. Students will be chosen at random to submit to the OPI. Ratings will be given according to the guidelines indicated below. Latin would not submit to this test.

**MEASURES**

As part of the Assessment Process, faculty members are interested in reviewing the following measures and student learning outcomes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FL Outcomes: | Measure |
| *a.      Students will be able to interpret (listening and reading) a language other than  English at the novice level on the ACTFL standards of proficiency, or demonstrate through alternative means a similar or parallel knowledge of another language,* | Listening |
| *b.      Students will be able to apply (speaking and writing) a language other than English at the novice level on the ACTFL standards of proficiency, or demonstrate through alternative means a similar or parallel knowledge of  another language,* | Reading |
| *c.       Students will be able to interpret non-verbal communications made by persons familiar with a language different from the student’s own native language experience,* | Video |
| *d.      Students will be able to identify the significant criteria that enhance the cultural identity of individuals other than those from the student’s native language experience,* | Writing |
| *e.       Students will be able to distinguish the similarities and differences among individuals using the same language who live in different regions or different parts of the world, and* | Presentation |
| *f.        Students will be able to discuss their role in developing cross-cultural understanding, or a similar or parallel understanding in another language.* | Reflection |

Data was collected and analyzed by the Language Learning Center. Each item was given a rating (see below).

Fully met = 8-10

Partially met = 5-7

Minimally met = 2-4

Not met = 0-1

Comparisons were made within each of the following categories: (1) language, (2) instructor, and (3) language group. Each language was either rated as group I and II: French, German, Italian, and Spanish or group III and IV: Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese; Latin and Russian. For the purposes of this final report, only a comparison language and language group were made. The comparison for the instructor is for internal review and strengthening the program. The data from the surveys indicate that our Department fully meets or partially meets the student learning outcomes for each of the measures. In only certain cases the rating was minimally met. It should be noted that Latin did not participate in the SACS review process during this period, but did make suggestions for improvement.

**ASSESSMENT**

In the spring 2014, faculty members from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures were asked to review their current teaching practices and reflect on how they might improve their teaching practices for the future. The suggestions they submitted are provided below by language group and instructor. These suggestions for improvements within all languages will be made available for review by all faculty members in order to gain a better understanding of what colleagues are doing (best practices) and to provide ideas for possible inclusion into their own teaching practices. Faculty will be asked to begin integrating these “best practices” into their course offerings beginning fall 2014 semester and spring 2015 semester.

1. **French (language group I & II):**

Listening:

What I do now: 1) Speak target language in class.  2)  Assign listening exercises in My French Lab.  3)  Always include listening section on each Chapter test (at least 25% of overall grade) testing students proficiency in vocabulary and grammar.

* What I can do to improve:  1) Incorporate more listening either through short video presentation in target language or 2) recorded passages of different French speakers.

Reading:

What I do now:  1) Pre-read situation of Point de départ to cover new vocabulary and chapter topics.  Then I have students get in pairs and role play while reading situation of Point de départ.  2)  Include short reading passages for each chapter test.  Students answer in English 3 -4 questions related to passage.

* What I can do to improve:  1) Assign reading passage for homework and have students get into small groups to discuss in class.  2)  Select short passage and have students read in class and discuss in class.

Video/ Presentation

What I do now:  1) Use the Video component of Point de depart at the end of each chapter and discuss in class, when appropriate.  2) Use media to introduce vocabulary (realia available with textbooks resources materials for instructor).

* What I can do to improve:  1) Try to incorporate more media in class (time permitting)  2)  Short clips from movies to illustrate and enhance cultural differences.  3)  Ask students to do a class presentation (5 minutes) on French or Francophone topics.

Writing:

What I do now:  1) Assign short writing sections in MyFrenchLab.  2)  Ask students to write 3 -4 sentences in class and share with partner....  i.e  when covering comparative/superlative or adjectives.  Students can describe their family and share with partner.  The students share with the whole class.

* What I can do to improve:  1)  Incorporate more writing outside of class, especially the second half of French 101 and in French 102.  Short essays that students will need to revise after instructor has reviewed first draft.

*-- Suggestions provided by Dr. Barbara Jessome*

**French based on FLET (language group I & II):**

* Each week in class, students listen to French and Francophone news broadcasts.  They are required to fill in blank spaces of a news broadcast transcript as they are listening.  As the semester progresses, the degree of difficulty and complexity increases.  Similarly students must maintain a journal where they read articles each week in from the French and Francophone press and then write summaries of them in French.
* Students in this course must also interpret lengthy French and Francophone television commercials for culturally-specific non-verbal communications.  They observe and reflect on these ads without the sound initially, and then with the sound later to add another dimension to this cultural communication activity.
* Students in this course work to compare the presentation of the same current event in both the Francophone and the American press.  Criteria that are specific to the cultural identity of each society becomes evident and a point of discussion for the class since the same topic is treated differently in each country's press.  Students are expected to write a brief analysis explaining their observations.
* Students in this course are exposed to the similarities and differences of French speakers throughout the world as they study television programming and the written press from regions as diverse as France and Senegal.  As a final project, they are asked to create a Non-governmental organization (NGO) that could serve in the Francophone world and present it to the class as a power point and oral presentation.  Some have come up with ideas such as mobile libraries, for example.
* In terms of suggestions as to how to improve, I would say that students in this course could be asked to write a reflection paper at the end of the semester where they directly discuss their role in promoting cross-cultural understanding.  For this particular course, the answers would vary greatly since the students' interests stretch from politics and international studies to business.

*-- Suggestions provided by Dr. Lee Slater*

1. **German (language group I & II):**

General Comments/Observations

* One may only test what one has taught.
* One must not teach to the test; i.e., one does not provide the students with the test questions and answers. Rather students learn and practice patterns, usage, concepts, analysis, critical thinking, and facts, then apply their skills in order to complete tests with identical concepts and vocabulary in a similar context. (This does not apply to important stock idiomatic phrases, which must be learned holistically and recalled spontaneously.)
* Before you evaluate the answers on a given test -- especially if they are other than totally objective, but even then – one must decide what one’s expectations are and how one will award points.
* If there are items on the test that no one or nearly no one has gotten correct, it must be assumed – under ordinary circumstances -- that the concept was not taught properly, was too difficult, was allowed too little time to be absorbed, or the test instructions were unclear. The item must be eliminated from the test and does not count.

Suggestions

In order to assume that our students meet certain standards, have a sufficient foundation and are ready to continue, we must include a certain amount of repetition and review of important aspects and skills. Therefore, I suggest that we all:

* Begin with brainstorming on part of students about the role and benefits of foreign languages and perhaps studying/visiting abroad. Have studentslist benefits of the study of their particular foreign language.
* In 101 and 201, reinforce the linguistic similarities between the two Germanic languages from the very beginning. For example, assign exercises that teach/reinforce intelligent guessing by making students aware of letter shifts from one language to the other:

ch =>gh (Tochter => daughter); ff => p (Affe => ape) As well as more obvious cognate (Worksheet -- Astrid)

* Come up with an agreed-upon list of conversational questions that students must be proficient in and able to answer orally at the end of the 101/102/201/202 series of courses, no matter where the students learned before or how many previous courses s/he has taken at our institution. (List – Paul)
* Test vocabulary regularly/twice weekly in writing from English to German, always including articles and plurals with nouns, with emphasis on active versus passive knowledge, regardless of the method by which the vocabulary is initially learned. Recognition is not enough.
* Introduce/review/test on every level the same key idiomatic expressions and phrases. (List -- Frederick)
* Discipline ourselves to use the target language in every possible context in- and outside of the classroom for the sake of immersion. This despite our own impatience or emphasis on our own sense of efficiency or urgency; i.e., in the office, during casual meetings in the building, in emails, on Blackboard announcements, etc.
* Have a prepared worksheet when showing a video from YouTube or German television, containing a list of guiding questions that prepare the student to make his/her own observations. Sometimes these are included in the text. Require that the answers be written down in the form of notes.
* Assign several short, one-paragraph essays on topics related to content (List – Judy)
* Introduce VOKI in 101 and 201, and have students compose a biographical sketch that reflects their level of proficiency, and that they then play/present to the class.
* Introduce Mixxer.org in 102 and 202. Have students document their Skype interactions and their learning experiences through journal entries after each interaction. Suggest/require that, in addition to small talk, they include conversation connected with their current chapter topics. (LLC -- Betty Rose)
* “The Dos and Don’ts of Germany”, a video unfortunately available only mostly in English, shows non-verbal interactions that are culturally distinct. It and other videos online or those associated with the text may be used – perhaps without sound -- to test or demonstrate non-verbal cultural conventions.

*-- Suggestions provided by Ms. Astrid Heinrich-Lamb*

1. **ITALIAN (language group I & II):**

Listening

* Bring a cellular phone (real or toy) to class, and pretend to receive calls throughout the class. As the students can only hear one side of the conversation, they must guess who is calling you and why.

* Listen to songs in class or at home, and then, then do some kind of exercise including fill in the gaps, comprehension questions, word order or sentence order.

* Use podcasts that the students can download and listen to for homework. Provide the link for download and the worksheet or comprehension questions to fill out.

Reading

* Identify Signal Words and Key Words (Activity for the Whole Class): Signal words used to indicate a particular text pattern are taught to show how these words function in the text. For instance, 'so' indicates a cause and effect, and 'after' indicates sequence of events in the text. Teaching these words and the function might give the readers new or different ideas to approach the text. Also, the teacher asks the students to identify key words to distinguish the important words from the less important words in the text.
* Breaking Up the Text (Activity done In Groups): The teacher provides handouts, which is the text broken up into each section, to each group and asks the students to summarize the texts in the groups. After finishing the summarizing of the texts, the students are encouraged to present their summaries to the other groups of students. This activity allows the students to analyze more details in each section, obtain specific information more closely, combine information of the sections, and understand the main idea of the text. Moreover, reporting the summaries to the class provides the students opportunity to speak the FL.
* Developing Data Banks: Words and discourse markers which are useful, important and frequently appear should be added to individual data banks to assist the students’ vocabulary development. Writing these words on students’ notebooks assists the students’ reading practices in future classroom activities.

Video

* DUBBING ACTIVITY: In this activity, students are asked to fill in the missing dialogues after watching a sound-off video episode. It is interesting and enjoyable for the students to complete a scene from the video by dubbing.
* ACTIVE VIEWING: Before starting the presentation the teacher writes some key questions on the board about the presentation so that the students get an overview of the content of it. After viewing the questions the students answer the questions orally, or the students may take notes while viewing. For more detailed comprehension students are provided a cue sheet or viewing guides and let them watch and listen for specific details or specific features of language.
* REPETITION AND ROLE-PLAY: When there are some difficult language points in the video unit, closely repetition can be a necessary step to communicative production exercises. A scene on video is replayed with certain pauses for repetition either individually or in chorus. When students have a clear understanding of the presentation, they are asked to act out the scene using as much of the original version as they can remember.
* REPRODUCTION ACTIVITY: After students have seen a section, students are asked to reproduce either what is being said, to describe what is happening, or to write or retell what has happened.

Writing

* Free-write: Students write on a given topic for 2-5 minutes without stopping (i.e., they are not allowed to lift their pen or pencil from the paper or make corrections). The focus is on developing fluency and processing ideas rather than on writing accurately
* Students keep a diary, describing what they see and experience every day in the FL.
* Throughout the semester, have a postcard for each member of the class, writing his or her name in the name and address space. Turn them picture side up on a table, have each student choose one (without looking at the name), then he or she will write a message to the person whose name is on the other side.

Presentation

* Students may be asked to take part in fieldwork involving observation of the use of non-verbal communication between that of native FL teachers and English speaking people, as well as between that of native FL speakers. The observation of foreigners who are not native English speakers may also be a source of developing student awareness of non-verbal communication and the role it may play in more effective communication. Students may find sources for such observation through observing foreign students on campus as well as interchanges between, as well as with their foreign teachers.
* Summarize, interpret, and analyze information from authentic materials or literary samples, both orally and in writing.

* Create and present poetry, short plays and stories.

Reflection

* Students could keep a journal in which they complete the following sentences: This week I studied..., I learned..., I used my FL in these places..., I spoke FL with these people..., I made these mistakes..., My difficulties are..., I would like to know..., I would like help with..., My learning and practicing plans for the next week are..
* Students could complete simple self- evaluation forms at various points during their course, to help students reflect on their Strategies in language learning.
* Using questionnaires and follow-up interviews in helping students reflect on their out-of- class Strategies in language learning.

*-- Suggestions provided by Ms. Antonella O’Neal*

1. **SPANISH (language group I & II):**

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| --- | --- |
| FL Outcomes: | Measure |
| *a.*1. Provide students opportunities to speak the language outside of class (round-table discussions, gatherings, etc.) 2. Provide movie nights for students to view mainstream, interesting films in target language | Listening |
| 1. Do readings in class (rather than at home) so that instructors can provide reading strategies on how to work with a foreign language text 2. Present students with graded readings so as not to bore them with too-difficult readings | Reading |
| *c.*1. Create lessons based on rituals: greetings / farewells, eating customs, family traditions, holidays, etc.  2. Have students view mainstream movies from cultures that speak the target language and write reflection on certain cultural artifacts / rituals they saw | Video |
| 1. Students will create an e-portfolio to describe different aspects of their lives as well as others in the target language in a systematic and visual format 2. Create rubrics and guides to help students know the expectations of writing assignments | Writing |
| *e.*1. Use Venn diagrams to make comparisons between different subcultures within the target-language community  2. Teach geography in class to tie language differences to geographic ones 3. | Presentation |
| *f.*1. Have students submit reflection papers on cultural rituals learned about in class 2. Introduce students to different ways they can use technology to reach out to speakers of the target language and keep communicating / practicing outside the classroom. | Reflection |

*-- Suggestions provided by Mr. Andrew Sewick*

* Have oral interviews at the end of each chapter. Oral interviews should not be just question oriented and should have at least two parts giving information and collecting information.
* Plan task oriented activities to be developed during each chapter that need to be completed at the end of each chapter. The steps to the final task should be built on the previous step and should cover reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities around a main core vocabulary and content that can be recycled from previous chapter.

*-- Suggestions provided by Dr. Louis Guadano*

1. **ARABIC (language group III & IV):**

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| FL Outcomes: | Measure |
| 1. Have mastered the Arabic alphabet sound system, be able to recognize correctly all Arabic sounds 2. Comprehend simple audio texts on familiar topics | Listening |
| 1. Have mastered the Arabic alphabet and sound system, be able to recognize and pronounce correctly all Arabic sounds 2. Comprehend words 3. Comprehend simple print sentences 4. Comprehend simple print texts on familiar topics 5. Have an active vocabulary of about 200 Arabic words | Reading |
| 1. Be able to initiate social interaction, ask for basic information, and be aware of basic cultural aspect of social interaction in the Arab world; 2. Comprehend simple audio/video texts on familiar topics; 3. Be able to initiate social interaction, ask for basic information, and be aware of basic cultural aspect of social interaction in the Arab world; | Video |
| 1. Write accurately from dictation 2. Be able to compose words 3. Be able to compose simple sentences about yourself and your family 4. Be able to compose simple paragraphs about yourself and your family and friends | Writing |
| 1. Student will be asked to prepare one role play with a partner (5-6 minutes) and present it in class together | Presentation |
| 1. Know about the differences between formal and spoken Arabic, recognize both resisters, and be able to use basic expressions in at least one dialect 2. Students are asked be able to talk about themselves, their education, and their family 3. Student are asked to make corrections on their written homework | Reflection |

*-- Suggestions provided by Ms. Rana Quraid*

1. **CHINESE (language group III & IV):**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FL Outcomes: | Measure |
| *a.      Students will be able to interpret (listening and reading) a language other than  English at the novice level on the ACTFL standards of proficiency, or demonstrate through alternative means a similar or parallel knowledge of another language,* | Listening and reading comprehension (e.g. multiple choice questions; the format can be similar to HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) |
| *b.      Students will be able to apply (speaking and writing) a language other than English at the novice level on the ACTFL standards of proficiency, or demonstrate through alternative means a similar or parallel knowledge of  another language,* | Responses orally or in a written form to a scenario in a cultural context (e.g. multiple choice questions; a topic writing; the format can be similar to HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) |
| *c.       Students will be able to interpret non-verbal communications made by persons familiar with a language different from the student’s own native language experience,* | Responses orally or in a written form to a scenario or video in a cultural context (e.g. multiple choice questions; a topic writing; the format can be similar to HSK (Chinese Proficiency Test) |
| *d.      Students will be able to identify the significant criteria that enhance the cultural identity of individuals other than those from the student’s native language experience,* | A paper or journal writing |
| *e.       Students will be able to distinguish the similarities and differences among individuals using the same language who live in different regions or different parts of the world, and* | Presentation; reading comprehensions |
| *f.        Students will be able to discuss their role in developing cross-cultural understanding, or a similar or parallel understanding in another language.* | Reflection or development of a cultural competency assessment tool based on curriculum |

*-- Suggestions provided by Dr. Ren Zhongtang*

1. **HEBREW (language group III & IV): Not Available**
2. **JAPANESE (language group III & IV):**

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| --- | --- |
| FL Outcomes: | Measure |
| 1. Can get some ideas of authentic announcements with a help of context (e.g., announcements at theaters and train stations) (JAPN 212) 2. Can identify the social relation between two speakers based on their speech levels (JAPN212) 3. Can get some ideas of self-introductions addressed to native speakers (JAPN 111) | Listening |
| 1. Can interpret simple lists (e.g., shopping lists, receipts, movie schedules, menu) prepared for native speakers 2. Can understand basic classroom instructions on handouts and presentation slides (JAPN 111) 3. Can extract basic information from emails from language partners and teachers (e.g., when to meet next time) | Reading |
| 1. Can follow the plot and identify with protagonists emotionally in slow-paced family dramas (JAPN 212) 2. Can figure out social relations of power between characters from their body language, demeanor, and mode of address. (JAPN 212) | Video (non-verbal communications) |
| 1. Can communicate with language partners in writing on simple matters (e.g., email inviting a language partner to a party) (JAPN 212) 2. Can supply basic information required for forms such as hotel reservations and travel documents (e.g., name, address, telephone number) (JAPN 212) 3. Can communicate with Japanese language teachers in writing to fulfill their basic needs (e.g., an email informing their absence from class) (JAPN 212) | Writing |
| 1. Compare and contrast the lives of seven high school students living in different areas of Japan, using *Deai* website by the Japan Forum (JAPN 212) | Presentation (similarities/differences/different regions) |
| 1. Can develop their role as a global citizen without privileging or fetishizing their home government, language, or culture (JAPN 212: this has become a real concern in Spring 2014 after public screening of Nanjing, Nanjing) 2. Can grasp the arbitrary nature of semiotic associations between a signifier and its signified in each language and apply this knowledge to relativize rather than take for granted the most familiar viewpoint that the students have grown up with/in. (JAPN 212) | Reflection (Cross-cultural and historical) |

*-- Suggestions provided by Dr. Junji Yoshida and Ms. Minori Marken*

1. **LATIN (language group III & IV):**

Latin is exempt from some of the latter categories because it is not applicable.

Interpreting (Listening and reading)

* Translation and interpret more authentic Latin authors
* More question and answers in Latin for discussion
* More presentation/video clip in Latin for interpretation

For applying (speaking and writing)

* More time on practicing/ correcting classical pronunciation
* More emphasis on speaking Latin
* Recite excerpts of authentic Latin from memory
* Write a short story or poem in Latin

*--Suggestions provided by Ms. Lynne Ropetski*

1. **RUSSIAN (language group III & IV):**

I teach Russian which is not only  my native language, but it is a "critical need foreign language" as identified in the National Security Language Initiative, a plan to further strengthen national security and prosperity in the 21st century through education, especially in developing foreign language skills.  Here are some of my suggestions on how to improve 6 measures listed below based on the learning outcomes.

* To further and deeper utilize immersion approach by providing much more explanation exclusively in Russian, without creating fear for students that they will be left out by not understanding it, but by way of challenging students to try to understand the gist of the communicated information, if not every word thereof, and obviously making sure students are not lacking the essential details.
* To invite interesting Russian native speakers to class for a short presentation in Russian, or mostly in Russian, with the further discussion including, but not limited to, any of the presenter's  non-verbal clues.
* To have  "briefings" of not more than a couple of minutes by students on any topics related to current events in Russia  with the recommended pertinent vocabulary from the presentation for everyone to benefit from.
* To have field trips to a Russian event, Russian movie, or a Russian eating establishment, to have a gathering with the Russian native speakers, with the discussion to follow up.  This can be arranged through the Russian Club which is a fully established student organization.
* To have students get actively involved in the community life that incorporates Russian population of the Tidewater area, with the required report of the chosen involvement submitted for a grade.  Again, the Russian Club can be instrumental in obtaining valuable contact information and presenting options for involvement with the Russian speaking community.
* To provide more opportunities for students to translate original Russian texts from sources other than a Text Book/Work Book, such as:  proverbs, sayings, songs, original literature, etc.
* To provide more opportunities for students to engage in one-on-one communication with Russian native speakers (in addition to a Russian native speaker interview, one-on-one, which is currently a mid-term assignment for the 2nd year students of Russian).
* To have events planned with students taking Russian from other educational institutions, e.g. TCC.
* To have presentations by distinguished Americans, such as the one that I have recently suggested for the fall semester with Prof. Bob Kunzinger about his book "The Iron Scar" written after his visits to Russia.
* To offer extra credits to attending students, and to seek cooperation from literature, history professors, etc. to encourage their students to attend too.
* Even though it is a language class, but since any language does not exist in a vacuum, to spend more time in class on interpreting and discussing substantive data  on the cultural, historical, and geopolitical differences for the areas in which the Russian language is spoken.

*--Suggestions provided by Ms. Maria Grise*

**DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION**

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures plans to implement these suggestions into the curriculum beginning fall 2014 semester. Ideas will be shared with all faculty members on best practices as well as areas for improvement according to similar language groups.