

**REVIEW OF MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT RESULTS  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**

**May 2010**

The narrative applies to the following programs in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures:

**B.A. in French (AHSS)**  
**B.A. in Spanish (AHSS)**  
**B.A. in French Education**  
**B.A. in Spanish Education**

The Department's faculty is our principal strength, having native speakers in every language we teach. Our faculty takes a caring and personal interest in their students, striving to provide an overall positive learning experience. Our faculty are well-trained, highly qualified, recognized both nationally and internationally, and represent a variety of disciplines ranging from technological and educational areas of expertise to literary research and linguistic fields in foreign languages.

In accordance with our Major Field Assessment Plan all students completing a baccalaureate in French or Spanish or French or Spanish Education must take the Oral Proficiency Interview in French or Spanish. In the 1990s Southeastern Louisiana University was the only university in Louisiana that had OPI certified testers in both French and Spanish. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has required the Oral Proficiency Interview since 1994. According to the ACTFL website, "The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or ACTFL OPI as it is often called, is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. It is a 10 to 30 minute face-to-face or telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee that determines how well a person speaks a language by comparing his or her performance of specific communication skills with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking". The ten proficiency levels are:

Superior	Intermediate Mid
Advanced High	Intermediate Low
Advanced Mid	Novice High
Advanced Low	Novice Mid
Intermediate High	Novice Low

Each interview is tape recorded and rated by our testers in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Although candidates may elect to take an official OPI during their junior year, we recommend that they take it immediately upon returning from a study abroad experience. Prior to taking the official OPI, candidates have the option to take an informal version at any point in the program. These informal interviews give the candidate feedback on his/her current proficiency level and suggest areas for improvement.

Till 2006, the minimum required score for our candidates was Intermediate-High: we officially changed it in 2008, requiring a minimum score of Advanced-Low. Most of our students demonstrated

the required level on the first exit OPI attempt. Whenever a student did not reach the level required on the exit OPI taken after the methods or grammar class, s/he participated in a second study abroad program and/or took additional conversation courses and/or work with a conversation partner for several hours each week, before being allowed to take the OPI again.

Our faculty has encouraged students to take advantage of the several Study Abroad programs offered by SLU, which provide valuable real-life encounters with the places and people inspiring foreign language and cultural studies to add to research and classroom experience. Our Department has expanded its offering adding interdisciplinary programs in France and Morocco, Germany, Italy, and Spain. For the last two years we have organized a study abroad program in Valencia, Spain, which has been very popular among our Majors and Minors. As all SOTs and narrative students comments report, 95 % of French and Spanish students were very satisfied with opportunities to experience summer study abroad. Lately, we have added a mini study abroad program in Germany to be completed during spring break and one in January 2011. These cultural programs have been more affordable, providing our students a greater opportunity to experience study abroad.

Our students in French/ Spanish and French/Spanish Education must document ways in which they “seek opportunities to strengthen their proficiency” by participating in activities outside of the classroom, including a recommended study abroad experience. To meet expectations for the assessment, students are required to engage in professional development opportunities outside of their coursework. They usually attend the Louisiana Foreign Language Teaching Association (LFLTA) or other professional development at the state or local level during their course of study. A few of the candidates also collaborated with a French/Spanish faculty on a paper to be delivered at professional meetings. Funds for travel are generally provided by a university grant. Involvement in professional development and other activities in the foreign language community enabled our students to become advocates for the field at an early point in their development.

### 31 Completers: 2007-2010

CRITERIA	Meet Expectation 3	Acceptable 2	Unacceptable 1
Efforts to Improve French/Spanish outside of class	31		
Attendance at Professional Development Events	29	1	1
Membership or Involvement in Professional organizations	29	1	1
Future plans for professional involvement	28		

The data illustrate that the students in the French/Spanish Programs are enthusiastically seeking professional opportunities in order to become active advocates and lifelong learners in the field. They are taking advantage of the extra-curricular opportunities that the Foreign Language Department offers them for strengthening their proficiency. The above chart shows that, over a three-year period, the majority of students “Meet expectations” in the four criteria evaluated. Many experienced study abroad, made efforts to improve Spanish/French outside of course work, attended professional development events, joined professional organizations. According to the details they provided, students:

- Participated in study abroad
- Engaged in conversation with natives outside of class
- Participated at activities during “Fanfare” such as Film festival and lectures
- Attended LFLTA, AATF
- Were members of Phi Sigma Iota (Foreign Language Honor Society)
- Joined the Spanish Clubs and/or the French Circle
- Served as judges at the Foreign Language Festival
- Participated in the activities for International Education Week

Our teacher education program in Foreign Languages is committed to preparing pre-service and in-service teachers for 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms. Our programs in French and Spanish are designed to prepare teachers for all-levels of certification (K-12). These programs meet state and national standards as well as University and Regents core requirements; they have been crafted to prepare candidates for the Praxis examinations and to produce highly qualified teachers who are able to create learning environments in which students engage in active processes of language use and learning. Candidates pursuing a degree in the Foreign Language (French and Spanish) Education Program at Southeastern Louisiana University participate in a comprehensive program of structured field experience beginning with observation and class participation in the sophomore year and advancing to a deeper involvement in the senior year for a total of 180 hours before they begin student teaching. Field experience is assigned by the director of Field experience in the College of Education and Human Development in collaboration with faculty in the department of Foreign Languages. Courses in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures that now include field experience are FREN /SPAN 303 (10 hours), FLAN 401 (15 hours) and FLAN 403 (20 hours).

During the course of their studies at Southeastern, foreign language education candidates have engaged in professional development opportunities that strengthen their own linguistic and cultural competence and promote reflection on practice as beginning teachers. Upon entering the French/Spanish Education program, candidates required to keep a record of any professional development activities, memberships in professional organizations, work in the community to promote the study of foreign languages, and opportunities in which they seek to reinforce their language proficiency outside of their coursework. The candidates included their record in their methodology portfolio. The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has redesigned its program to better reflect ACTFL standards and further develop our candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Candidates’ performance is assessed through examinations of content knowledge, portfolios that include personal philosophies, lesson plans/evaluations, self-reflections, and teaching evaluations by professors and mentor teachers, portfolios of students’ work, standardized test scores, exit exam, and state certifications exams (i.e. PRAXIS tests). Assessments that are unique to Foreign Language Education include the ACTFL OPI and the Professional Development Log included in their portfolio.

Since all Education candidates at Southeastern must pass PRAXIS II tests in order to qualify for Student Teaching, we have met the state requirement and have a 100% pass rate among program completers. Through an analysis of the data collected during the testing period from September of 2007 through May 2010, we have found the following:

- Southeastern students who took Praxis II, Content Test, scored above state average in Listening Comprehension and Structure of the Language.
- Candidates scored state average in Reading Comprehension.
- Candidates scored above national average in Culture.
- The majority of our candidates fall within the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartiles of each section of the test.

We are generally satisfied with the results, but in our constant effort to improve our program and our students' test scores, our department have begun to conduct a review session for teacher candidates to help them prepare for the exam. We hope that our pass rate on PRAXIS II improves after conducting review sessions each semester.