

Millikin University
Student Learning in the Spanish Major
By
Eduardo Cabrera, Ph. D.
Department of Modern Languages
June 20, 2008

Executive Summary

The Modern Languages Department supports the mission of Millikin University in preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a diverse global community, and a personal life of meaning and value. In the context of the Spanish major, the mission of the Department is to produce graduates who achieve the following four learning outcome goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

The core curriculum begins with freshman-level courses in Beginning Spanish and Continuing Spanish, as well as a sophomore-level course in Intermediate Spanish, all of which establish a student's competency in Spanish and readiness to continue on with more advanced studies in Spanish. As a student's course of study within the Spanish major continues, he or she engages more specific on focused areas of study in Spanish conversation and composition, and in courses that deal with the culture, art, business, literature, film, theatre and linguistics of the Spanish-speaking world.

Part of the Modern Languages Department's ongoing revitalization is an establishment of thorough and ongoing assessment at the course and program level. It is hoped and anticipated that the listing of artifacts and rubrics here provided will be helpful in continuing to make assessment more systematic throughout the Spanish major and the Modern Languages area.

Goals

The purpose of the Spanish major is stated in four Modern Languages Department goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

These Modern Languages Department goals match well with Millikin's University-wide learning goals:

- (1) Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
- (2) Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
- (3) Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The table on the following page shows how Modern Languages Department goals for the Spanish major relate to University-wide goals:

Learning Goal	Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s)
Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.	1
Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.	1, 2
Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze, and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.	1
Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of Hispanic culture, and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.	1, 2, 3

Students majoring in Spanish are required to take 21 credit hours of Spanish at the 300 level or above, including the capstone course SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition. The prerequisite for taking a 300-level course is three semesters of Spanish-language courses.

The mission of the Spanish major is to prepare students for a career in teaching, for graduate studies in literature, or to provide the necessary Spanish-language skills for success in other fields.

Snapshot/Overview

Three full-time instructors and one adjunct instructor teach Spanish. The three full-time instructors include one Associate Professor and two Lecturers.

The Spanish Major program has experienced major change in terms of its curriculum and requirements. From a complicated requirement of courses and sequence of courses, the Spanish Major was changed to a simpler requirement of seven courses beyond SP 223, Intermediate Spanish, including SP 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition (this capstone course was added to the curriculum in Spring 2005). This change improved the situation for scheduling as well as enhancing the students' ability to choose courses according to their career plans and academic interests.

Another recent change was the implementation of a communication-oriented approach to teaching. Every class was observed, and changes were recommended with the goal of adjusting to that methodology.

After a long period of time in which the language lab went unused, lab usage is now required of every student taking elementary language courses. For this purpose, there are two computer labs available for student use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In addition, the Department has implemented a new *communicative language lab* for students who are taking Spanish 103 and, more recently, also for students taking Spanish 114, which consists of group work with the coordination of a *facilitator*. Its main goal is that the students can achieve an advanced level of oral proficiency.

This year a mural reflecting the Latin American, French and Italian cultures was painted in the communicative language lab. The goal is to contribute to the process of learning within a more cultural-embedded ambience.

The curriculum consists of traditional courses in language, literature and culture, as well as practical courses like SP 330 (Spanish for Business), SP 340 (Theatre Performance in Spanish), and SP 350 (Study Abroad in Spanish) and SP 310 (Spanish for Health Professions). Those 4 new courses have been added to reflect 1) the tendency among Spanish programs across the country toward the inclusion of “practical” offerings, and 2) education within a global environment.

The number of students enrolled in the Spanish major has grown to more than 30 students in the academic year 2006-2007, and continue to grow.

Learning Story

The first-year curriculum in Spanish establishes the student’s proficiency in basic spoken and written Spanish, through Spanish 103 (Beginning Spanish) and Spanish 114 (Continuing Spanish). The second-year curriculum, with Spanish 223 (Intermediate Spanish) confirms the student’s readiness to proceed into more advanced junior- and senior-level courses that engage Spanish conversation and composition; culture, art, business, literature, film and theatre of the Spanish-speaking world, including Latin America, Spain, and U.S. Latino/Latina culture; and Spanish linguistics.

To complete the Spanish major, a student must take a minimum of 21 credits above Spanish 223, including the capstone SP 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition, from the following courses:

- Spanish 301, Spanish Conversation and Composition I;
- Spanish 302, Spanish Conversation and Composition II;
- Spanish 303, Culture of Spain;
- Spanish 304, Culture of Latin America;
- Spanish 310, Spanish for Health Professions;
- Spanish 320 (Art, Literature, and Film of U.S. Latinos);
- Spanish 321 (Survey of Spanish Literature);
- Spanish 323 (Survey of Latin American Literature I);
- Spanish 324 (Survey of Latin American Literature II);
- Spanish 330, Spanish for Business;
- Spanish 340, Theatre Performance in Spanish;
- Spanish 350, Study Abroad in Spanish;
- Spanish 402, Linguistics.
- Spanish 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition.

A Spanish Major Curriculum Map is offered as an appendix to this document.

A chapter of the national Spanish Honor Society *Sigma Delta Pi* was created, which makes possible for the Spanish major students to participate in cultural activities as well as in round tables to practice their oral communicative skills.

A radio show in Spanish *Español en Acción* was created, making possible for the students to participate as guests. Students may improve their listening and oral skills as well as their knowledge of the cultures of the Spanish speaking world.

The creation of the language communicative lab allows the students with a Spanish major to work as special tutors.

Double majors and the preparation for professional success:

One of the characteristics of the major in Spanish is that it supports students in their other field of specialization. All Spanish majors have another major. Most students pursuing another career use Spanish as a way to improve their work and, in this way, to become a successful professional. Spanish majors have the following first or second major:

Art
Accounting
Behavioral Sciences
Biology
Business Administration Management
Chemistry
Communication
Education
Marketing
Music
Nursing
Political Science
Theater

The capstone required course for Spanish majors, *SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition*, provides opportunities for the students to make a direct connection between what they learned in the Spanish courses and the main topics in their second (or first) field of study.

Description of the capstone: *Capstone course required of all Spanish majors. Students will compose and complete an individualized project and participate in an advanced dramatization demonstrating a high level of Spanish conversation and composition abilities.*

Assessment Methods

The table on the following page provides examples of specific assignments where student growth could be assessed:

Course	Assignments Where Student Growth Can Be Assessed	Related Modern Languages Department Goals	Related Millikin University Goals
Spanish 103 (Beginning Spanish)	Oral Exams Written Exams	1	1
Spanish 114 (Continuing Spanish)	Oral Exams Written Exams	1	1
Spanish 223 (Intermediate Spanish)	Oral Exams Written Exams Presentations	1, 4	1, 2
Spanish 301 (Spanish Conversation and Composition I)	Oral Exams Presentations Written Exams	1, 4	1, 2
Spanish 302 (Spanish Conversation and Composition II)	Oral Exams Essays Written Exams	1, 4	1, 2
Spanish 303 (Culture of the Spanish-Speaking World)	Presentations Exams	4	2, 3
Spanish 304 (Culture of Latin America)	Presentations Exams	4	2, 3
Spanish 320 (Art, Literature, and Film of U.S. Latinos)	Presentations Exams	4	2, 3
Spanish 321 (Survey of Spanish Literature)	Research Essays Exams	3	1, 3
Spanish 323 (Survey of Latin American Literature I)	Research Essays Exams	3	1, 3
Spanish 324 (Survey of Latin American Literature II)	Research Essays Exams	3	1, 3
Spanish 330 (Spanish for Business)	Presentations Exams	4	1, 2, 3
Spanish 340 (Theatre Performance in Spanish)	Presentations Exams	4	1, 2, 3
Spanish 350 (Study Abroad in Spanish)	Interviews Essay Diary	2	1, 2, 3
Spanish 481 and 482 (Topics in Hispanic Literature)	Research Essays Exams	3	1, 2, 3

Spanish Major Curriculum Map

Courses	Goal #1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.	Goal #2: Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.	Goal #3: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.	Goal #4: Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.
SP 103 – Beginning	X			
SP 114 – Continuing	X			
SP 223 – Intermediate	X			X
SP 301 – Spanish Conversation and Composition I	X			X
SP 302 – Spanish Conversation and Composition II	X			X
SP 303 – Culture of the Spanish-Speaking World				X
SP 304 – Culture of Latin America				X
SP 320 – Art, Literature, and Film of U.S. Latinos				X
SP 321 – Survey of Spanish Literature			X	
SP 323 – Survey of Latin American Literature I			X	
SP 324 – Survey of Latin American Literature II			X	
SP 330 – Spanish for Business				X
SP 340 – Theatre Performance in Spanish	X			X
SP 350 – Study Abroad in Spanish		X		
SP 402 – Linguistics	X			
SP 481/482 – Topics in Hispanic Literature			X	
SP 491-494 – Independent Study in Spanish			X	

Assessment Methods

For the assessment of the four learning goals the following courses will be used:

Learning Goals	Courses
1	SP 302 Composition
2	SP 350 Study Abroad
3	SP 324 Survey of Lat. American Literature
4	SP 330 Spanish for Business

The rubrics for those courses have been created (attached).

Assessment Data

The grading rubrics used to assess each learning goal have a maximum of 20 possible points. Those points have been divided for reporting purposes in the following way: Excellent: 19-20; Adequate: 13-18; Nominal: less than 13.

The students should be ranked “adequate,” with a minimum of 13 points, if the learning goals are being achieved.

The following assessment criteria will be used to evaluate student progress in achieving the learning goals:

“Green light” (an acceptable level or clearly heading in the right direction and not requiring any immediate change in the course of action): 80% or more of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent;”

“Yellow light” (not an acceptable level; either improving, but not as quickly as desired or declining slightly. Strategies and approaches should be reviewed and appropriate adjustments taken to reach an acceptable level or desire rate of improvement): 60% to 79% of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent”; and

“Red light” (current status or direction of change is unacceptable. Immediate, high priority actions should be taken to address this area): fewer than 60% of the students ranked “adequate” or “excellent”.

Learning Goal 1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Spanish.

Table 1: SP 302 Spanish Conversation and Composition II

Rubric Category	Percentage of students in category
Excellent	10
Adequate	90
Nominal	0
Number of students evaluated	11

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%.
 Rating for goal 1: “Green light.”

Learning Goal 2: Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.

Table 2: SP 350 Spanish Study Abroad

Rubric Category	Percentage of students in category
Excellent	55
Adequate	45
Nominal	0
Number of students evaluated	9

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%
 Rating for goal 2: “Green light.”

Learning Goal 3: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.

Table 3: SP 324 Survey of Latin American Literature

Rubric Category	Percentage of students in category
Excellent	25
Adequate	75
Nominal	0
Number of students evaluated	8

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%.
 Rating for goal 3: “Green light.”

Learning Goal 4: Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

Table 4: SP 330 Spanish for Business

Rubric Category	Percentage of students in category
Excellent	30
Adequate	70
Nominal	0
Number of students evaluated	13

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%.
Rating for goal 4: “Green light.”

Analysis of Assessment Results

The analysis of the data shows that the Spanish major is in the right direction.

Learning Goal 1:

The assessment of the learning goal for the *written component* of the Spanish Composition course shows that the Department is doing a good job during the first semesters of the Spanish language courses, building a strong foundation for the upper division courses. The Spanish Conversation and Composition II course (together with the Spanish Conversation and Composition I course) is one of the courses recommended to be taken at the beginning of the major. Most of the students take that course right or soon after they take SP 223: Intermediate Spanish.

This is a very important result: 100% of the students at the excellent or adequate level. With the strong formation in writing in the composition course, students are able to succeed in the other upper division courses. They will be able to write good essays in the literature classes, etc.

The oral component of the course has also benefited from a stronger foundation in the first semesters of Spanish language courses. On the year 2005 the Department created a *Communicative Lab*, in which students taking the first two semesters of Spanish can practice the target language with the assistance of a *facilitator* (an advanced Spanish major student).

For assessing Learning Goal 1, essays have been used as artifacts. From the 11 students, 1 (10%) wrote an essay that falls within the category “excellent”, 10 (90%) within the category “adequate”, and none within the category “nominal.”

Learning Goal 2:

Since the year 2004 the Department of Modern Languages has been promoting different Study Abroad programs: in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Spain and Argentina. The program at the Dominican Republic is the most popular in terms of attracting students from different academic departments.

The program in Chile started in January 2005, and has been very successful in terms of recruiting a good number of students and in achieving the corresponding learning goal. The newest program is the one in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which started in May 2006. In all those three countries Millikin' students have had plenty of opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from different social status. From the academic refined language to the street language, the students demonstrated their communications skills by interacting with professors, waiters, bus drivers, etc. It is also evident the confidence the students get by being able to communicate with native speakers in another country.

Assessment of the Study Abroad in Argentina:

This year students studied the life and contributions of Eva Perón, the life of the gaucho, the elements of tango (including taking tango dance lessons in Buenos Aires), community theater, and immigration.

For the purpose of assessing the Learning Goal 2, the final report/reflection essay written by students who participated in the Study Abroad program in Argentina was chosen as the artifact. From the nine students who wrote the final report/reflection essay, 5 fall within the category "excellent" (55%), and 4 within the category "adequate" (45%).

Learning Goal 3:

The assessment of the learning goal for the Survey of Latin American Literature I course shows that the students are able to (1) use the skills they learned in the composition course, and (2) apply the concepts of literature and analytical skills acquired in this and previous courses.

Two research papers were chosen as the artifact for the purpose of assessing the Learning Goal 3.

From the 8 students who wrote two essays, 2 fall within the category "excellent" (25%), and 6 within the category "adequate" (75%).

Learning Goal 4:

The Spanish for Business course is centered on the notion that in order to do business in another country, it is necessary to learn about its culture. Students learn important aspect of the culture of Latin American countries, relevant to the world of business, as well as its specific vocabulary,.

For assessing the Learning Goal 4, a comprehensive exam is used as the main artifact.

From 13 students who took the final exam, 4 fall within the category "excellent" (30%), and 9 within the category "adequate" (70%).

Improvement Plans

The Department of Modern Languages will continue to implement a communicative approach to teaching, as well as continue monitoring the needs of the students who major in Spanish. In Spring 2008 the capstone course SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition was offered for the first time, and will be offered every Spring semester. That course will allow for more integration of theory and practice, since students will be working in a special project relevant to their major. Those students who are double major will continue to be able to work in a project that put together the acquired knowledge in both fields. In the Spring 2008 semester, students from the capstone course participated in the *Celebrations of Scholarship* event, showing their achievements in their research. The Department is planning to continue with that tradition.

Starting in the Fall 2008 semester, the Department of Modern Language will have a new Assistant Professor of Spanish specialized in Central American Literature. This new position will allow the Department to better serve the growing number of Spanish majors.

Appendix 1: Rubrics

Compositions

Categoría	4	3	2	1
Oraciones y Párrafos	Oraciones y párrafos están completos, bien-construidos y con estructura variada	Todas las oraciones están completas y bien construidas (no hay fragmentos o escrito a prisa)	La mayoría de las oraciones están completas y bien construidas. Los párrafos necesitan algo de trabajo	Muchos fragmentos de oraciones u oraciones hechas a prisa o los párrafos necesitan mucho trabajo.
Gramática y Ortografía	No comete errores de gramática u ortografía	El escritor comete 1-2 errores de gramática u ortografía.	El escritor comete 3-4 errores de gramática u ortografía	El escritor comete más de 4 errores de gramática u ortografía.
Precisión del contenido	El documento contiene al menos 10 hechos certeros sobre el tema.	La carta contienen de 8-9 hechos certeros sobre el tema.	La carta contiene de 6-7 hechos certeros sobre el tema.	La carta contiene menos de 6 hechos certeros sobre el tema.
Puntuación	El escritor no comete errores en el uso de las mayúsculas y la puntuación.	El escritor comete 1-2 errores en el uso de las mayúsculas y la puntuación.	El escritor comete 3-4 errores en el uso de las mayúsculas y la puntuación.	El escritor comete más de 4 errores en el uso de las mayúsculas y la puntuación.
Extensión	El documento tiene 20 o más oraciones	El documento tiene de 18 a 19 oraciones	El documento tiene de 15 a 17 oraciones.	El documento tiene menos de 5 oraciones.

Appendix 2: Rubrics

Literature Essays

	Excellent	Adequate	Nominal
Concepts and Thesis	[5 points] Student shows a strong knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a clear thesis.	[3 points] Student shows a reasonable but less than complete knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a thesis.	[1 point] Student shows a marginal awareness of literature concepts, and thesis is not clear.
Organization of Ideas	[5 points] Student defends his or her main idea very clearly, with strong organizational links between and among his or her ideas.	[3 points] Student defends his or her main idea somewhat clearly, with reasonably effective organizational links between and among his or her ideas.	[1 point] Student's defense of his or her main idea is unclear; organizational links between and among his or her ideas are weak or nonexistent.
Text Analysis	[5 points] Clear and accurate analysis of the literature work. May show insight or originality.	[3 points] Competent explanation of the text. Some ambiguity or incompleteness may be present.	[1 point] Paraphrasing or plot summary outweigh commentary.
Mechanics	[5 points] Student's writing is very strong and clear, free of errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics.	[3 points] Student's writing is reasonably clear; errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics exist, but do not interfere seriously with understandability.	[1 point] Student's writing is unclear. Errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics seriously impair readability.

Excellent: 19-20

Adequate: 13-18

Nominal: less than 13.