

**Assessment Literacy**  
**LT 510: 2 Credits**  
**2006 Fall Term Syllabus**

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### **DESCRIPTION**

K-12 and universities, responding to calls for greater accountability, are using a variety of language assessment techniques to measure student proficiency. Most teachers, however, have had little or no training in language assessment. This course, therefore, provides students with basic information on key concepts and techniques in language testing. Through on-line and off-line interactions, students will deepen their understanding of the roles of assessment and how to use assessment to improve language teaching. Specifically, students will be presented with actual data and learn how to interpret and manipulate that data to evaluate programs, inform teaching, and communicate more effectively with students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders.

#### **The following topics will be covered:**

- I. Acquisition vs. Learning: How are languages learned? What does this mean for the development of tests and the interpretation of test results?
- II. Achievement vs. Proficiency: What does it mean to master material in a curriculum? What does it mean to actually use what has been learned in real-life situations?
- III. Assessment Repertoire: What kinds of assessments exist? Which ones are appropriate for various situations?
- IV. Standardized testing: What makes a test “standard”? What are the advantages and limitations of standardized tests?
- V. Performance Levels: How are proficiency levels defined in the ACTFL Guidelines? What do performances at these levels look like?
- VI. Data Workshop: What do real data reports look like? How can we interpret and use those reports?

### **OBJECTIVES**

This online course is designed to provide practicing teachers with an understanding of the fundamentals of language assessments and develop the ability to interpret test results to improve teaching. Students will learn about the purposes and uses of various assessment strategies and explore ways to incorporate this knowledge into language classrooms. Specifically, students will develop the ability to interpret and manipulate data from online proficiency assessments for the purpose of improving classroom instruction. Students will be able to explain test results to students, parents, administrators and other stakeholders in an informed and accurate manner.

### **TEXTBOOKS & READING MATERIALS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	PUBLISHER & PUB. DATE
<i>Dual Language Instruction</i>	Cloud, N., Genesee, F. and Hamayan, E.	Boston, MA: Thomson Heinle, 2000
<i>Teaching Reading and Writing in Spanish and English</i>	Freeman, Y.S. and Freeman, D. E.	Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006
<i>How Languages are Learned</i>	Lightbown, P. M. and Spada, N.	Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Class time will be a combination of presentation by outside experts, discussions led by the course instructor and small group discussion.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of regular entries in their online journals and a final paper outlining an assessment plan for at least one class they are teaching. 75% of the grade will be based on the online journal and 25% on the final paper. The class may be taken for a grade or pass/no pass.

Information and techniques will be provided through readings and video clips. Students will be expected to interact through online forums and/or off-line face-to-face discussions to deepen understanding of these concepts and discover how to apply them to the language classroom.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Acquisition vs. Learning

#### Activity 1

**Individual** [use icon]: When you hear the words *acquisition* and *learning* in the context of foreign language learning, what do the words mean to you? Enter your thoughts about this in your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: When you hear the words *acquisition* and *learning* in the context of foreign language learning, what do the words mean to you? Think about this for a few moments and then . . .

- Pair with a colleague and share your thoughts.
- After a few minutes, each pair should share their thoughts with the group.
- Take a few moments to write your thoughts about acquisition and learning in your Reflective Journal.

#### Activity 2

Watch the 4-minute video segment.

#### Activity 3

Reading passage 1.

## **Achievement vs. Proficiency**

### ***Activity 1***

Watch the one-minute video segment and review the accompanying graphic (chart comparing achievement vs. proficiency)

### ***Activity 2***

**Individual** [use icon]: Print a copy of downloadable Activity 2. Read through all of the assessment samples and determine if each is achievement or proficiency-based and then note the rationale for your decision. Make this activity a part of your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: Print a copy of downloadable Activity 2. Read through all of the assessment samples and determine—individually—if each is achievement or proficiency-based and then note the rationale for your decision. Make this activity a part of your Reflective Journal.

Discuss your individual findings with your fellow group members.

### ***Activity 3***

**Individual** [use icon]: Print a copy of downloadable Activity 2A. This document contains the correct answers for the previous activity. Compare your decisions to the information of this document. Keep this document with your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: Print a copy of downloadable Activity 2A. This document contains the correct answers for the previous activity. Compare your decisions to the information of this document. Keep this document with your Reflective Journal. With your fellow group members, talk about any of this information that you find interesting and worth further discussion.

### ***Activity 4***

Watch the video clip

### ***Activity 5***

Read the passage:

## **Assessment Repertoire**

### ***Activity 1***

Watch the 2-minute video clip. ]

### ***Activity 2***

**Individual** [use icon]: Think about all the different assessment options you have available to you as a foreign language teacher. Enter these thoughts into your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: Take a few moments to think about all the different assessment options you have available to you as a foreign language teacher. After about 5 minutes, share your list with your other group members. It would be a good idea for someone in the group to note the ideas on the board or on flip chart paper.

### **Activity 3**

Read the passage:

### **Activity 4**

Watch the 6-minute video clip

### **Activity 5**

**Individual** [use icon]: After reading about foreign language assessment options and after viewing the video clip, use the new information from the reading and video along with your original ideas to make a new, more comprehensive list of assessment options available to foreign language teachers.

Once the list is completed, reflect on your own practice by placing check marks next to the options that you utilize in your classroom.

After you have taken inventory of your own practice, what do you think? Writing in your Reflective Journal, address the following questions:

1. Does your practice reflect the full-range of assessment options available to you? If not, what options are not utilized (or under-utilized)?
2. Is it a good idea to have many different assessment components in your practice? Why or why not?

**Group** [use icon]: After reading about foreign language assessment options and after viewing the video clip, what additions would the group now make to the list of assessment options you previously generated? Add these components to the group's list.

Now, in your Reflective Journal, copy the list of assessment options and label it *Assessment Inventory*. Individually, place check marks next to the options that you utilize in the classroom.

After you have taken inventory of your own practice, what do you think? Writing in your Reflective Journal, address the following questions:

1. Does your practice reflect the full-range of assessment options available to you? If not, what options are not utilized (or under-utilized)?
2. Is it a good idea to have many different assessment components in your practice? Why or why not?

After completing your written reflection, share the results of your personal assessment inventory and your thoughts about the two questions above.

## Standardized Testing

The fact that many New Jersey school districts will use the STAMP Test from Language Learning Solutions to determine minimum required foreign language proficiency for completion of the graduation requirement or for placement into future study, introduced a whole new perspective on the importance of testing in foreign languages, in general, and standardized testing, in particular. This section of the learning modules will cause you to give some thought to the concept and implications of standardized assessment.

### Activity 1

**Individual** [use icon]: Standardized testing has been a part of American education for many decades, and the *No Child Left Behind* legislation at the federal level has escalated the importance of standardized testing in numerous ways. Using your Reflective Journal, make a list of pros and cons of standardized testing, in general.

**Group** [use icon]: Standardized testing has been a part of American education for many decades, and the *No Child Left Behind* legislation at the federal level has escalated the importance of standardized testing in numerous ways. Brainstorm with other groups members the pros and cons of standardized testing, in general. Chart the group's thoughts on the board or on flip chart paper. Enter this list into your Reflective Journal.

### Activity 2

View the 15-minute video clip.

### Activity 3

**Individual** [use icon]: In your Reflective Journal, address these questions:

1. Which instructional content areas of schooling are most affected today by standardized testing?
2. How does your school district use the data/test results from these content areas?

**Group** [use icon]: Think about these questions and respond to them in your Reflective Journal:

1. Which instructional content areas of schooling are most affected today by standardized testing?
2. How does your school district use the data/test results from these content areas?

Share your thoughts with the other group members.

### Activity 4

View the 5-minute video clip.

### ***Activity 5***

**Individual** [use icon]: The American foreign language community has actually had a number of standardized assessments available to it for many years. What are they? Enter your ideas to this question in your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: The American foreign language community has actually had a number of standardized assessments available to it for many years. What are they? Brainstorm the answer to this question with your colleagues and keep track of the group's responses on the board or chart paper. Enter the results in your Reflective Journal.

### ***Activity 6***

View the 5-minute video clip.

### ***Activity 7***

**Individual** [use icon]: Following the video clip, you may have noted additional standardized foreign language assessments that might not be on the list you generated. Make the necessary additions to your list (in your Reflective Journal) to have it reflect the information from the video clip.

Every test must have a purpose, that is, its goal must be the assessment of something that has been predetermined by the test developer. And so, each of the foreign language standardized assessments intends to measure certain things.

Using the list in your Reflective Journal, try to determine the purpose of each assessment. Make your notation to the side of each assessment.

**Group** [use icon]: Following the video clip, you may have noted additional standardized foreign language assessments that might not be on the list you generated. Make the necessary additions to the group's original list so that it reflects the information from the video clip.

Every test must have a purpose, that is, its goal must be the assessment of something that has been predetermined by the test developer. And so, each of the foreign language standardized assessments intends to measure certain things.

Determine, with your fellow group members, what you think is the purpose for each of the foreign language standardized assessments. Make sure your Reflective Journal contains this information, as well.

### ***Activity 8***

View the 4-minute video clip ]

### ***Activity 9***

**Individual** [use icon]: Now that you have seen the video clip, how did your assumption about the foreign language standardized assessments compare to the information in the video? Make any necessary modifications in your Reflective Journal so that your listing of the standardized assessments and their purposes matches the content of the video.

**Group** [use icon]: Now that you have seen the video clip, how did your assumption about the foreign language standardized assessments compare to the information in the video? Talk about this as a group and then make any necessary modifications in your Reflective Journal so that your listing of the standardized assessments and their purposes matches the content of the video.

## **Performance Levels**

### ***Activity 1***

View the 3-minute video clip.

### ***Activity 2***

**Individual** [use icon]: Reiterating the question from the video clip, what speaking proficiency level would you guess is achieved by the average language learner at the end of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, assuming the student had no prior foreign language study. Enter this information into your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: Reiterating the question from the video clip, what speaking proficiency level would you guess is achieved by the average language learner at the end of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, assuming the student had no prior foreign language study. Discuss this information in your group and then enter it into your Reflective Journal.

### ***Activity 3***

View the 2-minute video clip.

### ***Activity 4***

**Individual** [use icon]: After seeing the video clip, which points out the general achieved speaking proficiency levels of high school students who did not have prior language study, make sure your previous Reflective Journal entry contains the correct information.

**Group** [use icon]: After seeing the video clip, which points out the general achieved speaking proficiency levels of high school students who did not have prior language study, make sure your previous Reflective Journal entry contains the correct information.

### ***Activity 5***

View the 4-minute video clip.

### **Activity 6**

**Individual** [use icon]: Reiterating the question from the video clip, what speaking proficiency level would you guess is achieved by the average language learner at the end of 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12 Grades in a continuous language program? Enter this information into your Reflective Journal.

**Group** [use icon]: Reiterating the question from the video clip, what speaking proficiency level would you guess is achieved by the average language learner at the end of 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12 Grades in a continuous language program? Discuss this information in your group and then enter it into your Reflective Journal.

### **Activity 7**

View the 2-minute video clip.

### **Activity 8**

**Individual** [use icon]: After seeing the video clip, which points out the general hypothesized speaking proficiency levels of students in a K-12 continuous study of foreign languages, make sure your previous Reflective Journal entry contains the correct information.

**Group** [use icon]: After seeing the video clip, which points out the general hypothesized speaking proficiency levels of students in a K-12 continuous study of foreign languages, make sure your previous Reflective Journal entry contains the correct information.

### **Activity 9**

View the 5-minute video clip. ]

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## **Univeristy of Oregon (UO) ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

All students are subject to the regulations stipulated in the UO Student Conduct Code (<http://www.uoregon.edu/~conduct/>). This code represents a compilation of important regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to student life. It is intended to inform students of their rights and responsibilities during their association with this institution, and to provide general guidance for enforcing those regulations and policies essential to the educational and research missions of the University.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The mission of the College of Education is to “Make educational and social systems work for all.” Several options, both informal and formal are available to resolve conflicts for students who believe they have been subjected to or have witnessed bias, unfairness or other improper treatment. Within the College of Education, you can contact: Bill Young, COE Ombudsperson at 346-1401 or [wdyoung@uoregon.edu](mailto:wdyoung@uoregon.edu) or <http://education.uoregon.edu/ombuds>

Outside the College, you can contact:

UO Bias Response Team: 346-1139 or <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~brt/>

UO Conflict Resolution Services 346-0617 or <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~crs/>  
UO Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity 346-3123 or <http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/>

## **DIVERSITY**

It is the policy of the University of Oregon to support and value diversity. To do so requires that we:

- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals.
- promote a culture of respect throughout the University community.
- respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others.
- reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind.
- practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others.
- promote the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds which is the lifeblood of the university.

## **DOCUMENTED DISABILITY**

Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with the course instructor within the first two weeks of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Disability Services in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, chronic medical conditions, emotional/psychological disabilities, hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. For more information on Disability Services, please see <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>

## **GRIEVANCE**

A student or group of students of the College of Education may appeal decisions or actions pertaining to admissions, programs, evaluation of performance and program retention and completion. Students who decide to file a grievance should follow the student grievance procedure, or alternative ways to file a grievance outlined in the Student Grievance Policy (<http://education.uoregon.edu/feature.htm?id=399>) or enter search: student grievance.

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