

ALL THINGS ASSESSMENT AT KU

The Official Assessment Newsletter of Kutztown University



Languages Matter: Granting Our Wish for Improved Oral Proficiency

Dr. Christine Núñez, Dr. Dawn Slack, and Dr. Nancy Zimmerman, with KU undergraduate student Ashley Carter presented at the 2018 Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association annual conference in Pittsburgh PA.

According to the 2017 New American Economy report, between 2010 and 2015 the “number of bilingual job postings more than doubled—going from around 240,000 in 2010 to roughly 630,000 in 2015. What’s more, employers added jobs for bilingual workers at a much faster pace than they did for U.S. workers overall.”[i] Given market demand, the development of oral proficiency in a second language has been a key student learning outcome in the BA German and BA Spanish programs since 2007. Since that time, the Department of Modern Language Studies has administered the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to all seniors using independent, ACTFL-certified raters.

All Things Assessment is edited by Prof. Krista Prock, Interim Director of the Office of Assessment and members of the Advisory Board are David Beougher, Dr. Anne Carroll, Dr. Gil Clary, Dr. Michelle Kiec, Dr. John Ward and Dr. Carole Wells. Suggestions for articles, announcements and feedback of any sort are welcomed and appreciated

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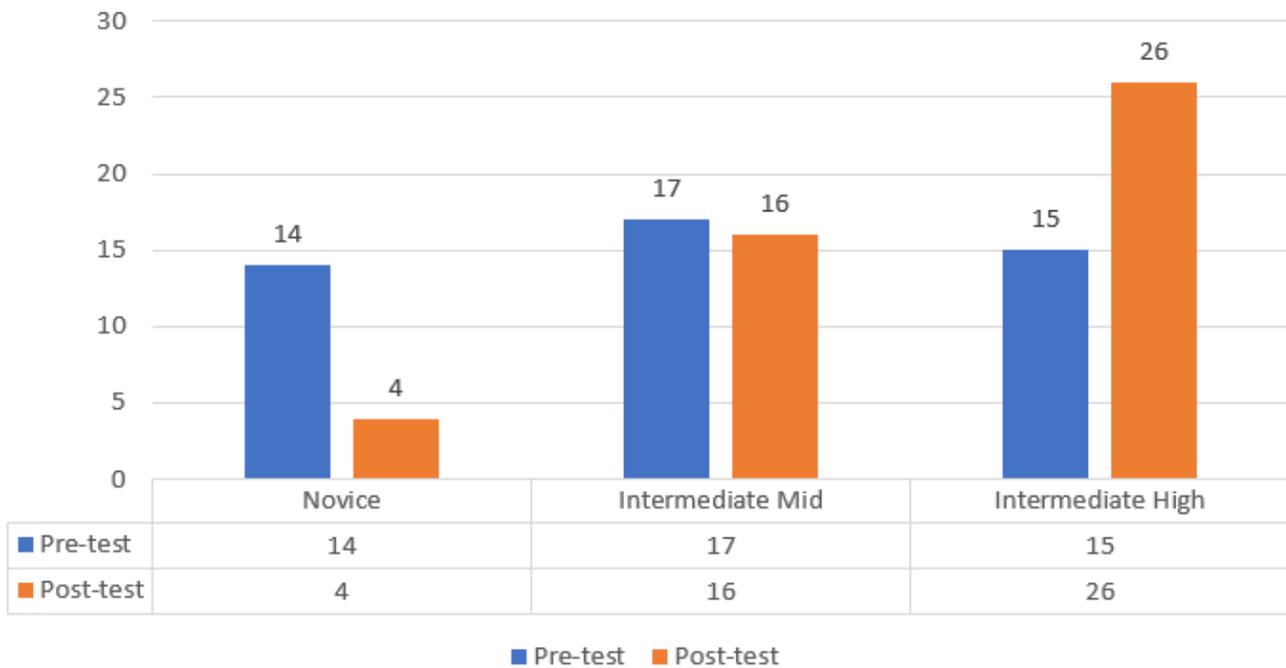
Data revealed that, while most students reached the Intermediate High level[ii], the number of students reaching the Advanced Low[iii] level was more inconsistent, and often limited to those students who had the opportunity to pursue language experiences outside the classroom, such as study abroad.

With the goal of increasing the number of program graduates reaching Advanced Low oral proficiency, and to identify additional initiatives that would facilitate that goal, the department incorporated two interventions, a formative assessment and a student survey into specific 200-level courses through a (2017-2018) KU Assessment Grant entitled “The Relationship between Increased Authentic Communicative Interaction in German and Spanish together with Frequent and Consistent Assessments and Feedback: A Longitudinal Study of Students’ Oral Proficiency Outcomes.”[i] The interventions, supported by funding from the department and the grant, included 1) “Language Partners”: small conversation groups led by KU peers with either native or advanced-level (German or Spanish) language skills and 2) “TalkAbroad”: a videoconferencing program that provides students the opportunity to engage in authentic conversations with partners from German- and Spanish-speaking countries.[ii] The assessment aspect of the project included oral proficiency testing at the beginning and end of each semester using the independently rated ACTFL “Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Language” (AAPPL). Since the AAPPL rating provides students with personalized feedback, additional goals of the project included increasing students’ awareness of their language proficiency,

improving their confidence speaking the target language and preparing them for the summative oral proficiency assessment in their senior year through specific suggestions for continued oral proficiency skill development. The student survey was included in the project to determine students’ perceptions of the interventions and the AAPPL assessment.

Data from pre- and post-test results of 46 student participants in this study reveals a sizeable increase in the number of students (n = 26) reaching the Intermediate High level by the end of the semester and a limited number of students (n = 4) who did not increase beyond the Novice level (see chart). Data from the student survey indicated overall positive attitudes toward the interventions as a means to increase learner confidence and oral proficiency development, although qualitative data revealed room for improving the efficacy of both the “Language Partners” and “TalkAbroad” programs. The results of the 2017-2018 study were shared at the 2018 Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association annual conference in a presentation entitled “Languages Matter: Granting Our Wish for Improved Oral Proficiency”, given by Drs. Christine Núñez, Dawn Slack, Nancy Zimmerman and student participant Ashley Carter. Given the positive results of the 2017-2018 pilot program, the department is continuing to integrate the interventions described above in 2018-2019, taking into account data from the student surveys to adjust both programs to maximize student learning outcomes. Data will continue to be collected using the AAPPL as a formative assessment in specific 200-level German and Spanish courses.

2017-2018 AAPPL Results



[i] New American Economy (2017). Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market. http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NAE_Bilingual_V8.pdf.

[ii] Proficiency criteria and levels are determined the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) who also trains and certifies independent raters. Intermediate High is required for PA certification to teach a foreign language and thus was established as the minimum target for the BA German and Spanish programs.

[iii] Advanced Low is the required level for accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and thus was established as the desired target for the BA German and Spanish programs.

[iv] Grant writers (in alphabetical order) were Drs. Lynn Kutch, Christine Núñez, Dawn Slack and Nancy Zimmerman.

[v] Since TalkAbroad sessions are recorded, they can be further used for assessment by instructors or self-assessment by students. More on TalkAbroad can be found at: <https://talkabroad.com/>.

Program Assessment

This fall, academic programs have made great strides in assessment. All programs have completed new drafts of their program student learning outcomes (SLOs) and created curriculum maps. The Academic Assessment Council, which was created in May 2018 to improve academic assessment at KU, has provided feedback on the SLOs and curriculum maps to all programs.

In order to facilitate this assessment work, several workshops have been held on the topics at hand: writing student learning outcomes, developing curriculum maps, and creating rubrics and collecting student work. These workshops were all recorded and the recordings are available on the Office of Assessment website.

The Academic Assessment Council will soon provide feedback to academic programs on their rubrics and Fall 2018 assessment plans, which are due to be submitted to Dean's offices by November 15th.



Meet the GAs

In Fall 2018, graduate assistants for assessment were hired in each college, CASA, the Honors Program, and the Office of Assessment. The Graduate Assistants have been trained in the use of Sharepoint and Nuventive Improve to facilitate the work they are doing to support the University's assessment efforts. Let's learn more about them!

CORRINE MCCONVILLE

Program: Masters Art Education; Certification in Teaching
Department: Visual and Performing Arts Department
Hometown: Lehigh, PA
Pets: My Three Roommates, Darin, Stew, Zack.
Interests/Hobbies: Ceramics, Yoga, Field Hockey, Traveling, Beach, Tie Dye, Fashion, Hanging with my two best friends Morgan and Marci.
Dream Job: Opening my own charter school for the arts, as well as my own ceramics studio.

JESSICA FOX

Program: Marriage Couple and Family Counseling
Department: Honors Program
Hometown: Perkasie, PA
Pets: Black cat- Stella and grey cat- Luna
Interests: Dance Teacher, pizza lover
Dream Job: Helping families with autistic/ behaviorally challenged children

KAYLA EHLINGER

Program: MA in English
Department: LAS Office Assessment
Hometown: Bristol PA, currently living in Doylestown, PA
Pets: Black poly-dactyl cat named Spooky (he was born on Halloween and is a total cutie!)
Interests: I love to crochet and knit! I also enjoy going backpacking and baking.
Dream Job: Instead of a dream job, I have a dream goal of hiking in every US national park.

LARA MCQUE

Program: Student Affairs in Higher Education
Department: CASA/Retention and Student Success
Hometown: East Greenville, PA
Pets: One dog named Xena, she's a handful
Interests/Hobbies: I love reading. If I'm not doing work or studying I'm reading. I also like to play at crafting hobbies so I have a large collection of yarn crafts, soapmaking supplies and coloring books. Whether I use them or not depends upon how much time I have and how motivated I am to complete a project.
Dream job: This is a hard one. I'm going with Head of Institution or Program that concentrates on the holistic development of GLBTQ+ students.

CRYSTAL HORNINGER

Program: Clinical Mental Health
Department: Office of Assessment
Hometown: Allentown, PA
Pets: Cat- Jonah Dog-Westie named Ziggy
Interests: Eating! Yoga, painting, martial arts
Dream Job: Becoming an ASSECT-certified Sex Therapist and owning my own counseling practice that also features Goat Yoga

MORGAN COATES

Program: School Counseling
Department: Business/Education
Hometown: Boyertown, PA
Pets: 2 Cats- Calypso and Snowflake, 1 Dog- Lilly
Interests/Hobbies: Digital Art, Video Games
Dream Job: School Guidance Counselor

Upcoming Due Dates

January 22nd - Completed Program Assessment Report, all columns complete

February 1st - Rubrics for remaining SLOs (those not submitted November 15th) and assessment plan for those SLOs (even if the SLOs will not be assessed in Spring 2019). The assessment plan is the Program Assessment Report completed through Part 9, Criteria of Success.

June 15th - Completed Program Assessment Reports to due to Deans. These reports should be a summary of all 2018-19 assessment results and an analysis of results, including a response to the data analysis with planned improvement actions. In essence, this is a combination of the Reports November 15th and January 22nd, with assessment results and analysis from Spring 2019 added, if assessment was done in Spring 2019.

Upcoming Workshops

What to do with your assessment data

Learn how to use the data you have after assessing student work. How can you use the data to inform decisions about your program? Join Dr. John Ward (Dean, College of Education) and Dr. Anne Carroll (Dean, College of Business) at this workshop.

January 14, 2019
10am-12pm
Beekey 235

For More Information

Please visit the Office of Assessment Website

<http://www.kutztown.edu/assessment>