

Assessment 6: Content Knowledge: Oral Proficiency Oral Proficiency Interview

1. Description of the Assessment

Our past practice in assessing oral proficiency (ACTFL Standard 1) has been to conduct and record interviews with our students before departure and upon returning from study abroad. Interviews are conducted outside of any course by senior faculty in French and Spanish by individualized appointment with their advisees. Student performance in the interview provides an occasion for discussion of the proficiency acquired to date, and the need for further work or remediation. Students typically study abroad during spring semester of their junior year. Therefore the pre-departure interview usually happens during fall semester, and the post-study abroad interview when they return to campus in fall of their senior year, when they are enrolled in the methods course.

Our interview procedures satisfy New Hampshire's oral proficiency requirements, which set a higher standard (ACTFL's Intermediate High level) than what is required by ACTFL/NCATE (Advanced Low). New Hampshire's oral proficiency requirements are stated as follows:

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| Ed 612.08 a | In the area of oral communication, the ability to interact appropriately in the target language, as demonstrated by meeting the requirements of one of the following: |
| Ed 612.08 a1 | Having the ability to understand equivalent to a minimum of "Intermediate High" according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) criteria in ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines – Speaking (1999) stating that Intermediate High speakers are able to: converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the intermediate level; and relate to work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence; OR |
| Ed 612.08 a2 | Having the ability to meet the New Hampshire Guidelines for Language Learning Continuum, Stage III, as outlined on p. 24 of the New Hampshire Guidelines for World Language Learning K-College, published by the New Hampshire Association of World Language Teachers (1997). |

New Hampshire Guidelines for Language Learning Continuum, Stage III are detailed under section 5b, Scoring Guide. New Hampshire does not proscribe an interview protocol, specialized training for interviewers, nor standard criteria for evaluation. These oral proficiency interviews have been recorded to demonstrate that students meet the proficiency level required by state certification standards. When state evaluators visit campus, they listen to the recordings of these interviews to verify that the standard has been met, as was their decision during our 2005-2006 accreditation review.

We recognize that ACTFL and NCATE require use of the official ACTFL oral proficiency interview (OPI). Beginning in fall 2006 we will require that our methods students do an "Official ACTFL Advanced Level Check" via telephone during fall semester of their senior year for a fee

of \$75. We may also elect to pursue the option of “Academic Institutional Upgrades” because some of our faculty members have had experience with the OPI, although they have not pursued official certification.

2. Alignment with ACTFL Standards

The Assessment Tool (questions in French and Spanish) illustrates that students are asked to reflect on their experiences abroad within the context of the target culture, and that they demonstrate the ability to “strengthen their proficiency” and “accommodate for gaps . . . by learning on their own” (ACTFL Standards 1b and 2a). We verify that they have attained a high level of proficiency as they strive to meet communicative tasks such as extended narration in the past tense, description, expressing sustained opinion, and formulating hypotheses. We probe for their understanding of the “connections between the perspectives of a culture and its practices and products” and for an awareness of how they have changed through living abroad.

Our past practice of pre- and post-study abroad interviews will continue to serve diagnostic and formative purposes, providing a basis for encouraging our students to work seriously toward developing oral proficiency so that they can pass the formal Oral Proficiency Interview. Because the ACTFL requirement (Advanced Low) is one level below the state requirement (Intermediate High), satisfaction of the state standard will presumably correspond to meeting ACTFL’s requirement. As students are informed about the evaluation procedure for the oral interview, (using both state and ACTFL standards) they will develop an understanding of both of these frameworks (ACTFL Standard 4a).

3. Analysis of Data Findings

Our tape recorded interviews completed by summer 2006 consist of six pre-study abroad Spanish students: one rated ideal, four acceptable, and one unacceptable (mid-intermediate to intermediate low *course* level, not ACTFL level. Two post-study abroad interviews were rated one acceptable, one ideal.

French recordings consist of one pre-study abroad interview (rated acceptable) and three post-study abroad samples, one rated acceptable and two ideal. These assessments were evaluated by the faculty who interviewed these students, measured against the state standards. No rubric was used.

4. Evidence of Meeting ACTFL Standards

The students whom we interviewed in 2005-2006 *after* study abroad all satisfied the requirements as outlined in the ACTFL Guidelines for the Advanced Low level as well as the New Hampshire Guidelines for World Language Learners, Stage III. Those students who were interviewed in fall 2005 before studying abroad will return to campus in fall 2006 and complete the post-immersion interview. More information about the correlation between the rating of these interviews and ACTFL standards can be deduced from our **Scoring Guide 5b**. Specifically, the interview assesses the candidate’s ability to meet ACTFL “Advanced Low” rating by requiring

narration and description in past, present, and future, and by including conversation about academic and leisure activities, and current and public (as well as personal) events.

5. Assessment Documentation

Students are interviewed by appointment outside of class in a fairly informal conversation with a senior faculty member. They are told that the interview serves both to assess their speaking proficiency and to exchange information about the study abroad experience. The faculty member who conducts the interview usually knows the program abroad, the target culture, and the student, so the conversation covers several topics of mutual interest. Students do not bring any notes or prepared work into the interview. They are encouraged to respond freely, taking time for self-correction or response time as needed to elicit a valid, comprehensive speech sample. The interview is oriented toward demonstrating the student's knowledge in a supportive environment, rather than testing according to a strictly proscribed protocol.

5a. Assessment Tool: Assessment 6: Content Knowledge: Oral Proficiency

Pre-study Abroad Interview : French

1. Comment t'appelles-tu? Quel est ton nom?
2. Depuis quand étudies-tu le français? (Il y a combien de temps que tu étudies le français?)
3. Pourquoi as-tu décidé d'étudier au Québec? En France?
4. Avec qui vas-tu voyager? Quand pars-tu?
5. As-tu déjà acheté votre billet?
6. Sais-tu ce que tu vas étudier? Les cours (questions supplémentaires selon les réponses personnelles)
7. Qu'est-ce que tu sais sur le Québec? La France?
8. As-tu déjà voyagé en France?
9. Quelles sont tes attentes?
10. Sais-tu avec qui tu vas habiter? Pour toi, comment sera la famille parfaite?
11. Sais-tu quelque chose sur la cuisine typique québécoise? Française?
12. Que veux-tu savoir de la vie quotidienne (ordinaire) au Québec? A Rennes?
13. As-tu parlé avec d'autres étudiants qui ont déjà étudié à l'étranger? Quelles suggestions t'ont-ils données?
14. Si tu avais l'occasion de parler avec les membres de ta nouvelle famille, qu'est-ce que tu leur demanderais?
15. Est-ce que tu es impatient (e) de partir?
16. Qu'est-ce que tu vas apporter avec toi?
17. Tu vas m'écrire chaque semaine?

Post -study Abroad Interview : French

Dans l'interview, on discutera plusieurs des thèmes suivants:

1. Premières impressions de France
2. La première semaine
3. Transformation personnelle

4. Différences culturelles
 5. Vie dans une résidence, et/où chez une famille d'accueil
 6. Culture – musées, spectacles, festivals, célébrations religieuses
 7. Culture: vie des étudiants
 8. Voyages
 9. Une aventure/événement inoubliable
 10. Maintenant que vous êtes de retour aux E.U, Avez-vous de la nostalgie pour la France? Voudriez-vous y retourner? Pourquoi?
- Questions supplémentaires selon les exigences de l'interview.

Pre-study Abroad Interview: Spanish

1. ¿Cuál es tu nombre?
2. ¿Cuántos años hace que estudias español? ¿Desde cuándo estudias español?
3. ¿Por qué decidiste estudiar en España/Ecuador?
4. ¿Con quiénes vas a viajar? ¿Cuándo sales?
5. ¿Ya compraste el pasaje/boleto?
6. ¿Sabes qué vas a estudiar? ¿Los cursos? (Preguntas adicionales según las respuestas personales)
7. ¿Qué sabes del Ecuador/España?
8. ¿Has viajado al extranjero alguna vez?
9. ¿Cuáles son tus expectativas?
10. ¿Sabes con quiénes vas a quedarte/alojarte? (preguntas sobre la familia anticipada – los miembros, la casa, etc.)
11. ¿Sabes algo de la comida típica de E/E? ¿La has probado alguna vez?
12. ¿Qué quieres saber de la vida familiar en Quito/Sevilla?
13. ¿Has hablado con otros estudiantes que ya han estudiado en el extranjero? Brianne, etc. ¿Qué sugerencias te han ofrecido?
14. Si tuvieras la oportunidad de hablar con los miembros de tu "nueva" familia, ¿que les preguntarías?
15. ¿Crees que les echarás de menos a tus amigos y familia?
16. ¿Qué vas a llevar? ¿Ya has comprado ropa?
17. ¿Vas a escribirme cada día?

Post -study Abroad Interview : Spanish

Questions and topics include, but are not limited to the following:

What were your first impressions/sensations in Spain or Ecuador?

Describe your first week in the country.

Tell about your most memorable experience. Where were you? Whom were you with?

What happened? Why was this experience so memorable?

Situation: you are talking to a student who will be going abroad next semester.

Advise him/her about what to expect. Include the following: practical advice about objects,

clothing, books to bring; advice about cultural differences to be aware of.

Situation: you are talking to a student who will be going abroad next semester. Give him/her some suggestions on places to go, things to do.

How does a student returning to the US feel? Describe your feelings fully. What plans do you have for future travel/study?

5b. Scoring Guide

The grid below represents schematically components of the New Hampshire Guidelines: Stage III. Interviewers check for inclusion of these functions, topics, and competencies, but did not use a numerically based scoring rubric.

New Hampshire Guidelines : Stage III

Function: Students develop ability to:	Context : Students can perform these functions :	Text Type : Students can	Accuracy : Students communicate more effectively, though tend to become less accurate as the task or message becomes more complex ; some patterns of error may interfere with meaning	Content : Includes cultural, personal, and social topics
Clarify and ask for and comprehend clarification	When speaking, in face-to-face social interaction and in simple transactions on the phone	When speaking, use strings of related sentences	Generally choose appropriate vocabulary for familiar topics but as complexity of message increases, hesitate and grope for words	Career choices, the environment, and political issues
Express and understand opinions	When listening, in social interaction	When listening, understand most spoken language when the message is deliberately and carefully conveyed by a native speaker accustomed to dealing with learners	Patterns of mispronunciation and misintonation may be evident	History, current affairs and civilization, with emphasis on significant people and events in these fields
Narrate and understand narration in present, past, and future	Generally use culturally appropriate behavior in social situations		Are able to understand And and retain most key ideas and some supporting detail when reading and listening	Art, literature, and music

5c. Data table:

French	unacceptable	acceptable	ideal
Pre-study abroad		1	
Post-study abroad		1	2

Spanish	unacceptable	acceptable	ideal
Pre-study abroad	1	4	1
Post-study abroad		1	1

Note: The students who were interviewed in fall 2005 pre-study-abroad have not yet returned to campus. They will be interviewed post-study-abroad in fall 2006; that is to say, the pre- and post-study abroad interviews were conducted with different students, and therefore we do not yet have data to compare their gain in oral proficiency resulting from study abroad.