Expected Outcomes: Communicate coherently in written German

Students will demonstrate proficiency in written German

Related typical general education outcomes:

4. Ability to Construct Arguments
7. Written Communication

Assessment methods

Method: Written samples

Collect samples of students' writing during their senior year. Faculty members evaluate the students' work.

Findings:

The 6 participants submitted their samples. Based on the submitted papers, faculty members determined that there was less of a range in years prior. All samples fell into the low-excellent to low-good range. Three out of the six had participated in the Department's study abroad program in Vienna, while a fourth took more than the required number of courses, which benefited his writing ability.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The section determined to continue to increase the writing modules in the first and second year classes. Based on last year's findings students were given even more opportunities to revise their work which seems to have born fruit. Hence, the section will continue to look for opportunities to provide students with new and varied writing assignments. However, since no students fell within the high excellent range, the section decided to focus more attention on developing extended (and scaffolded) research projects with its upper-level students to provide them with opportunities to acquire advanced discourse.

Additional comments:

The German faculty will continue to put emphasis on students taking all 3 skills courses offered as well as to supplement their curriculum through study abroad. In addition, the section is exploring the possibility of creating requirements for the production of certain text types (such as letters, dialogs and diary entries) already in the first year.

Expected Outcomes: Competence in oral communication

Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking and listening

Related typical general education outcomes:

8. Oral Communication

Assessment methods
Method: Oral samples

Students make voice recordings of both a reading of a prepared text and extemporaneous speech. Faculty members evaluate the students' samples. Students also have a brief exit interview with the undergraduate director.

Findings:

The six participants submitted samples. The faculty determined that there was less of a range in the spoken ability of its students as in years prior. The range of students' abilities resembled the range of ability in writing, from low excellent to good, whereby however, there were fewer in the excellent range (only one). The faculty believes that the participation of three of the students in the study abroad program impacted on the communicative skills of its students.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The German program will continue its commitment to foster communicative skills all throughout the curriculum. First steps have been undertaken to implement creating dialogues using free speaking tasks already in the first year. Upper level classes are expected now to have presentational components. Also, the bi-weekly Stammtisch is well attended and students are encouraged to use whatever skills they have, even beginners.

Additional comments:

In collaboration with a colleague, one of the German faculty members has obtained a grant to train key faculty members in each language in the testing of oral proficiency, and investigate ways to incorporate assessment of spoken language throughout the curriculum.

Expected Outcomes: Ability to understand cultural texts and contexts

Students will demonstrate background knowledge of culture as well as ability to read and understanding texts and contexts of German-speaking countries

Related typical general education outcomes:

10 Intercultural Knowledge and Diversity Awareness

Assessment methods

Method: Written samples and exit interview

Collect samples of students' writing created during their senior year. Faculty members evaluate the students' work. Cultural and political issues, in contemporary as well as historical contexts, are raised during the exit interview.

Findings:

The samples, as well as the new cultural questionnaire, of the 6 participants yielded three high excellents, two high goods and one low good. The exit interviews as well as the newly introduced cultural/historical questionnaire revealed that students had an excellent or very good understanding of relevant issues in German-speaking countries.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The section has determined that it would like to go further in its assessment of its students' ability to understand cultural texts and thus it is planning to implement a short reading assessment during the exit interview. The reading text will consist of a short cultural or historical text and students will be required to answer questions in German about it.
Additional comments:

Implementation of the questionnaire was determined to be successful.