### Expected Outcomes: Outcome One: Written Spanish Language Skills.

Graduating MHS students will communicate coherently in written Spanish.

**Assessment methods**

**Method:** Comprehensive Written Examination.

Each MHS student will be evaluated based on his/her performance on the written comprehensive examinations. These exams consist of ten different sections, each related to all genres of Spanish Peninsular Literature (from the Medieval period to the present day), Spanish American Literature (from the Colonial period to the present day), as well as the major areas of Hispanic Linguistics (i.e. History of the Spanish Language, Dialectology, Second Language Acquisition, Syntax, and Phonetics).

**Findings:**

Eight MHS students wrote for the exam, and the distribution of quality was as follows: 2 ranked as non-competent, 3 were graded as satisfactorily-finely capable, and 3 were given excellent marks. The quality of the written expression was not dependent upon the student’s native language.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

We made great strides in improving this category, mainly at the assessment level. We created a grading rubric for the exam that separates content knowledge from written expression. For the written communication skills in Spanish, we now can evaluate the exams based on a detailed grading rubric designed following the American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages guideline.

**Additional comments:**

For assessment purposes, we ask the students to submit a research paper from one of their classes. This allows for comparison between spontaneous writing and a more careful, student controlled writing situation in which the author would have access to useful resources such as a dictionary or thesaurus and could also more deliberately review grammar and structure.

### Expected Outcomes: Outcome Two: Spoken Spanish Language Skills.

Graduating MHS students will demonstrate competence in oral communication in Spanish.

**Assessment methods**

**Method:** Oral Interview and Recording.

Students submit an oral recording of spontaneous speech in Spanish over the subject of their choice. They engage in a sight-reading exercise in which they are asked to perform a cold reading of an unknown text in Spanish and engage in prompted conversation about the subject.

**Findings:**
Coincidentally, like last year, the strongest students were also the most impressive speakers with a similar bell-curve distribution as in the writing section. The distribution, however, had changed. Naturally, the native and heritage Spanish speakers who had ranked lower in writing, scored higher in speaking. Some of the weaker writers performed even more poorly as speakers. The majority of the students scored the same in both writing and in speaking.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

The results are what we expected.

**Additional comments:**

None

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**Expected Outcomes: Outcome Three: Hispanic Cultural Knowledge.**

Graduating MHS students will understand the major literary and cultural movements in the Spanish speaking world as well as the current trends in Hispanic Linguistics.

**Assessment methods**

**Method:** Comprehensive Written Examination.

Each MHS student will be evaluated based on his/her performance on the written comprehensive examinations. These exams consist of ten different sections, each related to all genres of Spanish Peninsular Literature (from the Medieval period to the present day), Spanish American Literature (from the Colonial period to the present day), as well as the major areas of Hispanic Linguistics (i.e. History of the Spanish Language, Dialectology, Second Language Acquisition, Syntax, and Phonetics).

**Findings:**

Of these eight students, there was a wide variety of performance on the first exam attempt: 2 students failed a majority of the sections and 2 students failed 1-2 sections, and 4 students passed all of their sections on the first attempt. Only 2 students did not pass enough of the sections on the retakes and were required to delay their graduation one semester. Mostly the failure rate is directly tied to poor content knowledge rather than language competency.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

We greatly improved our evaluation procedure for the exam with the new grading rubric. We provided two workshops in preparation for the exam -- one test-writing skills and the other on approaching the content. Also faculty members contributed advice for an orientation manual, detailing their philosophy of the exam, primary and secondary source materials, as well as practical study and test-taking tip.

**Additional comments:**

The structure and efficacy of the exam is still very much in debate amongst our faculty. We are making an effort to better track statistically the outcome of the exam and to marry it better with our graduate curriculum.

**Method:** Oral Interview and Recording.

Students submit an oral recording of spontaneous speech in Spanish over the subject of their choice. They engage in a sight-reading exercise in which they are asked to perform a cold reading of an unknown text in Spanish and engage in prompted conversation about the subject.
Findings:

All of the students can speak widely and at length on topics related to the Hispanic world. The profundity of students’ responses was not necessarily in correlation to their level of contact with the Spanish language or the Hispanic community.

How did you use findings for improvement?

For the most part, we are pleased with this outcome.

Additional comments:

None