Using evaluation for innovation and improvement in language and humanities education

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Please cite as:
“Ich lerne sehen”
Evaluation is a way of seeing...

...our programs, curricula, classes, teaching, students—our educational efforts—with an eye towards understanding, expressing, and improving their value...

Of course, seeing can be done in a variety of ways...
“This emphasis compels us to justify our values and methods by translating them into the quantitative, quasi-scientific methods... We are not asked to identify what we want our students to know or understand or be prepared intellectually to grapple with. Rather, we are asked for the behaviors that our students will exhibit that will demonstrate their learning—and we are told that we must develop a quantitative instrument that will measure these behaviors.”

Berger (2008)

“...[M]ore students are attracted to our program because the improvements in teaching and curriculum that grew out of the assessment process, which include increased emphasis on oral proficiency and culture for all languages, have enabled them to better move toward their goal of communicating fluently in the target language and acquiring an improved understanding not only of the target culture but also of their own.”

Carstens-Wickham (2008)
2 ways of seeing evaluation

Regulatory mechanism
→ agent of change
→ external, mandated
→ quasi-scientificist
→ quantitative measurement
→ comparing, monitoring, managing

Educative process
→ capacity for dealing with change
→ internal, proactive
→ pragmatic practice
→ aligned assessments
→ inquiring, understanding, improving

How do we choose to see it?
What approach to evaluation fosters innovation?
Facing change in language and humanities education
Since 1990... General characteristics

- #Students in college
- %Women and minorities
- $Cost of college
- %Working while in college
- #Courses taken in HS
- #Hours of homework/wk.
- ~Academic preparation

Students in the Humanities

- %Enrollments in majors

In 1890, 75% of bachelor’s degrees conferred in the U.S. were in the humanities; by 2000, 39% were in the humanities

- %Majors at Harvard

Humanities majors at Harvard fell to 20% in 2012 from 36% in 1954.

“We do have to worry about living after graduation. I don’t want to be doing what I love and be homeless” (Harvard undergraduate student)
Changing understandings about learning/teaching

- **Experiential**, link to non-classroom world
- **Individualized**, self-efficacy
- **Collaborative**, problem-based
- **Enculturation**, disciplinary authenticity
- **Multiple** pedagogies, diversified assessment

Learner-Centered
Changing understandings about learning/teaching

From “Millennials” to “Neo-millennials”

- Multimedia fluency
- Constant connection
- Distributed communities
- Collectivist, communal learning
- Active, embedded, reflective experiences
- Co-design and customization

24/7 teaching???

MOOC-mania?
“Seismic shifts have altered individual disciplines in the humanities in the course of the twentieth century”
Patricia Meyer Spacks, Academy president

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>comment on the humanities</th>
<th>A republic divided 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Bromwich</td>
<td>Revolution in the humanities 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Meyer Spacks</td>
<td>From classics to cultural studies 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Marcus</td>
<td>American literature: a vanishing subject? 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Delbanco</td>
<td>Comparative literature in question 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Yu</td>
<td>History’s postmodern fates 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The practice of art history in America 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The quest for a black humanism 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law &amp; the humanities 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagfinn Føllesdal &amp; Michael Friedman</td>
<td>The rise of American philosophy 116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“...don’t do anything, if by 'do' is meant bring about effects in the world. And if they don’t bring about effects in the world they cannot be justified except in relation to the pleasure they give to those who enjoy them. To the question 'of what use are the humanities?', the only honest answer is none whatsoever.”
Changing scholarly perceptions

It's the End of the Humanities as We Know It
And I feel fine
“... the humanities per se have a difficult task achieving any sort of prominence on the public policy agenda...where billions go to science and a comparative pittance goes to the humanities, there is little hope that poetry, literature, and language can realistically compete with roads, prisons, and health care for direct support.”

Summers (2004), p. 68
Changing public perceptions

“Viva la English”
Tribune Media: 10-26-2007

“I think that the fewer languages we have, the better off civilization will be.”
“Americans need to be open to the world; we need to be able to see the world through the eyes of others if we are going to understand how to resolve the complex problems we face.”

Daniel Akaka, U.S. Senator from Hawaii
A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government

May 21, 2012 02:30PM
Location: Room 342, Dirksen Senate Office Building
The Real Language Crisis

We are becoming a nation of second-language illiterates, and recent draconian cuts to language teaching in colleges and universities are exacerbating an already serious problem.

By Russell A. Berman

We in America are confronting a stark alternative: either open ourselves to an appreciation of human plurality and the diversity of cultures around the globe or limit ourselves to a narrowly normative culture. Will American schools and colleges provide students with opportunities to learn to understand other voices, or will our educational system succumb to the temptations of isolationism and xenophobia?
What role do the humanities play in American life? How have the humanities evolved over time? How should the humanities be defined in the twenty-first century? What can the humanities teach us about life, meaning, and the human condition?
We know that today’s students are less likely to choose language and literary study as majors than they were thirty-five or even fifteen years ago, and we wanted to explore ways to strengthen majors in our fields and attract new generations of students to what has been the traditional core of liberal study.
Had we been assessing outcomes all along in the normal course of our work, I doubt that the legislators and privatizers could have rushed in to fill the vacuum we created.
“Innovation in FL education today is an absolute essential: we adapt, or we do not survive. Evaluation offers a systematic basis for language programs to pursue innovations of various kinds.”

Norris & Mills (2014, p. 11)
How do we choose to see assessment and evaluation?

Agent of change?

Capacity for dealing with change?

ATTENTION...
THIS IS A TEST...
THIS IS A TEST OF THE
NATIONS EDUCATION SYSTEM...
IF THIS WERE A REAL
EMERGENCY, WE'D FIND
A BETTER SOLUTION THAN
MORE AND MORE TESTS...
THIS IS A TEST...
Assessment, evaluation, and change: Problematizing the received view
Encountering evaluation: Accreditation

US Department of Education “DOE”

Council for Higher Education Accreditation “CHEA”

Recognize Regional Accreditation Agencies

Middle States Association - MSA

New England Association - NEASC

North Central Association - NCA

Northwest Association - NWCCU

Southern Association - SACS

Western Association - WASC

Colleges & Universities
Primary emphasis → **Ensuring educational effectiveness**

Primary indicator → **Student learning outcomes**

Primary mechanism → **SLO assessment**

Assessment mandate, e.g., WASC (2008):

*The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.*
Accreditation and assessment mandates

M mandate to assess, yes, but...
- **Local ownership** over what outcomes, how assessed
- **Internal focus** and use for reform at program/dept level
- Intended to engender a culture of evidence & self-regulation
- Primary purpose is **program articulation and improvement**
Encountering evaluation: Accreditation

SLO Assessment:

Lived realities

**Perfunctory Process**

- State outcomes
- Measure behaviors
- Analyze the results
- Then what?
- (Let the chair/dean do it)

Why is this a typical kind of reaction...?
Encountering evaluation: Accountability

Accountability movement: using standardized tests to hold teachers and students to performance expectations

“We’re going to stand strong on accountability”
--Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education

“If you want to hold schools accountable and make sure they are learning, you have to test”
--Robert Black, spokesperson for the Gov. of Texas

No Child Left Behind
Encountering evaluation: Accountability

NO  
COLLEGE STUDENT  LEFT  BEHIND

College Leaving Exam

Replacing Accreditation: Focus on comparison-shopping, market-driven universities
Assessment is done to show: “how much students learn in colleges and whether they learn more at one college than another…”

Do ‘comparison shopping’ and ‘league tables’ lead to innovation and improvement?
Spellings Commission (2007), on higher education accountability:

“...higher education institutions should measure student learning...”
Encountering evaluation: Mis-interpretation

Falk (Baltimore Sun), Dean of Arts & Sciences, Johns Hopkins University:

“...the more we rely on standardized testing as our bellwether for the quality of education, the more we will value in education only those things that can be measured on standardized tests”.

Is measurement all that is needed for improvement to happen?
There has been an explosion of mandates for more and more standardized tests with very little evidence to support their use

--Walter Haney of Boston College's Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Policy.
Despite the intentions of accreditation and accountability...

Evaluation is presented to us in higher education as a regulatory mechanism, guided by forces external to the academy, and founded on measurement practices.

...so, how do we respond?
Outcomes Assessment: No Gain, All Pain

By Bernard Fryshman

Something is certainly afoot. The public disclosure systems put forward by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Voluntary System of Accountability from the country’s two big public university groups are major national initiatives encompassing some of America’s most impressive institutions. Miami Dade College’s effort to embed 10 desired learning outcomes into the curriculum, and a report of outcomes measurement by discipline, are two other accountability approaches that certainly bear watching.

Even homey old IPEDS has put on a fresh coat of paint, as the Education Department’s College Opportunities Online database (COOL, née PEER) has become Navigator, with an even more attractive set of tools, in the hopes that this time a few more somebodies will use the hundreds of millions of data elements sitting patiently by.

All of this activity is more a function of the skill of Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in moving her agenda than it is a recognition that there is merit to the numerical assessment of student outcomes.
Holquist (2011), on dangers of outcomes assessment:

“...to sacrifice all other goals in the service of standardized outcomes across the board, no matter what the effect might be on different areas of scholarship, university systems, or individual students and professors—the humans who are the subject of the humanities.” (p. 79)

“But in the end, it is only in the scale of a whole lifetime that the worth of literary education may be measured, and that is a scale that cannot be ‘tuned.’” (p. 86)

Misperception that outcomes assessment = standardized measurement
Responding to evaluation: Rejection

Barrington (2003), on assessment in the liberal arts:

“To design and administer (intellectually honest) assessment plans that will measure such capabilities with a dozen or more standardized ‘learning objectives’ is next to impossible” leading to “pestilent repercussions” for the truly valued learning objectives that constitute the liberal arts, in that it “discourages teaching such skills because they are difficult to measure.”

MLA website blogger:

“What I would much rather see is a definitive statement from the MLA rejecting the assessment madness altogether. Let’s admit that, when all is said and done, what we do is not something that we can ‘know’, or that can be measured...”

Misperception that outcomes assessment = standardized measurement
Survey of US college FL educators, on evaluation:

“frankly, a waste of time; it just causes us to jump through meaningless hoops. Good FL instructors already assess their students constantly both inside and outside of class and in a variety of ways. It's what we do. Much of the assessment craze seems to be a waste of time for us.”

My main concern is… “That it would not be a waste of everyone's time with no concrete results. That the people running it would be so afraid of stepping on toes that they just babble about quality without looking at the details.”

“Although required by our university and accrediting association, faculty see it as a burden that is essentially a waste of time. Some faculty refuse to participate. Conclusions drawn from evaluations have little, if any, impact on decision making.”

“Sometimes we think they are just collecting dust on some administrator’s shelf in the Dean’s office, cause we never hear anything from them...So, I’m not sure what those program evaluations are really accomplishing in our college or in our university.”

“Evaluation is a colossal waste of everyone’s time!”
Responding to evaluation: Cynical survivalism

How to approach a self-study evaluation for program review:

Write "reports" using "data"

Figure 1. How awesome we are

SOURCE: Because we said so

freshspectrum.com
Responding to evaluation: ‘Just do it’ mindset

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

One size fits all...?

A new measure to solve all of our problems?
What is the appropriate ACTFL proficiency level to adopt as a student learning outcome for the 2-year language requirement?

INTERMEDIATE - LOW
Respectable efforts at assessments for common outcomes, but...

Too easily adopted without articulation to individual programs and their values
Responding to evaluation: ‘Just do it’ mindset

Assessing intercultural learning in study abroad:

Starting point? →

Denial
Defense
Minimization
Acceptance
Adaptation
Integration

Ending point? →

Intercultural Development Inventory

Other intercultural outcomes not assessed?
What Do College Graduates Know?
A Survey of Arizona Universities

24. Plato was a pupil of:
   a. Aristophanes
   b. Socrates
   c. Crito
   d. Aristotle

18. What are the four basic forces in the universe?
   a. Gravity, electromagnetism, strong nuclear force, weak nuclear force
   b. Gravity, electromagnetism, chemical force, atomic force
   c. Gravity, centrifugal force, centripetal force, Coriolis force
   d. Gravity, electromagnetism, thermodynamic force, quantum force

34. Renoir and Monet belong to which school of art?
   a. Surrealism
   b. Abstractionism
   c. Impressionism
   d. Realism

7. Identify Snoop Doggy Dogg.
   a. A rap singer
   b. Cartoon by Charles Schulz
   c. A mystery series
   d. A jazz pianist

“...an examination of how much those graduating from Arizona’s three public universities—the University of Arizona, Arizona State University (ASU) and Northern Arizona University (NAU)—know about history, science, math, literature, arts, civics and other subjects. In other words, have they received a well-rounded, liberal education?” (p. 2)

“The vast majority of students surveyed earned a failing grade on our test of general knowledge and reasoning.”
Responding to evaluation: ‘Just do it’ mindset

RateMyProfessors

Quality Rating Categories
😊 How easy?
😊 How fair?
😊 How good?

HOW HOT???
Given that student evaluations of faculty remain one of the most written about and contentious areas of research in higher education, perhaps it’s important to state at the outset that this article won’t shed any new, scientifically valid light on the subject. This article looks at the popular website www.ratemyprofessor.com and its sister site “Professors Strike Back,” a feature of www.mtvu.com.

After viewing the videos on “Professors Strike Back,” we wondered what those teachers actually thought about “Rate My Professor” and the experience of “striking back.” In deference to busy schedules the Viacom Corporation. MTVu soon set up the “Professors Strike Back” feature where faculty can answer criticism, and at the same time contacted some faculty offering them the chance to be filmed responding to student comments on their teaching and to the idea of “RateMyProfessor” in general.

Frank Popper

In the highly edited videos that appear online, most faculty come across as quite emphatic and, at times, shockingly frank even when cloaked in an exaggerated persona. Frank Popper, who teaching land use planning at Rutgers and Princeton, clearly enjoyed making his over-the-top rebuttal to students. In response to a student comment that his course is a “rewarding experience if you have some background in this field; if not you might get lost and can’t read. Certainly can’t read at the college level.”

To the comment that he “loves to hear himself talk,” Popper replies: “Well, what I’m doing there is anti-filibustering you students who don’t know what you’re talking about, and take too long to say it and get all the details wrong or upside down anyway. Of course I anti-filibuster you. Who would want to listen to you? You’re like the worst senator in the world times ten and you’re paying for this (you think). I have to listen to you? Not in my class.”

Popper, who drove over to MTV’s studios in Greenwich Village to tape his reply, can’t quite sustain his persona. What come across as a bit more seriousness begins to leak out in his comment on student ratings on the site in general:

“In general I think you are very young students who have problems—oh what would a psychiatrist say?—of impulse control. You may love me; you may hate me, but you tend to be inaccurate, illiterate, and inappropriate in your expres-
Large public institution

Accreditation pressures to assess learning

We have to assess our “liberal studies” core, ASAP!

How about an electronic portfolio?

Huge expenditure, $$$, time, effort

Thousands of student portfolios created

BUT...
Responding to evaluation: ‘Just do it’ mindset

Electronic Portfolio \[\rightarrow\] NEVER GOT USED

...faculty didn’t understand it
...students thought:
1. *!%#$!@*
2. waste of time
...administrators wanted to do something with it but weren’t sure exactly what
Encountering evaluation: Reactions

Common interpretation that evaluation is bad for education
Summarizing the received view

- Evaluation portrayed & perceived as a bureaucratic mechanism
- Associated with technocratic, external measurement tools
- Realized in perfunctory, compliance-oriented ways
- Often punitive rather than formative or transformative

- Misplaced, unscholarly reactions to evaluation
- Non-participation, no buy-in by FL & humanities educators
- Missed opportunities for follow-through on evaluation

So, what’s the use?
And, what are the alternatives?
What are the alternatives?

- LSU: German, Russian programs (and faculty)
- George Washington: FL requirement
- SUNY Albany: French, Italian, Russian programs (and faculty)
- University of Iowa: MA and PhD in German and Linguistics
- Brandeis University: BA in Hebrew and Yiddish
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania: BA in French and German
- Etc.

“…no clear value to the institution…”
Drake University language programs...

- Low enrollments, student dissatisfaction, poor external reviews
- Faculty refuse instructional development support
- Faculty refuse to create strategic plan for improvement
  - No acknowledgement of need to change
  - No engagement with evaluation findings
  - NO MORE LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, NO MORE FACULTY!

What are the alternatives?

How do we transcend these debilitating attitudes?
How can we transform evaluation into a useful process that leads to the improvement of FL education?
Re-envisioning evaluation:
A focus on utility and use
Learning to see useful evaluation: Vision correction

Accreditation?

Assessment?

Innovation?

Measurement?

Evaluation?

Accountability?

Improvement?
Evaluation is the gathering of information about any of the variety of elements that constitute educational programs, for a variety of purposes that include primarily understanding, demonstrating, improving, and judging program value; evaluation brings evidence to bear on the problems of programs, but the nature of that evidence is not restricted to one particular methodology.

Norris (2006) *MLJ Perspectives*
Resolving terminological confusion

Outcomes assessment = the use of information about student learning for understanding and improving educational programs...

EVALUATION of programs

ASSESSMENT of learners

MEASUREMENT of quantifiables
UTILITY: The Utility Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of intended users.

Joint Committee on Educational Evaluation (1994)
But what are the characteristics of evaluations that meet this utility criterion? Considerable research has gone into answering this question (see Patton, 2008), and the following characteristics have been associated strongly with evaluations that produce useful and used results...

- **Manageable & Feasible:** Adapted to available time and resources
- **Democratic:** Negotiated decision making
- **Responsive:** Evaluation responds to primary intended users’ purposes
- **Educational & Transformative:** Users learn by participating
- **Clear & Understandable:** Transparent processes and outcomes
- **Pragmatic:** Context relevant use & focus
- **Participatory:** Active involvement of key stakeholders
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Learning from research on FL evaluation

Observations from case studies:

• Leadership = Modeling, enabling
• Focus = Prioritization for feasibility
• Data = Real, empirical, cyclical, local
• Collaboration = Participation by multiple faculty, staff, students crucial for programmatic use/reform to ensue

New questions:
• Factors that predict useful evaluation?
• Contextual constraints?
• What learning/change happens?
• Which methods contribute most?
Learning from research on FL evaluation

Davis (2012): What factors contribute most to SLOA being used in college FL programs? (Survey of US FL departments)

- Institutional support for assessment
- Faculty collaboration
- Communication about assessment
- Program ethos to improve/innovate
- Program leadership
- Institutional assessment infrastructure
- Program resources for assessment
- Institutional policies for assessment

Collecting, using assessment data
Making changes and learning from process

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Collecting, using assessment data
Making changes and learning from process
Watanabe (2012): How/when/why do programs learn through SLOA? (2-year case studies of 8 college FL programs)

- Engaged, participatory leaders
- Clear sense of program identity and value(s)
- Commitment to collaborative innovation
- Capacity and structure to make decisions

“Proactive program ownership”
…the ability to take advantage of or suppress external accountability pressures and perceive the need for, self-interest in, and capacity to do outcomes assessment

Learning through evaluation, primarily…
→ changes in pedagogy
→ changes in outcomes/assessment
→ changes in curricular design
→ changes in understanding
High assessment use for learning

Program B

- Internally motivated, not driven by program-external forces

Program E

- Primarily externally motivated

Low assessment use for learning
Useful evaluation in college FL programs: What have we learned?

Context & conditions:
→ Localized program focus and identity, engaged leaders, collaborative faculty, commitment to innovation, structure for decision-making

Process:
→ Participatory; focus on intended uses; prioritize important, feasible activities; collect locally meaningful data; follow through with joint decisions, actions; repeat the cycle

Methods:
→ Aligned with program and scholarly values; focused on substantial issues; designed, selected for specific uses; emphasize information yield
How does evaluation work?

PROGRAMMATIC

PRAGMATIC

PARTICIPATORY
It is difficult to interpret what we are seeing without understanding the context of the program.
How does evaluation work?

Purpose drives evaluation methodology, not vice versa.
Cronbach et al. (1980)

“The evaluator will be wise not to declare allegiance to either a quantitative-scientific-summative methodology or a qualitative-naturalistic-descriptive methodology.” (p. 7)
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Cronbach et al. (1980)
How does evaluation work?

**METHODS**
- Case studies
- Surveys
- Portfolios
- Interviews
- Observations
- Meetings
- Self assessment
- Document analyses
- Performance measures
- Student journals
- Teacher logs
- Expert reviews
- Focus groups
- Delphi technique
- Language tests

Multiple methods called upon to meet different purposes.
How does evaluation work?

Consensus:
Making the most of evaluation in Middle Eastern Studies
How does evaluation work?

1. **Participation** - stakeholders, representatives, primary intended users

2. **Prioritization** - challenges, questions in immediate need of answers

3. **Instrumentation** - what data will answer the questions?

4. **Collection** - how can we get data in available time/resources?

5. **Interpretation** - what do findings mean in context?

6. **Utilization** - what decisions & actions are taken?

Language and humanities educators are ultimately responsible for what happens in language and humanities education if contextual relevance and program improvements are sought.
Corrected vision...

What is the starting point for developing useful evaluations?

**Evaluative vision:** Begin by asking...

- What are the positions or characteristics of learners, the program, the discipline?
- How can they be measured?
- What are the questions they have about learners, teachers, courses, curriculum, etc.? What challenges do they face?
- What needs to happen on the basis of assessment/evaluation?
- Who is asking for that information? Why?
- Who is doing the measuring and interpreting? Why?
- Who is held responsible? Who can actually make changes in the program?

Useful evaluation
Evaluation in use for understanding and improving language and humanities education
1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes

How do we assess the ‘ineffable’ constructs associated with humanities education?

**Knowledge/Ability Outcomes:** Historical literacy, critical thinking, research and writing skills, such as:

- Understands how to locate and critically evaluate relevant scholarly books and articles
- Understands how to search various library databases
- Can synthesize and communicate findings to a scholarly audience...etc.

Assessment???
1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes

2-semester existing course, “Major seminar”

Students design, research, write a senior thesis

End-of-year conference: “History Day”

Each student gives conference presentation

Faculty & graduate students rate and comment

Students self-assess and provide feedback on outcomes and program

What happened as a result?

- 1. Understanding humanities learning outcomes
What the exercise did accomplish was to focus our collective attention much more intensively on the work of our undergraduates. We began to learn much more about both their achievements and failings and, as a consequence, to learn much more about the strengths and weaknesses of our program. In turn, this set in motion a whole series of changes, large and small, in the way we go about our work as teachers.

“I will note that since initiating these changes, the number of undergraduate history majors at American University has more than tripled…”

Robert Griffith, American University, History
2. Transforming a multi-language program

**Contextual Challenges:**
- Multi-language department
- Uncertain relation between languages
- Uncertain program value
- Questionable contribution to the institution
- Perceived minimal value by other programs
- Future of the department?

**Intended Uses**
Understanding and enhancing program’s contribution to student learning, enhancing institutional profile, survival
2. Transforming a multi-language program

Step 1: Who are we and what do we offer?

Actions:

- Full faculty discussion of learning outcomes
- Assessment committee convened, drafted SLOs
- Student focus groups vetted and suggested revisions
- Revised SLOs approved for majors across all FLs

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students express themselves confidently in a variety of oral and written registers, keeping in mind the communicative context and conventions of the particular culture.
2. Students read and comprehend texts in the target languages tailored to a variety of communicative needs.
3. Students write documents in the target languages tailored to a variety of communicative needs, keeping in mind the conventions of the particular cultures.
4. Students understand native speech.
5. Students demonstrate a familiarity with the current events, the pop culture, and the social structures of the countries/cultures in which the target languages are spoken.
6. Students demonstrate understanding of language variation (social, dialectal, and contextual.)

ETC...
Actions:

- Reviewed course offerings, syllabi, and outcomes
- Identified likely gaps
- Proposed revisions to courses, sequences
- Articulated core offerings across languages

Realization that opportunity to learn was uneven across different FLs → added courses, modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses, activities, and requirements</th>
<th>BA Major learning outcome 1</th>
<th>BA Major learning outcome 2</th>
<th>BA Major learning outcome 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower-level language courses</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-level language courses</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I, R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone course</td>
<td>M, A</td>
<td>M, A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior thesis</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I = Introduce
R = Reinforced, practiced
M = Mastery at target level
A = Assessment collected
2. Transforming a multi-language program

Step 3: What have students learned?

Actions:

- Specified uses: program improvement + public demonstration of value
- Identified major constructs: FL proficiency, content knowledge, program impact
- Developed data-collection methods: performance and reflection, objective and subjective
- Pilot-tested, revised, implemented plan

Realization that some outcomes not sufficient → added/adjusted course emphases, raised awareness

Anonymous survey of students’ perceptions about learning

Online reading assessment, CEFR level rating (external indicator)

Committee Q&A, ratings on rubric

Capstone course

Portfolio presentation in FL to faculty committee

Search senior essay, reflective narrative
2. Transforming a multi-language program

Step 4: What happened? Follow through and consequences

**Actions:**
- Posted SLOs, assessment plans to the website
- Developed program brochure based on SLOs (used with students and parents)
- Revised curriculum and courses based on findings
- Submitted unsolicited assessment report to dean, faculty senate
- Published assessment work

**Positive changes:**
- Enrollments increased
- Request for new faculty lines approved
- Chair named to newly formed university assessment committee
- Students’ perceptions increasingly positive
- Faculty collegiality improved

See Grau-Sempere, Mohn, & Pieroni (2009)
Cultural Dispositions Learning Outcome:

**Students will develop a deep appreciation for Italian cuisine and wine…**
3. Evaluation: collaborative reflection and innovation

Oral proficiency assessment
Writing assessment
Graduating majors survey
Hybrid program outcomes

Student Learning Goals: Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions
Majors – Upper Division Courses – Lower Division Courses

- Oral proficiency assessment
- Writing assessment
- Graduating majors survey
- Hybrid program outcomes

Annual focus on priority issue (1)
Monthly meetings: curricular reflection
Direct and indirect data collection
Annual retreat: data analysis
Strategic response: change, develop.

Tenure-line Research Faculty
Lecturer Faculty
Committee for the Study of Romance Languages and Cultures
3. Evaluation: collaborative reflection and innovation

Assessment: New technology (e.g., Wimba) and practices (e.g., rubrics)

Curriculum: Community-based learning across the 4-year Spanish curriculum

“...we have found assessment locally to be an ideal incubator of curricular innovation...” (Cachey, 2014)

Two-tier reversal: Lecturer and tenure faculty teaching across ‘levels’, combining language/culture

Scholarship: Collaboration with other FL/humanities educators at peer institutions

New major: Joint degree program in International Economics

Course delivery: Experimental implementation of hybrid Italian courses
“The project has contributed to building mutual respect and collegiality across the lecturer and research faculty frontier; has proven to be an incubator of curricular innovation; and has helped faculty members, both individually and collectively, to become more effective advocates for the importance of the languages and literatures other than English within the Humanities. Engaging in assessment requires engaging with the messy world of higher education as it is and not as we wish it might be.”

Ted Cachey, Notre Dame University Romance Languages
Toward useful evaluation in language and humanities education
## Useful evaluation: What have we learned?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received View</th>
<th>Useful Evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Generic, one-size-fits all</td>
<td>→ <strong>Contextualized</strong>: specific to actual programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accountability-driven</td>
<td>→ <strong>Intentional</strong>: multiple purposes and uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measurement-based</td>
<td>→ <strong>Diversified</strong>: methods articulated to uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One-shot judgments</td>
<td>→ <strong>Iterative</strong>: reform/change takes time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem-identifying</td>
<td>→ <strong>Problem-solving</strong>: improve via understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imposed, external</td>
<td>→ <strong>Participatory, internal</strong>: stakeholders (especially educators) own, take interest in, and act upon evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful evaluation: Examples in FL practice

Norris (2008)
Norris (2009)
Norris et al. (2009)
Norris & Mills (2014)
AELRC
Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center

Activities:

- Research and development (needs, tools, procedures)
- Dissemination (useful assessment and evaluation practices)
- Outreach:
  - Consultation with FL programs
  - Courses/training on assessment and evaluation
  - Fostering communities of practice
  - Summer institutes and workshops
  - Webinars
The Consortium is an umbrella organization for individual foreign language departments and other academic units to foster a culture of responsible and useful assessment of student learning outcomes in the humanities. As a collaborative effort, it enhances assessment practices developed by individual departments, helps to disseminate exemplary practices within the Consortium and beyond, and supports research into student learning.

The Consortium is open to new members of any institutional environment willing to contribute their insights into assessment as a useful tool in academic development of faculty, students, programs, and institutions.
“enables the field to articulate and demonstrate—internally and externally—the unique contributions of language studies in a pluralist and globalized world.”
Thank you!

norrisj@georgetown.edu