

Millikin University  
Student Learning in the Spanish Major  
By  
Eduardo Cabrera, Ph. D.  
Department of Modern Languages  
June 26, 2012

### **Executive Summary**

The Modern Languages Department supports the mission of Millikin University in preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a diverse global community, and a personal life of meaning and value. In the context of the Spanish major, the mission of the Department is to produce graduates who achieve the following four learning outcome goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

The core curriculum begins with freshman-level courses in Beginning Spanish and Continuing Spanish, as well as a sophomore-level course in Intermediate Spanish, all of which establish a student's competency in Spanish and readiness to continue on with more advanced studies in Spanish. As a student's course of study within the Spanish major continues, he or she engages more specific on focused areas of study in Spanish conversation and composition, and in courses that deal with the culture, art, business, literature, film, theatre and linguistics of the Spanish-speaking world.

Part of the Modern Languages Department's ongoing revitalization is an establishment of thorough and ongoing assessment at the course and program level. It is hoped and anticipated that the listing of artifacts and rubrics here provided will be helpful in continuing to make assessment more systematic throughout the Spanish major and the Modern Languages area.

## Goals

The purpose of the Spanish major is stated in four Modern Languages Department goals:

- (1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.
- (2) Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.
- (3) Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.
- (4) Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

These Modern Languages Department goals match well with Millikin's University-wide learning goals:

- (1) Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
- (2) Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
- (3) Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The table on the follo

| Learning Goal  | Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s) |
|--|--|
| Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish.   | 1  |
| Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries.   | 1, 2                                     |
| Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze, and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world.  | 1  |
| Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of Hispanic culture, and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world. | 1, 2, 3                                  |

Students majoring in Spanish are required to take 21 credit hours of Spanish at the 300 level or above, including the capstone course SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition. The prerequisite for taking a 300-level course is three semesters of Spanish-language courses.

The mission of the Spanish major is to prepare students for a career in teaching, for graduate studies in literature, or to provide the necessary Spanish-language skills for success in other fields.

### **Snapshot/Overview**

Three full-time instructors and two adjunct instructors teach Spanish. The three full-time instructors include one Professor, one Assistant Professor and one Lecturer.

**In December of 2011, Dr. Eduardo Cabrera, Chair and Professor of Spanish, was named by the College Board *Chief Reader Designate* of AP Spanish Literature for the 2012-2013 academic year.**

The Spanish Major program has experienced major change in terms of its curriculum and requirements. From a complicated requirement of courses and sequence of courses, the Spanish Major was changed to a simpler requirement of seven courses beyond SP 223, Intermediate Spanish, including SP 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition (this capstone course was added to the curriculum in Spring 2005). This change improved the situation for scheduling as well as enhancing the students' ability to choose courses according to their career plans and academic interests.

The Department continues implementing a communication-oriented approach to teaching. Every class was observed, and changes were recommended with the goal of adjusting to that methodology.

Lab attendance is now required of every student taking elementary language courses.

The Department continues using a *communicative language lab* for students who are taking Spanish 103 and also for students taking Spanish 114, which consists of group work with the coordination of a *facilitator*. Its main goal is that the students can achieve an advanced level of oral proficiency. Students spend an hour per week in the lab talking about the topics that are being studied in the language classes.

The Chair of the Department (Dr. Eduardo Cabrera) has been in charge of interviewing and hiring the tutors and facilitators for the lab. He has been also responsible of monitoring the functioning of the lab: the work of tutors and facilitators as well as the feedback from students attending the lab sessions.

The curriculum for the Spanish major consists of traditional courses in language, literature and culture, as well as practical courses like SP 330 (Spanish for Business), SP 340 (Theatre Performance in Spanish), and SP 350 (Study Abroad in Spanish) and SP 310 (Spanish for Health Professions). Those last four courses have been added to reflect 1) the tendency among Spanish programs across the country toward the inclusion of “practical” offerings, and 2) education within a global environment.

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>According to the information provided by the Career Center at Millikin University, 80% of students who graduated with a Spanish major (4) during the academic year 2010-2011 are professionally employed, while 20% (1) continue studying in graduate school.</b></p> |
|---|

### **Learning Story**

The first-year curriculum in Spanish establishes the student’s proficiency in basic spoken and written Spanish, through Spanish 103 (Beginning Spanish) and Spanish 114 (Continuing Spanish). The second-year curriculum, with Spanish 223 (Intermediate Spanish) confirms the student’s readiness to proceed into more advanced junior- and senior-level courses that engage Spanish conversation and composition; culture, art, business, literature, film and theatre of the Spanish-speaking world, including Latin America, Spain, and U.S. Latino/Latina culture; and Spanish linguistics.

To complete the Spanish major, a student must take a minimum of 21 credits above Spanish 223, including the capstone SP 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition, from the following courses:

- Spanish 301, Spanish Conversation and Composition I;
- Spanish 302, Spanish Conversation and Composit

Spanish 350, Study Abroad in Spanish;  
Spanish 402, Linguistics.

Spanish 480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition.

A Spanish Major Curriculum Map is offered as an appendix to this document.

A chapter of the national Spanish Honor Society *Sigma Delta Pi* was created, which makes possible for the Spanish major students to participate in cultural activities as well as in round tables to practice their oral communicative skills.

A radio show in Spanish *Español en Acción* was created, making possible for the students to participate as guests. Students may improve their listening and oral skills as well as their knowledge of the cultures of the Spanish speaking world.

The creation of the language communicative lab allows the students with a Spanish major to work as special tutors.

**Double majors and the preparation for professional success:**

One of the characteristics of the major in Spanish is that it supports students in their other field of specialization. All Spanish majors have another major. Most students pursuing another career use Spanish as a way to improve their work and, in this way, to become a successful professional. Spanish majors have the following first or second major:

Art  
Accounting  
Behavioral Sciences  
Biology  
Business Administration Management  
Chemistry  
Communication  
Education  
Marketing  
Music  
Nursing  
Political Science  
Theater

The capstone required course for Spanish majors, *SP480: Spanish Advanced Conversation and Composition*, provides opportunities for the students to make a direct conn[(C)-2(oa2)-3(on )] TJETBT1

### **Assessment Methods**

The table on the following page provides examples of specific assignments where student growth could be assessed:

| Course | Assignments Where |
|--------|-------------------|
|--------|-------------------|

## Spanish Major Curriculum Map

| Courses  | Goal #1: Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish. | Goal #2: Students will demonstrate an ability to engage in meaningful interactions in Spanish with people from other countries. | Goal #3: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze and conduct research on works of literature from the Spanish-speaking world. | Goal #4: Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world. |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| SP 103 – Beginning                                 | X   |   |   |  |
| SP 114 – Continuing                                | X   |   |   |  |
| SP 223 – Intermediate                              | X   |   |   | X  |
| SP 301 – Spanish Conversation and Composition I    | X   |   |   | X  |
| SP 302 – Spanish Conversation and Composition II   | X   |   |   | X  |
| SP 303 – Culture of the Spanish-Speaking World     |   |   |   | X  |
| SP 304 – Culture of Latin America                  |   |   |   | X  |
| SP 320 – Art, Literature, and Film of U.S. Latinos |   |   |   | X  |
| SP 321 – Survey of Spanish Literature              |   |   | X   |  |
| SP 323 – Survey of Latin American Literature I     |   |   | X   |  |
| SP 324 – Survey of Latin American Literature II    |   |   | X   |  |
| SP 330 – Spanish for Business                      |   |   |   | X  |
| SP 340 – Theatre Performance in Spanish            | X   |   |   | X  |
| SP 350 – Study Abroad in Spanish                   |   | X   |   |  |
| SP 402 – Linguistics                               | X   |   |   |  |
| SP 480 Advanced Spanish Conv. & Comp.              |   |   | X   |  |
| SP 481/482 – Topics in Hispanic Literature         |   |   | X   |  |
| SP 491-494 – Independent Study in Spanish          |   |   | X   |  |

## Assessment Methods

For the assessment of the four learning goals the following courses will be used:

| Learning Goals | Courses                               |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1              | SP 301 Spanish Conversation           |
| 2              | SP 350 Study Abroad in Spanish        |
| 3              | PMC / .8 re02 220.94 0.48001 refC1822 |



**Learning Goal 1:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Spanish.

Table 1: SP 301 Spanish Conversation and Composition I

Rubric Category

**Learning Goal 4:** Students will demonstrate their comprehension and appreciation of the diversity of the Hispanic culture and their understanding of the social, historical, political, and cultural contexts of the Spanish-speaking nations of the world.

Table 4: SP 303 Culture of Spain

| Rubric Category              | Percentage of students in category |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Excellent                    | 27                                 |
| Adequate                     | 73                                 |
| Nominal                      | 0                                  |
| Number of students evaluated | 11                                 |

Total of *Excellent* and *Adequate* combined: 100%.  
 Rating for goal 4: “Green light.”

### **Analysis of Assessment Results**

The analysis of the data shows that the Spanish major is in the right direction.

#### Learning Goal 1:

The assessment of the learning goal for the *oral component* of the Spanish Conversation course shows that the Department continues doing a very good job during the first semesters of the Spanish language courses, building a strong foundation for the upper division courses. The Spanish Conversation and Composition I course (together with the Spanish Conversation and Composition II course) is one of the courses recommended to be taken at the beginning of the major. Most of the students take that course right or soon after they take SP 223: Intermediate Spanish.

This is a very important result: **100% of the students at the excellent or adequate level.**

With the strong formation in oral expression in the Spanish conversation course, students are able to succeed in the other upper division courses. They will be able to communicate effectively in class, to participate in discussions, and contribute with their insights.

The oral component of the course has also benefited from a stronger foundation in the first semesters of Spanish language courses. On the year 2005 the Department created a *Communicative Lab*, in which students taking the first two semesters of Spanish can practice the target language with the assistance of a *facilitator* (an advanced Spanish major student).

For assessing Learning Goal 1, dialogues have been used as artifacts. From the 13 students, 8 (60%) got a grade that falls within the category “excellent”, and 5 (40%) got a grade that falls within the category “adeq  
 ade





## Appendix 1: Rubrics

### Compositions

| Categoría                 | 4   | 3  | 2  | 1   |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Oraciones y<br>Párrafos   | Oraciones y párrafos están completos, bien-construidos y con estructura variada | Todas las oraciones están completas y bien construidas (no hay fragmentos o escrito a prisa) | La mayoría de las oraciones están completas y bien construidas. Los párrafos necesitan algo de trabajo | Muchos fragmentos de oraciones u oraciones hechas a prisa o los párrafos necesitan mucho trabajo. |
| Gramática y<br>Ortografía | No comete errores de gramática u ortografía                                     |  |  |   |

## Appendix 2: Rubrics

### Literature Essays

|                       | Excellent   | Adequate  | Nominal   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Concepts and Thesis   | [5 points]<br>Student shows a strong knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a clear thesis.                                  | [3 points]<br>Student shows a reasonable but less than complete knowledge of literature concepts, and essay has a thesis.                               | [1 point]<br>Student shows a marginal awareness of literature concepts, and thesis is not clear.  |
| Organization of Ideas | [5 points]<br>Student defends his or her main idea very clearly, with strong organizational links between and among his or her ideas. | [3 points]<br>Student defends his or her main idea somewhat clearly, with reasonably effective organizational links between and among his or her ideas. | [1 point]<br>Student's defense of his or her main idea is unclear; organizational links between and among his or her ideas are weak or nonexistent. |
| Text Analysis         | [5 points]<br>Clear and accurate analysis of the literature work.<br>May show insight or originality.                                 | [3 points]<br>Competent explanation of the text. Some ambiguity or incompleteness   |   |