

County College of Morris

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT SUMMARY FORM

Please complete a separate form for each department and each program. Summary forms are due each year on June 15. Completed forms should be submitted electronically to Academicaffairs2@ccm.edu and to your division.

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2022-2023

DEPARTMENT: Languages & ESL

PROGRAM: International Studies

SUBMITTED BY: James Hart

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSESSMENT: James Hart

PART ONE

What was our plan? Describe the department/program assessment plan you employed over the past year.

The International Studies program has developed for its keystone course, ISA 110 – Intercultural Communication, an instrument to assess the students' ability to meet the learning outcomes of this course. As the keystone course, the learning outcomes are representative of the global perspective that the program tries to impart upon its students. The learning outcomes are:

1. Discuss the basic elements and functions of culture.
2. Analyze the impact of one's own values, beliefs, and communication styles on one's communication with individuals and groups from other cultures.
3. Explain how a culture's deep structure influences intercultural communication.
4. Explain why and how cultures differ in their perceptions and responses to reality.
5. Identify the similarities and differences between the world's six major religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism).
6. Explain how one can promote communication and avoid conflict through an understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication in intercultural settings

The assessment tool is an internally-developed, 25-question, multiple-choice and true-false test delivered via Blackboard at the end of the fall and spring semesters. The test is separate from the final exam and does not count toward the student's final grade. Historically, it has been administered during class time in the Language Lab to ensure the largest sample size possible, but during the pandemic, students were asked to take the outcomes-based assessment test outside of class on their own time. Now that we have returned to on-campus instruction, we are moving back to using the Language Lab to ensure the largest sample size possible.

The Expected Level of Achievement (ELA) is measured using a percentage of correct answers—or "score"—for each question or question category. The department would like students to score at or above 70%. A score lower than 70% indicates an area of investigation. A score from 70%-79% is considered "good" achievement; a score from 80%-89% is considered "very good;" and above 90% is considered "excellent."

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PART TWO

What were this year's results? Present and reflect on the outcomes of implementing the assessment plan detailed in PART ONE above.

The results of this year's assessment show an overall success rate (percentage of correct answers for all questions) of 86.62% (see Table 1). This suggests that learning outcomes are being met at a rate of "very good" according to the ELA. This year's score represents the highest score over the past seven years, confirming the positive trend identified last year.

Table 1: Success Rates for the ISA110 OBA Test from AY 2015-2016 to AY 2022-2023

	AY15-16	AY16-17	AY17-18	AY18-19	AY20-21	AY21-22	AY 22-23
Success Rate: All Test Items	82.36%	81.88%	80.44%	78.60%	82.12%	83.43%	86.62%

NOTE: No outcomes assessments were administered or reported in AY19-20 due to the pandemic

The positive trend may be a result of the changes that faculty have made based on previous outcomes-based assessment results (see Part 3 below). Faculty have endeavored to address areas of concern through different activities, delivery methods, and other modifications. These interventions may have increased the overall ELA.

In addition, this year's sample size was higher: 54 tests instead of 41. This is due to the fact that we have begun to schedule class time in the Language Lab for students to take the outcomes-based assessment test rather than allowing students to complete it on their own outside of class time. Though this is not a significantly higher number, it may have had an impact on the results by capturing more students.

Although the overall success rate for the current academic year is "very good," breaking it down into more nuanced categories can help the department understand which concepts presented in class posed the most difficulty for students.

Table 2 shows the breakdown by concept presented, and the percentages reveal that there is much consistency. Table 2 shows that, over time, students consistently understand the concepts represented by the categories "Comm. Competence," "Elements of Culture," "Nonverbal," and "Values" excellently or very well. The success rates in these areas have not dropped below 80% in six years. Even in the area of "Deep Structure," the success rates have been high, mostly in the "very good" range except for last year, when it was "good." Overall, these data show that learning outcomes #1 (discuss basic elements of culture), #2 (analyze the impact of one's own values, beliefs, and communication style on one's communication with individuals and groups from other cultures), #3 (explain how a culture's deep structure influences intercultural communication), and part of #6 (explain how one can promote

communication and avoid conflict through an understanding of verbal and nonverbal comm.) are being met. Based on previous trends, these results were expected. These areas are where most of the simulations, papers, and activities are performed and written, and form the bulk of the material in the book.

Table 2: Success Rates for the ISA110 OBA Test by Question Topic

	<u>FA17-SP18</u>	<u>FA18-SP19</u>	<u>FA20-SP21</u>	<u>FA21-SP22</u>	<u>FA22-SP23</u>
<u>Question Topic</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
Comm. Competence	92.84%	89.84%	94.50%	96.34%	94.17%
Deep Structure	81.17%	83.17%	82.00%	77.84%	89.50%
Elements of Culture	92.00%	90.25%	89.25%	92.50%	92.25%
Identity	63.50%	68.75%	80.25%	69.75%	71.00%
Language	32.00%	23.50%	45.50%	32.00%	45.00%
Nonverbal	84.60%	81.60%	93.20%	89.70%	89.50%
Religious Traditions	72.13%	72.88%	82.63%	76.88%	82.25%
Values	88.20%	83.10%	89.60%	89.40%	91.60%
Overall	80.44%	78.60%	82.12%	83.43%	86.62%

Historically, “Identity,” “Language,” and “Religious Traditions” are the areas in which students struggle. This year, there was an improvement in the area of “Identity” with a score of 71.00%. This is the third year in a row in which students met the ELA in “Identity,” showing a level of consistency in meeting outcome #4 (explain why and how cultures differ in their perceptions and responses to reality).

The area of “Language” improved from last year although it still falls below the ELA. As stated in previous reports, it’s not an issue with the question on the assessment instrument. We investigated this based on the theory that perhaps it wasn’t a well-constructed question, but in fact it does reflect the broad concept of how language and culture interact as presented in the course.

Finally, students continue to meet the ELA in the area of “Religious Traditions,” this year at a level of “very good,” which is an improvement from last year. This suggests that students are meeting learning outcome #5 (identify the similarities and differences between the world’s six major religious traditions).

The results of the assessment are shared with course instructors at the beginning of the next academic year at the first department meeting of the fall semester. The results are also shared with the students upon the conclusion of the test; they can view their total score and their score per test item on Blackboard.

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PART THREE

How can we use the results? Reflect on the changes in curriculum based on assessment, and on future goals.

Modifications of lessons and/or course delivery based on the previous year's outcomes results are reported to the department chairperson at the end of every academic year. Modifications were centered on the areas that students historically have underperformed (or could have performed better) according to the data: Religious Traditions, Language, and Identity.

Prof. Hart continued with the change in delivery of the "Religious Traditions" lesson from last year because this change seemed to help. Instead of highlighting key concepts, he covered all of the religion slides in detail to support the students' learning from the jigsaw activity for this unit. This repetition seemed to be helpful because it allowed Prof. Hart to clarify and give examples of concepts that appeared in the jigsaw activity.

For "Identity," Prof. Hart simplified the definitions of "cultural generalizations" and "stereotypes" to make them more discreet and easier to tell apart. He also referred back to these concepts more often throughout the course so that they were repeated and applied to a variety of different scenarios. Prof. Teeple also incorporated identity concepts throughout the course, taking time out to explain the role identity played in various situations. In addition, Prof. Teeple gave additional class time to activities, especially small group discussions of social vs. personal identities.

Similar to last year, Prof. Hart reinforced the lessons on "Language" by continuing to give more concrete examples about how culture is reflected in language use. The examples this year included more sayings and vocabulary in English that reflect dominant cultural patterns/values in U.S. American culture; this is different than the intervention from last year, in which Prof. Hart gave grammar and vocabulary examples from other languages and cultures. The idea was that students may connect to examples that are more familiar to them. Prof. Teeple also used proverbs and idioms. Prof. Teeple asked students to research and reflect on proverbs and idioms of a particular culture in order to understand the connection between language and culture.

Future plans are to continue the successful strategies in "Identity" and "Religious Traditions" and explore new ones, particularly in the area of "Language." For example, Prof. Teeple plans to give more specific examples of words that reflect a given culture and how/when particular language is used (for example, apologies in Japan). She also plans to implement a jigsaw activity on language and culture.