

Chinese Program Assessment, 2018-2019

This year's assessment focuses on the Chinese minor and Chinese literature courses. As indicated in the assessment plan of the previous year, a mid-semester survey was designed for the literature courses and a Chinese Senior Minor Exit Survey was also designed. The results from both surveys, as well as regular course assignments, have given a very helpful insight into students' perception of the program and what students hope to see in the program in the future.

The assessment of the literature courses are combined of mid-semester surveys, course feedbacks and course assignments. The mid-semester survey questions are somewhat similar to course feedbacks, but to solicit students' opinions on whether they got enough instructions and feedbacks for assignments. It really indicated that the course was on track. Based on students' feedback, one of the immediate change I made after reading the survey was to give paper instructions earlier so that students could start thinking about the paper earlier while the course proceeded. Although most students do not seem to start the paper that early, it seems that they all prefer knowing what the topics will be so that they can be more prepared. I think this is a good change too—not just because of that, but also because it lets students be more aware of their learning goals which their paper topics cover later. Each paper turned out to be better than the previous one—on the one hand, it means that students knew what I was expecting from my feedbacks from previous papers; on the other hand, it indicates that students are clearer about the learning goals with an earlier instruction.

In the course feedback, one of the complaints caught my attention and will become my major revision of my future literature courses. The grade in both literature courses mainly come from three papers and class discussion as well as one additional assignment in different forms in two courses. Students in both classes felt pressured by so few assignments, each occupying so big portion of the course. Some students suggested quizzes, which I did before but did not turn out well. I believe I need to either revise the quizzes or add some other kind of assignment in the future. This is something I can explore by talking to and learning from my colleagues very soon. However, I do not feel I should respond to some of the complaints such as requiring the format of the papers or limiting the reading amount (100-200 pages of novels each week) as I see they fit the course and the discipline.

Another new assessment tool I used this year was the Chinese senior minor exit survey. Although there were only 4 minors, our program is small and this has already been the biggest

class. So I believe their suggestions are still valuable. Moreover, if we do this continuously over the years, students' suggestions combined will still be indicative to the program. Because we are a minor, the focus of this survey is to evaluate how students think of the minor's structure and how we can enhance the minor. Generally speaking, students are satisfied with current setting given the current staffing situation which they know: 4 language courses + 1 language/culture course. However, when I ask them what other literature courses could be added into the program, most of indicated that a modern Chinese literature course will be a nice addition. This is partly because the one they took from me was the one on premodern literature, but it also indicates students' interests. This has made me reconsider whether I should remove the requirement of "a cultural course at 200 level or above" because my ASIA/CHIN 190 is actually a Chinese literature course on contemporary Chinese film and literature. This should be an item I revisit in a few years when I have gathered enough information.

We will focus on our Learning Goal 1 next year. We will use both direct and indirect assessment tools to evaluate it. Because I am in a one-person program and will be on sabbatical next spring, we may or may not be able to collect the assessment data. Due to this special situation which might have affected enrollment, the assessment plan of next year will focus on our study-abroad programs. The study-abroad program is an essential part of a language program which we strongly recommend students to do. Although not all students will take advantage of it due to various reasons, I still encourage all our minors to do it because we offer various kinds of opportunities including summer faculty-led program, semester language program and semester liberal arts program.

First, I will lead a study-abroad program in Shanghai, China this coming summer. Last time, students all complained about joining classes in the middle of a semester and having to catch up too much, so this time we will participate in an actual summer program starting fresh. As it will be a different program, an initial assessment will be necessary: Other than taking students to extra-curricular activities to enhance their language learning experiences, I will participate in all aspects of their school organized classes and activities if the university allows me (I know for sure some of the activities already). In addition to students' evaluation and feedback after the program, I will personally evaluate the program in terms of how it fits our students' needs and expectations based on Goal 1 and 2.

Second, since I will take my sabbatical semester in China, I would like to visit Harbin University and United International College for our semester-long study-abroad programs if the college can fund the trips at a fairly low cost, given that I am also willing to work for the college on these trips. These are our major exchange programs in China, the former focusing on Chinese

language and the latter focusing on liberal arts learning. For the Chinese program, it is especially important that I can at least visit the language program in Harbin if not both. In the past, students have brought back very diverse feedbacks on the program—some highly recommended it, some really complained about it. It makes me, the program coordinator, hard to give later students a good suggestion. Students these years have seemed to be less interested in a language only program. If I cannot wholeheartedly recommend and support this program, they will be more reluctant to take this path. Therefore, I really need a personal evaluation of the Harbin program from a Chinese teacher's perspective although our International Office approves of it. If this program does not really meet our students' needs and expectations or meet our learning goals, I can work on other options with the International Office.