 Office of General Education A-218C

160 Convent Avenue

New York, NY 10031

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

FRENCH 22600:

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| Date of report: | January, 2018 |
| Course: | French 22600 |
| Date/semester of assessment: | Fall 2017 |
| Assessment Team Members: | Maxime Blanchard |
| Coordination / Oversight: | Professor Vanessa Valdès |

**Assessment Findings**

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| Learning outcomes | Learning outcome assessed this round? If yes, brief description of methodology | Brief description of findings | Meeting expectations |
| Express verbally ideas with the vocabulary covered in simple sentences and demonstrate proficiency of the present, past, future tenses and of the most common subjunctive forms. | In groups of 2 partners, students were asked to have a discussion about a film they had seen in class (and discussed in class). The film was *Zazie dans le métro*, a 1962 adaptation by Louis Malle of Raymond Queneau’s eponymous novel. | All students received a passing and a good grade. The lowest grade was a B. I found that this format (oral exam in groups of 2) make students shine. They prepare well (with my instructions on how to prepare). | Most students exceeded my expectations. |
| Comprehend ideas expressed within the framework of the vocabulary and grammatical structures presented in listening exercises as well as in class and demonstrate this with an appropriate verbal response. | Students are instructed to use vocabulary they know, and to keep it simple. They are also warned against literal translations from English (which is the main problem, but often avoided with guidance from the professor). Finally, they are advised to speak in a somewhat formal manner (quite a challenge for English-speaking students) | Students were mostly successful. They avoided translations by using simple structures. However, since the lack of awareness of registers is a problem in English, it then becomes a problem in French… | Most students were above average. |
| Comprehend ideas expressed within the framework of the vocabulary and grammatical structures presented in written passages and demonstrate this with an appropriate written response. | Students have to write down their conversations, and they are allowed to have their notes during the oral exam. They are not allowed to read. Writing down the conversation makes the conversation more formal, which is excellent. | I do not grade the written version of the conversation because I find that students are too concerned about the written part of the exam if I do. The objective of the exercise is to have an intellectual conversation about a book or a film, not to write a review. | All students wrote a script of the conversation. |
| Produce a variety of simple written texts such as email messages, letters, summaries, brief commentaries. | N/A Not the purpose of the exercise. | N/A | N/A |
| Listen to basic oral material and imitate correct pronunciation and intonation. | Students had to watch the film (with subtitles), and understand it. They had to understand each other. They practiced the conversation in class, and pronunciation and intonation were corrected. | Pronunciation and intonation exercises are done at the beginning of every class. The oral exams are the culmination of that work. | For some students, pronunciation is problematic. Students who do not pronounce correctly are also weak with grammar, understanding, etc. I had only two “below average” students last semester. |
| Expand their understanding of the cultures and customs of the Francophone world. | In this oral exam, students had to read a novel, and watch its filmic adaptation. They compared two important French artists, Queneau and Malle.  They also learned that the English language is not the same as the French language. Of course, they learned that words and expressions cannot be translated literally, but they also learned that ways of thinking are different. A language is not a tool for communication. It is the expression of a culture. | This was a challenge. *Zazie dans le métro* is an absurdist text (the film and the novel). Most students have not seen an experimental film (they have seen Hollywood blockbusters), and it is difficult to make them go beyond “It’s weird”. | Some students appreciated the film… The novel seemed to be more liked by students. It is important to put students in contact with texts that make them think. |

**Conclusions**

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| *Briefly summarize overall findings by identifying strengths and challenges in students’ accomplishment of learning outcomes.*  It is difficult to make the students realize that a language cannot be directly translated. A language has a history, a context, etc. Students, even at City College, tend to project American values and concepts (a type of “political correctness”) on French-speaking cultures. It is often well-intentioned, nonetheless imperialistic.  It is also difficult to deal with the lack of awareness regarding registers. Most students are unaware of the differences between formal (or even acceptable) language and colloquial language.  It is finally difficult to deal with the lack of “cultural capital”. This is not an attack against City College students; I taught at Harvard University, and it was the same (worse, in fact). I have students who have not seen a film by a good director, who have not read a novel by a good writer. Of course, students are young, and in college to learn about art, literature, etc. But I do teach to seniors who have very little general knowledge, very little culture. I often wonder what they do in high school, in their other classes… The problem might be that many students are not curious: they are not taught to be curious. |
| *How useful are the text and other resources assigned to this course?*  *Vis-à-vis*, 6th Edition, McGraw-Hill, 2016is a textbook. It is useful to teach grammar, syntax, etc.  My students in 226 (Intermediate French) worked extensively on poems by Jacques Prévert and Arthur Rimbaud. They also read a novel by Raymond Queneau. They saw two films by Louis Malle, one of the most important French directors.  In the language laboratory, students did research on French historical places, on French-speaking towns and cities, and on Francophone historical characters. |
| Already implemented “Closing-the-loop” efforts to improve student learning/success: |
| *Since teaching this course, including this current semester, have you made changes in course content? If yes, please explain.*  I teach more culture, more high culture. I show canonical films, artistic masterpieces. I bring pictures of paintings, etc. I make students read literature, not only so-called “authentic” material. |
| *Since teaching this course, have you made changes in course delivery or other pedagogy? Please explain.*  I bring students more often to the language laboratory to make them research places, characters, etc. One of my favorite writers, André Malraux, said that one needs to have and renew one’s “stock of images”. I want my students to have a “stock of images” of beautiful places and historical characters. |
| *How exactly have the changes that you have implemented impacted student learning/student success? Please provide specific examples.*  I do not know. My objective is to make my students aware of culture, of films, art, novels, etc. Students know a lot about mass culture (gossip on social media, etc.), little about high culture. |
| Future “Closing-the-loop” plans to improve student learning/success |
| *Based on your assessment of student learning, what changes, do you plan to implement at instructional level to improve student learning? Specify topics and pedagogical changes, if applicable.*  I will continue incorporating more “high culture” by systematically bringing my students in language courses (I already do it in elective courses) to museums (they are usually free for CUNY students). |
| *Provide suggestions, if any, to be done on a departmental or institutional level to support student learning/success in this course.*  If professors had less administrative and bureaucratic duties, teaching would improve greatly. |

**Sample Questions and related outcomes**

Dans chacun des extraits…

- Trouvez trois mots que vous ne connaissez pas et allez les écrire au tableau (avec leur traduction)

- Trouvez un exemple (une phrase, un comportement) du caractère déluré de Zazie

- Trouvez un mot d’argot

- Trouvez un exemple d’écriture phonétique

- Résumez ce qui se passe dans cet extrait en une phrase

Examen oral 2 11 décembre 2017

L’examen oral 2 aura lieu le 11 décembre. L’examen se tiendra au NAC 6-320B. Il n’y aura pas de cours ce jour-là.

Formez un groupe de deux (choisissez un partenaire différent de la dernière fois). La conversation durera une dizaine de minutes.

Parlez de Zazie, le personnage. Faites sa description. Zazie est à la fois une enfant et une adulte. Expliquez.

Qu’est-ce qui est drôle et bizarre dans le film et dans le livre ?

Le livre et le film se moquent de la société française. Comment ?

Zazie dans le métro et Au revoir les enfants sont deux films de Louis Malle. Parlez des différences et des ressemblances entre ces deux films.

Zazie dans le métro

Chapitre IV :

a) Au début du chapitre IV, pourquoi Zazie pleure-t-elle?

b) Que veut Zazie au marché aux puces?

c) Que mange et boit Zazie dans les restaurant?

Chapitre V

a) Quelle est l’histoire familiale de Zazie?

b) Quand Zazie tente de faire passer le policier pour un satyre, qu’arrive-t-il?

c) Quel est le métier de Toton Gabriel ?

\*\*\* Choisissez un court passage des chapitres VI ou VII et jouez-le.