Spanish Language, Literary and Cultural Studies (SLLCS)

DATS @ DU

Background

SLLCS promotes research, learning, and community-engagement focused on the diverse global and local contexts associated with the people and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.

We are a majority teaching-line department (9 TP / 5 TT), serving about 250 majors and minors and supporting language requirements for non-majors / minors, a Spanish for Heritage speakers program, and an Internship program.

Several years ago, SLLCS articulated a desire to shift toward reimagining the evaluation of teaching, with particular interest in moving away from purely summative evaluations toward more formative processes that might support shifting departmental culture around teaching.

We joined a DAT in order to realize that aspiration.

A departmental survey and department-level conversations made clear that we are especially interested in establishing a set of shared values and practices around how we think about teaching, collectively and individually, and in opening for fresh spaces of exchange around how we teach.

Next Steps

During AY 24-25 AY, we will present our work and the proposed Criteria for Teaching Effectiveness to SLLC, gather feedback and introduce necessary changes, soft launch some elements in W25&S25, and develop a framework for department-wide implementation during AY 25-26.

Fall: Present the conclusion of our work to SLLCS
• Prepare briefing materials along with sharing poster draft
• Present initial draft of the framework to the Department

Winter: Voluntary implementation and rollout
• Launch a voluntary adoption phase where participants can opt into the new initiative.
• Gather feedback and make minor adjustments as needed.

Spring: Annual Review Process
• Hold a meeting to discuss possible changes, improvements, or extension of the framework and timeline for implementation.
• Set up one or two voluntary feedback sessions to ensure a collaborative development process.
• In a scheduled meeting, vote on formal adoption of the proposal.

Three Voices

Effective Teaching Goals		Developing	Proficient	Accomplished
Course design	Are learning objectives appropriate? Are learning objectives aligned with departmental SLOs?	Learning objectives are not articulated or need to be clarified. Connection to departmental SLOs is not clear. Course SLOs, content and materials are overly broad or narrow.	Learning objectives are articulated, appropriate, and aligned to the curriculum. Connection to departmental SLOs is present. Content and materials are appropriate for course SLOs, level and subject; topics are current and have an appropriate range.	Learning objectives are well-articulated, high-quality, relevant to all students, and clearly connected to the curriculum. Departmental SLOs are clearly articulated. Content and materials are challenging and relevant. Topics are well-integrated and appropriate in depth and range.
	Are activities and assessments aligned with learning objectives?	Some activities and/or assessments do not clearly align.	Most activities and/or assessments align to some degree with learning objectives.	Activities and assessments support and advance learning objectives.
Teaching practices	Course communication: How do students access information relevant to the course and their progress?	Syllabus, course schedule and grading criteria are not clear or posted on Canvas. Grading is not adequately supported by rubrics or other criteria. Progress (grades) and feedback are not given in a timely manner.	Syllabus, course schedule and grading criteria are clear and posted on Canvas. Grading is somewhat supported by rubrics or other criteria that is available to students. Progress (grades) and feedback are given, but inconsistently.	Syllabus, course schedule and grading criteria are clear and posted on Canvas. Grading is supported by rubrics or other criteria that are available to students. Progress (grades) and feedback are available to students and given in a timely manner.
	Are students actively engaged in the learning process?	Few opportunities for student engagement (i.e. small groups, discussion) and collaboration. Students lack opportunities to practice critical skills embedded in course goals.	Instructor uses diverse, effective, and inclusive strategies to support learning in all students. Students have some opportunities to practice skills embedded in course goals.	Instructor adapts evidence-based strategies in response to class needs and in collaboration with students. In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts.
	Are assignments and assessments educative and accessible?	Assignments and assessments are not appropriately challenging, accessible, or have not been aligned with course goals.	Assignments and assessments are challenging, modified for learning differences and aligned with course goals.	Assignments and assessments are varied, accessible to learning differences and aligned with course goals. They may encourage students to demonstrate knowledge through multiple or alternative means.
	Are there efforts to apply learned knowledge to teaching practices?	Evidence of inequities in learning and evaluation without clear attempts to improve.	Efforts to support learning in all students by examining possible inequities in performance across groups and making adjustments. Attention given to discrepancies or inequities in evaluation.	Effectively makes adjustments to address inequalities in assessments, incorporates student perspectives when possible and conducts analysis of assessment data. Attention given to discrepancies or inequities in evaluation.
Class dynamics	Do class dynamics promote respect and a sense of belonging?	Class dynamics do not sufficiently promote respect or sense of belonging among all students.	Class dynamics are inclusive and promote respect and sense of belonging among all students.	Class dynamics are respectful, open, and inclusive to all; promote both student-student and student-instructor dialogue; instructor models inclusive language, behavior, and course policies.
	Does class climate encourage student learning?	Class climate does not intentionally encourage student motivation; student engagement is generally low in both teacher-centered and student-centered activities.	Class climate encourages student motivation and consistent student engagement.	Climate fosters motivation, engagement and/or ownership of learning, and students show high levels of engagement.
	Does instructor's teaching practice support the development of	Instructor does not intentionally invest in facilitating student success.	Instructor makes attempts to have students recognize and develop transferable skills (empathy, communication strategies, self-assessment, etc.) as well as foster self-awareness through critical reflection on cultural practices & perspectives. At times, teaching practices promote self-directed learning.	Instructor encourages students to recognize and develop transferable skills (empathy, communication strategies, self-assessment, etc.) as well as foster self-awareness through critical reflection on cultural practices & perspectives. Teaching practices promote self-directed learning and a culture of reflection.
Reflection and iterative growth	How has the instructor demonstrated a commitment to reflection and iterative growth?	Attempts assessment of student learning through multiple means, such as student feedback and reflection requested during the course, review of course outcomes and/or engagement with other assessment tools.	Conducts regular assessments of student learning and experience through multiple means. Participates in workshops and other activities dedicated to pedagogical development.	Conducts evidence-based assessment of student learning and experience; seeks to assess lasting learning and transformative experiences through multiple means. Participates in workshops and other activities dedicated to pedagogical development and adapts them to their practice.
	How has the instructor's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by peer and/or student learning evidence?	Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of impact on learners or peer or student feedback.	Articulates some lessons learned or changes informed by prior teaching, impact on learners, or feedback.	Iteratively adjusts teaching based on reflection on impact on learners. Reports improved student achievement of learning goals and/or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications.

Possible Sources of Evidence May Include:

SELF:
- Syllabus
- Lesson plan
- Sample activity or assessment
- Reflective teaching statement
- SoTL projects or pedagogical publications

PEER[ii]:
- Teaching observation
- Collaborative design of pedagogical tools or materials
- Collaborative review of syllabi, lesson plans, activities, or teaching statements
- Teaching consultations

STUDENT:
- Student evaluations
- Classroom interviews
- Student Faculty Partnership Program*
- Student letters, emails, notes

Faculty members should include sources of evidence that represent each of these three voices as part of their annual review.

As part of the onboarding process, during the first three quarters of instruction at DU, faculty members should include a peer observation, student course evaluations, and a reflective teaching statement.

Lessons Learned

• This is not an easy process (surprise!)

• DAT helped facilitate important conversations around defining common goals for teaching and pedagogy.

• This is an important step towards cultivating a shared culture of teaching in our department.

• We hope this framework will support consistent feedback on teaching across ranks and series.

Team Members

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