Table 1: Direct and indirect assessment methods

Direct methods				
Methods	**Description**	**Purposes**	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**
Embedded assignments, tests or quizzes	Course tests/quizzes/ assignments that provide information on a student learning outcome. Students complete these as a regular part of the course.	• Examine student achievement of outcomes. • Ascertain extent to which program elements meet goals. • Provide feedback to teachers, students, admin.	• Evidence of learning is generated as part of normal workload. • Faculty members more likely to use results because they are active participants in the assessment process.	• Time required to develop and coordinate; to create a rubric to evaluate the assignment; to actually score the assignment.
Portfolios	A collection of student work such as written assignments, personal reflection, and self assessments. Developmental portfolios typically include work completed early, middle, and late in the students' academic career so growth can be noted.	• Examine student achievement of outcomes over time. • Understand student progress within program. • Ascertain extent to which programs meet goals. • Provide feedback to teachers, students, admin.	• Provides a comprehensive, holistic view of student achievement and/or development over time. • Students can see growth as they collect and reflect on the products in the portfolio. • Online submission and review of materials possible.	• Resources needed: costly and time consuming for both students and faculty.
Culminating project: capstone projects, senior theses, senior exhibits	Students produce work(s) that showcase their cumulative experiences in a program.	• Examine student achievement of outcomes. • Ascertain extent to which programs meet goals. • Provide feedback to teachers, students, admin.	• Provides a sophisticated, multi-level view of student achievement. • Students have the opportunity to integrate their learning.	• Creating an effective, comprehensive culminating experience can be challenging. • Faculty time required to develop assessment methods (multiple rubrics may be needed).
National FL exams or standardized tests	ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, SOPI, DIALANG, etc.	• Compare student achievement/proficiency to other programs/institutions. • Demonstrate achievement to outside audiences via commonly known instruments.	• External comparisons can be made. • Reliability and validity are monitored by the test developers. • External organizations can handle test administration and assessment.	• Test may not align with the curriculum and/or outcomes. • Information from test results is too broad to be used for decision making. • Cost.
Observation of student performing a task	Professor or an external observer rates a student's classroom performance using an observation checklist.	• Examine student achievement of outcomes. • Ascertain extent to course. performances meet programmatic goals. • Judge course/program effectiveness. • Provide feedback to teachers, students, admin.	• Captures data that is difficult to obtain through written texts or other methods.	• Can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors. • Can be complex to categorize observations. • Observer can influence behaviors of observed. • Can be expensive and time-consuming.

Table 1 (continued)

Direct methods				
Methods	**Description**	**Purposes**	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**
Culminating project: capstone projects, senior theses, senior exhibits	Students produce work(s) that showcase their cumulative experiences in a program. The work(s) are evaluated by a pair of faculty members, a faculty team, or a team comprised of faculty and community members.	• Examine student achievement of outcomes. • Ascertain extent to which programs meet goals. • Provide feedback to teachers, students, admin.	• Provides a sophisticated, multi-level view of student achievement. • Students have the opportunity to integrate their learning.	• Creating an effective, comprehensive culminating experience can be challenging. • Faculty time required to develop assessment methods (multiple rubrics may be needed).
Student publications or conference presentations	Students present their research to an audience outside their program. Faculty and/or external reviewers evaluate student performance.	• Publicly demonstrate student achievements.	• Gives students an opportunity to practice being a professional and receive feedback from career professionals or community members.	• Timing of professional conferences and cost for attendance may be an issue. Will be challenging to organize public presentation opportunities for all students with many graduates.
Indirect Methods				
Methods	**Description**	**Purposes**	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**
Survey[1]	Students/alumni self-report via a questionnaire (online, phone, or paper) about their perceptions, ability, attitudes, and/or satisfaction.	• Gain insight into learner attitudes, outcomes about the program. • Elicit stakeholders' perceptions of outcomes.	• Can be completed anonymously. • Non-threatening. • Inexpensive and easy to administer. • Easy to compare & analyze data. • Can be administered to large groups.	• Not suitable for collecting in-depth info. • Does not get whole story. • Might not generate careful feedback. • Wording can bias respondents. Requires careful writing & sampling. • Impersonal. • Response rates.
Focus group	Face-to-face, one-to-many discussions or question/answer session.	• Gain insight into group perception of learning. • Identify and understand needs & expectations of group. • Elicit group attitudes towards program.	• Provides rich, in-depth info and allows for tailored follow-up questions. • The group dynamic may spark more information--groups can become more than the sum of their parts. • "Stories" & voices can be powerful evidence for some intended users.	• Trained facilitators needed. • Transcribing, analyzing, & reporting are time consuming. • Data analysis is complex

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[1] For comparison of online survey tools available, visit here:
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey/compareElectronic.pdf

Table 1 (continued)

Indirect Methods				
Methods	**Description**	**Purposes**	**Advantages**	**Drawbacks**
Interview	Face-to-face, one-to-one discussions or question/answer session.	• Understand context, activities, people, and interactions. • Identify needs and areas of improvement. • Understand complex processes like teaching and learning. • "see" what people "say" & "do".	• Provides rich, in-depth information and allows for tailored follow-up questions. • "Stories" and voices can be powerful evidence for some groups of intended users.	• Trained interviewers needed. • Transcribing, analyzing, & reporting are time consuming. • Data analysis is complex
Case study	Intense investigation of a class and individual using multiple methods	• Document what actually happened. • Track perceptions, attitudes, & behavior. • Understand individuals' needs & expectations. • Identify obstacles course implementation.	• Fully depicts an individual's experience in a program, a class, etc. • Powerful means to portray program to outsiders. • Can generate thorough understandings.	• Time-consuming to collect, organize, describe, and analyze. • Represents depth of information rather than breadth. • Multiple methods require training.
Document analysis	Examination of program-related documents (e.g., syllabi, SLOs, webpage, transcripts, curriculum maps)	• Examine trends, patterns, & consistency in a program. • Identify gaps in curriculum. • Gain insight into program and its history. • Preliminary study for other methods.	• Provides comprehensive and historical information. • Does not interrupt routine of a program. • Information already in existence. • Few biases about the information.	• Documents or materials may be incomplete or missing. • Data is restricted to what already exists. • Does not evaluate current staff or client opinion, needs, or satisfaction. • Can be time consuming.

Table 2: Common Assessment Instruments in Foreign Language Programs

Outcome types	Locally-created assessment tools	Standardized assessment tools
Inter-cultural competency	• Portfolio assessment (Byram, 1997; Houston, 2005; Schulz, 2007) • Performance assessment (Ruben, 1976) • Interview (Fantini, 2006; Straffon, 2003) • Writing exam (Warford, 2006) • Capstone project (University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Foreign language and literature)	• Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Competence (Koester & Olebe, 1988; Ruben & Kealey, 1979) • Intercultural Sensitivity Index (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Olson and Kroeger, 2001) • Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer & Bennett, 1993; Walther, 2009) • Cross-Cultural Cultural Adaptability Inventory (Kelley & Meyers, 1995; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2001; Williams, 2005; Zielinski, 2007)
Language proficiency skills	• Placement exams • Course-embedded exams (Ricardo-Osorio, 2011) • Senior paper (Ricardo-Osorio, 2011) • Survey/self-assessment (Houston, 2005; Pfeiffer & Byrnes, 2009) • Portfolio (Grau Sempere, et al., 2009; Houston, 2005; Mathews & Hansen, 2004; Morris, 2006) • Presentation review board • Group orals/discussion • Exit interview (Grau Sempere, et al., 2009) • Public presentation • Integrated performance test (FL Standards-based: interpretive, interpersonal, presentational) tailored to classroom instruction	• ACTFL OPI/SOPI/COPI (Mathews & Hansen, 2004; Morris, 2006; Norris & Pfeiffer, 2003; Windham, 2008) • WebCAPE placement exam (Houston, 2005) • Language-specific speaking tests (AST, CST, HeST, SST) • STAMP test (ACTFL novice—intermediate, various languages) • Video Oral Communication Instrument • CEFR-based tests (e.g., Goethe-Zertifikat, TestDaF, Dialang) (Grau Sempere, et al., 2009)
Literary analysis and research skills	• Course-embedded paper assignments (English: Saxton & Mance, 2011)	*None* *[If you know of any, please inform us!]*