

Meeting 17 • 24 May 2011

Version: 5/24/11

no choice

Today • my deadline page

- numbers in () = minutes planned for activity/ topic
- √ = topic / activity that was adequately dealt with during the class
- + = topic needs more attention & will be resumed at next / subsequent meeting(s)
- M (earlier: -) = a topic / activity that was proposed but not carried out (but will be taken up later for MORE discussion)
- N = a topic / activity that was proposed but not included / is NOT going to be taken up after all
- Red italic text like this = comments after the meeting*

(5) (possibly a regular feature:) assessment (or language learning or just education) in the news! (If I can find something). Today: "Ax hovers over writing assessment"
(30) The group creates the scoring guide for a language-learning activity: Learners make drawings of topic downtown spaces (hotel, restaurant, station, youth hostel, library, museum, etc.) and practice locational / directional language (go to museum, sleep at youth hostel, go from youth hostel to station). THIS REPLACES ASSIGNMENT 4!
(30) Assessing (and teaching?!) listening and reading. Quick ways to generate multiple-choice tests; PSU first-year German combined reading / writing / WAC final exam. See reading on the "Schedule" page and in outlines for previous meetings, especially the relevant chapters of Hughes.
(20) BIMP feedback and discussion
(10) Two generic scoring guides for language activities: 1) reading a dialog aloud; 2) global prochievement SG - for just about anything.
(10) If time: fast look at the Oregon Common Assessment Kit that I finally located
(10) Startup for next (and last!) major topic: assessing courses, programs, curricula, departments, and maybe even beyond that. Look for reading suggestions on the "Schedule" page. For some initial thoughts: revisit a contentious topic - ranges in difficulty of languages; time needed to learn a language to whatever level - and can it be shortened? 0157 DLI 1973 chart; 0786 Clifford, Ray, "What Does it Mean to Learn a Language?" (TLE October 2008)

Upcoming class meetings

During the final weeks of the quarter we'll get into other assessments related to language learning: textbooks, courses, curricula, departments,

Bring WB & show its media

0915 Oregonian May 20 2011 B1, B10

Ax hovers over writing assessment

Hoping to save \$3 million, legislators may try to eliminate tests the state requires in K-12 schools

BY KIMBERLY MELTON THE OREGONIAN

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers have set their sights on the state writing assessment as they seek ways to reduce a looming budget shortfall. After weeks of negotiations and

behind-the-scenes conversations, some legislators on the budget-writing committees have asked the Oregon Department of Education to consider getting rid of the assessment, currently required three times between kindergarten and 12th grade.

The move could save about \$3 million. Writing is the only state assessment not required by the U.S. Department of Education. As legislators look for places to make reductions, Rep. Betty

For more on the state budget and other political news, go to oregon-live.com/politics

Komp, the Woodburn Democrat who is co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means education subcommittee, said it's natural for lawmakers to consider limiting assessments to only those required by the federal government.

But State Superintendent Susan

Castillo fired back at legislators on Thursday, saying the move could not only endanger the state's long-awaited move to higher graduation rates but also leave Oregon behind as states around the nation move toward a common curriculum and assessment.

"If these cuts go forward, we're not treating writing as a priority and therefore it will get less focus out in the field," Castillo said. "It's an inefficient way of treating a system that's been paid for by the tax-

payers for years. It's absolutely the wrong time to step back from writing when we know we'll need to build up the assessment to meet the higher standards of a common core curriculum."

Castillo shared her concerns with the State Board of Education on Thursday, just minutes before the board unanimously approved higher standards for the state reading test at elementary and middle school.

Board members said the boost

Please see **WRITING**, Page B10



Writing

Continued from Page B1

would help families better understand whether students are really on track to graduate.

Though they supported the proposal, some also said they fear an increased focus on testing in the classroom and believe the state needs to do more to support increased classroom time, improved instruction and student engagement.

One of the Department of Education's primary roles is to develop the standards that help define what Oregon teens need to know by the time they graduate from high school. The agency also manages grants and oversees charter schools, alternative programs, early childhood and special education services.

But it's largely known, and often criticized, for its focus on testing and compliance.

Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, said part of what his committee is trying to do is get a better sense of how each part of the department operates and how those programs and teams are affected by budget cuts.

Neither Komp nor Buckley would give specific numbers and programs, but both confirmed that they asked the department to consider getting rid of elementary, middle and high school writing tests among other cuts.

"I think we're trying to see whether this would be a cost-shift to school districts or whether they would do this type of assessment locally anyway," Buckley said. "If they would do that, the loss is really

being able to have your kids compared to other kids."

At least 35 states have writing assessments. At least three — Ohio, South Carolina and New Mexico — have recently suspended writing assessments due to lack of money.

The Oregon Department of Education requested a \$41.7 million general fund budget for 2011-13 to restore some of the reductions made to its 2009-11 budget of \$35.8 million.

Gov. John Kitzhaber proposed a \$34 million budget that would require the department to eliminate vacancies

and reduce time spent developing new data systems, answering parent complaints and providing support to local districts.

Castillo said she'd like to hold the line at those cuts and find a way to preserve the writing assessment. Students will have to show proficiency in writing as part of the new diploma requirements for incoming high school students. While students could meet those standards through work samples, many districts may offer local assessments if the state doesn't provide one.

That could lead to inconsistency through the state, Castillo said. If the state really wants to consider getting rid of the writing assessment, she said she'd like to engage in a public policy discussion and not scrap the program as a budget action.

"The implications are huge," Castillo said. "I think the public deserves to be part of that discussion."

Buckley and fellow co-chair Sen. Richard Devlin, D-Tualatin, say they hope to put forth the agency's budget and hold a hearing next week.

Questions for section consideration prior to meeting with Chair

(May 5, 2011)

JRP 0916

• What have been your section's most significant accomplishments this year? What has made these accomplishments possible?

• What have been your section's greatest challenges this year?

What have been the obstacles that have contributed to these challenges?

• Over time, how have you adapted your curriculum (classes, major/minor requirements) to reflect faculty areas of specialization / interest, student needs and the mission of WLL and PSU?

How will you continue to monitor the effectiveness of the offered curriculum?

• If applicable, what do you see as the mission of your graduate program(s)?

How is this mission communicated to students?

Are you fulfilling this mission adequately? If not, why not?

• Do you anticipate any personnel changes in the next two years? Next five years? Explain (sabbatical, retirement, etc.).

• How can WLL better support your section?

• What else should I know about your section?