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Foreign Language Learning as Perceived by College Students with Disabilities: Barriers to Learning and Positive Experiences

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**Foreign Language Learning as Perceived by
College Students with Disabilities:
Barriers to Learning and Positive Experiences**

Technical Report Number 01

**Student Perceptions Related to the National Standards for Foreign Language
Learning**

Technical Report Number 02

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Abstract

Individual, structured interviews were conducted with seven college students with a variety of documented disabilities. The objectives of the interviews were to gather student perspectives on their experiences as foreign language learners including barriers to learning and positive experiences (Technical Report 01) and their observations about elements of the *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning*, including communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities (See Technical Report 02). Results of Technical Report 01 indicated that students experienced barriers to learning in various aspects of foreign language classrooms including instructor behaviors, pedagogical approaches, and other factors. Positive experiences with FL learning included description of practices for the classroom environment, group work, use of the target language, and assessment of learning. Instructor disposition and classroom climate were key factors in creating welcoming and inclusive FL classrooms for students with disabilities.

Foreign Language Learning as Perceived by College Students with Disabilities

Issue

Students with disabilities are no longer an exception on college campuses with approximately 10% of college students nationwide self-disclosing as having a documented disability (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2006). Some students with disabilities experience difficulty with foreign language learning ranging from mild to more severe and related to the functional impact of the disability. Key areas in foreign language learning including auditory processing, working memory, speech articulation, phonological processing, and spelling among others may pose unique challenges for some individuals with disabilities. Their academic success, along with that of other students, prompted an investigation of effective teaching practices. Seven students with documented disabilities were interviewed to gather their perceptions of and experiences with foreign language learning. These students provided information and insights on barriers to learning as well as observations and strategies for more welcoming and inclusive foreign language classrooms.

Research questions

1. What are the perceptions of university students with disabilities regarding barriers to learning a foreign language? (Technical Report 01)
2. What are the perceptions of university students with disabilities regarding positive experiences learning a foreign language? (Technical Report 01)
3. What are the perceptions of university students with disabilities regarding

elements of the ACTFL *National Standards for Foreign Language Learning?*
(Technical Report 02)

Method

Seven college students with diverse cognitive and physical disabilities participated in individual, structured interviews with Project LINC staff. A semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) was used to guide each session in line with the overarching research questions. The topics for the interview included areas related to foreign language (FL) learning at the high school and college level. The interview protocol was constructed around the following topics: perceptions of learning FLs, differences between studying FLs in high school and college, classroom atmosphere and community, connection with faculty, group work, and advice for new FL instructors. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed to facilitate data analysis.

Each student was registered with the Office of Disability Services at Longwood University. Diagnosed disabilities included attention deficit disorder (2), autism spectrum (Asperger's syndrome) (1), cerebral palsy (1), learning disability (4), psychological disability (1), and visual impairment (1). Three students had more than one documented disability diagnosis. Self-reported demographic data was collected on each participant and is reported in table 1. Students were traditional age (18-22), predominantly Caucasian (86%), and 57% female. Each participant had completed high school FL requirements and taken between one and six semesters of FL coursework at Longwood.

Summary of Findings: Positive Experiences and Barriers to Learning

Student interviews revealed observations and insights into a variety of experiences in learning foreign language. In response to research questions 1 and 2 of the study, data was examined to reveal barriers reported by students as well as positive experiences resulting in welcoming and inclusive learning environments.

Barriers to learning foreign language

Accommodations. Participants identified several barriers related to requesting and receiving disability-based accommodations. Some barriers related to the student's self perception of disability. For example, one student commented that she felt self-conscious about needing accommodations in class. "I felt uncomfortable. I'm kinda insecure with my disability so I kinda minimize the kind of attention I draw from it." Another student noted that she wanted to avoid unfair advantage from using accommodations. "I don't want to make it, don't want to make it a crutch." Faculty response to accommodation requests was noted as sometimes creating a barrier. "I still go into it [*talking with faculty*] kinda fearing that there might be issues."

Students identified logistical challenges with some accommodations. One student noted that using large print text was cumbersome. Another noted that when she took a test in a separate, distraction-reduced setting she felt at a disadvantage because she couldn't ask the professor questions during the test. Some accommodations with specific application to FL learning were discussed. "My professors I had counted spelling but I struggle there and would always get it wrong. And, I know when I used the word processor [*for spell check*], it sounded right in my head or it would turn into another Spanish word that's something completely different."

Anxiety. Students identified a number of sources of anxiety generated during their FL classes. Some students reported pressure to receive passing grades for these required courses. “And then you can stress, you can crack under pressure, then you’re gonna freak out because you got an F on it. I have seen it all the time. And people are like, ‘I am gonna fail out of college.’” One student commented on the general demands of balancing an academic course load while taking foreign language: “I have all this other stuff. It’s all a part about juggling. Balance.”

Common elements of foreign language pedagogy were observed as sources of stress for some students. Anxiety in speaking the target language was a common sentiment. “You might say it wrong. That can be unnerving to have someone there who really can speak it.” Or as another student noted, “I got scared ‘cause they were talking very quickly.” Worry about performance in group work is a source of anxiety for some students: “I mean if you’re struggling you don’t want to bring everyone else down. So, that was always something for me.” Daily classroom interaction was perceived as stressful. As one student remarked, class members are “called on randomly that’s just....for me, ... it’s uncomfortable.” The amount of material covered in college level course work can add to a sense of overload. “Coming out for a test that has three chapters on it you are just like, ‘Oh my goodness. This is so much material. Like I am lost.’”

Another source of anxiety for students was their self expectations for performance as well as how they perceived the expectations of the instructor and class mates. The following comments reflected self-perceptions. “The first day I was....scared stiff.” “I don’t think I am very good at it [*speaking Spanish*].” Some comments reflected unrealistically high self-expectations. “I get very nervous when I have to speak in

English in front of anyone so in Spanish it's a little more difficult because I'm not perfect at it."

Students perceived instructors as having high standards that were perhaps beyond their current level of proficiency. "The expectations seemed higher than I felt comfortable with." Or another student noted, "She just wants it to be spontaneous right off your head. That's what scares me because I can't do that." In commenting about peers in the classroom, several students talked about the challenge of working outside their comfort zone. One factor creating anxiety was the perceived superior proficiency of some peers. "It's definitely the intimidation part. .. You have people who either are from, or have parents who can speak it... or have prior high training..." One student felt particularly vulnerable about perceptions of her disability: "I know this sounds kinda bad but I feel like since I'm in a wheelchair and have a disability that people like automatically expect me to mess up. So, it makes it even more challenging for me to get up 'cause I already feel like they're looking at me like, 'Ha! She's gonna mess up!'"

Classroom environment. Students noted that when the classroom was overcrowded, or when desks were too close together it impinged on the learning environment. Desk arrangement also was observed to play a role in setting the stage for class communication and interaction. "You need to feel like there's some sort of membership there and break down that barrier...between students and between students and teachers."

Group work. When talking about group work, participants described several potential barriers. The effective functioning of group members was sometimes problematic as students recalled other group members who didn't do their share of work

or frequently got off task. One student noted, “One thing I don’t like about it is like...when professors are like, ‘Group activity,’ but yet people are doing it individually.” The pace of group work was sometimes a challenge whether to keep up with speed of writing required in taking group notes, or to prepare a group assignment in a short time frame adding to the pressure of “feeling on the spot.”

At times, direction and structure of group work were unclear. One student noted “the problem with that group was everybody was shying away from it and there was this sense of diffusion of responsibility.” Or another student noted a lack of clear directions to the group: “She would just start putting us in groups expecting us to already know it or understand it. And, then it’s a mess ‘cause we’re all raising our hands and we don’t get it. Or, we start talking and go off subject and that’s never good.”

Students talked at length about the impact of group membership and selection. One student described discomfort with being assigned to work with a partner she didn’t know: “If they have to pair up with someone they don’t really know and they may not be comfortable speaking Spanish or speaking the foreign language or writing. They are going to get really nervous. It’s just uncomfortable.” One student noted difficulty in being accepted by peers. She explained that “college kids are college kids and they have their little attitudes.” Conversely, sometimes working with friends was observed to lead to less productive work time: “When you do group work with friends you kinda screw around a little bit more.” A final factor discussed in group membership was grouping students with different ability levels. Several students stated that being graded as a group was stressful at times, and one student noted the added pressure of being a lower performing group member: “I mean if you’re struggling you don’t want to bring everyone

else down. So, that was always something for me.”

Target language. Students reported a number of barriers related to target language use. Several participants were surprised by instructor expectations for target language use from the onset of college FL learning: “The expectations seemed higher than I felt comfortable with, especially at the 101 level.” Or as noted by another student, “You don’t know that language but you are learning that language. Somewhere you’re gonna have to say something in English. ...because you don’t have those skills. That’s the whole reason that you’re there. ...I was shocked.”

Several components of target language use were identified as particularly challenging. Demands on auditory processing (“Spanish words sometimes roll together”), short term memory (“Reading and writing you have out there and you can take your time and you’re not worried about missing what’s in the middle and hearing just the first and last things they said.”), and sustaining attention (“if you miss one thing, you miss the whole class”) were apparent.

Perceptions of peer pressure were reported to magnify barriers in language knowledge and skills in such areas as reading (“Reading out of the book is the most challenging because if you don’t get it right *everyone* knows you didn’t get it right. ... Especially if you are not comfortable reading in English.”), syntax (“That’s hard for me ‘cause I don’t know what to say. I don’t know if I’m using the right verb tenses.”), and vocabulary (“If that isn’t your first language in the first place, if you don’t know vocabulary or something, how are you going to ask?”).

Assessment. Some barriers were identified related to assessment of learning. A logistical concern was identified by a student who took tests in a minimum distraction

testing environment. He reported that being in another location provided quiet, but also reduced the availability of the instructor to answer questions if clarification was needed during the test. Oral testing was mentioned by several students as presenting barriers. One student described the graded requirement of generating spontaneous conversation on a given topic. He noted “So it’s that branching off that I get flustered.”

A common FL assessment practice is to assign pairs of students to present an oral conversation for a grade. One student indicated the unpredictability of the partner’s communication skills presented a challenge. “So instead of having a conversation with a teacher, that’s what I’m nervous about ‘cause I don’t know where...if the student can help me ‘cause I don’t know if she’s not gonna speak slow ...It’s hard.” Or as described by another student, “I think that’s part of the intimidation is that you have, ...different levels of proficiency even amongst the 101 [*students*].”

Professor characteristics. While students had many comments about positive and desirable attributes of teachers, there were just two areas of professor characteristics that students noted as creating barriers: faculty who were not approachable (“I had one that I just couldn’t talk to. I couldn’t talk to the teacher. She was very unwelcoming.”) and faculty who had perhaps unreasonably high expectations for students (“I think sometimes professors need to be more relaxed and not assume that everyone should know everything”). Another student described a faculty member trying to cover too much material in class. “Your students aren’t going to learn all the material that you want them to learn. Then they are cramming and getting stressed.”

Positive experiences in foreign language learning

Accommodations. Participants reported positive experiences and inclusive approaches to accommodation in FL classroom experiences. They noted instructor actions, including inviting students to request accommodations (“She went out of her way to ask about that. Which I really liked. It made me less uncomfortable requesting accommodations”), and responding with flexibility to accommodation requests as helpful.

Support strategies that were available to all students were identified as positives. Instructor use of Blackboard to post class documents for all students and student use of a laptop for notetaking were mentioned (“I might need some sort of accommodation and I might bring my laptop in or something for my notes. And, actually a lot of students do that anyways. ... I kinda just blend in in that situation.”)

Positive approaches to accommodating oral tests or exams were described by several students. Individualized responses such as meeting with the instructor for test administration outside of class, or use of audio recorded exam material were noted as helpful accommodations. Repetition and instructor willingness to speak more slowly were beneficial (“He would speak whatever the paragraph was a couple of times for me and slow it down. It was just easier for me to process ‘cause it’s all mumbled and I can’t do it when it’s fast.”)

Students also described their own actions for promoting a positive accommodation experience. They were confident in their self-advocacy skills (“If I ever have a problem I will talk to them. I’m very outspoken. I’m not afraid to do that stuff.”) and proactive in their requests for accommodation (“If you want those accommodation

sheets then you really have to pay attention at the beginning of the school year. Ask them at the beginning of the school year.”)

Professor characteristics. Many students commented on the role of professor characteristics and behaviors in providing a positive learning environment. Personal qualities such as high energy, “relaxed” personality, and having an approachable “presence” were mentioned as positive instructor qualities (“He’s got the right kind of dry personality and dry sense of humor that you need”). Reading students accurately and being sensitive and responsive to their learning needs was the focus of many student comments. One student commented, “She actively responds to what we need to work on.” Another student observed, “He knows who’s really putting forth effort.” One participant commented, “She was really good at helping everyone.”

Flexibility was seen as a positive quality (“Definitely be adapting. Sometimes your lesson plans have to change”). Availability was essential to many students noting that “willingness to meet,” having frequent office hours, and being responsive on e-mail were all contributors to a positive FL learning experience. One student commented “I just like that professors come up and are like, ‘Hey, I’m here to help you’ even in a classroom full of people.” Being clear about expectations was also important (“Definitely have to define expectations. That’s the big thing.”)

Students spoke of faculty whose behaviors resulted in a positive classroom climate. “It’s really important to not intimidate a newcomer.” Or another student observed: “The [instructor] will actually help you. That is a very comforting environment.” Speaking about accommodations, a student noted, “She makes it easy to get accommodations.” Students also reported a positive climate around assessment with

faculty who were focused on supporting student learning. One student remarked:

“Overall at the end of the day he [*the instructor*] seems to have like more so the attitude of, ‘Ok. What did you miss and how can we fix it?’”

The qualities of professors were so important that several students mentioned intentionally taking the same instructor for more than one FL course (“I like the way he taught. I liked him as a professor. We worked well together. Just the way he, you know, responded to the students or treated them. I liked his method of teaching”).

Classroom environment. Students commented on two aspects of the physical classroom environment that impacted their learning. Several students felt that small class size was important in a positive foreign language learning experience. As one student described, “you wanna have a small enough group where you can do things...to break them up into groups to get to know the students.”

Students also commented on the arrangement of desks within the classroom. One participant commented on the frequent practice of arranging student desks to face each other (the desks “were all in a box shape ...I feel like that allowed you to see who was talking.you could see what was going on”). Another student noted this arrangement was more inclusive than practices used in high school where students receiving special support were seated in a separate area of the class (“the thing about classrooms here is that the desks are all spread out. Like there’s not anybody in one area so I feel like I’m more a part of the class”). And finally, one participant noted, “I sit [*near the instructor*] so if there is a time where there is a break, I would be like ‘ I have a question.’ That to me was a way for the classroom to be set up for me.”

FL Pedagogy: Class structure/activity. Students had much to say about a variety of aspects of FL pedagogy. Classroom activities and organization were important. They liked classes with a predictable structure (“It didn’t offshoot from the book too much”) but with a variety of learning experiences (“but it does help when you can make it fun, more fun from the perspective that you’re not just doing the same thing everyday reading out of the book and that’s it”). Real world activities and experiences were noted as helpful (“Like trying to debate in Spanish a topic that, that real world today that ...you might discuss in English with someone. ...it forces you to use Spanish outside the typical... That made it more interesting in branching out from just the Spanish part.”)

FL Pedagogy: Classroom community. Participants commented on the importance of classroom dynamics in FL learning. As one student noted, “have the professor there but not standing in front of you overlooking you. More in the middle, just trying to guide you along to whatever you guys are talking about.”

FL Pedagogy: Group work. Students noted positive experiences in group work activities when directions and expectations were made explicit by the instructor. Clearly defined roles for members of the group, such as having a group notetaker, were seen as helpful. Several students commented on the importance of providing clear instruction and guidance before breaking into groups (“I think that it’s easier if they teach it to us first, break it down, and make sure we understand it and then branch off”).

Participants had varied perspectives about how group membership should be determined. One student noted, “I think it is better if the students get to pick because of comfort levels.” Another noted, “there should be some variance. The professor probably should pick sometimes. That might make some people angry but it would probably be

better for you to get that experience working with all the different people.” While some students expressed the opinion that group partners should be at similar skill levels, others thought it would be helpful to have a partner with slightly more skill (“so maybe you don’t understand this part but the other person does so you can learn from them so you’re not at a loss there”). Some students just liked group work in general, and didn’t state a preference. One participant observed, “I like meeting new people so it’s always fun. Big groups are good too. Oh, I prefer working in groups.”

FL Pedagogy: Target language. Students had positive experiences with using and learning the target language when they understood instructor expectations. One student noted that expectations for target language use should be clearly stated in the syllabus. As one student noted “Everyone makes mistakes [*speaking the target language*] and no one is perfect. You just have to realize this.” Several students expressed positive experiences when they were given selective permission to speak in English. Questions about the material, instructions for assignments or tests, and changes to the syllabus were suggested as critical times to allow selected native language use.

Instructors use a variety of strategies to foster effective learning experiences with the target language. One student found it helpful when information about the subject to be discussed was provided in advance so students could review vocabulary and prepare for discussions in the target language. Many students described multisensory approaches used by many instructors to reinforce target language meaning. Writing on the board while talking, using visuals and gestures, and rephrasing statements in different ways, and multiple times were all viewed as positive supports for learning. As one student mentioned, “when we don’t get it, she says it in English, writes it on the board, and

repeats it in Spanish.” Students also commented that a balance of expectations for listening, speaking, reading, and writing was helpful in FL classes.

FL Pedagogy: Assessment. Several comments were made about positive approaches to tests and assessments. Students endorsed the practice of providing study guides (“she did provide study guides and everything that was listed on it would be what to expect...All the expectations were clearly laid out.”) and practice exams (“he would give us an old copy of that exam or a similar exam to it. And, he’d let us go over that. He’d go over it with us”). One student noted it was helpful to have test questions of different formats within a single test such as fill in the blank, matching, and so forth.

For tests requiring partners, one student preferred the flexibility of choosing partners and signing up for times (“you can sign up for times, and then get to choose your own partner on who you get to work with for dialogue things. So, I just...I thought it was pretty flexible the way it was set up”).

Conclusions

Students with disabilities reported experiencing barriers to learning in various aspects of foreign language classrooms. Some barriers were typical of concerns expressed by many students in foreign language learning such as anxiety about performance in comparison to peers, unrealistic expectations for immediate fluency, or concern about test grades. Other barriers were unique or perhaps magnified due to the impact of a disability.

In discussing the accommodations process, students revealed varied levels of comfort with the self-advocacy skills necessary for success in the foreign language classroom. Faculty receptivity to accommodation requests and learning needs was noted

as a key factor in student comfort levels in class. Faculty who invited student disclosure in the syllabus, and responded to student needs with flexibility and acceptance were viewed as creating a positive classroom environment for learning.

Many common foreign language learning activities were revealed as possible sources of barriers for individual students. A student with ADHD highlighted the difficulty of listening and conversing spontaneously in class. An individual with dyslexia spoke of the anxiety created when required to read aloud from a text book. A student with Asperger's syndrome talked about the challenges of group activities, revealing that even these frequent classroom practices have the potential to impact a student with a disability in disparate ways. The broad experiences comprising language acquisition, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well as enhanced cultural knowledge and awareness were discussed by students as creating potential barriers to learning as well as positive opportunities.

Positive experiences with FL learning included description of practices for the classroom environment, group work, use of the target language, and assessment of learning. The importance of straight forward class structure and clear expectations were common themes. Perhaps most important, instructor characteristics including being approachable, flexible, and available were key factors in creating welcoming and inclusive FL classrooms for students with disabilities.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Information

Total participants = 7

1. Age: 18(1 or 14%)
19 (1 or 14%)
20 (1 or 14%)
21 (2 or 29%)
22 (2 or 29%)
2. Primary race/ethnicity: 6 White/Caucasian (86%), 1 Korean (14%)
3. Registered with the Disability Services office
7 Yes (100%)
0 No
4. Current academic class at Longwood
2 freshman (29%)
2 sophomore (28%)
1 junior (14%)
2 senior (29%)
5. Major

Computer science (1), Liberal studies/Elementary Education (1), Special Education (1) , Sociology(1), History & Social Studies Education(1), Spanish(1), Physics & Economics (1)

6. In high school:
 - a. Language studied: 5 Spanish (71%), 2 Latin (29%)
 - b. Years of foreign language taken
2 years (3 or 43%), 3 years (3 or 43%), 4 years (1 or 14%)
 - c. How academically challenging would you say your high school foreign language classes were?
Not hard at all (0)
Somewhat challenging (3 or 43%)
Challenging (4 or 57%)
Extremely hard (0)
7. At Longwood
 - a. Language studied

Spanish (6 or 86%) French (0) German (1 or 14%)

b. Why did you select that particular language?

Usefulness (4 or 57%)
Quality of instructor (0)
Friends (1 or 14%)
Background (2 or 29%)
Other: I took it in high school
I love the Spanish language.

Note: some participants provided more than one response

c. Semesters of foreign language taken at Longwood?

1 semester (2 or 29%)
2 semesters (2 or 29%)
3 semesters (2 or 29%)
6 semesters (1 or 14%)

Appendix A: Student Interview Protocol

1. Introduction/ Purpose/Icebreakers:
Tell me about your experience learning Spanish/French/German in high school?
 - How was learning a language different in HS than in college?

2. The *Standards for foreign language learning* (5 Cs)
 - A. Communication: Tell me about how you communicate in a FL class.
 - When is Spanish/French/German used? When can you use English? When can the teacher use English?
 - Is using Spanish/French/German uncomfortable for you and your classmates?
 - What speaking activities are the most challenging? The easiest?
 - B. Cultures : How do you feel about learning about the culture of the countries you are studying?
 - C. Connections: Did your FL courses in college help you feel connected to other classes and different points of view? How?
 - D. Comparisons : Did your FL courses in college help you understand more language in general? How? What about culture?
 - E. Communities : Have you ever used your FL learning skills beyond the school setting? When?

3. Classroom atmosphere and connection with faculty: Think about your college professors who were easiest to talk to about accommodations. What are some examples of when you have felt really comfortable with a teacher/instructor/professor?
 - What was the FL class like that you've felt most comfortable in?
 - What in the FL physical classroom helps you learn?
 - Technology?
 - Arrangement of classroom?
 - What general or specific changes would you recommend to make FL courses better?

4. Group work, classroom climate and community: What are some positive and negative experiences working in groups in your FL classes?

5. Advice for new FL instructors: What advice would you give a new foreign language instructor about how to teach FL well?

Appendix B: Data Codes and Definitions

Speaking the Target Language

This category relates to comments about students and instructors speaking the target language. Amount of speaking in class, means of eliciting spoken input from students, and amount of target language spoken are components of this category. Differences between use of the target language and English, including when each was preferred by students, are also part of this category.

Group work

Group work concerns times when participants mentioned working in groups of two or more, both in a positive light and a negative light. It concerns preferences of role within the group, choice of group members, and manners of assessing group work.

Study strategies

Strategies engaged in by students while studying foreign languages is the topic of this category. Both effective and ineffective strategies, as perceived by the participants, are included in this category.

Study abroad

This category included instances in which the participants mentioned study abroad experiences that they or others had engaged in. It also included both positive aspects of study abroad in relation to the acquisition of speaking abilities and knowledge of target language cultures.

Culture

Attitudes toward cultural practices, products and perspectives (as defined by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*) are the focus of this category. Ways in which

participants learn about the target language cultures, cultural activities carried out in classes, and relevance of cultural topics are addressed in this category. Comparisons between American/Virginian culture and the target language cultures are included.

Connections

Connections between other content areas and the target language are the focus of this category, particularly the ability to acquire unique information through the foreign language (as defined by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*). This category concerns connections between Spanish, French, or German and other classes like history, sociology, or literature in English.

Communities

This category concerns the use of the target language at, within, and beyond school contexts, as well as language learners becoming life-learners of the target language (as defined by the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*). Using the language with friends, family, or the larger community is part of this category. Suggestions for how instructors could encourage use of the target language outside of the class make up much of this category.

Classroom environment

Both positive and negative aspects of classroom environment are part of this category. Class size, physical set-up, student comfort, and use of technology are included.

Anxiety and student affect

Instances in which participants mentioned their own or other students' affect toward foreign language learning, including anxiety, are the centerpiece of this category. Ways in which affect can be positively or negatively changed by the instructor compose this

category. Participant feelings toward activities, instructors, other students, and assessment are included.

Accommodations

Accommodations, both at the high school and college levels, inform this category. It includes formal accommodations included in IEPs (in high school) or letters from the Disability Services Office, as well as informal accommodations provided by instructors but not mandated by other offices. Student and instructor comfort with accommodations compose this category. Accommodations for assessments are of particular import.

Advice for students

This category is made up of suggestions for future students in foreign language classes at Longwood University. Those suggestions included when to take the language classes, with whom to take those classes, and ways to be successful while studying.

Placement and dropping class

Patterns relating to placement are the focus of this category, and dropping language classes make up a large part of this group. The placement test used at freshman orientation, factors affecting placement and course dropping, and decisions to drop are central.