Department of French and Italian: ITALIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

**Assessment Report for academic year 2013/2014 &
Action plan for 2014/2015.**

Italian Studies has been actively engaged in assessment activities since before reporting out became required in 2011. As a result, assessment reports are a welcome activity that helps us move to new levels of understanding about our program. We thank you for this opportunity to go deeper into our learning goals and outcomes. This report is divided into the following sections:
1) learning Outcomes for our program;
2) assessment methods;
3) analysis of assessment results;
4) faculty involvement;
5) plans for next year;

6) **Learning Outcomes:**
   a) **Student Learning Outcomes for our majors:** by the end of the fourth year and arriving at Emory with no prior knowledge of the language, Italian Studies fourth year students, all of whom are majors, declared or non-declared, will have the following skills, knowledge, and dispositions:
      i) students will be able to demonstrate familiarity, both verbally and in written format, with a comprehensive overview of Italian culture: principal authors, artists, genres, and themes of Italian literature, art, and music from the 14th century to the present time, contextualizing these within the historical eras in which they were produced;
      ii) students will be able to exercise advanced reading comprehension skills necessary for engagement of these cultural eras;
      iii) students will be able to communicate at low to mid advanced verbal levels; for example, be able to formulate, elaborate, and engage others in effective conversation on topics such as observations and understanding of cultural artifacts of the different historical eras of Italian culture;
      iv) students will be able to command vocabulary and basic critical reading skills in a variety of cultural languages, principally art, history, music, and regional traditions, throughout the eras of Italian cultural history;
      v) students will be able to think critically in formulating opinions or accepting conclusions based on studies conducted.

   b) **Student Learning Outcomes for our beginning Italian Studies students:** by the end of the first year and arriving at Emory with no prior knowledge of the language, Italian Studies first year students will have the following skills, knowledge, and dispositions:
      i) *listening*: students will be able to understand the main topics of a conversation as expressed by numerous different native Italians who talk about their personal lives and preferences and describe and discuss their regions of Sicily and Campania;
      ii) *reading*: students will be able to understand the main points of texts that consist of cultural history, as well as the description of events past and present, feelings, and

wishes in personal and historical communications; they will also be able to understand, with some guidance, selected film excerpts and shorter literary prose;

iii) *speaking*: students will be able to communicate about routine situations requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. They will be able to engage in short discussions on cultural topics. Students will engage in personal and cultural conversations (e.g.: skits, interviews, group presentations) utilizing all tenses in the indicative;

iv) *writing*: students will be able to write paragraphs and short essays describing the cultural readings and audio-visual materials they have been studying; they will be able to narrate simple personal stories and experiences using the present, past and future tenses, and begin to formulate hypotheses;

v) *knowledge*:
   (1) students will acquire a vocabulary necessary to competently comment (in writing and through simple conversations) on texts, images, movies, and works of art;
   (2) students will foster a better understanding of Italian culture and the pivotal role played by Italy and by the Italians in the development of what we define as Western Civilization;

vi) *dispositions*:
   (1) cultural awareness: Students will develop their understanding of the relationship between language and culture through identifying similarities and differences between home and various regions of Italy; they will be able to give examples of one culture influencing another;
   (2) reflectivity: Students will be able to reflect on personal experiences while learning a new language and cultural history. They will be able to identify their personal learning style and recognize how this can be used to enhance their language-learning experience.

c) **Student Learning Outcomes for our second year Italian Studies students:** by the end of the second year and arriving at Emory with no prior knowledge of the language, Italian Studies second year students will have the following skills, knowledge, and dispositions:
   i) *skills*:
      (1) students will acquire the learning keys necessary to gain access to Italian culture and language;
      (2) students will obtain and provide information and express feelings and emotions in Italian;
      (3) students will communicate with Italians and Italian speakers, both here and in Italy, on a practical level; students will engage in increasingly complex conversations on a variety of cultural topics;
      (4) students will reach B1 levels of communication in Italian (as described by CEFR guidelines) by the end of Italian 201 [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre_en.asp];
   ii) *knowledge*:
      (1) students will acquire a vocabulary necessary to competently comment (in writing and through simple conversations) on texts, images, movies, and works of art illustrating Italian cultural history from antiquity to the present;

(2) students will foster a better understanding of Italian culture and of the pivotal role played by Italy and by the Italians in the development of what we define as Western Civilization;

iii) *dispositions*:

   (1) students will impart the attitudes and knowledge necessary to productively and authentically engage another culture;

   (2) students will become better citizens of the world; students will gain the skills to relate to and learn from foreigners with true respect for their heritage.

2) Assessment Methods:

  a) Assessment Methods for our seniors: two measures (direct and indirect), implemented four years ago, are generally applied at the end of Italian 470, spring semester, in order to evaluate what students learned. Both of these measures were reviewed by three faculty who, on rotation, teach third and fourth year classes. These individual meetings were recorded and the recordings will remain in our files.

    (1) *Direct measure*:

      (a) Final semester paper, involving individual evaluation of three stages:

        (i) topic choice with introductory paragraph and bibliography;

        (ii) rough draft plus a rewrite option;

        (iii) final version of the paper, with assessment evaluation of the final paper.

    (2) *Indirect measure*:

      (a) in final individual exit interviews through a one-on-one taped conversation (conducted after final grades have been sent to the Registrar) with a faculty member, the 470 students candidly discussed the following:

        (i) personal academic maturity and study skills developed during their four years;

        (ii) student engagement in the course work topics and applications/associations of Italian Studies in future paths of academic inquiry or in professional careers;

        (iii) how students sustained their academic responsibilities, as explained in the required course syllabi and in frequent illustrations of L2 and second culture acquisition pedagogy;

        (iv) personal learning styles and how they translated Italian Studies materials into these styles;

        (v) what learning strategies they brought to the program and which they developed: benefits and difficulties;

        (vi) what language elements have become easier to use; what language barriers they overcame that gave them increased freedom in comprehension and, therefore, expression;

        (vii) which pedagogical method allowed best for the enhancement of oral comprehension and verbal communication skills, and why;

        (viii) how the program helped students reach their goals, and how it could help even more;

        (ix) constructive evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the major curriculum;

(x) benefiting by enhanced language skills, which content topic addressed this past year engaged students the most;

(xi) which content vehicle: film, text, class presentation, external lecturer, etc. facilitated comprehension the most and why;

(xii) formulated critical thoughts on what Italian Studies at Emory helped students learn about "others" and how to positively/productively dialogue with "foreign cultures";

(xiii) what the value of engaging in a foreign language and cultural studies is;

(xiv) why they would or would not recommend the program to incoming students.

b) **Assessment methods for our beginning Italian Studies students**: in order to assess student learning outcomes for Italian 101 and 102 effectively, we needed to make the assignments and materials we used in these classes assessment-ready. When we began the assessment process in 2009, we realized the materials we used were all based on traditional language teaching rather than the IVC method, which meant we were using apples to test oranges. During the first few years of assessment we focused on our 4th year students and more recently set the goal of assessing first year students as well in order to document student growth over the course of four years. The following are the measures we have taken in order to bring Italian 101 and 102 to a place where they could accurately be assessed:

i) **Replacing the final exam with more accurate measures that better reflect our teaching method**. We spent the 2012-13 academic year testing out new ways to evaluate our students. We replaced the final exam with portfolio, video projects, and oral exams in order to evaluate our student work through a more open-ended process that replicated our teaching method. We also created an out-of-class writing assignment that focused on process and skill building.

ii) **Training faculty to grade in a way that is consistent across the board**. We hired a native Italian student to help us compare the grading techniques of our Italian 101 professors to see how we used rubrics to grade student work.

iii) **Moving toward student portfolios through A Domain of One's Own**. During the 2013-14 academic year, we took the first step in reaching our program goals of helping our students to create a 4-year on-line student portfolio to showcase their education. We replaced our paper portfolio with the on-line medium weebly.com. If things went well with this format, we would continue to move toward an on-line domain through the A Domain of One's Own program supported by Emory.

iv) **Moving toward more successful writing assignments that better reflect our teaching philosophy**. We continued to assess and revise our writing assignments, moving the writing assignment into the classroom as an in-class assignment after noting that students were using on-line translators for their work when it was completed as outside work. We developed pre-writing exercises that students would do during the week of the writing assignment involving creating a dictionary of words around the topic of their essay, conducting free writing in class on their topics, and creating an outline of their essay.

v) **Revising the listening comprehension exercises**. We focused a number of resources on listening comprehension, but still have work to do on this topic in order to be assessment-ready. We planned to create listening exercises for tests from scratch so content of possible listening clips could not be memorized by students beforehand. We also came up with a list of scenarios for listening comprehension that would be useful to our students in the 101 102 series to aid in the learning of vocabulary, language acquisition, and listening comprehension. Dr. Judy Raggi-Moore was tasked with filming these scenarios in Italy during her 2014 summer study abroad program.

vi) **Revision and overhaul of rubrics**. Of particular note, we decided to add a new component into our goal to become assessment-ready by conducting a substantial overhaul of all class rubrics.

c) **Assessment methods of second year Italian Studies students:** We are still working on establishing uniform rubrics and methods for Italian 201 and 202, but plan to use rubrics developed for the first year as models for those used in 201 and 202. Dr. Judy Raggi Moore received a Winship Award fall semester 2013 to work on Italian Virtual Class materials for Italian 201 and 202 classes. The first phase of integrating new faculty into the 201, 201 teaching process began while she was on leave developing materials. Dr. Christine Ristaino taught both 201 classes that fall while Dr. Raggi-Moore taught 202 level courses in the spring. As a result of this transition, moving Raggi-Moore out of the classroom to create materials and Ristaino into the classroom, we did not conduct formal assessment at the 200 level during the 2013-14 academic year, but we did have continued discussions regarding how we might formally assess the 200 level in future years through direct and indirect measures and we are building toward that.

3) **Analysis of Assessment Results:**
   a) **Analysis of assessment results of our seniors and fourth year students:**
      i) **Discussion of data to determine assessment results and action items for next year.** The process began in early September and continued through the month of October. Drs. Ristaino, Muratore, and Porcarelli met to discuss how to evaluate writing samples and oral interviews. Because of the length and number of oral interviews to watch, it was not possible to assess them in one meeting. Thus, over the course of the months of September and October, faculty watched the 10 interviews and evaluated them. Writing samples were assessed by Professors Porcarelli and Ristaino individually and results were pooled.
      ii) **Direct measures of 4th year classes evaluated: the final papers: Analysis of assessment results of our seniors and fourth year students:** Direct measure evaluated: the final papers.
         (1) In the past we have evaluated fourth year final papers. This year we are reading writing assignments that occurred throughout the semester because a faculty member inadvertently left the final papers in Italy. As a result, we will not be able to compare results directly to assessment from prior years.
         (2) Scoring was conducted on three elements: content and organization (40 points /100), Vocabulary (30 points/100), Grammar (30 points/100) leaving Fluency for the indirect individual exit interview. Thus fluency did not factor into the students' final grade.

(3) The following are the results of our graded papers: 5 student work samples were graded. Content & organization scores were as follows: 40, 38, 36, 35, 25; vocabulary scores were as follows: 30, 28, 27, 26, 25; grammar scores were as follows: 28, 27, 26, 25, 22. Students fell between the B2 vantage or upper intermediate range through the C1 effective operational efficiency (advanced) levels of communication in Italian (as described by CEFR guidelines http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages).

(4) Overall the papers were impressive considering that no student begins Emory with prior knowledge of Italian, thus all results are based on four intensive years of study, with most students completing either a full semester or a summer study program in Italy. The evaluated essays are being kept on file for future comparative purposes.

iii) Indirect measure: the individual exit interview. Each interview was conducted by Professor Judy Raggi Moore in her office. The three faculty who did not teach the students evaluated their work. All interviews were taped and tapes will be kept on file. Faculty individually reviewed the interviews and collectively discussed them.

(1) Italian language skills: Students were able to articulate their personal intellectual inquiry path into Italian Studies, evaluating why they began taking Italian and where they are now at the end of four years. Students were able to discuss cultural content topics on a variety of topics from the historical intersection of history, literature and art, to current events in Italy. Students were able to formulate college-level hypotheses on another culture from the objective viewpoint of an educated outsider. Students were able to relate, and compare and contrast, their findings on Italy, Italian and the Italian culture to their own country and native culture. Faculty evaluated student work, placing it into one of three levels: Low, Medium, or High. "Type and level of difficulty of grammar and linguistic expressions used" ranged from Low to High in our students' spoken Italian (3 marked as Low, 2 as Medium, and 5 as High); "level of language accuracy maintained in parallel with effective communication of articulate thoughts" ranged from Low to High (2 Low, 2 Medium, and 6 High); and "ability to comprehend questions and respond incorporating linguistic, syntactical and cultural prompts" ranged from Medium to High (3 Medium; 7 High).

(2) Strengths of program: Students evaluated the strengths of Italian Studies at Emory as follows: a) family-like atmosphere and strong sense of community; b) interesting and enjoyable Italian club events; c) community engagement inside and outside of classes (Somali immigration story exchange, professor engagement in the community and involvement of students, Italian Club community-engaged events, such as movies and pizza at local Italian restaurants); d) IVC method, cultural immersion and grammar in context; e) the engagement, passion, mentoring, and ready availability of the faculty; f) excellent summer and semester programs in Italy; g) the development of a strong community of students; h) offering of Italian 101 & 102 at Emory over the summer.

(3) Constructive suggestions: Students suggested the following improvements: a) have grammar workshops outside of class to help students with grammar struggles; b) make grammar more clear—it's a bit abstract and confusing at times

in the way it is presented; c) offer a 4th year Italian Modern Politics class; integrate more fieldtrips into our classes to celebrate the Italian culture, art, businesses, etc… here in Atlanta.

b) **Analysis of assessment results of first year:** During the 2013-14 academic year, our goals for beginning Italian were as follows:

   i) *Quizzes and exams:* During the 2013-14 academic year, we aimed to make our exams better reflect the way in which we teach. We teach in an inductive, culture-based, interest-driven, and constructivist fashion. However, the innovative manner in which we teach did not transfer over into how we tested our students. In order to address this pedagogical inconsistency, we dedicating a number of weekly meetings to discussions on how to be more intentional with our exam creation and revised our quizzes and exams to include fewer fill-in rote grammar exercise and more open-ended questions, word banks, and content production on our tests. However, we focused primarily on exams and less so on quizzes. Our intention is to work on quiz creation this year to reflect the same types of open-ended exercises we design on our tests, in our on-line textbook, and in class. The study we conducted with the help of our undergraduate student allowed us to gain valuable information about how we grade our quizzes and tests. Although it was a tedious process of closely examining every inch of testing—from quiz creation, to discussions on rubrics, to analyzing disparities in rubric interpretation and thus grading—by the end of the year we had created a process that allowed for extremely consistent grading and a more intentional process. Making sure all colleagues were on the same page and graded in similar ways needed to occur before we could move to more in-depth assessment of student work.

   ii) *Listening comprehension:* During the 2013-14 academic year we were in search of the best way to test listening. We decided to experiment on our tests with pre-recorded dialogues we created through Wimba, accompanied by follow-up questions. Although the dialogues were prefabricated and thus not authentic, the system seemed to work for testing. The recordings reflected class content, vocabulary, and homework, yet students could not memorize script content as they had in the past because they would hear the listening exercise for the first time in class on test day. Each time we tested with a pre-recorded dialogue, we inserted a different but structurally similar dialogue into classes so our students would have exposure to the format. Overall, this initiative was successful and provided a solid format for testing listening skills.

   iii) *Compositions*: During the 2013-14 academic year we focused energy on revising the composition process to better fit our assessment goals. During the fall semester of 2013, we dedicated four in-class days to the craft of composition-writing. We also scheduled due dates for compositions into our syllabus so faculty would assign an equal number of compositions, addressing disparities from the 2012-13 academic year on these assignments. Rather than writing a number of different compositions throughout the year, we focused on the process and revisions of one writing assignment. Students had a thesis statement due one class, a first paragraph another, one page due on a third class, and a final draft due a fourth class. With each stage, students were allowed to revise their essays while also moving to the next step. A

problem arose, however, when we discovered many of our students were using on-line translators to aid them in their essay-writing process. Furthermore, our essays, due at the end of the semester, added work to an already heavy end-of-the semester load in Italian Studies, since students had to turn in their portfolio and video projects around the same time. During the spring of 2014, we decided to dedicate three in-class days to composition-writing instead. Before each in-class composition, we asked students to create an outline, an essay dictionary, and 3 free-writes on the topic. The system worked beautifully, allowing students to prepare intellectually before the in-class assignments but write without access to on-line translators. When students arrived on composition day, they handed in all prep-work and then began to write compositions with access only to paper and pen. We were able to evaluate our students' authentic writing with a solid writing rubric. We plan to continue this successful practice with minor revisions in the future.

iv) *Student Portfolios*: student portfolios on Weebly were extremely successful. Our students enjoyed the on-line format of the portfolios as opposed to the paper format we utilized previously. The portfolio showcased student levels of competency with grammar, cultural acquisition, student interests, and visual applications of the material students learned.

v) *Incorporating student interests*: we have always tried to incorporate student interests into our classes but during the 2013-14 year, while continuing to evaluate our quizzes and tests for consistency, we allowed professors a bit more flexibility with lesson plans in order to focus on student needs and interests. During the first semester the three Italian professors struggled a bit as far as creating a bank of material from which all three professors could draw when it came to quizzes and tests. We had to add in a free section to allow instructors to test material they had focused on in class related to student interests. We met weekly to rectify some of the disparities in teaching but creating common quizzes and tests remained difficult throughout the semester. Second semester, however, student interests were explored by allowing them to pick their in-class composition topics as well as choose a topic related to the Italian culture we were studying to present to the class over the course of the semester in Powerpoint or Prezi format. This was the first time we formally incorporated student presentations into course content. Although students had to choose from a list of topics, they were allowed to pick the topic that best fit with their interests, or propose their own topic. Students enjoyed exploring their interests with these open-ended formats and because neither interrupted the flow of class material that professors were obligated to teach, for the most part, professors stayed on-task, too. To accompany this practice, we revised our week-by-week schedule on our syllabus to be more clear about grammar and cultural topics to be covered, which helped faculty and students better focus on what would be tested and quizzed. In addition to following student interests in class, the end of year portfolio continued to support them, as students showcased their work and discussed their learning styles and preferred aspects of Italian culture. The final group video projects we instituted a few years ago supports student interests as they are allowed to choose their own topics for this project and present through a chosen medium**.**

vi) *Overhaul of class rubrics***:** Led by Simona Muratore and Christine Ristaino, great intention went into the process of revising class rubrics for Italian 101 and 102. We

discussed desired student outcomes and teaching methods and our rubrics came to better reflect both of these elements. We are extremely excited about the new assessment methods and rubrics being put into place in the 100 level Italian Studies classes.

4) **Faculty Involvement:** program Assessment has been a collective effort within the Italian Studies Program. Judy Raggi Moore and Christine Ristaino have taken leadership roles in assessment and colleagues have participated in evaluation of 4th year students as well as first year materials, rubrics, and grading. Faculty have worked together to identify learning outcomes, create rubrics, discuss what is working and not working, and develop plans for improvement. All major decisions and most assessment activities have involved the entire full-time faculty, (a small unit of 4), as well as an occasional temporary faculty member who teaches beginning Italian courses.

5) **Plans for next year:**
   a) *fourth year classes*: with a careful eye on 4th year enrollment numbers we are continuing to study and implement our fourth year direct method of assessment in accordance with the Common European Framework for language assessment. This evaluation method continues to be incorporated into all class syllabi and coursework. Based on what we learn each year through assessment efforts, we will continue to collectively examine and revise our SLO's and develop and revise rubrics (stored in our Google Drive conference and to be posted on our Assessment page on the Italian Studies website) that loosely match the CEFR standards. We will continue to work toward an on-line domain portfolio project in Italian at the 4th level and hope to have this assignment and its metrics in place by the fall of 2016. We will continue to evaluate our fourth year students, examining student writing throughout the year in order to evaluate grammar and content acquisition. We will use these papers as our major form of direct assessment. As far as analyzing dispositions next year, our oral interviews will be replaced by a written survey in English. We feel we would learn more if students had more time to reflect on dispositions in their native language. As it stands now, their focus is mainly on language production and we feel it detracts from their ability to go deeply into the topic of dispositions and program suggestions for improvement. Our plans are to integrate this work into student portfolios through A Domain of One's Own.
   b) *first year classes*: now that Italian 101 and 102 classes are being evaluated with instruments that properly mirror teaching methods, the goal of Italian 101 and 102 faculty is to implement a portfolio through the Domain of One's Own project. Since our students are already creating portfolios on-line utilizing Weebly, it will not be difficult to transfer this format into a domain platform. Domain will allow us to track student work from 101 all the way to Ital 470, so student portfolios will showcase work for all four years of study and connect to student majors, minors, passions and interests. This will allow us to assess our students each semester as well as throughout the trajectory of their studies with us. Faculty will meet in the spring to discuss which elements of the 101/102 portfolio projects we will assess and how. By the fall of 2015, we should have our assessment plan for Italian 101and 102 completely in place and ready to go;

c) *second year classes*: During the 2013-2014 academic year, our numbers in Italian 201 were very high but they fell in the spring. We had decided to bring Dr. Ristaino in to teach Italian 201. Normally Dr. Raggi Moore teaches all 200 level classes. However, given Dr. Moore does not teach first year Italian classes, we imagined teacher familiarity and loyalty might raise our numbers at the second level. As predicted, our numbers went up considerably at the 201 level when there was a familiar teacher in the classroom. This year Dr. Ristaino and Dr. Moore are both teaching Italian 201. Dr. Moore is also teaching a combined Wednesday session with both her and Dr. Ristaino's students in it to create familiarity and teacher loyalty. Our hope is that they will continue to study with Dr. Raggi Moore in Italian 202 classes because they know her and appreciate her teaching style. In exchange for teaching all students on Wednesdays, Dr. Ristaino is running a portfolio project and test-piloting it at the 201 level. Given the successful Weebly on-line portfolios that were created at the 100 level during the 2013-14 academic year, we are moving into the next phase and have become participants of Emory's A Domain of One's Own Project. Dr. Ristaino is creating portfolio assignments with an eye toward student majors and minors. The idea is that in addition to learning Italian, working with Italian Studies professors will help students create a growing professional definition for themselves. We are hoping our investment in their careers and interests will draw students to our program and upper level classes for the mentoring that takes place. Ristaino and Raggi Moore meet weekly to assess how classes are going, discuss common lesson plans and goals, and decide what needs to be done around the portfolio project to accomplish program assessment goals. All 201 students from both classes are participating in our portfolio project. This year, as we experiment with domain portfolios, we will see what is possible as far as assessment is concerned. However, our thought is that the Domain process will be the fulcrum around which our assessment efforts turn. We will spend a substantial amount of time this academic year figuring out our next assessment goals utilizing Domain projects as the medium through which we will evaluate our students, eventually at all levels 1-4. We will evaluate the Domain Portfolio assignment at the end of the semester with an eye toward improving it before introducing it into 101 and 102 in the fall of 2015. Faculty will meet in the spring to discuss which elements of the 201/202 portfolios we will assess and how. By the fall of 2015, we should be ready to formally assess Italian 201 and 202 classes;

d) *third year classes*: we will eventually examine and introduce a domain project into our third year classes. The following is a summary of the time line we plan to use to do this: our 3-year plan for Domain assessment project integration is as follows: fall 2015: begin formal assessment through Domain in Italian 101 and 201 classes; spring 2016: begin formal assessment in Italian 102 and 202 classes; fall 2016: begin formal assessment in Italian 301 classes; spring 2017: begin formal assessment in Italian 302 classes; fall 2017: begin formal assessment in Italian 470 classes;

e) *continued integration of cutting-edge assessment research*: through engagement with the Emory College Language Center and representing Italian Studies at Emory, Dr. Raggi Moore will remain connected to the Consortium on Useful Assessment in Language and Humanities Education. This Consortium was created by Notre Dame University and Georgetown University, and included Emory and Rice universities. The consortium acted as a pilot project that actively studied assessment as a helpful catalyst to understanding and improving language and culture education through program evaluation. The program

was guided by Prof. John Norris of Georgetown University, one of the nation's leading authorities on assessment. Although this consortium has disbanded for the moment, Dr. Raggi-Moore will have access to the resources this group of scholars created together.

f) *continued emphasis on updating assessment tools*: in light of the university-wide emphasis on assessment, the Italian Studies Program will continue the methodical work of evaluating, assessing, developing, and implementing the following: Mission or Goals statement, SLO's, syllabi, and rubrics. A sizeable portion of our frequent faculty meetings is dedicated to this work. The topic of assessment has brought faculty internal conversations on pedagogy and program development to a more productively focused level, achieving the ultimate goal of this nationwide project. We continue to focus on mapping the SLOs throughout our courses. In this initiative we are assisted by Leah Churchran of the Faculty Technology Center in Woodruff.

g) *collaboration with virtual colleagues in assessment discussions:* the Italian Virtual Class (IVC) – How We Teach Project continues to work in accordance with the Guidelines on Useful Assessment presented by the Consortium and John Norris, within the Italian Virtual Class (a proprietary program, created by Prof. Raggi Moore) method adopted at Emory. We continue to engage three external universities that have adopted the IVC method to co-participate with us. In light of this we meet twice per year for 3-4 day-long workshops, one day of which is dedicated to evaluating work conducted individually on the SLO's, rubrics, and syllabi. Many of the meetings are recorded, digitized, and uploaded to a stream server for future consultation and publication. The working project is housed in Google Drive. We also presented our research at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference this past year, both as a unique example of innovative teaching as well as cross-university collaboration on pedagogy and assessment. We are presenting this coming November at the 2014 SAMLA and ACTFL conferences.

h) Domain of One's Own and Italian Studies mentoring: we are continuing to work on ways to retain students at 200, 300 and 400 levels. We have decided that our focus must be on mentoring in order to keep our students coming back to Italian Studies. The Italian Studies Mentorship Program that we began last year has not worked in the way we thought it would. Mentoring seemed to happen organically within our own individual classes rather than with the students from the group we were in charge of mentoring (100 level, 200 level, and majors and minors). Our new domain platform will allow us to mentor our individual students in a different and more effective way, strengthening the strong mentoring that is already happening within our classrooms. On all future domain assignments, we are asking students to relate the Italian content they are studying to their future goals, passions and interests. Professors will be able to see how students develop these interests, passions and goals throughout their trajectory of classes with us. Professors who teach upper level courses will be aware of student interests and goals on the first day they meet their students because of portfolios and will be able to begin a relationship and mentoring sooner in the semester as opposed to after the initial getting to know you phase, which sometimes takes a few months or even a full semester. Italian Studies is proud of its ability to connect with students on many different levels and mentoring continues to be a point of strength within Italian Studies. By reaching out to students around what matters to them the most—their interests, passions, and futures—it is our hope that they will feel connected enough to Italian Studies at the end of Italian 102 to continue studying with us.