



Language department pilots new semester exams

The Language Performance Assessments replace the regular language final system

by Hannah Young

The Language Department is taking a new approach to finals as they plan to eliminate the midyear final and replace it with the Language Performance Assessments in December.

Department Chair Lorri Starck-King felt that the finals schedule was too much of a time constraint.

“That hour and half period didn’t work for us. We were already doing it differently with the listening portion on different days.”

The 90-minute testing period favored the traditional multiple-choice exams, but when it came to accurately evaluating students’ proficiency in a language, it was not a good fit.

The Language Performance Assessments (LPA), however, allows each teacher to evaluate their students in the way of their choosing. Whether it’s through doing a project or writing on a topic, the language teachers plan to do an assessment that will be more realistic in demonstrating a student’s

ability to speak the language.

French teacher Franck Greaux said, “It’s a great departure from the traditional semester exam, which was mostly knowledge based with multiple choice and fill in the blank. A lot of times, it was just like a list of vocabulary. [The Language Performance Assessments] lend themselves more to showing a student’s ability to understand, to read, and to write.”

“It might take 3 days to complete projects, which is much more valuable than sitting for 90 minutes doing standardized assessment,” German teacher Venera Stabinsky said.

Ana Del Rey, a Spanish teacher, agreed, “It’s not the same format of 110 questions. That just doesn’t feel very natural. [This new testing method] follows the trend of language teaching globally. It gives us the opportunity to assess with authentic materials.”

Another crucial aspect of it is that the assessment is not cumulative but instead, summative.

Greaux described the semester exam format as “a little bit of a dinosaur in a sense. You have to incorporate everything you have learned from the beginning of the semester.”

However, the LPA is more “topical with the things you have been studying in class,” Starck-King



Foreign language students learn about the new language final that will be administered in December | Zervas

said.

Overall, the language department believes the new system will benefit students as well as teachers. “It will give students a better picture of themselves to know what they can really do. It will show them very clearly how well they are able to talk in a second language,” Del Rey said.

Stabinsky said, “It’s a good way for students to showcase what they’ve learned so far. It’s great feedback for teachers to see what we are doing well or where we have to go back and adjust our instruction.”

According to Greaux, the testing structure and timing will also prove advantageous to students. “The idea

is now we work from the beginning and we are finishing the unit with this exam. [The students] know where they are heading. They have a sense of direction.” Additionally, the teachers intend to use the department’s new plan to reduce the students’ stress in January.

The LPA will be submitted into the grade books as regular tests, rather than the traditional finals’ 20% weight on a student’s grade. For example, Del Rey grades her students through listening, writing, and speaking. Starck-King said, “[The LPA] goes into whatever category it would have gone into as a regular assessment.”

However, Greaux has some

hesitancy and concern towards how the assessments will pan out.

“Our department is the only one doing this. It feels like our department is on the other side of the mountain. I’m afraid of the consequences for our department. We no longer have the authority of a semester exam. What kind of message is it sending to the students? Some students will take it just as seriously because they are thorough and they care. And some might get the wrong idea,” Greaux said.

Nevertheless, the language department is excited to test this system out. “We want to see how you can engage with the language,” Starck-King said.

Girl Up and Feminism Club hosts Period Product Drive

Period Product Drive collects tampons and pads in support of impoverished women

by Da Hee Kim

During the week of Nov. 14, any student present at school would probably have noticed the brown paper bags sitting in various classrooms, hopefully overflowing with boxes of period products.

This event, while seemingly just another donation drive, was the brand new Period Product Drive, sponsored by Girl Up and Feminism Club.

New Trier’s Period Product Drive was a weeklong drive where the aim was to collect pads and tampons from female advisories, which were donated to homeless women and girls.

“We put these paper bags in a bunch of the advisory rooms, and we asked people to bring pads and tampons that they had, or to go out and buy them,” said senior Girl Up co-head Samantha Scheinfeld. “They go to the YWCA in Chicago, and we’re [Feminism Club and Girl Up] working together.”

Since the donations go to the YWCA, the Period Product Drive is local, which can be seen as a benefit. “Normally, we focus a lot on global issues, which is amazing, but it was nice to do something for the local community,” said Scheinfeld.

The idea behind the Period Product Drive is that these products



The Period Product Drive aims to help underprivileged women. | Zervas

are often not accessible to the majority of women in poverty. Therefore, since students in the district have or can generally afford period supplies, they can donate them to shelters that can’t pay the price.

Sophomore Helen Kuhn, a recent member of the club, shares this belief. “We are so fortunate that we can buy our own supplies,” said Kuhn. “So, we are donating the supplies to homeless shelters, so they can have the supplies without really spending any money.”

The Period Project was run by both Girl Up and Feminism Club, which are closely related. Girl Up is a co-ed program that exists within New Trier and across the nation, in

partnership with the United Nations.

According to the official website, the goal is to empower girls and help them “transform our world - Girl Up engages girls to take action.”

Girl Up’s purpose is not just to raise money for causes, but also to advocate for them, according to seniors Ali Christian and Ingrid Wefing.

“We spend a lot of time in the club learning about things that are happening,” said Wefing. Christian agreed with the idea that Girl Up goes beyond just being able to fundraise.

“I think [learning] is a big part of what Girl Up is about, besides just raising money.”

Similar to Girl Up, Feminism

Club is a club that exists not just at New Trier, but also at public and private schools in the area and nationwide.

Feminism Club works to be a space for conversation, open to all genders, where students can learn about feminism and other related topics.

“Feminism is becoming an increasingly intersectional topic,” said adviser and art teacher Gardiner Funo. “We have a lot of conversations about current events - and it’s not always feminine issues.”

Among the issues that Girl Up and Feminism Club tackle, periods are a problem that are particularly hard to confront. Period products can be difficult to purchase for impoverished women, since their income has to be spent on other necessities, like basic shelter.

“They can’t even afford a place to live and food to eat. How can they afford pads and tampons?” said Scheinfeld.

This inaccessibility also comes from the fact that talking about periods or similar topics are considered “taboo”, which leads to a lack of open conversation and awareness, especially with students.

“They may not want to divulge any personal information” said Kinetic Wellness and Health teacher Kate Goodman. Even across her sophomore Health classes, Goodman notices a lack of participation among students.

“Sophomores are worried about what they look like in front of their peers, typically.”

Despite the “taboo” nature of the

topic of periods, the Period Project was effective. Over the course of the week, many donations consistently came in from a majority of the advisories, which was indicative of the drive’s success.

“A lot of people have been bringing something in - it’s something that all girls usually have in their house, so it’s super easy,” said sophomore and Girl Up member Kathleen Hopps.

‘Normally, we focus a lot on global issues, which is amazing, but it was nice to do something for the local community’

Junior Maggie DiPatri witnessed its success herself. “My advisory had a full bag, and some advisories have had multiple bags, so it’s definitely gone well.”

DiPatri added that she didn’t really witness any roadblocks with the female advisories contributing, either.

Funo also didn’t get the impression that the drive had been struggling - instead, she saw how it thrived.

“One of the advantages of doing a drive for something like this, and doing it publicly, is that it normalizes that part of life,” Funo said.