Assessment of French 102 students

My French 102 spring 2009 students were given an identical culture test in French at the beginning and at the end of the semester. The questions involved knowledge of several French-speaking areas such as France, Canada, Senegal, Switzerland, Martinique and the three North African countries (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) that form the Maghreb. There were a total of 56 questions, and each question is a multiple choice question with three possible answers. A total of 11 students took the test. The results of these tests reveal the following:

On the first test at the beginning of the semester, students’ scores ranged from 23 of 56 (lowest) to 32 of 56 (highest). At the end of the semester, the scores ranged from 40 of 56 and 50 of 56, showing a vast improvement overall. The last scores reflect an improvement between 13 and 25 correct answers.

I would like to use a different culture test for my French 102 students. This time I would like to use a test written in English to strictly test their geographical, historical and cultural knowledge of the French speaking areas of the world, instead of the current test written in French, which could have caused additional mistakes due to unfamiliarity with the language.

Narrative Analysis of SP 101 Students’ Pre-knowledge of Spanish/Hispanic Cultures
Dr. Berta Isabel Arias – Fall, 2008

Cultural knowledge is a key component of any world language instruction since it gives the background information and texture to understanding the people who speak a specific world language. In all my language classes during the first week of class, students are asked to complete a brief ‘culture quiz’ to assess their knowledge of the people and countries that speak the specific language. Attached is the quiz administered to two of my Spanish 101 classes in the fall of 2008, identified as ‘Class X’ and ‘Class Y’.

As can be seen from the pre-test answers regarding the geography of the Spanish-speaking world, no students were able to name the 20 countries as compared to an almost 50% of the class responding to this question correctly in the post test. Similar approximately 50-100% gains were made between the pre-test and post-test answers with regard to the pre-Columbian cultures and their contributions.

The results of this particular sample are consistent with results I obtain in all my classes with beginning (Spanish 101) students, and confirm the need for addressing cultural content within the world language curriculum beyond the brief information given with the language texts.

Pre-Knowledge Assessment of Culture
SP 101 – Fall, 2008
Dr. Berta Isabel Arias

1. How many countries speak Spanish as their only or main language?
2. Name the countries.
Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Spain

3. What were the 3 major civilizations in the Americas when Columbus arrived in 1492 (pre-Columbian cultures)?
Aztec, Maya, Inca

3. How/why did Columbus get to the Americas?
Looking for a shorter route to the Far East/Increasing commerce with Asia

4. What were some vegetable(s)/fruit(s) as contributions from the Americas to the world?
Corn, beans, tomatoes, peppers, banana, oranges, potato.

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<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Answer 1</th>
<th>Answer 2</th>
<th>Answer 3</th>
<th>Answer 4</th>
<th>Answer 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class X (17 students)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Y (19 students)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<table>
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<th>Post-Test</th>
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<td>Class Y (14 students)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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