

Strategic Analysis Briefing: School of Foreign Languages Unit Evaluations

Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the unit-based SWOT analyses for the School of Foreign Languages, specifically focusing on the Curriculum & Material Development, Independent Learning Center (ILC), Measurement & Assessment, and Professional Development units.

The primary findings indicate a high level of institutional commitment to international standards—specifically the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)—and a strong culture of collaboration and peer-led improvement. However, several systemic challenges persist across all units:

- **Workload Constraints:** High teaching loads and administrative responsibilities significantly hinder the capacity for material development, professional development participation, and the execution of labor-intensive assessment protocols (e.g., the double-examiner system).
- **Digital Transformation:** While there is a strong awareness of and desire for digital integration (E-assessment, AI feedback, and digital learning platforms), units currently face infrastructural constraints, including a reliance on paper-based processes and inconsistent tech integration.
- **Evaluation Frameworks:** There is a noted need for more systematic, data-driven frameworks to track student engagement in independent learning, evaluate the long-term impact of professional development, and continuously assess curriculum effectiveness.

I. Curriculum & Material Development Unit

Mission and Scope

The unit is tasked with designing and updating a student-centered language curriculum aligned with international standards. Its scope includes curriculum planning, course design, material adaptation, and continuous improvement based on feedback and student performance.

Key Insights

- **Strengths in Methodology:** The curriculum is built on communicative language teaching practices and international standards. Success is driven by experienced instructors and strong internal collaboration.
- **Operational Limitations:** The primary internal weakness is the "limited time for instructors to engage in extensive material development due to heavy teaching loads." Additionally, financial resources for high-quality material production are restricted.

- **Future Trajectory:** The unit identifies a critical need for a "more systematic and continuous curriculum evaluation framework." Opportunities lie in expanding the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and digital learning platforms.
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II. Independent Learning Center (ILC) Unit

Mission and Scope

The ILC supports English language proficiency by providing structured out-of-class opportunities, primarily for B1 level students in the preparatory program. It aims to foster "learner autonomy and learner responsibility."

Key Insights

- **Strategic Alignment:** Activities are strictly aligned with the B1 preparatory program's learning outcomes, utilizing digital tools to provide flexible access.
 - **Engagement Challenges:** A significant weakness is that student participation is voluntary and "may be inconsistent." There is also a "difficulty in systematically tracking student engagement and measuring the direct impact of activities."
 - **External Pressures:** Students often prioritize assessed coursework over voluntary ILC activities, especially when facing an "intensive academic workload."
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III. Measurement & Assessment Unit

Mission and Scope

This unit manages the full assessment lifecycle—from placement exams to finals—ensuring that all tools are valid, reliable, and fair. It covers the English Preparatory Program across proficiency levels A1 to B2.

Key Insights

- **Rigorous Quality Control:** The unit employs a "peer-review system" for all exams and a "double-examiner system" for speaking exams to ensure objectivity and inter-rater reliability.
- **Administrative Burdens:** The very systems that ensure quality (double-examiners and peer reviews) place a "significant time and resource burden" on staff. Furthermore, reliance on paper-based materials for speaking exams is noted as a logistical burden that contradicts sustainability goals.
- **Technological Opportunities:** There is a clear mandate for "Digital Transformation & E-Assessment," including transitioning to tablet-based grading and leveraging AI for preliminary writing feedback.
- **Risk Factors:** The unit is vulnerable to "sudden shifts in YÖK (Council of Higher Education) policies," which can necessitate the redesign of assessment frameworks on short notice.

IV. Professional Development Unit

Mission and Scope

The unit plans and monitors in-service training to enhance teaching quality. It identifies faculty needs through surveys and organizes workshops, webinars, and publisher-supported training.

Key Insights

- **Needs-Based Approach:** Training is not arbitrary; it is "determined through instructor preference and needs-analysis surveys," utilizing internal peer expertise.
- **Global Integration:** The unit leverages international resources, such as the "American English Live Online Teacher Professional Development webinars," to provide access to global expertise.
- **Evaluation Gaps:** Current evaluation relies on "self-reported feedback surveys." The unit acknowledges a need for "additional monitoring tools" to track the long-term impact of training on actual classroom teaching practices.
- **Participation Barriers:** Similar to other units, "heavy teaching loads and administrative responsibilities" are the primary threats to instructor engagement in professional development.

V. Cross-Unit Comparative Analysis

The following table synthesizes the commonalities identified across the four units:

Category	Common Themes and Data Points
Strengths	Expertise in ELT; alignment with CEFR/International standards; strong internal collaboration and peer-sharing; use of digital tools.
Weaknesses	High Workload: Heavy teaching loads limit development time across all units. Data Gaps: Lack of systematic long-term tracking for curriculum, student engagement, and PD impact.
Opportunities	Digital Shift: Transition to E-assessments, AI, and online learning platforms. Collaboration: Potential for inter-institutional "item banks" and global webinar access.
Threats	Policy & Budget: Shifts in national regulations (YÖK) and limited funding for materials or conferences. Student Motivation: Students prioritizing grades over autonomous/voluntary learning.

VI. Critical Conclusions and Recommendations

1. **Address the "Workload-Quality" Paradox:** The School's highest-quality processes (e.g., double-examiner assessments and original material development) are also its most significant source of staff strain. Moving toward digital rubrics and automated data entry is a prioritized solution to mitigate this.
2. **Formalize Evaluation Frameworks:** Multiple units (Curriculum, ILC, and PD) identified a need for more than just "self-reported" or "anecdotal" feedback. Establishing a unified, data-driven framework for measuring the "long-term impact" of instructional and developmental initiatives is essential.
3. **Sustainable Infrastructure:** The Measurement & Assessment unit explicitly highlights the need to move away from "physical/paper-based materials" to reduce waste and manual administrative labor. This aligns with the broader institutional goal of "Digital Transformation."
4. **Strategic Resource Allocation:** Given the "restricted financial resources," the units should continue to leverage "Open Educational Resources" and "inter-institutional collaboration" to maintain high standards without excessive costs.