Guiding students who feel their language placement might not be appropriate

The 101 level: For any language this means that we start from the very beginning: greetings, the alphabet, basic vocabulary and grammar that allow the student to communicate on a basic level in the present tense. The courses are conducted primarily in the target language. A student who has had three or more years of language prior to UWEC (even if “their teacher didn’t teach them a thing” in high school), really should not be in 101 and should be encouraged to enroll for 102. It will save her time and money.

The 102 level: This implies that the student has seen the basic present tense of verbs (regular and irregular), the verbs “to be”, standard vocabulary and cultural units (the family, daily routines, etc.). There is a relatively quick review of this material to start the semester out and then we continue with more complex grammar such as reflexive verbs, and the past tense. Most students who have had 3 years of middle and high school language will have seen all of the grammar covered in 101 and 102. Talking to a student who placed high in the 102-range about moving up to 201 is legitimate and could be worth their time and investment.

The 201 level: Students who have seen the grammar described above, and who believe they had a decent previous experience with the language, are better served staying in 201 if that is their placement. While the 200-level might seem daunting, as opposed to 102, if the student has had 3 years or more of a language, asking to move down to 102 is most likely a waste of their time and money.

In all languages, the 201-level begins with a review of the materials covered in 101 and 102 before entering into the new materials. 201 focuses on reviewing the present and past tense, introducing compound verbs, the future and the conditional tenses and spends a good amount of time with the present subjunctive while building on cultural knowledge.

The 202 level: Begins with a review of 201 and then finishes the present subjunctive before introducing the past subjunctive and more complex compound sentences (e.g. “If I had known you were coming, I would have baked a cake!”).

At the 200 level classes are imparted almost exclusively in the target language and assessment activities are pushing students to begin to produce language at a more academic level in the various communication skills.

Any student who tests out of the 200 level, obviously had a successful experience prior to coming to UWEC and should be encouraged to continue on in their studies. Even if a major in French or German, let’s say, is not in their plans, we now have Certificate of Proficiency programs in those languages to go along with a Certificate in Spanish for the Health Professions.