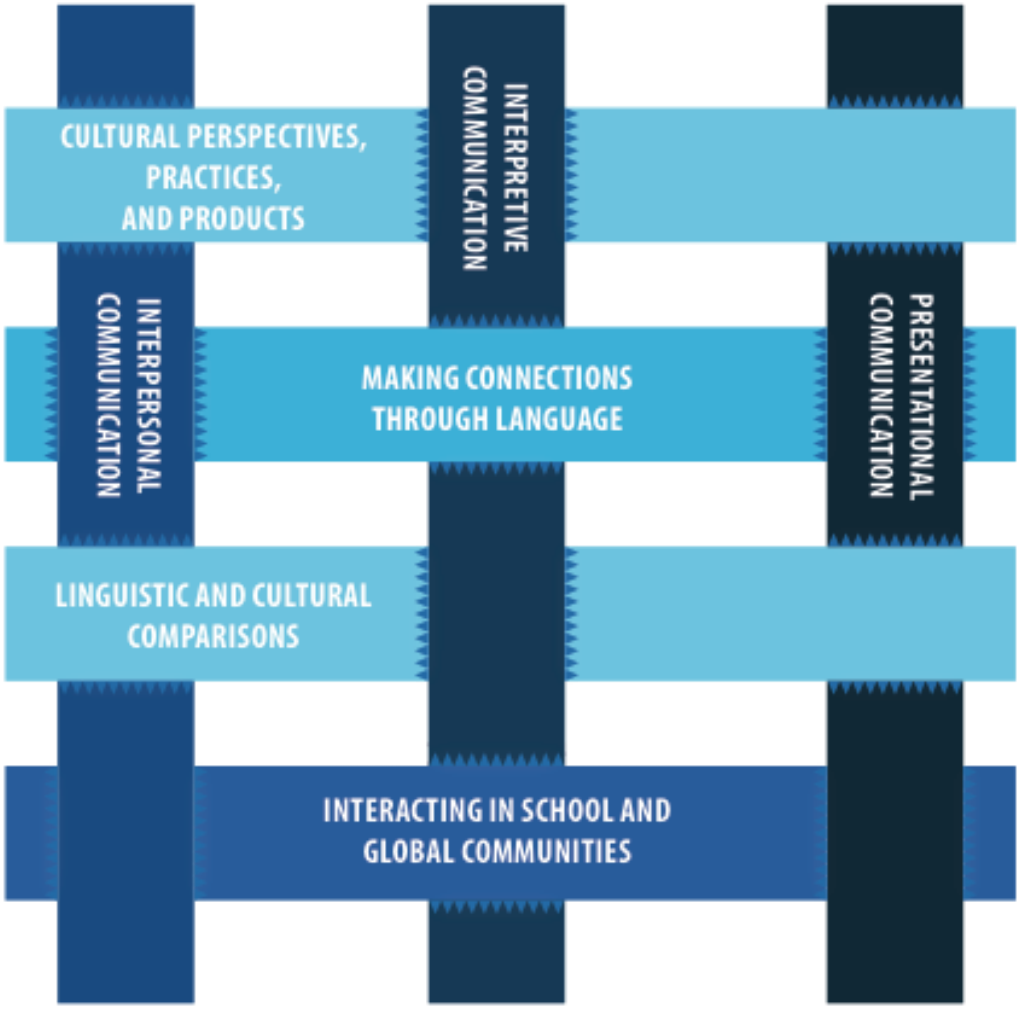
Implementing the Foreign Language Standards of Learning in Virginia Classrooms



A Guide for Teachers

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A Note to Administrators

This document, *Implementing the Foreign Language Standards of Learning in Virginia Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers* is intended to be used as a support document for teachers. It contains additional guidance and suggestions for implementing the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* in classrooms. This document is not intended to be used for the evaluation of teachers, students, or student performance in Virginia's world language classrooms.

Included are specific strategies that serve solely as examples. None of these examples should be considered as an expectation at any particular point of the curriculum. Instead of replacing a division-developed curriculum, this document serves as guidance for aligning a school system's current curriculum to the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* expectations.

Introduction

The technical assistance documents included are intended to assist teachers with implementing the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* (revised 2014). The documents elaborate on the content strands that outline the knowledge, skills, and processes essential for language use and the standards of performance for each level of study in both modern world languages (Roman alphabet and non-Roman alphabet) and Latin. This elaboration includes relevant and useful resources, such as language-learning strategies and assessment strategies that are appropriate for each strand and level of study.

This elaboration also provides teachers with a target proficiency level, a series of progress indicators that illustrate what students should be able to do in each skill area, and a group of performance indicators that spell out the seven domains that outline the range of performance for the given mode of communication—interpersonal, interpretive, or presentational—for each standard at each level. The seven domains are functions, contexts/content, text type, language control, vocabulary, communication strategies, and cultural awareness. Since the essential goal of learning another language is to communicate, the information included in this series of documents focuses on the following:

- Interpersonal Communication: Speaking and Writing
- Interpretive Communication: Listening for Understanding
- Interpretive Communication: Reading for Understanding
- Presentational Communication: Speaking
- Presentational Communication: Writing
- Cultural Perspectives, Practices, and Products

Since culture is reflected in language itself, it is included here to reinforce the fact that learning about culture cannot be separated from learning a language. The five standards of performance are all measurable; culture, on the other hand, is not measurable (except for factual knowledge). However, cultural appropriateness is a key element in every communicative act and helps determine the acceptability of each. This aspect of culture can be evaluated through the use of "Can Do Statements."

The proficiency targets given for each of the standards are based on data gathered from other states and have proved to be consistent among those states. These targets reflect the skill levels at which students can arrive when the target language is used to the maximum extent possible. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90 percent plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom. In classrooms that feature maximum target-language use, instructors use a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaningful communication (http:// www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/use-the-target-language-the-classroom-0). This does not mean simply talking in the target language 90 percent of the time, but also providing appropriate comprehensible input for meaningful communication.

The examples provided here must be recognized as *samples* of appropriate activities and resources and not as items that *must* be included in instruction in all classrooms in Virginia public schools. They are provided as models to inspire teachers to create similar age- and level-appropriate activities and assessments for students. Similarly, the suggested proficiency targets are given to provide informed guidance to local language programs and in no way should be interpreted as a state mandate.

This document is not static—it is adaptable so that it can reflect current trends in world language education. Any portion of this document can be modified as needed. In fact, the entire document is more like

a package that includes multiple parts that can be used separately as needs and language specialties dictate. For this package to be helpful and effective, however, teachers must be very familiar with the explanation of the basic principles of proficiency. The contents of this package include:

I. *Implementing the Foreign Language Standards of Learning in Virginia Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers*
II. Progression Grids for Languages Taught in Virginia Public Schools
    A. Modern World Languages: Roman Alphabet Languages
        1. Level I
        2. Level II
        3. Level III
        4. Level IV
    B. Modern World Languages: Non-Roman Alphabet Languages
        1. Level I
        2. Level II
        3. Level III
        4. Level IV
        5. Level V
    C. Latin
        1. Level I
        2. Level II
        3. Level III
        4. Level IV
III. Additional Resources
IV. Glossary of Terms

Note: The Progression Grids for Languages Taught in Virginia Public Schools are closely linked to the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* and contain the following information:

1. Strand—a particular strand of the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning*
2. Standard—the particular standard(s) of the *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* relevant to a strand
3. Target Proficiency Level—the specific level appropriate for performance at a level of study
4. Performance Descriptions—descriptions of the expected performance of a student at an appropriate proficiency range, including the domains relevant to that range:
    a. Functions
    b. Contexts/Content
    c. Text Type
    d. Language Control
    e. Vocabulary
    f. Communication Strategies
    g. Cultural Awareness
5. Resources relevant for each strand at a level of study
6. Sample Instructional and Assessment Strategies—examples of types of activities appropriate for a particular strand and the standard(s) relevant to that strand at a level of study

Sample assessment items will be submitted electronically by Virginia world language teachers, vetted by experts in the field of world language pedagogy, and made available online in an item bank. The sample assessment items will reference the applicable standard of learning for the level of study for which the item was designed. The item bank can be easily updated, as can any additional resources that individual teachers

would like to share with their world language colleagues.

The Integration of Proficiency into Levels of Study

A number of Virginia public schools now offer a variety of world language programs in addition to traditional levels: Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools (FLES); immersion programs; and long-term continued, articulated K-12 programs. In order for the current *Foreign Language Standards of Learning* to be applicable to this breadth of language programs, the scope of the standards of learning must be broadened. Additionally, students are beginning their study of world languages at different ages and/or grade levels (i.e., pre-kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school), and the current standards of learning do not address the expectations and goals of language performance for students of varying ages and grade levels. The smooth transition from level to level and from school to school by students who enroll in world language programs at various ages and grade levels can be ensured by considering the age appropriateness of content and performance, as well as the psychological development of the language learners.

A recognized solution that addresses such concerns is achieved through the integration of proficiency targets of performance into the *Virginia Foreign Language Standards of Learning*. To help explain the rationale for such integration, an explanation of the terminology and components of proficiency is offered below.

Performance vs. Proficiency

According to the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*, *performance* is the ability to use language that has been learned and practiced in an instructional setting (i.e., language ability that has been practiced and that is within familiar contexts and content areas). *Proficiency* is the ability to use language in real-world situations in a spontaneous interaction and nonrehearsed context and in a manner acceptable and appropriate to native speakers of the language. Assessment of language learners' *performance* is based on the description of the standards of the level of study within the contexts and content areas that have been learned and practiced. Assessment of language learners' *proficiency*, on the other hand, is based on language users providing sufficient evidence of all of the assessment criteria of a particular level of performance according to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. See Table 1.

Table 1. Assessing Performance vs. Assessing Proficiency: How Are These Assessments Different?

Assessing Performance	Assessing Proficiency

• **Based on instruction:** Describes what the language learner can demonstrate based on what was learned	• **Independent of specific instruction or curriculum:** Describes what the language user can do regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired
• **Practiced:** Derived from the language functions and vocabulary that the learner has practiced or rehearsed but which are applied to other tasks within familiar contexts	• **Spontaneous:** Derived from nonrehearsed situations
• **Familiar content and context:** Based on content that was learned, practiced, or rehearsed; all within a context similar but not identical to how learned	• **Broad content and context:** Based on content context that are appropriate for a given level
• **Demonstrated performance:** To be evaluated within a range, must be able to demonstrate the features of the domains of a given range in those contexts and content areas that have been learned and practiced	• **Sustained performance across all the tasks and contexts for the level:** To be at a level, must demonstrate consistent patterns of all the criteria for a given level, all of the time

Source: *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*, 2012, p. 5

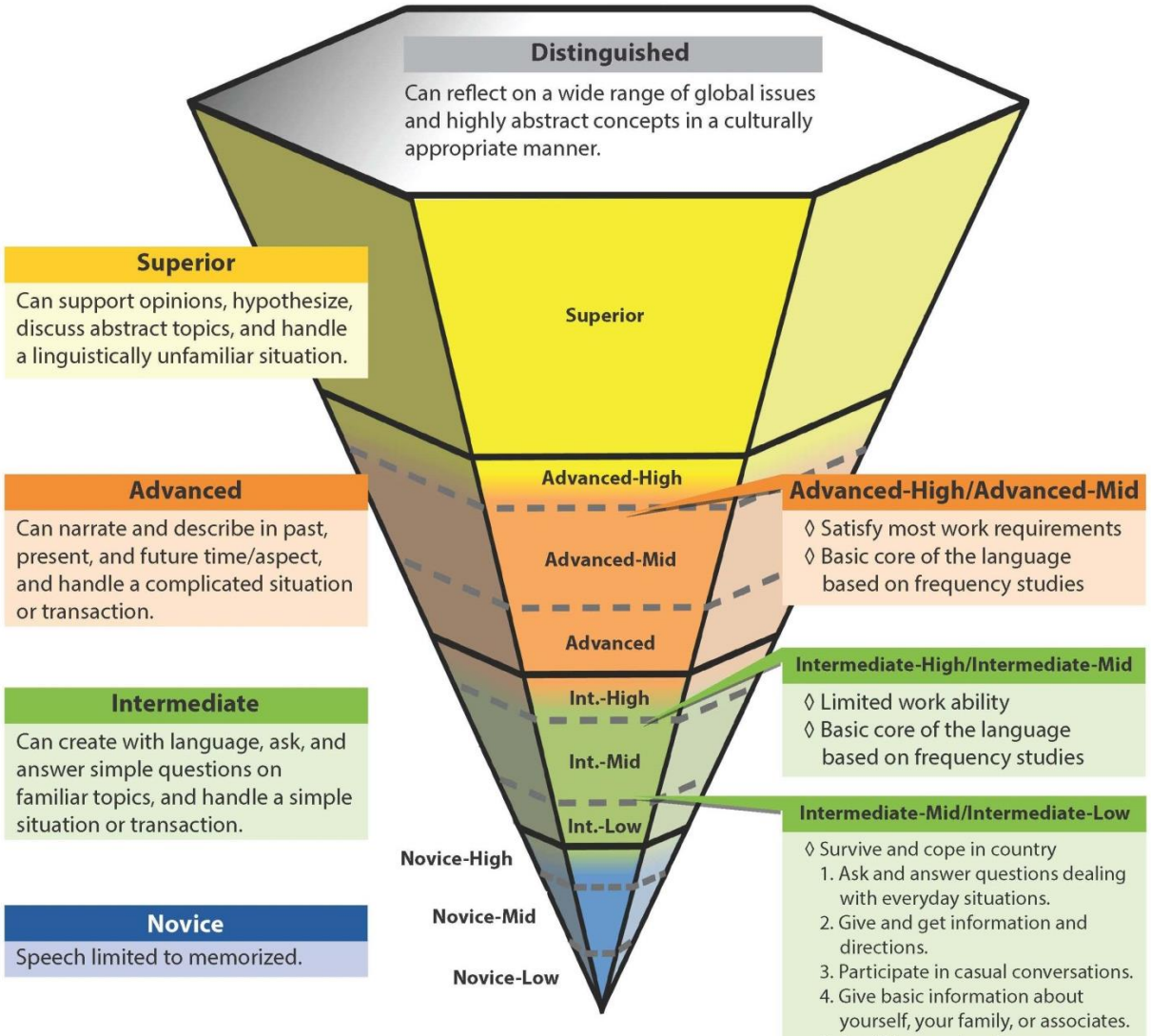
Proficiency Target vs. Proficiency Range vs. Proficiency Level

A *proficiency target* specifies reasonable expectations of language use for assessment at different levels of study. A target is not set up as a specific point but as a range since performance in individual skill areas (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening) will vary slightly on a daily basis but will cluster over time within a given range. A *proficiency range* indicates the scope of ability to communicate in a world language and incorporates a breadth of receptive and productive skills (i.e., listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing). It considers the level of psychological development as well as the linguistic level of ability with which thinking is expressed. Each range also considers knowledge of the culture(s) that use the particular world language. In other words, effective communication is the combination of mental capabilities, linguistic ability, and cultural awareness that is appropriate for any given age group. A *proficiency level*, on the other hand, refers to more specific abilities within a given broader proficiency range (e.g., Novice-Mid in the Novice range [see the discussion below]).

Proficiency

There are five major proficiency levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished. Each of the levels, except for Superior and Distinguished, is divided into sub-levels of Low, Mid, and High as illustrated in Figure 1. The description of each major level is representative of a specific range of abilities. Together these levels form a hierarchy in which each level above Novice includes all levels below it.

Figure 1. The ACTFL Proficiency Pyramid



Adapted from *South Carolina Standard for World Language Proficiency*. (2013). Retrieved from http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/documents/2013_SC_Standard_for_WL_Proficiency_08-13-13.pdf.

Adapted from *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/

The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* describe the tasks that speakers, writers, listeners, and readers can handle at each level, as well as the content, context, accuracy, and type of discourse associated with each task at each level. See Table 2. The guidelines also present the limits that a language user encounters when attempting to function at the next major level. Activities, exercises, and assessments have been created to show what the language learner is able to do within the current range in addition to how well the learner is able to perform at the next range, since the goal is to advance learning, not to maintain the status quo.

Table 2. Components of Proficiency for the Assessment of Speaking*

Proficiency Level	Global Tasks and Functions	Context/Content	Accuracy/ Comprehensibility	Text Type
Superior	Discuss topics extensively, support opinions, and hypothesize. Deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation	Most formal and informal settings; wide range of general interest topics and some special fields of interest and expertise	No pattern of errors in basic structures; errors virtually never interfere with communication or distract the native speaker from the message	Extended discourse
Advanced	Narrate and describe in major time frames and deal effectively with unanticipated complication	Most informal and some formal settings; topics of personal interest	Understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to dealing with nonnative speakers	Paragraphs
Intermediate	Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions	Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations; predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities	Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with nonnative speakers.	Discrete sentences
Novice	Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases	Most common informal settings; most common aspects of daily life	May be difficult to understand, even for speakers accustomed to dealing with nonnative speakers	Individual words and phrases

Source: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages © 2012

*****The Distinguished level of proficiency is not included in this document, since it is an unrealistic level of attainment for students in a K–16 environment. According to the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (2012), "Speakers at the Distinguished level are able to use language skillfully, and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness. They are educated and articulate users of the language. They can reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner. Distinguished-level speakers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes, allowing them to advocate a point of view that is not necessarily their own. They can tailor language to a variety of audiences by adapting their speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic. Speakers at the Distinguished level produce highly sophisticated and tightly organized extended discourse. At the same time, they can speak succinctly, often using cultural and historical references to allow them to say less and mean more. At this level, oral discourse typically resembles written discourse. A nonnative accent, a lack of a native-like economy of expression, a limited control of deeply embedded cultural references, and/or an occasional isolated language error may still be present at this level."

Below are the distinctions among the sub-levels:

- LOW — Uses linguistic energy to sustain the requirements of the level. A language user with a Low rating shows less fluency and accuracy, more lapses in vocabulary, and more self-correction than a Mid user. A Low user functions primarily within the level with little or no demonstrated ability from the next level.
- MID — Represents a number of speech profiles, based on the mix of quantity (i.e., how much the language user says), quality (i.e., efficiency and effectiveness with which a message is communicated), and/or the degree to which the user controls language features from the next sub-

level.

- HIGH — Communicates with confidence when performing the functions of a respective level. A language user is capable of functioning for at least half of the time at the next level but is unable to sustain performance at that level without difficulty or intermittent lapses (Shrum & Glisan).

For example, as seen in Figure 2, a language user considered a Novice-level speaker incorporates both the Novice- Low (NL) and Novice-Mid (NM) ranges; the Novice-Mid user simply performs better and more consistently than the Novice-Low user in the Novice range. Similarly, someone considered an Intermediate speaker incorporates the Novice-High (NH), Intermediate-Low (IL), and Intermediate-Mid (IM) levels of performance, with each level performing better than the preceding lower level: the Novice-High speaker cannot sustain performance at the Intermediate level; the Intermediate-Low speaker is consistent while the Intermediate-Mid level speaker performs best in the Intermediate range. The same is true for Advanced- and Superior-level speakers.

It is essential to remember that the ability to perform at any given level of proficiency—excluding Novice-Low— subsumes successful performance at all preceding levels (i.e., someone performing at the Intermediate-Low level in a skill demonstrates *de facto* successful performance of tasks at the Novice-High and Novice-Mid levels).

John De Mado, a world language consultant and head of John De Mado Language Seminars, LLC, notes that "accuracy is a destination, not a starting point." As students build proficiency, errors will be evident as they push themselves beyond their abilities. They will have control over basic structures and vocabulary at their current levels, but as they probe toward higher levels of proficiency, they will commit errors. Committing errors is a positive occurrence, because it shows that students are reaching beyond their current functional level. Teachers must understand the role of errors in language learning and how to correct them effectively, while positively acknowledging the risk-taking exhibited by students (Fratto).

It is important to note that the Defense Language Institute recognizes four language categories and has indicated the number of instructional hours needed per category to reach the Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid levels of proficiency—based on the results of highly motivated *adult* learners who receive 4-6 hours of formal instruction per day. See Table 3 for more information.

- ❖ Category I (Spanish, French, Italian) 240 instructional hours
- ❖ Category II (German) 300 instructional hours
- ❖ Category III (Russian, Vietnamese) 360 instructional hours
- ❖ Category IV (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean) 520 instructional hours

Source: Avant Assessment, 2010, pp. 1-2.

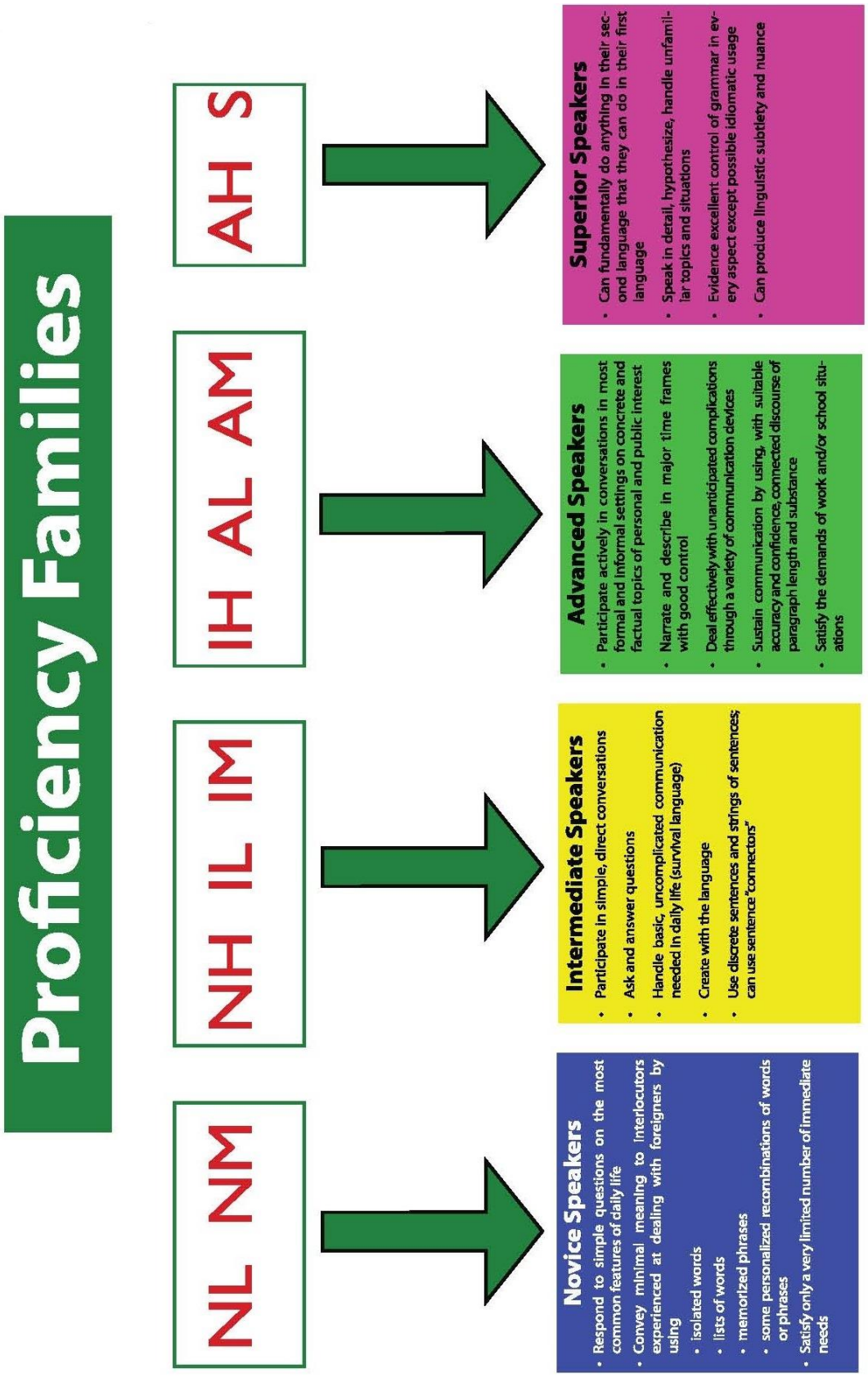
At most, a typical world language student has 180 instructional hours in each discipline per school year. More commonly, a world language student receives 50 minutes of instruction per day, 3 days per week over the course of 40 weeks of school, which totals 150 hours of instruction or 135 hours of instruction in a 90-day course that meets for 90 minutes and uses block scheduling.

Data from Avant Assessment, developers of the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) test, proves that the largest percentage of first-year (Level I) students can reach Novice-High by the end of the year, but indicates that students tend to stagnate at this level for up to three more years. However, if proficiency targets are set for the four levels of world language study currently offered in Virginia public schools, one could expect Novice-High performance for Level I and Intermediate-Low for Level II, which is essentially the same as Novice-High but is sustained for more than half the time. It would then be appropriate to set Intermediate-Mid as the target for the next two levels, Level III and Level IV. If reasonable proficiency targets are set and teachers plan to meet them, students are very likely to attain those targets. See Figure 3.

The expansion of the global community and workplace challenges the United States to produce a workforce that not only communicates in many languages, but that also understands the nuances of many cultures. The educated heritage speaker as well as communicatively proficient speakers of languages other than English are authentic resources who will have expanded career opportunities in the 21st century (North Carolina World Language Essential Standards: Classical Languages, Dual & Heritage Languages, Modern Languages, www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/foreign-language/world-language.pdf). One of the goals of world language education is to provide Virginia's students with the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in today's global society and enable them to include world language abilities in their career choices. Thus, it is important to examine the chart in Table 4, which illustrates the levels of proficiency needed in today's work world.

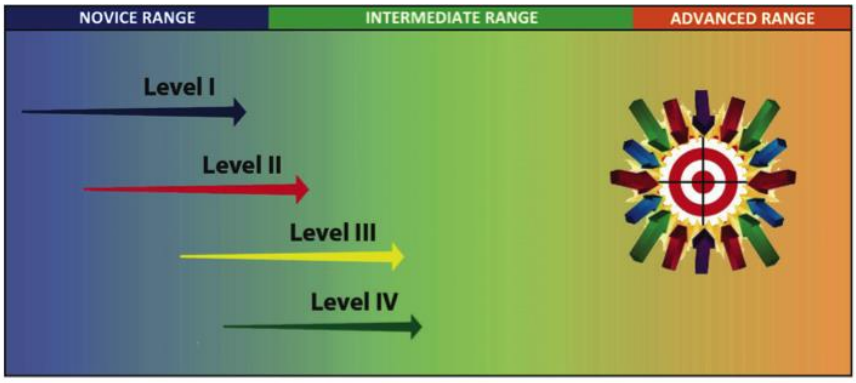
Additionally, using proficiency targets facilitates the smooth transition of students from school to school and from level to level, since proficiency ratings are nationally accepted and consistent, while individual school districts have widely varying grading scales. Proficiency targets facilitate the placement of students at their appropriate level of study depending on previous world language experience as well as on when the students entered their world language sequence. Finally, the targets set *realistic expectations* for student performance depending on when students begin learning another language. See Figure 4.

Figure 2. Proficiency Families



Courtesy of Greg Duncan, January 15, 2013

Figure 3. Proficiency Target Ranges



Source: ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners. 2012 Edition. (2012). Alexandria, VA: ACTFL, p. 6.

Table 3. How Long Does It Take to Become Functional in a Variety of Languages?

Group I Languages: *Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish*

	← Aptitude for Language Learning →		
Length of Training	**Minimal Aptitude**	**Average Aptitude**	**Superior Aptitude**
8 weeks (240 hours)	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid	Intermediate High
16 weeks (480 hours)	Intermediate High	Advanced Low	Advanced Mid
24 weeks (720 hours)	Advanced Mid	Advanced High	Superior

Group II Languages: *Bulgarian, Dari, Farsi, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Urdu*

	← Aptitude for Language Learning →		
Length of Training	**Minimal Aptitude**	**Average Aptitude**	**Superior Aptitude**
16 weeks (480 hours)	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid/High	Intermediate High
24 weeks (720 hours)	Intermediate High	Advanced Low/Mid	Advanced Mid/High
44 weeks (1,320 hours)	Advanced Mid/High	Advanced High/Superior	Superior

Group III Languages: *Amharic, Bengali, Burmese, Czech, Filipino, Finnish, Hebrew, Hungarian, Khmer, Lao, Nepali, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhala, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Vietnamese*

	← Aptitude for Language Learning →		
Length of Training	**Minimal Aptitude**	**Average Aptitude**	**Superior Aptitude**
16 weeks (480 hours)	Novice High	Intermediate Low/Mid	Intermediate Mid/High
24 weeks (720 hours)	Intermediate High	Advanced Low	Advanced Mid/High
44 weeks (1,320 hours)	Advanced Mid	Advanced High	Superior

Group IV Languages: *Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean*

	← Aptitude for Language Learning →		
Length of Training	**Minimal Aptitude**	**Average Aptitude**	**Superior Aptitude**
16 weeks (480 hours)	Novice High	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Low/Mid
24 weeks (720 hours)	Intermediate Low/Mid	Intermediate Mid/High	Intermediate High
44 weeks (1,320 hours)	Intermediate High	Advanced Low	Advanced Mid/High
80-92 weeks (2,400-2,760 hours)	Advanced High	Superior	Superior

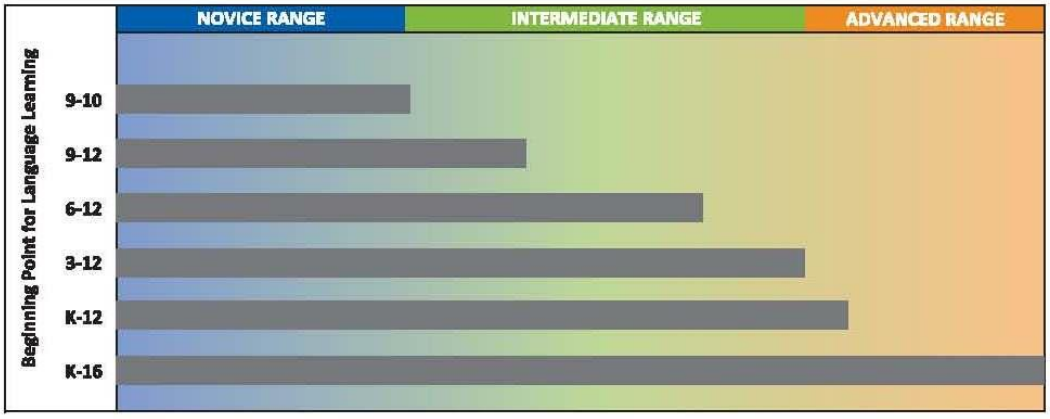
Source: Swender, E. *ACTFL Proficiency Levels in the Work World*. Presentation given at CIBER 2012 Conference, March 21, 2012, Chapel Hill, NC.

Table 4. Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World

ACTFL Level	US Gov	Language Functions	Corresponding Professions/Positions	Examples of Who Is Likely to Function at This Level
Distinguished	5 4	• Tailor language to specific audiences; persuade; negotiate; deal with nuance and subtlety	• Diplomat, Contract Negotiator, International Specialist, Translator/ Interpreter, Intelligence Specialist	• Highly articulate, professionally specialized native speakers • Educated L2 learners with extended (17 years) and current professional and/or educational experience in the target culture
Superior	3	• Discuss topics extensively; support opinions; hypothesize; deal with linguistically unfamiliar situations	• University FL Professor, Business Executive, Lawyer, Judge, Financial Advisor	• Well-educated native speakers • Educated L2 learners with extended professional and/or educational experience in the target language environment
Advanced High **Advanced Mid** **Advanced Low**	2+ 2	• Narrate and describe in past, present, and future; deal effectively with unanticipated complications	• Physician, Military Linguist, Senior Consultant, Human Resources Personnel, Financial Broker, Translation Officer, Marketing Manager, Communications Consultant • Fraud Specialist, Account Executive, Court Stenographer/Interpreter, Benefits Specialist, Technical Service Agent, Collection Representative, Estimating Coordinator • Customer Service Agent, Social Worker, Claims Processor, K-12 Language Teacher, Police Officer, Maintenance Administrator, Billing Clerk, Legal Secretary, Legal Receptionist	• Heritage speakers, informal learners, nonacademic learners who have significant contact with language • Undergraduate language majors with year-long study abroad experience • L2 learners with graduate degrees in language- related areas and extended educational experience in the target environment
Intermediate High **Intermediate Mid** **Intermediate Low**	1+ 1	• Create with language; initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions	• Auto Inspector, Aviation Personnel, Missionary, Tour Guide • Cashier, Sales Clerk (highly predictable contexts) • Receptionist, Housekeeping Staff	• Undergraduate language majors without year-long study abroad experience • L2 learners after 6-8 year sequences of study (e.g., AP) • L2 learners after 4 year high school sequences or 2 semester college sequences
Novice High **Novice Mid** **Novice Low**	0+ 0	• Communicate minimally with formulaic and role utterances, lists, and phrases		• L2 learners after 2 years of high school language study

Source: Swender, E. *ACTFL Proficiency Levels in the Work World.* Presentation given at CIBER 2012 Conference, March 21, 2012, Chapel Hill, NC.

Figure 4. Time as a Critical Component for Developing Language Performance

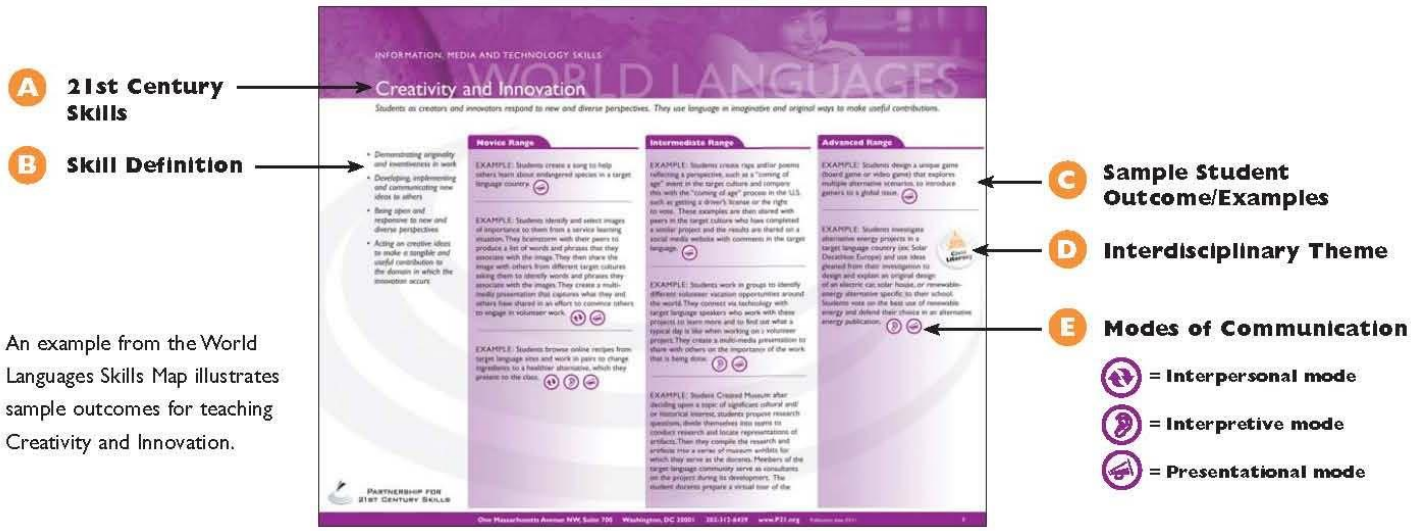


Source: *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*. 2012 Edition. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL, p. 6.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills

In 2011, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) forged an alliance with national organizations that represent academic subjects—world languages were included in this alliance. The year-long collaboration, spearheaded by the ACTFL, led to the publication of the P21 World Languages Skills Map (https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/21stCenturySkillsMap/p21_worldlanguagesmap.pdf). The map reflects the collective effort of hundreds of world language teachers and illustrates the integration of world languages and 21st Century Skills. The map provides educators, administrators, and policymakers with concrete examples of how 21st Century Skills can be integrated into core subjects. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Example Illustrating Sample Outcomes for Teaching Creativity and Innovation



In the Introduction to the P21 World Languages Skills Map, the following statement is found:

> The language teaching community has reached strong consensus regarding the goals of a language program: to develop students' language proficiency* around modes of communicative competence reflecting real life communication. This is reflected in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century in the opening statement, "Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience."

Many P21 principles are reflected in Virginia's current *Foreign Language Standards of Learning*, including the importance of well-articulated long sequence K–12 language programs that lead to high levels of proficiency so that students will be ready to use languages for professional purposes when they enter the workforce. Students need to leave the K–12 educational system with the Advanced level of proficiency and the postsecondary world at the Superior level. However, "meeting these levels of proficiency requires that students begin early and continue in an extended sequence of language learning that builds sequentially from one level to another." (https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/21stCenturySkillsMap/p21_worldlanguagesmap.pdf).

World language classrooms throughout the United States have changed over the past 20 years to reflect an increasing emphasis on developing students' communicative competence. According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills Map document, "Unlike the classroom of yesteryear that required students to know a great deal of information about the language but did not have an expectation of language use, today's classroom is about teaching languages so that students use them to communicate with native speakers of the language." Table 5 clearly illustrates the differences between the foreign language classroom of the past and today's world language classroom.

The P21 World Languages Skills Map focuses on information, media, and technology skills, including interdisciplinary themes that reflect the breadth of the *Virginia Foreign Language Standards of Learning* and its seven different strands. The P21 World Languages Skills Map is divided into the following areas: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Technology Literacy, Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, and Leadership and Responsibility. As seen in Figure 5, the interdisciplinary themes of Global Awareness; Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy; Civic Literacy; and Health Literacy are embedded in the P21 World Languages Skills Map.

Heritage Language Students

The national Standards for Foreign Language Learning address the issue of heritage language students—learners who have home backgrounds in a language other than English or who come from other immersion experiences, formal or informal. Having proficiency targets allows for much better integration of heritage language students into mainstream world language courses when these students continue to study their native language in traditional world language courses because heritage language courses are not available. Heritage language students need instruction that allows them to maintain strengths in their heritage language while they develop new skills, particularly in academic vocabulary and literacy or in the areas of reading and writing. With such support, they will become knowledgeable global citizens with the skills to be multilingual and multi-literate in a way that honors their need to simultaneously identify and communicate with their heritage, home, or immersion culture(s) and the mainstream culture(s) in which they live and work.

Table 5. Differences in the Foreign Language Classroom of the Past and Today's World Language Classroom

IN THE PAST	TODAY
Students learned about language (i.e., grammar)	Students learn to use language
Teacher-centered class	Learner-centered with teacher as facilitator/ collaborator
Focused on isolated skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing)	Focused on three modes: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational
Coverage of textbooks	Backward design focusing on end goals
Use of textbooks as curriculum	Use of thematic units and authentic resources
Emphasis on teacher as presenter/lecturer	Emphasis on learner as "doer" and "creator"
Use of technology as "cool tools"	Integration of technology into instruction to enhance learning
Instruction only about language	Use of language as vehicle to teach academic context
Same instruction for all students	Differentiation of instruction to meet individual needs
Synthetic situations from textbooks	Personalization of real-world tasks
Language learning confined to classroom	Opportunities sought for learners to use language beyond classroom
Use of tests to determine what students do not know	Use of assessments to determine what students can do
Teacher only knows criteria for grading	Students know and understand criteria on which they will be assessed by reviewing task rubrics
Students "turn in" work only for teacher	Learners create to "share and publish" to audiences broader than just teacher

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (2012 Edition)

This document is about performance descriptors and describes language performance that is the result of explicit instruction in an instructional setting. It is a companion to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which outline broad, general language proficiency guidelines regardless of when, where, or how the language is acquired. When paired with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning, which describe what students need to know and be able to do as they learn another language (i.e., the "what" of language education), the performance descriptors describe "how well" language learners are expected to do the "what" from the content standards.

The benefit of the coordination of these ACTFL documents is that the standards address the progress indicators that cover the K–16 range. The performance descriptors apply to language learners across the same span of ages and grade levels. Coupled, they identify a continuum of language learning, which can facilitate articulation across all institutions. By using the different components (i.e., domains) that are found in the performance descriptors, teachers become more aware of how learning targets must take into account the age appropriateness and cognitive development of language learners as well as the varying amounts of time required to achieve a given level of performance. The performance descriptors form a roadmap for teaching and learning. They also help educators set realistic expectations when assessing student progress. Teachers need to know not only what learners are able to do within their current range but also how well they are able to perform at the next level, since it is only when learners are challenged to go beyond their current level of

abilities that learning takes place.

The performance descriptors shown in Table 6 are based on three reasonable levels of proficiency (i.e., Novice, Intermediate, Advanced) for K–16 learners and incorporate the three modes of communication (i.e., Interpersonal, Interpretive, Presentational). There are three factors (see Table 7) that describe a language learner's performance in each range: Functions, Content and Contexts, and Text Type. The next four domains (see Table 8) describe how well a language learner demonstrates performance of the functions for the level, within the corresponding contexts and content for the level, using the text type(s) appropriate for that level. These four categories answer the following question: How well is the language learner able to be understood and to understand?

Using a combination of the Virginia Foreign Language Standards of Learning, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, a series of skill/proficiency progression documents has been prepared and provides a brief overview of the "what" and the "how well" of language learning and performance in each of the strands of the standards of learning at each level of study: I–IV+. Included is the expected proficiency target level for each standard along with progress indicators based on the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. These documents are not to be construed as a ready-made curriculum or as a state-mandated plan. They are an effort to correlate and supplement the state-approved Foreign Language Standards of Learning with pragmatic guidance in implementing the standards in the classroom.

Progress Indicators

In late 2013, ACTFL released the National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSL)-ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Progress Indicators for Language Learners, self-assessment checklists that can be used by "language learners to assess what they 'can do' with language in the Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of communication," as defined in the National Standards for 21st Century Language Learning. The checklist is organized into the following categories:

- Interpersonal (Person-to-Person) Communication
- Presentational Speaking (Spoken Production)
- Presentational Writing (Written Production)
- Interpretive Listening
- Interpretive Reading

Table 6. The Three Modes of Communication

Interpretive	Interpersonal	Presentational
• Interpretation of what the author, speaker, or producer wants the receiver of the message to understand	• Active negotiation of meaning among individuals	• Creation of messages
• One-way communication with no recourse to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer, speaker, or producer	• Participants observe and monitor one another to see how their meanings and intentions are being communicated	• One-way communication intended to facilitate interpretation by members of the other culture where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of the two cultures exists
• Interpretation differs from comprehension and translation in that interpretation implies the ability to read, listen, or view "between the lines," including understanding from within the cultural mindset or perspective	• Adjustments and clarifications are made accordingly	• "Presenter" needs knowledge of the audience's language and culture to ensure the intended audience is successful in its interpretation
• Reading (e.g., Web sites, stories, articles), listening (e.g., speeches, messages, songs), or viewing (e.g., video clips) authentic materials	• Speaking and listening (i.e., conversation); reading and writing (e.g., text messages, via social media)	• Writing (e.g., messages, articles, reports), speaking (e.g., telling a story, giving a speech, describing a poster), or visually representing (e.g., video, PowerPoint)

Table 7. Functions, Contexts and Content, and Text Type

Domain	Examples	What It Describes
Functions	• Ask formulaic questions • Initiate, maintain, and end a conversation • Create with language • Narrate and describe • Make inferences	• Functions are the global tasks that the learner can perform in the language
Contexts and Content	• Oneself • One's immediate environment • General interest • Work-related	• Contexts are situations within which the learner can function • Content is the topics with which the learner can understand and discuss
Text Type	• Words • Phrases • Sentences • Questions • Strings of sentences • Connected sentences • Paragraphs	• Text type controlled by the learner is that which the learner is able to understand and produce in order to perform the functions of the level

Table 8. Language Control, Vocabulary, Communication Strategies, and Cultural Awareness

Domain	What It Answers	What It Describes
Language Control	How accurate is the language learner's language?	Describes the level of control the learner has over certain language features or strategies to produce or understand language
Vocabulary	How extensive and accessible is the language learner's vocabulary?	Describes the parameters of vocabulary used to produce or understand language
Communication Strategies	How does the language learner maintain communication and make meaning?	Describes the strategies used to negotiate meaning, to understand text and messages, and to express oneself
Cultural Awareness	How is the language learner's cultural knowledge reflected in language use?	Describes the cultural products, practices, or perspectives the language learner may employ to communicate more successfully in the cultural setting

The five checklist items incorporate three of the seven essential strands of language development and application of the 2014 Foreign Language Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools. These three strands include the skills for functional language use: listening, reading, speaking, and writing—skills that allow learners to perform in the language(s) they are studying. The checklist outlines the skills and abilities that must be successfully demonstrated for a learner to function adequately at the targeted level of proficiency. The following remaining four strands of the Foreign Language Standards of Learning outline additional aspects of world language study that become relevant as the linguistic skills of performance develop:

- Cultural Perspectives, Practices, and Products—learning about and understanding the target language countries
- Making Connections though Language—linking what is being learned in a world language class with other subject areas
- Making Linguistic and Cultural Comparisons—reflecting on the learner's own language and culture
- Interacting in School and Global Communities—using the learners' skills and knowledge

According to the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements document, the ultimate goal for all language learners is "to develop a functional use of another language for one's personal contexts and purposes" (p. 1). The can-do statements help advance this goal by providing learning targets for curriculum and unit design and serving as progress indicators. They also help language learners chart their progress through incremental steps. The can-do statements are strategically aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 and the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, which allows for the charting of progress and performance, using nationally and internationally recognized scales.

The NCSSFL-ACTL Global Can-Do Benchmarks (see Table 9) coupled with the main indicators found on pages 6–39 of the NCSSFL-ACTFL document can help in setting long-term learning goals. Teachers need to ask themselves what they expect learners to be able to do with language after one semester, one year, or several years and re-evaluate their goals accordingly as they learn about their students' abilities through

assessment. Teachers can choose more specific can-do statements or customize new ones for thematic units and lessons. The benchmarks can also make their instruction more performance-oriented and provide opportunities for their students to produce language.

Interculturality

Language competence in a global society is a major need for all—"Learners today must have the linguistic proficiency to communicate with global audiences, insight into the cultural perspectives that shape those audiences, and the ability to behave appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (Van Houten).

Intercultural competence, therefore, is the demonstration of interaction between the use of language skills and cultural knowledge. The national World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages highlight the need for learners to understand the relationship between a culture's perspectives and its products and practices. A culture's perspectives reflect the values, beliefs, and attitudes of its people. Through contact with products (e.g., monuments, laws, music) developed by a culture and the practices (e.g., eating habits, shopping behaviors, use of space) demonstrated by its people, the perspectives (e.g., values, attitudes, beliefs) of a people become understandable (Van Houten, p. 4).

Both the ability to use the language and behave appropriately in cultural contexts are required in demonstrating intercultural competence. While this may be a big challenge for learners in the beginning stages of language learning—those who do not have the linguistic skills to address cultural perspectives in their language of study—it is the responsibility of all who facilitate language learning in any type or level of program to provide opportunities for those learners to experience language and culture together. Language and culture are inseparable. As a result, as language proficiency grows, so will intercultural competence.

Intercultural competencies are cumulative in nature, just as the proficiency level skills and abilities are at the Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior levels. As learners move up the proficiency continuum, they continue to add to their knowledge of products and practices before they can develop and apply an understanding of perspectives. In short, language competencies + cultural competencies > interculturality.

The interculturality can-do statements do not have sublevels of low, mid, and high. Learners are expected to demonstrate the interculturality benchmarks when they have demonstrated the highest proficiency sublevel (i.e., learners who demonstrate Novice-High language competencies should also be demonstrating Novice level interculturality competencies).

Determining the level of interculturality is essentially determining the performance of the language learner in the remaining four nonskill aspects of the Virginia Standards of Learning, which were previously mentioned.

Table 9. NCSSFL-ACTL Global Can-Do Benchmarks

	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice High	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid
Interpersonal Communication	I can communicate about some very familiar topics using single words and phrases that I have practiced and memorized.	I can communicate about very familiar topics using a variety of words and phrases that I have practiced and memorized.	I can communicate and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences, sometimes supported by memorized language. I can usually handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions.	I can participate in conversations about a number of familiar topics using simple sentences. I can handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions.	I can participate in conversations about familiar topics using sentences and a series of sentences. I can handle short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering a variety of questions. I can usually say what I want to say about myself and my everyday life.
Interpretive Listening	I can recognize a few memorized words and phrases when I hear them spoken.	I can recognize some familiar words and phrases when I hear them spoken.	I can often understand words, phrases, and simple sentences related to everyday life. I can recognize pieces of information and sometimes understand the main topic of what is being said.	I can understand the main idea in short, simple messages and presentations about familiar topics. I can understand the main idea of simple conversations that I overhear.	I can understand the main idea of messages and presentations about a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies. I can understand the main idea of conversations that I overhear.
Interpretive Reading	I can recognize few letters or characters. I can identify a few memorized words and phrases when I read.	I can recognize some letters or characters. I can understand some learned or memorized words and phrases when I read.	I can understand familiar words, phrases, and sentences within short and simple texts related to everyday life. I can sometimes understand the main idea of what I have read.	I can understand the main idea of short and simple texts when the topic is familiar.	I can understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life and personal interests and studies.
Presentational Speaking	I can present information about myself and some other very familiar topics using single words or memorized phrases.	I can present information about myself and some other very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, and memorized expressions.	I can present basic information about familiar topics using language I have practiced and using phrases and simple sentences.	I can present information about most familiar topics using a series of simple sentences.	I can make presentations about a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.
Presentational Writing	I can copy some familiar words, characters, or phrases.	I can write lists and memorized phrases about familiar topics.	I can write short messages and notes about familiar topics related to everyday life.	I can write briefly about most familiar topics and present information using a series of simple sentences.	I can write about a wide variety of familiar topics using connected sentences.

Source: *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Progress Indicators for Language Learners*, pp. 4–5.

Intermediate High	Advanced Low	Advanced Mid	Advanced High	Superior	Distinguished
I can participate in conversations about familiar topics with ease and confidence. I can usually talk about events and experiences in various time frames. I can usually describe people, places, and things. I can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.	I can participate in conversations about familiar topics that go beyond my everyday life. I can talk in an organized way and with some detail about events and experiences in various time frames. I can describe people, places, and things in an organized way and with some detail. I can handle a familiar situation with an unexpected complication.	I can express myself fully in conversations not only about familiar topics but also about some concrete social, academic, and professional topics. I can talk in detail and in an organized way about events and experiences in various time frames. I can confidently handle routine situations with an unexpected complication. I can share my point of view in discussions about some complex issues.	I can express myself freely and spontaneously, and, for the most part, accurately, in conversations about concrete topics and about most complex issues. I can usually support my opinion and develop hypotheses about topics of particular interest or personal expertise.	I can communicate with ease, accuracy, and fluency. I can participate fully and effectively in discussions about a variety of topics in formal and informal settings. I can discuss complex issues at length by structuring arguments and developing hypotheses.	I can communicate reflectively about a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally sophisticated manner.
I can easily understand the main idea of messages and presentations about a variety of topics related to everyday life and personal interests and studies. I can usually understand a few details of what I overhear in conversations, even when something unexpected is expressed. I can sometimes follow what I hear about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can understand the main idea and some supporting details of organized speech about a variety of topics of personal and general interest. I can follow stories and descriptions of some length and in various time frames. I can understand information presented in a variety of genres about familiar topics, even when something unexpected is expressed.	I can understand the main idea and some supporting details about a variety of topics of personal and general interest, as well as some topics of professional interest. I can follow stories and descriptions of some length and in various time frames. I can understand information presented in most genres, even when not familiar with the topic.	I can easily follow narrative, informational, and descriptive speech. I can understand discussions about most topics that deal with special interests, unfamiliar situations, and abstract concepts. I can sometimes follow extended arguments and different points of view.	I can follow a wide range of academic and professional discourse about abstract and specialized topics. I can understand all standard dialects. I can sometimes infer complex meaning that requires a deep understanding of culture.	I can understand highly abstract and specialized speech tailored to different audiences. I can understand sophisticated language, humor, and persuasive arguments embedded with cultural references and allusions.
I can easily understand the main idea of texts related to everyday life, personal interests, and studies. I can sometimes follow stories and descriptions about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can understand the main idea and some supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest. I can follow stories and descriptions of some length and in various time frames and genres.	I can understand the main idea and most supporting details in texts and on a variety of topics of personal and general interest, as well as some professional topics. I can follow stories and descriptions of considerable length and in various time frames. I can understand texts written in a variety of genres, even when I am unfamiliar with the topic.	I can easily follow narrative, informational, and descriptive texts. I can understand what I read on most topics that deal with special interests, unfamiliar situations, and abstract concepts. I can sometimes understand extended arguments and different points of view.	I can follow academic, professional, and literary texts on a wide range of both familiar and unfamiliar subjects. I can sometimes infer complex meaning that requires analysis and deep understanding of the culture.	I can understand with ease and confidence highly abstract and specialized texts that are succinct or elaborate. I can follow unpredictable turns of thought. I can manage inference from within the cultural framework.
I can make presentations about school, work, community topics, and topics I have researched in a generally organized way. I can make presentations about some events and experiences in various time frames.	I can deliver organized presentations appropriate to my audience on a variety of topics. I can present information about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can deliver well-organized presentations about concrete social, academic, and professional topics. I can present detailed information about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can deliver detailed presentations, usually with accuracy, clarity, and precision, about a variety of topics and issues related to community interests and some special fields of expertise.	I can deliver detailed presentations with accuracy, clarity, and precision to a wide variety of audiences about topics and issues ranging from broad general interests to areas of specialized expertise.	I can deliver sophisticated and articulate presentations about a wide range of global issues and high abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner, tailored to a variety of audiences.
I can write about topics related to school, work, and community in a generally organized way. I can write some simple paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can write about general interest, academic, and professional topics. I can write organized paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.	I can write about a wide variety of general interest, professional, and academic topics. I can write well-organized, detailed paragraphs in various time frames.	I can write extensively with significant precision and detail about a variety of topics, most complex issues, and some special fields of expertise.	I can write about complex and abstract issues ranging from topics of broad general interests to areas of specialized expertise using standard structure, lexicon, and writing protocols.	I can write about global issues from highly conceptualized and analytical perspectives. I can tailor my writing to sophisticated readers.

Source: *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements: Progress Indicators for Language Learners*, pp. 4–5.

Virginia World Language Proficiency Targets and Expectations of Performance

Tables 10, 11, and 12 illustrate the proficiency targets for Virginia public schools. Virginia has most proficiency target levels in common with other states, including Maine, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Ohio, who produce similar tables. These target tables illustrate:

- Middle and High School—Category I & II Difficulty Languages (French, Spanish, and German) For German, see Table 3 for additional guidance on proficiency progression.

Table 10. Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Modern World Languages (Roman Alphabet)

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets* for Modern World Languages (Roman Alphabet: French, Spanish, German**)				
MODE AND SKILL	LEVEL I 135-150 HOURS	LEVEL II 270-300 HOURS	LEVEL III 405-450 HOURS	LEVEL IV 540-600 HOURS
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid

* Proficiency targets are set, based on significant research, to provide informed guidance to local language programs and in no way should be interpreted as a state mandate.
**For German, see Table 1 for additional guidance on proficiency progression.

- Middle and High School—Category III & IV Difficulty Languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian)

Table 11. Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Modern World Languages (Non-Roman Alphabet)

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Modern World Languages (Non-Roman Alphabet: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian)					
MODE AND SKILL	LEVEL I 135-150 HOURS	LEVEL II 270-300 HOURS	LEVEL III 405-450 HOURS	LEVEL IV 540-600 HOURS	LEVEL V 675-500 HOURS
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Novice-High Intermediate-Low	Novice-High Intermediate-Low
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Novice-High Intermediate-Low	Novice-High Intermediate-Low

*Proficiency targets are set, based on significant research, to provide informed guidance to local language programs and in no way should be interpreted as a state mandate.

- Latin

Table 12. Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Latin

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Latin				
MODE AND SKILL	LEVEL I 135-150 HOURS	LEVEL II 270-300 HOURS	LEVEL III 405-450 HOURS	LEVEL IV 540-600 HOURS
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-High
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice-High	Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-High
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-High
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Intermediate-Low
*Proficiency targets are set, based on significant research, to provide informed guidance to local language programs and in no way should be interpreted as a state mandate.				

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