Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 World Languages

Introduction
Communication and Cultures Standards

As the world becomes smaller and communication is but a click, call or finger tap away, learners seek to use languages in addition to English in culturally appropriate ways with people locally and around the world. They reinforce concepts and skills from across disciplines, enhance college- and career-readiness, and interpret events of the modern and classical world from multiple perspectives as they experience language and culture for a variety of purposes within and beyond the classroom.

When learners are asked why they wish to study another language, they most often respond that they want to be able to communicate with other people and understand their culture. Indeed, language and culture are at the heart of the human experience. Through knowledge and skills gained from learning other languages, learners come to understand that language and culture are inextricably linked and that individuals must abide by the constraints and freedoms afforded in their own and other cultures to become effective communicators.

Through another language, learners develop an understanding of the relationship among cultural products, practices and perspectives. Learners also enhance their understanding of language and culture by making linguistic and cultural comparisons and developing insights into the nature of language and culture. Communicating about what people believe, what they do and what they use or make enables learners to understand authentic cultural contexts which define acceptable language and behavior.

Preparing students for college and career is an integral goal of Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages. The 21st Century college- and career-readiness skills listed below have been embedded throughout this document. They refer to the content knowledge and skills high school graduates must possess to be successful in any and all future endeavors.[1]

- Students as effective communicators use languages to engage in meaningful conversation, to understand and interpret spoken language and written text, and to present information, concepts and ideas.
- Students as collaborators use their native and acquired languages to learn from and work cooperatively across cultures with global team members, sharing responsibility and making necessary compromises while working toward a common goal.
- Students as inquirers frame, analyze and synthesize information as well as negotiate meaning across language and culture in order to explore problems and issues from their own and different perspectives.

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- Students as creators and innovators respond to new and diverse perspectives. They use language in imaginative and original ways to make useful contributions.
- Students as informed global citizens access, manage and effectively use culturally authentic sources in ethical and legal ways.
- Students as active global citizens evaluate authentic sources to understand how media reflect and influence language and culture.
- Students as productive global citizens use appropriate technologies when interpreting messages, interacting with others and producing written, oral and visual messages.
- Students as flexible and adaptable language learners are open-minded, willing to take risks and accept the ambiguity of language while balancing diverse global perspectives.
- Students as life-long learners are motivated to set their own goals and reflect on their progress as they grow and improve their linguistic and cultural competence.
- Students as adept language learners understand diverse cultural perspectives and use appropriate sociolinguistic skills in order to function in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.
- Students as productive and accountable learners take responsibility for their own learning by actively working to increase their language proficiency and cultural knowledge.
- Students as responsible leaders leverage their linguistic and cross-cultural skills to inspire others to be fair, accepting, open and understanding within and beyond the local community.[2]

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[1] Achieve. American Diploma Project Network. http://www.achieve.org/files/CollegeandCareerReady.pdf

[2] Partnership for 21st Century Skills. "21st Century Skills Map: World Languages." March, 2011. www.p21.org/storage/documents/Skills%20Map/p21_worldlanguagesmap.pdf.