Using Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages

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Ohio Department of Education, June 2014

1. Foreword

On June 12, 2012, the State Board of Education took a key step in reforming Ohio's education system when it adopted *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*. Clear standards delineate what students should know and be able to do in world languages. These standards are an integral component of an aligned system designed to improve achievement and ensure that all students are positioned for success in college and in a career in a globally interdependent world upon completion of their K-12 education.

The people of Ohio played an essential role in the revision of the learning standards. This revision would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Ohio educators, community members and other key stakeholders. World language consultants in the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Curriculum and Assessment facilitated the standards revision process by engaging diverse stakeholders, soliciting and incorporating a wide range of ideas and viewpoints into numerous drafts, and analyzing and incorporating copious feedback provided by regional focus group participants and online reviewers from all over the state. These measures ensured a transparent process and active, statewide participation throughout the project's two-year timeline.

Ohio's new world language learning standards also were reviewed by national experts who examined the content, developmental appropriateness and curricular considerations of the standards. Overall, the reviewers found them to be clear and comprehensive, setting rigorous expectations for learning that will significantly enhance student readiness for college and a career in the 21st century.

The revision process, as established by the Ohio Department of Education, required that the new standards be internationally benchmarked to the standards and practices of the world's best language educators and that they also should take into consideration trends from learned societies and other states. With these requirements in mind, Ohio's new world language learning standards:

- Are based on the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999) created by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL);

- Take into account the findings of the 2011 national standards impact study titled *National Foreign Language Standards: Impact and Influence After a Decade Plus*;

- Are aligned with the ACTFL *Proficiency Guidelines* (2012) and ACTFL *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* (2012);

- Incorporate elements from the *Framework for 21st Century Learning* of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.p21.org) and the *21st Century Skills Map for World Languages*;

- Align with the Student Self-Assessment Checklists in the LinguaFolio Student Self-Assessment Tool created by the NCSSFL, or National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (www.ncssfl.org);

- Are aligned with the English Language Arts Literacy Standards; and

- Are internationally benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and European Language Portfolio (ELP).

The adoption of these learning standards fulfills a requirement of Ohio House Bill 1 to revise the original 2003 academic content standards for grades K-12 in foreign language. The bill also specifies that the Department of Education revise the model curriculum to provide world language educators with updated support for implementing the revised standards. The revised model curriculum will continue to provide standards-based resources, tools and guidance for teachers to use in developing local curricula, planning standards-based instruction and developing high-quality assessments.

2. Overview of Ohio's Learning Standards for World Languages

Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages represent a research-based approach to language learning that prepares learners to use their language proficiency and intercultural competence to communicate effectively in a global society. They embrace the ongoing shift away from traditionally ineffective, grammar-oriented methodologies to a communicative and proficiency-based approach to teaching and learning a world language. Their implementation in world language programs around Ohio will help prepare students to be successful in both college and the workplace.

The new world language standards clearly define what students should know and be able to do at the end of instruction, regardless of whether learning takes place across grades K-12, 6-12 or 9-12. They are divided into three closely-aligned and well-articulated versions that correspond to the most common program entry points for students in Ohio:

- The K-12 version is for articulated programs that begin in kindergarten/elementary school with classes that meet a minimum of three times a week for at least 30 minutes a class (90 minutes per week) before continuing through middle school and high school;

- The 6-12 version is for articulated programs that begin in middle school and continue through high school; and

- The 9-12 version is for articulated programs that begin in high school.

The version of the standards that should be used with any given student is contingent upon the point at which he or she begins learning language in a sequential manner. For example, with a student who begins learning a second language in first grade in a program that meets at least 90 minutes per week, the K-12 version of the standards should be used exclusively throughout the entire span of language learning from elementary school through high school. For a student who begins language learning in middle school, the 6-12 version of the standards should be used exclusively. For students who begin learning a world language in high school, the 9-12 version of the standards would be most appropriate. In summary, the version of the standards that is initially used should continue to be the version that is used with students throughout the remainder of their K-12 language-learning career, because it appropriately articulates language learning and intercultural growth while accounting for factors like proficiency development, age-appropriateness, appropriate levels of cognitive demand and prior learning.

The most obvious difference between *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* and the former 2003 standards is the number of standards, which have been reduced from five to two. The two standards that follow represent rigorous, comprehensive world language content that all students should know and be able to do as they progress through a well-articulated program. These standards should be quite familiar to world language educators because they continue to align with the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1996; 1999) and the world language standards of nearly every other state in the country.

Standard #1:   **Communication:** Communicate in languages other than English, both in person and via technology.

Standard #2:   **Cultures:** Gain and use knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

The new Communication learning standard continues to be organized around the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. These modes, purposefully appearing in this order, correspond to the way in which language learners process new information. Students are first exposed to new information through authentic sources. They build their language proficiency by initially engaging in listening, reading or viewing comprehension activities, which enable them to form an initial understanding of what they have heard, read or viewed. Next, they engage in interpersonal activities. By discussing, questioning and exchanging viewpoints, they expand their understanding of the new information along with their ability to use it in a communicative context. Finally, they present their expanded understanding of the initial authentic information to others orally, through writing or by signing. This performance-based framework provides language learners with culturally rich-contexts for communication that they are apt to encounter in real life.

A. Interpretive Communication (Reading, Listening, Viewing)

- Learners comprehend the main idea and relevant details in a variety of age-appropriate live, written and recorded messages; personal anecdotes; and narratives in the language. They understand and interpret authentic texts ranging from articles in contemporary magazines, newspapers and Internet sources to children's stories and classical literary texts. Learners derive meaning through the use of listening, viewing and reading strategies. Learners reinforce and expand their knowledge across disciplines as they acquire information and distinctive viewpoints directly through authentic print, non-print and digital language and culture sources.

B. Interpersonal Communication (Speaking/Signing, Listening, Viewing, Reading and Writing)

- Learners initiate and sustain meaningful spoken, written and signed communication by providing and obtaining information, expressing feelings and emotions, and exchanging opinions in culturally appropriate ways. Learners actively negotiate meaning across languages and cultures to ensure that their messages are understood and that they can understand others.

C. Presentational Communication (Speaking/Signing and Writing)

- Learners present information, concepts, ideas and viewpoints on a variety of topics to audiences of listeners, readers or viewers for varied purposes. Learners demonstrate linguistic and cultural competence through creative endeavors and artistic expression. Learners use their understanding of culture to convey messages in a manner that facilitates interpretation by others where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning exists.

With its focus on building learners' oracy and literacy skills, the new Communication learning standard is aligned with the literacy requirements contained in *Ohio's Learning Standards in English Language Arts*. During the revision of the world language standards, considerable

attention was given to the literacy demands of the ELA learning standards. The new Communication learning standard has elements of the ELA literacy standards embedded within the interpretive, interpersonal and presentational competencies and also within the process and content statements that underpin them. In essence, this learning standard sets parallel expectations for students in terms of their second language reading and writing outcomes.

The new Cultures learning standard continues to incorporate the familiar organizers of cultural products, practices and perspectives, but in this document they are examined in a much more integrated way. Most significantly, this standard requires students to not only gain cultural knowledge but also to use what they learn to communicate in culturally appropriate ways in the target language. When used in an integrated fashion with the Communications learning standard, the Cultures standard has great potential to significantly increase students' intercultural competence.

Both standards feature two components: (1) competencies and (2) process and content statements. The competencies are specific statements of what students should know and be able to do communicatively and culturally by the end of each grade band. These competencies are somewhat akin to the former benchmarks in the 2003 standards. The process and content statements represent the component knowledge and skills of each competency. When mastered in a progressive sequence over time using techniques that re-spiral previously taught concepts and processes, they build learner proficiency and contribute to the eventual mastery of the competencies that they support.

Those who are already familiar with the national standards and Ohio's original K-12 foreign language standards might find themselves wondering what happened to the three former standards of Connections, Comparisons and Communities. During the revisionary process, world language educators across Ohio expressed a clear directive to weave together the original five standards in recognition of the fact that they are not all equally balanced or distinct. This directive is in keeping with a national trend in other states where the overall number of world language standards contained in their state documents has also been reduced. Although Comparisons, Connections and Communities are no longer listed as stand-alone standards, their importance in learning other languages has not diminished in any way. They have been carefully integrated into the Communication and Cultures learning standards and provide a considerable portion of the foundation for both. K-12 language educators should continue to connect their learners to other disciplines, oversee the making of linguistic and cultural comparisons and facilitate contact with target language communities where learners can use their communicative and intercultural skills. The blending of these former standards into Ohio's revised Communication and Cultures standards strengthens the foundational role each plays in creating the necessary contexts for communication and cultural learning to occur.

Although Ohio's world language standards have undergone compression and streamlining, they constitute a highly rigorous set of expectations for K-12 language learners. Academic rigor is instilled in teaching, learning, and assessment through standards which strengthen students' capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging. These same standards also develop learners' ability to employ the following skill sets when completing performance tasks in life-like contexts:

- Creativity and innovation;

- Critical thinking and problem solving;

- Communication and collaboration;

- Technology literacy;

- Personal management and learner autonomy;

- Productivity and accountability;

- Leadership and responsibility; and

- Interdisciplinary and project-based learning.

These skill sets are purposefully incorporated throughout *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*, drawing heavily from the collaborative work of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

3. Why the Standard Document's Name Was Changed

One of the first differences users will notice between the original 2003 standards and the new learning standards is a change in the document's name. The original standards were titled *Academic Content Standards: K-12 Foreign Language*. By contrast, the revised set has been renamed *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*.

Perhaps the most notable change is the obvious rejection of the term *Foreign Language* and an embracement of the term *World Language*. As an institution that values and respects the diverse languages and cultures of peoples around the world and within our own state's increasingly diverse community, the Ohio Department of Education has enacted this important name change to appropriately characterize the changing community in which we live and work. Indeed, in today's interconnected world, people need to use language effectively both at home and across geographic boundaries to cultivate positive relationships with neighbors, allies and future clients.

In addition, Ohio's schools serve an increasingly diverse population whose native language is not always English. Spanish, German, Russian, French, Somali, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi and Japanese are just a few of the languages that can no longer be considered "foreign" to all Ohio learners. Indeed, what was once "foreign" or unknown to past generations has become commonplace in the worldview of today's learners and emerging citizens. The new name of this document acknowledges the realities of the world-wide community and marketplace in which Ohio's young people will live and work.

Finally, the name change also draws attention to a significant and ongoing shift in education — one leading educators away from old-fashioned instructional practices that are teacher-centered in nature. By changing the name from *Academic Content Standards* to *Learning Standards*, the Ohio Department of Education seeks to place emphasis on learners and learner-centered teaching contexts. *Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* support learner-centered methodologies, and they are replete with opportunities for students to engage in autonomous language learning.

4. How the Learning Standards Were Revised

The work on the world language standards began with a teacher discussion group in June 2010. The participants, who represented a diversity of languages, grade levels and educational settings, were asked what they liked about the original 2003 standards, what they would change or improve, and why they would propose those changes. Working in small groups by language, program model and grade level, they provided substantial feedback.

Next, a representative expert advisory committee was seated. This group helped with the analysis of the discussion group's feedback before making preliminary recommendations for the revision of the 2003 standards. Their recommendations included the following:

- Weave the five C's (national standards of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities) together more as they are not equally balanced or distinct;
- Develop the standards by proficiency level and continue to account for age and cognitive abilities;
- Provide customized versions of the standards that correspond to Ohio's actual program entry points for students;
- Keep the standards more general and include more specifics in the model curriculum;
- Eliminate the redundancies in the original standards; and
- Pay careful attention to legislative mandates and ODE directives.

These recommendations subsequently guided the work of the representative writing team that was seated to assist the ODE world language consultants with the creation of the learning standards. Its preliminary work in November 2010 involved collapsing the 2003 standards into a more manageable amount of information. This work subsequently was reviewed by the expert advisory committee, which gave ODE consultants the go ahead to create the first draft over the course of the winter and spring in 2011. In May 2011 both the writing team and the advisory group assembled to inspect and suggest revisions to the first draft. ODE consultants immediately incorporated these revisions.

Next, a committee of nationally renowned world language content experts conducted an intensive review of the draft in June 2011. They examined the draft for the following: clarity and relevance of what students should know and be able to do, rigor and cognitive demand, proper sequencing of content within and across levels, age appropriateness, alignment of Ohio's learning standards with the ACTFL national standards and the integration of 21st century college and career readiness skills. Overall, the reviewers found Ohio's standards to be clear and comprehensive, setting high expectations for student learning. Based on an analysis of the extensive observations and recommendations made by the national reviewers, a clearer understanding was gained of what information belonged in the standards document and what information was most appropriate for inclusion in the Model Curriculum.

Following the completion of these initial activities, including an in-depth analysis of all feedback and recommendations received up to that point, work on a second draft of the new standards was undertaken. This draft was completed in the late summer of 2011.

In the fall of 2011, numerous focus groups were held around the state to collect stakeholder feedback. Further public review of the draft standards was conducted online in December 2011 and in January of 2012. Classroom teachers, school administrators, parents, higher education faculty, curriculum directors, school board members and business and community leaders from across the state participated in the online review and contributed to the further refinement of the learning standards.

Early in 2012, the ODE consultants incorporated this feedback into a third and final draft of the new learning standards. This document was presented to the State Board of Education Achievement Committee for initial consideration in February, 2012. Subsequently this group passed a resolution to bring the standards before the full board for consideration of adoption. On June 12, 2012, *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Lan*guages were adopted unanimously by the State Board of Education.

5. Philosophy and Guiding Assumptions

Philosophy

The broad goals delineated in Ohio's world language learning standards are based on a set of linguistic and cultural principles that guide communicative world language education. These philosophical precepts are anchored in language education research and supported by practice:

- Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience.

- All students are capable of learning a second language to the same degree that they know and are able to use their first language. World language study must be equitably accessible for all students.

- The main goal for modern world language education is to help students develop the proficiency necessary to communicate with speakers of another language in culturally appropriate ways.

- Children from non-English-speaking backgrounds should have opportunities to maintain and further develop proficiency in their first language.

- World language study is an integral part of the core curriculum as stated in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and *Ohio Amended Substitute Senate Bill 311*.

- All students can enhance their ability to function successfully in a global society by developing linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence in a second language.

- Language learning is a lifelong process. For learners to attain the advanced level of language proficiency necessary to be successful in their careers or post-secondary studies, world language instruction should begin in the elementary grades and continue with well-articulated sequences of instruction that continue uninterrupted through middle and high school right into the post-secondary level.

- Students acquire language when it is meaningful and interesting and when they can use it in a non-threatening environment.

- To become proficient in a second language, students need to use the language in a variety of real-life, meaningful and culturally accurate situations designed to promote relevant communication.

- Interdisciplinary learning connections are created when students are learning another language. Language learning equips students to interpret a variety of authentic live, print and technology-based texts and resources to access knowledge related to all content areas.

- World languages are a tool to provide content-based learning in reading, writing, mathematics, and all other subject areas.

- Students acquire proficiency in different ways and at different rates. Students may attain different levels of proficiency according to the particular language they learn. The School of Language Studies at the Foreign Service Institute has determined that the closer the language is to English, the more quickly an adult learner can achieve

proficiency. Conversely, the more difficult and unlike English a language is, the more time students need to learn it.

- Students spiral through content with increasing depth and sophistication as they attain higher levels of language proficiency. The extent to which a theme or topic is addressed at a given point in time depends on age and developmental appropriateness, as well as on the learners' proficiency level.

- Grammatical knowledge is just one of many tools that supports the attainment of communicative goals. Other tools include knowledge of vocabulary, sociolinguistic knowledge, intercultural competence, and a grasp of appropriate communication strategies across the three modes of communication (i.e., interpretive, interpersonal and presentational).

- Assessment provides useful feedback to learners about their attainment of the identified goals and learning objectives.

- Using a variety of formative and summative assessments (e.g., performance assessments, proficiency assessments, portfolios, journals, logs, self-assessments, peer assessments, digital assessments and traditional pen and paper assessments) provides a clearer understanding of student learning, student proficiency attainment, program effectiveness and accountability.

- Learning an additional language helps students understand the nature of language systems, including their own, and how language and thought are inextricably linked.

- Through language learning, students can understand and appreciate other cultures' world views, unique ways of living and behavior patterns, as well as their contributions to humankind.

- By learning another language, students gain access to the different culture(s) associated with that language. They learn to appreciate the different ways of life and accomplishments of each culture. In doing so, they become more reflective about their own culture, and they are able to generalize about the components of culture.

- Students' openness for other cultures seems to be at an optimal level prior to the age of ten. Lambert and Klineberg (1967) note that younger students seem to be more receptive to people who are different from themselves than their older peers.

- Cultural content recurs across the modes of communication because communication always occurs in a cultural context.

- Students must be able to use their second language proficiencies and the cultural understandings that they acquire to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration.

- World language study develops higher-order thinking skills, which enhances learning and achievement across content areas.

- There is a strong correlation between language learning and heightened global awareness, creativity and innovation.

- Proficiency in at least one language other than English greatly enhances college and career readiness in a globally interconnected world.

- World language study provides a foundation for lifelong language learning and for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

- World language learning best serves students when teachers are highly qualified and are provided with time and opportunities for high-quality professional development, which includes exchange programs and/or study abroad.

Guiding Assumptions

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

- Align with ACTFL's national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* and with the world language standards of other states and are internationally benchmarked against the most rigorous and innovative standards in the world;

- Set rigorous world language proficiency expectations for all students;

- Align with valid and reliable national tools for measuring students' overall language proficiency, including the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012, the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners and the NCSSFL LinguaFolio® student self-assessment portfolio;

- Identify world language knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary programs and to function effectively in multilingual workplaces and communities;

- Incorporate the most current brain research in second language acquisition;

- Incorporate results from research on how students' proficiency develops as they continue through an uninterrupted sequence of language instruction from kindergarten through grade 12;

- Incorporate college- and career-readiness skills as described in the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills Map: World Languages*;

- Encourage active and experiential communicative learning that enables students to perform real-life tasks in culturally appropriate ways;

- Require students to receive comprehensible input in the language in keeping with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language's minimum recommendation of 90% of instructional time;

- Focus on world language content knowledge (what students need to know) and skills (what students need to do) in relation to communicating appropriately in a variety of situations about a variety of topics and understanding cultures at home and abroad;

- Focus on important concepts across grade levels through well-articulated Competencies and Process and Content Statements, resulting in a rigorous and increasingly more sophisticated program;

- Seek to fully develop students' oracy and literacy in the target language being studied by setting second language reading and writing outcomes for students that are parallel to those contained in *Ohio's Learning Standards in English Language Arts*;

- Require the appropriate use of multimedia technology to facilitate learning and communication for all students;

- Guide the development of fully articulated, district-wide world language curricula and instructional programs for kindergarten through Grade 12;

- Serve as the basis for all formative (tracking growth and development and guiding instruction) and summative (measuring overall proficiency growth) assessments;

- Support differentiated language instruction to accommodate students' different learning styles; exceptional learning needs; cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds; and personal interests and goals;

- Require the selection and use of authentic instructional materials, including those that integrate multicultural and diverse perspectives across the curriculum.

6. College and Career Readiness

Preparing students for college and career is an integral goal of *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*. The term "21st century skills" refers to a set of core competencies that high school graduates must possess in order to thrive in today's global society and trans-global workforce. Described by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.p21.org) in their resource titled *21st Century Skills Map: World Languages*, the 21st century college- and career-readiness skills that follow have been embedded throughout the Ohio world languages standards document:

- 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.

- 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 reflects and influences 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.

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Source

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

7. The Role of Technology

Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages both support and promote the use of technology in the world language classroom and beyond. Ongoing technological advances and blended learning scenarios, which use a combination of technology-based and face-to-face learning, continue to expand the means by which students can interact with the world and learn other languages. Technological enhancements in schools across Ohio have given students access to the informational power and expansiveness of the Internet. Online language-learning options now bring teachers to students, no matter where they might be in the world or what time of the day it is. Commercially available language-learning software products provide an increasing array of supplemental learning resources for a diverse range of language learners.

One indisputable fact is that today's students are wired to the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through their iPads, laptop computers and other mobile devices. Content is available from a variety of sources and from experts online, often free of charge. Indeed, today's students have a vast world of knowledge readily available at their fingertips. If they learn something of interest in school, they know they can find out more about the topic with just a few clicks. Consideration of these characteristics of contemporary language learners is critically important when designing programs and planning lessons that align to Ohio's learning standards, which firmly embrace the use of technology to enhance learning in the world language classroom. Teachers regularly should employ a variety of technologies to engage students in the learning process by building lessons and assessment around authentic examples of the target language and culture and by connecting their classrooms in Ohio to other places in the world where the target language is spoken.

While schools and districts are strongly encouraged to consider the use of blended learning options to enhance world language study, it is important to understand clearly that *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* cannot be fully or correctly implemented using language-learning software programs as the exclusive means of delivering language instruction. As stand-alone options for learning other languages, none of the products currently on the market can adequately address all of the communicative and cultural demands of the new world language learning standards. Additionally, it is important to understand that the credit flexibility provision contained in Ohio Senate Bill 311 (the Ohio Core legislation) does not permit schools and districts to supplant licensed world language teachers with commercially-available software products under the guise of being a credit flexibility option. A growing body of language acquisition research clearly shows that these products are appropriate ONLY as supplemental materials and never as the primary vehicle for language instruction because the acquisition of language requires a significant level of varied human interaction for learning to be meaningful, and for proficiency and intercultural competence to develop across all language skill areas and communication modes.

The exclusive use of commercially available language-learning products as a replacement for licensed world language teachers and as the sole means of student language learning constitutes a serious departure from the practices proven to be most effective in communicative language teaching and learning and a misinterpretation of Ohio's credit

flexibility provision. Teachers and students are encouraged to consider the use of such products to supplement a well-rounded plan of communicative language learning. In selecting such products, schools and districts are encouraged to evaluate the appropriateness of software products and online courses using the recommendations that were developed by ODE in a guidance document titled *Guidance for Ohio Schools and Districts Considering Online and Technology-Based World Language Options*, which is available on the ODE World Language Web page.

8. The Importance of Communicative Language Learning

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 by their own and other cultures to become effective communicators.

Communicative language teaching, often referred to as a communicative approach, is a language-teaching approach that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning another language. As the world becomes smaller and communication is but a click, call or finger tap away, learners are becoming more and more motivated to use languages in addition to English with people locally and around the world for a variety of purposes. Unhindered communication in multiple languages reinforces concepts and skills across disciplines, heightens college- and career-readiness and enhances the overall quality of one's life. Being able to communicate with others allows speakers to interpret events of the modern and classical world from multiple perspectives as they experience language and culture within and beyond the classroom.

Through communication in other languages, learners also develop an understanding of the relationship among cultural products, practices and perspectives. They can enhance their understanding of language and culture by making linguistic and cultural comparisons and by 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.

In Ohio, world language education is undergoing a massive paradigm shift away from the Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual teaching methods of past decades. Language educators at all levels are fully embracing the research-proven tenets of modern Communicative Language Teaching. *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* fully embrace and support communicative language teaching and learning with the end goals being communicative and cultural competence.

Communicative competence is defined as the ability to interpret and enact appropriate social behaviors through proficient use of language, and it requires the active involvement of the learner in the production of the target language (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995; Canale and Swain 1980; Hymes 1972). This requires language learners to demonstrate a wide range of abilities:

- The ability to say the appropriate thing in a certain social situation (sociolinguistic competence);
- The ability to accurately employ knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and syntax (linguistic competence);
- The ability to begin, enter, contribute to, and end conversations in a consistent and coherent manner (discourse competence);

- The ability to communicate effectively and repair problems caused by communication breakdowns (strategic competence); and

- The ability to engage and interact with others in culturally appropriate ways for common purposes (intercultural competence).

Communicative language learning requires language educators to:

- Place primary emphasis on functional use of the language being learned through the use of communicative tasks within culturally rich contexts;

- Deemphasize the role of grammar and structure in world language lessons;

- Provide learners with substantial amounts of meaningful and comprehensible input through exclusive use of the target language (100% of the time in immersion classrooms and at least 90% of time in all other language-learning settings);

- Engage learners with plentiful and well-balanced opportunities to engage in interpretive, interpersonal and presentational communication;

- Incorporate the use of authentic texts and communication activities linked to "real-world" contexts that emphasize links across language skills and the various modes of communication;

- Utilize task-based cooperative and collaborative activities that require frequent interaction among learners or with other target language users to exchange information and solve problems;

- Provide learners with frequent feedback that is both positive and error-corrective in nature;

- Employ a learner-centered approach that takes into account learners' backgrounds, language needs and personal goals;

- Create a positive affective learning environment that lowers anxiety levels and encourages learners to take risks when attempting to use and create with the language; and

- Allow learners to be creative and to take an integral role in instructional decision-making.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that, for far too long, a majority of students have exited K-12 language programs in Ohio without attaining any measurable level of communicative competence. *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* addresses this deficiency by providing a rigorous, communicatively-based pathway to proficiency. When these learning standards supplant textbooks as the primary driver of instruction, K-12 language learners will have a real opportunity to gain measurably useful levels of language proficiency and intercultural competence, which will enhance their prospects for employment or post-secondary study following their graduation from high school.

Source

Pearson Higher Education. "Principles of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Instruction." 2007. www.pearsonhighered.com/samplechapter/0131579061.pdf.

9. The Role of Grammar in the World Languages Classroom

The grammatical knowledge of a language (e.g., tense, syntax, modality and other elements of usage) is not an explicit goal of *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*. Extensive research in second language acquisition has established that grammar learning should take place within a meaningful communicative context. Furthermore, it shows that grammar is just one aspect of language among many that support the attainment of the standards' proficiency targets; other aspects include knowledge of vocabulary, sociolinguistic knowledge, understanding of cultural appropriateness, and the ability to use communication strategies.

The learning standards support communicative, proficiency-based language learning. In communicative classrooms, grammar should never be the primary focus of instruction. Instead, grammar should be incorporated into lessons judiciously, using an inductive method. One widely-used inductive model, called the PACE Model, guides language instructors to:

1. **P**resent meaningful language through a communicative context;

2. Focus learner **A**ttention on some grammatical aspect of the language;

3. **C**o-construct grammatical explanations with the learners; and

4. **E**xtend the learning in a later lesson or task. (Donato and Adair-Hauck, 1994)

Those students who are provided with ample communicative opportunities to create meaning and use critical thinking skills in the target language will be much better prepared to achieve the higher levels of proficiency envisioned by Ohio's learning standards. Conversely, students in programs that continue to place primary emphasis on a progression of grammar learning in isolation will be severely disadvantaged as they attempt to meet the proficiency levels targeted by the standards.

10. Use of the Target Language in the World Language Classroom

Language acquisition research clearly shows that we learn our second and third languages most efficiently in the same way we learned our first language – by being immersed in it. It is essential that language teachers create an immersive environment for their learners. Indeed, Ohio's K-12 language learners need to be surrounded with comprehensible language, often called comprehensible input, in order to gain proficiency in an expedient manner. Research also shows that this input must be meaningful, interesting to the learner and culturally relevant.

In accordance with these findings, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) recommends that world language instructors deliver instruction using the target language a minimum of 90% of the time:

> Research indicates that effective language instruction must provide significant levels of meaningful communication* and interactive feedback in the target language in order for students to develop language and cultural proficiency. ACTFL therefore recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% 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 meaning making. For example, they:
>
> 1. Provide comprehensible input that is directed toward communicative goals;
> 2. Make meaning clear through body language, gestures, and visual support;
> 3. Conduct comprehension checks to ensure understanding;
> 4. Negotiate meaning with students and encourage negotiation among students;
> 5. Elicit talk that increases in competency, accuracy and complexity over time;
> 6. Encourage self-expression and spontaneous use of language;
> 7. Teach students strategies for requesting clarification and assistance when faced with comprehension difficulties; and
> 8. Offer feedback to assist and improve students' ability to interact orally in the target language.
>
> *Communication for a classical language refers to an emphasis on reading ability and for American Sign Language (ASL) to signed communicative ability.[1]

Ohio's learning standards require K-12 language educators to embrace this recommendation by using the target language as much as possible and maximizing the opportunities for learners to use the language as much as they are able to both during and outside of the instructional period. Ohio's *Model Curriculum for K-12 World Languages*, which supports the implementation and use of Ohio's learning standards, has been designed to aid teachers in this endeavor by providing them with the instructional strategies and authentic resources necessary to conduct their classes in the target language in such a way that learners will be able to comprehend the language input they receive and use it to communicate with others in culturally appropriate ways.

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Sources

[1] American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. "Use of the Target Language in the Classroom." July, 2012. www.actfl.org/news/position-statement.

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11. Proficiency and Research-Based Proficiency Targets

One of the primary goals of *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* is to enable more Ohio language learners to acquire advanced levels of proficiency in a modern, classical or visual language other than English. Language proficiency is defined as the ability of an individual to use culturally-appropriate language to communicate spontaneously in non-rehearsed contexts. Proficiency also refers to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language to understand, speak, read and write in real-life situations.

Proficiency is most often described as a progression of learning beginning at a novice level where language users have little or no functional ability to communicate and culminating at the distinguished level which is exhibited by highly articulate, well-educated language users. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, or ACTFL, distinguishes between eleven distinct levels of proficiency, shown here beginning with the lowest level on the scale:

1. Novice Low
2. Novice Mid
3. Novice High
4. Intermediate Low
5. Intermediate Mid
6. Intermediate High
7. Advanced Low
8. Advanced Mid
9. Advanced High
10. Superior
11. Distinguished

Students are considered novice language learners whether they begin their language program in kindergarten, fifth grade or ninth grade. At the novice levels, speech is limited to memorized material, formulaic utterances, lists and enumerations. At the intermediate levels, learners begin to create with the language. They can ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics and handle simple situations or transactions. At the advanced levels, learners can narrate and describe in the past, present and future tenses and handle a more complicated situation or transaction. At the superior level, learners can support opinions, hypothesize, discuss abstract topics and handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation. At the Superior and Distinguished levels, learners can use the language skillfully with accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness to reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a culturally appropriate manner.

Extensive research in second language acquisition indicates that the development of language proficiency requires a significant level of human interaction. Simultaneously, well-sequenced learning must occur over an extended period of time for that learning to be meaningful and for proficiency and intercultural competence to develop across all language skill areas and communication modes.

It is important to understand that different languages are categorized by their degree of difficulty for native English-speakers. Aspects such as the origins of a language, the nature of its writing system, phonology, grammar, and tonality are some of the factors which contribute to the perceived difficulty in learning a particular language.

Languages taught in Ohio can be categorized according to criteria developed by the Foreign Language Institute:

Level 1 Difficulty	Level 2 Difficulty	Level 3 Difficulty	Level 4 Difficulty
French	ASL	Greek (Modern)	Arabic
Italian	German	Hebrew	Japanese
Latin	Swahili	Hindi	Korean
Portuguese		Polish	Mandarin Chinese
Spanish		Russian	
		Somali	

The level of difficulty of a language directly correlates to the amount of time needed to move from one level of proficiency to the next (e.g., from novice high to intermediate low). For example, average high school-aged learners require approximately 135 to 150 total hours of communicatively intensive learning across the four language skills and three modes of communication to move between the lowest proficiency levels of a Level 1 difficulty language like French or Spanish. By comparison that same average learner would require significantly more time, perhaps as much as 350 hours, to move between the lowest levels of proficiency of a level 4 difficulty language like Arabic or Chinese. As learners move along the proficiency progression of learning, attainment of each higher level of proficiency requires a proportionally longer amount of time. The ACTFL prepared this visual organizer in the form of an inverted pyramid to show how each level of increasing proficiency encompasses greater ability in relation to a wider range of topics:

ACTFL Performance and Proficiency Guidelines for Language Learners
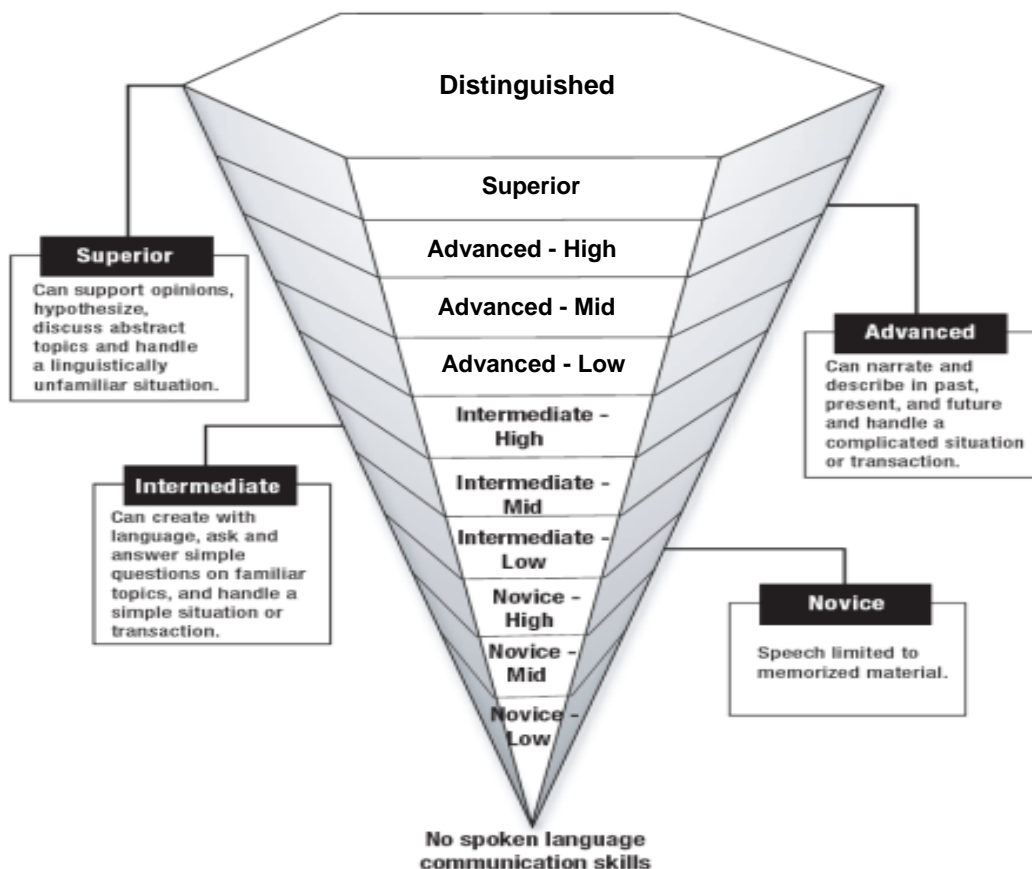
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ©2012

The world language discipline benefits from three nationally-acclaimed tools that enable us to describe and measure the proficiency of K-12 learners:

- The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* are descriptions of what people can do with language in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing in real-world situations in spontaneous, non-rehearsed contexts.

- The *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* describe language performance that is the result of explicit instruction in an instructional setting. They reflect how language learners perform regardless of whether learning takes place in classrooms, online, through independent project-based learning or in blended environments.

- The NCSSFL *LinguaFolio®* is a learner self-assessment portfolio instrument designed to support individuals in setting and achieving their language-learning goals. LinguaFolio enables language learners of all ages and levels to document their language learning as they progress towards greater proficiency. The *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* is the most well-known and used component of the *LinguaFolio®*.

The following chart is another helpful tool, which further defines the ACTFL proficiency levels:

Proficiency Level	Global Tasks and Functions	Context/ Content	Accuracy/ Comprehensibility	Text Types
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 patterns 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 and general interest.*	**Understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-native 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 non-native 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 non-native speakers.**	**Individual words and phrases**

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ©2012

Use of these tools will alleviate pressure experienced by many world language instructors to achieve unrealistic goals in short periods of instructional time. Feedback from the field verifies that the descriptions and expectations contained in these invaluable resources represent the reality of what learners should be able to do *on their own* in the language after set amounts of time, provided that the instruction is both standards- and performance-based.

The Ohio State University's *Collaborative Articulation and Assessment Project* (CAAP) is a valid and reliable assessment measuring the language proficiency of high school students in their third year of language learning as an indicator of their readiness for college-level language coursework. From 20+ years of data rendered by this assessment, we know that many high school students who are learning level I or II difficulty languages (e.g., French, Spanish, German) are apt to exhibit characteristics of the "Intermediate Low" range of proficiency in interpretive listening, interpretive reading and presentational writing at the end of their third year of study. This indicates that they are just transitioning from a reliance on memorized language, which is characteristic of the novice levels of proficiency, to being able to create simple language on highly familiar topics used for basic tasks at the end of their third year of study.

Since the majority of language students in Ohio do not continue their study of world languages beyond three years, the ramification is that most Ohio students are not attaining Intermediate Mid proficiency, which is the level which first affords language learners with basic in-country survival and coping skills, such as:

a. Asking and answering questions dealing with everyday situations;

b. Giving and getting information and directions;

c. Participating in casual conversations;

d. Giving basic information about yourself, your family or your associates;

e. Avoiding basic cultural errors; and

f. Having operational language skills.

Even fewer Ohio students take an Advanced Placement (AP) language class, which is usually taken during the fourth or fifth year of a traditional secondary program. Only a very small fraction of all K-12 students who ever study a world language take and pass an Advanced Placement exam.

Anecdotal evidence and an examination of the AP scoring guidelines indicate that language learners who show evidence of Intermediate Mid proficiency are likely to score a minimal AP passing score of "3." Learners who show evidence of Intermediate High Proficiency are likely to score an AP score of 4 or 5. Language students who show evidence of Advanced Low proficiency or higher are more likely to score a 5 on an AP language exam. (Jahner, 2014)

The implication derived from all of this information is that the vast majority of students who participate in a K-12 world language program in Ohio do not study a world language long enough to attain the Intermediate High level of proficiency, which is widely regarded as the most minimal level of proficiency required for employment purposes. Most employers seeking

to fill positions that require language fluency hire candidates with Advanced levels of proficiency or higher.

For a more complete description of each proficiency level in Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading, go to: http://www.actfl.org/files/public/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012_FINAL.pdf

Recommended Proficiency Targets

In order to assist schools and districts with setting appropriate proficiency targets for K-12 learners, the Ohio Department of Education has conducted extensive research in order to create the following sets of proficiency targets. These recommended targets take into consideration a variety of factors including the program model used, the time and intensity of instruction and the difficulty of the language. It is important to note that these targets may not be immediately obtainable by a language program if communicative standards- and proficiency-based practices have not been previously implemented. Programs that that have been grammar-based and textbook-driven will likely require a number of years for best practices to be implemented and for learner proficiency subsequently to reach the targeted levels.

Important: These research-based recommendations are designed to provide local schools and districts with the informed guidance needed to set rigorous yet attainable proficiency targets for their language students. In no way should they be interpreted as being state mandated. District decision-makers ultimately must consider the nature of their programs and establish targets that challenge learners yet remain obtainable given local constraints. Schools and districts may also want to consider the differentiation of targets to meet the needs of all types of learners.

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for **Level 1 & 2 Difficulty Languages** These include modern alphabetic languages and classical languages that are taught with a balanced emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking.						
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** 675-750 hours	**LEVEL VI** 825-900 hours
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High	Int. High / Adv. Low
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. Mid / Int. High	Int. High
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High	Int. High / Adv. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Nov. Low / Nov. Mid	Nov. Mid / Nov. High	Nov. High / Int. Low	Int. Low / Int. Mid	Int. Mid	Int. High
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. Mid / Int. High	Int. High

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Level 3 & 4 Difficulty Languages
These include logographic languages that are taught with a balanced emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking.

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 675-750 hours	LEVEL VI 825-900 hours
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice Mid	Nov. Mid / Nov. High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low / Int. Mid	Int. Mid
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice Mid.	Nov. Mid / Nov. High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low / Int. Mid	Int. Mid
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Low	Novice Mid.	Novice Mid. / Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low

Elementary FLES* Proficiency Targets for Level 1 & 2 Difficulty Languages
These include modern alphabetic languages taught via elementary school/middle school FLES programs at a minimum of 3 times per week and a minimum of 90 minutes of instruction per week.

MODE AND SKILL	End of 2nd year	End of 3rd year	End of 4th year	End of 5th year	End of 6th year	End of 7th year	End of 8th year
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High	Novice High
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Low	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High	Novice High

MODE AND SKILL	Elementary FLES Proficiency Targets for Level 3 & 4 Difficulty Languages These include logographic languages taught via elementary/middle school FLES programs at a minimum of 3 times per week and a minimum of 90 minutes of instruction per week.						
	End of 2nd year	End of 3rd year	End of 4th year	End of 5th year	End of 6th year	End of 7th year	End of 8th year
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Novice High	Novice High	Novice High
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice Low	Novice Low / Nov. Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Nov. High	Novice High
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Novice High	Novice High	Novice High
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Low	Novice Low	Novice Low / Nov. Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice High
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Low	Novice Low / Nov. Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid	Novice Mid / Nov. High	Novice High

MODE AND SKILL	K-12 Immersion Program Proficiency Targets for Level 1 & 2 Difficulty Languages These include modern alphabetic languages that are taught with a balanced emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking.			
	End of K-2	End of 3-5	End of 6-8	End of 9-12
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Mid	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Mid	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low

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K-12 Immersion Program Proficiency Targets for Level 3 & 4 Difficulty Languages These include logographic languages that are taught with a balanced emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking.				
MODE AND SKILL	**End of K-2**	**End of 3-5**	**End of 6-8**	**End of 9-12**
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. High
INTERPERSONAL Speaking	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Adv. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Mid	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Low	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. High

It is important to remember that the transition from one level of language proficiency to the next will rarely if ever correspond to the end of a course, semester or academic year. Fields where two different proficiency levels appear together signify that average students likely will be transitioning between the two levels sometime during the indicated year, course or level of instruction. Research also indicates that learners' proficiency levels across the different skills/modes will rarely develop at the same rate. For example, interpretive listening and interpersonal speaking abilities tend to develop more quickly for average learners of both modern alphabetic and logographic languages while interpretive reading and presentational writing skills tend to lag behind for learners of non-alphabetic languages.

IMPORTANT: When using these charts, it is important to keep in mind that diverse groups of learners develop language proficiency at different rates as the result of a variety of factors. It must be clearly stated there will be students who fall below and students who surpass the targeted levels.

Finally, these charts should not be viewed as being static. As data from long-term studies of Ohio language programs become available over the coming years, it may become necessary to make slight adjustments in these targets to better reflect the outcomes that are possible as the result of high-quality, standards- and proficiency-based programming.

Proficiency versus Performance
Language proficiency is often confused with another, very different term: language performance. These terms are NOT synonymous or interchangeable. Whereas proficiency

describes a learner's ability to use language spontaneously in non-rehearsed situations and unexpected or unknown contexts, performance describes the ability of learners to communicate successfully who have been given prior opportunities to rehearse, or practice, the language needed for successful communication in controlled situations and familiar contexts.

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12. Assessment in the World Language Classroom

Ohioans are currently engaged in the important process of aligning critical parts of the state's educational system to enhance the effectiveness of that system in promoting learning. These critical parts include learning standards, instruction and assessment.

**The Three Parts of an
Aligned Educational System**

Standards   Instruction

Assessment
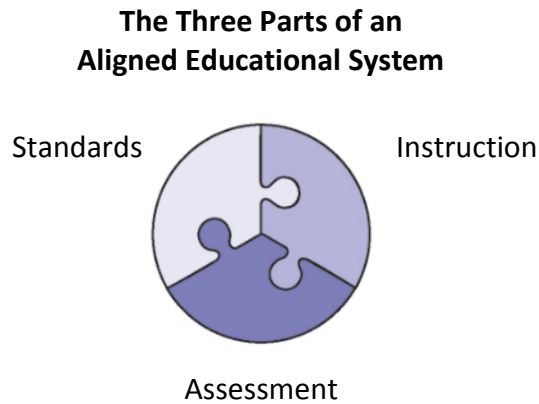
Ohio has developed and adopted clear, rigorous world language learning standards. As part of the ongoing process of aligning the educational system, educators and members of the public need to know whether students are meeting these standards. Assessment provides the mechanism for students to demonstrate their understandings and skills related to the learning standards. A comprehensive and thoughtful assessment system provides teachers with needed information about student performance that can be used for reporting progress to students and the public. Results provide students and their families with a way to determine what they are learning and what they need to do in order to improve performance. Assessment results also enable teachers to plan instruction, reflect on teaching practices and measure their students' academic growth for the purposes of educator evaluation and program improvement.

In synthesizing the research on educational assessment in general, and on world language assessment in particular, several principles emerge that match assessments with standards and instruction:

- Assessments must be based on agreed-upon standards;

- An assessment system must include a wide variety of assessment types/strategies;

- Assessments must be based on clearly stated expectations, criteria and standards for rating;

- Teachers and students must be actively involved in the assessment process (National Forum on Assessment, in McTighe, 2001; Robinson, N.D.).

Assessment procedures and tasks should be based on agreed-upon educational standards specifying what students should know and be able to do. The assessment tasks should be valid and appropriate representations of the learning standards students are expected to achieve. By assessing what is taught in the way it is taught, educators ensure that the written, taught and tested curricula are aligned.

Traditionally, many world language educators have relied heavily on multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and true-false tests. Yet, these are highly inadequate means to measure most of the important educational outcomes delineated in the world language learning standards and do not allow for diversity in learning styles or cultural differences. "A sound assessment system provides information about a full range of knowledge and abilities considered valuable and important for students to learn, and therefore requires a variety of assessment methods" (National Forum on Assessment, in McTighe, 2001). Such multiple means of assessment might include paper and pencil or online tests, portfolios, open-ended questions, performance-based assessments, individual and group projects, extended reading and writing experiences that include rough drafts and revisions, teacher observation, self- and peer-assessment, conferencing and proficiency assessments.

World language educators must hold both their students and themselves accountable for meeting the demands of the learning standards. To facilitate this process, it is incumbent upon teachers to include not only clearly-stated student expectations and criteria for each assessment, but also standards for rating assessments. Whatever system of assessment is used should be designed to provide not just numbers or ratings, but also useful information on the particular abilities students have or have not yet developed. Assessment procedures and results should be understandable and reported in terms of how well the standards have been met, keeping in mind the age of the learners and the level of proficiency that can be expected, given the length and intensity of the instructional sequence. The *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* (Swender et.al., 2012), the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners 2012* (Swender et.al., 2012) and the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* (Van Houten, Swender et.al., 2012) provide a necessary starting point for developing reasonable expectations about how well students can meet the learning standards.

Assessment systems should be designed to assist both educators and students in improving instruction and in advancing student learning. For an assessment system to do so, teachers must understand its purposes and procedures, and they must base assessments on the standards. Teachers should be involved in the design, administration, scoring, and use of assessment tasks. Results should guide instruction and enable students to monitor their own progress. Thus, assessment is an ongoing process shared between teachers and their students.

Ohio's Assessment System for World Languages
In general, there are three broad purposes of assessments. Diagnostic assessment occurs prior to instruction and is used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses in a particular area in order to place them into appropriate levels of instruction and/or to differentiate instruction accordingly. Formative assessment occurs during the learning process. It is used to monitor students' progress toward meeting instructional objectives and goals. Results shape current understandings so that repairs and improvements can be designed. Summative assessment occurs after an instructional sequence. It determines the extent to which students have met their instructional goals or objectives and enables educators to communicate results to students, parents and other member of the school community. Results also are used to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of instructional activities and assessment measures, and more generally, the curriculum (Hall, 2001).

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For the world language content area, Ohio's assessment system relies heavily on district-level assessments aligned to the learning standards and to local curricula. Each type of assessment provides invaluable information to Ohio's educators, students, parents, and communities. While each approach to assessment supports the others, each also serves its own unique purpose.

It is important to note that the proficiency-based nature of *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* requires world language educators to move away from the former emphasis that was placed on assessing discreet aspects of language (e.g., vocabulary knowledge, grammar ability, cultural factoids, spelling, syntax, etc.). Because the learning standards are communicative and proficiency-based in nature with culture embedded throughout, the measures that teachers use to formatively and summatively assess student performance and determine students' overall language proficiency growth should be as well.

Summary of World Language Assessment Types	
Assessment Types	**Purpose**
Placement (Summative)	• To assign students to the appropriate level of instruction within a particular program. • To provide information about students' language proficiency across skills and modes of communication.
Diagnostic (Summative)	• To provide information about students' relative mastery of or difficulty with portions of the curriculum. • To provide information about students' language proficiency across skills and modes of communication. • To diagnose students' strengths/needs.
Classroom Assessments (Formative & Summative)	• To assess students' accomplishments relative to the learning goals established by a particular curriculum. • To provide feedback on student learning. • To provide a basis for student evaluation (e.g., grading). • To identify students' particular strengths and weaknesses in order to help teachers tailor instruction to fit students' needs. • To assess students' ability to perform within the communicative and cultural contexts of a particular unit of study aligned to the curriculum. • To gauge educator and program effectiveness.
National Proficiency Assessments (Summative)	• To provide information about students' language proficiency across skills and modes of communication. • To periodically assess students' overall language proficiency independent of a particular curriculum. • To provide proficiency comparison data for accountability. • To gauge educator and program effectiveness.

Placement Tests

Students enter Ohio's world language programs with diverse experiences in relation to language learning. Some students articulate from immersion or partial immersion programs into traditional high school sequences. Others come from countries where the language of instruction is the home language. While no state-level placement tests exist, district world language professionals should work together to develop valid and reliable performance-based mechanisms for placing students, based on agreed-upon outcomes for each level of instruction offered in the district.

Diagnostic Assessments

No formal diagnostic assessments have been developed for world languages at the state level. Rather, teachers may wish to design diagnostic assessments drawn from the recommended Expectations for Learning found in *Ohio's Model Curriculum for K-12 World Languages*. Diagnostic assessments provide common, district-wide instruments that yield objective perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. They also provide teachers with important information for instructional planning. These assessments help identify students who need additional help in meeting the learning standards and in preparing for district-level performance assessments.

Classroom Assessments

The cornerstone of accountability for world language programs in the state is ongoing classroom assessment. Good teaching practice embraces assessing student performance and providing constructive feedback to students. An important benefit of classroom assessment is that the feedback is frequent and immediate. A rich blend of assessment measures, collected over time, should be used to paint a complete picture of students' second language abilities.

Performance-based assessments measure attainment of specific, communicative course objectives tied to a specific curriculum. They should be designed to reflect proficiency goals, presenting language in context and requiring students to use the language beyond the single word or sentence levels whenever possible to carry out realistic tasks. The focus is on performance rather than on the ability to manipulate discrete items (e.g., grammar concepts) taken out of context. Often, performance-based assessments specify the content knowledge, context, target audience, purpose, and product or performance expected.

In daily life, it is common to listen to or read some sort of text. People then discuss the ideas they develop about those texts with others (e.g., reactions to a radio broadcast, an article in the newspaper). Sometimes, they incorporate the information into written or oral presentations (e.g., a sales pitch at work, a letter to the editor). A specific type of performance-based assessment, called an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), is ideal for assessing students' ability to use what they are learning in their language class in these daily life contexts. They allow educators to assess the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing via the modes of communication (i.e., interpersonal, interpretive, presentational) through culturally appropriate, real-life (or lifelike) contexts. These types of assessments are most appropriate in modern language classes. For obvious reasons, assessments which focus on reading and writing would not be appropriate for a visual language like American Sign Language. Assessments in the classical languages would focus most heavily on the interpretive

area; to a lesser degree, items that tap into the presentational and interpersonal areas also might be used.

Proficiency-based IPAs complement performance-based testing by eliciting appropriate demonstrations of knowledge and skills on communicative tasks through real-world application of facts, concepts and skills in new situations. This allows for direct measurement of students' linguistic and cultural abilities. Proficiency-based IPAs are given as summative assessments at the end of an extended period of time (e.g., end of semester, end of year) to demonstrate learner proficiency in an unrehearsed context. In addition to their role in classroom assessment, proficiency-based IPAs can also be used for placement or diagnostic purposes. As with performance-based IPAs, discrete elements of language are not assessed.

Classroom assessment should be used not only to evaluate student performance and progress but also to inform instructional planning so that it better meets the needs of students. The information gleaned from assessments can be used to determine if further instruction is needed and to shape the form subsequent instruction will take, such as activities that review information already covered, conceptual reinforcement with the use of different techniques or extension projects for enrichment.

Use of Rubrics
World language programs are encouraged to develop and use appropriate rubrics to facilitate all aspects of student assessment. Rubrics are standardized scoring tools used to assess students' language proficiency or language performance relative to a variety of tasks. Proficiency rubrics are used to measure learners' ability to communicate meaningful information in spontaneous situations with native speakers. Performance rubrics are used to measure learners' ability to communicate meaningful information in practiced, rehearsed and familiar contexts, often at the end of a unit of study. In general, the use of rubrics facilitates easier evaluation and grading on the part of teachers, and it makes the grading process more transparent and understandable for learners.

Proficiency rubrics describe levels of language proficiency in interpretive reading, interpretive listening, interpersonal communication, presentational speaking and presentational writing across the twelve levels of language proficiency, from Novice Low to Distinguished. Performance rubrics describe specific expectations for learning in student-friendly language. They are shared with learners well in advance of assessments to provide them with a clear understanding of the criteria on which they will be evaluated. These rubrics focus on key elements that are essential for successfully completing the communicative task. Additionally, they are aligned to both the current proficiency level of the learners as well as the mode(s) of communication being evaluated.

Rubrics can also be classified as being either analytic or holistic in nature. An analytic rubric features evaluative criteria divided into categories which focus on specific elements (e.g., pronunciation, comprehensibility, structures, task completion, etc.). These rubrics are useful in pinpointing specific strengths and weaknesses, and this information can be used to guide learner improvement. Analytic rubrics are often most useful for evaluating a summative assessment at the end of an instructional unit. Holistic rubrics, on the other hand, are used to

evaluate work or performance as a whole. Evaluative criteria are combined into a general, descriptive paragraph, and the use of holistic rubrics renders results that can be used to show learners if they have met the learning expectations tied to targeted concepts, levels or standards.

National Proficiency Assessments

At key points in the instructional sequence, schools and districts should consider using national proficiency tests to gather information about students' general language abilities. These assessments are not tied to a specific curriculum. Rather, they are used to assess global linguistic proficiency. Programs may choose from a variety of valid and reliable national proficiency assessments:

Assessment	Grades or Ages	Languages Available	Skills Measured
Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA)	Pre-K to Grade 2	Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish	Listening, oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary
Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA)	Grades 2 to 8	Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish	Listening, oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary
National Online Early Language Learning Assessment (NOELLA)	Grades 3 to 6	Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)	Grades 4 to adult	Arabic, Chinese, English as a Second Language, French, German, Russian, Spanish	Interpretive reading and listening, interpersonal listening/speaking, presentational writing
Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency 4Se (STAMP 4Se)	Grades 3 to 6	Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency 4S (STAMP 4S)	Grades 7 to 16	Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
Classic Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (Classic STAMP)	Grades 7 to 16	German, Italian	Speaking, reading, writing
Ohio State University's Collaborative Articulation and Assessment Project (CAAP)	Grades 9-12 with 3 years of language Grades 9-12 with 2 years of language	French, German, Spanish Chinese	Listening, speaking, reading, writing
College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	Grades 7 to 12	Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish Italian	Listening, speaking, reading, writing Reading, writing
ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)	Ages 14 to adult	37 languages	Global speaking

Assessment	Grades or Ages	Languages Available	Skills Measured
ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)	Ages 14 to adult	26 languages	Global writing

Conclusion

Multifaceted assessment allows educators to determine students' growth and development over time. Without assessment, it is impossible to gauge student's attainment of the standards. Ohio's aligned system of standards, instruction and assessment helps to ensure that all students are prepared to meet the rigorous linguistic and intercultural demands of the new century.

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13. Considerations for Classical Languages

Classical Languages

Reading and understanding written messages of the ancient world are key goals for students of Latin and Greek. Oral interpretation, writing and recitation are also important communicative elements in a well-balanced classical language program. Additionally, a social-cultural-historical emphasis may also be an important curricular goal in the classical language classroom. To a lesser extent, the oral use of the language can be employed to build student interest and heighten understanding of and appreciation for the languages and their cultures, but generally interpersonal communication is not a major goal in the classical language classroom. The importance of the three modes of communication for classical language is evidenced in the following standards found in the "Standards for Classical Languages" of the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999):

- Students read, understand and interpret Latin or Greek.

- Students use orally, listen to, and write Latin or Greek as part of the language learning process.

Assessments in the classical languages focus most heavily on the interpretive area. To a lesser degree, items that tap into the presentational and interpersonal areas also will be in evidence.

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Classical Languages These include languages like Latin and Ancient Greek, which are taught with a focus on the written and not on the spoken word.						
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** 675-750 hours	**LEVEL VI** 825-900 hours
INTERPRETIVE Listening	Novice Mid	Novice High	Novice High / Int. Low	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. Mid
INTERPRETIVE Reading	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. Mid / Int. High	Int. High	Adv. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Speaking	Novice Low	Novice Mid.	Novice High	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low
PRESENTATIONAL Writing	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low / Int. Mid	Int. Mid	Int. High

When using this chart, it is important to keep in mind that different learners develop language proficiency at different rates as the result of a variety of factors. It must be clearly stated there will be students who fall below and students who surpass the targeted levels.

14. Considerations for American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a complex visual-spatial language used by the Deaf community in the United States and Canada. It is a vibrant, linguistically complete and natural language used by people of all ages to communicate everyday life experiences, needs, thoughts, and abstract ideas in a visual way. ASL is a language with a rich culture and heritage. Other countries also have their own signed languages, like Mexican Sign Language and French Sign Language (LSF).

It is important to note that ASL shares no grammatical similarities to English and should not be considered in any way to be a broken, mimed, or gestural form of English. In terms of its syntax, for example, ASL utilizes a topic-comment syntax, while English uses a subject-object-verb syntax. Some linguists note that, in terms of its syntax, ASL shares more in common with spoken Japanese than it does with English.

ASL and other sign languages are often incorrectly characterized as "gestural" languages. This is not absolutely correct because hand gestures are only one component of ASL. Facial features such as eyebrow motion and lip-mouth movements and other factors such as body orientation are also significant in ASL as they form a crucial part of the grammatical system. In addition, ASL makes use of the space surrounding the signer to describe places and persons that are not present.

Sections 3313.604 and 3345.09 of Amended Substitute House Bill 216 (1990) recognize American Sign Language as a foreign (world) language in Ohio. A middle or high school student who successfully completes a high school caliber ASL course taught by a licensed teacher is entitled to receive credit for that course toward satisfaction of a high school world language requirement. Any state postsecondary institution may offer and count ASL as a foreign language towards undergraduate requirements.

Since ASL is a visual-spatial language, the communication modes involve different skills:

- Interpretive Listening is labeled Interpretive Receptive, meaning that information is received visually, not through audio means. This category includes receptivity to both signing and fingerspelling.

- Interpersonal Speaking is labeled Interpersonal Interactive, which means that information is exchanged through visual interactivity rather than via audio means.

- Presentational Speaking is labeled Presentational Expressive, because information is being conveyed visually through signs and fingerspelling, not verbally.

The following chart contains recommended proficiency targets for American Sign Language (ASL) learners who are enrolled in programs that incorporate practices proven to be most effective:

Middle School/High School Proficiency Targets for Visual Languages These languages include American Sign Language (ASL).						
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** 675-750 hours	**LEVEL VI** 825-900 hours
INTERPRETIVE Receptive	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High	Int. High
	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Mid			
INTERPERSONAL Interactive	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High
				Int. Mid		
PRESENTATIONAL Expressive	Novice Mid	Novice High	Int. Low	Int. Low	Int. Mid	Int. High
				Int. Mid		

When using this chart, it is important to keep in mind that different learners develop language proficiency at different rates as the result of a variety of factors. It must be clearly stated there will be students who fall below and students who surpass the targeted levels.

To assist school and districts with setting appropriate proficiency targets for K-12 learners, the Ohio Department of Education has conducted extensive research and actively engaged with the ASL-teaching community in order to create this set of ASL proficiency targets. These recommended targets take into consideration a variety of factors, including the program model used, the time and intensity of instruction, and the difficulty of the language. It is important to note that these targets may not be immediately obtainable by a language program if communicative standards- and proficiency-based practices have not been previously implemented. Programs that have not yet established rigorous, standards-based expectations for learners will likely require a number of years for practices that have proven to be most effective to be implemented and for learner proficiency to subsequently reach the targeted levels. It is important to note that these research-based recommendations are designed to provide schools and districts with rigorous yet attainable proficiency targets for their language students. They are intended to provide local language programs with informed guidance and should in no way be construed as a state mandate.

The state of Ohio recognizes that there is no written form of ASL. However, some programs might incorrectly equate Presentational Writing in other languages to Glossing, which refers to a system for writing down ASL sign-for-sign pictorially and including notations to account for the facial and body grammar that goes with the signs. However, whether or not an ASL learner has the ability to gloss has no bearing on that learner's proficiency in ASL. Furthermore, glossing is not considered to be a part of the culture of ASL. Programs should not feel pressure to incorporate an artificial writing element into an ASL program when one simply does not exist for this language. If a school or district has an initiative that emphasizes writing across the curriculum, English can be used by learners in the ASL classroom to write about the language and culture of ASL.

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Source

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15. Alignment with Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages require learners to reinforce and expand their knowledge across other disciplines using the target language. The foundational underpinnings from the former Connections standard, which are embedded throughout the Communication and Cultures standards, require world language educators to become familiar with the learning standards of the other disciplines. Language teachers should seek to connect the learning that happens in their own classrooms to the learning that is taking place in their students' other content area classrooms whenever possible.

Ohio's Learning Standards in English Language Arts lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the 21st century, describing the skills and understandings learners are expected to demonstrate outside the classroom or in the workplace. These expectations are described in the *ELA College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards* across four strands which include Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. It is important to know that these four strands are well-represented in *Ohio's Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* by the Communication standard (i.e., interpretive, interpersonal and presentational communication), the Cultures standard and the targeted levels of proficiency that are expected of K-12 world language learners. Both standards and the proficiency targets identify and describe the expectations that are necessary to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready in today's global society.[1]

In the new English Language Arts learning standards, the Reading strand requires students to use both literary and informational texts. Using different text types is also a requirement of the interpretive portion of the Communication standard for world languages. Additionally, the ELA standards describe a balance of student writing for the purposes of explaining, persuading, and conveying experiences. The presentational writing component of the world languages Communication standard also includes these elements for identical purposes. Finally, the ELA Language strand, which describes students' command of the conventions of Standard English, equates to the different world language proficiency levels that can be achieved by learners who receive sufficient instruction and plentiful opportunities for contextualized practice across the modes of communication over time. These proficiency levels are described in detail in the previous section of this document.

Finally, with regard to the literacy development requirements included in the English Language Arts standards for technical subjects, Ohio's new world language standards:

- Seek to fully develop students' oracy and literacy in the target language being studied;
- Embed elements of Ohio's new ELA literacy standards within the process and content statements of both the Communication and Cultures standards;
- Use similar language and set parallel expectations for students in terms of their second language reading and writing outcomes; and

- Incorporate insights and draft language that were shared and/or reviewed by the Department's English Language Arts consultants to ensure that the world language learning standards line up with the English Language Arts literacy standards.

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Source

[1]American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. "Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the Common Core State Standards." 2012. http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/CrosswalkFinalAligningCCSSLanguageStandards.pdf.