Washington State
K-12 World Languages
Learning Standards

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Version 1.3

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Version 1.3 Update

In 2014-2015, the Washington K-12 World Languages Learning Standards were updated from the 2010 version to reflect the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Mathematics (replacing the state's 2005 Reading and Writing Learning Standards and 2008 Mathematics Standards) and minor revisions to the wording of the national standards upon which Washington's World Language Standards are based. This update does not change the content of the World Languages standards.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) revised the national standards to reflect 15 years of implementation in order to clarify what language learners will do to demonstrate growth on each standard. The World-Readiness Standards for Language Learners reflect the same structure as the original standards while integrating the Common Core State Standards, College and Career Readiness and 21st Century Skills. To reflect the non-linear nature of language acquisition, they are no longer numbered.
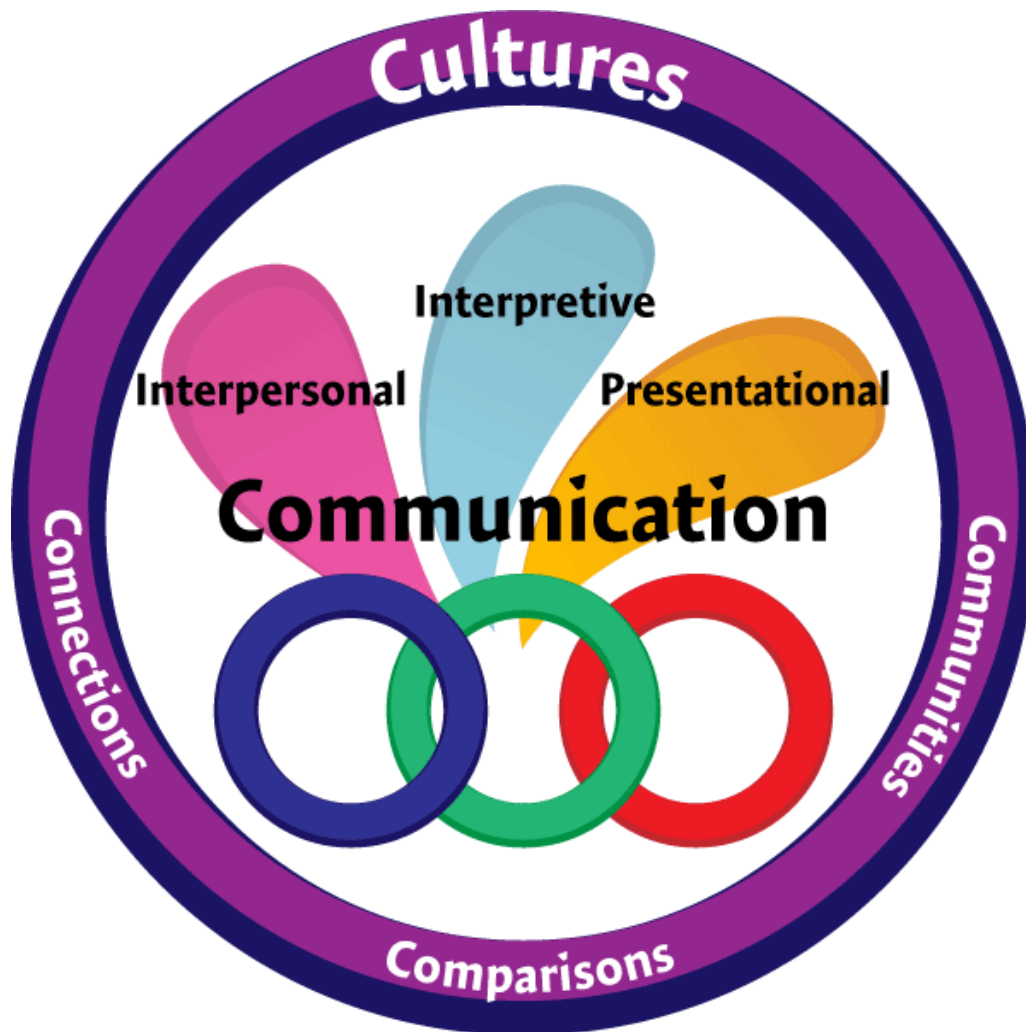
I. Overview

The Washington State K-12 World Languages Learning Standards describe what students should know and be able to do as they study and learn to communicate in languages beyond English. The purpose of this document is to provide strong support for students, parents, teachers, and the broader community by guiding the alignment and integration of world language standards into the planning and delivery of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature updated the definition of basic education to include the goal of preparing students to be "responsible and respectful global citizens" (http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.210 accessed 5/13/2014). One of the hallmarks of global citizenship is the ability to communicate in languages of the world beyond English.

In February 2010, the state's Curriculum Advisory and Review Committee (CARC), which consists of statewide representative groups of superintendents, curriculum directors, and principals, recommended that the national "Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century," available from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (www.actfl.org), be adopted formally as Washington's world languages learning standards. They further recommended that OSPI launch a systematic effort to introduce the standards to world language teachers across the state.

In 2013, ACTFL completed a thorough review of the national standards and republished the "refreshed" standards as the "World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages." The guiding principle was to clarify what language learners would do to demonstrate progress on each Standard.

These revised Standards include language to reflect the current educational landscape, including:
- Common Core State Standards
- College and Career Readiness
- 21st century skills

These Standards are equally applicable to:
- Learners at all levels, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary levels
- Native speakers and heritage speakers, including ESL students
- American Sign Language
- Classical Languages (Latin and Greek)

The Five C's of World Language Education

The purposes and uses of world languages are as diverse as the students who study them. Some students study another language in hopes of finding a rewarding career in the international marketplace or government service. Others are interested in the intellectual challenge and cognitive benefits that accrue to those who master multiple languages. Still others seek greater understanding of other people and other cultures. Many approach world language study, as they do other courses, simply to fulfill a graduation requirement.

Regardless of the reason for study, world languages have something to offer everyone. It is with this philosophy in mind that the standards task force identified five goal areas that encompass all of these reasons: *Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons,* and *Communities*—the five C's of world language education.

Communication is at the heart of second language study, whether the communication takes place face-to-face, in writing, or across centuries through the reading of literature. Through the study of other languages,

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students gain a knowledge and understanding of the *cultures* that use that language and, in fact, cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs.

Learning languages provides *connections* to additional bodies of knowledge that may be unavailable to the monolingual English speaker. Through *comparisons* and contrasts with the language being studied, students develop insight into the nature of language and the concept of culture and realize that there are multiple ways of viewing the world.

Together, these elements enable the student of languages to participate in multilingual *communities* at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways.

Excerpted with permission from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) from the "Standards for Foreign Language Learning Executive Summary"
http://www.actfl.org/files/public/StandardsforFLLexecsumm_rev.pdf.

Note for Washington State: Where the original text uses the term "foreign" languages, the word "foreign" has been replaced by "world" because the preferred terminology in Washington State is now world languages. This terminology has gained acceptance in recent years because so often languages other than English cannot really be considered "foreign."
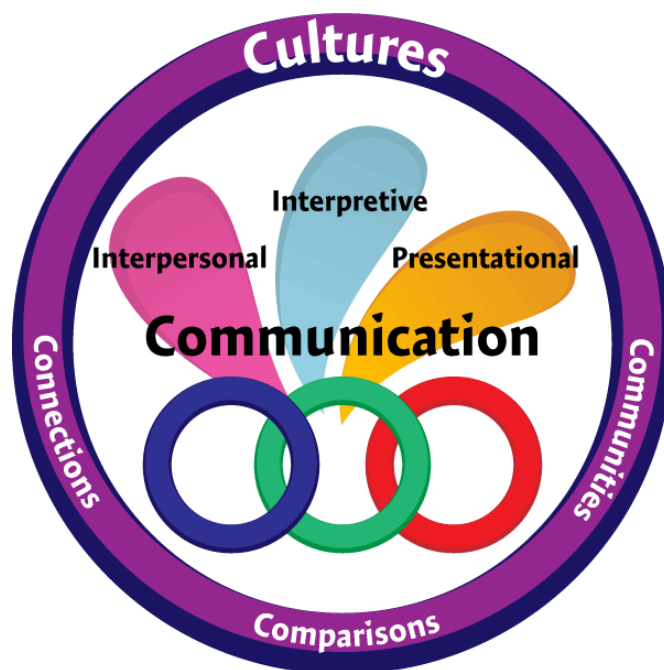
II. World Languages Learning Standards

The standards indicate what students should know and be able to do as they study and learn to communicate in a language other than English. There are eleven standards in five goal areas.

1.0 Communication

Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes

1.1 Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.

1.2 Interpretive Communication: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

1.3 Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

2.0 Cultures

Interact with cultural competence and understanding

2.1 Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

2.2 Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

3.0 Connections

Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations

3.1 Making Connections: Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.

3.2 Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.
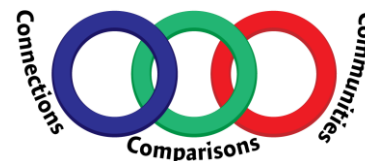
4.0 Comparisons

Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence

4.1 Language Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

4.2 Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

5.0 Communities

Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world

5.1 School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.

5.2 Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.

III. Context and Background for the Standards

COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.
This standard focuses on interpersonal communication, that is, direct oral or written communication between individuals who are in personal contact. In most modern languages, students can quite quickly learn a number of phrases that will permit them to interact with each other. In the course of their study, they will grow in their ability to converse in a culturally appropriate manner.

Interpretive Communication: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics. This standard involves one-way listening and reading in which the learner works with a variety of print and non-print materials. The context in which the language is experienced and the ability to control what they hear and read may impact students' development of comprehension. As a result, the ability to read may develop before the ability to comprehend rapid spoken language. In addition, content knowledge will often affect successful comprehension, for students understand more easily materials that reflect their interests or for which they have some background.

Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
This standard focuses on the formal presentation of information, concepts, and ideas in spoken and written form and is concerned, in most cases, with one-way speaking and writing. Students with little or no previous language experience are likely to produce written and spoken language that will contain a variety of learned patterns or will look like English with words in the other language. This is a natural process and, over time, they begin to acquire authentic patterns and to use appropriate styles. By contrast, home-background students will write in ways that closely resemble the spoken language. Moreover, they will control informal oral styles. Over time these learners will develop the ability to write and speak using more formal styles.

CULTURES

Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.
This standard focuses on the practices that are derived from the traditional ideas and attitudes (perspectives) of a culture. Cultural practices refer to patterns of behavior accepted by a society and deal with aspects of culture such as rites of passage, the use of forms of discourse, the social "pecking order," and the use of space. In short, they represent the knowledge of "what to do when and where."

Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied. This standard focuses on the products of the culture studied and on how they

reflect the perspectives of the culture. Products may be tangible (e.g., a painting, a piece of literature, a pair of chopsticks) or intangible (e.g., an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education). Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values (perspectives) of that culture, and the cultural practices involve the use of that product.

CONNECTIONS

Making Connections: Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively Learning today is no longer restricted to a specific discipline; it has become interdisciplinary. Just as reading cannot be limited to a particular segment of the school day, so too can world language build upon the knowledge that students acquire in other subject areas. In addition, students can relate the information studied in other subjects to their learning of the world language and culture. World language instruction thus becomes a means to expand and deepen students' understanding of, and exposure to, other areas of knowledge. The new information and concepts presented in one class become the basis of continued learning in the world language classroom.

Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives: Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures. As a consequence of learning another language and gaining access to its unique means of communication, students are able to broaden the sources of information available to them. They have a "new window on the world." At the early levels of language learning, students can begin to examine a variety of sources intended for native speakers, and extract specific information. As they become more proficient users of the world language, they can seek out materials of interest to them, analyze the content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences.

COMPARISONS

Language Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
This standard focuses on the impact that learning the linguistic elements in the new language has on students' ability to examine English and to develop hypotheses about the structure and use of languages. From the earliest language learning experiences, students can compare and contrast the two languages as different elements are presented. Activities can be systematically integrated into instruction that will assist students in gaining understanding and in developing their abilities to think critically about how languages work.

Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.
As students expand their knowledge of cultures through language learning, they continually discover perspectives, practices, and products that are similar and different from their own culture, and they develop the ability to hypothesize about cultural systems in general. Some students may make these comparisons naturally, others may not. This standard helps focus this reflective process for all students by encouraging integration of this process into instruction from the earliest levels of learning.

COMMUNITIES

School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.
This standard focuses on language as a tool for communication with speakers of the language throughout one's life: in schools, in the community, and abroad. In schools, students share their knowledge of language and culture with classmates and with younger students who may be learning the language. Applying what has been learned in the language program as defined by the other standards, students come to realize the advantages inherent in being able to communicate in more than one language and develop an understanding of the power of language.

Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.
Each day millions of Americans spend leisure time reading, listening to music, viewing films and television programs, and interacting with each other. By developing a certain level of comfort with their new language, students can use these skills to access information as they continue to learn throughout their lives. Students who study a language can use their skills to further enrich their personal lives by accessing various entertainment and information sources available to speakers of the language. Some students may have the opportunity to travel to communities and countries where the language is used extensively and, through this experience, further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture.

Excerpted with permission from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) from the "Standards for Foreign Language Learning Executive Summary"
http://www.actfl.org/files/public/StandardsforFLLexecsumm_rev.pdf.

Note for Washington State: Where the original text uses the term "foreign" languages, the word "foreign" has been replaced by "world" because the preferred terminology in Washington State is now world languages. This terminology has gained acceptance in recent years because so often languages other than English cannot really be considered "foreign."

Note on version 1.2: The language of the 5 C's was updated to match the revised World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf.

IV. Assessment

World languages are fortunate as an academic discipline to have been a high priority for the development of world-class proficiency-based assessments in the arenas of business and government. Nationally available language proficiency assessments measure a person's ability to use a language for a variety of purposes, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, across the three modes of communication found in the World Language Standards: Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational.

Proficiency is commonly measured using guidelines developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines measure proficiency on a scale of eleven levels: Novice Low, Mid, and High; Intermediate Low, Mid, and High; Advanced Low, Mid, and High; Superior, and Distinguished. See: http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012.

For world languages, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines can be used as common benchmarks for language development across the PK-16 spectrum rather than developing specific and separate grade-level performance standards. Depending on the program model, students in a high school language program may be performing at the Novice Mid level, while students in an elementary program might be at the Intermediate Mid level.

A student's ability to engage in conversation, understand written or spoken text, and present information orally or in writing is developed over a number of years of learning a language. Each person is unique, and even in immersion programs, not all students attain the same level of proficiency in the same period of time. However, all students should be able to increase their proficiency each year if they are in a high-quality language program taught by a fluent and effective teacher. So, assessing language proficiency is a critical component of program design and evaluation.

Assessment of language proficiency provides students with accurate feedback on their developing abilities in the language. While grades may be based on many non-linguistic factors, such as mastery of specific grammar points or completion of homework, language proficiency focuses only on what a student is able to do with the language.

There are a number of valid instruments available now for assessing language proficiency for free or at a reasonable cost. The Center for Applied Linguistics (www.cal.org) maintains a Foreign Language Assessment Database of over 200 assessments in 90 languages that can be easily searched. There are several assessment instruments that are being used in Washington schools at this time that are aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. These include:

- ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or OPIc (computer-based) and Writing Proficiency Test (WPT), offered through Language Testing International (LTI) (www.languagetesting.com). These are the assessments that are required of all future teachers seeking a Designated World Language Endorsement as of 1/1/2010.
- ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency (AAPPL) for grades 5–12, offered through Language Testing International (LTI) (http://aappl.actfl.org/).
- Online assessments for Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening developed at the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon.
- Oral Proficiency Assessments from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, DC, that use an interview protocol to assess oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and listening comprehension of students PK-8.
- Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP 4S) for students grade 7–16 and STAMP 4Se for students grade 3–6, offered through Avant Assessment (www.avantassessment.com)

Beyond these on-demand assessments, there is an array of Integrated Performance Assessments similar to OSPI-developed in Social Studies, the Arts, and Health & Fitness that allow teachers to assess their students' developing language proficiency throughout the year. In addition, one of the most powerful forms of standards-based language assessment may be student self-assessment via a tool developed by the National Council of State Supervisors for Language (www.ncssfl.org) and used in a number of states: LinguaFolio® and LinguaFolio Online, developed by CASLS (http://casls.uoregon.edu/).

LinguaFolio® is also aligned to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and uses the same scale of eleven levels. (See: http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements.) However, instead of general descriptions of each level, LinguaFolio® and the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements provide a series of "Can-Do" statements that students can check off as they develop those language skills or set goals for themselves. LinguaFolio® allows those who are learning or have learned a language to reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences. It is a tool that can accompany a student's language learning throughout life and is suitable for documenting language abilities for various uses.

V. Acknowledgments

The adoption of the national Standards for Foreign Language Learning as Washington State K-12 World Languages Learning Standards was an effort led by Washington teachers, community educators, and higher education faculty with support from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Listed here are individuals who played key roles in developing and reviewing this document and to whom we are extremely grateful.

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