

**Catalina Foothills School District
K-12 Standard for World Languages**



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

June 2010

K-12 Standard for World Languages

A 21st century world languages curriculum is an essential aspect of developing learners prepared for success in the 21st century. Thus, the CFSD World Languages redesign team is pleased to present the *K-12 Standard for World Languages*. A committee of educators worked together during the 2008 - 2010 school years to develop the measurement topics and benchmarks for the world languages standard. The contribution of these professionals was significant in creating a challenging and relevant program of study. The *K-12 Standard for World Languages* will be a powerful resource for preparing students to meet high levels of proficiency in their language learning. The curriculum is designed to address the needs of all students engaged in the study of a world language other than English, regardless of the language they study, the grade level at which they begin, or their post-high school plans.

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The CFSD World Languages redesign team wishes to acknowledge the following individuals for their expertise and guidance in the development of the standard:

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World Languages Education in the 21st Century

An Essential Core Experience

Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD) students are part of a dynamic, interconnected, and technologically driven global society. Learning to effectively communicate in more than one language, with an appropriate understanding of cultural contexts, is an essential goal for all students that prepares them to compete and collaborate internationally.

To study another language and culture is to gain an especially rich preparation for the future. It is difficult to imagine a job, a profession, a career, or a leisure activity in the 21st century, which will not be enhanced by the ability to communicate efficiently and sensitively with others. While it is impossible to foresee which foreign language will be useful at a later point in life, those who have experienced the process of acquiring a second language have gained language learning skills that make learning another language easier. Possession of the linguistic and cultural insights, which come with foreign language study, will be a requisite for life as a citizen in the worldwide neighborhood. (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, 2006, p. 12)

To this end, the World Languages redesign team developed the Standard for World Languages and a K-12 program of study that supports a common vision about language learning - a vision that articulates language learning at the elementary, middle, and high school levels so that CFSD students may achieve a high level of language proficiency. The Catalina Foothills School District World Languages measurement topics and benchmarks reflect the philosophy and goals found in the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006). They were developed by consulting standards in the United States and internationally, as well as by examining the latest research and best practices on second-language acquisition. Other documents that influenced the work included, the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines*, *ACTFL's Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners*, National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) *Culture Proficiency Guidelines*, and *The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts and Foreign Languages in America's Schools* (National Association of State Boards of Education). A critical component of the development process was the collaboration with Dr. Robert Marzano and David Yanoski (Marzano Research Laboratory), Ed Coughlin (Metiri Group), and world language experts in the field: Dr. Myriam Met (National Foreign Language Center), Greg Duncan (Interprep), and Peggy Boyles (Peggy Boyles & Associates). Each of these expert consultants provided guidance and feedback throughout the redesign process, which resulted in a comprehensive curriculum that lays the foundation for creating local [CFSD] thematic units and related assessments.

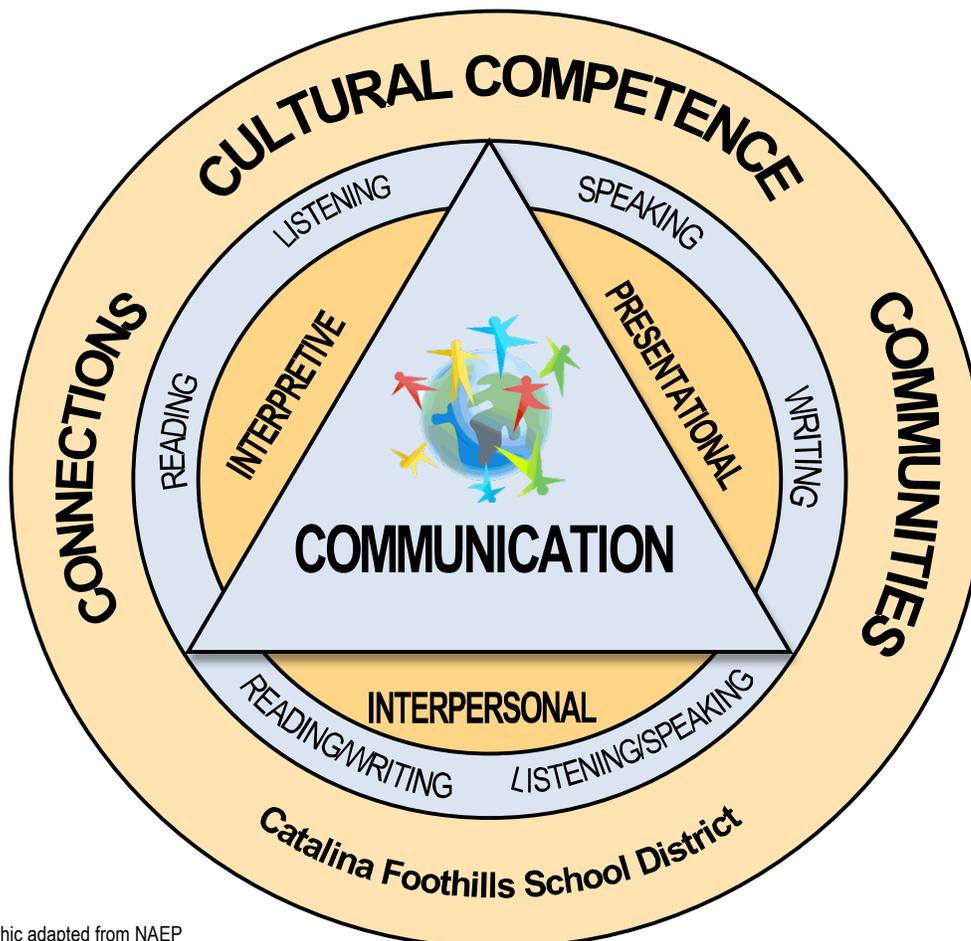
The world languages standard is generic in nature, designed as a core subject, and is meant to be inclusive for all languages taught in Catalina Foothills schools. It represents a major shift in curriculum design, instruction, and assessment. Teachers will create instructional plans from thematic-based units that focus on student performances and measure communicative functions. Instructional practices will change the way language is taught to achieve these communicative goals. This changes the focus from teaching students to describe language to helping students use the language.

One World Languages Standard

The reorganization of the previous CFSD “foreign” language standards into one World Languages Standard is reflected in the CFSD Framework for World Languages, graphically depicted below. As shown, the overarching goal of language instruction is the development of students’ communicative skills (the central “C” of five Cs - “Communication”). Students are provided ongoing opportunities to engage in conversations, present information to a known audience, and interpret authentic materials in the language of study. In addition to developing linguistic proficiency, a meaningful context for language use must be established. The four Cs in the outer ring of the graphic (Cultural Competence, Connections, Communities, and Catalina Foothills) provide this meaningful context for initial language learning. These contexts stress (1) the teaching of culture and the comparison of target and native languages and cultures to develop cultural competence; (2) the study and reinforcement of content from other disciplines; (3) opportunities to interact with native speakers of languages; and (4) a challenging learning environment to engage in the modes of communication. As such, the four context Cs serve as the basis for instructional activities and are fully embedded within the *K-12 Standard for World Languages*.

The CFSD Framework for World Languages includes three modes of communication: interpersonal (speaking), interpretive (listening and reading), and presentational (speaking and writing), shown around the inner triangle. All three modes are essential to developing fluency in another language.

Framework for World Languages Standard



Acquisition of a New Language System

Learning a language is a complex process, whether the language is acquired in infancy as a first language or later in life as a second or third language. In either case the learning process consists of acquiring a language system rather than learning a series of disconnected components. A language system consists of not only vocabulary and grammar rules, but also such elements as gestures and other forms of nonverbal communication. In addition, a language system includes discourse, whereby speakers learn what to say to whom and when.

Knowing a language involves being able to carry out a large variety of tasks in the language learned. It involves knowing which sounds are used in the language and which are not, knowing that certain sound sequences make up meaningful words, and being able to combine words to form phrases and phrases to form sentences. It means having a command of the linguistic system—the phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics—of a language. However, familiarity with the language system alone is not enough to enable students to engage in successful communicative activities. Learners also acquire, through specific and focused instruction, the strategies that assist them in bridging communication gaps that result from differences of language and culture. Examples of these strategies are circumlocution (saying things in different ways), using context clues, understanding, interpreting, producing gestures effectively, and asking for and providing clarification.

Teachers assist their students in achieving proficiency in another language by planning instruction that is based on appropriate learning strategies. In turn, students are able to apply the strategies that work best for them, long after they leave the classroom, for a lifetime of learning.

Language Usage

The effective use of language can be viewed as combining individual words in specific ways to make phrases, combining phrases into sentences, and combining sentences into paragraphs. When a person implements this process effectively, he or she is thought to be literate in a language. To develop this literacy in a world language, students gain knowledge about the new language system and become able to use that knowledge to communicate. Such knowledge and abilities can be achieved through direct instruction and guided practice orchestrated by a teacher. In presenting such activities, the teacher considers three essential components: function, content topics, and context.

Function. Function refers to linguistic tasks that students perform, such as asking for and responding to information, narrating past activities, describing events, expressing preferences, and persuading. Function plays a significant role in determining appropriate content. Indeed, it is the foundation on which lessons and units of instruction are built. The teacher determines the function or functions to be learned as a first step in implementing any lesson or unit of instruction. Next, the teacher decides on the topics, or subjects, to be learned and the specific vocabulary and language structures that are appropriate for the students' level of maturity, cognition, and language proficiency. By using appropriate instructional strategies, materials, and other resources, the teacher provides the students with multiple opportunities to practice the specific language elements to be learned.

Content/Topics. A variety of content/topics may be used as the focus of instruction at any given level, except when specific vocabulary or specific language structures are beyond the cognitive development of the learners. Topics appropriate for language learning in the school setting are of two kinds: social and academic. Social language is language that students use to communicate their interests. Academic language is more formal and relates to the vocabulary and language structures that students need to succeed in their academic studies. As students advance in attaining proficiency, it is important that topics requiring academic language are increasingly used. Although the focus at the beginning level may be placed more on social language, academic language also needs to be introduced. At intermediate and more advanced levels, the focus is increasingly placed on academic language and a more sophisticated development of social language.

Context. Context comprises the settings in which one uses language. Examples of contexts are formal or informal settings. Whether oral or written, language conveys meaning best when the situation and the setting in which it is used are known and authentic. Context also helps define and clarify the meaning of a language that is new to the learner. There are elements of language that are appropriate in some contexts but inappropriate in others. Knowledge of context assists students not only in comprehending meaning but also in using language that is culturally appropriate.

Text type. A text type is an oral or written language unit with a formal structure, such as a word, a phrase, a sentence, and a paragraph. The content of the world languages curriculum enables students to progress systematically from simple to complex and from brief to extensive expressions of language. Specifically, the process of language development consists of a progression of three stages both orally and in writing. At first, students use and comprehend unanalyzed language units, such as words, phrases, and some sentences. Next, students break apart and analyze language samples and recombine them to create their own sentences. In addition, ideas may begin to flow across sentences. Finally, students organize created words and phrases into paragraphs, thereby expressing more complex meaning. In addition, ideas may begin to flow across paragraphs. By being aware of these progressive stages, both students and teachers are able to monitor progress in light of expected proficiency targets at various stages of language learning.

Role of Grammar

While knowledge of the grammar of a language (e.g., rules for syntax, tense, and other elements of usage) is not an explicit goal of the CFSD World Languages standard, grammar plays a supporting role in allowing students to achieve linguistic proficiency. Grammar is one tool that supports the attainment of linguistic proficiency; others tools include knowledge of vocabulary, sociolinguistic knowledge, understanding of cultural appropriateness, and grasp of communication strategies.

Students who are provided with ample opportunities to create meaning and use critical thinking skills in a language of study achieve linguistic proficiency. Research has established that all grammar learning must take place within a meaningful context, with the focus on producing structures to support communication. When language practice is contextualized and reflects real-world use, it forms the foundation for developing proficiency. All models of language presented to students must be grammatically correct, situationally appropriate, and culturally authentic. Such models include not only the language used by the teacher but also the language used in text materials, periodicals, and audio and video recordings presented in the classroom.

Cultural Competence

In addition to gaining experience with language systems, studying other languages provides students with knowledge of the richness of the cultures of the languages being learned. Connections between language and culture can be understood only by those persons who possess knowledge of both. CFSD students need to develop an awareness of other people, the people's unique ways of life, and their contributions to the world. By learning a world language, students gain knowledge of social, political, and economic institutions, great figures of history, literature, and the fine arts. They also gain knowledge of everyday life in many countries of the world. The specific elements of culture to be learned will vary by language, and even within languages, as is the case with the many distinct cultures of speakers of Spanish, French, and Chinese. Because of the strong link between language and culture, it is essential that language be modeled by the teacher and expressed by the students in culturally authentic ways.

Comparisons of Language and Culture. The nature of the language being learned and the culture identified with that language lend themselves to comparison with the English language and American culture. The expected outcome of such comparisons is not only students' increased knowledge of and proficiency in the new language but also students' increased knowledge of and proficiency in English. A goal of the World Languages curriculum is to help students develop an awareness of languages as systems. Instruction focusing on the similarities and differences between the language system being learned and the language system of English allows students to gain insights about language that contribute to increasing literacy in both English and the target language.

Students benefit from language learning by discovering different patterns among language systems and cultures. By engaging in comparisons between their language and the new language, students develop a greater understanding of their own language. By struggling with how to express particular meanings in a new language, how to encode them structurally, and how to be sensitive to norms of politeness in another culture, students gain awareness of the nature of language itself. For example, students who assume that all languages are alike may soon discover patterns and structures that exist in other languages do not exist in their own. This discovery not only enhances students' ability to use the target language, but also provides insights into the strategies that students use for communicating meaning in their own language.

Because of the complexity of the interaction between language and culture, world language study provides comparisons between cultures as well as between languages. Students may assume that the culture of the language they are learning is the same as their own culture. By comparing the culture of the language being learned with the culture of English speakers, the teacher provides students with the basis for linking language to the appropriate cultural setting. The study of a world language and the resulting intercultural exploration expands learners' views of the world.

Content and Instructional Relationships

The basic content of world language instruction is the language itself—its use in culturally appropriate contexts. However, for every language there is relevant content that can be used to enhance the process of achieving literacy in that language. For example, content in a Spanish course may include information on countries in which the language is spoken, the geography of those countries, and the historic events leading to Spanish having become the language of much of Latin and South America. Since it expands access to information, world language learning expands the educational experience of all students. This expansion opens doors to learning that enriches a student's school experience and life experience. World language learning also provides learners with skills that last beyond the limits of their formal education. Language acquisition is, thus, a continuous process that contributes to lifelong learning.

World language studies build on the knowledge that students acquire in other subject areas. Students can relate information learned in other content areas to their learning in the world language class. The new information and concepts presented in one class become the basis for continued learning in the world language classroom. For example, students in the elementary grades may be introduced to seasons, and temperatures. At the same time, the world language teacher presents weather vocabulary in the target language. A comparison of weather conditions in the target country with those at home serves to deepen the understanding of previously learned information. Such reinforcement also occurs at higher levels of instruction. For example, the world language teacher makes links to a history class by introducing students to journalistic accounts of historical events or literary depictions of individuals. Having studied certain artists and scientists, students read documentation in various reference materials. Having discussed works of literature in the English class, students have a better understanding of various genres and literary conventions on encountering similar texts in the language classroom. World language acquisition, then, contributes to the entire educational experience of students by encouraging the transfer, enrichment, and strengthening of concepts acquired in other subject areas.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners

Today's world language students reflect the diversity found in the general student population. Students with physical impairments and/or learning disabilities, students at risk, heritage and English language learners, gifted students and students who manifest the full range of ability levels are all present in world language classrooms. The following information will assist world language teachers in providing access to, and engagement with, the world language curriculum for all learners.

Special Education Students. Special education students have specific needs that are outlined in an individualized education plan (IEP). Teachers should review each special education student's IEP to become aware of the support services, accommodations and/or modifications that are necessary to ensuring the student's access to the instructional program, including any assistive technology that may be specified.

Specific learning disabilities or other cognitive disabilities that manifest as deficits in students' use of their primary language may also create difficulties in students' learning a second language. Some students who have learning disabilities or other cognitive disabilities may have difficulty in processing oral or written language. For these students, a thorough review of the processing difficulty will typically have been performed by the IEP team and the concerns, results and recommendations will be reflected in their IEPs. With the assistance of special education teachers and other specialists, world language teachers can implement specific strategies for special education students that might consist of changes in the sequence of instruction, the methods of instruction, the pacing of instruction, or the instructional materials used. The strategies might also encompass variations in assessment techniques (e.g., providing additional time to take tests). Regardless of the modifications or accommodations made, educators should always place their attention on helping special education students progress toward higher levels of proficiency in language processing. (See section on "Meeting Diverse Needs.")

English Language Learners. Students with limited English proficiency (LEP) also may need specific supports and adaptive instructional delivery in order to achieve CFSD's world language standards. An instructional delivery plan for a student with an ILEP needs to take into account the student's level of English language proficiency as well as his or her cultural experiences.

Advanced Learners. At any year or level, students will display a range of performance. Advanced learners consistently perform or are capable of performing in a world language significantly above the

stated performance levels. However, they may not be able to demonstrate consistent communicative proficiency with all of the language functions. There are specific accommodations that enable advanced learners to develop their capacities more fully. They include accelerating the pace, advancing to the next level of instruction, enriching their experiences through in-depth study on broad topics that require the use of higher-order thinking skills, and differentiating instruction based on learners' needs and abilities.

The pace of instruction for an advanced learner can be accelerated if assessment indicates the student has mastered significant portions of the world language curriculum being studied at his or her current placement. The complexity of instruction can be modified by encouraging students to go into more depth by addressing topics, time periods, or connections across disciplines not normally expected at the current level of language development. For example, advanced learners may become more involved in the culture and the novelties of the language being studied by reading appropriate literature or other resources that teachers may select and by attending plays and concerts that highlight the culture of the target language. (See section on "Meeting Diverse Needs.")

Role of Technology

Technology improvements over the years have provided teachers of world language with a wide variety of options to enhance instruction. The move from relying primarily on text materials to the incorporation of electronic and multimedia products has created many more opportunities to address different learning styles and student interests. Furthermore, students can interact with the language they are studying beyond the classroom setting. Many means of delivering input, practice opportunities, and enrichment are now available to give students a more interactive experience within and beyond the world language classroom. Online textbooks not only reproduce a hard copy textbook in electronic form, but some also provide audio and video files that allow students to see and hear structured and authentic language more frequently. Moreover, online assessments - linked to a particular textbook - and more holistic assessments, are being developed to provide a more interactive means to assess students' performance.

It is important to remember that there are many forms of technology. While computers and electronic resources are the most commonly discussed technologies in education, it should be remembered that there are many types of technology that can be used in the world language classroom. Textbooks, dry erase boards, manipulatives, recording and presentation devices, realia of all types and supplies to create visuals and projects are all current technologies. The cave paintings in Lascaux, the ruins at Machu Picchu, and porcelain from the Chinese dynasties exemplify technologies from the past. As a result, there are many technologies at the disposal of world language educators to make teaching and learning come alive.

While there is considerable interest in implementing technology into teaching and learning, it must be implemented to best meet the needs of both the students and the teacher. For example, students enjoy using online technologies for practice in dealing with vocabulary, grammar, culture, and communicative functions. However, if such isolated practice does not link to the overall goals of the lesson or unit, or if assessment expects students to understand and create authentic communication, these discrete technologies are of limited use. While they may be suitable to reinforce or review key components, students will not progress toward the ultimate expectations without the opportunity to synthesize the components into more cohesive and coherent communication. In addition, different technology applications will be of varying use for students. As with differentiated instruction, a differentiated approach to technology use needs to be considered, based on student needs.

For teachers, electronic technologies have a significant advantage: students have more access to authentic sources and virtual experiences. The ability to access current target language and culture texts quickly, to provide students with increased opportunity to view authentic situations and to hear authentic language, to have students communicate with speakers of the target language regularly and to frequently incorporate students' particular interests all serve as agents for consistent real-world applications and higher levels of motivation. In addition, students now have the ability to practice pronunciation beyond the classroom setting, as software programs provide both input and the ability to record student language production. Virtual experiences allow students to visit historical and cultural sites without leaving home. The recent development of electronic project learning has provided an additional layer of interaction beyond simply making contact with other speakers of the language for the sake of gleaning information. Students can now work collaboratively with students all over the world on projects of mutual interest. Clearly, technology can put CFSD students in immediate contact with the languages, cultures and communities that they are studying.

The challenge of incorporating technologies into the classroom involves careful planning. Availability and access, time allocations, student and teacher experience, as well as best use all must be considered. World languages educators with limited knowledge of technology will find guidance on technology implementation in CFSD's Educational Technology Standard. The standard provides a set of clear, rigorous expectations for what all students should know and be able to do. The technology standard addresses a broad range of technology experiences with application in computer and multimedia literacy, information literacy, digital citizenship, and technological literacy in order to provide the best possible foundation for technology achievement.

In summary, the integration of various technologies into the world language classroom provides teachers and students with a wider variety of interactive opportunities than ever before. This variety allows teachers to address different learning styles as well as students' different needs. It also provides teachers with the ability to capitalize on students' particular interests in a more efficient way, and to individualize and differentiate instruction more easily. The potential for technology integration is evident and in demand. Janice Paulsen (*New Technologies for the 21st Century Foreign Language Classroom*, 2003) illustrates the benefits of technology integration in the world language class:

Today's electronic information and communication technologies have made authentic intercultural contact and communication a reality. If we harness them effectively, these new technologies not only support the teaching and learning of other languages and cultures, but also provide tools, strategies and practices that increase student interest and performance. Today's students know the technology, and teachers know the language. Together, they become a dynamic teacher-learner combination. Integrating these new technologies into foreign language instruction enables teachers to tap and build upon the natural motivation of students (Paulsen, p. 1).

The Characteristics of Proficiency-Based Instruction

Proficiency-based instruction focuses on **what students can do with language** (i.e., functional language use) rather than what they know about language. It involves meaningful use of language for “real” communicative purposes. Proficiency-based instruction:

- is gained through a spiraling and recursive process—it requires repeated exposure and opportunities to practice new skills, receive feedback, and apply skills in more sophisticated contexts with increasing accuracy of expression;

- takes into account how learners acquire language at different rates—for example, it does not rely on “covering the textbook” or on hours of seat time accumulated;
- integrates content and language—linguistic elements that make up a language emerge naturally from the content domain and are understood within the context of that content;
- integrates language and culture: Culture is viewed as an inseparable entity from language teaching;
- integrates language with other disciplines: Language experiences are organized around topics and/or themes that become progressively and sequentially more difficult;
- has implications for design and organization of courses, instructional methodology, and assessment; and
- is inclusive; it views the learner as a performer, an initiator, and a user of language; it views the teacher as a facilitator who takes into consideration students’ learning styles while fostering communicative language use.

Communicative Language Proficiency Levels

Unlike other CFSD curriculum standards, the Standard for World Languages is articulated by levels and proficiency targets. This was done to reflect the targeted “proficiency” goals at the end of each level/course required to experience success in continuing grades/courses (See *CFSD Articulation Chart for World Languages*, p.15). The development of these proficiency targets was informed by the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines* (1999, 2001), organized by stages (novice, intermediate, advanced, superior), and the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* (ACTFL, 1998, 2002) which are used to describe the expectations for students at each level of language development. The levels are fully defined in the K-12 curriculum and are summarily reflected in the following proficiency statements:

- **Novice Low:** Students communicate using *isolated words* and limited *high-frequency phrases* to talk about self and family.
- **Novice Mid:** Students communicate *using memorized words and phrases* to talk about familiar topics related to school, home, and the community.
- **Novice High:** Students communicate *using words, lists, and simple sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate Low:** Students communicate *using simple sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate Mid:** Students communicate *using strings of sentences* to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- **Intermediate High:** Students communicate *using connected sentences and paragraphs* to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.
- **Advanced Low:** Students communicate *using paragraph-level discourse* to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.

According to the research on language acquisition, students develop communicative competence in another language in much the same way as their first language, although the rate of acquisition will vary. Language study is spiraling and recursive and must be aligned to realistic proficiency targets in an

articulated program in order to support continuous student progress. As teachers provide students with comprehensible input and as students' interaction with the language intensifies, they are able to speak using one or two words or short phrases. Speaking results from acquisition. Reading and writing are introduced as extensions and support what students can already understand and say.

At the next stage of language development, students move ahead by using longer phrases and strings of sentences. They recombine the language in different ways and they begin to create with the language. As language development proceeds, students become increasingly able to use the language in a variety of contexts, for a variety of audiences, and for a variety of purposes.

The main goal for world language education is to help students develop the ability to communicate with speakers of another language. To achieve this goal, instruction in world languages must provide students with regular opportunities to use the language in a variety of real-life meaningful and culturally accurate situations designed to promote relevant communication.

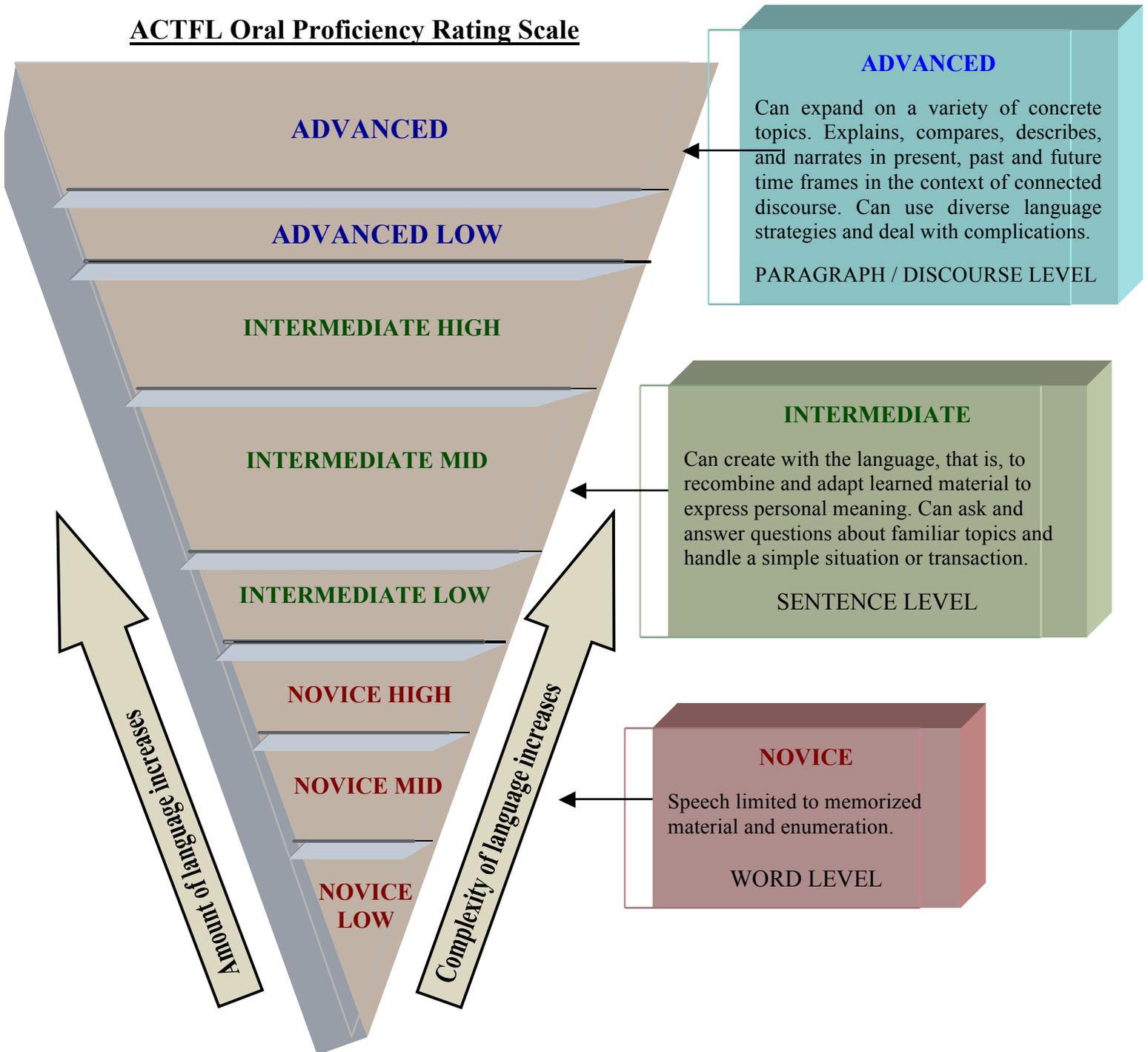
The number of years spent studying a language and the frequency of instruction impact the level of proficiency acquired in the target language. Referencing the *Inverted Pyramid of Oral Language Proficiency* on the next page, it is easier to move up the beginning levels of proficiency than at the more advanced levels. The beginning levels are dealing with vocabulary expansion, limited language structures, and limited ability to communicate. The leap from novice to intermediate involves vocabulary and topic expansion, and the use of some basic grammatical structures. It will take longer to move through the Intermediate Level to acquire this language expansion. At the upper levels, the language is more sophisticated and the vocabulary becomes broader and more complex. Speakers at this level have attained functional proficiency in the language. The Superior level (beyond Advanced) can be attained only through extensive living in the target culture.

The established proficiency targets for CFSD are possible to achieve because the study of language and culture is part of the core curriculum, which provides continuous instruction from the early elementary grades through high school. Just as students continue to develop skills in their first language throughout their lives, the same applies to acquiring another language.

Inverted Pyramid of Oral Language Proficiency

The inverted pyramid is used to show that as students advance their proficiency, the amount of time and practice needed to reach the next level increases. A student can move relatively quickly through the early stage of mimicking memorized words and phrases—a stage that is limited, controlled, and comfortable. However, longer periods of practice and an increasingly meaningful volume of experiences are necessary to move into later stages of development characterized by flexible, challenging, and creative use of language. The overall goal is to gradually mesh cultural and linguistic skills with increasing accuracy in order to obtain a comprehensively high level of language proficiency.

ACTFL Oral Proficiency Rating Scale



The *Articulation Chart for World Languages* (page 15) illustrates the level-to-level articulation for continuous language study and provides multiple entry points. This accommodates students who move into the district after a sequence of instruction has begun. For example, a student who enrolls at the middle school or high school with no prior language experience, will be appropriately placed in the first course of the language sequence. Students who have successfully completed a year or more of language study will be assessed and the appropriate placement will be determined. During spring 2011, we will begin to evaluate all CFSD eighth grade students using a criterion-referenced external assessment based on a set of standards consistent with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Using computer-adaptive testing technology, the assessment will identify students' proficiency from the Novice Low through the Intermediate Mid range in communicative situations. Similarly, all fifth grade students will be assessed with an internal assessment to determine the appropriate entry point for middle school. CFSD teachers who are trained to administer the Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI) will assess students' oral language proficiency.

Culture Proficiency Guidelines

The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) created the *Culture Proficiency Guidelines* to supplement and extend beyond the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, which include several statements about cultural effectiveness as reflected in language use. Since language is a critical component of human communication and behavior, it is inevitable that these guidelines overlap in many respects with the existing language proficiency guidelines. Because language and culture are inseparable, CFSD included the *Culture Proficiency Guidelines* in the student profile for each level/course.

According to the NFLC, the literature of anthropology and linguistics is replete with definitions of "culture," some of which include almost every aspect of society. The definition used in the guidelines for cultural proficiency is the cultural knowledge, perspectives, values, practices, behaviors, and products that are reflected in or influence human communication. The purpose of the *Culture Proficiency Guidelines* is to delineate means of improving cross-cultural communication *via* the identification of the components of culture and to develop a graded culture proficiency scale that includes them. Among the many such components are:

- aspects of daily life in the culture
- degree of interaction
- speaking styles and usage in familiar and unfamiliar situations for different discourse functions
- nonverbal communication and body language
- knowledge of society
- etiquette/behavior/politeness formulae and selection of appropriate forms of address
- common practices
- formal and informal registers
- metaphors, idiomatic expressions, sayings, and allusions
- social, regional and other dialects/variants of the language
- Fine Arts and other cultural artifacts, including stories and events known throughout the culture
- cultural products

The examples of cultural components above reflect two broad kinds of cultural knowledge and understanding: *declarative knowledge* of socially important events, people, products, and other artifacts and achievements, and *procedural knowledge (ability)*, which is reflected in individuals' language, behaviors, and expectations in different contexts and in their reactions to others' behaviors and language. The guidelines, currently in draft form, are intended primarily to inform the education and assessment of culture, and serve as a framework for language instructors in the classroom.

There is general agreement that culture is an important element of language proficiency and that strong cultural understanding and the ability to reflect it in communication are essential for reaching professional levels of language proficiency (ACTFL Superior) and beyond. Below those levels, both behavior and language are almost always characterized by culturally inappropriate aspects that reflect gaps in understanding.

Although the *Culture Proficiency Guidelines* are generic (in that they refer to the ability to function in any culture) in applying them to consideration of an individual, the individual must be thought of as functioning within a specific culture. Thus, one would be thought of as having "culture proficiency" at a certain level for, e.g., Spanish or French or Chinese culture. (*Culture Proficiency Guidelines*, NFLC, Draft 3.2)

Conclusion

The CFSD World Languages redesign team has made clear the purpose and intended learning outcomes of an articulated World Languages program. Language and cultural *proficiency* have been identified as primary goals. While numerous factors contribute to the acquisition of a second language, two key factors are *time and intensity* or length and frequency of instruction. Because providing a *thorough and quality 21st century education* remains a priority in CFSD, all students need to be given the opportunity to learn a world language in a program that offers appropriate time allocations and quality instruction. A program that does not offer a sufficient amount of contact time and frequency of instruction assumes less student proficiency from the outset and denies students access to excellence and equity in achieving the *K-12 World Languages Standard*. Success for all students in world languages depends not only on specifying the appropriate content, but also on establishing learning environments that facilitate student learning of a world language. The number of years spent studying a language will impact the degree of proficiency that we can expect learners to attain. (See CFSD K-12 Articulation Chart for World Languages.)