

# Introduction

## Vision Statement

Studying another language and culture provides powerful keys for successful communication: "knowing how, when, and why, to say what to whom" (National Standards, 1996). The organizing principle for language study is communication, which highlights the social, linguistic, and cultural aspects of language. The approach to second language instruction endorsed here is designed to facilitate meaningful interaction with others, whether they are on another continent, across town, within the neighborhood, or in the classroom.

## Purpose

This document has been created to assist Kansas educators in developing local curricula for world languages. These standards set forth high, yet realistic expectations. Each educational entity should develop and adapt curricula based on these approved standards and adapt them. This model clarifies the close alignment of second language acquisition with other core subjects and with basic literacy. These standards are not a curriculum, no more than a textbook is a curriculum. They provide guidance for instruction, assessment, staff development, and teacher preparation. Underlying this document is the belief that both subject knowledge and teaching expertise are essential for effective instruction.

## Background

The Kansas State Board of Education adopted Kansas Curricular Standards for Foreign Language in 2000. They were developed by the Kansas Foreign Language Association in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Education beginning in 1998 and based on *the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* published in 1996 by American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The writers of this revised document have benefited from the ongoing national standards project as well as other state standards projects. Kansas standards are aligned with the national document and rely heavily on almost two decades of defining proficiency levels and student competencies in using the target language in real life situations. The following conclusions have been drawn from research over the past two decades:

- A. Second language study...
  1. .benefits all children because all can learn and experience success.
  2. is best begun in kindergarten and continued without interruption through Grade 12 and beyond.
  3. provides the vision and skills necessary to be a global citizen.
  4. .develops critical-thinking skills.
  5. .has a goal of real-life communication.
  6. should be part of the core curriculum.
- B. Assessment should reflect proficiency objectives of the state and national standards.

## The Five C's redefine listening, speaking, reading, and writing



### Communication

In the rapidly shrinking, interdependent world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, business and economic communities, as well as various governmental sectors need citizens prepared with real-world language skills. Being able to talk about the language, to explain grammar rules, and to recognize sounds or signs are not enough. Students must speak/view, read, and comprehend spoken/signed and written language proficiently. \* Kansas recognizes American Sign Language as a foreign language according to state statute 72-1121, L1990 Ch. 253, P.2, July 1.

They must be prepared to participate in face-to-face interaction with people of other cultures and to interpret concepts, ideas, and opinions expressed through their media and literature. The communication standard has three components:

- interpersonal / conversational (listening and speaking skills), (rule states, if they are not complete sentences, do not capitalize the first word of the bullet)
- interpretive (listening and reading skills)
- presentational (speaking and writing for an audience)



### Cultures

The study of another language enables students to understand a different culture *on its own terms*. The exquisite connections between the culture that is lived and the language that is spoken can only be realized by those who know both. The culture standard includes three components:

- products (tangible and intangible)
- practices (patterns of social interaction)
- perspectives (meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas)



### Connections

Studying a world language expands the educational experience by connecting with other disciplines. The conscious effort to connect the world language curriculum with other academic disciplines opens doors to information and experiences that enrich students on an academic and personal level. The connections standard reinforces knowledge and skills in the following content areas:

- reading, writing
- math
- history, government, economics, geography
- science
- music
- art
- health
- technology



### **Comparisons**

Students benefit from discovering patterns among language systems and cultures. By comparing languages, learners develop a greater understanding of their own language and culture and of language and culture in the broadest sense. Rather than making naïve assumptions based solely on their own language, students are open to and can anticipate linguistic and cultural differences. What students learn about the nature of language and its interaction with culture carries over into future contacts with other languages and cultures. The comparison standard includes:

- languages; and
- cultures.



### **Communities**

Students must be prepared to apply language skills, and cultural knowledge and sensitivity in the real world. They benefit from an awareness and appreciation of the multi-lingual people around them, in Kansas communities, and across the United States. The community standard addresses:

- Application - use of the language in the larger community
- Exploration - lifelong interest in learning the language

## **Organization of this document**

*Standards* are general statements of what the student should know and be able to do. *Benchmarks* are specific statements of what the student should know or be able to do. They are used to measure a student's progress toward meeting one standard. For the purpose of this document, benchmarks are described for three sub-divisions each at the novice and intermediate stages, where most students function, and one advanced stage. *Indicators* state what knowledge or skills a student demonstrates in order to meet a particular benchmark at a given developmental stage. They are categorized according to the complexity of skills and knowledge needed to accomplish a stated task. *Instructional examples* are lessons, ideas, or activities from which the student acquires the knowledge or skill described in an indicator. Examples included are only representative samples.

The standards, benchmarks, and indicators are provided in two formats. The first, beginning on page 10, presents each standard with its benchmarks and indicators in a scope and sequence chart. The second, beginning on page 28, presents all standards, benchmarks, and indicators by level (Novice Low, Novice Mid, Novice High, etc.) and provides instructional examples for most indicators.

## **State requirements**

There are currently no world language requirements for high school graduation in Kansas. Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) requires that secondary schools provide instruction in a foreign language. Board of Regents Kansas Scholars are required to complete two years of one foreign language. For Qualified Admissions, the Kansas Board of Regents strongly encourages students

to take two units of one foreign language in high school.

However, across the nation a much greater emphasis is being placed on language proficiency. To be competitive in the job market and in college applications, language study should start as early as it is available and continue as long as possible. The most effective program includes a K-12, uninterrupted, well-articulated sequence of at least one language. For the average student, five to seven years of continuous study are needed to achieve *real world* proficiency levels. Studies show that two years are not sufficient to become fluent in a second language. Because students will more easily learn a third or fourth language after learning a second, all languages offered by a district do not have to begin in kindergarten.

### **Assessments**

Standards-based assessments include proficiency interviews, integrated performance assessments, and self-assessment tools. The field is also benefiting from the development of high quality, computerized standards-based, proficiency assessments.

Assessments should form a solid base of evidence for informing instruction and ensuring articulation. Performance targets focus on what has been learned, not merely what has been taught. They focus on what students can do with what has been taught and learned. A test should involve situations rather than lists of words and phrases and discreet grammar points. It is essential for teachers at all levels to evaluate and discuss actual evidence of what students can do independently with language, rather than basing the quality of the program on which textbook is *best* or how many grammar rules were drilled and memorized.

See Appendix B.

### **Stages of language development**

World language study should be part of a student's educational experience from kindergarten through university. Research confirms that children easily and naturally acquire language. The degree of proficiency gained is directly proportional to the amount of time spent by students in meaningful study, with some languages requiring more time than others to attain the same degree of proficiency. Whereas foreign language study can begin at any grade level, the use of the terms *novice*, *intermediate* and *advanced stages* indicate general proficiency and performance levels.

*Novice:* the student communicates with phrases and words to express basic needs. "I need a hat."

*Intermediate:* the student expresses and elaborates on basic needs. "I need a wool hat because my ears are cold."

*Advanced:* the student communicates in *paragraphs* to respond to and resolve problems. "If hats are on sale when I get my next paycheck, I might go get one to keep my ears warm."

Acquisition of a second language is a long-term process. Students who begin in elementary school can reasonably reach the advanced level during their college years. Just as a student does not learn all there is to know about English, math, science, and social studies in two years, neither can a student achieve foreign language proficiency in such a short time.

To become a licensed world language teacher in Kansas, one must demonstrate minimal proficiency at the *advanced low* level. To produce qualified teachers within our state, educational institutions must provide an articulated sequence of instruction beginning in elementary grades and continuing through middle school, high school and into college. Therefore, this K-12+ model addresses the *novice low* through *advanced low* proficiency levels.

**Program models**

Although the traditional model in Kansas has been two to five levels of study in high school, Kansas also has K-12, 6-12, and other models. Regardless of the model, it is important to plan a world language program that is continuous, cumulative, proficiency-oriented, and sequential.

Based on current studies of Standards-based Measure of Proficiency (STAMP) assessment data, a year of instruction at the high school level requires a minimum of 100 hours, evenly distributed during 21 or more weeks per year, meeting at least 3 times a week. At that rate the average student gains novice skills after approximately 200+ hours, intermediate skills after 400+ hours, advanced skills after 800+ hours and superior (fluent) skills after 1600+ hours. Younger children might be scheduled into shorter periods of instruction, but should have language at least three times per week, continuing all year, sequentially from year-to-year without gaps. It should be noted that combining levels of instruction into a single time period will dilute its effectiveness, such that 100 hours would likely result in slower progress. The standards in this document provide a framework for a K-12 curriculum with a minimum of 100 hours of instruction to meet the benchmarks of each proficiency level. See Appendix C.

<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Middle and High</b>	<b>K-12 program</b>
Novice Low	Level 1	6-7	K-5
Novice Mid	Level 2	8-9	6-7
Novice High	Level 3	10	8
Intermediate Low	Level 4, AP or IB	11	9
Intermediate Mid		12, AP or IB	10, 11
Intermediate High			12, AP or IB
Advanced Low			

Elementary programs (typically K-5 or K-8) fall into two major classifications: immersion and Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES).

- Immersion accelerates language learning by using the target language as the primary means of communication to teach core content. The day’s schedule may be segmented into portions or percentage (70 percent target language, 30 percent English; 90 percent target, 10 percent English, etc.) Teacher fluency and competence in subject matter are crucial to this model. The immersion experience sometimes creates a *silent period* to allow the brain time to absorb large amounts of the new language.
- FLES typically teaches the target language one period per day, often with an instructional focus on core content matter. The amount of time allotted for instruction is crucial to the success of this type of program. Classes meeting 3-5 times per week and accumulating 100-110 hours of instruction distributed evenly throughout the school year should be considered the minimal.

Both models can continue into middle school and high school if attention is paid to proper placement based on student performance level. In the case of immersion, teaching content in the target language might not be practical on a school wide basis but can be done on a course-by-course basis. Because of the changing nature of the learner, adaptations of instructional levels are necessary through the middle school years. For example, the time needed for students to progress from novice mid to novice high might be two years at the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade level, but only one year at the tenth grade level or above.

### **Distance learning and technology**

Although the best case scenario is to have a qualified language instructor in every school, teacher shortages and low enrollments may require use of interactive distance learning (IDL). Effective IDL instruction is fully interactive. It focuses on students rather than technology and provides equal access to all students. To overcome challenges of technology and of matching school calendars and bell schedules, trained facilitators and back-up plans make this a viable alternative to face-to-face instruction.

### **Curriculum and unit planning**

In their widely-acclaimed book *Understanding by Design*, Wiggins and McTighe (1998) describe *backward planning*. In Stage One, the planner identifies desired results by choosing specific indicators from the standards on which to focus. In Stage Two, the planner determines what will be acceptable evidence of student learning. In Stage Three, the planner identifies overarching themes or big ideas to unify learning experiences and instructional activities. All of the learning experiences and activities are aligned with the *big ideas* and the final product or performance benchmark. Depending on the final product or performance, the teacher will lay out lessons by thinking like a storyteller, giving the unit narrative structure, or by thinking like a coach, developing the unit by task analysis. In either case, the unit has a clear-cut beginning, middle, and end. A sample unit framework for standards-based backward planning is provided in Appendix D.

### **Language choice**

With hundreds of languages spoken around the world, it is risky to predict which one will be the most useful in a particular person's lifetime. Even choosing from the 30 most commonly taught requires a multitude of assumptions. Tradition, history, and availability of certified teachers have rendered Spanish, French, and German the three most commonly taught languages in Kansas in recent years. Others being taught in public and private schools in our state include American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Kickapoo, Latin, and Russian. Rather than predicting the future's most useful language, it is clearly more effective to study one language, any language, continuously for several years.

As students learn to function in a language, they also learn strategies for the process of language acquisition and for coping with the large variety of language possibilities. Skills developed when learning a second language will be adapted and applied when learning additional languages. It is more important to learn a second language well, than to barely scratch the surface of many languages. The selection of which language to teach rests with the local school district, based on such factors as community interest, heritage, and availability of highly qualified teachers and other resources. Attention should also focus on teaching and preserving the state's

heritage languages, especially those in danger of disappearing from the common legacy of the region, of the United States, and the world.

### **Diverse language learners**

Second language learning is not exclusively for college-bound students. All students should be encouraged to investigate the value and role of second language skills and cultural knowledge for employment in sectors such as business, economics, government, military service, travel, and leisure. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, digital communication, international markets, and international living reveal the power of multi-lingualism and the power of understanding cultures. As the state plan to integrate academic standards with career and technical education standards unfolds, language standards emphasizing proficiency levels will facilitate incorporating language into each individual career plan of study.

Every Kansas student, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, disability, or giftedness, should have access to a challenging, standards-based world language curriculum.

### **Heritage language learners**

While the majority of world language students in Kansas are true beginners, increasing numbers enter school as heritage speakers of languages other than English. Heritage language skills must be valued and nurtured, rather than diminished or eliminated by the school experience, as has been the consequence of some past practices. Heritage speakers contribute authentic dimensions of language and culture essential to second-language learners. Students then have opportunities to practice with native speakers and learn about culture first-hand.

Skills of heritage students vary, but all will benefit from developing native literacy skills in tandem with English language skills, and valuing bilingualism, and biculturalism. The continued study of one's native language supports greater competency in English. Heritage learner's proficiency skills usually exceed Novice-Low in interpersonal communication, but not in other skills, so instructional suggestions for heritage learners (HL) can be found in the Standards by Proficiency Level section of this document, Novice- Mid and above.

### **Cognitive gain from language learning**

Researchers (Cooper, 2008) find a direct correlation between language learning and improvements in cognitive and verbal skills. Data from Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) show that the highest verbal scores are from students who have studied world languages for three or more years. As students learn a second language, they develop and practice many if not most of the critical-thinking skills described in Bloom's taxonomy of thinking processes. World language students acquire and practice a specific set of critical-thinking skills that they then transfer to the standardized verbal test-taking modality. World language study promotes and enhances flexibility in critical thinking and reasoning skills in addition to paving the way to bilingualism.



**Standard 1.1 Communication – Interpersonal/Conversational.** The student engages in conversations, provides and obtains information, expresses feelings and emotions, and exchanges opinions.

**Standard 1.2 Communication – Interpretive.** The student understands and interprets written and spoken/signed language on a variety of topics.

**Standard 1.3 Communication – Presentational.** The student conveys information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners, viewers, and readers for a variety of purposes.



**Standard 2.1 Cultures – Practices and perspectives.** The student demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the target language cultures.

**Standard 2.2 Cultures – Products and perspectives.** The student demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the target language cultures.



**Standard 3.1 Connections – Content.** The student makes connections to other disciplines through knowledge of a world language.

**Standard 3.2 Connections – Authentic sources.** The student uses authentic sources of the target language to gain knowledge.



**Standard 4.1 Comparisons – Language.** The student understands the nature of language by making comparisons between the target language and English.

**Standard 4.2 Comparisons – Cultures.** The student understands the concept of cultures through comparing the target cultures and American culture.



**Standard 5.1 Communities – Application.** The student applies language skills and cultural knowledge both within and beyond the school setting.

**Standard 5.2 Communities – Exploration.** The student becomes a lifelong learner for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

