

World Languages Overview

Introduction

In order to be successful in an increasingly global society our students must have exceptional educational experiences, including the opportunity to develop awareness of other cultures and people and to become proficient in English and other languages.

Language education not only contributes to students' career and college readiness, it also helps develop the individual as language learners take on a new and more invigorating view of the world. They come to understand the world better because of their knowledge of speakers of another language – of people who share many of the same hopes and dreams for their future. While perspectives may differ among speakers of different languages, more similarities exist than we might imagine. However, it is only through knowing the language of others that we can truly understand how they view the world. And this is what makes the language student a 21st Century skilled learner! Partnership for 21st Century Skills World Languages Map www.P21.org.

Indiana's World-Class Standards

In an effort to maintain high-quality academic standards, the Indiana Department of Education reviews and updates the standards for each grade level in each subject area at least once every six years. Under the mandate of the General Assembly to devise standards that are “world-class, clear, concise, jargon-free, and by grade level” (Indiana Public Law 146-1999), Indiana teachers, community members, and content experts at the university level collaborated to review and revise the *2013 Academic Standards for World Languages*

Purpose and General Description of World Languages Standards in Indiana

Standards are statements that define what students should know and be able to do after certain amounts of time and at various levels of instruction. Standards serve as a gauge for excellence and are typically differentiated across a range of outcomes from minimum competencies to high levels of achievement.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) national standards task force developed eleven national standards for world language study. These standards are further classified into five goal areas that encompass all of the reasons to study a world language, commonly referred to as the five C's of world language education. The Indiana world language standards model is based on the goals outlined by these 5 C's: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. ACTFL provides the following description of these goals:

***Communication**, or communicating in languages other than English, 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, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the **cultures** that use that language; in fact, students 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 are unavailable to monolingual English speakers. Through **comparisons** and contrasts with the language studied, students develop greater insight into their own language and culture and realize that multiple ways of viewing the world exist. 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 (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, 2006, p. 31).*

The eleven ACTFL national standards are captured by eight standards in the new Indiana model, as shown in the following table. This modification is intended to ease implementation by Indiana educators.

	ACTFL National Standards	New Indiana World Language Standards
Communication	Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.	Standard 1: Learners engage in written and spoken conversations on a variety of topics. (Interpersonal)
	Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.	Standard 2: Learners interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. (Interpretive)
	Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	Standard 3: Learners present to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. (Presentational)
Cultures	Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.	Standard 4: Learners examine, experience, and reflect on the relationships among the practices, products, and perspectives of the cultures studied.
	Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.	
Connections	Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.	Standard 5: Learners use the target language to expand their knowledge of and make connections among multiple content areas.
	Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.	Standard 6: Learners strengthen language proficiency and cultural knowledge by using current digital media and authentic resources.
Comparisons	Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.	Standard 7: Learners understand the nature of language and culture through comparisons of the languages and cultures studied and their own.
	Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
Communities	Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.	Standard 8: Learners use their knowledge of the target language and cultures both within and beyond the school setting for personal enrichment and civic engagement.
	Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.	

ACTFL Standards taken from *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, 2006, p. 9.

At the state level, academic standards allow schools and local communities to effectively and efficiently plan curricula. While this document is not meant to serve as the curriculum or describe how the content should be taught, it does assist teachers in designing curricula as well as ensure appropriate articulation, consistency, and learning outcomes statewide. A number of examples have been included to provide additional context and clarity. The examples, however, are not meant to be specific to any given language or content area nor are they intended to prescribe curriculum.

Target Language and Native Language Use

In order to provide students with as much exposure to and practice with the target language as possible, world language instructors should use the language to the greatest extent possible when interacting with students both within and beyond the school setting. However, there are some appropriate and strategic uses for English in world language classrooms. For example, at beginning levels instructors may elect to use English judiciously with Standard 4 (Develop Awareness of Other Cultures) and Standard 5 (Make Connections to Other Content Areas) to provide more depth and richness when exploring and comparing cultures and content areas. The role of English should decrease as students' language skills improve.

Four Related Sets of Standards

The 2013 revision of *Indiana's Academic Standards for World Languages* replaces the document published in 2007. The document includes three sets of standards, one for Modern European and Classical languages, one for East Asian languages and one for American Sign Language.

This approach allows for articulation of common standards that are applicable to all languages, but also serves to distinguish the developmental differences (i.e. the increased time necessary to read and write in an East Asian language) that occur when learning the various languages.

The 2014 Indiana Academic Standards for Heritage Language Learners, first published in 2009, will be published for use in 2014 – 2015 school year.

Language Sequences and Proficiency Levels

The 2013 standards documents are organized by Levels I to IV and are appropriate for sequences of study in Middle School and High School. By the end of Level IV students studying Modern European or Classical languages will likely reach between *novice-high* to *intermediate-low* in all skills on the ACTFL proficiency scale. Asian language learners will likely reach the *novice-high* level for speaking and listening proficiency and the *novice-mid* level for reading and writing proficiency.

It is highly recommended that schools introduce language learning at the earliest age possible. The four levels allow for common entry points for language learners and local conditions will determine how schools implement the standards. Additionally, due to a highly mobile population, consideration should be given to providing options that allow all students to enter a program regardless of prior language learning experiences. World Languages Departments can consult the Indiana Department of Education to better ascertain which language sequence is the most appropriate fit for their programs.

The 2013 *Standards for World Languages* are designed for mainstream Middle School and High School students. Schools with middle school programs, where students have studied a world language for multiple years, may have the ability to offer Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) as advanced courses in 11th or 12th grade. It should be noted, though, that alignment and articulation with AP and IB are beyond the scope and purpose of this document. While there is undoubtedly some overlap in terms of the knowledge and communicative skills that students will develop in these courses, teachers interested in AP and IB should directly consult those programs to ensure that outcomes meet both the Indiana Academic Standards and those set forth in the AP and IB programs.

Classical Language Programs

Language acquisition includes speaking, listening, reading and writing. Although traditional instruction of Classical languages has emphasized reading comprehension and translation through grammar, syntax and vocabulary, it is recognized that Latin frequently is the natural springboard for the study of modern languages. While speaking and listening are of immediate concern for modern languages, the incorporation of these two skills is useful for students of Classical languages and provides another means for teachers of Classical languages to expand instruction.

World Languages and English as a Second Language

Indiana's Academic Standards for World Languages are designed to guide instruction in world languages including commonly and less-commonly taught languages, heritage languages, and classical languages. A separate set of WIDA English language development (ELD) standards for English Learners exist to guide English instruction for language minority students, and these differ from the standards for world languages.

References

National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2006). *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century (3rd Ed.)*. Lawrence, KS: Allen Press.

Resources

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
 - <http://www.actfl.org>.
- Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning and National Mapping Project
 - <http://asiasociety.org/education>.
 - <http://mappingthenation.net/>.
- Indiana Foreign Language Teachers Association (IFLTA)
 - <http://www.iflta.org>
- National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL)
 - <http://www.ncssfl.org>.
- US Department of Education (US DOE)
 - http://www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/tech/international/guide_pg9.html.