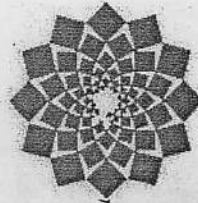


# ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking Revised 1999



## PRELIMINARY Proficiency Guidelines Revised 2001

### Writing

ACTFL Level for English-Cognate Languages	ACTFL Level for Other Languages	Benchmark Level	PASS Level
Novice-Low	Novice-Low	Benchmark I	N
Novice-Mid	Novice-Mid	Benchmark II	W
Novice-High	Novice-Mid	Benchmark III	M
Intermediate-Low	Novice-High	Benchmark IV	H
Intermediate-Mid	Novice-High+	Benchmark V	E
Intermediate-High	Intermediate-Low	-----	E

**Validating AP Modern Foreign Language Examinations Through College Comparability Studies**  
*Deborah Lokai Bischof, Educational Testing Service; David I. Baum, Educational Testing Service; Jodi M. Casabianca, Health Products Research; Rick Morgan, Educational Testing Service; Kathleen A. Rabiteau, Educational Testing Service; Krishna Tateneni, Eidetics*

**Abstract:** In 2002, nearly 100,000 high school students took one of the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) language examinations in French, German, or Spanish. One way in which the validity of these exams is ensured is through periodic college comparability studies. The purpose of such studies is to equate the AP scores with performance standards in the third year of representative college programs. This article describes the comparability study that ended in 2002, which, unlike past studies, was conducted across all three of the modern foreign languages in the AP Program at that time. This study led to changes in the cut points used to convert exam scores to AP grades in all three languages. Consequently, the exam performance level required to earn each AP grade was reevaluated to ensure proper alignment with current advanced-level college offerings. (pgs 616-622)

**Developing Language Proficiency** *FLA Summer 2004*  
**Literary Discussions and Advanced Speaking Functions: Researching the (Dis)Connection**  
*Richard Donato, University of Pittsburgh; Frank B. Brooks, Florida State University*

**Abstract:** This study investigated the discourse of class discussion in the advanced undergraduate Spanish literature course. Motivating this study was the need for research to determine how discussion in advanced undergraduate literature courses provides discourse opportunities to students to develop advanced language functions, as defined in the ACTFL Guidelines. Despite claims that literature classes play an additional role in developing language proficiency, this issue has not received serious research attention. In this study, classroom transcripts were analyzed for the following features: (1) discourse structure of the literary discussion; (2) the use of teacher questions; (3) verb tense distribution; and (4) student uptake. The analysis attempted to uncover how literary discussion afforded opportunities for students to describe, to narrate in major time frames, to use extended discourse, to share opinions and arguments, to explore alternatives, and to hypothesize—all advanced and superior level speaking functions. The study also included instructor and student interviews to determine their views of foreign language literature classes and to see if what was observed could be explained by the goals the instructor and students had expressed. The findings suggest that simply having a literary discussion does not ensure that students will be pushed to use the language in advanced ways even when faced with tasks requiring critical thinking and advanced language use. One issue that this study reveals is that, for students to experience speaking in the advanced ranges of proficiency, discussions must enable complex thinking in complex language. Other findings suggest that literature instructors should be aware of the discourse opportunities that arise in literary discussions should make speaking expectations and advanced functions clear to students, and should monitor student language use during discussions. (pgs 183-199)

**Ongoing Assessment of a University Foreign Language Program**  
*Thomas J. Mathews, Weber State University; Cheryl M. Hansen, Weber State University*

**Abstract:** This paper reviews the process a university foreign language department went through in developing a procedure to assess its curriculum using the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and, to a lesser extent, the National Standards, as guiding principles (National Standards, 1996). This procedure included a noncredit workshop that met only once to inform students about the process, an oral proficiency test, and a portfolio of students' written work. Rubrics for evaluation are described. Tables show preliminary results for the first year's assessment. It was found that the average oral proficiency rating for graduating seniors was Advanced-Low and that 74% rated Intermediate-High or better. Similarly, the average written proficiency rating was Advanced-Low. Students also presented material that documented their abilities to analyze literary texts, write in a variety of styles, and demonstrate an awareness of target language culture. (pgs 630-640)

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0152-1

# *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*

## *Communication*

### *Communicate in Languages Other Than English*

**Standard 1.1:** Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

**Standard 1.2:** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

**Standard 1.3:** Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

## *Cultures*

### *Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures*

**Standard 2.1:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

**Standard 2.2:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

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## *Connections*

### *Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information*

**Standard 3.1:** Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

**Standard 3.2:** Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

## *Comparisons*

### *Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture*

**Standard 4.1:** Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language 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*

### *Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World*

**Standard 5.1:** Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

**Standard 5.2:** Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

***National Standards in Foreign Language Education***  
*a collaborative project of ACTFL, AATF, AATG, & AATSP*

c/o American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Inc.  
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Yonkers, NY 10701

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Common Curriculum Goals from the Oregon Department of Education

District defined standards derived from Common Curriculum Goals

Benchmark Stages describe levels of proficiency on a given skill based on the content standards.

Second Language Design Team  
Pew

Recommendation for the Second Language Minimum Performance Standards  
Presented to the Portland Public School Board of Education  
Revised Document of November 5, 1998  
March 1, 1999  
DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT

Content identifies topics and vocabulary.  
Context identifies where & how the topic is covered (informal, formal, situations, role plays)

Text Type describes the structure of the language produced (e.g. lists, sentences, paragraphs)

Functions represent what a student knows & can do with the language at the indicated Benchmark Stage

Functions at each Benchmark Stage are read from left to right to understand the progression of each proficiency.

Describes an acceptable, on demand, minimal performance at this Benchmark Stage.

Common Curriculum Goals	Content Standards	Benchmark Stage 1	Benchmark Stage 2	Benchmark Stage
<b>LISTENING/RECEIVING:</b> Listen to receive message for a variety of purposes. Demonstrate comprehension of messages from authentic and other sources to gain information.	Comprehend messages from authentic and other sources in order to gain information, engage in conversations, and respond to a variety of verbal and non-verbal cues.	Recognize sounds/signs of the target language. Comprehend isolated words and everyday expressions. Mimic simple commands and requests.	Identify type of content/context. Comprehend simple phrases, short sentences and some repetitions with some repetition. React to simple commands and requests.	Extract some specific information and main ideas in spoken/sign material. React to simple multiple step commands and requests.
<b>SPEAKING/SIGNING:</b> Speak/sign for a variety of audiences and purposes. Communicate information, ideas and requests.	Request and convey information, express ideas and accomplish tasks.	Exchange messages at simple level above.	Exchange memorized greetings, introductions, leave taking, common personal requests.	React to simple multiple step commands and requests.

Common Curriculum Goals	Content Standards	Benchmark Stage 3 Functions	Text Type	Content/Context of Instruction and Role Plays	Minimum Performance Standard Level Descriptor
<b>LISTENING/RECEIVING:</b> Listen to receive messages for a variety of purposes. Demonstrate comprehension of messages from authentic and other sources to gain information.	Comprehend messages from authentic and other target language sources in order to gain information, engage in conversations, and respond to a variety of verbal and non-verbal cues.	Extract some specific information and main ideas in spoken/sign material. React to simple multiple step commands and requests.	Words, phrases and short sentences supported by contextual cues	Content from Benchmarks 1 & 2 plus: City/Town/Community Stores/Shopping Daily routine School Geography Social Activities Interests	Proficient: Comprehension of spoken passages increases when these are enhanced by pantomime, props and/or visuals. Students may need additional, repeating and/or a slowed rate of speech.
<b>SPEAKING/SIGNING:</b> Speak/sign for a variety of audiences and purposes.	Request and convey information, express ideas and accomplish tasks.	Exchange information about a variety of formal and informal settings and basic personal topics.	Simple and/or incorporate sentences	Content from Benchmarks 1 & 2 plus: Basic objects Family members	Proficient: Students demonstrate a functional communicative ability which continues to be characterized by learned utterances and

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date: 18 May 2006  
from: William B. Fischer  
about: recent grant award - background information and opportunity for FLL graduate students to apply to attend a tuition-paid for-credit workshop course this summer (26-30 June)

Our Department has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to conduct a teacher training workshop in Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction in Foreign/Second Languages, and to do the follow-up research about the implementation of SSBI. I have attached the first page of the grant proposal, which provides a basic overview. The full proposal is available on my website via the link blow (if you are receiving this as an email), or via this quoted link (if you are reading ink on paper):

[http://web.pdx.edu/~fischerw/homepage/html/projects\\_toc.html](http://web.pdx.edu/~fischerw/homepage/html/projects_toc.html)

PPS Project

## Best Practices in Second Language

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Portland Public Schools' second language instruction places a high value on developing a second language program that is based on performance of the language rather than knowledge about the language. Students are engaged in meaningful, authentic and purposeful language learning tasks which include an integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as building cultural understanding.

**Teachers, as much as possible, emulate authentic language use. They:**

- use the target language extensively and encourage the students to do so.
- establish an affective climate in which students feel comfortable taking risk.
- provide opportunities to use the target language to interact with others, to understand others and to make oneself understood.
- use a variety of print and non-print materials including authentic materials.
- value students for whom this is their first language.

**Teachers understand that language learning is not additively sequential but is recursive and paced differently at various stages of acquisition. They:**

- utilize class time for listening, speaking, reading and writing which is appropriate to course objectives and to the language skills of students.
- use the textbook as a tool, not as a curriculum.
- use explicit error correction in activities when the focus is on discrete language points and uses indirect correction when communication is the focus.

**Teachers understand that language proficiency involves both comprehension and production. Comprehension abilities tend to precede and exceed productive abilities.**

- Classroom assessments reflect the way students are taught.

- Student tasks and teacher questions reflect a range of thinking skills.
- Students are explicitly taught second language learning strategies and are encouraged to assess their own progress.
- Culture is systematically incorporated into instruction.
- Students are enabled to develop positive attitudes toward cultural diversity.
- The physical environment of the classroom reflects the target language and culture.

**Teachers understand that language learning is complex. Instruction takes into account individual learning styles and rates, and also attends to teaching process strategies for successful learning. They:**

- use a variety of print and non-print materials including authentic materials.
- use technological resources to assist in language learning and practice.

**Teachers understand that the ability to perform with language is facilitated when students actively engage in meaningful, authentic and purposeful language learning tasks.**

- Activities simulate real-life situations.

**Teachers assess oral proficiency in open-ended tasks as well as achievement of specific skills. They are familiar with oral proficiency interviews and use them to assess students' proficiency.**

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