

Guide Questions

1. How would you describe the children's level of interest during French instruction?
2. How is the level of participation of the children during French instruction?
3. Compare the children's behavior, participation, responsiveness, and level of activity during French instruction with that during math instruction.
4. What type of activities do the children seem to enjoy during French instruction?
5. How do the children interact with the teacher during French instruction?
6. As you know, part of the French class is focused on reinforcing math topics already introduced in English during regular math instruction. What impact do you think this has on the children's math skills?
7. Any other comments?

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LITERACY THROUGH LANGUAGES CONNECTING WITH THE COMMON CORE

by Paul Sandrock

Every language teacher should be excited with the opportunity presented by the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core Standards have defined literacy and outlined the mission for English Language Arts in a way that provides a natural fit with our National Standards for Language Learning. Taking advantage of this connection, language teachers can showcase the importance of learning languages by demonstrating how literacy is learned, practiced and strengthened through standards-based and performance-based language learning.

The national consensus that has coalesced around our National Standards for Language Learning is remarkable. Most states have adopted or adapted the standards represented by the five goal areas, our five C's of Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. Not only have the language standards endured for over 15 years, they have proven to be flexible and adaptable to fit all types of program models, instructional sequences of varying lengths and all languages; whether alphabetic (French, German, Latin, Russian, Spanish), logographic (Chinese, Japanese) or visual (American Sign Language). The Standards have guided the critical review and improvement of language programs from prekindergarten through

postsecondary levels, teacher preparation programs and teacher licensure requirements. Language assessments have also been impacted by the standards as institutions look for or design valid evaluations of language performance.

ACTFL worked with local and state supervisors of languages to create a crosswalk to show the connections between the four strands of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and the Standards for Language Learning. This document is available to download at www.actfl.org/commoncore. The easy part was to link the Common Core strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening to the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational). The fourth Common Core strand, language, correlates with the description of language proficiency levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced) as Common Core describes growth in the strand of language as increasing accuracy in applying language conventions, deepening understanding of how language functions, and expanding precision of understanding and using vocabulary. The more difficult challenge is to demonstrate what could occur through language learning that would truly develop or strengthen the literacy skills described in the Common Core Standards.

CROSSWALK OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES:

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

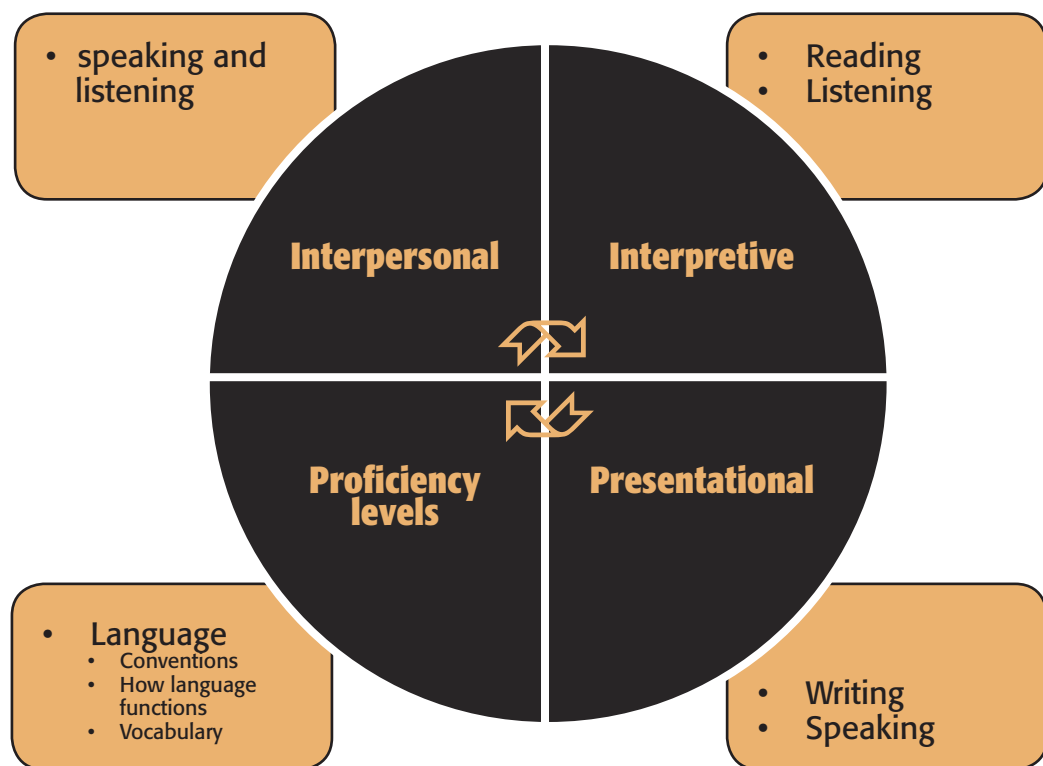
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language

National Standards for Language Learning Three Modes of Communication

- Interpersonal
- Interpretive
- Presentational

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced



USING THREE MODES OF COMMUNICATION TO DEFINE LITERACY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The three modes of communication provide us with a clear outline for designing assessment and instruction that will support and develop the skills described in the Common Core. The literacy that is described in the Common Core ELA Standards needs to start being developed early, both in native language and in second language. What does this look like in early language learning?

Interpersonal

I often hear teachers say that their Novice level learners are not capable of discussing anything. It is all in how we define “discuss.” Novice level learners may rely more on key words and phrases, but they are very capable of asking questions and using sentence patterns when these are highly practiced and memorized. The key in the interpersonal mode is for learners to have a motivating reason to engage in conversation, such as to find out some information that one partner knows and the other

doesn’t, identify how alike or different they are, or try to come to agreement on their preferences. Novice level learners function in personally relevant contexts, so they need to be themselves when engaging in interpersonal exchanges. They are better able to negotiate meaning when they have a repertoire of memorized expressions to ask for clarification. Consider teaching early language learners expressions to signal they didn’t understand something, expressions like “What do you mean?” or “Please repeat that.” or “An example, please.” With a few key expressions, Novicelevel language learners will be engaging in meaningful conversations and developing Common Core literacy skills described in the first standard under Speaking and Listening as “Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively”.

What does this look like at the Novice level? Examples from the ACTFL Crosswalk document:

- Share likes and dislikes in conversation with others;
- Ask and answer questions about topics, such as family, school events and celebrations in person or via email;
- Collaborate to solve simple real life problems.

Interpretive

Early language learners understand a lot of what they hear in the target language because of how the teacher provides comprehensible input, regular language patterns, and visual or graphic support. In reading, similar strategies need to be modeled and practiced so that learners begin to internalize how to make meaning. The teacher’s challenge is how to get learners to show what they understood. An important point for teachers of early language learners to keep in mind is to avoid making the learner demonstrate understanding through language production (presentational). Strategies to help novice language learners show what they understood, without producing language, include seeing a list of information that logically could be in the text

THROUGH CONTENT-RICH UNITS, TEACHERS ADD TO THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE LEARNING NOT ONLY A NEW LANGUAGE, BUT ALSO LEARN, REVIEW, OR REINFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS VALUABLE TO OTHER SUBJECT AREAS.

to read, listen to or view and then checking off what they actually note in the text; receiving a list of either-or choices and then selecting the choices found in the text; or writing down key words or phrases from the text as evidence to say that each of several inferences given in a list is either logical or not logical. In all of these examples, Novice level language learners might use a variety of strategies to understand but do not have to produce language to show that they understood. The strategies Novice level learners might use in the interpretive mode include skimming or scanning, identifying key words and phrases, and predicting based on context and prior experience. Practicing literacy in this way, classrooms of early language learners begin to show evidence of the Common Core ELA Standards, such as the eighth reading standard, “delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning”.

What does this look like at the Novice level? Examples from the ACTFL Crosswalk document:

- Identify main ideas in developmentally appropriate oral/visual narratives based on familiar themes and highly predictable contexts with visual or graphic support;
- Interpret informational texts with text features that support meaning, such as graphs and charts;
- Use content knowledge learned in other subject areas to comprehend spoken and written messages in authentic texts.

Presentational

Common Core ELA Standards describe three purposes for writing that students need to develop, to persuade, explain and convey experience. I find that teachers of Novice level learners easily provide many examples of how their students can explain or tell about themselves, but can early language learners persuade? Novice level language learners can present and support their opinion when given structured ways to do so that allow them to use the language they know. For example, to persuade others as to which season has the most to enjoy, early language learners could use their strength of listing and filling in the sentence pattern of “I like (name a season) because I like (list things to enjoy)”. The spoken or written message might be “I like winter because I like snow, I like to ski, I like hot chocolate, I like cold, I like the holidays, I like snowboarding, I like sweaters”. That’s pretty persuasive and impressive

for a beginning language learner! The novice level language learner may also use a variety of communication strategies in the presentational mode, including relying on a practiced format, using graphic organizers to present information, and supporting presentational speaking or writing with visuals.

What does this look like at the Novice level? Examples from the ACTFL Crosswalk document:

- Use simple sentences on very familiar topics to write short notes, messages and brief reports about themselves, people and things in their environment;
- Create charts to identify pros and cons of an argument;
- Utilize one or two credible sources, skimming and scanning websites, to create surveys or complete graphic organizers.

Broadening the Content for Language Learning

Teachers of early language learners are already making connections with content across the entire curriculum. Through content-rich units, teachers add to the impact of language learning as students learn not only a new language, but also learn, review, or reinforce knowledge and skills valuable to other subject areas. How do early language learners practice the three modes of communication and build Common Core literacy? Teachers attain this goal by designing units connected with age and grade appropriate content. Rather than teaching a unit on a vocabulary topic like food, students explore food through the lens of making healthy choices or examine food through the causes of famine identifying where and why people are hungry. Such a thematic focus allows for deeper development of the literacy goals described in the Common Core State Standards. With this approach, language teachers will become valuable allies supporting literacy initiatives in their schools and early language learners will benefit.

ACTFL WEBINAR SERIES FALL 2012

- Linking Common Core and World Languages (Three Webinars)
- Building Literacy via Communication Strategies (Three Webinars)
- [Link: https://live.blueskybroadcast.com/bsb/client/CL_DEFAULT.asp?Client=562094&title=Home]



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