

WORLD  
LANGUAGES  
CURRICULUM  
GUIDE

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## **Introduction and Beliefs**

We believe communication is at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally-equipped to communicate successfully in a multi-cultural United States society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and in at least one other world language. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities within the district foreign language course offerings to develop further proficiency in their first language.

Supporting this vision are three principles about language and culture, learners of language and culture, and language and culture education:

***We believe that competence in more than one language and culture enables people to***

- communicate with people in other cultures in a variety of settings,
- look beyond their customary borders,
- participate more fully in the global community and market place,
- develop insight into their own language and culture,
- act with greater awareness of self, of other cultures, and of their own relationship to those cultures, and
- gain direct access to additional bodies of knowledge.

***We believe that all students can be successful language and culture learners, and they***

- must have access to language and culture study that is integrated into the entire school experience,
- benefit from the development and maintenance of proficiency in more than one language,
- learn in a variety of ways and settings, and
- acquire proficiency at varied rates.

***We believe that language and culture education is part of the core curriculum and it***

- is tied to program models that incorporate effective strategies, assessment procedures, and technologies,
- reflects evolving standards at the national, state, and local levels, and
- develops and enhances basic communication skills and higher-order thinking skills.

# **Goals and Standards for World Language Learning**

[Aligned with Montana State Standards]

## ***Communication***

### **GOAL ONE: COMMUNICATE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

Standard 1.1 Students engage in conversation, 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***

### **GOAL TWO: GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES**

Standard 2.1 Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the traditions, ideas and perspectives, the literary and artistic expressions, and other components of the cultures being studied.

## ***Connections***

### **GOAL THREE: 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***

### **GOAL FOUR: DEVELOP INSIGHT INTO THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE & 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 cultures through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

## ***Communities***

### **GOAL FIVE: PARTICIPATE IN MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITIES AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD**

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

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

## **World Languages Performance Profiles And Benchmarks**

The World Language Performance Profiles describe what students should be able to do with a world language at the end of each year of world language study. All World Language students demonstrate how well they can interpret and communicate in the world language they are learning, though the focus of Latin language learning is to derive cultural and linguistic information from a written text.

Each benchmark description assumes a level of vocabulary and language control commensurate with all previous years of language study and illustrates the students' spiraling development of communicative ability. They are intended to be used for global assessment of student proficiency, rather than assessment of student achievement. The context and purpose of the communication is emphasized rather than any one skill in isolation: Listening, speaking, reading or writing.

The benchmark performance descriptions that typify student language interpretation and communication abilities are generally designated along the language learning continuum as:

- *Advanced - The student demonstrates superior performance with regard to communication at this level.*
- *Proficient - The student demonstrates communicative competency at this level.*
- *Nearing Proficiency - The student has partial mastery or prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental to this level.*
- *Novice - The student is beginning to attain the prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental to this level.*

Students show how well they are able to interpret and communicate using the world language they are learning through six domains of language use.

The domains of language use that make up the student performance profiles and benchmarks are: *Comprehensibility, Comprehension, Language Control, Vocabulary, Communication Strategies, and Cultural Awareness.*

World Languages Performance Profiles and Benchmarks 1 and 2 For a Student at the end of Levels I and II of the Target Language.						
	Comprehensibility	Comprehension	Language Control	Vocabulary	Communication Strategies	Cultural Awareness
<b>Advanced</b>	Exchanges information on familiar topics verbally and/or in writing; is comprehensible to a receptive native speaker.	Comprehends and interprets main ideas from authentic material which is appropriate for student's level; responds appropriately with little hesitation.	Employs sound and structural patterns of the target language with moderate accuracy and derives meaning by comparing target language structures to the student's first language.	Uses words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions in familiar categories.	Initiates conversations and elaborates on familiar topics, using question-asking and memory aids to avoid breakdowns in communication.	Identifies and describes language and cultural contributions; makes connections between the target culture and own culture within and outside the classroom.
<b>Proficient</b>	Exchanges information on familiar topics verbally and/or in writing; is comprehensible to a native speaker who is accustomed to non-native speakers.	Comprehends and interprets main ideas from authentic material which is appropriate for student's level, and responds appropriately with hesitation.	Recognizes and produces sound and structural patterns of the target language with some accuracy and makes connections to the student's first language.	Uses a limited number of words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions in familiar categories.	Exchanges information on familiar topics, and asks questions or uses memory aids to avoid breakdowns in communication.	Sometimes identifies and describes language and cultural contributions, and makes connections between the target culture and own culture within and outside the classroom.
<b>Near Proficient</b>	Exchanges basic information with prompting on familiar topics verbally and/or in writing; is sometimes comprehensible to a native speaker accustomed to non-native speakers.	Responds appropriately to repeated oral and/or written cues and comprehends main ideas from authentic material appropriate for student's level with prompting.	Sometimes recognizes and produces sound and structural patterns of the target language and makes connections to the student's first language.	Sometimes recognizes and uses words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions in familiar categories.	Attempts limited oral and/or written communication.	Recognizes obvious cultural contributions, makes language and cultural connections, and identifies similarities and differences between the target culture and own culture with assistance.
<b>Novice</b>	Exchanges basic information with prompting verbally and/or in writing, relying heavily on body language and English.	Sometimes responds to basic and repeated oral and/or written cues with prompting.	Seldom recognizes and produces sound and structural patterns of the target language.	Seldom recognizes or uses target language vocabulary in familiar contexts.	Attempts oral and/or written communication with hesitation.	Recognizes obvious cultural contributions, makes some language and cultural connections, and identifies similarities and differences between the target culture and own culture with assistance.

World Languages Performance Profiles and Benchmarks 3, 4, and 5 For a Student at the end of Levels III, IV and V of the Target Language.						
	Comprehensibility	Comprehension	Language Control	Vocabulary	Communication Strategies	Cultural Awareness
<b>Advanced</b>	Initiates communication verbally and/or in writing, elaborating in familiar contexts in present time with some control of other time frames; is comprehensible to a native speaker	Comprehends and responds to oral and/or written communication intended for a native speaker when the language is supported by situational context.	Applies, in limited contexts, sound and structural patterns and idiomatic expressions of the target language; derives meaning by comparing target language structures to the student's first language.	Demonstrates control of an expanding vocabulary including a number of words and phrases and idiomatic expressions for a variety of topics.	Uses language strategies in a variety of situations to avoid breakdowns in communication.	Analyzes and explains significant similarities and differences among target cultures with the student's own culture; enhances classroom activities by independently seeking new information and illustrating language & cultural connections
<b>Proficient</b>	Initiates communication on familiar topics in survival situations in present time and sometimes uses other time frames verbally and/or in writing, and is usually understood by a native speaker accustomed to non-native speakers.	Interprets main ideas from authentic material appropriate for the student's level but responds with some hesitation.	Applies, in limited contexts, sound and structural patterns and idiomatic expressions of the target language; may show interference from the student's first language.	Uses an expanding vocabulary including a number of words and phrases and idiomatic expressions for a variety of topics.	May use language strategies like paraphrasing, question-asking, circumlocution, and memory aids to avoid breakdowns in communication.	Describes significant cultural contributions, but needs assistance to effectively interact in authentic situations; sometimes enhances classroom learning by seeking out and sharing language and cultural connections.
<b>Near Proficient</b>	Exchanges information on familiar topics in survival situations in present time verbally and/or in writing; is usually understood by a native speaker accustomed to non-native speakers.	Identifies main ideas from authentic material appropriate for the student's level.	Sometimes recognizes and produces sound and structural patterns and idiomatic expressions of the target language, but shows interference from the student's first language.	Uses a limited vocabulary, including some words, phrases, and idiomatic expressions in familiar contexts.	Communicates verbally and/or in writing and sometimes elaborates on familiar topics in survival situations with heavy dependence on question-asking and memory aids.	Recognizes similarities and differences between target culture and own culture, and sometimes contributes to classroom activities by finding and sharing language and cultural connections.
<b>Novice</b>	Exchanges basic information verbally and/or in writing with prompting, relying heavily on body language and English.	Identifies main ideas from familiar material appropriate to the student's level.	Seldom recognizes and produces sound and structural patterns and idiomatic expressions of the target language.	Recognizes and produces limited target language vocabulary in familiar contexts.	Attempts oral and/or written communications with frequent breakdowns.	Recognizes obvious cultural contributions, makes language and cultural connections, identifies similarities and differences between target culture and own culture with assistance.

# **APPENDIX**



## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Which language should my son/daughter take?

*The choice of which language to study is a matter of personal preference. Personal interests, career opportunities, discussions with parents, guidance counselors or a friendly world language teacher can help you make the decision.*

*The knowledge, skills, and processes essential for language learning are acquired and practiced in every Helena School District #1 world language classroom. The focus on interpretation of text in Latin and the focus on communication in the other world languages ensure that students exiting Helena School District #1 world language programs will be able to interact with users of the language and understand their culture.*

- How long does it take to learn to communicate in a world language?

*At least 3 years of same language study are required to produce basic competency in that language. A fifth year in Spanish is offered in Helena School District #1.*

- Why do world language course offerings vary from school to school and from year to year?

*Factors that affect the courses offered any given year in any school include: course enrollment and budgetary constraints.*

- What foreign study and travel opportunities are available for students of world languages?

*There are numerous summer, semester and full-year programs available. Please consult your world language teacher or guidance counselor for information.*

## CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The tools listed below are offered as a menu of choices for teachers to use in measuring student achievement. All teachers are not expected to make use of all tools, but all teachers should become familiar with each and apply as many as appropriate to each individual teaching situation. Whenever applicable, performance measures should be utilized. Ratings are based on predetermined criteria which both raters and performers know in advance.

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**Presentations:** one-way communication. Examples include writing non-interpersonal texts such as reports and articles, presentation of speeches or skits.

**Dialogues/Interviews:** Two-way communication. Examples include conversation, exchanges of personal letters or of electronic mail messages.

**Portfolios:** A purposeful, systematic and organized collection of a student's work. Portfolio samples may be selected by the student, the teacher, or both. Portfolios may be "show" portfolios which represent quality, finished products; or they may be "process" portfolios, which include materials which demonstrate the process leading to a finished product. Portfolios can include, but are not limited to, notes, papers, diagrams, drafts, sample writings, audio or video tapes, journal entries, logs, check lists, tests, and anecdotal records. The portfolio should be shared with parents and can be passed on to other teachers as a continuous document of progress.

**Paper/pencil tests and activities:** Paper-pencil tests and activities are used when a written response in some form is the most efficient and appropriate means of evaluating a student's knowledge or thinking. These tests may include, but are not limited to, such formats as the multiple choice test, true-false, completion tasks, cloze, essay responses, inventory, check-lists and surveys.

**Projects or Exhibitions:** Provide the student with opportunities to extend basic knowledge and skills to a higher level of thinking. Because projects usually entail an extended period of time to complete they reflect the student's ability to manipulate complex information and thinking strategies. They are beneficial to students whose strengths may not be apparent in paper-pencil tests alone. Examples include: autobiographical poems, show and tell, create a monster, description of a pet, labeled floor plan of a house and cultural research.

**Logs:** A factual record written by the student about events, daily activities, etc.

**Journals:** A subjective account written by the student of thoughts, feelings and reactions that may include opinions about films, other people, life experiences and ideas, etc.

**Text-embedded tests:** An objective test that emphasizes the recall of material stressed in the chapter or unit such as vocabulary, verb tense, oral and reading comprehension, etc.

**Standardized Tests:** Tests which are always given under the same conditions so that scores can be compared across groups. Examples include: SAT Language Test, Le Grand Concours, National German Test, Advanced Placement Language or Literature Test, textbook supplied tests, special tests generated by an outside source and classroom tests.

**Teacher-made test:** Written and oral tests include objective and essay type items.

- Objective items include T/F, multiple choice, matching, fill in the blanks, etc.
- Essay items include short (restricted) answers and paragraph or longer answers.
- Oral performance tests include speeches, reports, dialogues, etc.

These tests may be scored analytically or holistically. In analytical scoring, credit is given in specific categories such as grammar, vocabulary, length, pronunciation, fluency, syntax, variety of expression and content. In holistic scoring, an overall score is assigned based on the general impression of the entire work.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

### **CURRICULUM**

The content of the learning experience. There are two areas: content elements (facts, concepts, laws, rules, values, attitudes) and content packages (courses, units, lessons, programs, modules).

### **INSTRUCTION**

The process of the learning experience. There are two types: operational elements (method of learning, e.g. discovery, scientific) and situational elements (circumstances of learning, e.g. open classroom, inclusion, collaborative learning, large group vs. small group).

### **CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

The statement of what students should *know* and *be able to do* to achieve the goals of world language education.

### **GOALS**

The aim or desire toward which the student and teacher are working. (The "what?")

### **LEVEL**

Equivalent to the year of language study.

### **BENCHMARKS**

Benchmarks define our expectations for students' knowledge, skills, and abilities along a developmental continuum in World Language study. Student outcomes (the measurable results of what the student has learned) are measured at the end of levels 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

### **ASSESSMENT -- STUDENT**

The methods that measure student performance (including portfolios, paper/pencil tests, oral tests, etc.) and report student achievement (letter grades, pass/fail, etc.).

### **EVALUATION -- PROGRAM**

The conclusions drawn from analysis of all assessment tools that summarize the strengths, weaknesses and overall validity of a program.

### **RUBRICS**

A rating scale which the teacher develops to grade an assignment. Skills are identified and rated on a continuum. Rubrics break down a complex skill into a list of component skills and assess the level of mastery of these skills. Rubrics often use such terms as "little evidence", "partial evidence", and "substantial evidence" of the presence of a behavior or trait.

### **TARGET LANGUAGE**

The world language and culture that the student has chosen to study.

# CLARIFICATION OF GOALS AND STANDARDS FOR HELENA SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

## GOAL ONE: COMMUNICATE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

### RATIONALE

For students in the United States the ability to use and function in at least one other language in addition to English will become increasingly important in the rapidly shrinking, interdependent world of the 21st century. Many individuals in the business and economic communities have been calling upon the education system to prepare students with foreign language competence. At the same time, they also have warned us that being able to talk about the language, to describe its grammar, and to conjugate verbs will not be enough. In the 21st century, students must be able to speak, to read and to comprehend both spoken and written language. They must be able to participate appropriately in face-to-face interaction with members of other societies, and they must also be able to interpret the concepts, ideas, and opinions expressed by members of these societies through their media and their literature.

### DISCUSSION

Human beings use language for a variety of purposes. When they use the spoken language to interact with others, they exchange information, they express feelings, and they attempt to persuade others to adopt or accept their points of view. Speakers and listeners process language in real time. They simultaneously interpret the meaning and intent of the speech directed at them; and they respond appropriately following the accepted forms of interaction used by members of that culture and society. When using the written language, human beings also use language to communicate information, to express feelings, and to persuade. What is different about writing and reading is that they allow those communicating to do so after thought. Writing (as opposed to spontaneously occurring speech) can be planned, and texts (as opposed to oral messages) can be read and re-read.

Communication can be characterized in many different ways. The approach suggested in Goal One is to recognize three "communicative modes" which place primary emphasis on the context and purpose of the communication. As illustrated in the figure that follows, the three modes are: (1) *Interpersonal/Negotiated*, (2) *Interpretative*, and (3) *Presentational*. Each mode involves a particular link between language and the underlying culture that is developed gradually over time:

### Modes of Communication

<b>Interpersonal/ Negotiated Mode</b>	<b>Interpretive Mode</b>	<b>Presentational Mode</b>
Conversation/ Correspondence	One-way communication	One-way communication
speaking listening reading writing	reading listening	writing speaking

**The Interpersonal/Negotiated Mode.** The Interpersonal/Negotiated Mode is unique in that it allows for the active negotiation of meaning between members of different cultures. Participants can observe and monitor one another to see if their meanings and intentions are being communicated. Adjustments and clarifications can be made accordingly. As a result, the chance of ultimately achieving the goal of successful communication has a higher probability in this mode than in the other two modes. The Interpersonal/Negotiated Mode is most obvious in conversation, but both the interpersonal and negotiated dimensions can be realized through reading and writing, such as, for example, exchanges of personal letters or of electronic mail (e-mail) messages.

**The Interpretive Mode.** The Interpretive Mode is focused on the appropriate cultural interpretation of meanings that occur in written and spoken form where there is no recourse to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer or the speaker. Such instances of "one-way" reading or listening include the cultural interpretation of texts, movies, radio and television broadcasts, and speeches. Interpreting the cultural meaning of texts, oral or written, must be distinguished from the notion of reading and listening "comprehension" where this term could refer to understanding a text with a United States mindset. Put another way interpretation differs from comprehension in that the former implies the ability to "read (or listen) between the lines."

Since the Interpretive Mode does not allow for active negotiation between the reader and the writer or the listener and the speaker, it requires a much more profound knowledge of culture from the outset. The more that one knows about the other culture, the greater the chances of providing the appropriate cultural interpretation to a written or spoken text. It must be noted, however, that acquiring this knowledge of culture and the ability to read or listen between the lines are developed over time and through exposure to the language and culture.

**The Presentational Mode.** The Presentational Mode requires the presentation of meanings in a manner that facilitates interpretation by members of the other culture but where there is again no opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of the two cultures. Examples include the writing of such non-interpersonal texts as reports and articles, or the presentation of speeches. These examples of "one-way" writing and speaking again require a

much higher order knowledge of culture from the outset, since the goal is to make sure that the burden of reading and listening between the lines by members of the other culture, the audience, has been minimized to the extent possible.

**Academic Study and the Three Communication Modes.** For native English speaking students beginning the study of another language in school, the goal of language study is ultimately to develop abilities to carry out negotiation, interpretation, and presentation of meanings grounded in the other culture. Nevertheless, at the early stages of work in all three modes of communication, these efforts are generally dominated by the world-view of the first culture. Over time, however, exposure to the other culture through its language structure, use and content should trigger incremental changes leading to the absorption of at least pieces of the other culture's world view.

For students with home backgrounds in the language, the above framework of communicative modes provides a useful way of characterizing their strengths and needs. Such students may indeed arrive in our school program, for example, with considerable ability in the Interpersonal/Negotiated mode. However, they may not have a completely developed knowledge base of the literary culture that is required by both the Interpretive and Presentational Modes.

The use of a framework of communicative modes also highlights the challenge to students who study non-European languages. Cultural distance will place great demands on the Interpersonal/Negotiated mode, because the process of negotiation requires abilities that will be unfamiliar to the typical speaker of a European language. Likewise, the amount of cultural knowledge ultimately required for the Interpretive and Presentational Modes is presumably much greater for students studying non-European languages than for students of one European language (e.g. English) studying another European language (e.g. Spanish).

It would be expected that the Interpretive Mode would predominate in the study of classical languages such as Latin, perhaps with some attention to the Presentational Mode as a way of strengthening language knowledge and use. While some attention may be given to the oral dimension in classical languages, it is quite unlikely that such oral work is part of the Interpersonal/Negotiated Mode simply because there are no native speakers with whom to interact and negotiate.

## **STANDARDS**

Goal One includes three standards. The first focuses on the Interpersonal/Negotiated Mode; the second focuses on the Interpretive Mode; and the third focuses on the Presentational Mode.

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

This standard focuses on interpersonal communication. In most modern cognate languages, students can quite quickly learn a number of phrases that will permit them to interact with each other. In the course of their study, they will grow in their ability to converse in a culturally appropriate manner. Students who come with a home background in the language may have already acquired such abilities.

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

This standard focuses on the understanding and interpretation of written and spoken language. Standard 1.2, unlike Standard 1.1, involves one-way listening and reading in which the learner works with a variety of print and non-print materials. For students who come to language learning with no previous background in the language, the context in which the language is experienced and the ability to control the input may impact the development of listening and reading comprehension. As a result, for some learners, the ability to read may develop before the ability to comprehend rapid spoken language. In addition, content knowledge will often affect successful comprehension. In contrast, students with exposure to the language through home life may be quite advanced in their understanding of the spoken language and less advanced in terms of their ability to read. The reading aspects of this standard makes it particularly relevant to the classical languages.

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

This standard focuses on the presentation of information, concepts and ideas in spoken and written mode form. This standard in most cases is concerned with one-way speaking and writing. Students with little or no previous experience in the language are likely to produce written and spoken language that will contain a variety of learned patterns or will look like English with words in the other language. This is a natural process and over time, they begin to acquire authentic patterns and to use appropriate styles. By contrast, home-background students will produce written language that closely resembles the spoken language. Moreover, they will display a good control of informal oral presentational styles. Over time these learners will develop the ability to write and speak using a variety of more formal styles.

**GOAL TWO: GAIN KNOWLEDGE AND  
UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES**

**RATIONALE**

The study of another language enables the student 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 possess a knowledge of both. American students need to be aware of other peoples' contributions to the world at large; their art of living, the solutions they have found to the common problems of human life, and the patterns of behavior which order their world. Such awareness will help combat the ethnocentrism which too often



dominates the thinking of our young people. Oliver Wendel Holmes' contention that the human mind, once stretched to a new idea, never returns to its former dimensions (*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*) underscores the benefits which the study of cultures through their own language can bring.

## DISCUSSION

**What is Culture?** The term "culture" is generally understood to be the forms of culture which have been created by its members, including their view of the world (ideas and perspectives) and the behavior patterns based on that view. Students who study a foreign language come into contact with and learn to appreciate the products of the culture. These may be utilitarian (used in the performance of a certain task or function) or expressive (a manifestation of emotion or thought). They may also be tangible (a motorcycle, a cathedral, a bowl of lentils) or intangible (an oral tale, a song, a sigh). The chart below illustrates how the characteristics of cultural forms intersect:

FORMS OF CULTURE		
	TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
EXPRESSIVE	a necklace	a pirouette
UTILITARIAN	a street sign	a taboo

In the last few decades, members of the foreign language profession have tended to divide culture into two parts. Most familiar is "Big C" culture, which includes the study of the great figures of history and those products of the literature, the fine arts, and the sciences that are traditionally assigned to "elite" or "high" culture. The second part is "small c" culture, which includes those aspects of daily living studied by the sociologist and the anthropologist. Involvement with both is vitally important for students at all levels of language learning. In reality, the true content of the foreign language course is not simply the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but also the culture expressed through that language. It is critical that students become skilled observers and analysts of cultures.

**Avoiding Cultural Misunderstandings.** People who share the same native language share some common ideas, perspectives and behavior patterns. Many speakers of a language that is spoken in various parts of the world, however, are members of a different culture, the traditions and expressions of which have been shaped by time, geographical location, and various profound and unique experiences that cause groups to differ from each other even though they share a language. To apply the same criteria in analyzing, teaching and interacting with those cultures would be to ignore reality and to fail to respect the dignity of disparate cultural groups. To assume, for example, that the Spanish-speaking cultures in Latin America are essentially the same as the cultures of Spain or the cultures of immigrants from Mexico or the Caribbean living in the United States is to deny the special identity of each group. The same can be said for the French-speaking cultures of Africa, North America, the Caribbean, the South Pacific, and France itself. Such examples of cultural diversity within commonly shared languages are numerous and

significant, and their impact always has been particularly poignant in the pluralistic society of the United States.

It is equally important that students recognize that members of one culture tend to make assumptions and draw corresponding conclusions about other cultures based upon their own values. Opinions and attitudes, both hidden and expressed, are often based upon a surface examination of other cultures, using criteria that can be applied with validity only to one's own culture. The erroneous judgments that result from such assumptions, born of a lack of adequate information, understanding, and sensitivity, eventually lead to negative reactions to members of different cultures. To counteract this tendency, teachers can provide learning activities appropriate to grade level that explore the process of stereotyping and the role stereotypes play in forming and sustaining prejudice. Finally, it is critical to provide opportunities for many different kinds of interaction with members of other cultures so that students draw informed conclusions and develop sensitivity to the cultural forms of others.

**Teaching Similarities and Differences.** While nobody doubts that both similarities and differences exist among any given cultures, the question that concerns teachers is which to present first. There is some evidence to show that a positive point of departure--underscoring ways in which members of the other culture share similar interests and behaviors with language learners in the United States--establishes a favorable mind set toward speakers of the other language. It is essential, however, that cultural differences not be swept under a pedagogical rug. It is the differences in world view and in the behavior patterns based on those differing ideas and perspectives that give rise to misunderstandings and conflict. It is important to help students *expect* differences and know how to *analyze* observed differences (how to put them into perspective within the cultural framework of the other language). At every stage of language learning, *both* similarities and differences among the students' own culture and the other cultures should be presented. Interactions with representatives of the other cultures and experience with a variety of cultural expression (personal anecdotes, poetry, headlines, editorials, laws, music, museums, trains, and pets, for example) can help learners shape their own awareness. This personal exploration in the language of the culture enables students to develop cross-cultural understanding and respect.

**The Specific Role of Second Language Study.** The enduring dimension of culture study is the actual participation in the exchange of information and ideas among members of various cultures using the foreign language. While a great deal of information about other cultures can be gained through the study of other disciplines, such as the social sciences and the arts, only second language study empowers learners to engage successfully in meaningful, direct interaction, both orally and in writing, with members of the other culture. The ideas, perspectives, behaviors, and forms of culture--be they historical or contemporary--can be shared in a special way with members of the culture in which they originated. This new, "insider's" perspective is the true catalyst for cross-cultural understanding.

## **STANDARDS**

**STANDARD 2.1: Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of traditional ideas and perspectives, institutions, the literary and artistic expressions, and other components of the cultures being studied.**

Because language is the primary vehicle for expressing cultural ideas and perspectives, the study of another language provides opportunities for students to develop insights into other cultures. Students may bring with them varied experiences with the foreign language and culture: some may have lived or traveled abroad; some may have home experience with the language and culture. Whatever the students' background, the many dimensions of culture provide motivation and bring real vitality to language learning.

## **GOAL THREE: CONNECT WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES AND ACQUIRE INFORMATION**

### **RATIONALE**

Foreign language learning can expand the educational experience of all students by combining with other disciplines in the school curriculum either formally or informally. Knowledge is power, and increasing student access to information through the use of a foreign language increases student ability to "know and do." Using a foreign language to acquire information increases the potential for empowering students with knowledge, no matter what the topic or discipline. It can also provide learners with skills and interests that will look beyond the limits of their formal educational experiences.

In today's society, access to information takes on a variety of forms and occurs both in and out of school. Students may watch news releases from foreign countries, listen to interviews with foreign nationals before or during the translation, or access foreign university libraries through internet connections in their homes. Classroom instruction serves as an organizer, preparing students to access the variety of sources in the other language. They may acquire information through technology, personal interviews, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries and encyclopedias in the school library.

With the conscious effort to connect with other parts of the students' academic lives the foreign language curriculum opens doors to information and experiences which will enrich the students entire school and life experience. Those connections may flow from other areas to the foreign language classroom and may also originate in the foreign language classroom to add unique experiences and insights in the rest of the curriculum.

### **DISCUSSION**

Knowledge of a second language and culture can combine with the study of other disciplines and shift the focus from language acquisition to broader learning experiences for the student. Language used in this way can help the student integrate the contributions from any discipline into a holistic and ever-expanding open system. For example, while learning about the origins of the German classical music tradition, students with a knowledge of the language could deepen their understanding of a composer's works by reading segments of his correspondence with contemporaries or excerpts from his diary describing the creative process. The same information could also be useful in other classes as students learn to make connections across the disciplines,

shifting emphasis from learning of individual language pieces to recognition that language acquisition is a continuous process contributing to life-long learning.

Taking the shift from teacher-directed learning to student-directed learning one more step, the student could use the developing language skills to go beyond the requirements for class work, and use the language skills to pursue a topic further for personal interest. Although students entering the language classroom may have had no prior conscious experience with language learning, they are not empty vessels. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge of the world around them (both in other areas of the curriculum and from personal experience). Furthermore, those children who know languages other than English bring additional linguistic and cultural experiences to their classrooms. With a goal of language instruction to "acquire information and connect to other disciplines," the teacher can use the classroom language learning experience to build upon what students already know. In this way, foreign language acquisition focuses on the broader education of students; it benefits their growth in non-language disciplines, encourages the transfer/enrichment/strengthening of information obtained in sequential and exploratory programs, and helps students "learn how to learn." The student can transform the learning experience into a catalyst for life-long language use.

## **STANDARDS**

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

Learning today is no longer restricted to a specific discipline, it has become interdisciplinary. Just as reading cannot be limited to a particular segment of the school day, but is central to all aspects of the school curriculum, so too can foreign language build upon the knowledge that students acquire in other subject areas. In addition, students can relate the information studied in other subjects to their learning of the foreign language and culture. Foreign language instruction thus becomes a means to expand and deepen students' understanding of and exposure to other areas of knowledge, as well as a way to gain access to another means of communication and thus broaden their cultural understanding. The new information and concepts presented in one class become the basis of continued learning in the foreign language classroom. In the lower grades, for example, students in a science class might be introduced to the range of vocabulary related to weather, seasons, and temperatures. At the same time, the foreign language class could continue this presentation with the months of the year, seasons, and weather vocabulary in the foreign language. By comparing the weather conditions in the foreign country with that at home, students have acquired new knowledge at the same time as they have deepened their understanding of previous information. This kind of interdisciplinary reinforcement can occur at all levels of the school curriculum. At various stages, the foreign language teacher could teach the names and events presented in the history class, the geographical place names learned in geography, the concepts and processes introduced in science, the achievements and biographies of artists and musicians studied in art, the manipulations and story problems taught in math, or the vocabulary, structures, and genres discussed in English literature. By integrating itself into

the broader curriculum, foreign language learning contributes to the entire educational experience of students.

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

As a consequence of learning another language and gaining access to its unique means of communication and ways of thinking, students are able to acquire new information and perspectives. As learners of a foreign language, they are able to broaden the sources of information available to them. They have a "new window on the world." At the lower levels of language learning, they can begin to examine a variety of sources intended for native speakers, and extract specific information. As they become more proficient users of the foreign language, they can seek out materials of interest to them, analyze the content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences.

**GOAL FOUR: DEVELOP INSIGHT INTO THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

**RATIONALE**

Students benefit from the language learning experience by discovering different patterns among language systems and cultures. The acquisition of a second language draws attention to how the two languages and cultures interact. This interaction causes students to reflect on the patterns, and thus, gain insight into their own language and culture. This exploration of the new language helps students to frame issues about their own world view while investigating another.

**DISCUSSION**

There is a generally held notion that students are better able to reflect on their first language and culture after having the experience of learning a second. There has been evidence of this notion in various research studies done on the effects of second language learning. Although the research remains inconclusive, anecdotal evidence given by language learners supports the fact that they develop a better understanding of the structure of their first language and of the elements of the target culture.

The long term experience of studying another language also leads students to discover that other cultures view the world from a perspective different from their own. Concepts understood by the students through the knowledge of their native language and culture are viewed in a new light based on an awareness of apparently similar concepts in the target culture. For example, students in the United States have an understanding of the word "bread" based on its role and reality in our culture. This concept cannot automatically be transferred when learning a second language. The appearance, taste, use, and perception of bread in another culture may be entirely different. When students understand new associations with the label for "bread" in the target

culture, they are drawn to examine this concept more closely in their native language. They begin to realize that it is not simply a matter of learning a different vocabulary word for the English word, but of acquiring an entirely new set of concepts for the term. "Gaining insight into one's own language and culture" does not mean only English, so even students whose home language is that of the foreign language classroom may experience this. For instance, a Spanish speaker moving to Montana from the Southwest may encounter many unfamiliar words in Peninsular Spanish.

As students begin to see this process as an important aspect in language learning, they gain insight into how people from other cultures view the culture of the United States. Students also discover that there may be concepts in one language that do not exist in the other. For example, the United States concept of "weekend" does not exist in the French language because the French do not have a comparable two-day, end-of-the-week respite from work. Students begin to see how this void in a language/culture leads to language borrowing, and how the English language has borrowed terms such as *potpourri*, *salsa*, *Gestalt*, and *arena* because they express concepts for which the English language has no equivalent. This realization of the interconnectedness of language and culture is an important aspect of language learning.

The study of a second language expands the world view by affirming an alternative and at the same time providing the insight that comes from the process of viewing the first language and culture through the perspective of the second. Intercultural exploration presents numerous opportunities to view both languages and cultures. Students compare and contrast cultural institutions in changing societies such as Russia or in historical institutions such as those found in ancient civilizations as in the Roman Empire. The process of learning a second language allows us to go beyond what we take for granted by exploring something new. This exploration could include generational differences as viewed by Asian cultures or the concepts of time and space as viewed by Hispanic cultures. The language we acquire influences the way we construct our vision of the world, and when we acquire a second language, we are offered an alternative view of the same world. Comparing and contrasting languages and cultures promotes cultural literacy.

## **STANDARDS**

**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.**

## **GOAL FIVE: PARTICIPATE IN MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITIES AT HOME & AROUND THE WORLD**

### **RATIONALE**

In response to a shift from a manufacturing-based economy to one based on information, technology and service, the economy of the United States is changing. As companies expand

domestic and international markets, United States citizens need to be proficient in English and in other languages. This proficiency is developed and sustained by the opportunity to learn and use the language over a long period of time. Moreover, students are highly motivated to excel in their study of a second language when they see immediate applications for the skills they learn. They may find their ability to communicate in other languages better prepares them for school and community service projects, enables them to expand their employment opportunities both at home and abroad, and allows them to pursue their own interests for personal benefit. Ultimately, as a result of the ability to communicate in other languages, they realize the interdependence of people throughout the world.

## **DISCUSSION**

Recognizing the need for a more productive and competitive work force, many schools are emphasizing a Tech-Prep curriculum to better prepare students for the school-to-work or school-to-college transition. These educational efforts can extend to the language classroom, preparing competent and self-confident students for work in the multilingual communities around the globe. The needs of today's society and work force can best be met by weaving together the resources and expertise of vocational schools, academic institutions, businesses, local and national governments, and public and private organizations. Embedded in a changing United States society and a world of instant global communications is a strong need for a work force which can meet the needs of consumers who may not speak English. An advanced-level knowledge of another language and culture puts workers in a better position to serve the needs of a global society.

Even though some students have direct access to multilingual communities through their home backgrounds, all students can benefit from an awareness of the many communities in the US where English and other languages are spoken--communities like the French-speaking Cajun areas of Louisiana, the German areas of the Texas Hill Country, the Italian communities of New York and New Jersey, the Hispanic communities of the Southwest and the Asian neighborhoods of the West Coast. Students who study languages and develop a keener awareness of cultures are better equipped to function in the multilingual communities that exist in the US and abroad.

In addition to language as a job skill, language opens the door to many types of leisure activities. From the television screen to the computer monitor, US citizens have a direct link with the entire contemporary world. Through works of great literature and the arts, a deeper understanding of self is attainable. As US citizens travel to other countries and interact with speakers of other languages, they realize that competence in more than one language and knowledge of other cultures enables them to experience more fully the artistic and cultural creations of those cultures.

## **STANDARDS**

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

This standard focuses on language as a tool for communication with speakers of the language throughout one's life: in school, in the community, and abroad. Using the language outside of the school setting, students come to realize the advantages inherent in being able to communicate in more than one language and develop an understanding of the power of language. Well-developed language skills increase not only the marketability of the employee but also the ability of the employer to best meet the needs of the customer.

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

Language is an avenue to information and interpersonal relations. Each day millions of US citizens spend their leisure time reading, listening to music, viewing films and television programs, and interacting with each other. Students who study language can use their skills to further enrich their personal lives by accessing various entertainment sources available to speakers of the other language. By developing a certain level of comfort with the language, students can use these skills to access information as they continue to learn throughout their lives. Some students may have the opportunity to travel to communities and countries where the language is used extensively and, through this experience, further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture.