



World Languages Task Force Summative Report

Delaware Department of Education

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Summary

In 2006, the Delaware High School Graduation Requirements Subcommittee to the State Board of Education was formed to investigate ways to increase the specificity and rigor of course requirements for graduation and align requirements more closely with the entrance requirements of the University of Delaware and Delaware State University. The committee raised the notion of minimum requirements for many content areas including world language competency. They ultimately recommended and the State Board of Education approved a two-credit requirement in world languages for all students.

Secretary of Education, Valerie Woodruff, established a 27-member World Languages Task Force in May 2007 under the leadership of Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate for World Languages and International Education. This Task Force was charged with defining the world languages graduation requirement in terms of its functional use for all of Delaware's students who graduate in 2013. During four meetings, Task Force members considered several implementation issues including system, student and teacher capacity, world language competence, students with special needs, students with a career or technical focus and the use of technology in language learning. Two essential questions guided the work of the Task Force:

- What does it mean to have functional communicative competence in a language?
- How will linguistic competence be demonstrated by each student?

Focus group meetings with representatives from state agencies, parents and students provided Task Force members with a variety of input into the importance of language learning and its impact on the state's constituents. Various individuals representing different aspects of world language teaching and learning also made presentations, including Jacque Bott Van Houten from the Kentucky Department of Education and Kyle Ennis from Avant Assessment. Tom Welch, nationally renowned educator and innovator, directed the thinking of the Task Force during its initial meeting on May 30 and again on September 18 when the group drafted its first round of recommendations.

The Task Force Members understand that the economic future of the state of Delaware rests on ensuring our high school students are ready for the workplace, college and citizenship. A high school education that has meaning for today requires students to be competent communicators and problem solvers as they collaborate with people who speak other languages and come from different cultures with differing worldviews. Being competent in world languages provides skills for Delaware's students to be competitive in a global marketplace. World language learning must be recognized as a tool for living and working in a global society, not as an academic checkbox for college admission. Therefore, the

World Languages Task Force set forth eight recommendations that capitalize on the ideas of proficiency and performance. These recommendations reflect an underlying philosophy that language learning is meaningful and purposeful. Students must have many opportunities to use the language and then demonstrate how well they can use it in a number of real-world situations.

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Definition of a World Language

In changing the term *foreign language* to *world language*, the Delaware Department of Education recognized that *foreign* denoted exclusion and isolation. The US Census Bureau in June 2004 predicted that Hispanic and Asian populations in the United States will continue to grow at much faster rates than the US population as a whole (Mok, 2004). Therefore, the languages and cultures of the world that have traditionally been beyond the Delaware state line can no longer be considered *foreign*. Adopting the term *world language* reflects an understanding of “a world where peoples and cultures are in a constant state of movement and interaction, and where knowledge of world languages will enable students to think and communicate globally in their future lives as citizens and workers” (Jensen and Sandroock, 2007).

It is recommended that ...

A world language be defined as any language that is used by peoples around the world. Although English is a world language, for the purposes of the World Languages graduation requirement, a world language will refer to any language (and its cultures) other than English.

Recommendation 2

American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language (ASL) is the predominant expressive form of communication of the deaf community in the United States, in the English-speaking parts of Canada, and in parts of Mexico.

While there has been no reliable survey of the number of people who use ASL as their primary language, estimates range from 500,000 to 2 million in the U.S. alone (US Census, 2004).

According to the US Census of 2004, 30,603 people in the state of Delaware (approximately 6%) were hard-of-hearing or had difficulty hearing normal conversation and 2581 people (0.51%) were unable to hear a normal conversation (or *deaf*). This means that nearly 33,000 Delawareans possibly communicate to some degree using ASL. The Margaret S. Sterck Delaware School for the Deaf currently services 142 students.

It is recommended that ...

Students be allowed to take American Sign Language (ASL) to fulfill the World Language graduation requirement. They may, however, choose to study an additional world language since ASL does not fulfill the world language admissions requirement in some colleges and universities, including the University of Delaware.

Recommendation 3 Proficiency

Communicative proficiency is the ability to use language for purposeful communication. A proficiency-based program looks at what students can do with language, rather than at the number of chapters covered in a textbook or hours of seat time accumulated. Proficiency-based world language learning is functional in nature and is defined by the proficiency levels found in the Delaware Recommended Curriculum for World Languages and are based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ACTFL K-12 Performance Guidelines and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (see Appendix A and B).

Proficiency-based language learning requires assessing language proficiency. Students must demonstrate their ability to communicate in a language. Oral interviews and simulated real-world tasks help provide evidence of a student's ability to use language in meaningful ways. The use of the proficiency scale can provide a means of granting credit for and encouraging language proficiency that has been gained outside of the school.

Students should have options in how they demonstrate their language ability to fulfill the two-credit world language graduation requirement. School districts also need flexibility in responding to this requirement.

It is recommended that ...

World Language credits be awarded based on demonstrated proficiency. Students will have options in meeting the world language graduation requirements. They may demonstrate language proficiency in two ways:

- Completing a minimum of two high-school world language courses in the same language that use locally generated or commercially produced assessments to determine the level of proficiency of students. Student performance assessments must target the novice-mid* level of proficiency as described on the ACTFL scales in the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational), or

- Demonstrating novice-mid* or higher proficiency level on a nationally recognized adaptive test of language proficiency in the skill areas of speaking, reading and writing.

According to ACTFL's 2002 *Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World* report most students who only study two-years of a world language in high school can only "communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases." Most real-world jobs require individuals who can at least "create with language, initiate, maintain and close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions." This means that if a language is truly going to be a useful workplace skill, students will need at least an intermediate-low proficiency level (See Figure 1 and Appendix D). Jobs such as cashiers, tour guides and sales clerk require language skills at this level. However, customer service reps, social workers, billing clerks and police officers require a more advanced level to communicate effectively with customers and clients.

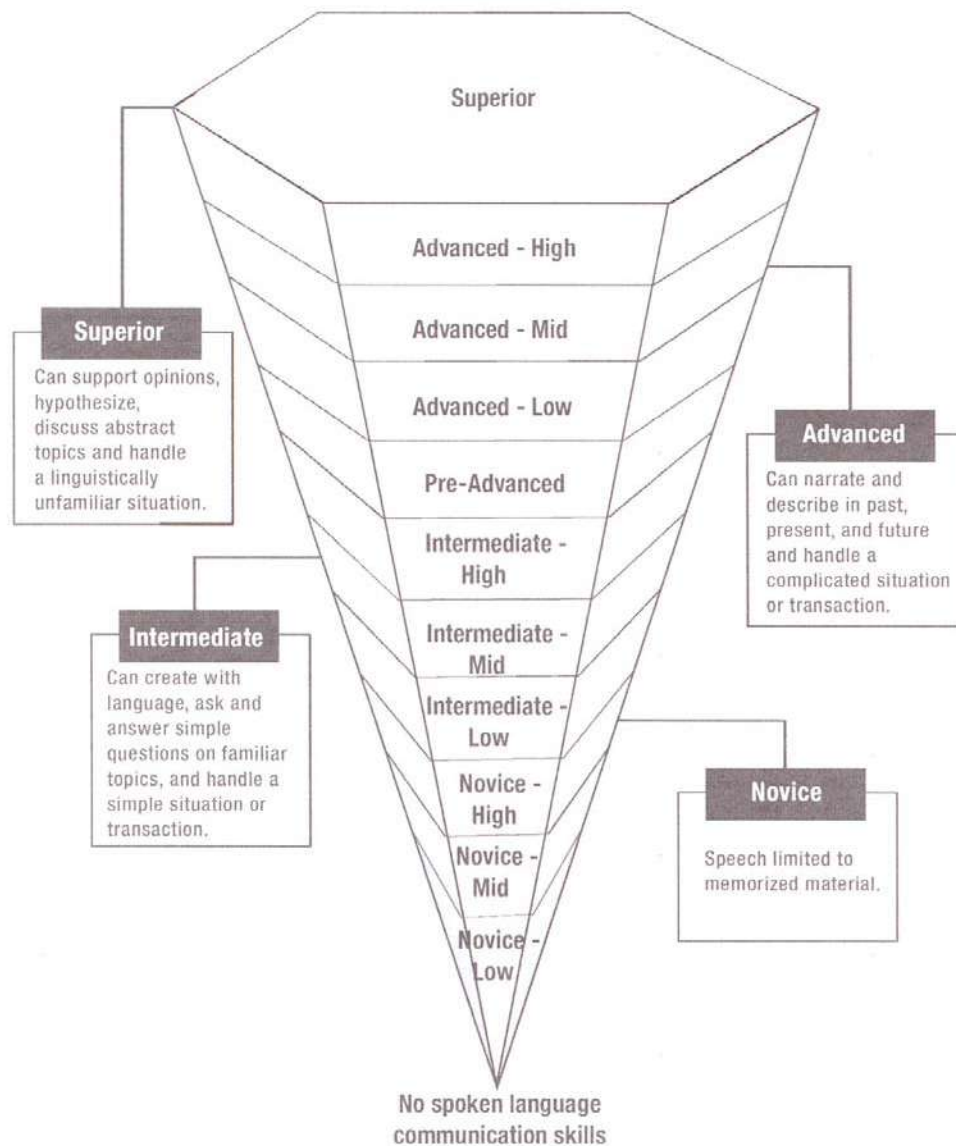
The Delaware World Language Assessment Project 2004-06 used an online assessment of world language proficiency to gauge the proficiency level of most Delaware students after two years of high school world language study. The results indicated that 50% or more students performed at Benchmark 2 (Novice Mid) or higher in speaking, reading and writing. This performance was below the national average at Benchmark 3 (Novice High). If students begin language study earlier, they will be able to perform at even higher levels after two years of study at the high school level (See Delaware Recommended World Language Program Articulation Chart, Appendix C).

**It is recommended that ...*

The threshold for minimum proficiency expectations be raised over time as language programs become more robust and begin earlier. This will allow students to reach the ultimate proficiency target of intermediate low, which will allow them to use their languages as a work-place or academic skill after high school. A possible trajectory for the state's minimum proficiency expectations over the next 12 years would be:

2013	Novice Mid
2016	Novice High
2020	Intermediate Low

Figure 1
ACTFL Performance and Proficiency Guidelines for Language Learners



Taken from *Passport to the Future: Ohio's Plan for World Languages*, 2007

Recommendation 4 **Early Language Learning**

In order for students to be able to use language meaningfully in the workplace or academia after high school, they must have uninterrupted, well-sequenced, long-term language instruction. As young children are at an optimal time to learn languages, all elementary students should have access to high quality, ongoing and systematic world language instruction as the fundamental building block to demonstrating higher levels of language proficiency in high school. This recommendation is key for students to be able to meet the gradually increasing minimum proficiency expectations outlined in Recommendation 3.

It is recommended that ...

In order for students to reach a level of proficiency that will allow them to use the language as a work-place or academic skill after high school, all students begin sequential learning of at least one world language in elementary school.

Recommendation 5 **Proficiency Data**

World language learning is a skill that must be documented. Assessing student proficiency is crucial to credentialing student language learning. Teachers must use a variety of formative and summative performance assessments to gauge student proficiency. Students also benefit when they set clear goals for their own learning and can articulate *what* they are learning. Portfolios along with self-assessment can become valuable tools for making language learning transparent. Several nationally recognized tools already exist that could help Delaware world language teachers and students assess, validate and credential language learning. (See Appendix E for information regarding the LinguaFolio and Appendix F for online proficiency-based assessments.)

It is recommended that ...

Both a portfolio-based self-assessment tool such as LinguaFolio and a nationally recognized online adaptive test of language proficiency that assesses reading, writing and speaking be used to gather evidence of student proficiency levels.

Recommendation 6

Delaware Virtual School

The World Languages Task Force members recognize the powerful potential of online world language learning. With over 4 million students nationwide who are enrolled in online schools (Lewis, 2003), the popularity of learning via technology grows every year. The Delaware Virtual School will offer Delaware's middle and high school students access to learning twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world. As many traditional brick-and-mortar schools may find capacity challenges in delivering world language instruction to all of its students, the Virtual School can provide students with options to fulfilling the world language graduation requirement.

A statewide pilot of online learning in Spanish is scheduled for January. If the results show that students can demonstrate proficiency levels commensurate with those gained in traditional classrooms, the World Language Task Force believes that the Delaware Virtual School should be an invaluable means in delivering world language instruction to students across the state.

It is recommended that ...

If the results of the pilot prove positive for language development, the Delaware Virtual School provide instruction in a variety of world languages as an option for students to learn languages at higher levels or to learn many languages beyond what their schools can provide for them. The Delaware Virtual School would also be an option for students to meet the two-credit graduation requirement as long as their level of proficiency can be documented.

Recommendation 7

Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Research on how children learn languages legitimizes the presence of the vast majority of students in the world language classroom. Language learning is an innate human capacity and as such, cognitive ability should not be a prerequisite for determining if a student can effectively learn a second language. Most students can develop functional proficiency in listening and speaking equal to their first language abilities unless they manifest speech production difficulties in the first language (Jensen, 2005). Research indicates that all students can benefit from learning another language and culture when (1) instruction is based on second language acquisition theories, (2) accommodations are carefully

planned for and executed and (3) appropriate strategies and materials are used (Kleinert et al, 2007).

It is recommended that ...

If a student's disability entitles him/her to receive special education services, the study of world languages should be included in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), wherein the IEP team delineates appropriate modifications, accommodations and/or proficiency level expectations.

Recommendation 8

Options

The word "options" resonated from many comments made by parents and students in the World Languages Task Force Parent and Student Focus Group. "Most parents and students feel that students need to have options in the languages they study, when and how they study them and how they demonstrate that learning" (Parent and Student Focus Group Report. See Appendix H.).

If a student is not college-bound, the traditional world language curriculum may not be the most appropriate for him or her. Students, especially those who have identified a specific career or technical path, would benefit from specialized career-focused language courses. These courses could provide a conversational approach to language learning that targets the vocabulary and functional skills needed for a specific career. These courses would not create inferior standards for vocation students. They would, in fact, align to the same Grade Level Expectations and minimum proficiency expectations as the academic language courses, but the content and perhaps the skill areas in which the students demonstrate their proficiency would differ as appropriate to the profession. Professionals in the career fields in collaboration with world language educators could help design the content of these specialized options.

It is recommended that

Schools and districts consider providing options in which students can demonstrate world language proficiency, such as traditional academic world language courses and functional/applied language courses. In the functional/applied courses, students would learn specialized vocabulary meaningful for their career or vocation. The focus would be on functional use of the language in a cultural context and may not require students to demonstrate the minimum proficiency requirements in all of the same skill areas (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

Next Steps

The World Languages Task Force understands that these recommendations are advisory in nature and do not provide the detail needed to make them immediately useful for schools and school districts.

To facilitate the implementation of these recommendations for the world language graduation requirement, the following is still needed:

- Further discussion on the role of a language proficiency assessment as an option for meeting the world language graduation requirement, especially for bilingual students. Students who have developed proficiency through non-school means, such as study abroad, intensive summer institutes, commercial products, or heritage language connections should have access to proficiency tests that award them credit for their proficiency without seat-time in a classroom.
- Review of the effectiveness of online learning of world languages from the Delaware Virtual School pilot. Technological initiatives such as this one can greatly impact the availability of languages and levels of languages throughout the state.
- *A Delaware World Language K-12 Implementation Guide* that would be a companion piece to the *World Languages Task Force Summative Report*. The Implementation Guide should provide:
 - Details about these recommendations, especially for the course design options for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) students and for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Technical schools, community colleges and professionals in the fields of health care, social services and business can be powerful collaborators in the development of specialized CTE language courses.
 - Information and direction on how to establish new world language programs, expand existing programs (backward expansion from high school to middle school to elementary), and plan for teacher preparation, recruitment, and professional development.
 - Clarification on the proficiency assessment options available and outline how the assessments may be administered and the costs involved.

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Appendix A

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

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The 1986 proficiency guidelines represent a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive, sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion.

Because these guidelines identify stages of proficiency, as opposed to achievement, they are not intended to measure what an individual has achieved through specific classroom instruction but rather to allow assessment of what an individual can and cannot do, regardless of where, when, or how the language has been learned or acquired; thus, the words "learned" and "acquired" are used in the broadest sense. These guidelines are not based on a particular linguistic theory or pedagogical method, since the guidelines are proficiency-based, as opposed to achievement-based, and are intended to be used for global assessment.

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Irene Thompson
A. Ronald Walton

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GENERIC DESCRIPTIONS—SPEAKING (Revised 1999)

Superior

Speakers at the Superior level are able to communicate in the language with accuracy and fluency in order to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives. They discuss their interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy. They explain their opinions on a number of topics of importance to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured argument to support their opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities. When appropriate, they use extended discourse without unnaturally lengthy hesitation to make their point, even when engaged in abstract elaborations. Such discourse, while coherent, may still be influenced by the Superior speakers' own language patterns, rather than those of the target language.

Superior speakers command a variety of interactive and discourse strategies, such as turn-taking and separating main ideas from supporting information through the use of syntactic and lexical devices, as well as intonational features such as pitch, stress and tone. They demonstrate virtually no pattern of error in the use of basic structures. However, they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal speech and writing. Such errors, if they do occur, do not distract the native interlocutor or interfere with communication.

Advanced-High

Speakers at the Advanced-High level perform all Advanced-level tasks with linguistic ease, confidence and competence. They are able to consistently explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames. In addition, Advanced- High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain performance at that level across a variety of topics. They can provide a structured argument to support their opinions, and they may construct hypotheses, but patterns of error appear. They can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise, but in general, they are more comfortable discussing a variety of topics concretely.

Advanced-High speakers may demonstrate a well-developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms or for limitations in vocabulary by the confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. They use precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning and often show great fluency and ease of speech. However, when called on to perform the complex tasks associated with the Superior level over a variety of topics, their language will at times break down or prove inadequate, or they may avoid the task altogether, for example, by resorting to simplification through the use of description or narration in place of argument or hypothesis.

Advanced-Mid

Speakers at the Advanced-Mid level are able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks. They participate actively in most informal and some formal exchanges on a variety of concrete topics relating to work, school, home, and leisure activities, as well as to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance.

Advanced-Mid speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present, and future) by providing a full account, with good control of aspect, as they adapt flexibly to the demands of the conversation. Narration and description tend to be combined and interwoven to relate relevant and supporting facts in connected, paragraph-length discourse.

Advanced-Mid speakers can handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar. Communicative strategies such as circumlocution or rephrasing are often employed for this purpose. The speech of Advanced-Mid speakers performing Advanced-level tasks is marked by substantial flow. Their vocabulary is fairly extensive although primarily generic in nature, except in the case of a particular area of specialization or interest. Dominant language discourse structures tend to recede, although discourse may still reflect the oral paragraph structure of their own language rather than that of the target language.

Advanced-Mid speakers contribute to conversations on a variety of familiar topics, dealt with concretely, with much accuracy, clarity and precision, and they convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. They are readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the quality and/or quantity of their speech will generally decline.

Advanced-Mid speakers are often able to state an opinion or cite conditions; however, they lack the ability to consistently provide a structured argument in extended discourse. Advanced-Mid speakers may use a number of delaying strategies, resort to narration, description, explanation or anecdote, or simply attempt to avoid the linguistic demands of Superior-level tasks.

Advanced-Low

Speakers at the Advanced-Low level are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks, although somewhat haltingly at times. They participate actively in most informal and a limited number of formal conversations on activities related to school, home, and leisure activities and, to a lesser degree, those related to events of work, current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance.

Advanced-Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present and future) in paragraph length discourse, but control of aspect may be lacking at times. They can handle appropriately the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar, though at times their discourse may be minimal for the level and strained. Communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution may be employed in such instances. In their narrations and descriptions, they combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length. When pressed for a fuller account, they tend to grope and rely on minimal discourse. Their utterances are typically not longer than a single paragraph. Structure of the dominant language is still evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of the speaker's own language rather than that of the target language.

While the language of Advanced-Low speakers may be marked by substantial, albeit irregular flow, it is typically somewhat strained and tentative, with noticeable self-correction and a certain 'grammatical roughness.' The vocabulary of Advanced-Low speakers is primarily generic in nature.

Advanced-Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion, and it can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may be achieved through repetition and restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

Intermediate-High

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully many uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests and areas of competence, though hesitation and errors may be evident.

Intermediate-High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance at that level over a variety of topics. With some consistency, speakers at the Intermediate High level narrate and describe in major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. However, their performance of these Advanced-level tasks will exhibit one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to maintain the narration or description semantically or syntactically in the appropriate major time frame, the disintegration of connected discourse, the misuse of cohesive devices, a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, the failure to successfully circumlocute, or a significant amount of hesitation.

Intermediate-High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although the dominant language is still evident (e.g. use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations, etc.), and gaps in communication may occur.

Intermediate-Mid

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; these include personal information covering self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging.

Intermediate-Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution.

Intermediate-Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to make utterances of sentence length and some strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. Because of inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, misunderstandings can occur, but Intermediate-Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Intermediate-Low

Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information covering, for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, as well as to some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate-Low level, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information, but they are also able to ask a few appropriate questions.

Intermediate-Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors. Their utterances are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language but, in spite of frequent misunderstandings that require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate-Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Novice-High

Speakers at the Novice-High level are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects and a limited number of activities, preferences and immediate needs. Novice-High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information; they are able to ask only a very few formulaic questions when asked to do so.

Novice-High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their utterances, which consist mostly of short and sometimes complete sentences in the present, may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since these utterances are frequently only expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes appear surprisingly fluent and accurate. These speakers' first language may strongly influence their pronunciation, as well as their vocabulary and syntax when they attempt to personalize their utterances. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice-High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle simply a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice-High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence level discourse.

Novice-Mid

Speakers at the Novice-Mid level communicate minimally and with difficulty by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited by the particular context in which the language has been learned. When responding to direct questions, they may utter only two or three words at a time or an occasional stock answer. They pause frequently as they search for simple vocabulary or attempt to recycle their own and their interlocutor's words. Because of hesitations, lack of vocabulary, inaccuracy, or failure to respond appropriately, Novice-Mid speakers may be understood with great difficulty even by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives. When called on to handle topics by performing functions associated with the Intermediate level, they frequently resort to repetition, words from their native language, or silence.

Novice-Low

Speakers at the Novice-Low level have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, they may be unintelligible. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they may be able to exchange greetings, give their identity, and name a number of familiar objects from their immediate environment. They are unable to perform functions or handle topics pertaining to the Intermediate level, and cannot therefore participate in a true conversational exchange.

For the complete proficiency level descriptors for listening, reading and writing, please see <http://www.gwu.edu/~slavic/actfl.htm>.

Appendix B

ACTFL K-12 Performance Guidelines

ACTFL K-12 Performance Guidelines

Since their introduction in November, 1998, the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners have helped language teachers, school administrators, parents, and students to understand the developmental path that second language learning takes when it occurs within a school setting.

The ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners:

- Describe the language proficiency of K-12 language learners in Standards-based language programs
- Describe language outcomes for students who begin instruction at different entry points
- Are inspired by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning
- Are organized according to:

Three Modes of Communication

- **Interpersonal**

The Interpersonal Mode is characterized by active negotiation of meaning among individuals. Participants observe and monitor one another to see how their meanings and intentions are being communicated. Adjustments and clarifications can be made accordingly. As a result, there is a higher probability of ultimately achieving the goal of successful communication in this mode than in the other two modes. The Interpersonal Mode is most obvious in conversation, but both the interpersonal and negotiated dimensions can be realized through reading and writing, such as the exchange of personal letters or of electronic mail (e-mail) messages.

- **Interpretive**

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 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 the term could refer to understanding a text with an American mindset. Put another way, interpretation differs from comprehension in that the former implies the ability to “read (or listen) between the lines.”

- **Presentational**

The Presentational Mode refers to the creation of messages in manner that facilitates interpretation by members of the other culture where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of the two cultures exists. Examples include the writing of reports and articles or the presentation for speeches. These examples of “one-way” writing and speaking require a substantial knowledge of language and culture from the outset, since the goal is to make sure that members of the other culture, the audience, will be successful in reading and listening between the lines. These three modes of communication, then, provide the organizing principle for describing language performance, as evidenced by students at the benchmarks labeled Novice Range, Intermediate Range and Pre-Advanced Range. These benchmarks correlate to students enrolled in K-Grade 4 or Grade 5-8 programs; Grade 9-10 programs; K- Grade 8, Grade 9-12 or Grade 5-12 programs; and K-Grade 12 programs, respectively. These benchmarks also reflect language descriptors as set forth in the Novice, and Intermediate sections of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

Three Benchmark Levels

- * Novice Learner (K-4, 5-8, 9-10)
- * Intermediate Learner (K-8, 7-12)
- * Pre-Advanced Learner (K-12)

Six Domains of Performance

- * Comprehensibility (How well is the student understood?)
- * Comprehension (How well does the student understand?)
- * Language Control (How accurate is the student's language?)
- * Vocabulary Usage (How extensive and applicable is the student's language?)
- * Communication Strategies (How do they maintain communication?)
- * Cultural Awareness (How is their cultural understanding reflected in their communication?)

To find out more how these questions play out in the proficiency expectations for Delaware's K-12 program, please consult the Delaware Department of Education's World Language Recommended Curriculum website and click on Program Articulation:
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/ci/content_areas/language/default.shtml.

Appendix C

**Delaware Recommended World Language
Program Articulation Chart**

Delaware Recommended World Language Program Articulation Chart

Elementary School Program (E)			Middle School Program (M)		High School Program (H)				Targeted Outcomes
					Gr. 9 H1 Nov Low- Nov Mid	Gr. 10 H2 Nov Mid	Gr. 11 H3 Nov Mid- Nov Hi	Gr. 12 H4 Nov Hi- Int. Low	NH-IL
			Gr. 7 M1 Nov Low	Gr. 8 M2 Nov Low- Nov Mid	Gr. 9 H2 Nov Mid- Nov Hi	Gr. 10 H3 Nov Hi- Int. Low	Gr. 11 H4 Int.Low	Gr. 12 H5 Int. Low- Int. Mid	IL-IM
Gr. K- 3 E1-E4 Jr Nov Mid		Gr. 4 – 6 E5-E7 Jr. Int Low- Jr. Int. Mid	Gr. 7 M3 Jr. Int. Mid	Gr. 8 M4 Jr. Int Mid- Nov Hi-	Gr. 9 H3 Nov. Hi- Int Low	Gr. 10 H4 Int. Low- Int. Mid	Gr. 11 H5 Int. Mid – Int. Hi	Gr. 12 H6 Int. Hi – Pre- Advanced	IH-PreAD

Incorporating the research from second language acquisition, educators and students are also able to compare and contrast the expected outcomes of early versus late language learning experiences. While teenagers are able to learn a second language at a faster rate, early language learners have the opportunity to develop a higher proficiency level in the language as well as near-native pronunciation.

Appendix D

ACTFL Proficiency Levels in the Work World

Oral Proficiency Levels in the Work World

Proficiency Level		Language Functions	Corresponding Professions/Positions	Who is Likely to Function at the Level?
ACTFL	US Gov			
Superior	5 4	<i>Ability to tailor language to specific audience, persuade, negotiate. Deal with nuance and subtlety.</i>	Diplomat, Contract Negotiator, International Specialist, Translator/Interpreter, Intelligence Specialist	Highly educated and professionally specialized native speakers; L2 learners with extended professional and/or educational experience in the target culture
	3	<i>Discuss topics extensively, support opinions and hypothesize. Deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation</i>	University FL Professor, Business Executive, Lawyer, Judge, Financial Advisor,	Educated native speakers; Educated L2 learners with extended professional and/or educational experience in the target language environment
Advanced High	2+		Human Resources Personnel, Court Stenographer/Interpreter	L2 learners with graduate degrees in language related area and extended educational experience in target environment
Advanced Mid	2	<i>Narrate and describe in past, present and future and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication</i>	Customer Service Representative, Social Worker, Claims Processor	Heritage speakers, informal learners, non-academic learners
Advanced Low			K-12 Language Teacher, Physician, Police Officer, Military Linguist, Billing Clerk	Undergraduate language majors with year-long study abroad experience
Intermediate High	1+		Aviation Personnel, Receptionist, Missionary	Undergraduate language majors without year-long study abroad experience
Intermediate Mid	1	<i>Create with language, initiate, maintain and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions</i>	Tour guide, Cashier, Sales clerk (highly predictable contexts)	L2 learners who have completed 6-8 year sequences of language study, in AP courses, etc.; L2 learners upon completion of basic college language (4-6 semester) sequence
Intermediate Low				L2 learners after 4 years of high school language sequence; L2 learners after 2 semester college sequence
Novice High	0+			
Novice Mid	0	<i>Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases</i>		L2 learners after 2 years of high school language study
Novice Low				

NOTES:

- The levels indicated are minimal proficiency levels for specific job descriptions and have been established by subject matter experts from a variety of agencies, organizations and companies for whom ACTFL provides oral proficiency testing following an analysis of the linguistic tasks and the responsibilities of the positions.
- The references to how long it takes to reach certain levels of proficiency were written specifically for the study of Spanish, a Category I language. Other Category I languages include Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Swahili and Swedish. For Category II, III and IV languages, one can expect that it will take longer to reach the same levels of proficiency.

Appendix E

LinguaFolio



The National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)'s LinguaFolio project is an ongoing effort to promote reflective and autonomous language learning and cultural interactions through the use of a self-assessment tool based on the European Language Portfolio. NCSSFL members associated with the project and its implementation in their respective states are available to provide further information and/or professional development training.

Initially presented at the ACTFL 2003 Delegate Assembly and followed by additional sessions at the ACTFL 2004 Annual Meeting and Exposition, NCSSFL adopted the LinguaFolio initiative as the organization's official project for 2005 the Year of Languages. ACTFL has adopted LinguaFolio as part of its Discover Language project.

LinguaFolio is a student portfolio comprising three components: (1) a language biography, which includes information about a student's language background and intercultural activities; (2) a language passport, where formal assessments and a student's self assessments are recorded; and (3) a language dossier, providing samples of a student's work over time. LinguaFolio is a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language at school or outside school can reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. It is a tool that can accompany language learning throughout life and is suitable for documenting language abilities for various uses.

LinguaFolio is intended to:

- encourage the learning of all languages
- emphasize the value of knowing many languages - plurilingualism and pluriculturalism
- contribute to global understanding
- promote autonomous learning and the ability to assess one's skills
- facilitate articulation among language programs (e.g., high school to university, transfer of students within school districts) based on a clear and commonly accepted description of language proficiency
- serve as a tool to assess language learning
- recognize and value heritage languages
- promote language learning as a life-long endeavor

LinguaFolio will help learners to:

- evaluate and describe their language proficiency in clear and simple terms
- document and reflect on their language learning inside and outside school and on their intercultural experiences
- inform others about their proficiency in different languages e.g., when changing schools, starting a language course, participating in an exchange program, applying for a job
- set personal language learning objectives and map out ways to achieve them, e.g., cultivating community experiences, listening to music, using the web

LinguaFolio will help educators, schools and other institutions to:

- recognize the needs and motivation of learners and to help them set learning goals
- develop culturally responsive programs for learner strengths and needs
- obtain information about the language learners previous language learning experiences
- evaluate and document performance in a differentiated way
- connect US standards and performance guidelines to internationally accepted Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- describe their language programs and produce evidence of language learning experiences

LinguaFolio will help businesses and community employers to:

- profile language proficiency of their employees or job applicants and to make better use of their language abilities

LinguaFolio should consist of three parts:

- **Language Passport**
An overview of experiences and ability with different languages: It can be updated frequently and records formal qualifications and diplomas and self- assessments.
- **Language Biography**
A record of personal language learning history that helps to evaluate learning goals, and reflect on language learning and cultural experiences.
- **Dossier**
A collection of pieces of work and certificates chosen by the individual to document and illustrate language skills, experiences and achievements. It can be used to demonstrate the individual's language abilities to others.

For more information about the LinguaFolio and copies of the proficiency-level check sheets, passports and biographies, consult the Virginia Department of Education's LinguaFolio site:

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/linguafolio/>



There is also a LinguaFolio written especially for young learners (K-8): the LinguaFolio, Jr. For information about the LinguaFolio, Jr, consult

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/linguafolio/junior.html>.

Appendix F

Online Proficiency-based Assessments

Online Performance-based Assessment

Delaware Department of Education selected the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) Test offered by Avant Assessment (formerly Language Learning Solutions, Inc.), as an online assessment of proficiency for the World Language Assessment Project (See Wang, S. and Cataldi, A. (2006)). The rationale for choosing the STAMP test is as follows:

STAMP is developed at the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, a National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Oregon. STAMP is age appropriate for grades 7 through 12 and post secondary levels and has been piloted with over 20,000 students. It is a summative assessment, measuring student reading, writing and speaking proficiencies, delivered securely and efficiently via the Internet in a proctored environment.

About **STAMP** (STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency) Web-based Test of Foreign Language Assessment

STAMP is a Web-based assessment tool built to benchmarks characterizing proficiency levels that are tied to ACTFL Performance Guidelines. Results show student proficiency from Novice-Low through Intermediate-Mid on the ACTFL scale and are based upon a clear rubric of expectations.

Reports from STAMP provide independently-scored individual results for students and teachers; class-level reports for teachers and coordinators; and building, district, and state-level reports for administrators. The Web-based reporting system allows teacher-playback of all student oral-responses and the ability to review the writing responses.

You can find more information about STAMP at http://www.avantassessment.com/products/about_stamp.html.

STAMP Facts and Features

- Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Italian and Chinese
- Measures from Novice-Low through Intermediate-Mid
- Age appropriate for grades 7 through 16 (13-16 are college levels)
- Reading, Writing and Speaking
- Statistically validated, realia-based, and computer adaptive
- Externally scored with high levels of inter-rater reliability
- Textbook independent

STAMP Reporting Benefits for Teachers and Programs

- Provides validated, easy-to-use data for progress-checking, placement, program & standards review, curriculum & staff development, and instructional planning
- Longitudinal individual speaking and writing samples are accessible to teachers

STAMP Benefits for Students

- Engages students in real-world language situations
- Clearly explains what each student can do with the language
- Reports provide feedback for potential goal setting

Other online proficiency-based assessments for early language learners (K-8):

NATIONAL ONLINE EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING ASSESSMENT (NOELLA)

The National Online Early Language Learning Assessment (NOELLA) is the first affordable, universally accessible, and nationally norm-based assessment of proficiency for early language learners. Designed for children learning languages other than English in U.S. classrooms, NOELLA provides schools throughout the country, regardless of their size or location, the means to measure the performance of young students accurately and reliably. It is available at a significantly lower cost than existing assessments and is tied to the national foreign language standards and the ACTFL K-12 Proficiency Guidelines.

The complete test assesses reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Currently, CASLS is developing items for Spanish, Japanese, French, and Chinese versions of NOELLA.

NOELLA is a joint project involving CASLS at the University of Oregon, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., and six cooperating state departments of education in Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Virginia.

For additional information, see <http://casls.uoregon.edu/noella.php>.

Besides the STAMP and NOELLA, there are no other online adaptive tests of world language proficiency available in all skill areas of speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Other commonly used proficiency-based assessments that are not available online:

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI)

The OPI is currently used worldwide by academic institutions, government institutions and private corporations as academic placement, student assessment, program evaluation, professional certification and hiring and promotional qualification. The OPI is also recognized by the American Council on Education (ACE) for the awarding of college credit and is available in 37 languages. The OPI is administered by ACTFL certified oral proficiency testers.

The MOPI is modeled on the OPI and is often used to test lower proficiency ranges. This assessment must also be administered by testers who have been certified by ACTFL. Assessors must be trained and certified by ACTFL.

For additional information about the OPI or the MOPI, see

<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3348>.

Appendix G

Focus Group Report: State Agencies

World Languages Task Force State Agencies Focus Group Report July 18, 2007

Participants

Agency	Name
Department of Labor (DOL)	Robert Strong
State Police	Jorge Camacho
Department of Agriculture (DDA)	Mark Davis
Economic Development Office (DEDO)	Tom McCarthy
DSCYF	Karen Smith
DSHS	Joseph Swiski
Department of Labor (DOL)	Terry Koenig
Department of State (DOS)	Christopher Portante
DelDOT	Mary Beth Gzym

Focus Group Questions:

What are your current human resource needs in terms of language proficiency and what do you project the future need to be? Conversational proficiency? Reading and writing as well? Which languages? In which job titles?

Responses:

State Police:

We must provide service correctly to a number of groups with limited English proficiency. We are actively recruiting Spanish-speaking officers. We see a lot of resumes that list having two or more years of a language, but most often these people cannot hold a simple conversation or provide simple translations during times of service. We need people who can speak Spanish—to know what has transpired, to give detailed descriptions of suspects or incidents, to tell us where injuries have occurred, etc. Students must be motivated to continue learning their language beyond the two year requirement. They should learn how to continue to work and improve their language skills. We are working on ways to motivate officers to have better language skills by possible financial incentives and hiring preferences.

Department of Agriculture:

Of course we need immediate speakers of Spanish. Our challenge is to use a standard Spanish so that all literate Spanish-speakers can understand health warnings, work instructions, etc. But which country's Spanish should be used? Our Spanish speakers must have a diverse linguistic background.

Department of Labor:

Our future depends on having a competitive edge, and that edge is dependent on having a new skill set unlike anything in the past. This skill set includes knowing a variety of languages. Students need to graduate being able to use a language at a basic level. Two credits of a language may provide these skills if they are focused on real communication and culture and credentialed in some way to verify some basic set of skills.

Economic Development Office:

Language learning must be practical as well as personally enriching. To be economically competitive, students must be able to use a language and really understand the culture of the language. Kids need to have more interaction with native speakers of the languages they are studying to increase motivation—either virtually or in real life.

Department of State:

We need employees with a wide range of language skills in a variety of languages. For some of our social service groups (e.g., Human Relations, Commission for Women) there is an immediate need for Spanish. For our cultural agencies, there is a need to serve visitors to the state. In the long run, there will be a need for all sorts of languages for Corporations—from Mandarin Chinese to French to Spanish to Arabic. Students studying languages in school need to have a firm understanding of the language's culture. Without that, their language skills are useless. Is a two-year requirement adequate for students to develop skills adequate to meet the job demands of interacting with speakers of other languages? How will students be encouraged to continue their language study to develop and refine their language skills? Students need to have travel abroad experiences. This is one way to make sure they have the skills to communicate and understand the culture of the people they are interacting with. We would also invite language students (particularly German, Japanese and Spanish) to join tour groups for speakers of those languages. This will give them opportunities to assess their own language competencies and provide them with experiences about future career options. It is important that students, parents, teachers and administrators know that it doesn't matter which language students start learning. It's the fact that they are learning languages that will totally open their eyes to a world of opportunities including the ability to learn many other languages later on.

DSCYF:

Currently, Spanish is crucial for our first-line staff. They must be able to talk to people, get personal information from them and record this information on state forms. They must understand the diversity of Spanish-speaking cultures to be sure to make people feel welcome and understood. Students would benefit from studying languages from elementary school. Waiting until high school may not

give them the time to develop the level of Spanish they need to communicate in the way that we need them to.

DeIDOT:

We have several areas within DeIDOT where it's extremely helpful to have employees who speak Spanish. They include the following jobs: (1) Toll collectors to provide directions and explain toll charges to drivers; (2) DMV Specialists/Technicians in driver services or vehicle registration/inspection sections to assist with completing paperwork or explaining the rules, but the need exists in most other parts of DMV including Uninsured Motorists; (3) Delaware Transit Corp Bus Operators, Mechanics and Reservations for handling consumers who use regular and/or DART bus service. Most of these jobs require people to be conversationally fluent, but there is an on-going need to provide more written documents in Spanish.

State Police and Department of Agriculture:

We both believe that interaction with native speakers and real application of language skills are crucial to motivating students to learn languages. We propose that language classrooms establish local exchanges with families who speak the [target] language. We also can offer mini-internships that focus on the importance of having language skills.

State Agency representatives were given a checklist of skills associated with varying levels of language proficiency and asked to determine which level of skill their employees would need to fulfill their job expectations.

Appendix H

Focus Group Report: Parents and Students

World Languages Task Force Student and Parent Focus Group Report September 13-27, 2007

Summary

The vast majority of students (92%) participating in this Focus Group identified themselves as college-bound. One student indicated that he was going to the military directly after school. Most of the students express an understanding of the need for graduation requirements since they ensure that students have a wide variety of experiences and knowledge that prepares them for college or work.

Most students and their parents believe that speaking a world language in addition to English is both economically and socially beneficial for them in their post-high school endeavors. One student acknowledges that "... speaking other languages will be more important in the near future than it is right now. Younger students will absolutely need to speak two or more languages." Another student cites the fact that the demographics of the US are changing as the rationale for language learning.

Approximately half of the students believe that they will exit their high school programs with a proficiency level that will allow them to use the language in their post-high school goals. Two of those students come from homes where they speak other languages (French and German). The other half of the students emphatically states that they know that their levels will not be adequate. They have had experiences either traveling or speaking with individuals locally and know that they could not communicate in meaningful ways.

Three main issues regarding world language learning were reoccurring in the comments made by both parents and students: the length of study, the quality of instruction and validation of student language skills. Most comments from Focus Group participants emphasized the importance of starting to learn languages in the elementary school so that students are capable of reaching a level of proficiency that will be beneficial to them. A few comments believe that if the elementary piece is impossible, language learning must at least begin in middle school or students will not be able to be successful on AP language exams.

Many comments underscored the need for a communicative approach to language learning and stated that the current way that students are being taught languages is ineffective.

There was much enthusiasm around the idea of using an assessment of language proficiency to validate student communicative skills. Some parents believe that students should have an option of demonstrating proficiency on an identified assessment and then receive credit for their proficiency. They cite many examples of students who would benefit from this approach (native Spanish-speaking students, students who speak other languages at home or who learn languages not taught in schools on their own time). A few parents mentioned using the proficiency assessment as a way to grant credit instead of seat-time. Although favorable of having a choice of demonstrating proficiency through an assessment, a few students did not like the idea of credit only being awarded based on the results of a test citing that “some students just aren’t good test takers.” One parent states, “Sometimes the pressure of these high-stakes tests create too much pressure. Testing shouldn’t be the sole measure.”

Concerns were shared regarding career and technical students as well as special needs students. A couple of parents recommended that a specialized, career-focused approach to language learning be used to give students the language skills they will need for their career choice. One student and one parent asked questions about how special education students were going to be able to meet the graduation requirement. They also recommended specialized courses or alternate means to demonstrate competence for these students.

The one word that resonates from many comments in this Focus Group is “options.” Most parents and students feel that students need to have options in the languages they study, when and how they study them and how they demonstrate that learning.

Participants

School	Student	Parent(s)
Caesar Rodney	Victoria Richardson	Derrick and Florence Richardson
Dover	Lilia Melikechi	Anne Rhoads
Polytech	Calvin Lantz	Jeff and Susi Lantz
A.I. DuPont	Victoria Black	Anne Black
Cab Calloway	Meagan Santangelo	Donna Santangelo
DE Milt Academy	Seana Henigan	Larry Henigan
Delcastle	Kyle Rowe	Paul and Karla Rowe
McKean	Deasha Barrett	Stephanie Williams
St. George’s	Samantha McDermitt	Patty McDermitt
William Penn	Deanna Rishell	Kent Rischell
Cape Henlopen	Michelle Ogorzalek	
Seaford	Emily Wheatley	Kay Wheatley
Sussex Technical	Drew Stewart	Kerry Stewart

Focus Group Questions:

Why do graduation requirements exist?

Responses:

“To set criteria for college.”

“To establish what the school thinks students should know before they can get a diploma.”

“To prepare students for college in all areas.”

“To make sure students don’t just take the easiest classes; to make sure we are well-rounded.”

“To make sure every student is on the same playing field so that everyone will have a fair opportunity for success after high school.”

To ensure that students take a variety of courses—not just in the areas that they like.”

“To fulfill experiences that help you learn the most that you can.”

“If they didn’t exist, there would be no focus or purpose for going to school.”

What are your goals for after high school?

Responses:

“I will be going to college and majoring in communications. I’ve applied to the University of Delaware, Penn State and Temple. I hope to become an editor and eventually an author.”

“I want to major in English in college. I don’t know where I want to go yet or what I will do with my English major.”

“I will go to college or the Air Force Academy. I want to be a pilot.”

“College and then into my career. I plan on studying fashion merchandising and business management.”

“I am going to college to become a physical therapist.”

“I’m going to be a massage therapist.”

“I plan on going to UD to be a nurse.”

"I'm going into the military, but I don't know which branch yet."

"I want to be a special education teacher so I am definitely college-bound."

"College. I want to be a graphic designer."

"I want to be a lawyer. I'm going to Georgetown University."

"I'm interested in going to either the University of Virginia or to UD to become a nurse."

"I plan on becoming an architect."

How will being able to communicate in a world language help you achieve your goals?

Responses:

"The United States is so diverse right now with lots of different races and languages, especially Spanish. Everyone needs to speak at least two languages now days, especially Spanish. It will help you understand and relate to people of different races and cultures. I think that speaking other languages will be even more important in the near future than it is right now. Younger students will absolutely need to speak two or more languages."

"Being able to speak another language makes you unique in Delaware. People look for language skills in jobs. My family speaks French, and I'm learning Spanish right now too."

"Knowing other languages will help you out when you travel to other countries. It will also help with business deals. You must know how people in other cultures do business in order to sell and buy. "

"I'm taking Italian now since I know that the fashion industry is heavily influenced by Italian designers. Italian will also help me market myself in international business."

"I'm studying French right now. I'm not sure how useful it will be for me in my career. "

"I'm studying French. Right now it has helped me communicate better with the foreign exchange students at our school."

"I'm sure any language will help in my career as a massage therapist so that I can talk with my patients."

“My language skills in French will make me more marketable and will make it easier for me to learn other languages.”

“Our school doesn’t offer languages yet. Our school will be sending students to Deltech for language classes to meet HS requirements and UD admission requirements.”

“I’m taking Spanish since in the future, English-speaking people will probably be in the minority in the US. It will be very beneficial then.”

“I graduated from Delcastle in 93. I didn’t study a foreign language. Now I work for Comcast and we’re going global. I need to communicate with people all over the world.”

“I graduated in 77. They just suggested learning languages back then. There was no requirement. I’m really happy to see that they’re finally requiring language learning 30 years later. “

“If I’m prosecuting someone, it will help me to communicate with them and to understand how they think. I’m sure I’ll have many Spanish-speaking clients.”

“I already know that I will use my skills a lot in my nursing career. My mother is a nurse and she called me one day while she was at work because she only speaks English. There was a male Spanish-speaking patient that she couldn’t communicate with and asked me to talk to him about his symptoms and how to take his medicine.”

Will your level of proficiency be high enough to achieve your goals?

Responses:

“I think so. I’m currently in AP Spanish IV. Our teacher makes sure that we continually practice all of the skills like reading, speaking and writing.”

“I also agree that languages will be a lot more crucial in the future. I am only beginning to study Spanish. It’s not so hard since I speak French.”

“I’m not taking a world language right now. My mother speaks German so I speak German at home with her. I might take French later. My German is very good. I think my level of German will definitely help me achieve all of my goals.”

“I know that I don’t have a good-enough level of Spanish right now to do anything related to my career with it. I know that after 2 years of Spanish I couldn’t communicate at all in it when we traveled to Spain. I don’t think my level has improved much since then. Starting in high school is way too late.”

"I know that my 4 years hasn't been enough. I will definitely have to continue in college to get to a level where I can actually communicate with patients. I can't do that now. I don't know how to say "take this pill twice a day and continue to check your blood pressure." If I had started in middle school or even better, in elementary school, I would literally be in another world full of different opportunities for me."

"I know that most parents don't think that their children can do anything with the world language they are learning. They're not learning how to communicate with the language. They are learning grammar instead."

Will the world languages graduation requirement be enough to make sure students are "competitive" in securing the types of jobs/careers they want after high school?

Responses:

"Two years is not enough. Students need to start earlier. They need to take a placement test to make sure they are in the right level. Students need to understand the culture of the language too. Students cannot afford to be handicapped by culture and language in this global society. The requirement may not be enough for students to really know how to speak in high school, but it does lay a foundation for learning and hopefully will encourage students to continue to study.

"Students really need to have an intermediate range. Will two years give students that?"

If you had the power to determine how many years students in Delaware should learn a language, what would you recommend? Why?

Responses:

"We must have a long-term commitment to language learning if students are going to really be able to use another language. They need to start in elementary school and then take some sort of proficiency test to determine their levels. My daughter was interested in Spanish since she was 5 years old, but she had to wait for the 9th grade to learn the language. I bought her tapes and books and tried to provide as much enrichment as I could, but she would have soaked up the language if the school had offered a class."

"At a bare minimum, students should start language learning in the middle school and be required to continue for at least three years in high school. In high school, the classes become much more difficult and language learning is harder for students. They don't have as much time to dedicate to learning the language. Younger kids like to play with language and have fun with it."

“We must start teaching kids languages in elementary school. Kids can learn many languages at an early age and it’s easy for them. They don’t get confused. Language barriers in adults create mistrust. Learning another person’s language and culture can create trust that we need so badly in this world today.”

“I don’t think we should have a choice if we learn languages or not. We must speak other languages. This will help us learn new ideas. We shouldn’t just concentrate on one foreign language though. Not everyone should be learning Spanish. There are many other languages that are important—German, French.”

“In my psychology class, we learned about language acquisition. It is easier for kids to learn languages when they are younger. The older you are the more time and focus it will take.”

“I took Spanish for 7 years starting in middle school and I can’t do anything with it. Teachers must teach the language through conversations, not verb conjugations.”

“Start early! Students can always change or add languages later once they decide what they’re going to do in life. New languages will be easy to learn if you have a foundation in elementary school.”

“We need “Conversational Spanish.” For technical students, language learning needs to be taught in the work/shop setting. Conversational skills are much more important than grammar knowledge. “

“Conversation is the key element—no matter when you start.”

“Speaking a language is a skill like golf. Look at Tiger Woods, he started practicing golf at 3 or 4 years old. Language skills must be built. We must equip young children who can learn many languages easily.”

“What requirements exist for students to learn languages in the elementary school? I was required to take two years of Latin and two years of a modern language. Language really helps you learn in general too. It really does equip you to think and analyze better.”

“All Europeans know are at least bilingual. Most are trilingual. We’re behind. We need to start in the elementary school if we ever want to really be able to use a language and compete with the Europeans.”

“Start in 1st grade. As students learn in their own native language, it is so much easier for them to learn a foreign language. They can relate their languages so much more easily. But I’m cautious about making any recommendations about mandating programs in the elementary school unless there is money behind the

mandate. I have seen too many times, particularly in my district, how when things are forced to be done, they are done only half the way—or not being done in the way that is good for our kids. If you do start language learning young, there must be funding there to make it happen.”

“I would say that students should start in kindergarten or first grade since they are sponges at that age and can absorb everything the teacher presents. They really develop perfect pronunciation and enhanced listening skills. The problem with starting programs in the elementary school is that principals and teachers feel that something has to go, that there isn’t enough time for anything “unnecessary” like languages. Instead of looking at language learning like a scheduling problem, people really need to be creative and follow model schools in the US and around the world that have success language programs. If elementary school isn’t a reality in Delaware, 6th grade would have to be the absolute first step. There’s no other way that students can gain enough language experience to be successful on the AP exam without starting at least in middle school.”

“Kindergarten is the most appropriate grade to start in. I’m jealous that Cape students are now getting Chinese beginning in kindergarten. We never got that.”

Additional Comments:

“I am worried about the special education students and how they will be able to meet the requirement. Would they be able to take two first year courses instead of a level 1 and level 2?”

“I like the idea of having a test to determine student proficiency levels, but I don’t like the idea of using a test to decide if a student should graduate or not. Some students just don’t test well. I do like the idea of some students being able to get credit awarded by proving their proficiency level. This will allow them to take other languages or to concentrate on learning English if they don’t speak English.”

“I don’t think the testing option would be fair for native English-speakers. Why should native Spanish speakers get to take a test and get credit for a language they already know? Our English-speaking students can’t take a test in English for credit.”

“A world language helps you learn other stuff. French helps me understand a lot of vocabulary in English. I can figure out words I don’t know by looking at the base words or prefixes that I’ve learned in French.”

“We had a foreign exchange student from Norway at our school who spoke perfect English. He had been studying it since he was in elementary school. He also spoke French, German and some other languages too.”

“We had a foreign exchange student from Sweden who also was fluent in English. He also spoke so many languages. I felt dumb.”

“My school already has a proficiency test that allows freshmen to get up to one credit in a world language from their studies in middle school.”

“World languages are more like math—they are skills. Kids come to 9th grade and they’re all over the board in terms of what they know and can do. Having some sort of proficiency test that helps place students in the right course or that awards credit based on performance level sounds like a good idea to me.”

“I am ok with a proficiency test being used to validate student knowledge.”

“I’m concerned with the world language requirement in UD’s Promise to the state. How will the work of the task force influence or be influenced by UD’s three HS credit requirement for world languages. That is difficult to almost impossible for some of our technical students who have some many other shop-related credits to complete.”

“The UD world language requirement is the only reason St. Georges is trying to find ways for their students to take languages at Deltech.”

“I do not think testing for credit is fair. I am only taking Spanish for the requirement. I have no desire to speak it. I don’t know how I would use Spanish for my future goals.”

“What is available to help students learn languages on their own—on their own time?”

“Students must have options in how they demonstrate their language learning. I like the freedom of having a test so that I can learn on my own and at my own pace and take a test once I’m ready. That is what UD should do instead of require 3 credits. They should have a proficiency exam instead.”

“This Task Force and Focus Group is very important. Language learning must be done. We’re behind.”

“I’ve worked in 5 different countries with people who spoke many different languages and come from very different cultures. Learning languages really helps you learn other things and to understand different cultures.”

“The world language curriculum at the schools must change. It must be written so that different students with different learning styles can learn. Classrooms should present real-life, practical activities that use the language. No more useless verb charts, please.”

“We must stop playing with kids. We must do something so that they have real skills to use in the real world: languages help them to listen to people and to learn new things.”

“Why should native speakers of Spanish be placed in the lower levels of a Spanish class when they clearly already have many if not all of the skills they need to be successful in that class? This is not fair for the non-Spanish-speaking students trying to learn Spanish. They are a disruption. Sometimes Spanish-speaking students even use their language as a tool of intimidation against us. I think they should have other options—either a course for themselves or testing out.”

“I believe that testing would create accountability for student learning, but there is an inherent fear involved. I fear that the real benefit would be lost and that the test would be used against kids instead of helping credential their learning. Sometimes the pressure of these high-stakes tests creates too much pressure. Testing shouldn’t be the sole measure.”

“I don’t know about using a test to award credit since there are some students who aren’t good test takers.”

“World Language classes are not taken as seriously as other classes. These classes are not seen as “real” and students know that they don’t have to perform really. They are “electives” that are not on par with the other content areas. I think that a proficiency test would give some credibility to the content area and send a message that we’re serious about you really being able to use the language that you’re studying.”

“The reputation of Spanish at my school is that it is really easy and an easy way to get credits. Students know that they don’t have to do anything, so it is not stressful at all.”

“Spanish is equally important as science, social studies or math. One of my counselors actually discouraged me from asking my Spanish teacher for a letter of recommendation for one of my college applications. She told me that I should really have a letter from one of the “core” areas.”

“More out-of-the-box thinking is needed to face this world language issue. There should be financial incentives for schools to offer more languages. Perhaps if you offer three languages at your school, you get \$5 extra per unit count or if you have certain number of students performing at a high level of proficiency, the school gets extra funding. Schools, and people in general, get better results when there are incentives. Rewards work better than punishments.”

“I’m concerned about the special education population. Teachers need to know how to work with this population.”

“I caution people to become too PC in this matter so that many students are penalized in their language learning for the sake of a few students. The Task Force must really think about how people will benefit from their language study.”

“The key to successful language programs is student having options—options in which languages to study and options in how they demonstrate that learning.”

Appendix I

**World Languages Task Force
Agendas**



World Languages Task Force

**Orientation Meeting
Collette Education Resource Center
Dover, Delaware
May 30, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 pm**

AGENDA

Welcome

Overview of the World Languages Task Force

Introduction of Task Force Members

World Language Landscape in Delaware

World Language Learning Version 3.0
Tom Welch, T Welch Consulting

Tasks for Next Meeting
<http://wltaskforce.wikidot.com/>



World Languages Task Force

Meeting #2
Collette Education Resource Center
Dover, Delaware
July 16, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 pm

AGENDA

Welcome

Discussion of Proficiency and Functional Communicative Competence

Presentations on Language Assessment Instruments:
LinguaFolio
Jacque Van Houten, Kentucky Department of Education

STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency)
Kyle Ennis, Language Learning Solutions

Update on Business Leader and Service Industry Focus Groups

Questions for Next Meeting
What is a world language?
Is American Sign Language (ASL) a world language?
How will world language competence be demonstrated by each student?
<http://wltaskforce.wikidot.com/>



World Languages Task Force

Meeting #3
Collette Education Resource Center
Dover, Delaware
September 18, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 pm

AGENDA

Welcome
Gregory Fulkerson, DOE

Presentation of “Delaware Facing Forward”
Jack Markell, DE State Treasurer

Report from Focus Group with State Agencies

Update on Focus Groups with Students and Parents

Formation of Recommendations regarding Proficiency/Communicative Competence,
Use of LinguaFolio and STAMP, Definition of a World Language, and American Sign
Language as a World Language
Tom Welch, Facilitator

Discussion of the World Language Graduation Requirement and the
Special Needs and Career Votech Student

Questions for Next Meeting
How will world language competence be demonstrated by each student?
Should the requirement be demonstrated in the same way for all students?
*What role should technology play in helping students meet the world language
graduation requirement?*

<http://wltaskforce.wikidot.com/>



World Languages Task Force

**Meeting #4
Collette Education Resource Center
Dover, Delaware
December 3, 2007
1:00 – 4:00 pm**

AGENDA

Welcome
Gregory Fulkerson, DOE

Report from Focus Group with Students and Parents

Discussion of the World Language Graduation Requirement and the Student with
Special Needs or with a Career Votech Focus

Clarification of Recommendations regarding Proficiency/Communicative
Competence, Use of LinguaFolio and STAMP, Definition of a World Language,
and American Sign Language as a World Language

Recommendations Posted for Further Discussion until Sunday, December 9
<http://wltaskforce.wikidot.com/>