



## New Jersey Student Learning Standards – World Languages

### Introduction

#### World Languages

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards – World Languages (NJSLS-WL) is a guiding document toward participation in the state’s global society. As one of the most diverse states in the United States, New Jersey encompasses a multicultural, global citizenry. In all regions, there are people speaking and interacting with others in different languages; there are street signs in several languages and international enterprises conducting business in English and in a multitude of other languages. The New Jersey Department of Education, whose mission is to equip students with necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to participate successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, embraces the state’s multiculturalism and diversity, including the acquisition of diverse languages and cultures.

#### Mission

World languages education provides learners with the essential language skills and cultural understandings in languages other than English necessary to live and work in a global, culturally diverse world.

#### Vision

An education in world languages fosters a population that:

- Cultivates communication and cultural understanding in more than one language with the levels of language proficiency that are required to function in a variety of occupations and careers in the contemporary workplace.
- Exhibits attitudes, values, and skills that indicate a positive disposition and understanding of cultural differences and that enhances cross-cultural communication.
- Participates in local and global communities with people who speak languages other than English to address social justice issues and other global problems.
- Values language learning for its long-term worth in advancing personal, work-related, and/or financial success in our increasingly interconnected world.

## Intent and Spirit of the World Languages Standard

The study of world languages benefits all students by fostering academic success, cognitive flexibility, increased access to information from other content areas, employment opportunities, and the ability to function more effectively with understanding and respect in all environments encountered in their lives. To meet the high school graduation requirement (*N.J.A.C. 6A: 8:5.1*), the New Jersey Student Learning Standards – World Languages (NJSLS – WL) promotes an acquisition process that is research-based, spiraling and recursive, and aligned to appropriate proficiency targets that are designed to ultimately enable learners to attain Novice-High level proficiency or above, which is a requirement for high school graduation. All students have regular, sequential instruction in one or more world languages beginning in kindergarten and continuing at least through the freshman year of high school. Further, *N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(b)4* directs districts to actively encourage all students who otherwise meet the current-year requirement for high school graduation to continue their study of a second language through high school in order to reach higher proficiency levels. Opportunities to develop higher levels of proficiency should be based on personal and career interests.

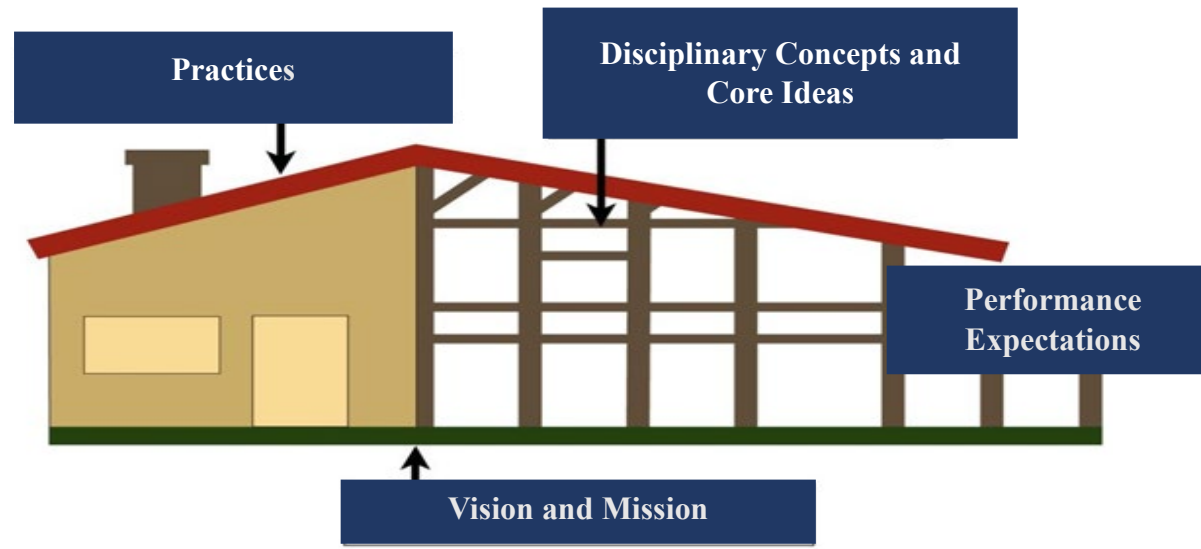
The number of years spent studying a language and the frequency of instruction impact the level of proficiency acquired in the language. This principle has historically been supported by research in the United States and abroad (Raymond, 2012). A three-year grant project (2005-08) administered by the New Jersey Department of Education supports these research findings. Data from the federally funded project that assessed the language proficiency of 60,000 8th-grade students presented compelling evidence for the need to develop programs that offer all students the opportunity to meet the state-designated proficiency level of Novice-High. The data showed that programs offering a minimum of 540 hours of articulated instruction in classes that meet at least three times a week throughout the academic year produce a majority of students who can speak at the Novice-High proficiency level or higher. Consequently, the establishment and/or maintenance of quality, well-articulated language programs at the elementary and middle-school levels, as required by New Jersey Administrative Code, is critical for building the capacity of high school students to achieve the Novice-High level of language proficiency required for graduation.

## Revised Standards

### Framework for NJ Designed Standards

The design of this version of the NJ World Language Standard is intended to:

- promote the development of curricula and learning experiences that reflect the vision and mission of world languages as stated in the beginning of this document;
- foster greater coherence and appropriate progressions across grade bands;
- prioritize the important ideas and core processes that are central to world languages and have lasting value beyond the classroom; and
- reflect the habits of mind central to world language studies that lead to post-secondary success.



In this diagram:

- The *Vision and Mission* serve as the foundation for each content areas' standards. They describe the important role of the discipline in the world and reflect the various statutes, regulations, and policy.
- The *Disciplinary Concepts and Core Ideas* are the joists and play an integral role in the framing by making connections among the performance expectations. Core ideas help to prioritize the important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom. They provide clear guidance as to what should be the focus of learning by the end of each grade band level (i.e., end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12).
- The *Performance Expectations* are the studs and serve as the framework for what students should know and be able to do. They incorporate the knowledge and skills that most important for students to know to be prepared for post-secondary success.
- The *Practices* are the roof and represent two key ideas. Positioned as the top of the house, they represent the apex of learning. The goal is for students to internalize the practices (habits of mind) and be able to apply them to new situations outside the school environment. The practices span across all aspects of the standards and are integral part of K-12 students' learning of the disciplines.

## Disciplinary Concepts

### *Interpretive Mode of Communication*

In the Interpretive mode of communication, students demonstrate understanding of spoken and written communication within appropriate cultural contexts. Examples of this kind of *one-way* reading or listening include cultural interpretations of printed texts, videos, online texts, movies, radio and television broadcasts, and speeches. Beyond the Novice level, “interpretation” differs from “comprehension” because it implies the ability to read or listen “between the lines” and “beyond the lines.”

<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Core Idea</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Novice Low</li><li>• Novice Mid</li><li>• Novice High</li><li>• Intermediate Low</li><li>• Intermediate Mid</li><li>• Intermediate High</li><li>• Advanced Low</li></ul>	Learning a language involves interpreting meaning from listening, viewing, and reading culturally authentic materials in the target language.

### *Interpersonal Mode of Communication*

In the Interpersonal mode of communication, students engage in direct oral and/or written communication with others. Examples of this “two-way” communication include conversing face-to-face, participating in online discussions or videoconferences, instant messaging and text messaging, and exchanging personal letters or e-mail messages.

<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Core Idea</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Novice Low</li><li>• Novice Mid</li><li>• Novice High</li><li>• Intermediate Low</li><li>• Intermediate Mid</li><li>• Intermediate High</li><li>• Advanced Low</li></ul>	Interpersonal communication between and among people is the exchange of information and the negotiation of meaning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intermediate Mid</li><li>• Intermediate High</li><li>• Advanced Low</li></ul>	Speakers and writers gain confidence and competence as they progress along the proficiency continuum.

### *Presentational Mode of Communication*

In the Presentational mode of communication, students present, orally and/or in writing, information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers with whom there is no immediate interaction. Examples of this *one-to-many* mode of communication include a presentation to a group, posting an online video or webpage, creating and posting a podcast or videocast, and writing an article for a newspaper.

<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Core Idea</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Novice Low</li><li>• Novice Mid</li><li>• Novice High</li><li>• Intermediate Low</li><li>• Intermediate Mid</li><li>• Intermediate High</li><li>• Advanced Low</li></ul>	Presentational communication involves presenting information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intermediate Mid</li><li>• Intermediate High</li><li>• Advanced Low</li></ul>	Speakers and writers gain confidence and competence as they progress along the proficiency continuum.

## World Languages Practices

The practices are the skills that individuals who leverage their ability to speak multiple languages in their careers use on a regular basis. Because the purpose of World Languages is to provide students with the essential language skills and cultural understandings in languages other than English, many of the practices can be applied to daily life. These practices establish a strong link between communication and culture, which is applied when making connections and comparisons and in using language to function as part of local and global communities. Curriculum writers and educators will want to consider how they can design learning experiences that will enable their students to develop these skills in conjunction with the skills reflected in the core ideas and performance expectations (ACTFL, 2012).

Practice	Description
Communicate	Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes.
Cultures	Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied. Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.
Connections	Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own. Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.
Comparisons	Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.
Communities	Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world. Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.

## Language Proficiency Levels

Unlike other content areas, the NJSL – WL is benchmarked by proficiency levels. In this iteration of version, the performance expectations for all three modes of communication are displayed in one document according to proficiency level. Below is a chart from *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (2012)* that shows how assessing for performance is different from assessing for proficiency.

The ultimate goal of world language instruction is for learners to attain high levels of proficiency, which allows them to use the language with ease and confidence in everyday interactions with native speakers and in the workplace. To attain proficiency, learners learn, use, and practice language that they acquire in a classroom setting. Spiraling and recursive performance in a world language leads to proficiency.

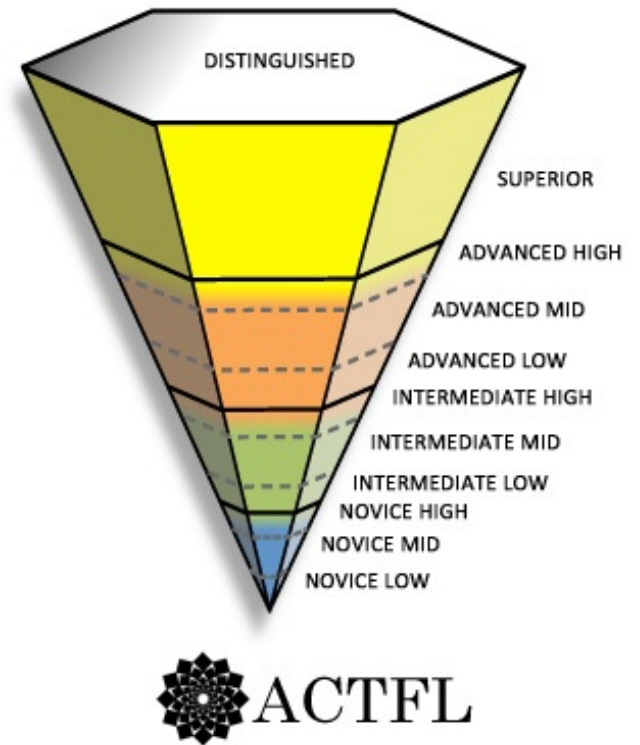
- *Performance* is defined as how well a learner uses language acquired in a classroom setting.
- *Proficiency* is defined as the spontaneous use of language in real-world situations that might occur when:
  - interacting with native speakers of the language, or
  - immersed in a target language environment.

<b>Assessing Performance</b>	<b>Assessing Proficiency</b>
<i>Based on instruction:</i> Describes what the language learner can demonstrate based on what was learned	<i>Independent of specific instruction or curriculum:</i> Describes what the language user can do regardless of where, when or how the language was acquired
<i>Practice:</i> Tasks are derived from the language functions and vocabulary that learners have practiced or rehearsed but which are applied to other tasks with familiar contexts	<i>Spontaneous:</i> Tasks are non-rehearsed situations
<i>Familiar content and context:</i> Content based on what was learned, practiced, or rehearsed; all within a context similar but not identical to how learned	Broad content and context: Context and content are those that are appropriate for the given level
<i>Demonstrated performance:</i> To be evaluated within a range, must be able to demonstrate the features of the domains of a given range in those contexts and content areas that have been learned and practices.	<i>Sustained performance across all the tasks and contexts for the level:</i> To be at a level, must demonstrate consistent patterns of all the criteria for a given level, all of the time

The following guidelines describe what individuals can do with language when speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-life situations in spontaneous and non-rehearsed contexts (ACTFL, 2012). The guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished.

- *Novice Low*: Students communicate using words and phrases that are memorized and practiced when talking about very familiar topics related to self, family, friends, school and home.
- *Novice Mid*: Students communicate using memorized words and some phrases to talk about familiar topics related to school, home, and the community.
- *Novice High*: Students communicate using words, lists, and simple sentences to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- *Intermediate Low*: Students communicate using simple sentences to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- *Intermediate Mid*: Students communicate using strings of sentences to ask and answer questions, to handle simple transactions related to everyday life, and to talk about subject matter studied in other classes.
- *Intermediate High*: Students communicate using connected sentences and paragraphs to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.
- *Advanced Low*: Students communicate using paragraph-level discourse to handle complicated situations on a wide-range of topics.

Figure 1: ACTFL Proficiency Levels



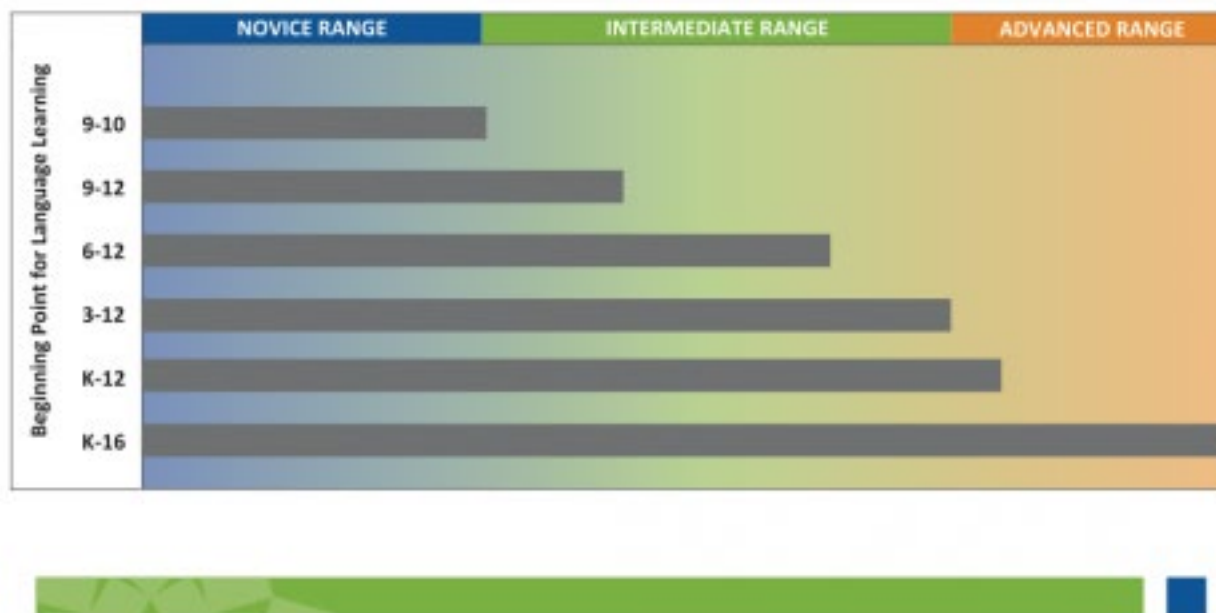
### Realistic Grade-Level Targets for Benchmarked Performance Levels

Language learners can be expected to move through levels of proficiency at different rates. In addition, language learners may demonstrate differing proficiencies depending upon the communicative mode in which they are functioning (interpersonal, interpretive, or presentational) and the language they are studying. For example, students studying a language with a different writing or grammar system and few if any cognates or loan words may require additional time to acquire the language at the same proficiency level as students studying a language with many cognates or loan words and the same writing or similar grammar system. Other factors that correlate to the development of proficiency include the age and cognitive development of the students and literacy in their first language.

The chart below comes from the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners 2012 and visually depicts general approximation of performance for all students. As time and intensity of program are directly related to the development of proficiency the chart reflects elementary programs that meet for at least 90 minutes a week in a standards-based program and middle school and high school programs that meet daily for the equivalent of a class period.



Figure 2: Time as a Critical Component for Developing Language Performance



13 | ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners © ACTFL, Inc., 2012

### Grade Bands, Proficiency Targets, and Core Ideas

The NJSLS – WL is organized in grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12). Within each band, the modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) are explicated by core ideas, intercultural understandings, and targeted proficiency levels. Further, clear expectations guide users by giving performance examples describing what students can do with the language they are learning at the targeted level. The guide is sequential, organized as a continuum toward higher levels of proficiency.

The intercultural statements build upon the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) statements for Intercultural Communication (Moeller & Yu, 2015) and provide examples for students to use the target language and knowledge of culture to improve Intercultural Communicative Competence. The statements underscore the intricate relationship between language and culture by providing examples of the products and practices that learners may encounter and understand at different levels of proficiency. Intercultural Communicative Competence is essential for establishing effective and positive relationships across cultural boundaries.

## The Seal of Biliteracy

The State Seal of Biliteracy (*N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-5.3*) identifies graduating high school students who are able to demonstrate high levels of proficiency in English in addition to one or more world languages. The Seal of Biliteracy seeks to: encourage students to study languages; provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills; provide universities with a method to recognize and award academic credit to applicants seeking admission; and strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and languages of communities. Students who meet all requirements to be eligible for a Seal of Biliteracy receive a notation on local transcripts and a certificate from the New Jersey Department of Education.

## Philosophy and Goals

NJSLS – WL reflect the philosophy and goals found in the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006) and the summary of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. They were developed by consulting standards in the United States and internationally, as well as by examining the latest research and best practices on second-language acquisition. The revised world languages standard is generic in nature, designed as a core subject, and is meant to be inclusive for all languages taught in New Jersey schools. With regard to the implementation of NJSLS – WL for particular languages or language groups:

### American Sign Language (ASL)

The differences between studying ASL and spoken languages can be profound. Students of American Sign Language learn how to communicate spatially, rather than arranging words sequentially into sentences. They face unique challenges due to the modality differences between speaking and signing. This involves language features like the use of space, eye gaze, classifiers, depicting verbs and cinematic techniques. Students engage in all three modes of communication— interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational by using the hands, face and body to express ideas while incorporating a variety of complex linguistic features, such as role shifting, semantic influences on message meanings and application of appropriate prosodic features to reflect the signer's intent and tone. Contrary to a linear language, ASL students are challenged to express their ideas while simultaneously using these complex units of meaning. In addition, students learn different ways to navigate conversational interactions like turn-taking, attention getting techniques, and the importance of maintaining eye contact.

### Classical languages

The study of classical languages focuses primarily on the interpretive mode using historical contexts. Occasionally, some attention may be given to oral dimensions of classical languages, such as by asking students to make presentations in the language of study as a way of strengthening their language knowledge and use.

### Heritage-languages

Heritage-language students may be (1) newly-arrived immigrants to the United States, (2) first-generation students whose home language is not English and who have been schooled primarily in the United States, or (3) second- or third- generation students who have learned some aspects of a heritage language at home. These students have varying abilities and proficiencies in their respective heritage languages; they often carry on fluent and idiomatic conversations (interpersonal mode), but require instruction that allows them to develop strengths in reading (interpretive mode) and in formal

speaking and writing (presentational mode). These students are held to the same standards for world languages as their English-speaking peers, and they should be provided with opportunities for developing skills in their native languages that are both developmentally supportive and rigorous. Designing curriculum to maintain and further develop native-language skills ensures that the skills of these students do not erode over time as English becomes their dominant language.

## **New Jersey Administrative Code Summary and Statutes**

### **Curriculum Development: Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills and Interdisciplinary Connections**

District boards of education shall be responsible for the review and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction based upon changes in knowledge, technology, assessment results, and modifications to the NJSLS, according to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-2.

1. District boards of education shall include interdisciplinary connections throughout the K–12 curriculum.
2. District boards of education shall integrate into the curriculum 21st century themes and skills ([N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1\(c\)](#)).

### **Twenty-first century themes and skills integrated into all content standards areas (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1(a)3).**

“Twenty-first century themes and skills” means themes such as global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; learning and innovation skills, including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration; information, media, and technology skills; and life and career skills, including flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility.

### **Amistad Law: [N.J.S.A. 18A 52:16A-88](#)**

Every board of education shall incorporate the information regarding the contributions of African-Americans to our country in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students.

### **Holocaust Law: [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28](#)**

Every board of education shall include instruction on the Holocaust and genocides in an appropriate place in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary school pupils. The instruction shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

### **LGBT and Disabilities Law: [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35](#)**

A board of education shall include instruction on the political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, in an appropriate place in the curriculum of middle school and high school students as part of the district’s implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards ([N.J.S.A.18A:35-4.36](#)) A board of education shall have policies and procedures in place pertaining to the selection of instructional materials to implement the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35.

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**2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards – World Languages**  
**7.1 World Languages Novice Low by the End of Grade 2**

**Interpretive Mode of Communication**

*Novice Low learners* identify a limited number of memorized or familiar words, symbols, or characters in very familiar contexts when they are supported by visuals in informational and fictional texts.

Core Idea	Performance Expectation
<p>Learning a language involves interpreting meaning from listening, viewing, and reading culturally authentic materials in the target language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1.NL.IPRET.1: Identify a few memorized and practiced words contained in oral, viewed, and written chunks of language in culturally authentic materials when supported by visual cues such as pictures and gestures and text support such as bolded words, bulleted lists, and/or captions.</li> <li>7.1.NL.IPRET.2: Respond with physical actions and/or gestures to simple oral directions, commands, and requests.</li> <li>7.1.NL.IPRET.3: Recognize a few common gestures associated with the target culture(s).</li> <li>7.1.NL.IPRET.4: Recognize a few memorized words related to weather and climate in the target culture(s) and in students' own cultures in highly contextualized oral texts.</li> </ul>

Intercultural Statements	Possible Topics
<p>Through the target language, learners recognize and identify the names of a few typical products related to everyday life in the target culture and in the learners' own culture.</p>	<p>Family members, pets, school supplies, animals, weather.</p>
<p>Learners recognize and identify a few typical practices of the target culture.</p>	<p>Greetings based on different levels of language formality within the family, similarities and differences of school supplies in the target culture and in students' own cultures, authentic songs and dances as a reflection of target culture people.</p>

## Interpersonal Mode of Communication

*Novice Low learners* communicate using practiced and memorized words and phrases. They answer some formulaic questions on very familiar topics and express personal needs with memorized words and phrases. Novice Low learners often use gestures and pictures to convey meaning.

Core Idea	Performance Expectations
<p>Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information and the negotiation of meaning between and among individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.1: Respond to a few simple questions on very familiar topics using memorized words and phrases that have been repeatedly practiced.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.2: With the help of gestures and/or visuals, share with others basic needs on very familiar topics using memorized words and phrases that have been repeatedly practiced.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.3: Tell others a few basic preferences and/or feelings using memorized words and phrases, often supported by gestures or visuals.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.4: React to a few procedural instructions, directions, and commands in classroom situations.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.5: Enact a few culturally authentic gestures when greeting others and during leave takings.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.IPERS.6: Share with others the names of a few memorized and practiced words and phrases related to climate change in the target culture(s) and in students' own cultures.</li> </ul>

Intercultural Statements	Possible Topics
<p>Through the target language, learners recognize and identify the names of a few typical products related to everyday life in the target culture and in the learners' own culture.</p>	<p>Family members, school supplies, pets, weather.</p>
<p>Learners recognize and identify a few typical practices of the target culture.</p>	<p>Greetings based on different levels of language formality, school supplies in target culture and in the United States, authentic songs and dances as a reflection of target-language people.</p>

## Presentational Mode of Communication

*Novice Low learners* express basic information about themselves using memorized words and phrases, with the help of gestures or visuals.

Core Idea	Performance Expectations
<p>Presentational communication involves presenting information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.1.NL.PRSNT.1: Present very familiar personal information using memorized words and phrases that have been repeatedly practiced, often using gestures and visuals to support communication.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.PRSNT.2: Express a few basic preferences and/or feelings using memorized words and phrases that are supported by gestures or visuals.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.PRSNT.3: Imitate a few culturally authentic gestures when greeting others and during leave takings.</li> <li>• 7.1.NL.PRSNT.4: State the names of a few memorized and practiced words and phrases related to climate change in the target culture(s) and in students' own cultures.</li> </ul>

Intercultural Statements	Possible Topics
<p>Through the target language, learners recognize and identify the names of a few typical products related to everyday life in the target culture and in the learners' own culture.</p>	<p>Family members, school supplies, pets, weather.</p>
<p>Learners recognize and identify a few typical practices of the target culture.</p>	<p>Greetings based on different levels of language formality, school supplies in target culture and in the United States, authentic songs and dances as a reflection of target-language people.</p>