Module 11: Comparisons Standards

This module provides an overview of Practice 6: Comparisons, discusses the Massachusetts World Languages Standards for Comparisons, and highlights ways to address the Standards.

Practice 6: Comparisons

This Practice involves developing insight into the nature of language and culture to interact with cultural competence. In this Practice, students recognize and analyze similarities, differences, interconnectedness, and interactions in target-language cultures and the language itself and make comparisons of the cultures and language studied and their own. Proficiency in Comparisons encourages students to respect and uphold the value of all cultures and embrace the different types and forms of language used throughout the world, helps improve students’ overall linguistic awareness, cultural competency, and literacy development across languages, and supports students in effectively communicating in the target language and participating in their communities.

Comparisons Standards

The Massachusetts World Languages Standards for Comparisons describe the skills that students can demonstrate at different levels of proficiency in Comparisons. The Comparisons Standard at each proficiency level contains between five and six different Functions, with Functions related to cultures numbered from 6.a.1 to 6.a.3 and Functions related to languages numbered 6.b.1 to 6.b.3. The chart below shows how Functions progress across proficiency levels within the Comparisons Standards. Check marks in a new row indicate Functions that emerge at higher proficiency levels and check marks with a plus sign indicate new, more rigorous features of a previously acquired Function.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | NL | NM | NH | IL | IM | IH | AL | AM | AH | S |
| a.1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| a.2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ |
| a.3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |
| b.1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| b.2 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ |
| b.3 | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |  | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ |

Addressing the Standards

Recommendations to effectively address the Comparisons Standards include embedding Comparisons into unit goals/objectives, summative assessment tasks, and learning activities and experiences, rather than teaching about Comparisons in isolation. When designing assessments and learning experiences across the communicative modes, educators should model an assets-based approach to making comparisons, encourage students to independently discover linguistic and cultural similarities and differences through project-based or experiential learning, and expose students to different varieties of the target language and different target-language cultures, as well as languages and cultures that students have a connection to beyond English and the target language. To align with Massachusetts’ vision for Deeper Learning, educators should provide students with opportunities to engage with language and cultural products, practices, and perspectives in a way that demonstrates Mastery, Identity, and Creativity.

Two Lenses: Proficiency and Equity

Proficiency and equity serve as the foundation of the Comparisons Standards. The Standards are organized by proficiency level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and they are addressed by investigating, explaining, and reflecting on the nature of language and the concept of culture through comparisons of the language and cultures studied and students’ own languages and cultures. Specifically, they are designed to support students to use the target language to interpret authentic cultural products as well as to engage in conversations and presentations based on their new or deepened knowledge and understanding. In terms of equity, the Comparisons Standards center and affirm students’ linguistic and cultural behaviors; encourage students to recognize and embrace different languages, language varieties and forms of cultural expression that carry significance for them; support students in recognizing and correcting stereotypes, systems, and privileges that harm members of different cultures; and promote a deeper understanding of and respect for diverse peoples, cultures, and communities.

Additional Resources

[ACTFL Resource on Integrating Comparisons into Language Instruction](https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/Comparisons.pdf) • [Massachusetts Deeper Learning Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/overview.html)