Module 13: Connections Standards

This module provides an overview of Practice 7: Connections, discusses the Massachusetts World Languages Standards for Connections, and highlights ways to address the Standards.

Practice 7: Connections

This Practice involves connecting with other disciplines and acquiring information and diverse perspectives to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations. In this Practice, students build interdisciplinary knowledge and develop skills that are necessary for success in a globalized, diverse 21st Century society. Proficiency in Connections encourages students to use their language skills in an immediate and practical way, exposes students to meaningful, relevant, and cross-disciplinary content from target-language resources, and supports students in effectively communicating in the target language and making connections with diverse perspectives and communities.

Connections Standards

The Massachusetts World Languages Standards for Connections describe the skills that students can demonstrate at different levels of proficiency in Connections. The Connections Standard at each proficiency level contains two different Functions, numbered 7.a and 7.b along with the proficiency level abbreviation. The chart below shows how Functions progress across proficiency levels within the Connections Standards, 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. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ |
| b.  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓+ | ✓ |

Addressing the Standards

Recommendations to effectively address the Connections Standards include embedding Connections into unit goals/objectives, summative assessment tasks, and learning activities and experiences, rather than teaching about Connections in isolation; providing opportunities for students to make connections to content being learned in other classes; and promoting student autonomy and ownership of their learning. When designing assessments and learning experiences across the communicative modes, educators should encourage students to make connections that address big ideas beyond the classroom; provide students with opportunities to explore interdisciplinary and contemporary themes; and use authentic texts (i.e., any cultural artifacts that convey meaning, including artistic products and performances) that demonstrate different viewpoints within target-language communities. To align with Massachusetts’ vision for Deeper Learning, educators should provide students with opportunities to make connections and engage with diverse perspectives in a way that demonstrates Mastery, Identity, and Creativity.

Two Lenses: Proficiency and Equity

Proficiency and equity serve as the foundation of the Connections Standards. The Standards are organized by proficiency level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and they are addressed by employing creativity, innovation, flexibility, and adaptability to engage in critical-thinking, inquiry, and problem-solving in all disciplines. Specifically, they are designed to support students to use the target language to make connections and acquire information and diverse perspectives, allowing them to apply what they’ve learned to become productive, global citizens. In terms of equity, the Connections Standards center and affirm students’ identities and interests; encourage students to make connections with disciplines and perspectives that carry real-world significance for them; and promote a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives from target-language cultures and communities.

Additional Resources

[21st Century Skills Map for World Languages](https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/resources/21st%20Century%20Skills%20Map-World%20Languages.pdf) • [ACTFL Resource on Integrating Connections into Language Instruction](https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/Connections.pdf) • [California Department of Education Resource on Teaching Connections](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/fl/cf/documents/wlfwteachconnectionsstds.docx) • [Massachusetts Deeper Learning Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/overview.html) • [Massachusetts Digital Literacy and Computer Science Content Standards](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/dlcs.docx) • [STARTALK Resource on Integrating Culture, Content, and Language](https://www.startalk.info/educators-principles-integrating/)