Module 9: Overview of Linguistic Cultures Standards

This module introduces the Linguistic Cultures Standards, explaining how they progress as proficiency increases.

Overview of Linguistic Cultures Standards

The Linguistic Cultures Standards describe *what* students must know about various cultures to effectively communicate in the target language. They represent Domain 2 and consist of Practice 5: Cultures and Practice 6: Comparisons. These Standards provide content, context, and purpose for Domain 1: Communication, and they empower students to act with cultural competence and critical consciousness as they build connections to other speakers/signers and become informed, engaged, global citizens.

**Supporting Novice Learners When Teaching Cultures and Comparisons**

* Tangible materials
* Culturally-appropriate gestures
* Simple video clips, short songs, visuals
* Graphic organizers, T-charts, Venn diagrams
* Occasional use of English for reflection activities

The Cultures Standards promote cultural competence and understanding as students explore cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Students use the target language to investigate, explain, and reflect on culture. The Comparisons Standards involve investigating interactions between language and culture. As students explore similarities and differences between different languages and cultures, they reflect not only on target-language cultures, but also on their own languages and cultures. The graphic on the right provides recommendations for supporting Novice learners when teaching these Standards.

Progression of Linguistic Cultures Standards

Students develop and/or advance their skills in Cultures and Comparisons at each level of proficiency and show progression across the following linguistic components:

* Function: the simplest expression of the standard, describing what students can do with the language
* Context: the topics and settings in which students can use the language to accomplish a function

As proficiency increases, students can perform a greater variety of Functions and operate in a broader variety of Contexts. Text Types and Supports remain the same across proficiency levels, and Comprehensibility is not included.

As the proficiency level increases…

Contexts are broader

Functions increase and are more complex

*Comprehensibility is not included*

Text Types remain: The target language exclusively (or almost exclusively)

Supports remain: Appropriate linguistic scaffolding

Two Lenses: Proficiency and Equity

Proficiency and equity serve as the foundation of the Linguistic Cultures Standards. The Standards are organized by proficiency level according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and they are addressed using Core Practices that align with proficiency-based approaches to language teaching. 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 Linguistic Cultures Standards center and affirm student diversity; focus on what students can do rather than what they cannot do; promote a deeper understanding of different varieties of the target language and diversity within target-language cultures; support students in recognizing and correcting stereotypes, systems, and privileges that harm members of different cultures; and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate Mastery, Creativity, and Identity through Deeper Learning.

Additional Resources

[ACTFL Core Practices](https://www.actfl.org/resources/guiding-principles-language-learning) • [CARLA Step-by-Step Guide to Creating Integrated Performance Assessments](https://carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/CreateUnit/p_2.html) • [MaFLA Programming](https://mafla.org/pdonline/) • [Massachusetts World Languages Linguistic Components Summary](https://www.doe.mass.edu/worldlanguages/support/linguistic-components.pdf) • [Massachusetts World Languages Quick Reference Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/worldlanguages/support/)