

**INTRODUCTION
TO THE
NEW JERSEY
WORLD
LANGUAGES
CURRICULUM
FRAMEWORK
INITIATIVE**



INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW JERSEY WORLD LANGUAGES CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK INITIATIVE

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1995, New Jersey enacted the *Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education* to ensure the development and assessment of rigorous academic standards throughout the state. On May 1, 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted 61 core curriculum content standards in seven academic and five workplace readiness areas. The inclusion of two world language standards represented a key moment in the “evolution” of the study of world languages in New Jersey. For the first time in this state’s history, world languages was recognized as an **essential component of the core curriculum for all students**. The study of world languages has assumed a new role as an integral part of the school curriculum that, as in other content areas, will span the entire spectrum of K-12 education.

This new scope and sequence of language instruction emphasizes knowledge about second language acquisition, the importance of communication, and the relationship between culture and language as a new basis for program development. The ability “to communicate at a basic literacy level in at least one language other than English” (Standard 7.1) and “to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture” (Standard 7.2) is now considered to be one of the hallmarks of a well-educated citizen in the state of New Jersey.

OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATION

This *World Languages Curriculum Framework* represents the knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm of a cross-section of New Jersey educators. In addition, the *Framework* development team drew from the expertise of leaders in the field, from current language research and from existing national and state documents. This *Framework* builds upon and supports the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996) produced by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, in collaboration with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and other language-specific organizations. The philosophy and goals of the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project reflect the efforts of the foreign language teaching field to develop professional policy about how and what is being taught in world language classrooms throughout the country. *New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards for World Languages* are philosophically aligned with the goals and guiding principles of the national standards.

The *World Languages Curriculum Framework* is intended to serve as a catalyst to assist schools in making curricular decisions based on an understanding of how students learn world languages most effectively, thereby providing a blueprint for innovation in local curricula and classroom practice.

Chapters 1 through 9 provide a rationale for language study, discuss the components of an effective program, and deal with issues affecting the implementation process. These chapters also provide information on restructuring the learning environment, strategies for diverse learners, assessment, teacher preparation, and professional development. The World Languages standards and related cumulative progress indicators are located in chapter 4, along with key terms associated with these standards.

Chapter 10 consists of a series of sample learning scenarios developed for Grades K-12 that reflect the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*. These scenarios provide illustrative examples of teaching and learning that incorporate student-centered, interactive, and interdisciplinary instructional activities. Interdisciplinary connections with standards from other core content areas as well as Workplace Readiness Standards are included.

Chapter 11 describes models of high-quality world language programs found in different states and discusses strategies that have contributed to their long-term success. In recognition of world languages as an essential component of the curriculum for a broader spectrum of learners, the first part of chapter 12 provides instructional adaptations for students with disabilities. These adaptations complement the learning scenarios found in this document. Strategies for exceptionally able learners are found in the second part of chapter 12.

Translation of the standards into strategies for teaching and learning is a formidable task as the implementation of the standards affects all areas of language learning: curriculum and instruction, performance and assessment, and teacher preparation and professional development. By itself, this *Framework* will not change what happens in world language classrooms in New Jersey. However, the conversations that ensue from discussing and using the ideas presented in this document can suggest a new focus for language practitioners.



Chapter 1

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY OF WORLD LANGUAGES



BENEFITS OF WORLD LANGUAGE STUDY

Two decades of research on the benefits of second language acquisition gives an impressive rationale for world language instruction in terms of the **cognitive benefits, academic achievement, and development of positive attitudes toward cultural diversity**. In addition, New Jersey's multicultural and multiethnic community and its growing economy demand increased contact and face-to-face interaction with members of other cultures both in New Jersey and around the world. A teacher from Elizabeth comments:

The mix of languages and cultures in the Elizabeth community creates both a need and a resource for a world language program in our schools. As an international port and with a myriad of local businesses owned by members of many ethnic groups, Elizabeth is a city where the ability to communicate in languages other than English is crucial. Within our student population, there are 35 different native languages, and over 60% of our students speak a language other than English at home. Nurturing and increasing their multilingualism will give our children personal and professional advantages for the future.

(Anne Gammons, personal communication, March 24, 1998)

This *Framework* affirms the belief that all New Jersey students should be given the opportunity to study at least one world language other than English. The rationale provided below summarizes the necessity and importance of providing this opportunity for New Jersey's children.

Why is it important to provide this opportunity for the children of New Jersey? The study of another language and culture:

- enables students to interact and communicate with others while gaining a greater understanding of and respect for the cultural perspectives, practices, and products of different cultures;
- provides an appreciation of state and national responsibilities in the world community;
- enables students to become multilingual and multicultural resources for American and international businesses based in the state of New Jersey;
- strengthens critical-thinking skills through problem solving, conceptualizing, and reasoning;
- enhances the ability to see connections between the various disciplines by incorporating visual and performing arts, health and physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and workplace readiness into the language classroom;
- develops the skills and habits essential to the learning process;
- facilitates the acquisition of subsequent languages;
- provides a competitive edge in career choices and in professional development;

- offers language enrichment opportunities for students whose heritage language is not English; and
- provides students with a sense of personal satisfaction and enjoyment in their ability to communicate with people from other cultures.

The global village is here. . . . Although emerging technologies expand communication and access to information, they do not diminish the need for language competency. To the contrary, proficiency in multiple languages permits people to take full advantage of technological advances. Multilingual people can benefit most from the Information Age.

(Genesee & Cloud, 1998, p. 62)

WORLD LANGUAGES AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL: THE OPTIMUM STARTING POINT

Recent scientific research has provided many insights into **when** and **how** children best acquire languages. These findings have important implications for educators, policy makers, and parents as they challenge the traditional time framework for beginning language study in schools as well as methodology for teaching languages. Patricia Kuhl, at the University of Washington, reported that by six months, infants' perceptual systems are already configured to acquire their native language. With each year of growth, children are less able to filter out fine distinctions among the sounds of other languages. After early childhood, the language acquisition mechanism becomes highly structured creating an interference effect that may account for the difficulty in learning languages at a later time. This indicates that a window of developmental opportunity exists for acquiring other languages. These findings, along with the ease with which children in bilingual families acquire two languages, support the contention that world language instruction should begin as early as preschool age. (Education Commission of the States, 1996)

Dr. Gladys Lipton (1998, p. 11), highlights the results of research on children who study a foreign language in elementary school. These students:

- achieve expected gains and have even higher scores on standardized tests in reading, language arts, and mathematics than those who have not;
- show greater cognitive development in such areas as mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking, and higher-order thinking skills;
- have an improved self-concept and sense of achievement in school; and
- can transfer their language learning skills in subsequent foreign language study in high school and college.

Lipton notes Boyer's 1995 recommendations for the elementary school of the future, which urged that "foreign language instruction begin early, certainly by third grade, that it be offered daily, and be continued through all grades." Lipton, Morgan, and Reed (1996) report that on the 1995 Advanced Placement French Language Examination, students who began their study of French in Grades 1-3 and 4-6 outperformed those who began in Grade 7 or later.

Curtain and Pesola (1994, pp. 3-4) identify three powerful arguments for including world languages in the core curriculum of elementary schools in the United States. They are excerpted below.

- One of the most important factors influencing the development of language proficiency is the amount of time spent working with the language. When language learning begins earlier, it can go on longer and provide more practice and experience, leading ultimately to greater fluency and effectiveness.
- Every skill and outcome that is important to society is introduced through the elementary school curriculum. The lists of curriculum requirements in almost every state attest to the importance of reading, math, social studies, science, music, art, and physical education. . . . Only when languages become a secure part of the elementary school curriculum will language learning begin to meet the needs so vividly described in the national reports of the 1980s.
- The age of 10 is a crucial time in the development of attitudes toward nations and groups perceived as "other," according to the research of Piaget, Lambert, and others (Lambert & Klineberg, 1967). Children are in the process of moving from egocentricity to reciprocity, and information introduced before age 10 is eagerly received. . . . The awareness of a global community can be enhanced when children have the opportunity to experience involvement with another culture through a foreign language.



Chapter 2

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FOR ALL STUDENTS

The term “all students” includes students who are college-bound, career-bound, academically talented, those whose native language is not English, those with disabilities, students with learning deficits, and students from diverse socioeconomic (disadvantaged or advantaged) backgrounds. It conveys a commitment that male and female students will achieve at comparable levels across all areas. For certain profoundly handicapped students, few if any of these standards will apply. However, the majority of special needs students should have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is linked to the curriculum standards. They may address the core curriculum at different levels of depth and may complete the core curriculum according to different timetables. In addition, those students who can do more than achieve this set of expectations must be afforded the opportunity and encouraged to do so.

(The New Jersey Department of Education, 1996, p. v)

An increasing amount of research is being done that justifies the inclusion of **all** students in world language classrooms. Findings indicate **that all students can benefit from learning another language and culture** when instruction is based on second language acquisition theories and appropriate methodology and materials are used.

Gahala (1993) and Heining-Boynton (1994) maintain that effective techniques which emphasize teaching through more than one modality enable handicapped and at-risk students to experience success as language learners. Heining-Boynton emphasizes that language learning practices which are successful with at-risk students are the same practices that current research on language acquisition is advocating as sound instructional techniques for all students. Traditional methods fail with these students because they exploit areas such as memory work, language out of context, and teaching abstract rules.

Andrade, Kretschmer, and Kretschmer (1989) discuss their personal experiences with students with disabilities as well as research done by Bruck (1987) on language-disabled children. They conclude that the majority of children with disabilities can benefit from studying another language and culture and should take part in elementary and middle school world language programs. They further recommend that successful second language instruction for learning disabled students be a meaningful, interactive (rather than structured, passive) learning experience.

Justification that all students, including those with below-average abilities, can benefit from learning a world language has been shown in studies of at-risk learners in French immersion programs. Genessee (1992) found that although these students did not perform as well as above-average students on reading and writing tests, they did score *at the same level* as the higher-ability students on listening comprehension and speaking tests.

Goodlad and Oakes's (1988) research on individual learning differences shows that grouping and tracking are a generally ineffective means for addressing individual differences. They advocate the mainstreaming of students with disabilities and/or low academic achievement.

The Ohio Department of Education (1996) states that "language learning is an innate human capacity. All children can develop functional proficiency in listening and speaking. Most will also develop functional proficiency in the literacy skills equal to their first language abilities" (p. 127).

Barnett (1988) commented that "the new total foreign language package of different training, different experiences, and most of all different GOALS is exactly what will enable us to realize success with ALL students" (p. 1).

COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY: THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFICIENCY-BASED INSTRUCTION

Proficiency-based instruction focuses on **what students can do with language** (i.e., functional language use) rather than what they know about language. It involves **meaningful use of language for "real" communicative purposes**. Proficiency-based instruction:

- is gained through a spiraling and recursive process—it requires repeated exposure and opportunities to practice new skills, receive feedback, and apply skills in more sophisticated contexts with increasing accuracy of expression;
- takes into account how learners acquire language at different rates—for example, it does not rely on "covering the textbook" or on hours of seat time accumulated;
- integrates content and language—linguistic elements that make up a language emerge naturally from the content domain and are understood within the context of that content;
- integrates language and culture: Culture is viewed as an inseparable entity from language teaching;
- integrates language with other disciplines: Language experiences are organized around curricular topics or themes that become progressively and sequentially more difficult;
- has implications for design and organization of courses, instructional methodology, and assessment; and
- is based on the philosophy of outcomes-based education. It is inclusive; it views the learner as a performer, an initiator, and a user of language; it views the teacher as a facilitator who takes into consideration students' learning styles while fostering communicative language use.

**COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND STANDARDS-BASED
(PROFICIENCY-BASED) APPROACHES TO
WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHING**

TRADITIONAL	STANDARDS-BASED
Units are organized by grammar topics.	Units are organized by themes.
Learning the language is the only goal.	Using the language to learn subject matter is a goal.
Middle and high school curricula are generally the same.	Curriculum varies by grade to coordinate with studies at Grades K-12.
Units are organized around grammar.	Units are organized around situations and scenarios that can be applied to real life.
Grades are almost exclusively based on paper-and-pencil tests.	Grades are based on performance and production of materials as well as paper-and-pencil tests.

Note. This chart was developed by A. Lubiner and E. Lubiner (personal communication, April 1998).

ARTICULATION: THE K-12 CONTINUUM

The New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework recommends a sequentially, articulated world language program from elementary through secondary levels. **Implementation of a world language program in a modified form will result in a lesser degree of language proficiency and understanding.** Expectancies and performance tasks will also be limited accordingly. A language experience of two years—regardless of when it occurs—will not enable students to reach beyond the beginning levels of proficiency. According to Met (1989),

One or two years of study can bring students no closer to competence in those languages than 1st and 2nd grade mathematics instruction can prepare students for careers in engineering. When initiating language programs, schools, therefore, should consider level-to-level articulation. An elementary school foreign language program should logically lead to continued articulated study at the middle school, high school, and college. (p. 57)

A quality program builds upon each preceding level of instruction, according to Curtain and Pesola (1988, p. 52). The middle school program for continuing FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) students should be substantially different from the program for students who are beginning language study at that level. Districts should establish a separate track for continuing FLES students. As students reach the high school level with extensive backgrounds in world languages, curriculum at that level must also change in significant ways. Successful articulation can only be accomplished with the full participation of elementary, middle school, and high school teachers in planning the program to assure continuous development of language skills.

It is important to reemphasize that a **student's level of language proficiency is dependent on both the length of instruction and the quality of instruction**, that is, time spent in meaningful communication on topics that are relevant to a student's cognitive level and interest level. This may extend to language experiences occurring in an informal environment, which should then be integrated into the school setting.

THE STUDENT-CENTERED, AUTHENTIC CLASSROOM

“The orientation toward communication places language learners in a living laboratory, in which process is the primary focus of planning and instruction” (Curtain & Pesola, 1994, p. 97). The student-centered reform model of language instruction focuses on authentic, challenging tasks that provide meaningful learning experiences. These relevant experiences lead students to understand broad concepts and to develop strategies for analyzing these concepts across disciplines.

The student-centered world language classroom is characterized by students working collaboratively in pairs or in small groups. The teacher acts as a guide during interactive modes of instruction. Students typically work in extended blocks of time on authentic and multidisciplinary work.

Students are engaged in tasks designed to incorporate the problems and solution strategies that they would use in real-life settings. Ideally, projects include an integrative approach and seek a high level of competence, offering the opportunity for demonstration of students’ thought processes and revision of their work.

Assessments are performance-based and include both *formative* (ongoing evaluation of student progress during a learning activity) and *summative* (evaluation of the end product of student learning activities) components. These assessments facilitate student reflection on the learning process and the improvement of learning.

In the student-centered, authentic classroom, students become independent thinkers, question posers, problem solvers, and discoverers in the context of a cooperative environment where a world language is used as the vehicle to seek and acquire knowledge.

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTION

One of the guiding principles in the introduction of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* is that world languages connect with other disciplines: “Successful language learning activities are interdisciplinary. World languages have more meaning and purpose when tasks are a natural outgrowth of school life and emerge from the content area of other disciplines” (New Jersey Department of Education, 1996, p. 7-3). The academic content in the school curriculum provides a meaningful basis for language learning, and interesting content provides a purposeful and motivating context for learning the communicative functions of a second language. According to Met (1998b), “integrating language and content . . . is not just consistent with communicative language teaching; it is likely to promote the development of communicative competence.”

Research has confirmed that time spent in experiencing the second language as the medium of instruction is more effective in producing language proficiency than time spent in direct language instruction alone (Curtain & Pesola, 1994). Integrated instruction is also a vehicle for promoting higher-order thinking skills. Class activities are cognitively demanding as they go beyond mere description and identification. Language functions such as explaining, classifying, comparing, and evaluating are used consistently in content-based methodology as students communicate about thoughts, not just words.

Eileen Lorenz and Pierre Verdaguer (1997) stress that interdisciplinary teaching goes beyond routine use of a single text or a program of study.

Foreign language teachers must examine what students are learning in other classes, decide which areas are relevant to learning and using a second language, and select areas that connect it in meaningful and interesting ways to language and cultures. The end result should be daily lessons in which language concepts and information are more understandable and easier to remember, as well as highly motivating for students. (p. 147)

In order to most effectively integrate content into world language programs, language objectives should be identified at a given level and content-based activities selected through which linguistic skills may be acquired or practiced.

At the elementary level, world language instruction can reinforce or enhance every subject taught in the mandated curriculum: visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. The content and activities derived from these subjects are appropriate to the cognitive, affective, and linguistic needs of students and are consistent with the outcomes stated in the cumulative progress indicators across the seven content areas.

At the secondary level, one of the most effective ways to plan an interdisciplinary unit is to focus on creating a project that involves content from different subject areas. After selecting cumulative progress indicators from two or more content areas, an essential question or common element related to the cumulative progress indicators is identified. A product is then created that naturally integrates the cumulative progress indicators while fostering a transfer of learning and use of critical-thinking skills.

Met (1998b) offers the following suggestions for integrating mathematics and science into the world language curriculum:

CONNECTING WORLD LANGUAGES WITH MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Mathematics provides many opportunities for connections. At the earliest levels of language proficiency, students can practice numbers in cognitively demanding tasks. Many of the major conceptual tools of mathematics can be applied to almost [any] topic, and as such, can fit well with the topics of the language classroom. For example, estimation and measurement can be used to predict and then calculate the size (height or weight) of classroom objects . . . or to calculate . . . ratio[s]. . . . Number use and number patterns work well with both younger and older learners. While young students can engage in simple arithmetic operations, older students can use numbers to complete challenging number patterns (e.g., 3-7-15-31-?). . . . The concept of percentages and the tool of graphing can be applied to the group work and class surveys that are common in communicative classrooms. Students can report the results of their surveys in percentages (e.g., 38% of our group and 67% of our class thinks the world will be a safer place in the year 2010). Survey results can also be graphed in various forms, both common and less common, such as bar and line graphs, pie graphs, or even box-and-whiskers or stem-and-leaf graphs.

Teachers can focus on specific language elements through connections with mathematics. Pair and group tasks can lead to reports that use the 1st person plural forms of verbs and adjectives (e.g., we found . . . , our banana weighed . . . , 75% of us like to . . .) or to the 3rd person plural of the past tense (e.g., 18% of students went to the movies last weekend). In recent years, heavy emphasis on pair work has meant that many students get more practice in using the singular verb forms than in the plural forms. Reporting survey results, or interpreting graphs and survey data can provide increased practice for needed forms.

Connections with science will depend on the grade level and topic. Some science topics work well for language learners, such as the migration of butterflies and weather/meteorology. Many students have a deep interest in the environment. Not only can students acquire language to describe the natural environment, they can also identify ways in which the environment can be protected, even in first-year classes at the secondary level. Natural phenomena (earthquakes, monsoons, tornadoes) can be linked to the language for identifying and describing geographic and topographic features. Grammatical skills and expression of language functions can be expanded through discussion of scientific phenomena. Students can describe (orally or in writing) the steps in an experiment (past tense), the reasons for the results (describing cause-and-effect relationships), or hypothesize using if/then constructions.

Note. From "Making Connections" by M. Met, 1998, in J. Phillips (Ed.), *Foreign language standards: Linking research, theories and practices* (The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series), Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company. Reprinted with permission.

CROSS-CONTENT WORKPLACE READINESS AND SYSTEMS THINKING

To help prepare students for a rapidly changing world, the State Board of Education adopted five workplace readiness standards to be integrated with the seven academic standards. These workplace readiness standards define the skills that students need as they pursue college, careers, and adult responsibilities as citizens. The cross-content workplace readiness standards include career planning and workplace skills; use of technology, information, and other tools; critical thinking, decision making and problem solving; self-management; and safety principles.

Unlike the cumulative progress indicators for the other content areas, the workplace readiness indicators are not organized by grade-level clusters because (in addition to crossing all content areas) they also cross grade levels. Teachers and counselors should integrate these concepts into all programs in content-specific and developmentally appropriate ways. To strengthen the linkages between the content area and cross-content workplace readiness standards, the scenarios in this *Framework* include interdisciplinary approaches to workplace readiness.

As society becomes more complex, “traditional” education becomes less relevant due to its fragmentary nature. **A more effective approach to education—an interdisciplinary, systems thinking approach—is needed to provide cohesion and foster the development of workplace readiness skills.** This approach is experiential—students learn by doing. They select and design projects, research possible solutions to problems, present their work to review panels, and evaluate it using a variety of authentic forms of assessment. Academic content is integrated into all of these activities so that students meet and sometimes surpass the outcomes indicated in the standards.

Today, systems thinking is needed more than ever because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity. Perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information that anyone can absorb, to foster far greater interdependency than anyone can manage, and to accelerate change faster than anyone's ability to keep pace. . . . Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static “snapshots.”

(Senge, 1990, pp. 68-69)

Interdisciplinary, systems thinking education is effective because it is meaningful for students. They can see its relevance both in school and for their future careers. Students are motivated and challenged by projects in which they play key decision-making roles. They learn to communicate, create, “think on their feet,” and meet timelines. They learn how to work on a team, how to be responsible leaders and good listeners, and how to carefully consider the ideas of others. Throughout the process, students gain self-satisfaction, earn respect from peers and adults, and grow in self confidence.

Consider the following example in the Grades 5-8 learning scenario, “Say It With a Card.” Students are engaged in a multistep, experiential project to design and market a line of target-language greeting cards for the international division of an American card company. They interpret and analyze data obtained about the card market in the target culture and use problem-solving skills to create an orig-

inal line of cards that satisfies the needs of the target-culture market. An important real-life application of this scenario is the students' ability to use persuasive language to "sell" the new card line to an employer and to creatively market the product. The card line is both self and peer assessed and is then used as part of a community service project to send cards to native-language speakers in hospitals or nursing homes. Interdisciplinary connections abound in the visual and performing arts, language arts literacy, and workplace readiness. Students use artistic skills, oral and written communication skills, and problem-solving skills while working on a team to design and effectively market a "real-life" product.

The use of the systems thinking approach and the value of experiential learning are fully endorsed by the New Jersey World Language Standards and *Curriculum Framework* and are enmeshed into each of the essential components of an effective world language program (as discussed in this chapter). Communicative-based language instruction emphasizes what students can do with a language in culturally authentic settings. It engages students in multistage tasks and problem solving in the real-life contexts facing adult citizens, workers, professionals, and consumers. Consequently, the interdisciplinary, systems thinking approach and workplace readiness skills have been incorporated into the learning scenarios in chapter 10 at all benchmark levels. See Appendix G for further illustration of the interdisciplinary, systems thinking approach.

SUMMARY OF THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE NEW JERSEY WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

An effective world language program:

- embraces the belief that language learning is an innate human capacity and that all students who speak one language can successfully learn another;
- focuses on meaningful communication with increasing accuracy of expression in an authentic, real-life context;
- is available to all students as part of the core curriculum in a K-12 articulated sequence;
- is delivered in a student-centered curriculum based on inquiry, problem solving, and application of concepts;
- explores themes and issues across content areas and makes connections to the multicultural world of the 21st century, thereby fostering a greater understanding of and appreciation for world cultures; and
- supports the systems thinking approach to learning while integrating the skills outlined in the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards.



Chapter **3**

RESTRUCTURING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



SCHEDULING AND RESTRUCTURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Scheduling and restructuring of the school day is one of the most important considerations that should be addressed as a means to implement the vision of standards reform, not only for world languages, but for all of the content areas within the core curriculum. In order to achieve high academic standards, students need time for involvement in learning experiences or projects, extended discussions, and reflection. Teachers need sufficient time to research new instructional approaches; develop integrated, meaningful learning experiences; and design authentic assessment strategies. If we view our schools as learning organizations where students can achieve high academic standards, we need to overcome “time barriers” to provide more time for teachers to teach and students to learn.

The following recommendation was made in *Breaking the Tyranny of Time—Voices from the Goals 2000 Teacher Forum* (United States Department of Education, 1994):

Adopt a curriculum based on the principle of flexible pacing—one that allows students to move through their learning individually instead of in lock step, that permits them to take the time they need to learn, rather than just move through the material. The flexibility to meet students’ learning and developmental needs, and not mere administrative convenience, should provide the rationale for how time is apportioned. Restructuring our priorities should help us design a school day that is more educationally sound than our present one. (p. 9)

Time needs to be viewed from the perspective of being a resource—a resource that can be shaped and reshaped to meet educational needs. **Team teaching** and reviewing the school’s master schedule are examples of adjustments that have created time and increased teacher competencies in many schools. Another example is the extended time created by **block scheduling**. The instructional day is less fragmented and more focused, and students remain engaged with subject matter for longer periods of time. Additional recommendations may include the adoption of a **six-day cycle** and/or a reevaluation of scheduling priorities. Utilization of noninstructional time (e.g., study halls, lunch periods, efficiency in class movements, and use of opening and closing routines) might also be reexamined.

At the elementary level, one of the most effective and efficient ways to deal with time allocations is to plan a content-enriched curriculum. Elementary **mathematics** concepts can be taught with limited vocabulary and with use of manipulative experiences. **Science** experiences and discoveries can occur through the world language without risking the students’ ability to understand concepts. **Social studies** themes such as home, family, community, social patterns, and comparative cultures are very appropriate for presenting in a world language. Using this approach to help solve the scheduling problem has many positive effects on the learning process. Students’ understanding of concepts across disciplines is reinforced; retention of material is increased; second language acquisition is more effective; and opportunities for use of critical-thinking skills are enhanced.

At the **secondary level**, the rethinking of scheduling practices creates opportunities for expanding the world language curriculum outside the classroom and into the community. Field-based learning experiences (e.g., community service learning, working with cultural institutions and apprenticeships) are ways for students to learn and apply new concepts in meaningful and relevant ways, to develop workplace readiness skills and to facilitate making career choices.

STAFFING OPTIONS

The following information on staffing options and other delivery models has been drawn from the work of Curtain and Pesola (1994, pp. 38-47). Staffing is one of the most critical elements in insuring the success of the world language program. The value of a dynamic, enthusiastic, well-trained, and skilled world language practitioner cannot be overestimated. It is essential that teachers within any of the staffing models described below have excellent language skills and are committed to the new paradigm of communication-based language instruction.

It is important to recognize that **alternative models must be coordinated by the district's world language teacher/supervisor who is well versed in communicative-based instructional methodology and performance assessment.** It is the vision of this *Framework* that as a consequence of properly implemented and supervised alternative delivery, interest and enthusiasm for world languages will increase as colleges and universities fill the demand for endorsed world language teachers.

The following is a compilation of models for staffing elementary world language programs.

The World Language Teacher/Specialist Model

The world language teacher instructs only world languages, has a high level of language proficiency, and uses appropriate and culturally authentic teaching and learning strategies to promote effective acquisition of the world language. At the elementary level, s/he may be referred to as the *world language specialist*. The specialist meets with students for varying contact hours depending on the intensity of the program model adopted.

In FLES programs, the world language specialist presents new material that is reinforced by the classroom teacher. They work as a team to integrate language and content into instruction.

The Classroom Teacher Model

In the classroom teacher model, the elementary classroom teacher assumes responsibility for teaching the world language program. Note the following considerations:

- The success of this model is highly dependent on the desire and ability of the classroom teacher to develop the linguistic competence and necessary skills to effectively deliver standards-based world language instruction. The teacher must be willing to make the personal commitment and put in the extra time needed for planning and implementing a new program.
- Elementary school teachers who are required to “learn a language with the students” (through a commercial audio/videotape program) may not be able to develop the level of proficiency needed to reenter and reinforce the students’ language learning. They may not be able to teach

other subject content through the language using the interdisciplinary approach advocated by the standards.

- This model may be potentially effective when designed and coordinated with the district's world language specialist/supervisor who teaches some of the class sessions and selects additional materials or media support for the classroom teacher.

In support of his theory of comprehensible input, Stephen Krashen (1997) recommends a strategy for assisting in the development of conversational ability when a fluent or native-speaking world language teacher is not instructing the language. He proposes

the establishment of a library of print and aural comprehensible input...a vast collection of light as well as "serious" reading—comic books, magazines, novels, etc., and light as well as serious viewing and listening—quiz shows, comedy, drama, documentaries, etc., to provide the comprehensible input missing from the...students' environment. (p. 44)

Krashen maintains that this will help to reduce the problem of students acquiring a poor accent, because they will be receiving comprehensible input from interesting, authentic sources—sources other than a nonnative/fluent speaker. He underscores the value of self-selected listening and reading in guaranteeing comprehension and sustaining interest in learning a language.

The Nonspecialist Teacher/Volunteer Model

College students, preservice teachers, parents, or other interested and qualified adults from the community provide world language instruction. Note the following considerations:

- This option may not be suitable for long-term articulated world language programs because it demands an extended commitment and a high degree of reliability to deliver the program with consistency. It assumes that the nonspecialist has some methods training and/or experience working with students.
- This model may be effective under the supervision of the district's world language specialist/supervisor who serves as a resource for the nonspecialist and who carefully monitors the instructional process and goals of the program. This is a viable option for bringing languages that would otherwise never be considered for inclusion in the curriculum (e.g., Swahili or Hindi) and takes advantage of community language resources.

OTHER MODELS

The Media-Based Model

The media-based model uses technology (e.g., videotape, audiotape, and computer programs) as the primary vehicle for teaching world languages. Media-based programs are often implemented as alternatives to staffing models because of the lack of available qualified teachers and budgeting limitations.

The key to a successful media program is the quality and intensity of follow-up by a language specialist. Media-based programs supplement, but cannot replace, interactions that take place between the teacher and students. Note the following considerations:

- Media-based programs may not provide the meaningful interaction necessary for successful language learning.
- Media-based programs may not address the learning styles and needs of all students.
- High-quality media-based programs that meet the criteria for effective standards-based world language instruction are difficult to find. In addition, specialized knowledge is needed to evaluate their potential benefit for both immediate use and long-term effectiveness.

The Distance Learning Model (“Live Interaction” Model)

In a world language program using distance learning, the teacher is located at one site (the *base* site), usually with a group of students, and one or more groups of students are located at a *remote* site or sites. Remote sites usually are located in another school building some distance away. Video cameras, monitors, and microphones are located at the base and remote sites so that teachers and groups of students can see and communicate with each other. This model is most frequently used at the high school level.

Note the following considerations:

- The distance learning model is most effective when it is designed to incorporate sound language acquisition and learning theories. The telelinguist, studio teacher-facilitator, and local school facilitator must coordinate their efforts to maximize learning through carefully selected input, focused feedback, and practice in language output production.
- Several states with well-planned programs are experiencing success with this model. Mel Nielson and Elizabeth Hoffman (1996), from the Nebraska Department of Education, reported that once schools had a “means” of delivering language instruction, interest in doing so increased.

As a consequence of alternative delivery, all Nebraska secondary schools must now offer foreign language, up from about 60% in 1982. The number of students enrolled in foreign languages has grown by over 400 percent since the mid 1970s, increasing the demand for endorsed teachers. (p. 130)

- When the total number of students receiving simultaneous instruction exceeds the average class size, opportunities for students to produce oral language and teacher evaluation of individual progress are severely limited.
- Teaching on camera requires extensive preparation, skilled planning, and a high level of technical quality. Careful management is required to bring these factors together. It is critical that the teacher receive adequate preparation time to ensure a quality program.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The goals of the Core Curriculum Standards can best be met by using a variety of instructional materials. These may include:

- nontraditional materials (e.g., interactive multimedia and computer software);
- supplementary materials (e.g., cassettes, videos, transparencies);
- culturally authentic materials (e.g., newspapers, magazines, brochures, menus in print or electronic format; and cultural artifacts such as food, art, or money); and
- basal materials.

A textbook should not be the sole curricular support in the world language program. A textbook represents only one resource for the curriculum. Other resources should include the nontraditional, supplementary, and culturally authentic materials mentioned above.

Teachers should collaborate on the selection of materials that encourage active learning and support the development of conceptual understanding. **Selection of the materials should take place only after curricular decisions have been made.**

The following lists of content criteria and pedagogical criteria for selecting world language instructional materials have been adapted from the *South Carolina Foreign Language Framework* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Education, 1993, pp. 43-45).

Content Criteria for Selecting World Language Instructional Materials

- Content is meaningful and can be easily related to the lives of students.
- Content includes language that is authentic and natural and based on real-life experiences.
- Language is viewed as a medium for logical-thinking processes and not as a collection of isolated words and phrases.
- Content places primary emphasis on communication skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Grammatical structures and vocabulary are introduced naturally as components of themes and functions.
- Content is appropriate to the language needs, age levels, and interests of students.
- Cultural content is integrated throughout, reflecting multiethnic diversity within language groups and giving an accurate view of everyday life.

Pedagogical Criteria for Selecting World Language Instructional Materials

- Activities are open-ended and encourage creative use of language and negotiated meaning in a variety of situations.
- Activities call for higher-order thinking skills and reflection, not simply recollection of factual information.
- Activities are designed to meet the needs of students with diverse learning styles, including a variety of individual, pair, small-group, and class activities.
- Activities are student-centered and require student involvement and responsibility.
- An interdisciplinary approach is used with themes that encourage cross-disciplinary projects.
- Materials include ongoing assessments of all four communication skills, with emphasis on language proficiency.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

The latest instructional technologies, particularly the most interactive technologies such as computer-assisted language learning and advanced telecommunications, enhance the possibilities of providing world language instruction for **all** students. Technology brings languages and cultures into the classroom in an immediate and authentic way, transforming the world language classroom by re-creating the multidimensional nature of language as it exists within the visual, social, and cultural world.

The use of technology in the world language classroom has many potential benefits, including the following:

- It enhances student interest and potential learning by enabling students to communicate freely with more people from many parts of the world.
- It allows for individualized instruction while also providing opportunities to work collaboratively and apply knowledge to simulated and real-life projects.
- It provides practice, remediation, and assessment opportunities far beyond the scope of traditional practices.

Otto and Pusack (1996, pp. 151-152) discuss the advantages of using computer technology at the elementary and at the secondary level. They recommend **using computers as a bridge between the world language curriculum and other curriculum areas, thereby serving as a tool to access almost-unlimited sources of information and to expand authentic language experiences.** Learning then becomes more interesting to students. Students can be encouraged to use target-language data on CD-ROM or the Internet, recognizing that they may not be able to fully understand the entire text. The function of the teacher is to guide learners in finding and interpreting such information as songs, fairy tales, biodata from children abroad, maps, and magazines. The Internet is an invaluable tool for individual and group research, virtual field trips, daily news stories, job searches, and all types of inquiries and correspondence. Interdisciplinary multimedia projects may be put on CD-ROMs and made available to the school community.

It is important to interject that **new technologies cannot replace teacher-student or student-teacher interactions**. Oxford (1998) cautions that technology can assist in creating a meaning-focused, communicative language learning environment only if it becomes an integral part of the broader curriculum. Teachers must focus on learning objectives and then choose the type of technology and the tasks that meet the objectives.

Such instruction must have communicative competence as its cornerstone, provide appropriate language assistance tailored to the student, provide appropriate error correction suited to the student's changing needs over time, offer an abundance of authentic language input, provide interesting and relevant themes and meaningful language tasks, be designed for use by students with different learning styles, teach students to become better learners via explicit training in language learning strategies, use a variety of interaction types, and involve all language skills. (p.143)

The role of the teacher as the facilitator in setting goals, providing guidelines and resources, and providing suggestions and support to the student is a key factor in successful computer-assisted instruction.



Chapter 4

LINKING THE STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT



THE NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS AND INDICATORS FOR WORLD LANGUAGES

Key Terms

A **core curriculum content standard** (or simply **content standard**) mandates what all students should know and be able to do in world languages and across disciplines. The two world language standards, *Standard 7.1* and *Standard 7.2**, are presented following this section. The world language standards will be assessed at benchmark grade levels as part of the statewide assessment program.

A **cumulative progress indicator** mandates what all student's should know and be able to do at specific benchmark grades (Grades 4, 8, and 12). *Standard 7.1* has 23 indicators, and *Standard 7.2* has 13 cumulative progress indicators. These world language indicators are listed under their respective standards.

Examples:

- 7.1.5 By the end of **grade 4**, students provide and obtain information on familiar topics.
- 7.1.12 By the end of **grade 8**, students express details of their everyday lives and past experiences.
- 7.1.21 By the end of **grade 12**, students communicate orally with increasing logic and accuracy.

A **framework** serves as a resource to develop district curricula and to modify instruction through classroom examples, such as the learning scenarios in chapter 10 of this document, and a discussion of the underlying rationales.

***Note:** *The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards* are numbered from Standard 1.1 to Standard 7.2, covering the seven core content areas. The number "7" represents the world language content area. Decimal point one (".1") refers to the first world language standard, and ".2" refers to the second world language standard. The second decimal refers to the cumulative progress indicator.

Standard 7.1

All students will be able to communicate at a basic literacy level in at least one language other than English.

Descriptive Statement

Meaningful communication is the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information through speech, gestures, behavior, or a combination of these. It is through communication that we express ourselves and transmit or receive information. For these exchanges to be meaningful, students need to communicate about, understand, and interpret written or spoken language on a variety of topics in the language studied. The key to successful communication is knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom. This standard thus focuses on interpersonal communication.

Key Term: Communication

Communication may be characterized in three different modes:

- **Interpersonal** focuses on active negotiation (direct oral or written communication) among individuals.
- **Interpretive** focuses on receptive communication (the cultural interpretations of meaning that occur within written or spoken form) among individuals.
- **Presentational** focuses on productive communication (spoken or written communication for an audience with whom there is no immediate personal contact).

Cumulative Progress Indicators

By the end of *Grade 4*, students

1. Respond to and initiate simple statements and commands such as greetings, introductions, and leave-taking.
2. Express attitudes, reactions, and courtesy using short phrases and simple sentences.
3. Express likes, dislikes, and preferences.
4. Describe people, places, things, and events using short phrases and simple sentences.
5. Provide and obtain information on familiar topics.
6. Express basic personal needs.

7. Identify some common and distinct features, such as parts of speech and vocabulary, among languages.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades
by the end of **Grade 8**, students

8. Create and respond to simple phrases, questions, and sentences.
9. Describe people, places, things, and events with some details.
10. Generate and respond to short messages such as invitations, directions, announcements, and appointments.
11. Interact with appropriate responses in limited social settings and basic situations.
12. Express details of their everyday lives and of past experiences.
13. Engage in original and spontaneous conversation in the language studied.
14. Organize thoughts into coherent oral speech.
15. Explore employment opportunities where languages are advantageous.
16. Identify common and distinct features, such as prepositional phrases and clauses, among languages.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades,
by the end of **Grade 12**, students

17. Communicate and interact in a limited range of task-oriented and social situations.
18. Respond to statements and initiate and sustain conversations with increasing linguistic accuracy.
19. Understand a sustained conversation on a number of topics.
20. Comprehend fluent speakers in everyday situations.
21. Communicate orally with increasing logic and accuracy.
22. Research language-related employment opportunities.
23. Identify common and distinct features, such as grammatical structures, among languages.

Standard 7.2

All students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture for at least one language other than English.

Descriptive Statement

The acquisition of another language focuses attention on how language and culture interacts. This interaction helps students reflect on cultural patterns and thus gain insight into their own language and culture. Exploration of a new culture helps students to frame issues about their own world view while investigating another. Comparing and contrasting languages and cultures promotes cross-cultural discourse and understanding, which are at the heart of the humanities.

Key Term: Culture

Culture may be understood to include three aspects of a society:

- **Perspectives** (e.g., attitudes, values, ideas)
- **Practices** (e.g., patterns of social interactions)
- **Products** (e.g., music, books, laws)

Cumulative Progress Indicators

By the end of *Grade 4*, students

1. Demonstrate an awareness of culture.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultures of speakers of the language studied.
3. Recognize interrelationships between the language and the culture of a given group of people.
4. Recognize and explore the process of stereotyping.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades,
by the end of *Grade 8*, students

5. Compare the customs of their own culture and the studied culture.
6. Understand the role of stereotyping in forming and sustaining prejudice.
7. Demonstrate an awareness of contributions made in many fields by men and women of diverse cultures.
8. Examine interrelationships between the language and the culture of a given group of people as evidenced in literary works.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades,
by the end of *Grade 12*, students

9. Recognize and understand verbal and nonverbal cues within a culture.
10. Explore and discuss similarities and differences among various cultures.
11. Explore and discuss representative works of diverse cultures in many fields of endeavor.
12. Analyze interrelationships between the language and the culture of a given group of people, as evidenced in their literary works and communications, as well as in their political, economic, and religious structures.
13. Use technology to enhance language acquisition and to acquire current cultural information in order to develop more accurate impressions of the culture studied.

DEVELOPING DISTRICT CURRICULUM

The most important factor in the development of a district curriculum is linking the standards to the curriculum development process. A district curriculum should be organized to integrate the district's philosophy or goals with the philosophy and goals set forth in the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*.

- Administrators, supervisors, grade-level teachers, and world language teachers who represent the various schools and grade levels in the district should become a team to develop world language programs.
- The curriculum team should develop a written document that provides for program models that can be adjusted and expanded into a continuous and sequential language program within the core curriculum while providing for mutual reinforcement among disciplines. The document should indicate the amount of time on task, the quality of activities, and expected outcomes at each level.
- Developing a curriculum before selecting materials will ensure that communicative goals and objectives drive instruction. The curriculum will serve as a standard by which to judge the appropriateness of resources (which should be listed to assist in program implementation).
- It is important that the curriculum document be organized and arranged so that teachers on various levels may become aware of the objectives containing skills that may have been previously introduced, but not necessarily mastered, on another level.
- As the curriculum development team creates a shared understanding and vision, the course will be set for developing a world language curriculum that will continue to evolve as a living document.

The considerations in this chapter regarding state and national documents in the school, district, or classroom context have been adapted from *Bringing the Standards into the Classroom: A Teacher's Guide* (Rosenbusch, 1997, pp. 7-14).

State and National Documents

In whatever context the local curriculum is being developed or evaluated, consider the following documents generated at the state and national level:

- the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for World Languages* and the *New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework*;
- language-specific standards from national language-specific organizations; and
- the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*.

Within the parameters of meeting the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*, answer the following questions:

- Do the expectations for students set forth in this document match those in the existing curriculum?
- Is there evidence of curricular focus on both standards (communication and culture) and on the cumulative progress indicators at every level of instruction in the existing curriculum?
- Are school or district assessment practices aligned with the state standards?

School or District Context

If the curriculum is being developed or evaluated at the local level, also consider the following information, relevant to the individual school or school district:

- school or district mission statement or philosophy;
- school board goals;
- goals of the world language program;
- student, parent, and community expectations;
- student body profile data; and
- staff/specialist qualifications.

Within the parameters of the information in the documents listed above, answer the following questions:

- How does world language study fit into the school context? (Are there language requirements for all students? What languages are offered? What considerations are needed for vertical articulation K-16?)
- What should students know and be able to do at the end of each level of instruction and at state benchmark levels (Grades 4, 8, and 12)?
- How will the school district know that the students have accomplished these standards, and how will this be communicated to the students and their parents? (What kinds of assessment will be required? What kinds of training will be provided for teachers to ensure consistent and fair assessment practices across the program/school/district?)
- What specific program considerations need to be made in light of student body profile data and/or community demographics and student, parent, and community expectations?

Classroom Context

Consider the following when correlating classroom goals with the goals of the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*:

- textbooks;
- curriculum that has been developed or adapted;
- supplementary materials;
- available technology;
- community resources; and
- colleagues as resources.

Answer the following questions:

- What opportunities are offered to the students for
 - interacting face-to-face?
 - interpreting written and spoken messages?
 - making meaningful written and spoken presentations that are appropriate to their language proficiency?

- How is culture presented so that students understand the relationships between perspectives and products and between perspectives and practices?
- What opportunities are provided to assess current information available in the target language?
- How can collaborative work with colleagues in other disciplines be done to enhance the language learning experience for students by making connections to other subject areas?
- How can collaborative work with colleagues be done within the world language department to make sure that grading practices and expectations for performance are consistent?
- What experiences are provided for students to analyze and compare linguistic and cultural features of the native- and target-language environments?
- What opportunities are provided for students to use the language beyond the classroom setting?
- What community resources are brought into the classroom to enrich the language and cultural experiences for students?
- Is available technology used to facilitate student communication beyond the classroom?

If classroom practices and expectations do not correlate with the New Jersey World Languages Standards, **districts must identify the changes needed to align their existing curriculum with the state standards.**