

**Commission on High Schools**

**Interculturality**

**July 16, 2019**

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## Definitions

### Culture:

is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

### Interculturality:

is made up of the following:

#### Knowledge and Comprehension

- \* Products and Practices
- \* Comparison with own culture
- \* Socio-linguistic awareness

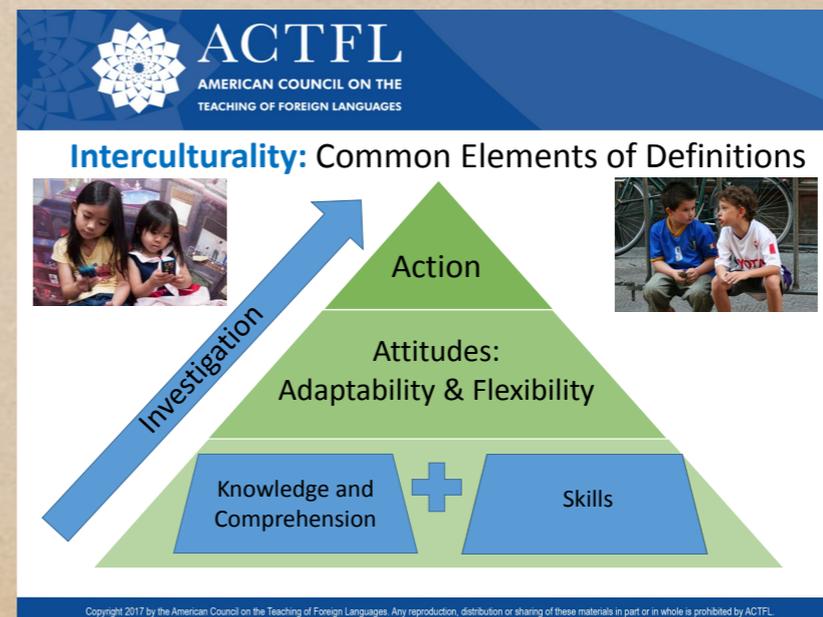
#### Skills

- \* Listen, Observe
- \* Interpret, Analyze
- \* Evaluate, Revise

#### Attitudes: Adaptability & Flexibility

- \* Suspend judgement
- \* Respect
- \* Empathy

Action:



As language professionals we are familiar with the ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for language learning that includes the five c's of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities and their standards



## WORLD-READINESS STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES

GOAL AREAS	STANDARDS		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b> Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes	<b>Interpersonal Communication:</b> Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	<b>Interpretive Communication:</b> Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.	<b>Presentational Communication:</b> Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
<b>CULTURES</b> Interact with cultural competence and understanding	<b>Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.	<b>Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.	
<b>CONNECTIONS</b> Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations	<b>Making Connections:</b> Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.	<b>Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives:</b> Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.	
<b>COMPARISONS</b> Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence	<b>Language Comparisons:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.	<b>Cultural Comparisons:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
<b>COMMUNITIES</b> Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world	<b>School and Global Communities:</b> Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.	<b>Lifelong Learning:</b> Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.	

## POP QUIZ:



## How Well Do YOU Know the “Cultures” Goal Area of the National Standards?

- The National Standards identify three key elements for teaching the goal area of Cultures:
  - Art, literature, and music
  - Products, practices, and perspectives
  - Who, what, and why
  - Economic systems, philosophy/religion, and social customs
- Which of the following were used in the original Standards document to describe teaching the goal of Cultures?
  - It is important to help students expect differences and learn how to analyze observed differences
  - The exquisite connections between the culture that is lived and the language that is spoken can only be realized by those who possess a knowledge of both
  - It is equally important that students recognize that members of one culture tend to make assumptions and draw corresponding conclusions about other cultures based upon their own values
  - All of the above
- In the following description of a cultural phenomenon in the United States, identify which item is the cultural perspective, as described in the standards:
  - In the U.S., food labels must identify calories and nutrition information
  - Many people go on crash diets and pay to join a weight-loss program
  - Americans tend to value youth over old age; some would call it an obsession
  - Restaurants are starting to include more fish and low-carb menu options
- All of the following are examples of products of Cultures, as described in the Standards, except:
  - Typical breakfast foods
  - Laws
  - Greetings
  - Music
- All of the following are examples of practices of Cultures, as described in the Standards, except:
  - Eating utensils
  - Patterns of social interaction
  - Paying a set price or bartering
  - Rites of passage, such as entering school, obtaining a driver's license, graduation, getting married
- A key message from the Standards is to establish the relationship between products and perspectives and between practices and perspectives. To help students learn about the cultural perspective of “coming of age,” all of the following are examples of the link of perspectives with either practices or products, except:
  - The legal drinking age varies a lot in different countries.
  - Some birthdays have the added significance of celebrating when young people move into more adult roles and responsibilities
  - The age for obtaining a driver's license signals when a society acknowledges a transition in trusting minors with more responsibility
  - While not standard across a culture, the age when dating is generally approved varies from culture to culture because it coincides with when the culture expects an increasing independence of the young people from their parents
- Teaching of Cultures is strengthened when students read, listen to, or view “authentic materials,” which are defined as:
  - Written and oral communications produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group
  - Magazine and online articles, restaurant menus, poems, radio and TV shows
  - Language in real use, “reflecting the details of everyday life in a culture as well as its societal values”
  - All of the above
- Of the following, the least effective way to teach Cultures is:
  - Students experience and explore the culture
  - Integrated with the practice and development of communication
  - Connected with a thematic focus
  - Isolated cultural topics in specific mini-lessons
- Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is found below the surface. In this metaphor for culture, examples of the deep culture that is below the surface are:
  - Food, flags, and festivals
  - Personal space, concept of cleanliness, and attitudes toward children or elderly family members
  - Literature, visual arts, theater, and music
  - Body language, dress, and vocabulary
- Which of the following quotes best represents your focus for teaching Cultures?
  - “Lead with culture and language will follow.” (Donna Clementi)
  - “Language is culture in motion. It is people interacting with people.” (Sandra Savignon)
  - Culture “is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them.” (Claire Kramersch)
  - “Children penetrate a new culture through meaningful experiences with cultural practices and cultural phenomena that are appropriate to their age level, their interests, and the classroom setting.” (Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Dahlberg)

Quiz created by ACTFL Associate Director of Professional Development Paul Sandrock

We have all been teaching culture to our students using texts, movies, music, art, etc. and now we have NCSSFL-ACTFL Intercultural Communication Can-Do's, that will help us to go beyond just teaching about culture.

“Intercultural Communication is demonstrating one’s knowledge of culture through language. Intercultural Communicative Competence or ICC, is using language skills, cultural knowledge and understanding, in authentic contexts to effectively interact with people. It is not simply knowing about the language and about the products and practices of a culture. **RATHER**, it is an **active participation** in communicating with those from another culture, experiencing and discovering the culture because of inherent curiosity, and forming new attitudes that mediate between one’s own and the others’ cultures.”

Language Educator 2018

### What is Intercultural Communication?

“Intercultural Communication is a complex activity that combines cross-cultural knowledge and language skills. It involves initiating understanding and responding to what is communicated, using culturally appropriate language and behavior in a given context.”

ACTFL

So, now that we have an idea of what interculturality is, how do we go about creating/re-creating our culture lessons? We can put in use the ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication.

The **Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication** consists of two Global Proficiency Benchmarks:

**Investigation** of the products and practices to understand perspectives; and **Interaction** with others in and from another culture.

Each proficiency benchmark is broken down into two Performance Indicators that outline how learners develop their intercultural communication skills through cultural knowledge, language and behavior.

**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS + PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**NOVICE**

**INTERMEDIATE**



	PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK
<b>INVESTIGATE</b> Investigate Products And Practices To Understand Cultural Perspectives	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify products and practices to help me understand perspectives.	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> make comparisons between products and practices to help me understand perspectives.

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>PRODUCTS</b>	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify some typical products related to familiar everyday life.	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare products related to everyday life and personal interests or studies.
<b>PRACTICES</b>	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify some typical practices related to familiar everyday life.	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare practices related to everyday life and personal interests or studies.



	PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK
<b>INTERACT</b> Interact With Others In And From Another Culture	<b>I can</b> interact at a survival level in some familiar everyday contexts.	<b>I can</b> interact at a functional level in some familiar contexts.

	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	<b>I can</b> communicate with others from the target culture in familiar everyday situations, using memorized language and showing basic cultural awareness.	<b>I can</b> converse with peers from the target culture in familiar situations at school, work, or play, and show interest in basic cultural similarities and differences.
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>I can</b> use appropriate rehearsed behaviors and recognize some obviously inappropriate behaviors in familiar everyday situations.	<b>I can</b> recognize that significant differences in behaviors exist among cultures, use appropriate learned behaviors and avoid major social blunders.

As language teachers, I know that you have many culture lessons that you have been using with your students. **In order to rework some of our current culture lessons/activities, we need to consider the following questions:**

1. Does the activity target a specific range of language proficiency?
2. Does the activity provide background cultural knowledge and context?
3. Does the activity provide an opportunity for learners to use culturally authentic materials/resources and communicate with speakers of the language?
4. How is the blending of language performance and cultural knowledge (interculturality) assessed?
5. Are learners given time and guidance to self-assess and reflect on their interculturality?

Language Educator

In order to help us, to focus on clear objectives and out comes, we can use the ACTFL Intercultural Communication and Reflection Tool.

**Intercultural Communication and Reflexion**

**Novice High School**

**Learning Target for Intercultural Communication**

\* Investigate:

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\* Interact:

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**Intercultural Activities (in class, in the target language)**

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**Reflections (at home, in English or target language)**

Interactive Journal. Learners will reflect on/answer the following questions in their journal.

1.

2.

**Closing Activity (in class, in the target language)**

# Intercultural Communication and Reflection

## Sample Activities

INTERMEDIATE	Middle / High School
<b>Learning Target for Intercultural Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Investigate:</b> In my own and other cultures I can describe how attitudes toward informality and formality in relationships affect behavior and language.</li><li>• <b>Interact:</b> I can use appropriate greeting and leave taking gestures and behaviors in familiar informal and formal situations.</li></ul>

### Intercultural Activities *(in class, in the target language)*

#### Learner Discussion:

- How does the level of formality between students and teachers in the USA compare to that of the target culture?
- What might be some reasons for similarities or differences in formality in both cultures?
- How much formality do you prefer with teachers? Why?
- How do people use behavior and language to show their attitude toward another person in the USA? And in the target culture?

### Reflections *(at home, in English or the target language)*

1. Describe how formal or informal are you with people in your life (parents, friends, teachers). How does your language or behavior change when interacting with these people?
2. How is this similar or different to teens in <target culture>?
3. Why do you think there are these similarities or differences?
4. How do you know what level of formality someone else expects?
5. Do you think American parents are too informal with their children?
6. Do you think teachers in the USA are too informal with their students?
7. What are the advantages and drawbacks to an informal teacher-student or parent-child relationship?
8. How does the level of formality between the student and teacher affect the classroom environment?
9. How does the level of formality between the parent and child affect the home environment?
10. What new insights about yourself and others have you gained from thinking about this?

### Closing Activity *(in class, in the target language)*

Essay topic: Pick one of the following topics:

- a) Choose one of your classes in which the teacher is either very formal with students or very informal with the students. Tell how this affects the atmosphere of the class, teacher-student interactions, and the behavior and language in the class. How does this level of formality affect your experience in the class? How might this be similar or different to a class in <target culture>?
- b) Write from the point-of-view of an exchange student from <target culture> staying in the USA for a year. What might surprise her/him regarding the level of formality between American teens and their parents/teachers/other adults? How might s/he have to adjust her/his own behavior and language?

I have shared with you some information on **Interculturality** and its components. We have briefly looked at the ACTFL Intercultural Communication Proficiency Benchmarks and Performance Indicators and the Intercultural Communication and Reflexion Sheet.

From this information and our own experiences in teaching our students, we know that the cultural component of language continues to be one of the most important aspects in real language acquisition. Being able to learn about, to be immersed in a language is important, but perhaps even more important are the opportunities for our students to use the **skills of Investigation** (products/practices/understand cultural perspectives) and **Interaction** (language/behaviors) to be able to develop a deep and profound understanding of the many cultures of the French-speaking world.

**So, what's next??**

I am hoping that some of you will join me in working with **Interculturality on the High School Commission** by starting to look at some of the lessons that we have been using and see how we can use the **components of investigate and interact** to develop more meaningful activities and projects to be used in our French language classes for all of our learners.

**Merci Beaucoup!!!!**  
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