



Introduction

The Colorado Department of Education approached the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to prepare a review of the Colorado Academic Standards for World Languages. The CAS-WL was compared with standards for learning languages from New Zealand, Ohio, North Carolina and Texas. ACTFL and the Colorado Department of Education agreed on the following scope of work:

- The discussion of **depth and breadth** will be based on the alignment of CAS-WL to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (WRSLL).
- The discussion of **coherence** is based on the alignment of CAS-WL with the guidance needed for using standards for classroom/program implementation.
- The discussion of **rigor** is based on the alignment of CAS-WL with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements.

Methodology

This review of the Colorado Academic Standards for World Languages (CAS-WL) covered all of the components of depth/breadth, coherence, and rigor outlined in the introduction. The analyses were conducted to review the alignment of the CAS-WL with the key documents for comparison: World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (WRSLL), the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, and the NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. This review is intended to inform and guide the work of those revising Colorado's world languages standards.

The following specific comparisons were made and are provided in greater detail in this report's sections:

1. Comparison of the CAS-WL Prepared Graduate Competencies and the CAS-WL Standards to the WRSLL
2. Alignment of the CAS-WL Range Level Expectations to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and NCSSEFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements
3. Coherence of CAS-WL Range Level Expectations and Extended Evidence Outcomes with the WRSLL Sample Performance Indicators and Sample Progress Indicators
4. Coherence of the CAS-WL 21st Century Skills and Postsecondary Workforce Readiness with the WRSLL Sample Progress Indicators
5. Coherence of Components across the CAS-WL document, examining the consistency of increasing language performance and appropriateness of the descriptions for the Range Level Outcomes-Concepts and Skills; the Extended Evidence Outcomes; and the 21st Century Skills and Postsecondary Workforce Readiness; and
6. Comparison of three external referents with the CAS-WL, describing the degree of similarity or difference with the CAS-WL.

Throughout this review, consideration was given to the variety of grade levels and programs that use the CAS-WL to design and implement effective language learning. Learners at any given Range Level (Novice Low through Intermediate Mid) might be in elementary grades, middle school grades, or high school grades, depending on the program model and the learners' prior experiences with the language. Therefore this review examined the depth and breadth, coherence, and rigor measured against the Range Level, versus for a particular grade level.



Findings and Recommendations

In the findings it was stated the Colorado Standards needed revising to reflect to focus on literacy, real-world applications, and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for college, career, and the world. Three key findings have influenced the discussion throughout the review in order to maximize these standards to address the needs of learners across Colorado, whether in elementary schools, middle schools, or high schools and focused on preparation for 21st Century postsecondary and workforce expectations:

1. CAS-WL should extend the Range Level Expectations into the Advanced Range. This allows for longer sequences of learning, beginning in elementary grades as well as meets the needs of heritage and native speakers of a language. This increases the flexibility of the standards for implementation across all education institutions in Colorado.
2. CAS-WL should add Communities as an important standard for learners. The addition of Communities reinforces the relevance and application of the CAS-WL for all learners as every learner finds themselves in a position to use the skills and understandings learned through a second language in their community, work, or across the globe. Also, this standard asks learners to identify their goals for learning another language and to gauge their progress toward those goals. This is further illustrated in the section “Comparing the Standards of the CAS-WL to the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning Goal Areas” below.
3. Updating the description and wording of the CAS-WL so the standards reflect and focus to meet the needs of Colorado students is needed. (pg. 10)*: Can-Do Statements, which act as the main tool for student self-assessment in the world languages field are lacking. The practice of student self-assessment and goal-setting is a key motivator that also demystifies the continuum of world language learning for learners. Its absence from the CAS-WL document is therefore a significant misalignment.
4. Range Level Expectations need a revision to be re-written with a focus on learners “using the language” to perform tasks at that level, then they can be aligned to that proficiency level and designed to fit into a continuum of language progress within the context of that standard, be it Culture, Connections, Comparisons, or (if added), Communities.
5. The first Inquiry Question for each Range Level partially aligns with the WRSLL document and is the most appropriate question to include. The first Inquiry Question is based on the standard, so any revision should be based on the revision to the CAS-WL standards themselves. We may consider examining the WRSLL Sample Progress Indicators for each specific standard as well as the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements across the modes of communication in order to identify appropriate Inquiry Questions based on what learners are asked to do in the Sample Progress Indicators and what they can demonstrate in the Can-Do Statements.
6. Relevance and Application section of the document need to consider examining the WRSLL Sample Progress Indicators for each specific standard as well as the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements across the modes of communication in order to provide applications that are better targeted for learners at the Novice and Intermediate levels.
7. Language in ensuring post-secondary readiness and revisiting the graduation competencies after revision to check alignment. The learners’ demonstration of these 21st Century Skills and Postsecondary and Workforce Expectations needs to be identified as what is appropriate for the Range Level and Proficiency Level.

* Page numbers refer to the page(s) in the full benchmarking report.