

# A Decade of Foreign Language Standards

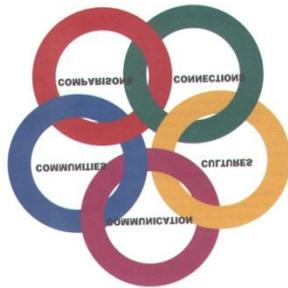
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Impact, Influence, and Future Directions

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# NATIONAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE STANDARDS: IMPACT AND INFLUENCE AFTER A DECADE PLUS

## FORWARD

In 2008, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) was awarded a federal grant under the International Research and Studies program to assess the role the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning has exerted in the profession. The three-year grant, titled *A Decade of Foreign Language Standards: Influence, Impact, and Future Directions*, has assembled a wealth of data from a variety of evidence. The following is one of three reports that together attest to the conclusion that the Standards did indeed influence and instigate change in how languages are taught and learned. (Note: Standards capitalized refers to National Standards) The information also provided direction for the future. This report describes that impact and influence on institutions, educators, and research in our profession. It summarizes major findings from survey data and supporting evidence sought by Task Force members (See Appendix A for Task Force members and affiliations). A second document, *Decades of Standards: Influence, Impact: Survey Results*, presents the raw data and analysis in more detail for the researcher or educator interested in delving into specific findings. A third document presents recommendations for actions to build upon the strong base Standards established and to make them more powerful in future endeavors.

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The first iteration of the national standards was released in 1996 with the title, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*. This slim 109-page publication quickly became known as the “generic” version of standards in that it addressed issues and delineated standards common to all second-language learning yet contained examples in many languages. The Standards were a result of three-years of development, dissemination, consideration of input from the field at large, and endorsement from professional language associations as well as from a wide set of stakeholders including other educators, representatives of government, business, and industry. The project had been funded by the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* which supported the development of national standards in most curricular areas. The intent was that the Standards be broad enough in their definition of “What students know and are able to do” so that states and districts could in turn design standards in line with their priorities and programs.

The time period embedded in the subtitle (“preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century) would hardly suffice to instill the amount of instructional change needed to make the Standards a reality for learners before the new century dawned. Likewise the generic concept would benefit from application to specific languages early in the professional development process. A second version was needed and needed quickly. The Standards Collaborative Board had been established to advise and manage revenues from the Standards publications to promote future developments. Its membership at the time consisted of: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the American Association of Teachers of French, the American

Association of Teachers of German, the American Association of Teachers of Italian, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, American Classical, American Council of Teachers of Russian, Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools/Chinese Language Teachers Association, and the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers/Association of Teachers of Japanese. The Collaborative recommended that each language group develop standards with specific progress indicators, scenarios, and issues for its language/cultural context. Consequently, in 1999, the generic volume had been expanded and the new title acknowledged a new century for language learning in the United States: *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*. (An additional edition was published in 2006 with Arabic and participation by the American Association of Teachers of Arabic).

Dissemination of the Standards was not solely based upon the publication although these volumes were widely distributed and used in state and district education agencies, for workshops and conferences, in methods of teaching courses, and they were purchased by individual teachers at all levels of instruction. The majority of states engaged in developing foreign language standards did base their frameworks on the national standards; some replicated them exactly in terms of goals and outcomes, and others made some adaptations. Articles appeared in the professional literature even before the Standards were finalized, and most early ones were expository in nature aimed at achieving professional consensus. ACTFL and language-specific organizations designed and delivered professional development opportunities around the Standards, and conferences featured many sessions focused on various components of the Standards. More language-specific groups showed interest in creating standards specific to their languages and were supported in those efforts by the Standards Collaborative Board.

## ASSESSING IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

As the Standards reached the decade (plus a few years) mark, it was time to assess their influence and impact on teaching and learning, on curriculum, on assessment, on research. A proposal from ACTFL to carry out this review was funded through the International Research and Studies program. Three Task Forces were charged with investigating the impact but also trying to determine where standards were not being used or where work needed to be done to promote better understandings. Each Task Force focused on a different aspect of standards: 1) the professional literature, 2) institutional efforts, 3) professional development for teachers at the pre-service and in-service levels. (Task Force Chairs and members are listed in Appendix A).

Activities central to the gathering of information on the Standards included:

- A review of the professional literature from 1998– 2009 to locate items that addressed Standards. From this data base, items were classified as having a principal focus, substantial mention, or passing mention on Standards. Entries for the first two categories were annotated for inclusion in a searchable data base that will be available through ACTFL and is one of the products from the grant proposal.
- An electronic survey was developed and distributed to foreign language educators. The survey contained a branching system so that targeted responses would be sought from state and district supervisors and methods course faculty as well as from teachers at large.

Total respondents numbered 2,134; 1,801 indicated “familiarity with the standards” and completed the questionnaire. Detailed survey results are available on the ACTFL website: *Decade of Standards: Influence and Impact* (2010) at: <http://actfl.org>

- Additional information was acquired and analyzed by task force members, including syllabi from methods course faculty, curricular units and materials from district supervisors, website scan for standards-related products from Language Resource Centers, public documents from state departments of education.

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS IN THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE**

Charges to the Literature Survey Task Force were:

- To conduct a literature search of articles, chapters, books that explore the Standards, specific goal area pursuant to the creation of a searchable annotated bibliography to serve as reference source for the profession.
- To search conference programs for national, regional, and state meetings since 2000 to estimate the numbers of Standards-based presentations. There is an expectation that conference presentations do lead in some instances to publication and that they also serve as a primary professional development opportunity for many teachers (a reality confirmed by the electronic survey conducted by the other task forces. Given the numbers of conferences, a sampling of programs that were available electronically to the extent possible was done.
- To survey commercial and not-for-profit materials to see how Standards are reflected.

The Task Force worked on these charges simultaneously through a massive computer search of online databases. In this work, it became clear that many conference presentations were not listed, and when listed, not enough information could be found to determine the role of Standards. It was also evident that not-for-profit materials were highly diverse in nature (including textbooks, manuals, government documents, newspaper articles and brief mentions). The original database search yielded over 900 items. It appeared to be consistent and fairly comprehensive in relation to charge 1 but appeared hit-and-miss and quite diverse for charges 2 and 3. The Task Force, in consultation with the co-directors of the project, thus decided to restrict the annotated resource database to materials from charge 1. This database should therefore present a reliable and comprehensive resource for the profession.

In this report, the focus will be on the first charge and the searchable, annotated bibliography developed with these materials. It will also include findings from three conferences that were reviewed manually from charge 2 from 1997 to 2009.

***Evidence of the impact of Standards in the professional literature.*** In terms of numbers, the search found 591 references in the scholarly literature which were entered into the database. Each reference was reviewed by a member of the Task Force so that each could be classified in terms of the amount of focus given to the Standards. There were three categories:

*principal focus*: the whole reference is about the Standards, and this fact is usually noted in the title and/or abstract

*substantial mention*: the reference has a section of at least two or three well-developed paragraphs related to the Standards

*passing mention*: there is only a note or a one-liner pro forma related to the Standards

References in each of the first two categories (principal focus, substantial mention) were then annotated and keywords assigned to them for the search engine of the database.

Of the 591 references, 167 were identified as having *principal focus* on Standards, 143 *substantial mention*, 281 *passing mention*) supporting the premise that Standards have had a major impact on the profession through this number of publications. Of the 310 references classified as principal focus or substantial mention, 173 are in journals, 90 are book chapters, 16 are books, and 40 are dissertations. This distribution would be considered typical of academic dissemination, again suggesting a positive scholarly response to the Standards. The number of publications in different journals suggests how that dissemination is reaching teachers and scholars. The top 7 journals by number of references were:

<i>Modern Language Journal</i>	60	<i>NECTFL Review</i>	27
<i>Hispania</i>	58	<i>ADFL Bulletin</i>	27
<i>Foreign Language Annals</i>	37	<i>French Review</i>	15
<i>Die Unterrichtspraxis / Teaching German</i>	31		

All three of the commonly taught languages are represented through their journals; in contrast, there is no journal dedicated to a less commonly taught language in this group of top 7 journals. *Italica* has 6 references; *Slavic and East European Journal* has 5. Others, including *TESOL Quarterly*, have 1. The language distribution is similar, with the top languages found in the Standards literature as follows:

Spanish	55
French	40
German	12
Japanese	10
Russian	6
LCTLs without a specific language named	3

These distributions confirm the greater impact as measured in publications of the Standards on commonly taught languages than on less commonly taught languages even though all on this list were part of the first set of language-specific standards.

It is often believed that the Standards have had a greater impact on the K-12 level than on the postsecondary level. The 27 references found in the *ADFL Bulletin*, which is devoted nearly exclusively to postsecondary instruction, and also the 60 references in the top ranking *Modern Language Journal*, whose readership is primarily postsecondary researchers or secondary supervisors would suggest considerable impact, or at least interest in the Standards, from postsecondary colleagues. Looking at the category “level of instruction” directly, we find again,

that although K-12 references exceed postsecondary references, there is a substantial number of references relating to the postsecondary level as well.

K-12	121	Postsecondary	96
FLES/FLEX 2			
Elementary 31			
Middle/Jr High 28			
High school 60		All levels	117

This finding is encouraging and demonstrates that while the Standards project was funded as a K-12 initiative, it was adopted by professional organizations to reach into postsecondary. This bridging of levels occurs in part because languages are not yet pursued for long sequences, in part because many students begin studying a foreign language (sometimes a new one) in colleges/universities. And for those students who do continue more advanced study in higher ed, the Standards help build an articulated sequence. Several other factors may also weigh in: higher education faculty who are experimenting with Standards are more likely to publish than are K-12 teachers, and journals with a higher education audience, the *Modern Language Journal* and the *ADFL Bulletin*, dedicated issues with a focus on Standards to the topic.

As part of preparing items for the annotated bibliography, the task force identified topic fields for each article. Looking at these results provides insights into the areas where published documents focused attention. In the category of “topic framework”, the largest group by far is “curriculum and program development” with 212 references, followed by “teachers and teaching” with 148 references, suggesting the classroom impact of the Standards over either a “policy/administrative” impact (81 references) or especially over a research impact (cf. “theories and methods” 68; “learners and learning” 60; “research” 48). This finding is reinforced by the second to the top category in topic area: “classroom examples” with 115 references (the first is “Standards” with 136 examples, a vague label that is hard to interrupt in terms of this report). It can be interpreted therefore that the major impact of the Standards has been on classroom practice.

### *Impact of the 5 Cs.*

The breakdown of the number of references treating each of the 5Cs is as follows:

All 5 Cs together	184
Cultures	58
Communication	37
Connections	27
Comparisons	18
Communities	18

The large number of references treating all 5 Cs together may acknowledge that the integrated nature of the 5 Cs, expressed in the Standards logo and put forth in the text of the Standards document, has been accepted in the profession; it may also result from the numbers of articles that served to familiarize readers with the Standards. The electronic survey that looked at the Five Cs in terms of 1) areas of professional development and 2) teacher emphasis found Communication to have more mentions than Cultures. A possible explanation may relate to

writers' wanting to explore topics less prevalent in the professional literature eschewing the new Framework of Communicative modes and thinking that research in the four skills has been adequately covered. It is intriguing that Connections follows, with notably more frequent mentions than Comparisons and Communities. This result might be related to articles that look to using languages in other disciplines, although references suggesting these uses are not numerous: heritage learners of Spanish (5 references) or for special purposes (2 references). Communities has often been termed the "Lost C", with the literature expressing the difficulty in teaching toward Communities and its consideration as an application task after the basic language is learned, a sentiment also found by other Task Forces in this project. These results support notions of Communities, but also of Comparisons, as having a lesser impact on the profession than the other three areas.

If states are looking to develop "Power Standards," this literature review would support the selection of Cultures and Communities for that role. It should be noted, however, that all the literature in this survey cites thoughts and work of teachers, administrators, and scholars. There are no references that relate a student perspective. An ongoing study (Magnan & Murphy, 2011) funded by the Department of Education done at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in conjunction with ACTFL, revealed the priority students give to the Communities Standards and secondly to Interpersonal and Interpretive Communication for aligning with their personal goals for language learning.

#### *Review of Conference Sessions*

The three conference schedules reviewed, as available, from 1997-2009 (ACTFL, NECTFL, SCOLT) showed presentations for the each year (See the Survey Results document for data charts). Considering all three conferences together, the numbers are fairly consistent across years, with the average being 62.3 presentations related to the Standards a year. It is interesting that LCTLs are represented as well as CTLs, especially at ACTFL. Sessions about CTLs are much more numerous at all three conferences in nearly all years, however, with ACTFL 2006 and 2008 being the exception. This sampling of conference presentations attests to continued professional engagement with the Standards among teachers of both CTLs and LCTLs.

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS ROLE IN INSTITUTIONS**

***The Standards have had impact on institutions at the national, state, and district levels.*** This project defined institutions as states, districts, schools, institutions of higher education, professional organizations, and resource centers. That is a broad spectrum but one that covers both contexts in which foreign languages are taught and ones that provide professional development to teachers and from which data could be gathered through individual responses and websites. These groups also develop curriculum, program standards, materials, assessments, and sponsor research.

*In the states:* The first place to investigate to see the influence of Standards is in the states, i.e., state departments of education, given that the development of the Standards was funded as part of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. In all the disciplines supported by the act, the connection between national standards in the disciplines as the basis for state standards was

strong and intentional. The electronic survey conducted for the *Decade of Standards* project contained a thread of questions for state supervisors. Nineteen of 34 state supervisors responded (note that not all states have a designated foreign language supervisor), but the 56% response was not encouraging. Consequently, the Debbie Robinson, Institutional Task Force Chairperson, expanded the data by gathering evidence from Department of Education Websites. The information gathered demonstrates that the National Standards are indeed highly visible in the state standards. In 40 states, the influence of the Five Cs is clear. Most states have all 5 Cs stated explicitly in their documents; others have all five but have combined some (e.g. Comparisons with Cultures). The “connecting circles” logo promoting the equity and interdependence of the Five Cs in the national standards has not been maintained in all states so that some use Communication and Cultures as their main goal areas—more traditional ones for foreign language study—and have the subsume the other Cs which while still mentioned are not as prominent. Only 8 states seem not to have foreign or world language standards, but one of those provides “guidance” that does show alignment. In 2 of the states without DOE standards, state professional associations assumed that responsibility and their recommended standards align with the national ones. Only 2 states with standards created them without visible alignment to the Five Cs. Even with all this variety, the evidence of the impact of the Standards is strong. Previous to their appearance, state outcomes were in terms of 4 skills sometimes with the addition of culture as a 5<sup>th</sup> skill. Today, over 40 states construct communication around the Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of the framework created in the Standards, thereby enriching and expanding the contexts of communication and the changes this entails for teaching and learning. State documents are beginning to describe cultural outcomes in terms of processes of observation and experience shifting away from lists of facts and frequently out-of-date comments on life-style.

*In districts and departments:* In the survey, 64 respondents self-identified as supervisors or department chairs. The predominant district size was 1,000-5,000 students (22%) but the range in enrollments was spread with high teen percentages from 5,000 up to 100,000. In terms of foreign language enrollments in programs the highest percentage was again 1,000-5,000 (39%) so those had to come from the larger districts/institutions. In schools, 50% reported having elementary programs, 84% have middle-school and 98% high school programs. It must be noted that these data are higher than enrollment data given that respondents are more likely to be those with an interest in the survey. (See ACTFL, 2010, *Foreign Language Enrollments in K-12 Public Schools: Are Students Prepared for a Global Society?* for latest enrollment figures.)

In assessing impact of the standards, supervisors reported that their district’s professional development was based on the national standards and their state standards. The data show that the supervisors who responded reported that the standards have had impact on: Professional development; curriculum development: assessment. Seventy-two percent reported using copies of both of these in professional development. Additionally 52% report that the district supports attendance in standards-based workshops offered outside the district. Sixty-one percent of district supervisors report that their district curriculum is “most definitely” aligned with the Standards, 26% say their curriculum is in process of being realigned, and only 2% have no plans for alignment. In a follow-up request for evidence of Standards in districts David Jahner, Task Force member, found that curriculum units and maps provided guidance to classroom teachers and these documents were aligned with Standards. Development of performance assessment appears to lag well behind curriculum development. No one reported assessment programs as completed

but rather described them as beginning or in progress. A closer look at each of these topics follows.

**Professional Development in districts/departments:** Supervisors report (79% - 61%) that their own professional development was facilitated by: reading professional literature, attending state, regional, and national conferences, meeting and dialoging with other supervisors and colleagues. Less widespread activities but still of note include visiting other districts (41%) and connecting with postsecondary institutions (31%). The efforts made by supervisors to gain knowledge of standards and current practice are reflected in their taking professional development to their teachers and in their curriculum and assessment activities.

Supervisors reported offering from 2 to 6 full days or equivalent annually, and that they had "complete" (33%) or "some" freedom (63%) in terms of topic selection and budgetary allocations. The standards were given high priority when planning professional development, but most emphasis was on the Communications Goal Area and this is confirmed through teacher responses elsewhere on the survey. The format of most professional development in districts was through workshops but it is not known if these were related to an overarching theme or independent topics. Thirty-nine percent reported offering summer institutes, an unexpectedly high percentage; it is not clear whether these were primarily for teachers to gain knowledge or for them to participate in curriculum development or both. The greatest limitations on district-sponsored professional development were time (68%) and budget (67) and this was reported before the drastic cuts to education in the last year. An internal issue for the foreign language profession relates to responses regarding teacher willingness to change or to engage in meaningful professional development. Of nine open-ended responses on change as an issue, seven directly related to teacher recalcitrance.

**Curriculum development and assessment:** Aligning curriculum to Standards was "most definitely" the focus of development in the last decade. In line with reports from the states this process has been revisited several times in districts and is a continuous activity. Supervisors were able to cite evidence of curricular implementation of standards through classroom observations (84%) and follow-up discussions with teachers (83%); professional development activities (75%); lesson plans (73%). It was surprising to see that assessment practices (78%) constituted evidence beyond lesson plans even though another question indicated that district assessments aligned with standards occurred in just 43% of schools. Further only 62% used student performance as evidence leaving a gap between how the students did on the assessments and the design of the assessments by teachers.

Supervisors ably summarized their successes and challenges as they worked to implement national and state standards into their districts and departments.

#### **Greatest Successes in districts:**

- *Curriculum writing* that involves teachers actively, takes place over a number of years, facilitates collegial dialogue, creates experimental plans, enables teachers to take ownership of curriculum, assist in articulation.
- *Support for professional development* for teaching strategies through outside consultants, workshops, resources (new textbooks, technology), involvement of teachers across levels.

- *Assessment projects* to connect teaching and testing through resources and training in district or national plans (e.g., AFLAP, LinguaFolio, proficiency testing).

### **Greatest Challenges in districts:**

- *Administrative support* in terms of budget, time, stable leadership, teacher turn-over, PD specific to foreign languages, staff.
- *Teacher reluctance to change* with concerns on those who are unwilling to abandon a primarily grammatical syllabus, focus on textbook coverage, consider standards a waste of time, want classroom autonomy not collaboration, rely on discrete-point/pencil-paper tests, see language as the outcome not communication. Concern is also expressed for preparation and induction of new teachers. Only 56% felt that teacher education graduates are familiar with Standards; it will be important in the future to see whether the ACTFL/NCATE national recognition designation improves this evaluation.
- *Status of foreign languages* as not being a core subject with resulting lack of funding, exclusion from district priorities. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) priorities were identified as a major initiative that resulted in negative impact on foreign language programs in terms of student learning opportunities and funding for professional development for teachers.

*In National Language Resource Centers:* These federally funded resource centers include among their objectives research into language learning, professional development especially for teachers of less-commonly taught languages (LCTL), curriculum and material development. Their funding and growth has occurred as the Standards have expanded to include languages other than the original nine. Standards for learning Arabic are now in the printed version; they have also been developed for Hindi, Swahili, Korean and are in various stages of development for American Sign Language, Scandinavian languages, and additional African languages. Direct support for development came from the Standards Collaborative Board, Language Resource Centers, and international government groups supporting instruction in the U.S. in their national languages.

A survey of directors of LRCS and a website search by a Task Force member, Ursula Lentz, provided evidence of ways in which Standards were integrated into program activities. Eleven centers provided information. Standards were primarily addressed in areas of professional development and curriculum and materials with some work in assessment. Center websites have served to disseminate materials for teaching and assessment. The influence of Center summer institutes is confirmed through the electronic survey of educators. That data indicates that 24% of teachers report having received professional development at summer institutes. The survey did not determine sponsorship of those institutes so exact information of the numbers of these summer programs that were Center-sponsored.

Developing standards-based curriculum and professional development related to curriculum development was reported by 91% of the responding LRCs. It is important to note that most of the materials developed, including curriculum units, lessons, and online professional development modules are available online for download, mostly free of charge and offer the most concrete evidence of the impact of standards on LRCs. The materials provide teachers a view of what standards implementation looks like in the classroom. Materials developed for the

critical languages (other than Arabic and Chinese which have language-specific standards) tended to focus on proficiency guidelines, likely because the languages are taught in post-secondary programs. This will undoubtedly change as other language groups, mentioned above, are published in the next editions of standards (N.B. The plan is for the next print edition to include a CD with all language-specific standards).

Assessments developed by LRCs overall focus on use of authentic texts and scenarios but do not address the modes of communication. Professional development for assessment included proficiency and formative assessments. The integrated performance assessment model (IPA), developed by ACTFL as a framework for assessing the national standards, provides a framework for including all standards in an assessment. One LRC has done extensive work with the model providing online standards-based professional development, and sample curricular units that assess the standards. Additional information from the LRC Survey is available in the Survey Results document;

*In educational organizations at large:* In addition to the states using the national standards in the development of their frameworks, major multidisciplinary organizations also used them in their own outcome initiatives. The National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) includes in its program review an assessment of how teachers are prepared in specific disciplines. Foreign languages had not been a discipline involved in this process prior to the development of the national standards. The Standards Collaborative provided the funding for ACTFL to be designated as the Specialized Professional Association (SPA) for foreign language teacher candidates. The standards developed for teacher education programs directly connected to the student learning Standards; in fact, an advantage for the ACTFL/NCATE collaboration lay in the fact that the profession had new standards in the performance outcomes paradigm whereas many other disciplines struggled making a major shift away from their former standards. The ACTFL SPA standards were highly praised and served as a model for other SPAs. Universities that have successfully been designated as “Nationally Recognized” for their foreign language teacher education programs have incorporated Standards into their programs thereby strengthening the higher education / K-12 teacher connection. (See <http://www.ncate.org/tabid/165/Default.aspx> for foreign language nationally recognized programs).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards reviews portfolio submissions of teachers who seek to receive their credential as a “highly accomplished” teacher which in many states entails financial rewards. The 5 Core Propositions of the NBPTS are expanded for a number of disciplines. In foreign languages, the Standards provided much of the performance and assessment descriptors for this program. (See [http://www.nbpts.org/userfiles/file/WorldLanguages\\_standards.pdf](http://www.nbpts.org/userfiles/file/WorldLanguages_standards.pdf) for the world language standards).

## NATIONAL STANDARDS AND TEACHING PRACTICE

*The standards have had impact and influence on the practice of classroom teachers.* The evidence in support of this affirmation gathered from the survey is reported in detail in the Survey Findings document. Information was gathered through survey forced-choice and open-

ended responses; the latter items provided insights that will be particularly valuable for future planning and projects. Patterns of teacher response to practice include that:

- Teachers have worked to create classroom activities related to standards and have created and taught new lessons/units with a standards-based focus. They have also connected current activities to the standards. The latter approach, matching current practice to standards, was the dominant model in the early years. Today more teachers claim that the standards are indeed their organizing principle and that the standards are the basis of activities.
- Teachers seem to focus primarily on the Communication (79%) and Cultures (22%) standards in their teaching. Within Communication Interpersonal (63%) receives most emphasis with Interpretive (31%) and Presentational (24%). However, based on the open-ended survey responses, it is unclear as to the degree of understanding of the new paradigms presented in these two goal areas with any depth (e.g., three modes of communication, 3P culture paradigm). The teaching of Cultures reflected teacher comfort with his/her own knowledge and experience. Those who were native speakers and who had substantial experience abroad found it easy to teach, although a number mentioned that they only taught the culture they knew best; for many languages, especially Spanish, this could ignore vast areas of the target-language world. Teachers without experience in the target culture found it difficult to teach and did not express a way to use the Culture Framework to learn more themselves.
- The evidence that district supervisors seek to verify implementation of standards includes classroom observations and discussions with teachers as well as professional development activities and lesson plans.
- Teachers have not embraced the Connections (11%) and Communities (8%) standards to the extent anticipated, which overlooks the interdisciplinary purpose of the standards. The forced choice ranking may have influenced part of these responses although open-ended items confirmed this. Teachers interpret the Communities goal area as one that requires them to take students into the local community or abroad. They find this goal area to be nebulous, out of their control, and not assessable.
- Given the importance in the standards of using the target language in the classroom, teachers indicate that they use the target language at least 90% of the time or more in most of their classes.
- Standards have not been made transparent to students at the classroom level (i.e., teaching students about the standards).
- Lowest impact of standards is in the areas of assessing students' ability to interact with target-language communities and providing opportunities for students to communicate with others via technology.
- Teachers interpret the Communities goal area as one that requires them to take students into the local community or abroad. They find this goal area to be nebulous, out of their control, and not assessable. The professional literature survey indicates that 18 articles have appeared on that topic and the last few years have shown more interest in higher education by linking to service learning initiatives on campuses. The Standards do not limit the definition of the goal area to a physical community; the increasing use of social networking and other technological advances should encourage innovative ways of connecting students with native speakers and the global community.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*The standards have had impact and influence on the content of professional development (PD).* In the section on institutional impact, the context of professional development was explored. The content of professional development through the teacher perspective is presented here. Impact, however, might have been higher with more opportunities for formal professional development; slightly over half of survey respondents reported having received formal PD, and less than half have engaged in informal PD.

- Formal PD has primarily focused on the Communication and Cultures goal areas, 99% and 56% respectively, which offers some explanation as to why instructors have not addressed Connections (37%), Comparisons (32%), and Communities (25%) in their practice to the same extent as the more familiar areas. Formal PD on the Standards has mostly consisted of a one-shot workshop (79%) or even shorter session/seminar/lecture (56%) that began occurring within the last five years, some eight years after the first publication of the Standards. Thus, it took some time for Standards to reach instructors. A reason for formal PD not having had more of an impact on classroom practice is the ineffectiveness of a one-shot workshop plus lack of follow-up after PD. On a more positive note, 24% reported having attended a summer institute and 12% indicated that they had participated in a series of workshops. These formats should have provided more in-depth work with Standards, curriculum and lesson planning.
- Informal PD seems to have more evenly covered all five goal areas, which means that instructors on their own have sought information on the full spectrum of the Standards. Talking with colleagues (76%) and reading professional literature (59%) have been the most prevalent types of informal PD on standards. Cross-referencing this with the literature survey where all Five Cs were the most common focus of articles (184), but when a single goal area was the focus, Cultures generated the most articles (58).
- Evidence for the influence of Standards on PD in districts, departments, and with individual teachers is extensive. The survey indicates that respondents agree and strongly agree that PD on the Standards has: determined how supervisors plan professional development; prompted discussion among colleagues who teach foreign languages and the reading of professional literature on standards; prompted teachers to re-examine their philosophy of teaching languages, as well as their instructional and assessment practices; led to instructors' matching or connecting their current classroom activities to the standards and to develop lesson/unit plans that address the standards; prompted teachers to focus more on developing oral interpersonal communication, be it adapting textbook activities to make them more interpersonal or providing their students with opportunities to negotiate meaning with the teacher and classmates.
- As a result of PD on the standards, teachers have begun to pay more attention to developing the interpretive mode of communication and to providing students with the tools to engage in lifelong learning of the foreign language.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS IN METHODS COURSES

Evidence was presented to show that new teachers, as judged by district supervisors, are familiar with Standards (56%) but that leaves 44% who are not. A related question as to whether their university mentors were oriented toward Standards found that only 37% were completely so rated, 58% minimally, and 5% not at all. This may be a result of a number of teacher education programs that continue to have student teaching supervision done by a non-specialized faculty member. Survey questions were posed directly to foreign language methods faculty who would be those most likely to have knowledge of Standards and reflect them in their syllabi. Information on the methods course was gathered through a specific set of survey items and through a follow-up project conducted by Nathan Bond, Task Force member, who collected 29 syllabi from which he could gather more in-depth information.

*The Standards have had an impact on the content of methods of teaching courses.* The most widely used resource used to address Standards in methods courses is the publication *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (76%). More than 50% report incorporating other standards-based resources into their courses such as the professional literature, textbook, websites, state standards and frameworks. Almost half also access videos (49%) and sample thematic units (48%) built upon Standards. Methods courses are addressing to a high degree (90%+) a number of topics that relate to the standards such as communicative language teaching, the importance of using the target language, the cultures framework (Products, Practices, Perspectives), teaching grammar in context, making input comprehensible, and making content meaningful. Topics addressed less frequently in methods courses are preparing learners for lifelong learning, standards-based assessment, and using the target language beyond the classroom; two of these related to the Communities goal area highlighting again that this area, highly prized by stakeholders and even students, receives less attention from all professional groups: classroom language teachers, methods course teachers, professional development personnel.

Over 17 tasks pursued by methods students that relate to Standards received over 50% positive responses by faculty. Those with over 80% response included:

- Design oral, written, and/or multimedia presentational tasks
- Select an authentic oral, written, and or visual text as the basis for a lesson and/or thematic unit
- Design lessons that integrate the three modes of communication
- Design interpretive listening, reading, and/or viewing activities that develop interpretive strategies.

These and other tasks indicate that the Standards, its framework of communicative modes, the use of authentic materials, and thematic units form a strong core of future teacher work in methods courses. Least cited tasks in methods courses are assessments of learner's ability to interact with target language communities (34%) and assessments to measure students' understanding of the 3Ps (41%). While the use of technology in methods courses is high, it is used primarily to locate authentic materials and deliver presentations rather than to address the Communities standards.

Survey responses were based upon items that did relate to Standards-based content. The Task Force on Professional Development decided to look at course syllabi as further evidence of attention to Standards in methods courses. Nathan Bond contacted survey respondents and 31 submitted syllabi for perusal. He found that 25 professors integrated Standards into the methods course. In assessing the extent to which this was done; he determined that 4 did so extensively as evidenced by over half of class sessions clearly identified Standards as part of the lesson topic. Seven syllabi listed Standards in approximately half the lessons, and 12 did so in 1 to 4 lessons. This does not mean that Standards were not treated in actual lessons but is limited to syllabus citation. A major way in which the syllabi present Standards information is through the required textbook for the course. The Standards publication was required in 8 courses and optional but recommended in an additional 5. The Annenberg videos, *Teaching Foreign Languages K-12:A Library of Classroom Practices*, are specifically listed as materials in 5 syllabi.

Syllabi confirmed information from the survey as to the types of tasks teacher education students do in the courses. In terms of the Five Cs, these syllabi indicated that emphasis was placed on all goal areas in 15 of the courses; this may in part be related to the textbook adopted in that course which covers all Cs. In other syllabi, the emphasis is seen to be on goal areas of Communication or Communication/Culture. In 11 courses, lesson plan templates/formats and/or rubrics to evaluate plans require students to indicate how Standards are targeted in their lessons.

## CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

***The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning have had an impact and influence in multiple areas of the profession.*** The initial question posed for this project can be answered in the affirmative as evidenced by searches of the professional literature, surveys of institutions and individual teachers, and additional information gathered by task force members. This report highlights places where impact and influence have been greatest to include:

- The publication, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, in its third edition has been widely read and served as the basis for Standards implementation, for research and curricular articles. It is cited often in the professional literature, used as a basis for state standards development, served as a reference for design of workshops and professional development, and influenced successful assessments such as the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA). This project has provided insights into areas where the next edition of the Standards should update and clarify premises. Next steps: A new Standards package is being developed which will include a renewed version of the generic standards with a CD for all the language-specific standards. As new languages have developed their standards, the current publication is getting too large.
- A growing number of the Less Commonly Taught Languages have been developing language-specific standards and that work has been supported by the Standards Collaborative Board. As these are completed, they will be added to the CD referenced above. At present, standards in American Sign Language, Hindi, Korean, Swahili, have been developed, and Modern Greek, Scandinavian, Yoruba are underway.

- A solid body of professional literature that describes how Standards have formed and reformed curriculum, program, and classroom instruction. Articles have focused on both K-12 and college/university programs. All five goals areas of standards have been addressed as well as specific areas. As a result of the project, this literature is accessible to the profession as a searchable web bibliography. *Next steps:* Keep the bibliography current through a team of volunteer reviewers.
- Institutional integration of Standards has been accomplished in the majority of states and in many districts even where there are no state standards. The content of the Standards did fulfill the intended role of being broad, visionary, and flexible enough at the national level so that states could adopt and adapt them as appropriate to initiatives and goals at that level. Likewise school districts added a level of specificity to state standards and developed programs that had local support financially and educationally. *Next steps:* Support dialogue among states and districts on standards-related professional development especially in terms of stronger instructional practices and performance assessment.
- The Standards have provided a set of outcomes amenable to linkage with a number of educational initiatives that have arisen in states such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Common Core. The communicative, cultural, connections, comparisons, community goals have facilitated alignment with these larger initiatives in ways that a more narrow focus on language systems alone would not have permitted. In higher education teacher preparation standards for NCATE program recognition are derived from the Standards, and as universities make efforts to be recognized, their language departments are addressing challenges to promote proficiency and content knowledge from the Standards framework. Other initiatives in higher education have included performance outcomes for majors/minors and in general education; the Standards provide guidance for meeting these issues. *Next steps:* Disseminate “cross-walks” of these documents with professional leadership so that language instruction plays a role in the total educational experience of today’s students. Build stronger linkages to higher education programs and assessment priorities.

A set of specific recommendations to the profession will complete the work of this grant project. These recommendations arise from the information gathered throughout the project and will set an agenda for the profession for the next several years.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

### **Project Personnel**

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