Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards World Language Education

Introduction

The 2026 Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards for World Languages represent Nebraska's commitment to preparing students for success in college, career, and civic life through meaningful communication in more than one language. These standards support the development of students' language proficiency across three communicative modes—Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational—and promote cultural understanding, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

The standards are aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (2024) and the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. They are designed to support Nebraska educators in delivering high-quality instruction that fosters biliteracy, intercultural understanding and academic achievement.

Content Area Standards Overview

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-760.01 requires the State Board of Education to adopt measurable academic content standards for the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Standards describe grade-level expectations for given content areas and provide a framework upon which Nebraska

districts develop, establish, and implement curriculum. For effective teaching and learning to occur, the content area standards should drive local decisions related to instructional materials, resources, and interim, formative, and summative assessments. The Nebraska Department of Education has identified quality criteria in the development of content area standards. These criteria ensure that standards are grounded in a strong research base of human cognition, motivation, and teaching and learning and describe essential knowledge and skills for college, career, and civic readiness. The standards, written by teams of Nebraska educators and reviewed by subject matter experts, were developed with the following of indicators of quality:

- **Measurable**. Standards provide benchmarks against which student progress toward learning goals can be measured.
- **Appropriately challenging**. Standards must build in complexity so that by the end of grade 12, students are prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Connected**. Student learning is most effective when it connects knowledge and skills to related topics and real-world applications.
- **Clearly worded**. Content area standards must effectively communicate what students should know and be able to do.
- **Scaffolded**. Indicators in the Nebraska content area standards scaffold student learning by sequencing connected knowledge and skills across grades so that students build and deepen understanding and ability over time.
- **Specific.** Specificity assures that the language used in standards and indicators is sufficiently detailed to be accurately interpreted by educators.

Standards Design

Nebraska's standards reflect the tiered structure common across all content areas. Grade-level or grade-band standards include broad, overarching content-based statements that describe the basic cognitive or affective

expectations of student learning. They also reflect, across all grade levels, the long-term goals for learning associated with college and career readiness. Indicators further describe what students must know and be able to do to meet the standard as well as provide guidance related to classroom instruction. Supporting resources are available on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

Nebraska's Standards Organization

Nebraska's standards are organized in three levels of specificity:

- **K-12 Comprehensive Standards.** These statements identify broad, general concepts that are not grade-band specific, covering the big ideas of the subject.
- **Proficiency Levels and Bands Expectations**. These identify what students should know and be able to do by the end of each identified proficiency level and proficiency band. Each of these categories includes a description of the expectations for the given proficiency level and band.
- **Curricular Indicators.** The statements provide specific information to distinguish expectations between proficiency levels and bands. Curricular indicators are integral parts of the standard.

Focus on Proficiency

In addition to the standards and indicators, this document is organized by proficiency levels and proficiency bands. Proficiency levels are specific to the Language and Literacy Strand and are consistent with the 2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

- **Novice** learners rely on memorized language and contextual support to communicate basic meaning.
- **Intermediate** learners use language more independently to sustain interaction and convey meaning in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.
- **Advanced** learners communicate with greater precision, flexibility, and control across a wide range of time frames and contexts, including academic, professional, and community settings.

The Cultures and Communities Strand and the Lifelong Learning Strand are also organized by Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. However, these levels function independently from the language proficiency expectations included in the Language and Literacy Strand.

Three Integrated Strands

A major shift in the 2026 revision is the organization of the standards into three integrated strands, consolidating and reframing the 2019 standards:

1. **Language & Literacy** *(previously Communication)*
   Focuses on interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication across modalities, emphasizing language functions, text types, and literacy development.
2. **Cultures and Communities** *(previously two strands: Cultures and Communities)*
   Emphasizes intercultural understanding, interaction with diverse communities, and the ability to navigate cultural perspectives, practices, and products in authentic contexts.
3. **Lifelong Learning** *(previously two strands: Connections and Cognition)*
   Centers on learning strategies, cross-disciplinary transfer, career connections, and sustained language development beyond the classroom.

Together, the strands position world language learning as an integrated process that supports communication, cultural understanding, and lifelong growth.

Coding

The standards are organized using a coding system that includes the state, content area, proficiency level or band, strand, standard, and indicator.

The above example (NE.WL.N.3.1.1) reads: Nebraska. World Language Content Area. Novice Proficiency Level . Strand 3. Standard 1 . Indicator 1.

Key Features of the World Language Standards

The overall structure of Nebraska's College and Career Ready Standards for World Languages reflects the two-tier structure common across all Nebraska content area standards. The two levels within the structure include standards and indicators.

Standards are broad, overarching statements that reflect long-term learning goals. They describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of language learning.

Indicators define measurable outcomes aligned with each standard. They specify what students must demonstrate to show proficiency development across proficiency ranges, and they guide assessment and instructional decisions.

The standards provide clarity and coherence to support language learning across a range of educational settings and grade levels. They are not a curriculum; rather, they provide the framework from which local districts and educators design instruction. Decisions regarding materials, pacing, thematic content, and instructional practices remain under local control.

The Nebraska Department of Education supports educators in the implementation of these standards through guidance, professional development, and curated resources. Educators may refer to the Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative for support in selecting high-quality instructional materials that align with these standards.

World Language Strands

Nebraska's World Language Standards are organized into three Strands, aligned with the national World-Readiness Standards:

- **Strand 1: Language and Literacy**
  - The Language and Literacy Strand emphasizes communication through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It focuses on building proficiency across the three modes of communication: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational.
- **Strand 2: Cultures and Communities**
  - The Cultures and Communities Strand promotes students' abilities to interact with cultural competence and respect, to analyze cultural products and practices, and to engage meaningfully with multilingual communities both locally and globally.
- **Strand 3: Lifelong Learning**
  - The Lifelong Learning Strand highlights the development of language learner autonomy and motivation, including goal-setting, reflection, and using language for personal enjoyment, enrichment, and professional growth throughout life.

Within each goal area, standards and indicators are articulated by proficiency range rather than grade level. This design acknowledges that students enter and progress through language learning at different points and rates, especially in programs that serve heritage speakers, dual language learners, and late-start language

learners. Each indicator describes the expected performance at a specific proficiency range based on the ACTFL scale (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced).

STRAND 1: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Key Points for the Revised Standards

The updated "Language & Literacy" strand for the Nebraska World Language Standards significantly enhances the previous "Communication" strand (WL1) by explicitly integrating a broader focus on literacy skills within the three modes of communication: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational. While the previous standards recognized these modes and their role in meaningful communication, the new framework provides more granular and actionable indicators across all sublevels (Novice Low to Advanced High) for listening, speaking, reading, and writing within each communication mode. A notable addition is the inclusion of specific strategies for learners at Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. These strategies move beyond simply describing what learners can do to also outlining how they can achieve communication goals (e.g., using graphic organizers, cognates, circumlocution, self-correction, and asking for clarification). This reflects a more comprehensive approach to developing practical language skills and aligns with the concept of language as functional communication. See Appendix for language learning strategies applicable to all learners.

Support for Key Points with Current Theory

These revisions are pertinent as they align with contemporary language acquisition research emphasizing a proficiency-based approach where language learning is about the ability to use language to accomplish communication objectives in real-world contexts. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which inform these standards, define proficiency as the ability to use language consistently across diverse situations, including unrehearsed communication on unfamiliar topics. The Guidelines also describe proficiency in terms of four criteria (FACT): Functions and tasks, Accuracy, Context and content, and Text type. By providing detailed indicators and explicit strategies within each mode, the revised standards directly support learners in

developing this sustained ability across these FACT criteria. The inclusion of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes as organizing principles reflects the understanding that these modes represent the authentic ways individuals interact with language in one-way reception, two-way interaction, and one-way production.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines explicitly incorporate these modes to facilitate understanding of their relationship with performance descriptors used in educational contexts. Furthermore, the explicit focus on literacy skills within these modes (as seen in analogous state standards like Ohio's Interpretive Literacy) supports the development of "21st century literacy skills", enabling learners to "infer meaning," "recognize organizational features," and "make text connections", which are critical for deeper comprehension and production beyond surface-level language use. The emphasis on strategies also empowers learners to navigate complex linguistic challenges and become more effective communicators, aligning with research on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which highlights the importance of authentic interaction and meaningful language use. This approach views communication as both a goal and a primary means of learning. Additionally, the focus on learners producing language through strategies supports the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), which posits that producing language helps learners notice gaps in their knowledge, test hypotheses about the language, and develop metacognitive awareness of their linguistic resources.

STRAND 2: CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

Key Points for the Revised Standards

The new "Cultures and Communities" strand represents a significant evolution from the previous separate "Culture" (WL2) and "Communities" (WL4) strands. This consolidation underscores the inseparability of language and culture and emphasizes active engagement within communities. While the previous Nebraska standards aimed for students to "observe and discuss" cultural elements and "identify and apply culturally-appropriate language", the revised strand builds on these objectives to "interact with cultural understanding and cultural

humility" as well as "engage in local and global communities with cultural understanding". This change promotes a more dynamic and participatory role for learners. The new standards introduce specific indicators such as "Culturally Authentic Engagement" and "Culturally Authentic Collaboration", which guide learners toward practical, active participation and thoughtful interaction within multilingual communities.

Support for Key Points with Current Theory

This combined strand aligns with research that posits intercultural understanding is integral to effective communication. Learning a language provides unique opportunities to develop "cultural insights" and "understand, respect, and value the practices, products, and perspectives that are at the heart of cultures other than their own". The integration of cultures and communities reflects the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards' vision of learners engaging in "real-world contexts and unrehearsed situations". The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines themselves, while focusing on language abilities, incorporate "sociocultural knowledge" as a component of accuracy across speaking, writing, listening, and reading domains. The ACTFL Performance Descriptors, which are aligned with the Guidelines, also explicitly list "Cultural Awareness" as a parameter for performance.

By emphasizing interaction and collaboration, the standards foster crucial skills like empathy, respect for diversity, closer introspection, greater self-awareness, and active listening, which are vital for navigating a "diverse, multilingual world where worldviews, cultural customs and traditions often clash". This holistic approach prepares students to be "globally competent individuals who can communicate effectively to compete in a highly competitive global market" and build "social neighborhoods within our diverse communities". This approach is strongly supported by Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which argues that language education must integrate linguistic competence with intercultural skills, attitudes, and knowledge to enable successful and appropriate communication across cultural boundaries. The move towards "Culturally Authentic Engagement" and "Culturally Authentic Collaboration" directly reflects the development of skills like savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness) and savoir être (attitudes of openness

and curiosity) from Byram's model, encouraging learners to critically analyze cultural practices and actively mediate understanding.

STRAND 3: LIFELONG LEARNING

Key Points for the Revised Standards

The new "Lifelong Learning" strand consolidates and elevates aspects previously found across the "Connections" (WL3), "Communities" (WL4), and "Cognition" (WL5) strands in the older Nebraska standards. This revision creates a cohesive framework that emphasizes the ongoing and self-directed nature of language learning beyond formal instruction. The focus has expanded to "gain deeper understanding, develop critical thinking, and solve problems" through language study, linking it explicitly to "building, reinforcing, and expanding knowledge of other disciplines" (WL3.1). Furthermore, the revised standards make direct connections between language and culture study and "personal, educational, and career plans" (WL3.2), highlighting the practical value of multilingualism. A significant update is the explicit emphasis on "lifelong learning skills" (WL3.3) through "goal setting, action planning, and progress monitoring through intentional use of effective learning strategies, self-assessment, and self-reflection".

Support for Key Points with Current Theory

The "Lifelong Learning" strand is strongly supported by linguistic and educational research that recognizes language acquisition as a "long-term process" that extends throughout an individual's life. The integration of interdisciplinary content connections (WL3.1) aligns with ACTFL's "Connections" goal and the Michigan standards, which state that "interdisciplinary content connections" are an essential element of proficiency-oriented language learning. Research indicates that learning another language enhances "critical thinking" and "mind-mapping skills", making language a tool for intellectual growth across all subjects. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines underscore the importance of context and content in defining language ability, and expanding these contexts to other disciplines enriches the learner's overall proficiency. The explicit link to

personal, educational, and career plans (WL3.2) is critical given the "proven economic value" of bilingualism and the increasing demand for "globally competent individuals". This ensures that language learning is perceived as a valuable asset for future success and societal contribution, aligning with the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards, which describe how learners "demonstrate ability to make connections and comparisons as they engage in unrehearsed communication as members of local and global communities". Finally, the emphasis on metacognitive skills (WL3.3) like goal setting, self-assessment, and strategy use is foundational for learner autonomy.

The ACTFL Can-Do Statements, aligned with the Proficiency Guidelines, explicitly encourage individuals to "engage in active goal setting and monitoring of their own progress". This directly supports Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory, which emphasizes learners' proactive role in managing their own learning, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their progress. By actively engaging in monitoring their own progress and adjusting strategies, learners are better equipped to sustain their language development, adapting to various learning contexts and rates of acquisition. This empowers them to take "responsibility for their own learning journey" and continue developing their linguistic and intercultural abilities long after formal schooling ends. This also ties into motivation theories in second language acquisition, where internalizing goals and seeing clear relevance to personal and career paths (instrumental and integrative motivation) are key for sustained engagement.

Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative

The standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should learn, but do not prescribe specific curricula, lessons, teaching techniques, or activities. Standards describe what students are expected to know and be able to do, while the local curriculum describes how teachers will help students master the standards. A wide variety of instructional resources may be used to meet the state content area standards. Decisions about curriculum and instruction are made locally by individual school districts and classroom teachers.

High Quality Instructional Materials

Every Nebraska student deserves the opportunity to learn from high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials to prepare for success in college, career, and civic life. While the revised standards lay out a roadmap for the acquisition of 21st century skills, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), along with a well-crafted, locally determined curriculum, are essential to assuring students meet grade-level benchmarks.

[insert NIMC Graphic] The Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative (NIMC) promotes and advances equity by providing tools and resources so that all Nebraska students have access to high-quality materials. This includes learning the content outlined in Nebraska's college- and career-ready standards but also includes opportunities for students to discover and explore their passions within the context of postsecondary interests. Research demonstrates that English language learners, students with disabilities, low-income, and students of color are less likely to have access to high quality content or textbooks in the classroom. This inequity, in part, accounts for the significant achievement gap between these students and their peers. The NIMC is committed to help address this gap.

Developing a Vision

As districts consider instructional materials, a key first step is establishing a district-wide vision for excellent literacy instruction in which all students have access to grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations. The implementation of high-quality instructional materials is critical to assuring students have access to the grade-level texts, tasks, and instruction that will prepare them for future success. The Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative provides reviews of materials, an abundance of resources such as subject-specific resources for navigating the selection and implementation process, supporting research, professional development resources, communication tools, archived webinars, upcoming events, frequently asked questions, and a statewide map of HQIM in use by Nebraska districts. To learn more, please visit the Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative website.

Novice Level Band

Description

At the novice level, students are characterized by their ability to use language to express basic personal information and satisfy a limited number of personal needs using formulaic language. Their performance is primarily limited to words, phrases, and simple sentences on familiar or highly predictable topics.

In the Language and Literacy Strand (WL 1), novice learners focus on literal comprehension and rote production. In the Interpretive Mode (WL 1.1), students identify the most basic information through isolated words and phrases in highly familiar contexts, relying heavily on visual or contextual support. In the Presentational Mode (WL 1.2), students communicate basic personal information using predictable and formulaic words and phrases about their immediate environment. In the Interpersonal Mode (WL 1.3), students participate in basic exchanges by responding with high-frequency words or constructing simple questions and answers in structured contexts.

In the Cultures and Communities Strand (WL 2), students begin to build cultural awareness by focusing on recognizing cultural products, practices, expressions, and contributions. They identify and describe these elements using isolated words and phrases (WL 2.1) and interact by identifying and responding with culturally appropriate simple expressions in everyday, highly predictable situations (WL 2.2).

Finally, in the Lifelong Learning Strand (WL 3), novice students use the language to identify simple concepts from other disciplines (WL 3.1) using isolated words and predictable structures. They also begin to identify college and career options supported by language skills (WL 3.2) and begin to set short-term learning goals with support (WL 3.3).

[ICON] NE.WL.N.1 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

NE.WL.1.1 Interpretive Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.NL.1.1.1

Identify isolated words and phrases of heard/viewed communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

NE.WL.NM.1.1.1

Identify elements of the explicit meaning of heard/viewed communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

NE.WL.NH.1.1.1

Identify the explicit meaning of heard/viewed communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.NL.1.1.2

Identify isolated words and phrases of read communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

NE.WL.NM.1.1.2

Identify elements of the explicit meaning of read communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

NE.WL.NH.1.1.2

Identify the explicit meaning of read communications containing high-frequency vocabulary, predictable language structures, and/or extra-linguistic support.

NE.WL.1.2   Presentational Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.NL.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication using predictable and formulaic words and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NM.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication using a string of predictable and formulaic and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NH.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication using complex predictable and formulaic and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.NL.1.2.2

Present written communication using predictable and formulaic words and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NM.1.2.2

Present written communication using a string of predictable and formulaic and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NH.1.2.2

Present written communication using complex predictable and formulaic and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.1.3   Interpersonal Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.NL.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by responding with predictable and formulaic questions, gestures, words and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NM.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by using a string of predictable and formulaic questions, gestures, and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NH.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by engaging in conversations with complex, predictable, and formulaic questions, gestures, and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.NL.1.3.2

Exchange written communication using predictable and formulaic questions, words, and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NM.1.3.2

Exchange written communication using a string of predictable and formulaic questions, and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

NE.WL.NH.1.3.2

Exchange written communication using complex, predictable, and formulaic questions, and/or phrases about topics related to the self and immediate environments.

[ICON] NE.WL.N.2 CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

NE.WL.2.1   Cultural Competence

Indicator 1

NE.WL.N.2.1.1

Observe the products and practices of one's own culture(s) and the cultures studied to build an understanding of different perspectives.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.N.2.1.2

Identify expressions and behaviors in cultures studied. Respond appropriately with rehearsed actions and phrases.

NE.WL.2.2   Community Engagement

Indicator 1

NE.WL.N.2.2.1

Identify and explore cultural activities and customs in authentic contexts.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.N.2.2.2

Identify and explore various facets of community relationships.

[ICON] NE.WL.N.3 LIFELONG LEARNING

NE.WL.3.1   Interdisciplinary Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.N.3.1.1

Use the language to build knowledge of other disciplines (e.g., fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, etc.).

Indicator 2

NE.WL.N.3.1.2

Identify and explain basic concepts from other disciplines (e.g., fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, etc.) and recognize patterns or connections between the language and cultures studied and one's own.

NE.WL.3.2   Personal and Professional Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.N.3.2.1

Identify ways that language proficiency and intercultural understanding enrich personal, educational, and career opportunities.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.N.3.2.2

Name and explore opportunities available through bi-/multilingualism and intercultural understanding connected to personal, educational and career goals.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.N.3.2.3

Identify knowledge and skills acquired through the study of language and culture related to personal enjoyment as well as educational and career advancement.

NE.WL.3.3   Self-Regulated Learning

Indicator 1

NE.WL.N.3.3.1

Set short-term goals using familiar strategies with support.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.N.3.3.2

Use familiar learning strategies, monitor progress when prompted, and begin to ask for help and feedback when needed.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.N.3.3.3

Self-assess using simple tools (e.g., rubrics, likert scales, thumbs up/down, etc.) to assess performance and begin to connect effort and strategies to the learning outcomes. Begin to use the results and feedback to improve the learning process.

Intermediate Level Band

Description

Intermediate students are defined by their ability to use language creatively, moving beyond memorized phrases to function with an understanding of need and purpose. They participate in short conversations on predictable or familiar topics and handle simple transactions using sentence-level communication. Their discourse typically consists of discrete sentences and sentence strings.

Within the Language and Literacy Strand (WL 1), students begin to create with language. Interpretively (WL 1.1), they comprehend the main idea and some supporting details from short, connected communications, relying on familiar vocabulary and structures. Presentational (WL 1.2) students express personal meaning by combining and recombining familiar vocabulary into simple, straightforward, connected sentences about personal experiences. Interpersonally (WL 1.3), they can initiate, sustain, and conclude exchanges on familiar topics and meet practical or transactional needs. They develop strategies such as using known language to compensate for unknown vocabulary (circumlocution).

In the Cultures and Communities Strand (WL 2), intermediate learners transition from identifying to analyzing and comparing cultures. They investigate, compare, and provide insight into cultural products, practices, and perspectives, recognizing that significant differences may exist among cultural perspectives. In the Lifelong Learning Strand (WL 3), students apply language to reinforce and expand knowledge. They describe familiar concepts from other disciplines using connected sentences and begin to independently set clear short-term goals and create action plans to monitor their progress.

[ICON] NE.WL.I.1 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

NE.WL.1.1   Interpretive Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.IL.1.1.1

Comprehend simple strands of meaning in heard/viewed communications on familiar topics that contain familiar vocabulary and language structures.

NE.WL.IM.1.1.1

Comprehend strands of meaning in heard/viewed communications on familiar topics that contain contextualized or familiar vocabulary and language structures.

NE.WL.IH.1.1.1

Comprehend various strands of meaning in heard/viewed communications on familiar topics that may contain low-frequency vocabulary, varied language structures, and/or contextual clues.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.IL.1.1.2

Comprehend simple strands of meaning in read communications on familiar topics that contain familiar vocabulary and language structures.

NE.WL.IM.1.1.2

Comprehend strands of meaning in read communications on familiar topics that contain contextualized or familiar vocabulary and language structures.

NE.WL.IH.1.1.2

Comprehend various strands of meaning in read communications on familiar topics that may contain low-frequency vocabulary, varied language structures, and/or contextual clues.

NE.WL.1.2   Presentational Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.IL.1.2.1

Present spoken/signed communication to share information weaving a series of simple sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IM.1.2.1

Present spoken/signed communication to share information weaving a series of connected sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IH.1.2.1

Present spoken/signed communication to share information, weaving a well-structured paragraph in various situations and environments.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.IL.1.2.2

Present written communication to share information weaving a series of simple sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IM.1.2.2

Present written communication to share information weaving a series of connected sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IH.1.2.2

Present written communication to share information weaving a well-structured paragraph in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.1.3   Interpersonal Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.IL.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by expressing ideas with original and creative questions, gestures, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IM.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by sharing ideas and following up with original and creative questions, gestures, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IH.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by initiating, sustaining, and concluding conversations with complex original and creative questions, gestures, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.IL.1.3.2

Exchange written communication to share information using original and creative questions, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IM.1.3.2

Exchange written communication to share ideas and follow up using original and creative questions, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

NE.WL.IH.1.3.2

Exchange written communication to initiate, sustain, and conclude conversations using complex, original, and creative questions, and/or sentences in various situations and environments.

[ICON] NE.WL.I.2 CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

NE.WL.2.1   Cultural Competence

Indicator 1

NE.WL.I.2.1.1

Reflect on the various facets of one's own culture(s) and the cultures studied to deepen understanding of perspectives.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.I.2.1.2

Interact with culturally-specific behaviors and language in common scenarios, and recognize social norms.

NE.WL.2.2   Community Engagement

Indicator 1

NE.WL.I.2.2.1

Participate in level-appropriate and culturally authentic activities and customs.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.I.2.2.2

Participate in meaningful cultural collaborations within school-based communities.

[ICON] NE.WL.I.3 LIFELONG LEARNING

NE.WL.3.1   Interdisciplinary Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.I.3.1.1

Interpret and analyze authentic texts in the language to reinforce and expand knowledge of other disciplines (e.g., fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, etc.).

Indicator 2

NE.WL.I.3.1.2

Interpret and analyze concepts from other disciplines using insights (e.g., historical, scientific, artistic, literary, etc.) from the language and cultures studied.

NE.WL.3.2   Personal and Professional Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.I.3.2.1

Develop plans for enhancing and incorporating language proficiency and intercultural understanding in personal, educational, and career preparation.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.I.3.2.2

Explain the value of bi-/multilingualism and intercultural understanding to enrich opportunities in personal, educational, and career settings.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.I.3.2.3

Apply knowledge and skills acquired through the study of language and culture for life-long learning (e.g. personal enjoyment and educational/career advancement).

NE.WL.3.3   Self-Regulated Learning

Indicator 1

NE.WL.I.3.3.1

Set clear short-term goals and create action plans using effective learning strategies.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.I.3.3.2

Use familiar learning strategies, begin to monitor progress independently, make changes to strategies when prompted, and often ask for help and feedback when needed.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.I.3.3.3

Self-assess performance using tools (e.g., rubrics, checklists, etc.) to connect learning outcomes to the intentional use of effective learning strategies. Frequently use results and feedback to improve the learning process.

Advanced Level Band

Description

The Advanced Level marks the stage where students are characterized by their comfort in using the language to provide details, reflect, and elaborate on both concrete and abstract information and ideas. Advanced learners communicate effectively by narrating and describing in the present, past, and future time frames, generally utilizing paragraph-level communication. They communicate with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion.

In the Language and Literacy Strand (WL 1), advanced learners demonstrate sophisticated linguistic control. Interpretively (WL 1.1), they analyze the meaning and purpose of communications containing complex language structures and often contextualized, interdisciplinary, or unfamiliar vocabulary. They synthesize interdisciplinary knowledge and integrate new information into their personal schema. Presentational (WL 1.2) students create a clear, coherent, and well-reasoned discourse on subjects related to their field of interest, producing organized and detailed paragraphs across all major time frames with cohesion and fluidity. Interpersonally (WL 1.3), they engage in unplanned, in-depth exchanges and discussions on a variety of concrete and abstract topics, and are able to effectively handle unexpected complications.

Across the Cultures and Communities Strand (WL 2) and the Lifelong Learning Strand (WL 3), students apply deep knowledge and critical thinking. They function at a competent level in intercultural contexts by analyzing and explaining how diversity in cultural products and practices relates to perspectives and cultural norms (WL 2). In lifelong learning, they synthesize interdisciplinary insights to generate informed solutions to complex local and global issues (WL 3.1). Furthermore, advanced learners independently set meaningful short and long-term goals and actively analyze how their language and cultural skills support personalized, purposeful educational and career pathways (WL 3.2, 3.3).

[ICON] NE.WL.A.1 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

NE.WL.1.1 Interpretive Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.AL.1.1.1

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of heard/viewed communications containing low-frequency vocabulary, complex language structures, and/or contextual clues.

NE.WL.AM.1.1.1

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of heard/viewed communications containing contextualized interdisciplinary and/or unfamiliar vocabulary within complex language structures.

NE.WL.AH.1.1.1

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of heard/viewed communications containing interdisciplinary and/or unfamiliar vocabulary within complex language structures.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.AL.1.1.2

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of read communications containing low-frequency vocabulary, complex language structures, and/or contextual clues.

NE.WL.AM.1.1.2

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of read communications containing contextualized interdisciplinary and/or unfamiliar vocabulary within complex language structures.

NE.WL.AH.1.1.2

Analyze the implicit meaning, explicit meaning, and purpose of read communications containing interdisciplinary and/or unfamiliar vocabulary within complex language structures.

NE.WL.1.2   Presentational Mode of Communication

NE.WL.AL.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication to analyze familiar and some unfamiliar topics creating connected paragraphs across all major time frames with confidence.

NE.WL.AM.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication to synthesize familiar and some unfamiliar topics creating a series of well-connected paragraphs across all major time frames with confidence and fluidity.

NE.WL.AH.1.2.1

Present spoken / signed communication tailored to a specific audience that provides an original, well-supported argument, including detailed evidence in support of a point of view across all time frames with confidence and cohesion.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.AL.1.2.2

Present written communication to analyze familiar and some unfamiliar topics creating connected paragraphs across all major time frames with confidence.

NE.WL.AM.1.2.2

Present written communication to synthesize familiar and some unfamiliar topics creating a series of well-connected paragraphs across all major time frames with confidence and fluidity.

NE.WL.AH.1.2.2

Present written communication tailored to a specific audience that provides an original, well-supported argument, including detailed evidence in support of a point of view across all time frames with confidence and cohesion.

NE.WL.1.3   Interpersonal Mode of Communication

Indicator 1

NE.WL.AL.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by analyzing and adapting conversations with complex questions, gestures, and/or sentences to support and justify perspectives in various contexts across a multitude of time frames with confidence.

NE.WL.AM.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by synthesizing and adapting conversations with complex questions, gestures, and/or sentences to thoroughly elaborate in various contexts across a multitude of time frames with confidence and fluidity.

NE.WL.AH.1.3.1

Exchange spoken/signed communication by anticipating and adapting conversations with complex questions, gestures, and/or sentences to engage holistically in various contexts across all time frames with confidence and cohesion.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.AL.1.3.2

Exchange written communication that analyzes and adapts conversations using complex questions and/or sentences to support and justify perspectives in various contexts across all major time frames with confidence.

NE.WL.AM.1.3.2

Exchange written communication that synthesizes and adapts conversations using complex questions and/or sentences to thoroughly elaborate in various contexts across all major time frames with confidence and fluidity.

NE.WL.AH.1.3.2

Exchange written communication that anticipates and adapts conversations using complex questions and/or sentences to engage holistically in various contexts across all time frames with confidence and cohesion.

[ICON] NE.WL.A.2 CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

NE.WL.2.1   Cultural Competence

Indicator 1

NE.WL.A.2.1.1

Analyze the relationships between the products and practices of one's own culture(s) and the cultures studied.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.A.2.1.2

Demonstrate awareness of subtle differences among cultural behaviors and adapt behaviors in familiar and unfamiliar situations, adjusting as appropriate.

NE.WL.2.2   Community Engagement

Indicator 1

NE.WL.A.2.2.1

Engage in and reflect on culturally authentic activities and customs.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.A.2.2.2

Engage in meaningful and lasting cultural collaborations within and beyond the school.

[ICON] NE.WL.A.3 LIFELONG LEARNING

NE.WL.3.1   Interdisciplinary Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.A.3.1.1

Analyze authentic texts in the language and synthesize information gathered to reinforce and expand knowledge of other disciplines (e.g., fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, etc.).

Indicator 2

NE.WL.A.3.1.2

Synthesize understanding by applying interdisciplinary insights and concepts to create informed solutions to complex local and global issues drawing from multiple sources.

NE.WL.3.2   Personal and Professional Connections

Indicator 1

NE.WL.A.3.2.1

Envision and create detailed paths to language proficiency and intercultural understanding with personal, educational, and career plans.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.A.3.2.2

Analyze the broader impacts of bi-/multilingualism and intercultural understanding on personal, educational, career, and societal outcomes.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.A.3.2.3

Integrate knowledge and skills acquired through the study of language and culture for life-long learning (e.g. personal enjoyment and educational/career advancement).

NE.WL.3.3   Self-Regulated Learning

Indicator 1

NE.WL.A.3.3.1

Set meaningful short and long-term goals independently and create a personalized, flexible plan including a variety of strategies.

Indicator 2

NE.WL.A.3.3.2

Use multiple learning strategies, regularly monitor progress, make changes to strategies independently when needed, and proactively seek help and feedback.

Indicator 3

NE.WL.A.3.3.3

Self-assess performance consistently and independently using a variety of tools to attribute growth to the intentional use of effective learning strategies. Consistently use results and feedback to improve the learning process.

Special Considerations for Implementation of the Nebraska World Language Standards

Nebraska recognizes that language programs exist in diverse linguistic, cultural, and instructional contexts. The following Special Considerations guide the interpretation and implementation of the Nebraska World Language Standards across all languages, learner populations, and program models. These considerations ensure that proficiency expectations are understood within the characteristics of individual languages, learner backgrounds, and instructional settings.

I. LANGUAGE SYSTEMS AND MODALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Languages differ significantly in their structures, modalities, and literacy demands. Performance expectations should be interpreted with attention to the characteristics of the language of study. (See appendix for suggested performance outcomes).

- Alphabetic languages (e.g., French, German, Spanish) typically support earlier decoding and faster early-stage vocabulary expansion.

- Logographic or mixed-script languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.) require sustained instructional time for literacy development; reading and writing proficiency emerge along a different trajectory than oral comprehension and production.
- Native American Languages may have written language systems, while other languages' systems are still in development. Language proficiency must follow the individual tribes and language elders for guidance.
- Visual–spatial signed languages, such as American Sign Language (ASL), use three-dimensional grammar, classifiers, non-manual markers, and signing space. Literacy includes viewing and producing signed texts through live or recorded formats. Instruction and assessment should include modality-specific features when appropriate (e.g., non-manual markers, classifiers, tone, register). The following are equivalent modalities:
    - Listening ↔ Viewing
    - Speaking ↔ Signing
    - Reading ↔ Viewing recorded/visual texts
    - Writing ↔ Creating recorded signed expressive texts

II. LEARNER BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

Students come to language learning with a variety of backgrounds. All learners—Heritage, Multilingual, Dual Language/Immersion, and World Language Learners—require intentional opportunities to develop intercultural communicative competence.
Program considerations include:

- Integrating cultural products, practices, and perspectives into instruction in ways that promote deep understanding rather than surface-level comparisons.
- Supporting intercultural communication skills, including noticing, interpreting, and responding to cultural nuances with understanding and respect.

- Aligning cultural learning with academic language development, helping students use the language of study to analyze cultural perspectives, express interpretations, and engage in meaningful cultural inquiry.
- Acknowledging students' linguistic and cultural perspectives, connecting home experiences, community knowledge, and lived cultural practices to language study.
- Providing authentic cultural resources, including texts, media, artifacts, and voices from a variety of communities, to strengthen global awareness and interdisciplinary literacy in the language of study.

This focus ensures that cultural understanding develops alongside linguistic proficiency and supports Nebraska's broader goals for preparing culturally competent, globally engaged learners. See Appendix for language learning strategies applicable to all learners.

The following are special considerations for specific groups:

1. Heritage Language Learners

Heritage learners are those students with a cultural or family connection to a language they are studying. These students often enter programs with varying cultural and proficiency skills, such as: literacy, vocabulary, discourse skills, and cultural perspectives.

Program considerations include:

- Providing differentiated pathways and placement processes that recognize existing proficiency.
- Supporting the development of academic literacy, expanded vocabulary, and formal register.

2. Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners are those students with a primary language other than English. It is important to recognize that multilingual learners bring valuable linguistic assets that support their development in additional languages.

When appropriate, teachers may draw on the English Language Proficiency Standards to support:

- Effective scaffolding to intentionally build on students' knowledge across all languages they use, including their home languages and English.
- Instructional planning that connects students' language practices across English and the language of study, especially in the areas of interaction, academic language use, and interdisciplinary literacy.
- Goal setting that acknowledges students' individual English language development alongside their growth in the language of study.
- Assessment practices that consider the varied literacy backgrounds, prior schooling experiences, and proficiency levels of multilingual learners may have in English and other languages.

Connections between the Nebraska World Language Standards and ELPA 21 proficiency levels can help educators design instruction that is developmentally appropriate and supportive of multilingual learners' full linguistic repertoires.

3. Dual Language and Immersion Learners

Dual Language and Immersion learners are those students who participate in programs whereby regular instruction occurs in two languages across content areas (e.g., Science, Math, Social Studies, etc.). Students develop proficiency in English and a partner language through both language and content instruction.

Program considerations include:

- Increasing exposure time to the language of study when setting proficiency expectations.
- Recognizing that academic language develops across content areas and may differ from conversational proficiency.
- Providing guidance for expected proficiency outcomes at key grade bands (refer to ELA Standards) , acknowledging variations in instructional approaches and time allocations.

4. World Language Learners

World Language Learners are those students who begin learning an additional language with no or limited prior experience beyond English. These learners benefit from instructional approaches that explicitly build foundational linguistic awareness and support the gradual development of academic language in the language of study.

Program considerations include:

- Supporting the development of foundational language-learning skills, including phonological awareness, decoding of new sound or writing systems, basic vocabulary acquisition, and strategies for interpreting meaning from context.
- Providing clear, scaffolded instruction, including vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns, aligned with proficiency progression.
- Developing metalinguistic awareness, helping students make connections between English and the language of study in areas such as grammar, morphology, cognates, syntax, text structure, etc.
- Ensuring access to content, using visuals, modeling, gestures, structured interactions, and authentic texts and materials appropriate to learners' proficiency levels.
- Building confidence and learner agency, acknowledging that monolingual students may need additional time to acclimate to learning through a new language and may progress at different rates across modalities (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). (See appendix for suggested performance outcomes)

III. ACCESSIBILITY

In accordance with federal and state accessibility laws, programs must ensure that all students have the support they need to participate fully in language learning.

This includes:

- Addressing communication situations, such as limited access to auditory or visual input, and providing necessary multimodal supports.
- Ensuring the availability of accessible instructional materials, assessments, and resources, including audio, visual, signed, and other multimodal formats.
- Designing learning environments that enable all students to engage meaningfully with the language of study, regardless of sensory or communication differences.

IV: USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Nebraska World Language Standards recognize that technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), plays an increasingly significant role in communication, language use, and global engagement. Consistent with the ACTFL Technology Position Statement and guidance from the Nebraska Education Technology Association (NETA), technology and AI should be used intentionally to enhance language learning, support communicative proficiency, and promote ethical, equitable, and responsible digital citizenship.

Technology and AI tools can be integrated to support the core goal of world language education: the development of learners' ability to interpret, interact, and present meaning in another language. Digital tools may expand access to authentic texts, multimedia resources, and real-world audiences, enabling learners to engage with diverse perspectives and cultures. AI-supported tools may assist with language exploration, practice, and feedback, but they should complement—not replace—human interaction and instructional guidance.

Student Agency and Ethical Use

In alignment with ACTFL and NETA principles, students can be taught to use technology and AI responsibly, transparently, and ethically. This includes:

- Understanding the appropriate role and limitations of AI in language learning

- Using AI tools to support learning processes (e.g., brainstorming, revising, comprehension support) rather than substituting for original thinking or communication
- Respecting intellectual property, privacy, and data security
- Demonstrating honesty and accountability in technology-assisted work

Language learning classrooms provide a meaningful context for developing ethical digital citizenship as students analyze sources, evaluate AI-generated content, and reflect on accuracy, bias, and cultural authenticity.