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Standard Guide for Use-Oriented Foreign Language Instruction¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers identification of the components of a quality language instructional program and establishes criteria for each component. This guide is meant to provide criteria for the minimum standard for a program designed to attain specified language proficiency goals.

2. Terminology

2.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

2.1.1 *authentic language material*—material produced by native speakers for native speakers for nonlanguage training purposes.

2.1.2 *class(room) hour*—50 min of instruction plus a 10-min break.

2.1.3 *client*—the individual or organization that engages the services of a language training institution.

2.1.4 *institution*—the organization that provides language training.

2.1.5 *intensive*—at least 4 h per day, 5 days per week.

2.1.6 *proficiency*—ability to use language skill(s).

2.1.7 *program*—a system of instruction.

2.1.8 *progress*—change in language skill(s) over time.

2.1.9 *quality*—consistent in meeting or exceeding client expectations.

2.1.10 *student*—the one who studies the language.

2.1.11 *use-oriented instruction*—language instruction directed at satisfying the communication needs of the students.

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This guide is intended to serve institutions for the development of instructional programs as well as to serve potential clients and students in the selection of a training program to meet their needs.

3.2 It may not be possible for a specific program to meet all of the components of the standard for every language. If the

standard cannot be met for a given language, the institution will clearly inform the client and the student of that fact.

3.3 The following components are addressed:

3.3.1 *Needs Analysis*—Assists clients and training institutions in determining language needs, setting reasonable objectives and expectations, and selecting appropriate training programs.

3.3.2 *Describing Levels of Language Proficiency*—Assists students, clients, instructors, and institutions in assessing needs, setting realistic goals, and charting progress toward those goals.

3.3.3 *Explicitness and Reasonableness of Language Outcome Expectations*—Assists in determining an individual's need for training to increase proficiency. Determines the estimated number of classroom hours required to meet an identified proficiency objective. Assists in determining the suitability of an institution to provide appropriate instruction.

3.3.3.1 These guidelines are not intended to be absolute. Individual cases may be influenced by a number of factors, including: individual language learning ability, prior language experience, native language, attendance, motivation, homework, exposure and reinforcement outside the classroom, and individual learning style.

3.3.4 *Training Program Criteria*—Assists students, clients, and institutions in identifying and establishing a use-oriented training program.

3.3.5 *Establishing Criteria for Language Instructors*—Assists in recruiting, selecting, and retaining instructors.

3.3.6 *Supervision of Instructors*—Emphasizes the importance of the supervisory role that may be performed by one or more individuals. Assists institutions in establishing supervisory procedures and gives guidelines to clients for evaluating a training program to meet their needs.

3.3.7 *Evaluating Student Progress in Language Proficiency Terms*—Establishes minimum requirements for evaluating and documenting student progress in terms of language proficiency for the benefit of clients, students, institutions, and instructors.

3.3.8 *Guides for Institutional Stability*—Provides clients with criteria by which to determine the stability of an institution.

3.3.9 *Advertising and Promotional Activities*—Assists institutions in preparing advertising and promotional materials and assists clients in interpreting and understanding such advertising and materials.

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3.3.9.1 These guidelines shall apply to advertising, such as print, broadcasting, and electronic media, as well as oral presentations.

4. Needs Analysis

4.1 Procedure:

4.1.1 Determine how the prospective student will use the target language by conducting a language audit that addresses the following:

4.1.1.1 Language skills needed (listening, speaking, reading, and writing),

4.1.1.2 Communicative tasks to be accomplished (for example, closing a deal, ordering a meal, or asking for directions),

4.1.1.3 Conditions under which language is to be used (with whom, where, how, and why), and

4.1.1.4 Kind of language needed (standard, academic, technical, regional, or street slang).

4.2 Determine the student's current level of proficiency in any relevant language skills by such means as an oral proficiency interview, a writing sample, or a self-evaluation check list.

4.3 Determine the proficiency level(s) and time frame that are needed to meet the student's language needs. Refer to sections on Describing Levels of Language Proficiency and Language Outcome Expectations.

4.4 Describe appropriate training options (for example, in the areas of scheduling, class size, curriculum, methodology, and cost).

4.5 Agree on objectives and training program.

5. Describing Levels of Language Proficiency

5.1 Skills:

5.1.1 *Listening Skills*—See **Table 1**.

5.1.2 *Speaking Skills*—See **Table 2**.

5.1.3 *Reading Skills*—See **Table 3**.

5.1.4 *Writing Skills*—See **Table 4**.

6. Explicitness and Reasonableness of Outcome Expectations

6.1 See **Table 5** for explicitness and reasonableness of outcome expectations guidelines.

7. Training Program Criteria

7.1 Every use-oriented language training program should include the following:

7.1.1 A curriculum plan that:

7.1.1.1 Is designed to meet the needs of the client,

7.1.1.2 Is made clear to the student,

7.1.1.3 Is responsive to feedback from the client or student, or both, and

7.1.1.4 Includes frequent and ongoing formative evaluation.

7.1.2 Instructional materials that:

7.1.2.1 Are professionally developed,

7.1.2.2 Are user-friendly,

7.1.2.3 Are determined by the institution to be appropriate to the student's skill level in the language,

TABLE 1 Levels of Listening Proficiency^A

Level	Description
0	No Proficiency
0+	Survival Proficiency Able to understand short phrases based on memorized material. Slightly longer phrases must be repeated and include frequent pauses to be understood.
1	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to understand very simple statements, questions, and face-to-face conversations concerning some familiar situations and many basic needs. Repetition and slower speech are necessary for understanding.
2	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to understand most routine conversations spoken at a normal pace relating to social and occupational situations. Some difficulty understanding common structures and vocabulary remains; occasional repetition is still needed.
3	General Functional Proficiency Able to understand almost all conversations spoken at a normal pace without repetitions, including discussions within the individual's occupation; readily understands phone conversations and broadcasts, but still experiences some difficulty with very fast speech, slang, and cultural references.
4	Full Functional Proficiency Able to understand all discussions, no matter how complex, within the listener's experience; able to understand most cultural references as well as manipulations of the language including persuasion, negotiation, conjecture, and humor.
5	Educated Native Proficiency

^A A plus sign after Levels 1 through 4 (that is, 1+, 2+, 3+, and 4+) indicates the ability to handle successfully all of the functions of that level and, inconsistently, some of those of the next.

7.1.2.4 Include authentic language materials from countries where the target language is spoken, and

7.1.2.5 Include materials for study outside of class.

7.1.3 Learning resources that include at least:

7.1.3.1 Audio and video capabilities,

7.1.3.2 Basic reference materials, such as dictionaries, and

7.1.3.3 Authentic materials, including current and relevant periodicals.

7.1.4 An instructional methodology that:

7.1.4.1 Is appropriate to individual student needs as determined by the needs analysis and ongoing evaluation, and

7.1.4.2 Can be articulated to the client or student, or both.

7.1.5 Procedures for program evaluation during the training program and at the conclusion of the training program.

7.2 Training Program Options:

7.2.1 Quality programs may include one or more of the following:

7.2.1.1 Immersion opportunities,

7.2.1.2 Computer-assisted instruction capabilities, including multimedia,

7.2.1.3 Training to use language for specific purposes,

7.2.1.4 In-country training opportunities,

7.2.1.5 Field work,

7.2.1.6 Enrichment from outside sources,

7.2.1.7 Continuity of training at other locations, and

7.2.1.8 Procedures for program evaluation after the student has taken up responsibilities in the field.

8. Establishing Criteria for Language Instructors

8.1 Criteria for Employment:



TABLE 2 Levels of Speaking Proficiency^A

Level	Description
0	No Proficiency
0+	Survival Proficiency Able to satisfy immediate needs such as for lodging, meals, and transportation, using memorized or rehearsed speech only. No fluency.
1	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple conversations on familiar or rehearsed topics. Experiences frequent misunderstandings. <i>Examples</i> —Can exchange greetings, elicit predictable information, and explain routine procedures in a restricted way.
2	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to handle routine daily interactions that are limited in scope. Able to handle confidently, but not fluently, most social conversations on such topics as current events, work, family, etc. <i>Examples</i> —Can typically ask and answer predictable questions in the workplace and receive and provide straightforward direction.
3	General Functional Proficiency Able to speak the language with sufficient fluency and accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. However, there are noticeable linguistic and cultural imperfections that limit the individual's ability to participate in more sophisticated interactions such as high-level negotiation. Can typically discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with ease. <i>Examples</i> —Can use the language as part of normal professional duties such as answering objections, clarifying points, justifying decisions, understanding the essence of challenges, stating and defending policy, conducting meetings, delivering briefings, etc. Can reliably elicit information and informed opinion from native speakers.
4	Full Functional Proficiency Able to use language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs. <i>Examples</i> —Understands the details and ramifications of concepts that are culturally or conceptually different from one's own. Can set the tone of interpersonal, official, semi-official, professional, and nonprofessional verbal exchanges with a representative range of native speakers (for all audiences, purposes, tasks, and settings). Can play an effective role among native speakers in such contexts as negotiations, conferences, lectures, and debates on matters of disagreement. Can advocate a position at length, both formally and in chance encounters, using sophisticated verbal strategies.
5	Educated Native Proficiency

^A A plus sign after Levels 1 through 4 (that is, 1+, 2+, 3+, and 4+) indicates the ability to handle successfully all of the functions of that level and, inconsistently, some of those of the next.

8.1.1 Instructors should meet the following established criteria:

- 8.1.1.1 Authentic linguistic and cultural characteristics (native or near-native proficiency),
- 8.1.1.2 A bachelors degree or equivalent,
- 8.1.1.3 The equivalent of two years teaching experience (a minimum of 200 classroom hours),
- 8.1.1.4 Recent exposure to the target language and culture, and
- 8.1.1.5 Pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach the target language as a foreign language.

8.2 In some instances instructors may not meet all of the established criteria. In these cases, the institution will disclose this fact to the client. The institution will undertake quality control and on-the-job training and will establish a probationary period to ensure effective instruction.

9. Supervision of Instructors

9.1 Instructor Training:

TABLE 3 Levels of Reading Proficiency^A

Level	Description
0	No Proficiency
0+	Survival Proficiency Able to understand some isolated words and phrases such as personal or place names and street or store signs but not connected prose.
1	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to understand very simple connected printed material. Able to get the main idea of short, frequently encountered materials such as invoices, forms, and charts.
2	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to read with some misunderstandings straightforward familiar factual material. <i>Examples</i> —Descriptive or narrative writings such as routine reports, simple biographical information, standard business letters, and simple technical material written for the general reader.
3	General Functional Proficiency Able to read with almost complete comprehension a variety of prose material on familiar and unfamiliar topics. Can typically understand news stories similar to wire service reports, routine correspondence, general reports, and technical material in the reader's professional field. Can get the main idea of more sophisticated texts but may not perceive subtlety and nuance.
4	Full Functional Proficiency Able to read fluently and accurately all styles and forms of language pertinent to professional needs.
5	Educated Native Proficiency

^A A plus sign after Levels 1 through 4 (that is, 1+, 2+, 3+, and 4+) indicates the ability to handle successfully all of the functions of that level and, inconsistently, some of those of the next.

TABLE 4 Levels of Writing Proficiency^A

Level	Description
0	No Proficiency
0+	Survival Proficiency Able to note down intelligibly, if not perfectly, bits of information such as a name, an address or location, a date or a simple list of items.
1	Minimal Functional Proficiency Able to note down information to meet simple needs, statements, and questions on familiar topics. Ideas may not flow smoothly. Writing is generally comprehensible to natives accustomed to dealing with non-natives.
2	Limited Functional Proficiency Able to write with some accuracy and in some detail about routine matters as well as about most common or familiar topics. Writing is generally comprehensible to natives.
3	General Functional Proficiency Able to organize and express ideas in writing well enough to satisfy personal, social, professional, or academic needs. There may be occasional errors, but they rarely interfere with the native's comprehension. Sometimes able to express subtleties and nuances.
4	Full Functional Proficiency Able to organize and express ideas in writing on all topics pertinent to personal, social, professional, and academic needs. Able to express subtleties and nuances in a wide variety of styles. Writing may, however, be recognized as the work of a non-native.
5	Educated Native Proficiency

^A A plus sign after Levels 1 through 4 (that is, 1+, 2+, 3+, and 4+) indicates the ability to handle successfully all of the functions of that level and, inconsistently, some of those of the next.

9.1.1 *Orientation*—Every instructor shall have received both an administrative and a pedagogical orientation. The administrative orientation should include an introduction to the institution, staff relationships, record keeping practices, personnel policies (for example, terms of employment), and code of ethics and professional conduct (for example, cross-cultural awareness, interpersonal behavior, conflict of interest, and dealing with criticism). The pedagogical orientation should include a description of student profile(s), course objectives,

TABLE 5 Classroom Hours to Achieve Proficiency Levels, by Language Difficulty^{A,B,C}

From S/L/R-0 ^D to:	S/L/R-1	S/L/R-2	S/R/L-3	S/L/R-4
I. Romance and Germanic Languages French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian Romanian, German Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish	150	400	650	^E
II. Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean	350	1100	2200	^E
III. Other Languages ^F for example, Russian, East European, African, Other Asian languages, etc.	250	600	1100	^E

^A Hours approximate. Actual hours required may vary according to student's language learning aptitude.

^B For learners to achieve these goals, classroom study should be supplemented by a minimum of 2 to 3 h of preparation for each five classroom hours.

^C This table is an adaptation of the U.S. State Department Foreign Service Institute's expected levels of speaking proficiency for various lengths of training. This adaptation is intended to meet the needs of private sector students.

^D S = speaking proficiency, L = listening proficiency, and R = reading proficiency.

^E Generally cannot be achieved in classroom. Requires extensive use of language in the native setting.

^F Indonesian, Malay approximate classroom hours: for S/L/R-1: 200; S/L/R-2: 550; S/L/R-3: 900.

materials and methodology, preparation of lesson plans as required, cross-cultural sensitivity, and evaluations.

9.1.2 *Continuing Professional Development*—Provision shall be made to enable instructors to maintain and enhance their knowledge base through continuing educational opportunities. All instructors shall receive regular in-house staff training. Other opportunities include access to professional literature and may also include membership in professional organizations and professional conference attendance.

9.2 Scheduling and Coordination of Teaching Assignments:

9.2.1 Scheduling is the process of matching the needs of the student(s) (see Section 4) with the skills of the appropriate instructor(s). Scheduling may be the responsibility of one or more persons.

9.2.2 In setting up a quality language training program, it is important that the person(s) in charge of scheduling and coordination take into account a variety of factors, such as student(s)/instructor background knowledge and experience, learning/teaching styles and levels, and cultural and linguistic appropriateness. When appropriate, the student should be exposed to more than one instructor.

9.3 Plan of Supervision:

9.3.1 *Ensuring Preparedness for Class*—Preparedness for class, including development of class plans and syllabus, and selection of books and materials to be used, should be monitored by a person with appropriate experience or training, or both, in teaching in a use-oriented language program.

9.3.2 Classroom Observation:

9.3.2.1 Classes must be observed on a regular basis. The frequency of classroom monitoring varies with the intensiveness and length of the training program, the level of experience of the instructor, and contractual agreements.

9.3.2.2 The duration of classroom visits varies with their frequency.

9.3.2.3 The following elements should be evaluated during a classroom visit performed in the process of instructor supervision (see Fig. 1 for a sample):

- (1) General organizational and preparedness qualities,
- (2) General technique-related qualities,
- (3) General affect-related qualities,
- (4) Student-guidance qualities, and
- (5) Reactive techniques.

9.3.3 Feedback, Counselling, and Appropriate Follow-Up:

9.3.3.1 Feedback should occur as soon as feasible following classroom observation.

9.3.3.2 Counselling should be targeted at elements observed (see 9.3.2.3.(1)–(5)).

9.3.3.3 Counselling should be constructive, collaborative, and positive in nature.

9.3.3.4 Counselling sessions should include agreement on actions to be taken, if any, and should include appropriate recognition, encouragement, and reinforcement of positive observations.

9.3.4 *Soliciting Student Feedback*—Regular formal and informal feedback from students on the quality of instruction should be encouraged and welcomed, and appropriate action taken, when necessary.

9.3.5 *Completing Reports and Records*—A documentary record should be maintained of the results of classroom observations, student feedback, counselling, and any actions taken. Such records should be used in periodic summative evaluations of overall instructor performance (see Figs. 2 and 3 for samples of summative teaching and nonteaching forms, respectively).

10. Evaluating Student Progress in Language Proficiency Terms

10.1 Requirements for Evaluation:

10.1.1 The institution shall have a systematic approach to the evaluation of student progress. This system shall include a variety of means that are implemented at regular intervals throughout the training program.

10.1.2 The means of evaluation shall be appropriate to the objectives of the course (see Section 4).

10.1.3 The means of evaluation shall be determined by the institution and explained to the student early in the program.

10.1.4 The means of evaluating progress may include, but are not limited to, oral and written feedback, learner's logs, informal and formal observations, portfolio assessments, standardized or in-house testing, progress reports, audio or videotaping, and post-course surveys. The means of evaluating end-of-training proficiency may include, but are not limited to, oral and written feedback, formal instruments such as standardized tests, the institution's own tests, portfolio assessment, or a combination thereof.

10.1.5 Formal evaluations must be documented.

10.1.6 Components of a formal instrument used to evaluate proficiency should be: relevancy, objectivity, reliability, and ratibility. There should be available clear descriptions of what results mean (see Tables 1-4).