



## **WHAT ARE THE NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS?**

The 2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements, the result of collaboration between the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guide:

- Language learners to identify and set learning goals and chart their progress towards language and intercultural proficiency;
- Educators to write communication learning targets for curriculum, unit and lesson plans;
- Stakeholders to clarify how well learners at different stages can communicate.

The statements are organized according to the Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational Modes of Communication as described in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*:

- Interpretive Communication: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.
- Interpersonal Communication: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.
- Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

Aligned with the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* and the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* the Can-Do Statements reflect the continuum of growth in communication skills through the Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished levels.

The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication and the Reflection Tool for Learners provide a set of examples and scenarios that show how learners use the target language and knowledge of culture to demonstrate their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Just as the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for language clarify the Communication standards in the World Readiness Standards, this tool is intended to clarify and support the Cultures standards (use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices or products and perspectives of cultures) and lead learners toward developing ICC. For the purpose of this document, ICC refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other language and cultural backgrounds. ICC develops as the result of a process of intentional goal-setting and self-reflection around language and culture and involves attitudinal changes toward one's own and other cultures. Intercultural communicative competence is essential for establishing effective, positive relationships across cultural boundaries, required in a global society.

*The revised language Can-Do Statements were the year-long work of a writing team spearheaded by State Supervisors Kathy Shelton (OH) and Lisa Harris (VA) and ACTFL Director of Education Paul Sandrock. Members included: Ruta Couet (SC), Lynn Fulton-Archer (DE), Jessica Haxhi (CT), Ali Moeller (NE), Debbie Nicholson (WV), Christina Oh (VA), Fernando Rubio (UT), Thomas Sauer (KY), and Jacque Bott Van Houten (KY). The writing team met face-to-face three times and collaborated online over a nine-month period. Once a draft was developed, feedback was provided by over 470 professionals through an online survey and focus groups.*

*The new Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication were developed through a 2016-17 task force chaired by Jacque Van Houten (KY), with sub-committee chairs Ruta Couet (SC), Nathan Lutz (NJ), Ali Moeller (NE), Paul Sandrock (ACTFL), and Kathy Shelton (OH), and with task force members Donna Clementi (WI), Mara Cobe (NC), Bonnie Flint (UT), Paula Garrett-Rucks (GA), Deborah Hefferon (MD), Michael Kluemper (KY), Sarah Lindstrom (CT), Dorie Perugini (CT), Mary Lynn Redmond (NC), Julie Sykes (OR), Alicia Vinson (KY), and Manuela Wagner (CT).*

## HOW ARE THE NCSSFL-ACTFL CAN-DO STATEMENTS ORGANIZED?

### PROFICIENCY BENCHMARKS

Identify the overarching features of language performance, i.e., context, text type and function, in each of the three modes of communication to describe learner's progress along the ACTFL Proficiency continuum. Benchmarks support learners in setting long-term goals and inform program and course outcomes.



### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Deconstruct the Benchmark by focusing on certain aspects of language performance, i.e., context, text type, and function. Indicators describe the steps toward reaching the overarching Benchmark goal. Indicators support learners in charting progress toward meeting language learning goals and inform unit design.



### EXAMPLES

Illustrate language performance in a variety of learning contexts (e.g., social, academic across PK-20, immersion, adult) and inform instruction at the lesson or learning activity level.

Proficiency Benchmarks, Performance Indicators, and Examples are color-coded for ease of use.

Novice (blue) - Intermediate (green) – Advanced (orange) – Superior (gold) – Distinguished (gray)

<b>How to Use the Can-Do Statements</b>	<b>How NOT to use the Can-Do Statements</b>
<p><b>Can-Do Statements describe what learners can do consistently over time</b> Learners demonstrate what they “can do” consistently in each mode and at each sub-level, in numerous situations throughout the learning process. Learners may be at different levels for different modes (Interpretive, Interpersonal, Presentational) or skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking, signing).</p>	<p><b>Can-Do Statements are NOT a checklist of tasks to be demonstrated once and checked off</b> It is not sufficient for learners to show evidence of performance in just one specific situation; the indicators and examples at each sublevel illustrate how learners might demonstrate skills in each mode of communication through a wide variety of evidence.</p>
<p><b>Can-Do Statements help learners set goals as they progress along the proficiency continuum.</b> Can-Do Statements describe what learners can independently do at each sublevel and help pave the way to higher levels. Higher level skills and functions (e.g., using timeframes, understanding complex texts) need to be introduced at lower sublevels and built upon in order to have independent control of those skills and functions at higher sublevels.</p>	<p><b>Can-Do Statements are NOT a limitation of what to learn or teach</b> Can-Do Statements do not show what to learn or teach at each sublevel; the descriptors show the skills and functions that can be done with full control at that sublevel. Learners should work with authentic texts and real-life scenarios at all levels and sublevels and set goals for how to progress to the next higher level.</p>
<p><b>The sets of examples can be adapted to match school, district, or postsecondary curriculum as well as independent learning goals</b> The examples include topics that expand across the proficiency continuum, from familiar (daily life, personal experiences, classroom or researched topics) to concrete to abstract. Learners and educators are encouraged to customize the “I can . . .” examples in order to fit the content and context of the learning and the targeted proficiency level.</p>	<p><b>The sets of examples are NOT a prescribed curriculum</b> The Can-Do Statements include examples of communicative performance to adapt or modify for local curricula; they are not intended to provide ready-made lessons. The examples provided do not claim to be exhaustive or specific to a level of schooling.</p>
<p><b>Can-Do statements are a starting point for self-assessment, goal-setting, and the creation of rubrics for performance-based grading</b> Learners and educators use the statements for self-evaluation to become more aware of what they know and can do in the target language. By using statements aligned to the proficiency scale, educators can more easily create rubrics that enable learners to chart their progress.</p>	<p><b>The Can-Do statements are NOT used as an instrument for determining a letter or number grade.</b> Growth in acquiring a language is measured over time when tasks are integrated into performance assessments and evaluated using rubrics based on the ACTFL proficiency descriptors.</p>

# Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication

## Introduction

The **NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication** and the **Reflection Tool for Learners** provide a set of examples and scenarios that show how learners use the **target language** and knowledge of culture to demonstrate their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Just as the **NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements** for language clarify the Communication standards in the *World Readiness Standards*, this tool is intended to clarify and support the Cultures standards and lead learners toward developing ICC. For the purpose of this document, ICC refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other language and cultural backgrounds. ICC develops as the result of a process of intentional goal-setting and self-reflection around language and culture and involves attitudinal changes toward one's own and other cultures. Intercultural communicative competence is essential for establishing effective, positive relationships across cultural boundaries, required in a global society.

### **Cultures Goal: Interact with cultural competence and understanding.**

**Standard:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain and reflect on the relationship between **Practices and Perspectives** of the cultures studied.

**Standard:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain and reflect on the relationship between **Products and Perspectives** of the cultures studied.

World Readiness Standards

The **NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication**:

- **Provide samples** of how learners can develop and demonstrate their ICC through the language they are learning. The extent to which one can fully understand and participate in a culture is related to the level of language proficiency.
- **Apply to a variety of learning and life environments**, such as in elementary school, an immersion class, a high school or college course, independent learning, a study abroad situation, or a work setting.
- **Serve as a framework**, not a curriculum, to integrate target language use and intercultural competencies in instruction, making clear the inextricable link between language and culture.

- **Focus on communicative interaction** in another culture, i.e., the ability to communicate and articulate in the target language and behave appropriately in the target culture.
- **Are illustrated with examples** for each proficiency level, paired as complementary examples as learners Investigate and Interact.
- **Support deeper learning by providing a Reflection tool with sample scenarios** that show how educators can organize activities for intercultural reflection, both inside the classroom in the target language and outside the classroom in English or the target language.
- **Are meant to be used as part of a school-wide program** that includes educator collaboration with other content areas and time for guided learner reflection on their intercultural experiences.

The use of the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication* can be a first step in the process to simplify the complexities of ICC and provide guidance for educators and learners. Rather than a linear process, ICC is more iterative and interactive, like a mosaic of various cultural experiences informed by self-reflection. Each individual begins at different cognitive, cultural and linguistic stages and progresses at various rates.

## **What is Intercultural Communication?**

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

For the purposes of this document, the term intercultural communication refers only to the use of culturally appropriate verbal and nonverbal skills to build relationships with people of different cultures.

Researchers such as Byram (1997, 2002), M.J. and J.M Bennett (2003), Deardorff (2006), and Fantini (2006) agreed that developing Intercultural Communicative Competence is a complex, non-linear process built from an accumulation of cultural knowledge, practices and social encounters experienced within a variety of cultural contexts. An apt metaphor is a mosaic whose total image is an assemblage of smaller, unique pieces. Each intercultural experience provides an opportunity for interpretation, discovery, interaction and reflection that motivates learners' curiosity and leads to awareness of self and others.

Because intercultural growth involves elements in the affective domain it can be a challenge, and sometimes impossible, for educators to evaluate learners' progress. Educators can, however, evaluate how well learners' language use demonstrates intercultural competence, given that the extent to which one can fully understand and participate in a culture is related to the level of language proficiency. The *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication* suggest examples that allow for and support these opportunities for intercultural encounters.

The *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication* show the intersection of language proficiency and cultural competence, which do not always align. One individual may possess strong cultural competence yet demonstrate a low level of language proficiency (figure 1). Another individual may display high language proficiency but minimal cultural competence (figure 2).

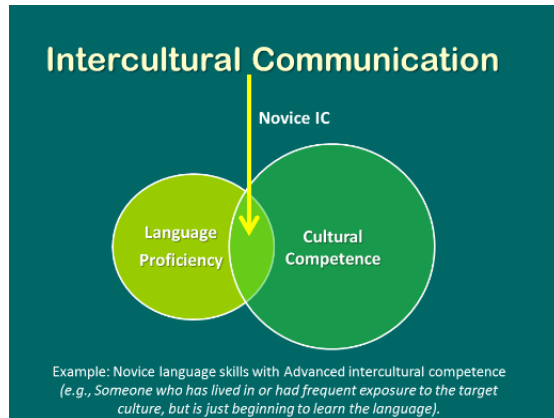


Figure 1

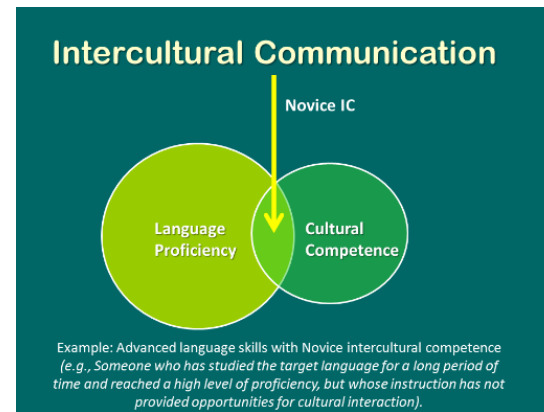
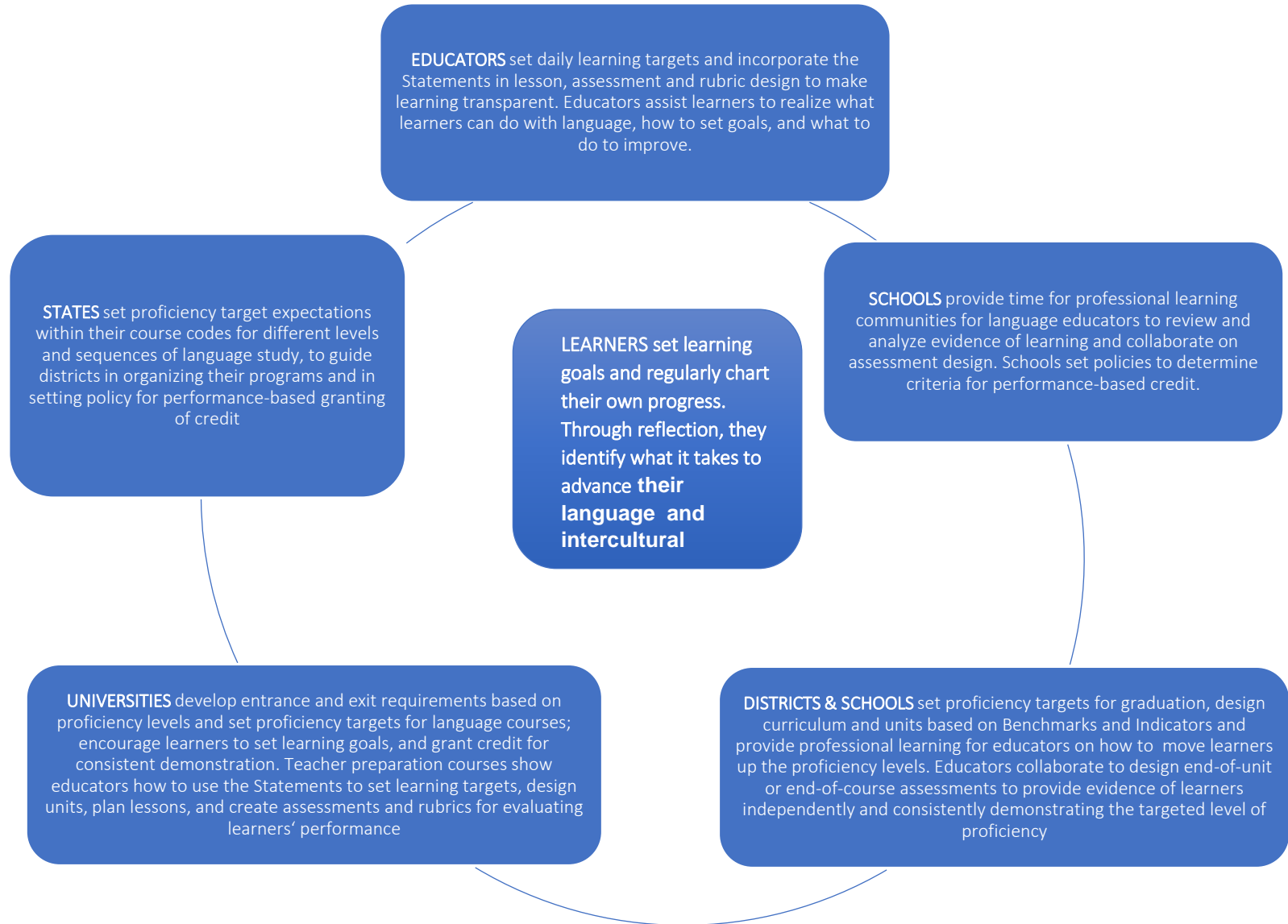


Figure 2

The *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication* focuses on the extent to which learners can demonstrate their intercultural competence through verbal and non-verbal communication. These Intercultural Can-Do Statements are aligned with the Language Can-Do statements to ensure consistency with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The statements are intended to depict the linguistic competency from Novice to Distinguished levels of language proficiency across the modes of communication.

## How Stakeholders Use the Can-Do Statements





## **What are the Theoretical Framework and Research that Support the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements?**

Too often learners are seen as subjects of assessment, not users of assessments. To become the primary users of assessment information, learners must make what they learn part of themselves. One important means for involving learners in their own learning process is by having them participate in a goal setting process to monitor their own progress to determine how well they are accomplishing their learning targets. Learning goals form the foundation for motivation in an instructional setting and for where working memory is being allocated. Motivation is critical to learning because, “without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 74). It is vital to understand motivation in order to promote learner autonomy which is key to the continuation of language learning beyond the classroom.

Learning targets, expressed in terms of Can-Do Statements provide an important venue for setting learning goals to provide language learners the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning through the establishment of positive short-and long-term learning goals and to monitor their own learning experiences to ensure accomplishment of these goals. SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound) goals, such as the Can-Do Statements, provide a clear direction to focus learners’ language learning efforts that will help them meet these goals. Such a constructivist, or sociocultural worldview, regards learning as an ongoing process where learners are continually involved in self-assessment and self-reflection about their own learning ultimately aimed at developing self-regulation and self-efficacy.

The impact on learners and learner achievement of Can-Do Statements, as evidenced in LinguaFolio® (LF®) and its European predecessor, the European Language Portfolio (ELP), has been investigated through a growing body of research. LinguaFolio® was designed to help language educators develop autonomous learning and learner empowerment. Research at the classroom level has revealed that goal setting, which is at the heart of LF® and ELP, promotes self-regulated learning, increases language and academic achievement, enhances motivation and task value, and improves self-assessment when implemented regularly and frequently (Burton & Swain, 2014; Ciesielkiewicz & Coca, 2013; Little, 2009; Little, 2003; Little, Goullier, & Hughes, 2011; Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012; Ziegler, 2014; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012; Clarke, 2013; Moeller & Yu, 2015). Learners who experienced LF® as an intervention in the world language classroom achieved higher academic outcomes as measured by cumulative GPA and ACT scores in math, science, reading, and English in comparison to students who were not exposed to LF® (Clarke, 2013).

These studies have shown that the major components of setting goals, documenting progress, and self-assessment of learning are critical in developing learner autonomy and self-regulation in language learners that contribute to increased motivation, higher language achievement, and academic success.

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