

"Is this going to be on the test?"

**Can we help students develop a proficiency mindset?
COFLT/WAFLT Conference Fall 2016**

Rita Smith Barrett
Portland Adventist Academy
spanishfromtheheart.weebly.com

Student video

- Note: waiting for permission to publicize

The problem

We teach because we want our students to develop proficiency, love for language, but often students seem to care only about grades.



<http://images1cdn1.bcgsearch.com/images/Law-School-grades-and-your-career.jpg>

If we want to change the way students think about class...

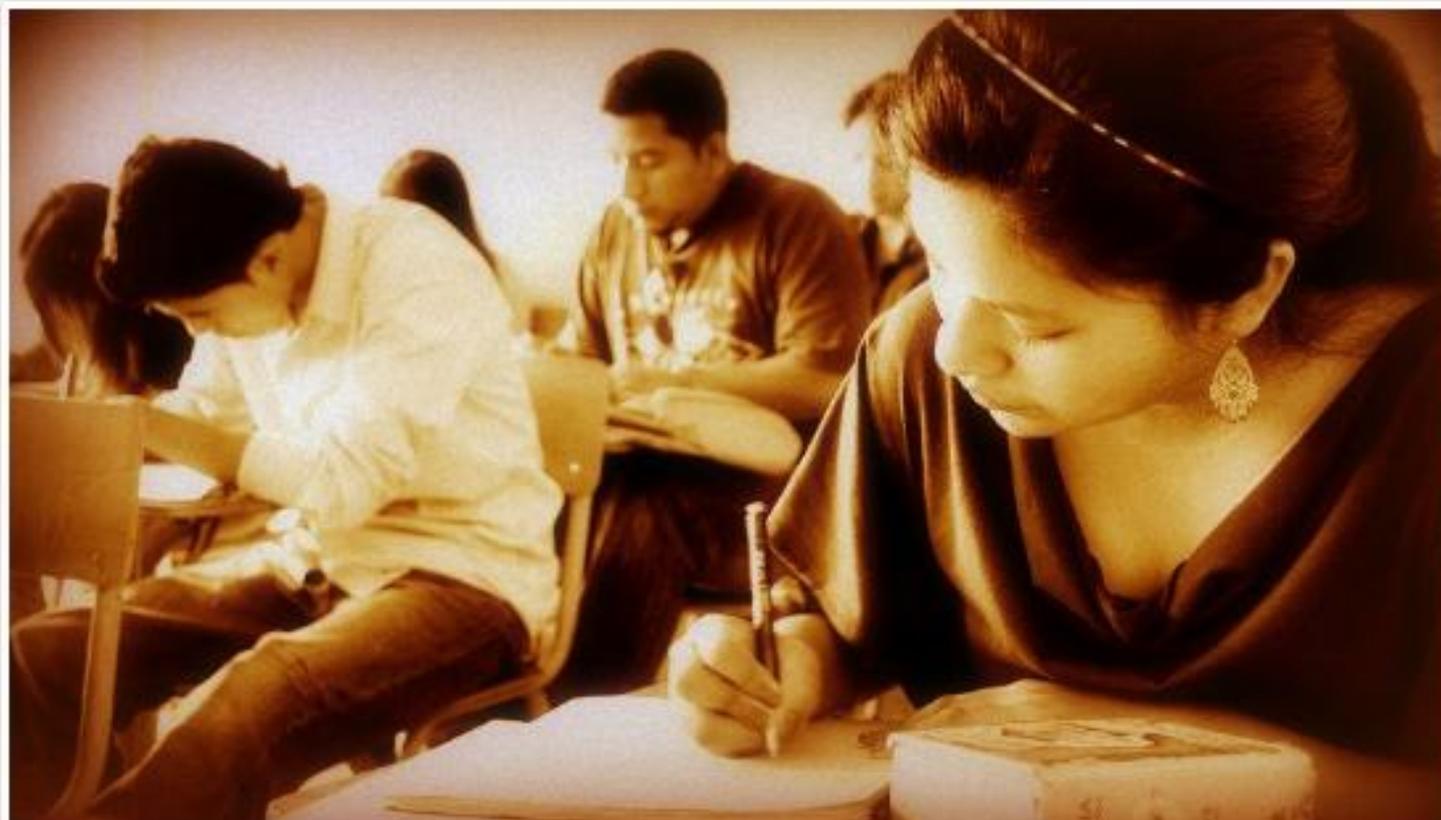
First, we have to re-orient OUR thinking to proficiency. Are we focused on teaching discrete skills, vocabulary lists and grammar rules, or do we see a bigger picture?



PROFICIENCY vs. PERFORMANCE vs. ACHIEVEMENT

By: David Bong Co-Founder & CEO of Avant Assessment

Tuesday, October 04, 2016



Simply stated, Proficiency is the ability to use language in a real-world situation, Performance is the ability to use language in a limited and controlled situation such as a classroom or controlled situation-based exchange, and Achievement is the ability to repeat language elements that have been taught and mastered at some level. Each has a role in language learning, but only proficiency is what people use to communicate in the real world.

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Performance vs Proficiency

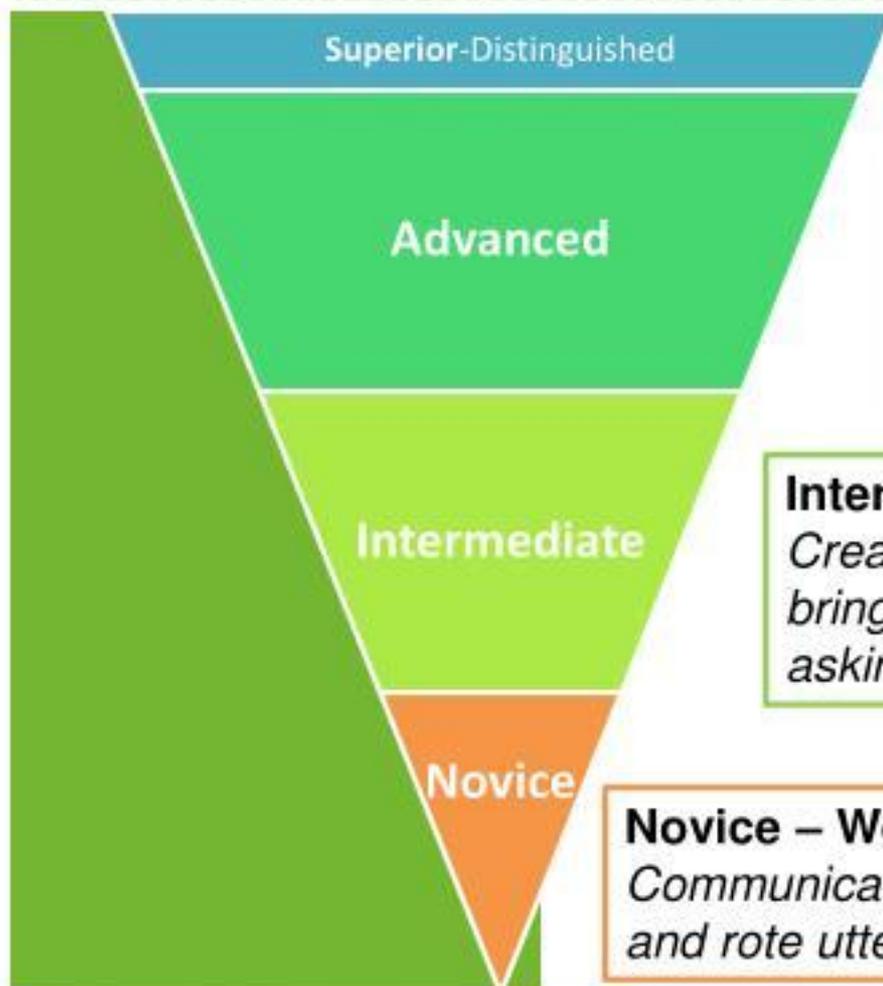


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Can we teach for proficiency?

- Do we engage our students in “real world” language when we role play making hotel reservations?
- At what age does a child make proficient use of his native language?
- What is “real world” language use? Is it only unsheltered use of language with native speakers?

ACTFL Proficiency Levels



Superior-Distinguished

Advanced

Intermediate

Novice

Advanced – Paragraph Level

Narrate and describe in past, present and future and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication

Intermediate – Sentence Level

Create with language, initiate, maintain and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions

Novice – Word Level

Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases

Why would they care?

- If students feel that what they are learning is irrelevant, they won't care whether they become proficient. Why would they want to be really good at something that doesn't matter to them?
- Motivational speeches about later usefulness of language are like trying to convince them they'll use algebra later. Yeah, right.

Why would they care?

Dr. Krashen suggests that our efforts to motivate students are unhelpful. Instead, create comprehensible, compelling input that students can't ignore.

<http://skrashen.blogspot.com/2014/10/the-end-of-motivation.html>

Que llueva (Brain Break)

¡Qué llueva, qué llueva!
El sapo está en la cueva.
Los pajaritos cantan.
Las nubes se levantan.
¡Qué sí! ¡Qué no!
Qué caiga un chaparrón.
¡Qué sí! ¡Qué no!
Qué caiga un chaparrón.



www.guiainfantil.com/servicios/musica/Canciones/que_llueva.htm

Note: José Luis Orozco has a slightly different version
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfY49snnauw>

Make it about *today!*

- Rather than trying to motivate students to learn something that will be useful to them in their impossible-to-imagine adult lives, make proficiency something that is useful to them today!
- Communicative teaching builds a thirst for proficiency. When it is relevant, personalized and compelling, students want to join in.

Let them experience proficiency

If what they hear or read is comprehensible, they can enjoy their current proficiency level, while their proficiency continues to grow.

What is $i+1$? Let's see what it feels like.

[How easy is easy? \(Marcos Benevides\)](#)

<http://www.slideshare.net/MarcosBenevides/how-easy-is-easy?>

Students own their education

Train students to understand basics of SLA

Help them understand proficiency and have reasonable expectations



Language is like a mountain: it is huge and no one knows it all



[http://albugesdigitales.es/blog-fotografia/uploads/montana\(1\).jpg](http://albugesdigitales.es/blog-fotografia/uploads/montana(1).jpg)

But you don't need to know every trail to enjoy the mountain.



http://cdn.allsteamboat.com/images/content/5552_14368_Steamboat_Springs_Colorado_Mountain_Biking_md.jpg

It frustrates me that I can understand so much more than I can say!



Read & Listen

Write & Speak

Your brain needs a flood of input to get a trickle of output.



Hey, WELCOME to my class
which is a LANGUAGE class
and so we want to learn all about language
without using it to talk to anyone.

JUST KIDDING!

Can you talk tacos?



**Talking to people
is what our class is
all about!**

We are on a journey to
COMMUNICATE & CONNECT
with real people who speak real language.

We're charting our journey by talking a lot about **THE TWO BIG P's**:

PROFICIENCY



&



PERFORMANCE

What's PROFICIENCY?

PROFICIENCY helps us stop talking about **grades** that don't really tell us how we're doing
and instead talk about **levels** that tell us what we can do and where we're headed next.

QUICK RUNDOWN:



What's PERFORMANCE?

PERFORMANCE is doing stuff with language -

It's how we show what we can do with our language, **ACCORDING TO PROFICIENCY LEVEL.**

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How about an example?

How Would you talk about tacos?

If you talk about tacos using just a few simple words, you know



beef, lettuce, cheese, yum!

that's an example of using language in our lowest measured proficiency level, **Novice Low.**

How about adding in some repetitive phrases?



beef, cheese on top, lettuce on top, no hot sauce, eat every day

now you've moved up to performing with some language in our next level, **Novice Mid.**

When you can put some sentences together (still simple!)



I like tacos. Tacos, beef and I like beef. I put cheese. My friend John, no cheese. He doesn't like cheese.

CONGRATS! You've graduated to performing some tasks in our goal for level 1, **Novice High.**

Where are We going next?

We're adding **connectors** and more **vocabulary** and creating with language:



My family eats tacos a lot, often, because we all love the tacos. My mom makes amazing the tacos. She finds recipes on some web site and makes best tacos with different ingredients. Do you want you come to my house to try my mom's tacos?

WHOA - that's a performance in a whole new level called **Intermediate**,
and it's divided into low, mid, and high too!

**In our class we talk about all our work by figuring
out two things:**

- 1) what **PROFICIENCY** level am I showing here?
- 2) how can I work on moving to the next level?

**Because when we ask these questions, what we're
really asking is:**

- 1) how can I **CONNECT** with more people today?
- 2) how can I **CONNECT** with them tomorrow?



**Enjoy
the
JOURNEY!**

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So now how would we talk about tacos?!

If you talk about tacos by combining what you know to make short statements and simple sentences, making yourself understood even with some mistakes,



My family eat tacos a lot because my mom makes best tacos. She makes tacos, amazing, with different gredients. You want eat my mom's tacos at my place soon?

that's an example of using language in the first proficiency level above novice, **Intermediate Low**.

How about adding in more connections, more variety, more questions?



Because all we absolutely love them, my mom cooks tacos pretty often. She finds the instructions to cook them on a some website. How about come to my house to try them? Sounds good? How about next Monday after the school?

Now you're usually able to communicate what you want even if there are some "mistakes," and you've moved up to performing with some language in our next level, **Intermediate Mid**.

Where to next? Keep going and you'll confidently describe, tell stories about some experiences in various time frames, and even handle some unexpected complications!



What you mean you don't like tacos? I know, you had bad tacos once, right? I went to a taco stand in Texas one time and I was threw up for some hours! I mean, sick as a dog. I thought, I don't want tacos again another time and then my mom made tacos de lengua with cilantro and onions from Mexico and I thought, lol! My friends need to try these tacos, they're like the heaven! So, Monday after school?

Congrats, you've graduated to performing some tasks in: **Intermediate High**.

But what if you start confidently handling unexpected complications? Organizing communication well, throwing in info from various parts of life like social problems?



Do you have any idea where that avocado on your taco came from? Probably it came from Mexico, the center part. I heard the news that there is drought in Mexico and not only, also there have been drug problems the government can't handle. Drug problems make difficult to pick and sell and transport the avocados.

WHOA - That's a performance in a whole new level called **Advanced** - low, mid, & high of course!

In our class we talk about all our work by figuring out two things:

- 1) what **proficiency** level am I showing here?
- 2) how can I work on moving to the next level?

Because when we ask these questions, what we're really asking is:

- 1) how can I **connect** with more people today?
- 2) how can I **connect** with them tomorrow?

NOVICE LOW

Describe it using only words. Try to think of the ten most important words to describe it. Be very generic. There can be spelling errors and wrong words like a Kindergartener would make.

NOVICE MID

Describe it using simple phrases and lists. You do not need to have verbs. There can be spelling errors and wrong words. "Me like"

NOVICE HIGH

Describe it using simple sentences with few details. Use "I like", "It has" and "It is". Limit the sentences to 4 words or less.

INTERMEDIATE LOW

Describe it using detailed sentences with words like "with" "in" "at" "also".

INTERMEDIATE MID

Describe it using detailed sentences. Combine some of your sentences with transition words like "furthermore" "however".

INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Describe it using a paragraph with detailed sentences. Include a simple personal story in the past tense. *When I was little, I went...* Also include ordinal words like "first" "last" and "then".

Student-friendly proficiency descriptions

WLClassroom.com

Novice Low:

I can...

- Repeat single words or short phrases I've heard and memorized
- Greet others
- Recognize some words that I have heard before
- Give my name
- Name a few things around me
- Answer questions with "yes" or "no"
- Count to 10

I'm working on...

- Learning more words and phrases
- Understanding more things that I read or hear
- Asking some simple questions

Novice Mid:

I can...

- Use different words and phrases I've heard and memorized
- Introduce myself
- Greet others in different ways
- Name some of my likes and dislikes
- Name different activities
- Ask simple questions
- List things, like colors, animals, numbers
- Give time, date, and weather info

I'm working on...

- Speaking in simple but full sentences
- Explaining words I don't know
- Asking more kinds of questions
- Hesitating less when I speak

Novice High:

I can...

- Provide info using words, phrases and short sentences
- Confidently speak on practiced subjects like giving basic info about myself
- Describe surroundings and people
- Giving opinions on things I like/dislike
- Use words like "is," "like" and "have" and connect sentences with "and" or "with"
- Ask simple questions
- Read/listen and understand main ideas

I'm working on...

- Speaking in complete sentences
- Using correct verb forms
- Directing conversations into new directions
- Handling new questions or situations

Intermediate Low:

I can...

- Generally speak confidently in complete sentences.
- Create with language and answer open-ended questions
- Mostly use present tense verb forms correctly
- Describe things and people in detail and give opinions on various topics/situations (because)
- Correct myself when I misspeak
- Ask some appropriate/pointed questions

I'm working on...

- Quantity and quality: using lots of different language and using it correctly
- Improving my use of present tense verb forms and adjectives
- Not hesitating too much when I speak

Intermediate Mid:

I can...

- Use extended, connected sentences
- Quickly access lots of vocabulary to describe many different subjects
- Mostly use correct present tense and begin to use future and past tenses
- Describe, explain and compare
- Ask pointed, relevant questions
- Talk around words I don't know and be understood
- Recognize when a speaker uses different tenses

I'm working on...

- Fewer pauses when speaking
- Using multiple time frames (past, present and future)
- Speaking in detail about specific interests or aspects of my life

Intermediate High:

I can...

- Communicate with ease and confidence on any subject that relates to me
- Narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present, future) - often, but not necessarily all the time
- Understand the main idea and some supporting details or follow the storyline of a fluent speaker
- Handle everyday situations

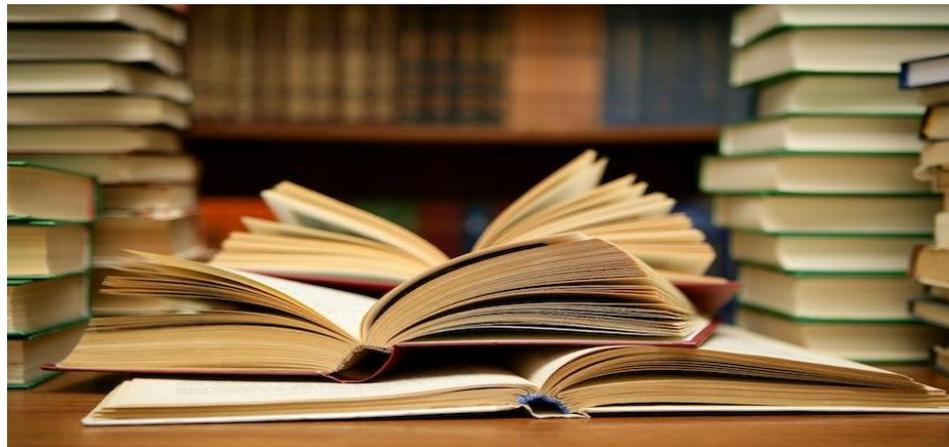
I'm working on...

- Speaking correctly in various time frames
- Participating in conversations that go beyond my everyday life

Read!

Students can take charge of their proficiency through independent reading.

The cumulative difference between reading a little and reading a little more is huge!



READ 20 Minutes A Day!

Student A Reads	Student B Reads	Student C Reads
 20 minutes a day	 5 minutes a day	 1 minute a day
 3,600 minutes per school year	 900 minutes per school year	 180 minutes per school year
 1,800,000 words per year	 282,000 words per year	 8,000 words per year
		
 Scores in 90th percentile on standardized tests	 Scores in 50th percentile on standardized tests	 Scores in 10th percentile on standardized tests

If they start reading for 20 minutes per night in Kindergarten, by the end of 6th grade, Student A will have read for the equivalent of 60 school days, Student B will have read for 12 school days, and Student C will have read for 3 school days.

When **ACQUIRING** another language:
First, we learn to **LISTEN**.
We learn to **READ** what we've heard.
We learn to **WRITE** what we've heard and read.
Finally... we **SPEAK**
because we have heard, read and written it.

Grant Boulanger



Keep it in front of them

Proficiency timeline—Creative Language
Class blog

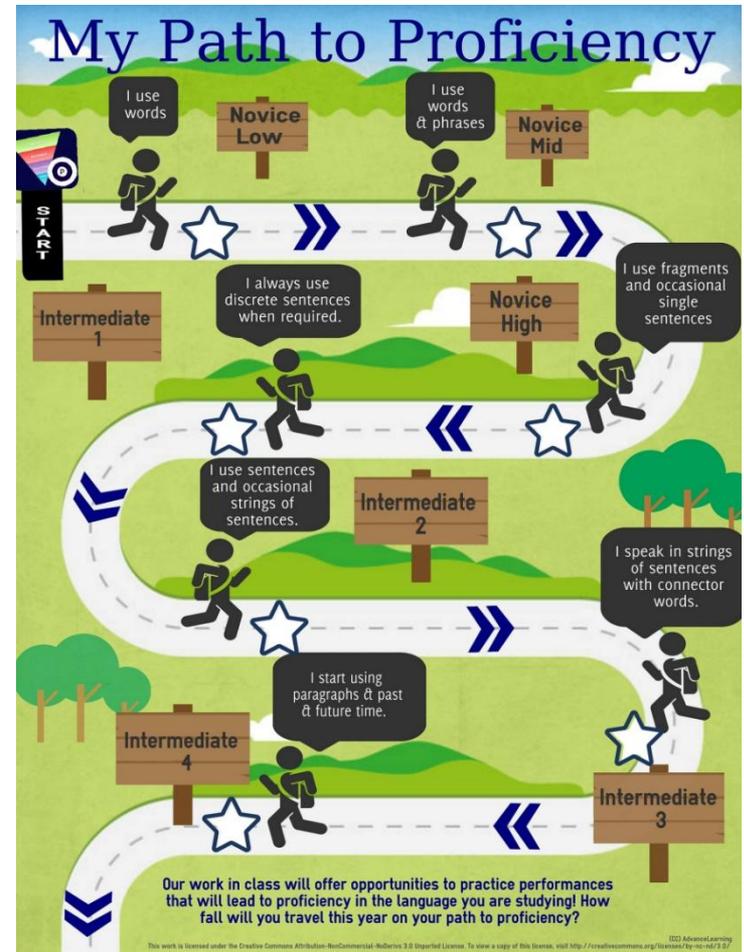
<http://www.creativelanguageclass.com/assessments/bring-the-rubric-to-life/>



Keep it in front of them

I use this graphic for the student notebook cover (my students use view binders—the ones with plastic sleeves on front and back).

This could also be used as a poster.



Keep it in front of them

Change the way you talk about their learning and their grades. How can you decrease your emphasis on points and letter grades and increase your emphasis on building proficiency?

Do you have to grade that?

- As long as we give grades, students will care about grades
- If you want students to focus less on grades, grade less stuff— e.g., I do not collect or grade practice work done in class
- If it is fun, avoid giving a grade! (Alfie Kohn: pizza for reading makes overweight kids who hate to read—reading must be a chore if I have to be bribed to do it.)

But... show results

Get an outside opinion, to help students see what they have gained and how they can grow. (AAPPL, STAMP, OPI.)

But be careful how you use these: guide student expectations and understand it is just one test one day, not a definitive decree.

AAPPL ARIZONA ASSESSMENT OF PROFICIENCY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Student Name/ID: _____
School Name: _____

Mode: _____ Your Score: _____

Life Score Report
Language: Spanish
Academy: _____
Description: _____
Report Date: 5/21/2016
Strategy

Interpersonal Listening and Speaking
This communication mode was not assessed.

Interpretive Reading
Your AAPPL Interpretive Reading/Listening score of 1-3 means that you likely understand the main idea and possibly some supporting facts in short passages on very familiar topics. You usually need to reread/reread the passage more than once. You usually need visual cues, context clues, and prior knowledge to help you understand what you read/hear.

Use what the passage says about the topic to understand the main idea and look for some supporting facts. Try to use different approaches to understanding such as looking/listening for clues such as words or parts of words that you already know, word order and form. Use what you already know about a topic. For additional clues about what the author wants you to understand, then go back and reread/re-listen to get more information.

Interpretive Listening
Your AAPPL Interpretive Reading/Listening score of 1-4 means that you likely understand the main idea in short passages on very familiar topics but rarely the supporting facts. You usually need to reread/reread the passage more than once. You may need visual cues such as pictures, your own knowledge of a topic, or familiar parts of words or words that are similar to English in order to understand what you read/hear.

Use what the passage says about the topic to understand the main idea and look for some supporting facts. Try to use different approaches to understanding such as looking/listening for words that you recognize, words or parts of words in your own language, words that are similar to words you already know about a topic, or parts of words you already know about a topic. Use what you already know about a topic for additional clues about the topic. Then go back and reread/re-listen and see what more you can understand.

Presentational Writing
This communication mode was not assessed.

ACTFL

(Extra caution with National Spanish / French Exams—these are competitions, not proficiency assessments)

Proficiency expectations

The CASLS study found:

“The majority of students studying a foreign language in a traditional high school program reach benchmark level 3 or 4 by end of the fourth year of study, regardless of the language studied. These levels are similar to the ACTFL levels Novice-High and Intermediate-Low.”

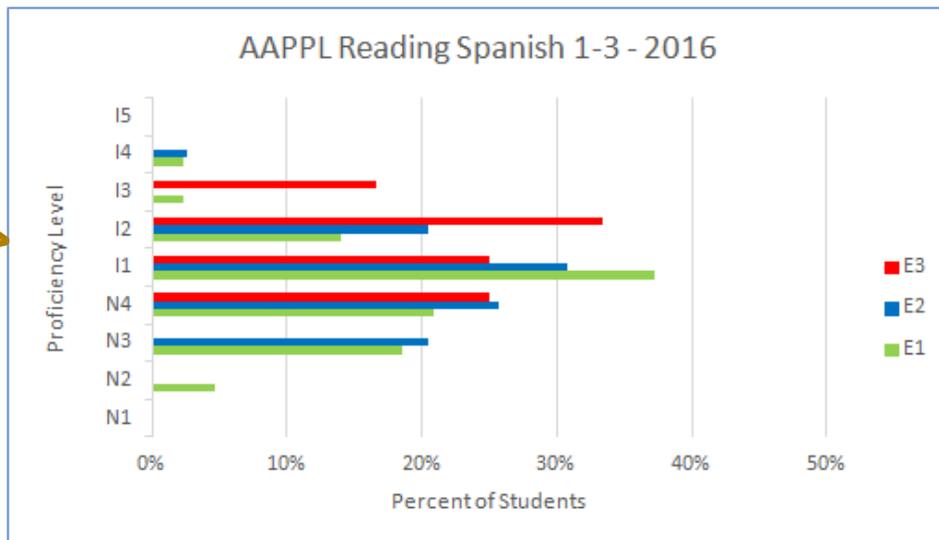
(CASLS, “What Proficiency Level Do High School Students Achieve?” p. 1)

Proficiency expectations

The researchers caution, “Unfortunately, teachers, administrators, and parents often underestimate the amount of time students need when a program is being planned, and they are then disappointed in the students’ learning outcomes later. Of course, the number of hours needed to reach a specific proficiency level varies from student to student, but our research shows that only about 15% of students reach a proficiency level near Intermediate-Mid even after approximately 720 hours of study, which is about four years in a typical high school program.”
(CASLS “How Many Hours” p. 1)

PAA AAPPL results / CASLS study

Note:
100
hours
per year



AAPPL levels

- N1 Novice low
- N2, 3 Novice mid
- N4 Novice high
- I1 Intermediate low
- I2, 3, 4 Intermediate mid
- I5 Intermediate high

Table 1. Percent of Students at Each Benchmark Level for Each Year of Study

CASLS study

- NE Not established
- 1 Novice low
- 2 Novice mid
- 3 Novice high
- 4 Intermediate low
- 5 Intermediate mid

Skill	Level*	Years / Hours of Study			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
		90-180 hrs	270-360 hrs	450-540 hrs	630-720 hrs
Reading	NE	3.2	2.0	1.4	2.2
	1	52.8	31.0	11.7	3.1
	2	28.4	39.3	30.8	21.2
	3	12.6	21.7	37.4	32.1
	4	2.5	5.0	14.7	27.5
	5	0.5	1.0	4.0	13.9

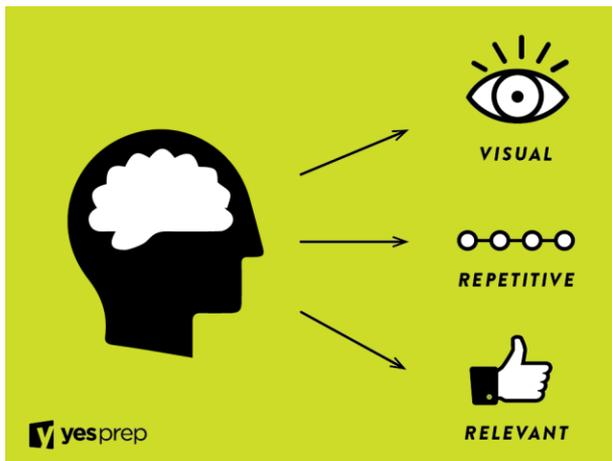
PAA AAPPL results—my takeaway

This was the first year we used the AAPPL and students did not prepare for the test. Some scores were higher or lower than actual classroom performance, but in general, I agree with the ratings.

Student survey showed that most students felt this experience encouraged them to aspire to greater proficiency.

Extrinsic vs Intrinsic Motivation

- Growth mindset (Carol Dweck)
- If we just change the way we grade rather than the way our students THINK about their work in class, we may continue to feed the extrinsic motivation beast



The joyful journey

Enjoy their proficiency—give them the tools so that their creativity can flourish! Have fun!

If they are on a “joyful journey,” they will stay with it longer and reach higher levels of proficiency.



Sources

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