

# Resources and Approaches for Integrating High-Leverage Teaching Practices: A Content Analysis

Sara Ahnell

Auburn University

## Abstract

*Implementing high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) for language learning can help ensure teachers create and deliver a high-quality curriculum, especially when working with Novice learners who require more scaffolded instruction. This study aimed to fill a gap by identifying print resources and approaches available to support world language teachers' integration of HLTPs into instructional design for Novice learners in middle and high school classrooms (grades 6-12). In the Fall of 2022, various resources were analyzed according to their use in assisting teachers with integrating HLTPs, state standards, and current second language acquisition (SLA) research into instructional design. These resources included several ACTFL publications, select world language methods textbooks, and documents from departments of education across 13 states in the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) region.*

*The analysis found that teachers in this Southeastern region have access to numerous resources for implementing the HLTP of backward design, including proficiency goals for each level and state standards that are aligned with the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). However, comprehensive instructional approaches or models to create proficiency-based, contextualized curricula integrating the other nine HLTPs were limited. The findings highlight a lack of adequate guidance and resources for streamlined instructional design to assist teachers in integrating HLTPs when working with Novice language learners in grades 6-12, particularly after proficiency and communicative goals have been established.*

**Keywords:** *High-leverage teaching practices, instructional design, pedagogical content knowledge, language teaching resources, novice language learners*

## Introduction

Attention to pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and its development in pre-service and in-service teachers is crucial for improving student outcomes in many content areas (Baumert et al., 2010; Evens et al., 2016, 2019; Shulman, 1986, 1987). Watzke (2007) found that ineffective teaching practices of pre-service world

language teachers could become permanent if those teachers did not continue developing their PCK. Research by Evens et al. (2019) showed that both pre-service and in-service teachers of French demonstrated similar PCK, signifying that simply spending more time in the classroom does not equate to increased PCK or expertise. Language teachers need specific professional development and support to improve their PCK to positively impact student outcomes.

High-Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) serve as a platform to define those essential practices for world language teaching, and their integration into instructional design is a possible way to develop the PCK of teachers both in training and in the field (Ball & Forzani, 2009, 2011; Davin & Troyan, 2015; Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Hlas & Hlas, 2012). World language teachers with well-developed PCK, advanced proficiency or higher in the target language, and sound understanding of how to integrate the 10 HLTPs into instruction have the potential to improve student outcomes significantly (Borden, 2022; Davin & Troyan, 2015; Vyn, Wesely, & Neubauer, 2019).

While Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021) do an excellent job in outlining each language learning specific HLTP, what they do not do, nor do they aim to do in their work, is integrate them into an instructional approach or model to facilitate instructional design. Many in-service and pre-service teachers, especially those with less developed PCK, may need a more direct approach to integrating HLTPs for language learning into an instructional framework. Ritz and Sherf (2023) found that while many teachers in the field may be taking steps to implement proficiency-based instruction, they need more support in how to implement HLTPs into instruction. This study addresses what print resources are available for pre-service and in-service language teachers looking to integrate HLTPs in creating instruction for Novice learners.

The author conducted a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) to systematically identify what resources and approaches are currently available to language teachers looking to integrate HLTPs when creating instruction for Novice students in the 6-12 classroom. The resources analyzed in this content analysis were not pre-made curricula such as commercially available textbook series. While textbooks can be utilized as a resource when creating instruction, this study aimed not to analyze pedagogical materials already produced and ready to deliver to students but rather resources teachers can use to create their own materials integrating authentic texts using HLTPs. The inferences and interpretations drawn from this content analysis are intended to allow for a clear understanding of what approaches, frameworks, or models, if any, a language teacher could easily access and utilize when creating instruction integrating HLTPs for a Novice level classroom in a middle or high school setting.

## **Literature Review**

The underlying conceptual theories and frameworks that gird the 10 HLTPs for language learning are extensive. The 10 HLTPs for language learning fit into ACTFL's six core practices and the larger context of world language instruction research and practice aimed at assisting world language teachers in the field. The ACTFL core practices and related 10 HLTPs can be grouped as follows: (1) establishing mean-

ingful and purposeful context for language instruction, developing contextualized performance assessments, and planning with an iterative backward design model; (2) facilitating target language comprehensibility, designing communicative activities, and using the target language 90% or more of class time while building a discourse community; (3) teaching grammar in context with a focus on meaning before form with the PACE model (i.e., presenting (P) a story to highlight a grammatical structure, drawing students' attention (A) to the structure, co-constructing (C) the grammar pattern with students, and extending (E) with related activities); (4) incorporating authentic cultural resources and guiding learners to interpret authentic texts, products, practices, and perspectives; and (5) providing appropriate corrective feedback (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Swanson & Abbott, 2015). Glisan & Donato (2017, 2021) provide a succinct list of the ten HLTP summarized as follows:

- HLTP #1: Facilitating Target Language Comprehensibility
- HLTP #2: Building a Classroom Discourse Community
- HLTP #3: Guiding Learners to Interpret and Discuss Authentic Texts
- HLTP #4: Focusing on Form in a Dialogic Context Through PACE
- HLTP #5: Focusing on Cultural Products, Practices, Perspectives in a Dialogic Context
- HLTP #6: Providing Oral Corrective Feedback to Improve Learner Performance
- HLTP #7: Establishing a Meaningful and Purposeful Context for Language Instruction
- HLTP #8: Planning for Instruction Using an Iterative Process for Backward Design
- HLTP #9: Engaging Learners in Purposeful Written Communication
- HLTP #10: Developing Contextualized Performance Assessments

Promoted by ACTFL and based in SLA research and pedagogy, high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) have been clearly defined by language education scholars Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021). However, HLTPs do not purport to be a part of any sort of comprehensive instructional approach or method for pre- or in-service teachers: “the authors opted not to include entire sample lessons that illustrate each HLTP so as not to create a misunderstanding that there is only one way for the practices to be enacted within lessons” (p. 12). While teaching practices and methodologies for language learning are already highly variable across classrooms in the US, resources containing an approach or method integrating HLTPs could be beneficial to pre-service teachers and teachers already in the field (Borden, 2022; Lacorte & Suárez García, 2014).

Although HLTPs are necessary in outlining those essential practices that should be incorporated into the design and delivery of world language instruction, their practical application and integration into instructional design may remain out of reach for many of those currently teaching in the field (Ritz & Sherf, 2023). This author believes that teachers could benefit from a more prescriptive but not restrictive, highly scaffolded framework when approaching instructional design and implementation. An approach encompassing and integrating the standards and research-based core practices, which form the foundation of high-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) for language learning, could facilitate instructional design and

ensure the integration of the HLTPs. This type of framework is especially needed when designing high-quality instruction for Novice learners who require highly scaffolded instruction to function in the target language due to their limited language proficiency.

The epistemological assumptions for this paper are aligned with a constructivist and sociocultural perspective, especially Vygotsky's definition of scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD of the learner is the range in which the learner can function in the target language without help. In the world language classroom, the teacher's role is to design instruction that is targeted to the students' ZPD and provide the gradual release of assistance, which is the foundation of the concept of scaffolding.

Even in a middle or high school setting with total beginners, language should serve as a mediational tool for language acquisition, meaning that the instruction should be conducted exclusively or near-exclusively in the target language (Swanson & Abbott, 2015; Vyn, Wesely, & Neubauer, 2019). This is the essence of sociocultural theory as it relates to language instruction (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Because Novice learners have such limited language proficiency, the teacher's instruction in the target language needs to match the students' ZPD and be well-planned and highly scaffolded with a focus on ensuring input that is comprehensible (i.e.,  $i+1$ ) and engaging for students (Krashen, 1982). The lower the language proficiency of the learners, the better thought out the instruction must be in the middle or high settings to keep input and instruction comprehensible, age-appropriate, and compelling in the target language.

Many commercially available textbooks created for world language students and teachers in grades 6-12 level lag behind current research in second language acquisition and do not assist the teacher in sufficiently integrating HLTPs (Aski, 2003, 2005; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Many textbooks in world language teachers' classrooms contain what Lee & VanPatten (2003) refer to as attractive window dressing—a visually appealing but rigid and targeted-grammatical syllabus with accompanying mechanical activities. Teachers working with these materials have a greater need to use the textbook as a resource rather than a complete curriculum and often need to create their own materials, especially to introduce authentic texts to Novice learners. However, even units and lessons taken from textbooks with more effective instructional materials must be adapted to a particular group of students and their ZPD, requiring some sort of instructional model or framework for the creation of high-quality lessons. The goal of this content analysis was not to analyze world language curricula but to analyze resources available for instructional design for teaching Novice learners in 6-12 classroom.

As many commercially available middle and high school world language textbooks may still not be aligned with ACTFL core practices and HLTPs, the necessity of creating instruction is apparent for world language teachers (Aski, 2005, 2003; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Many teachers in the field are hindered by the overwhelming demands of attempting to create this type of instruction without adequate practice-based training or a solid instructional approach or model (Ritz & Sherf, 2023). In addition to a lack of effective

pedagogical materials such as a textbook, secondary teachers are often presented with professional development (PD) that is not specific to world language pedagogy or second language acquisition, such as generic workshops on student learning and classroom management, although recent research is scant on professional development offerings for language teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Horwitz, 2005; Peyton, 1997; Steele et al., 2009). These factors illustrate the need for a comprehensive approach or model for instructional design when teaching Novice learners that can be used beginning in pre-service teaching and throughout a world language teacher's career (Knight, 2020; Steele et al., 2009).

Professional development specific to second language acquisition can be difficult to come by in the case that administrators are limited in funding for registration and travel to offsite professional conferences or workshops. Many of the materials available for PD or instructional design in-person, in print, or online are often too generic or nebulous to be used effectively or straightforwardly by busy practicing world language teachers (Steele et al., 2009). For example, the language learning HLTP #1, called *facilitating target language comprehensibility*, is highly complex as many smaller practices contribute to its effectiveness (Glisan & Donato, 2017). These smaller practices can be deconstructed further into instructional moves, which can be further broken into sub-practices, also called micro-practices. One of the main challenges for world language teachers is designing instruction under tight time constraints for multiple levels and groups. To make the HLTPs more practical, they could be deconstructed into manageable, digestible steps that fit into an instructional approach or model. Organized in such a way, teachers could better create and deliver high-quality materials and instruction based on core practices relatively quickly and efficiently.

This study explored what resources are currently available to teachers seeking to integrate HLTPs for language learning into their classroom instruction at the middle and high school levels for Novice learners. The following questions guided the content analysis:

1. What easily accessible resources and materials, if any, can assist language teachers in developing their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) using High-Leverage Teaching Practices for language learning?
2. How do these materials assist teachers in integrating High-Leverage Teaching Practices for language learning into instructional design for Novice learners in middle and high school language classrooms?

## **Methods**

The author employed Krippendorff's (2018) qualitative content analysis methodology to make "valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) and the contexts of their use" (p. 24). Documents and resources were selected that would represent what an average teacher in the field could easily access for free on the Internet and some commercially available print publications that can be purchased from ACTFL or other publishers. Several popular methods textbooks for world language pedagogy that a typical language teacher might own were also included.

A sample region of the United States was chosen to investigate the resources available using state department websites for world languages grades 6-12 in Fall

of 2022. This region was composed of a group of 13 states that form the regional language organization called the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), excluding the Virgin Islands because online world language standards materials were unavailable at the time of data collection. For each state in the region, the state department website was accessed to gather available materials for teachers of world languages in grades 6-12. See Appendix A for a list of the states in the selected region for this content analysis and the types of resources provided on each state department's website.

In addition to the materials provided by this sample of states in the region, other available online resources from the ACTFL website were included. See Appendix B for the types of information provided by the ACTFL website. The final sources selected for analysis were publications created for in-service and pre-service teachers. These included relevant ACTFL publications and a sample of popular, often-used textbooks for world language methods courses. See Appendix C for a list of these texts. While many of the methods books pre-date the HTLPs, most of them provide thorough explanations and examples of most of the HTLPs, even if they do not refer to them as such.

#### *Data Analysis and Coding Procedure*

The documents examined contain hundreds of pages of beneficial information and research relevant to world language instruction. However, the main aim of the study was to determine if any provided comprehensive instructional approaches or models for teaching Novice learners that would be easily accessible to a pre- or in-service language teacher.

For state resources found in Appendix A, each resource was accessed in Fall of 2022 and uploaded into the qualitative analysis software MAXQDA2022. This software is used to organize, code, and analyze qualitative data, and in this study, it served to store and code the many documents and resources examined. Resources such as state standards included large volumes of information, with most state department standards documents between 50 and 100 pages each. For example, South Carolina's state standards for World Languages reached 160 pages. MAXQDA2022, the qualitative data analysis software, was instrumental in that it could handle large amounts of text data.

The procedure was to upload sources into the software and then sort the resources based on type (i.e., standards, proficiency goals, guides, sample lessons, templates, etc.). The next step was to locate relevant passages of each text, code them, and find the relevant themes across the materials. Regarding a coding frame, categories and features emerged in the documents across states. A coding matrix, as articulated by Krippendorff (2018), was created and a sample is provided in Appendix D.

For the publications listed on Appendix C, the author followed a process similar to that of the sources from Appendix A. Each text was uploaded into the MAXQDA2022 qualitative data analysis software. The author located relevant passages of texts that specifically focused on instructional design and then coded each section for whether each text provided any comprehensive instructional model or framework, lesson planning templates, sample lessons, etc. The author then

identified themes within each text and across texts.

## Findings

As shown in Appendix A, 100% of states (n=13) provided standards and proficiency goals, and all states in the region provided access to documents outlining standards and proficiency goals for world languages. Some states provided supplemental resources such as guides, generic lessons, unit templates, or samples of pre-made curriculum materials. The bulk of state and national resources included countless courses of study and standards, proficiency goals, benchmarks, and sample student tasks, which are helpful for incorporating HLTP #8 using backward design as an iterative process (Glisan & Donato, 2021). However, none of the documents provided by state department websites offered comprehensive instructional models or approaches for creating curricula.

Each state's standards and proficiency goals were unified and aligned with the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (ACTFL National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The features common to each state's standards documents emphasize the 5 Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) and three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Seven of the 13 states provided supplemental materials, as listed in Appendix A.

All states proposed similar proficiency goals for the Novice level, with students reaching Novice Mid proficiency by the end of Level 1 and Novice High by the end of Level 2 of a modern language such as Spanish, French, or German. Appendix E shows an example of proficiency goals for all levels and in each mode of communication for the state of Virginia. This type of chart was common in documents from state departments of education, and proficiency goals were consistent across the states selected. Brief, sample task descriptions in all modes of communication and Can-Do statements were also prominent features for all states. While the sample tasks and Can-Do statements varied slightly from state to state, there was a strong sense of unity regarding what teachers and students should be able to do at each level. While this type of information is essential in planning instruction employing HLTP #8 with backward design, it does not provide teachers with any instructional model or approach for creating curricula to improve students' proficiency once goals and Can-Do statements are identified.

An abundance of information can be easily accessed during the backward design phase of creating overall course goals, unit goals, lesson goals, performance assessments, and vertical planning. However, states did not propose any specific approach or model for instructional design in creating a curriculum integrating other HLTPs to assist teachers and students in reaching these goals. None of the resources, including state department documents from the sample states, ACTFL Website articles, or publications, proposed or advocated for any specific instructional approach or model to integrate HLTPs into instruction except the PACE model used to teach grammar in a dialogic context (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002; Donato & Adair-Hauck, 2016). The PACE model is also promoted by ACTFL and is mentioned in some state department materials as the preferred way to teach grammar. It is also part of HLTP #4 called "focusing on form in a dialogic context through PACE"

(Glisan & Donato, 2017). The methods textbook, *Teacher's Handbook*, by Shrum and Glisan (2016) describes this model in detail and provided a sample lesson in the appendix on how this would be used in the classroom for Novice learners. Yet, a comprehensive approach or model incorporating other HLTPs for instructional design for Novice learners was not present in any of the documents analyzed.

The ACTFL-sponsored book series on High-Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) by Glisan and Donato (2017, 2021) clearly identifies and describes the practices, but they do not propose any comprehensive instructional approach or model to apply these practices, nor do they claim to. The authors provide useful tools after explaining each HLTP in the form of checklists, charts, and rubrics. These tools benefit teachers who want to assess their implementation of the HLTPs, yet lack explicit guidance for creating instruction.

## Discussion

The findings from the data analysis of the various resources selected for this content analysis can be categorized into four themes.

### 1. Unified State Standards, Courses of Study, and Proficiency Goals Aligned with World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning

All 13 states sampled were highly unified in their standards, courses of study, and proficiency benchmarks. There was no difference between states on what proficiency level students should reach at the end of each level in 6-12 world language classrooms. All the standards, courses of study, and proficiency goals were based on the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* (ACTFL National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and proficiency benchmarks in all three modes of communication. (ACTFL, 2011, 2021, 2024). The 5 Cs were also a strong focus and incorporated into each state's standards. HLTPs were not mentioned explicitly in any state department documents, but there were indirect mentions of many practices, such as guiding learners to use authentic texts and making input comprehensible.

The only variation in materials provided by state departments of education was the inclusion of supplemental resources. Seven of the 13 states added additional resources, such as examples of pre-made instruction (e.g., sample lessons, units, templates, etc.). However, these were of varying quality, and none included any straightforward instructional approach, model, or strategies for a teacher to create her own instruction. Integration of HLTPs in the other sources the author analyzed, such as ACTFL resources, publications, and methods textbooks, provide ample information on backward planning and incorporating standards into communicative goals that contextualize and frame thematic units. Once teachers have utilized the necessary resources to determine goals and content, such as state and national standards, they must create their own instructional materials. Straightforward instructional approaches, models, and strategies for lesson and learning activity design to achieve proficiency goals for Novice learners in the context of state and national standards, regardless of language, are noticeably lacking.

### 2. HLTPs for Language Learning Support Standards and Proficiency Goals

HLTPs give teachers concrete practices to help them better understand what type of teaching will allow their students to reach the goals outlined by state and national organizations. They complement the materials available from state education



departments, such as the standards and proficiency goals. However, they are simply a collection of deconstructed practices, not an integrated instructional approach or model (Glisan & Donato, 2017). This lack of practical implementation support leaves teachers attempting to create instruction with an obvious gap in applying the theory of integrating these practices into instructional design and delivery.

As noted earlier, HLTs and the related publications that describe them are not comprehensive instructional approaches or models. This content analysis revealed that no widely available, comprehensive instructional approach exists to integrate these practices into a cohesive framework. Classroom language teachers, especially under the increased demands of post-COVID-19 education, need a structured approach that provides scaffolding and support for daily instructional planning. Unfortunately, such an approach is not currently widely available.

### *3. Curriculum Design is a Local Decision with Textbooks Not Required and Serving as a Resource; Authentic Resources Required*

Multiple states explicitly express that curriculum is a decision to be made at the local level by individual districts and teachers. For example, the standards documents from the state of Georgia's Department of Education (2007, p. 2) urge this:

The most common tool available to modern language teachers is the textbook; however, it should not dictate the curriculum. Whenever possible, teachers should access and use authentic materials. Teachers are strongly encouraged to use the ever-expanding resources available on the Internet and other media sources, as well. Culturally authentic materials that add relevance to linguistic and cultural components of language study are readily accessible. [...] topics should be combined into coherent thematic units and taught in context. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for Modern Languages encourages language taught in a communicative context and discourage language taught in isolation.

Several other states echo this recommendation that textbooks are not required and should only serve as a resource in creating curriculum, but all state standards explicitly require the implementation of authentic materials into courses, including at the Novice level. Telling teachers to seek out their own materials from the internet and then teach those topics and texts in contextualized, proficiency-based, thematic units strongly necessitates the teacher's creation of instruction with appropriate scaffolding to allow Novice students to comprehend the texts. However, little to no guidance is given on creating instruction except that the choice is up to local districts and classroom teachers. Teachers need more support than what is currently readily available to them to create the instruction urged by their standards and state education departments (Ritz & Sherf, 2023).

### *4. Comprehensive Instructional Approaches or Models to Create Curriculum, Including Lessons and Learning Activities, are Scarce or Nonexistent*

Publications by ACTFL on instructional design in the Keys series provided little in the way of complete instructional models or strategy integration within a comprehensive approach. The sponsored ACTFL text explicitly geared towards

instructional design, *The Keys to Planning for Learning* (Clementi & Terrill, 2017), devotes a sizeable portion of the book to discussing learning goals and backward design. Understanding backward design is undoubtedly helpful to teachers and not inherently problematic, except that the text is unbalanced in that the proportion focused on instructional design, such as lesson planning to meet those goals, is minimal. Out of 262 pages, only a few of those pages focus explicitly on instructional design and the recommendations are generic. For example, the lesson design template includes the following stages: gain attention/activate prior knowledge, provide input, elicit performance/provide feedback, assess performance/closure, and enhance retention/transfer (Clementi & Terrill, 2017, p. 62). The authors only give an example of one sample lesson to review these cycles, and the descriptions are brief. There is no detailed narrative lesson plan to accompany the template, and teachers must extrapolate from the template to design their own lessons.

One concern that became apparent about methods textbooks like Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's Handbook* (2016), Omaggio Hadley's *Teaching Language in Context* (2001), and Lee and VanPatten's *Making Communicative Language Happen* (2003), is that while they contain large quantities of excellent information, research, and more explicit explanation of instructional design than the other sources, they are likely too dense for many teachers to easily use when creating instruction under time constraints in their own classrooms. *Common Ground: Second Language Theory Goes to the Classroom* (Henshaw & Hawkins, 2022) is arguably the most reader friendly. All the methods texts provide concrete examples of many outstanding instructional techniques and strategies, but these can be hidden in the hundreds of pages of text.

Without a more concise approach to incorporate research-based strategies and HLTPs promoted by these texts that is practical and easily accessible, teachers may fail to integrate HLTPs or resort to using outdated textbooks or ineffective methods (Aski, 2003, 2005; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Ritz & Sherf, 2023; Rubio et al., 2004; Vold, 2020; Wong & VanPatten, 2003). Most materials available to teachers for curriculum design are either pre-made materials of varying quality or generic unit and lesson design templates. Resources from state departments of education and other publications are seemingly lacking instructional approaches or models for creating and delivering instruction.

## Implications

There are abundant resources available for teachers on what their students should be achieving in world language classrooms, including standards, "Can-Do Statements," proficiency goals, and sample student tasks (ACTFL, 2011, 2021, 2024). This information is easily accessible online and in print through various documents provided by ACTFL, state departments of education, and methods textbooks. HLTPs and ACTFL core practices for language learning are clearly defined (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021; Swanson & Abbott, 2015). However, there remains a lack of practical application guides for teachers on how exactly they could create and deliver instruction in an organized and concrete fashion to reach those goals. Where information on instructional design is available to teachers, as seen in textbooks and other publications examined in this content analysis, it is either too dense, vague, theoretical, or challenging to piece together for practical application.

A comprehensive instructional approach integrating the 10 HLTPs for language learning and ACTFL core practices would help both pre-service and in-service teachers who instruct Novice learners. The ideal approach should be well-organized and structured, enabling teachers to develop and deliver proficiency-based, contextualized instruction that is exclusively in the target language and easily comprehensible. It should provide Novice learners with consistent scaffolding and support while allowing teachers the flexibility and agency to infuse creativity and address the unique needs of their students.

Ahnell (2023) has proposed such an approach, the Integrated Communicative Approach (ICA), which offers teachers a way to create proficiency-based, contextualized units of instruction and assist them in the integration of HLTPs. These units, lessons, and activities are carefully sequenced and scaffolded to keep Novice language learners engaged and to improve their proficiency through comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), while supporting teachers in using the target language 90% or more of the time.

The Integrated Communicative Approach (ICA) is an instructional framework that integrates all 10 HLTPs and ACTFL's six core practices beginning with the creation of a contextualized performance assessment using a backward design model. The Integrated Communicative Approach framework provides four different lesson types to build an integrated, contextualized, communicative unit to facilitate language acquisition: (1) the Comprehensible Input Meaning-based Output (CIMO) model for vocabulary-focused lessons, (2) the CIMO-G model which incorporates a grammar (G) focus by combining the structure of processing instruction and the whole language approach of the PACE model, (3) the PGAP model for literacy-focused instruction using authentic texts, where PGAP stands for the stages of Pre-Reading, Guided Interaction, Assimilation, and Personalization, and (4) the Artifact Based Culture Capsule (ABCC), a model for the study of an artifact from the target culture to explore products, practices, and perspectives. An instructional framework like the Integrated Communicative Approach could provide pre-service and in-service world language teachers with fresh perspectives on instructional design and delivery methods and useful, practical resources for creating and implementing proficiency-based, contextualized language instruction for Novice learners.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The content analysis in this paper did not examine instructional approaches or strategies for implementing HLTPs that teachers may access through teacher preparation programs or professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, or conferences. It also did not analyze instructional materials that teachers may share within individual departments and districts or through professional learning communities, online marketplaces like Teachers Pay Teachers, or websites run by language consultants. It also did not examine which materials teachers access and utilize to plan and create instruction integrating HLTPs, which would be valuable for future research.

Further research could focus on developing a streamlined and accessible instructional framework, like the Integrated Communicative Approach, to integrate HLTPs when creating instruction for Novice learners in 6-12 world language

classrooms. This would be highly beneficial to language teachers today. Such a framework could leverage resources already available to teachers, as identified in this content analysis, given that these existing documents are vital to backward design and understanding of the other HLTPs. An instructional approach like this would support teachers in integrating existing materials (e.g., HLTPs, standards, proficiency goals, etc.) to create tailored instruction to meet the unique needs of Novice learners, particularly in middle and high school classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

There are ample resources available to teachers on what students should be able to achieve in terms of proficiency at each level of instruction in the 6-12 world language classroom. HLTPs for language learning and core practices are well-defined. However, there is a lack of adequate resources for streamlined instructional design to integrate HLTPs when working with Novice learners, especially once communicative goals have been established. VanPatten and Simonsen (2022) underscore this gap plainly: “There is no research on the topic of best methods we can recommend or at least no current research. Research on particular methods died out in the 1980s [...] even ACTFL does not prescribe particular methods. Maybe it’s best to forget about a ‘best’ method and to think instead about outcomes and how we can get there” (p. 228). While there may not be one best method, this study reveals that teachers have few, if any, effective and readily accessible methods to support them. Although this flexibility and freedom may empower teachers, it also places the burden of piecing together their own methods.

In response to these findings, a comprehensive instructional approach focusing on lesson planning and delivery—beginning with contextualized, culturally rich, comprehensible input, followed by activities exclusively in the target language that promote acquisition and meaning-based output with embedded formative assessment—is urgently needed to support world language teachers in the challenges they face today’s classrooms. Ideally, this comprehensive approach would not be presented as another general curricular design discussion from a theoretical standpoint. Instead, it should aim to outline a practical and highly scaffolded framework that teachers can use to create proficiency-based, thematic instruction integrating high-leverage teaching practices. Such an approach is essential for bridging the gap between currently available materials and the resources teachers need today by integrating state and national standards, textbooks as resources, authentic texts, high-leverage teaching practices, and second language acquisition research. Understanding and implementing this type of approach could enhance the pedagogical content knowledge of current and future world language teachers, ultimately leading to positive impacts on student outcomes in middle and high school classrooms across the United States.

## References

- ACTFL. (2011). 21st-century skills map. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/21stCenturySkillsMap/p21worldlanguagesmap.pdf>
- ACTFL. (2021). Guiding principles for language learning. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/resources/guiding-principles-language-learning>
- ACTFL. (2024). ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Author. Retrieved from [https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/ResourcesPublications/ACTFL\\_Proficiency\\_Guidelines\\_2024.pdf](https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/ResourcesPublications/ACTFL_Proficiency_Guidelines_2024.pdf)
- ACTFL National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages: 4th Ed.* Author.
- Adair-Hauck, B., & Donato, R. (2002). The PACE model: A story-based approach to meaning and form for standards-based language learning. *The French Review*, 265-276.
- Ahnell, S. W. (2023). *Deconstructing and implementing high-leverage teaching practices with the integrated communicative approach: An instructional design framework for teaching novice learners in the secondary world language classroom* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Kansas State University. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/deconstructing-implementing-high-leverage/docview/2819244129/se-2>
- Aski, J. M. (2003). Foreign language textbook activities: Keeping pace with second language acquisition research. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(1), 57-65.
- Aski, J. M. (2005). Alternatives to mechanical drills for the early stages of language practice in foreign language textbooks. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(3), 333-343.
- Ball, D., & Forzani, F. M. (2009). The work of teaching and the challenge for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(5), 497-511.
- Ball, D. L., & Forzani, F. M. (2011). Building a common core for learning to teach: And connecting professional learning to practice. *American Educator*, 35(2), 17.
- Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voss, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Neubrand, M., & Tsai, Y. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. *American Educational Research Journal* 47, 133-180.
- Borden, R. (2022). Building a classroom discourse community in university Spanish courses: What high-achieving language teachers do. *Foreign Language Annals*, 55, 586-609.
- Clementi, D., & Terrill, L. (2017). *The keys to planning for learning: Effective curriculum, unit, and lesson design*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(8), 597-604.
- Davin, K. J., & Troyan, F. J. (2015). The implementation of high-leverage teaching practices: From the university classroom to the field site. *Foreign Language Annals*, 48(1), 124-142.
- Donato, R., & Adair-Hauck, B. (2016). PACE: A story-based approach for dialogic inquiry about form and meaning. *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction*, 5, 206-230.

- Evens, M., Elen, J., & Depaepe, F. (2016). Pedagogical content knowledge in the context of the foreign and second language teaching: A review of the research literature. *Porta Linguarum: revista internacional de didáctica de las lenguas extranjeras*, 26, 187-200.
- Evens, M., Tielemans, K., Elen, J., & Depaepe, F. (2019). Pedagogical content knowledge of French as a foreign language: Differences between pre-service and in-service teachers. *Educational Studies*, 45(4), 422-439.
- Georgia Department of Education. (2007). *The Georgia Standards of Excellence for World Languages*. Retrieved from <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Frameworks>
- Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices*. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2021). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices [Vol. 2]*. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Grahn, L., & McAlpine, D. (2017). *The Keys to strategies for language instruction: Engagement, relevance, critical thinking, collaboration*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Henshaw, F. G., & Hawkins, M. D. (2022). *Common ground: Second language acquisition theory goes to the classroom*. Hackett Publishing.
- Hlas, A. C., & Hlas, C. S. (2012). A review of high-leverage teaching practices: Making connections between mathematics and foreign languages. *Foreign Language Annals*, 45, s76-s97.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2005). Classroom management for teachers of Japanese and other foreign languages. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38, 56-69.
- Knight, S. W. (2020). Establishing professional online communities for world language educators. *Foreign Language Annals*, 53(2), 298-305.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage publications.
- Lacorte, M., & Suárez García, J. (2014). La enseñanza del español en los Estados Unidos: panorama actual y perspectivas de futuro. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, 1(2), 129-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23247797.2014.970358>
- Lee, J. F., & VanPatten, B. (2003). *Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen*. McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Omaggio, H. A. (2001). *Teaching language in context*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Peyton, J. K. (1997). Professional Development of Foreign Language Teachers. *ERIC Digest*.
- Ritz, C., & Sherf, N. (2023). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment: A snapshot of world language education in Massachusetts. *Foreign Language Annals*, 56(1), 29-52. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12675>
- Rubio, F., Passey, A., & Campbell, S. (2004). Grammar in disguise: The hidden agenda of communicative language teaching textbooks. *RAEL: Revista Electronica de Linguica Aplicada*, 3, 158-176.

- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X015002004>
- Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411>
- Shrum, J. L., & Glisan, E. W. (2016). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction. (5th ed.)*. Cengage Learning.
- Steele, T. M., Peterson, M. D., Silva, D. M., & Padilla, A. M. (2009). A year-round professional development model for world language educators. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42(2), 195-209. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01017.x>
- Swanson, P., & Abbott, M. (2016). *Building your core: Effective practices for language learners and educators*. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/Building-Your-Core-Effective-Practices.pdf>
- VanPatten, B., & Simonsen, R. (2022). *Language acquisition in a nutshell. Theory and Practice Publishers*. <https://www.amazon.com/Language-Acquisition-Nutshell-Bill-VanPatten-ebook/dp/B0BZZZ1DDR>
- Vold, E. T. (2020). Meaningful and contextualised grammar instruction: What can foreign language textbooks offer? *The Language Learning Journal*, 48(2), 133-147.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes (Vol. 86)*. Harvard university press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. MIT Press.
- Vyn, R., Wesely, P. M., & Neubauer, D. (2019). Exploring the effects of foreign language instructional practices on student proficiency development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 52(1), 45-65.
- Watzke, J. L. (2007). Foreign language pedagogical knowledge: Toward a developmental theory of beginning teacher practices. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(1), 63-82.
- Wong, W., & Van Patten, B. (2003). The evidence is IN: Drills are OUT. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(3), 403-423.

**Appendix A**

**List of States and Online Resources Provided**

States	Type of Sources Available Online Through State Department Website	Supplemental Materials
Alabama	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Arkansas	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Florida	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Georgia	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Sample Units/Lessons	Yes
North Carolina	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Unpacking Document" <a href="#">similar to a Course of Study</a>	Yes
Kentucky	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Louisiana	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Full Unit Outlines for Immersion in French and Spanish Lang Arts and Math, Thematic planning templates for generic units and lessons	Yes
Mississippi	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "World Language Teaching Guide" with basic information on field and research, Sample Lessons	Yes
South Carolina	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Resource Guide" with Sample Units for each level and immersion courses	Yes
Texas	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No
Tennessee	Standards with Proficiency Goals, Core Practices	Yes
Virginia	Standards with Proficiency Goals, "Guide" with links for resources	Yes
West Virginia	Standards with Proficiency Goals	No



**Appendix B****ACTFL Website Topics from the 2022 Main Resources Page**

ACTFL Website Main Resources Page	Relevant Topic(s)
	Teaching and Learning Remotely
	Race, Diversity, and Social Justice
	ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners
	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012
	Can-Do Statements
	World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages
	Guiding Principles
	Assigning CEFR Ratings to ACTFL Assessments
Guiding Principles Page	ACTFL Core Practices Overview
	Backward Design
	Facilitate Target Language Comprehensibility
	Guide Learners Through Interpreting Authentic Resources
	Design Oral Interpersonal Communication Tasks
	Teach Grammar as a Concept and Use in Context
	Provide Appropriate Oral Feedback

**Appendix C****World Language Curriculum and Instruction Publications**

Author(s)	Title and Year Published	Published by ACTFL?
Henshaw and Hawkins	<i>Common Ground: Second Language Acquisition Theory Goes to the Classroom</i> (2022)	No
Glisan and Donato	<i>Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices, Volume 1</i> (2017)	Yes
Glisan and Donato	<i>Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-Leverage Teaching Practices, Volume 2</i> (2021)	Yes
Clementi and Terrill	<i>The Keys to Planning for Learning, 2nd Ed.</i> (2017)	Yes
Grahn and McAlpine	<i>The Keys to Strategies for Language Instruction</i> (2017)	Yes
Shrum and Glisan	<i>Language Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction</i> (2015)	No
Lee and VanPatten	<i>Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen</i> (2003)	No
Omaggio Hadley	<i>Teaching Language in Context</i> (2001)	No

**Appendix D**

**Sample of Coding Matrix for Two States in Sampled Region**

State	Type of Resource Provided								
A L	Standards/Course of Study				Model or Guide for Instructional Design Provided	Instructional Design Framework Based on Standards or HLTPs	Unit Planning or Lesson Template	Premade Curriculum Materials	Curriculum Materials are a Local Decision
	Yes				No	No	No	No	Yes
Standards Include:					HLTPs mentioned: No Explicit HLTP Integration: No Indirect inclusion of HLTPs: Yes				
	5 Cs	3 Modes	Proficiency Targets	Sample Tasks/Goals					
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
A K	Standards/Course of Study				Model or Guide for Instructional Design Provided	Instructional Design Framework Based on Standards or HLTPs	Unit Planning or Lesson Planning Template	Premade Curriculum Materials	Curriculum Materials are a Local Decision
	Yes				No	No	No	No	Yes
Standards Include:					HLTPs mentioned: No Explicit HLTP Integration: No Indirect inclusion of HLTPs: Yes				
	5 Cs	3 Modes	Proficiency Targets	Sample Tasks/Goals					
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					

**Appendix E**

**Example of a 2021 proficiency goal chart from Virginia Department of Education**

**The exit outcome expectations align to the ACTFL Proficiency Levels and are coded as follows:**

- **NL** = Novice Low
- **NM** = Novice Mid
- **NH** = Novice High
- **IL** = Intermediate Low
- **IM** = Intermediate Mid
- **IH** = Intermediate High
- **AL** = Advanced Low
- **AM** = Advanced Mid

---

**Modern Language Exit Proficiency Expectations for levels I and II difficulty rated languages, alphabetic languages, such as French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc.**

<b>MODE &amp; Skill</b>	<b>Level I or 140 hours</b>	<b>Level II or 280 hours</b>	<b>Level III or 420 hours</b>	<b>Level IV or 560 hours</b>	<b>Level V or 700 hours</b>	<b>Level VI or 840 hours</b>	<b>Level VII or 980 hours</b>	<b>Level VIII or 1,120 hours</b>
<b>INTERPRETIVE Listening</b>	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
<b>INTERPRETIVE Reading</b>	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
<b>INTERPERSONAL Person-to-person</b>	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM
<b>PRESENTATIONAL Speaking</b>	NM	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM
<b>PRESENTATIONAL Writing</b>	NM	NH	IL	IM	IH	AL	AM	AM