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Standard Guide for Use-Oriented Foreign Language Instruction¹

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1. Scope

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

1.2 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

F3130 Practice for Language Service Companies

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *asynchronous learning*—learning in which communication exchanges between instructors or learners, or both, occur with a short or long time delay. Learners can access the information transmitted from one person to another at any time. Exchanges may occur via email, blogs, message boards, podcasts, etc.

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

3.1.3 *blended learning*—an instructional approach designed to optimize learning outcomes. It is an integrated approach that combines to varying degrees face-to-face instructor-facilitated learning with e-learning activities and resources that allow

some level of student control over time, place, path, or pace, or a combination thereof, of learning.

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

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

3.1.6 *computer-adaptive software*—software that presents materials on the base of demonstrated mastery of previous material.

3.1.7 *corpus (plural corpora)*—a collection of naturally occurring language samples compiled as written texts or as a transcription of recorded speech stored electronically.

3.1.8 *concordance*—a listing of each occurrence of a word, phrase, expression or pattern in corpus, presented with the contexts in which they appear.

3.1.9 *curriculum plan*—a plan that serves as a framework for the design and implementation of instruction.

3.1.10 *e-learning (electronic learning)*—a learning platform that includes all forms of electronically supported, computer- and network-enabled learning and teaching. E-learning applications and processes include web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual education opportunities and digital collaboration. Content is delivered via the Internet, intranet/extranet, audio or video, satellite TV, and CD-ROM. It can be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media in the form of text, image, animation, streaming video, and audio.³

3.1.11 *fluency, n*—the ability to speak or write a language easily, well, and quickly.

3.1.12 *formative assessment*—a range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.⁴

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

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

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-learning>.

⁴ Huhta, Ari, "Diagnostic and Formative Assessment," in Spolsky, Bernard, and Hult, F. M., *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*, Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2010, pp. 469–482.

3.1.15 *Learning Management System (LMS)*—a technology platform through which students access online learning materials and courses. An LMS generally includes software for creating and editing course content, communication tools, assessment tools, and other features for managing the course and tracking student progress.⁵

3.1.16 *learning resources*—those materials and other sources of learning that are used in a language program, such as books, software, web content, etc.

3.1.17 *physical classroom, n*—a brick-and-mortar traditional classroom.

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

3.1.19 *program*—a system of instruction.

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

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

3.1.22 *skill modalities*—the four receptive and productive language use skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

3.1.23 *social media*—web- and mobile-based technologies that facilitate communication within and among networks of individuals.

3.1.24 *syllabus (also curriculum)*—a description of the content of the course of instruction and the order in which elements of the course are to be taught.

3.1.25 *use-oriented instruction*—language instruction that prepares learners to use the language to carry out real-world communicative tasks.

3.1.26 *virtual classroom, n*—an online learning environment that can be web-based and accessed through a portal or software-based and require downloadable executable file.

4. Significance and Use

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

4.2 It may not be possible for a specific program to meet all of the components of the standard for every language. If the standard cannot be met for a given language, the institution will clearly inform the client and the student of that fact.

4.3 The following components are addressed:

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

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

4.3.3 *Explicitness and Reasonableness of Language Outcome Expectations*—Assists in determining an individual's need for training to increase proficiency. Determines the

estimated number of classroom hours required to meet an identified proficiency objective. Assists in determining the suitability of an institution to provide appropriate instruction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Needs Analysis

5.1 Procedure:

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

5.1.1.1 Language skill modalities needed (listening, speaking, reading, and writing),

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

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

5.1.1.4 Kind of language needed (standard, academic, technical, regional, street slang, colloquial, dialect, and register).

5.2 Consider individual learning style, aptitude, and potential disabilities of a learner.

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

5.4 Determine the proficiency level(s) that are needed to meet the student's language needs. Refer to Section 6 on

⁵ Northwest Educational Technology Consortium, in iNACOL at http://www.inacol.org/research/docs/iNACOL_DefinitionsProject.pdf, 2005.