> "You live a new life for every language you speak. If you know only one language you only live once."
> *-Czech Proverb*

WHY?

Knowledge, work and daily living in the 21st century know no geographic borders, and common sense dictates that those with language ability, likewise, will know no boundaries. In addition to being be able to read and compute, language ability is among the skills deemed essential for those who will live and work well into the last quarter of this century. Thus, language learning in our schools needs to deliver communicative ability, which will only happen when proficiency is the goal.

What matters most?

Proficiency should be the mantra for all stakeholders in the language learning enterprise—students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community-at-large. There are three critical steps that need to be taken to make that mantra a reality:

1. Set proficiency targets for each course/level of instruction.
2. Design learning pathways to meet those targets.
3. Assess (internally and externally) to determine if targets are being met and use data to modify instructional practice.

Practical Applications

- Bring students into the discussion of proficiency targets and help them understand the target for the course/year.

- Use rubrics that provide feedback to students about their progress toward the proficiency target.

More Information:

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
www.actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org

Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools
www.goo.gl/oQx19

Shelby County (TN) Schools (includes former district of Memphis City School)
www.scsworldlanguages.weebly.com

Proficiency: (n) what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context.

Making it Personal...

- *What specifically can YOU do to become more knowledgeable about proficiency?*

- *How can you better inform yourself and your stakeholders about the concept of proficiency and the targets that you set for your courses?*

I3 A3 Novice N2 N4 Distinguished Intermediate I4 I2 Superior Intermediate Advanced

Shelby County Schools, Department of Curriculum and Instruction (R)