연 어 ● JEZIK ● SPRACHE ● LENGUA ● ЯЗЫК ● 語言 ● SPROG ● ΓΛΩΣΣΑ ● LANGUAGE ● भाषा ● LINGUAGEM ● لغة

THE ANN ARBOR LANGUAGES PARTNERSHIP

A2LP

SUMMARY

A collaborative undertaking of the Ann Arbor School District and the Teacher Education Program at the University of Michigan School of Education, the **Ann Arbor Languages Partnership (A2LP)** promotes language diversity, learning, and achievement in the District's schools to make new languages a tool and a resource for all students. As its primary activity, the Partnership will provide instruction in world languages to students in Ann Arbor public schools through a carefully structured teacher education program run by the School of Education. Beginning in September 2009, its first full year of operation, the Partnership will offer Spanish language instruction to third-graders in all 21 elementary schools in Ann Arbor. In September 2010, the program will expand Spanish instruction into the fourth and fifth grades, while continuing in third grade. Once the program is established, other languages may be added. Beginning in its planning year, 2008-09, the Partnership will also support and document the achievement of language-diverse students who are English learners in the District's schools.

CORE BELIEFS

The Partnership is based on a shared group of core beliefs. These include commitments to pluri-lingualism and language diversity, to learning in and from experience both in and beyond the classroom, to transparent documentation and assessment that values languages and language learning in a global world, and to the importance of working collaboratively.

Pluri-lingualism and Language Diversity

New language is a tool and a resource, not a simple school subject. The Partnership is built around the value of dynamic language competence, captured in the concept of 'pluri-lingualism.' Pluri-lingualism holds that all individuals know and use multiple languages to some degree in their daily lives, and that these experiences expand over time through childhood and into adulthood. Unlike the view of 'multilingualism' that emphasizes the parallel notion that individuals do the same things in several languages simultaneously (and are therefore not multi-lingually competent if they cannot), pluri-lingualism argues that an individual's language use is shaped by what s/he wants and needs to do in that language, and those interests and needs shift over time. In recognizing, documenting, and building upon the notion of pluri-lingual competence, this approach values languages as a central tool in sustaining diversity and in supporting social integration within classrooms, schools, communities, and nations.

Learning Language and Teaching in/from Experience

The Partnership views learning both in and from experience as its central vehicle for both students, who are new to a language, and teachers, who are new to teaching. This focus on experience is structured into the Partnership on three interrelated levels. At the core, students learn from their experiences in their families, community, as well as in the classroom as they develop a 'pluri-lingual' foundation in the world. That **student learning** is supported through classroom instruction by new teachers, who are learning to be language teachers through the clinical experiences of their teacher education program in Partnership classrooms.

These two levels – **student learning** and **teacher learning** - are encompassed by a third level, **professional learning**, that grows out of the collaborative work of District teachers and University faculty as they develop the Partnership. This third level of **professional learning** will contribute to research and innovation that can benefit other districts and teacher education programs. The diagram below summarizes the interaction of these levels:

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
NEW TEACHER LEARNING
STUDENT LEARNING NEW LANGUAGES

University supervisors and District media specialists support new teachers in classroom

District classroom teachers draw on language in curriculum

Transparent Documentation and Assessment of Language Learning and Use

A major challenge is how to effectively document what students are learning in languages. Conventional testing often falls short in this regard. The evidence of new language learning lies in using it for one's own purposes. Thus assessing pluri-lingual learning must involve two things. First, capturing the **learner's intentions**—what s/he wants to be able to use the language(s) to do—and then documenting the **learner's performance**—what s/he can do with the new language(s)—against those goals. These intentions and uses need to be mapped onto a common framework that is portable across contexts of language use, and can accommodate multiple languages according to common aims.

Over the last fifteen years the Council of Europe, in conjunction with the European Union, has specified such a framework for language learning, documentation, and use through a policy document known as the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and Learning**, or **CEFR**. Language learning and assessment in the Partnership is anchored in this Framework, which will allow and encourage students to document not simply the language(s) they are being formally taught, but also other languages they may use or encounter in their homes and community.

Working Collaboratively

The Partnership presents a genuine collaborative opportunity in which the respective interests, needs, strengths, and resources of the District and University can converge and complement each other. For the District, the design supports and extends language diversity and learning across its elementary schools and supports a pathway that can articulate language learning, from elementary through middle and high school. For the University, the Partnership builds a truly clinical teacher preparation program for world and second language teachers at the elementary—and eventually the secondary—levels. The commitment to a multi-year agreement and joint management of activities instantiates this value of sustained collaboration in the Partnership.

LANGUAGE CONTENT

The language to be taught as content in Partnership classrooms is anchored in a framework of outcomes that express what learners 'can do' in the particular language. These outcomes draw on language research and policy work that has been underway in the Council of Europe. **The Common European Framework of Reference for Language and Learning** sets out of 'can do' statements in three domains of language use: **understanding** (the skills of reading and listening), **interaction** (the skills of interactive and presentational speaking), and **writing**. These domains are defined across three levels of 'User:' Basic, Independent, and Proficient. These three levels have been further subdivided:

BASIC USER		INDEPENDENT USER		PROFICIENT USER	
Breakthrough	Waystage	Threshold	Vantage	Effective Mastery	Operational Proficiency
A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**

Thus the framework of levels is intended to function like an accordion, allowing for greater expansion and detail, yet always within the overall structure. The Partnership will organize classroom teaching and assessments according to these scales, which are now globally accepted not only in Europe, but in much of South America, East Asia, and China. The Framework provides a blueprint of outcome statements, which are then detailed according to specific community needs, interests, and resources. During the planning year (2008-09) of the Partnership, the Basic User—the Breakthrough and Waystage Levels (A1 and A2)—outcomes will be 'localized' into a set of 'level descriptors' that outline particular outcomes relevant to students and families in Ann Arbor schools. These general outcome statements are:

BASIC USER	Breakthrough A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
	Waystage A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Through the localization process in the Partnership's pilot year, stakeholders—District teachers, University faculty, students, parents, and community members—will expand the specifics within this global Framework. In this process the classroom curriculum will be developed and sequenced. However, because the Framework links intention to use, and is articulated from the language learner/user's perspective, it can capture any and all experiences with languages, both in and outside of the classroom. Students can document these experiences according to their goals and progress on the Framework. Thus language learning in the Partnership is less about "covering" prescribed content than encountering, using, and mastering content to meet needs.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND TEACHER PREPARATION

In 2009-10, which will be the first operational year, third-graders will receive two 30-minute periods of Spanish per week. Apprentice teachers at the University of Michigan will provide the instruction; they will be assessed for their Spanish language proficiency on entering the program and then receive intensive training in classroom pedagogy. Once in District classrooms, they will be supported and supervised by a collaborative team that will include faculty and field supervisors from the School of Education and some District personnel.

The media center specialists in the building will act as mentors for the apprentice teachers, assisting them as they think through issues such as school culture, classroom management, and individual differences among students. In this way, the apprentice teachers will receive input, support, and supervision for content and pedagogical issues from the University supervisors, while they are coached and supported in issues of professional role and school/District culture by the media specialist.

DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

Because this educational program is outcomes-driven, rather than conventionally curriculum-based, processes that document and assess what students 'can do' in the new language—their learning and progress—are critically important.

The Language Portfolio process

Through the **Common European Framework**, students will have access to the **Language Portfolio**, a public-domain documentation process organized and supported by the Council of Europe. The **Language Portfolio** includes three parts: an **individual learning history**, which captures the student's evolving experiences with other languages and cultures both in and out of school; a **self-assessment and statement of goals** using the 'can do' levels of the Framework; and **documentation of achievement** of those goals including external assessments, project work, and other evidence.

The **Language Portfolio** is designed to be dynamic and to reflect the learner's interests, achievements, and goals over time. It can include multiple languages and, in many European contexts, is increasingly used for employment and study outside one's own country. The Language Portfolio can be maintained in print form; however, it is often undertaken digitally through a web-based system, which will be available to Partnership students.

ASSET Languages Assessments

To provide external documentation as part of the **Language Portfolio**, the Partnership has organized an on-going collaboration with the **University of Cambridge Assessments**, which is directing Council of Europe work with the **Common European Framework** in England. The **University of Cambridge Assessments** has developed and oversees the administration of a set of Framework-based assessments in 31 'community' (or heritage) languages in British schools through the **ASSET Languages Program**. The Partnership has entered into a research and practice agreement with **University of Cambridge Assessments** to use the ASSET Spanish language assessments. These assessments, which are designed for elementary school learners, are primarily teacher-led, though they can also include centrally administered versions as well. They are tied directly to the Framework and the Language Portfolio process, and will serve as a tool and benchmark in the localization process as we develop local level descriptors.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To organize the Partnership, the District and the University have entered into a multi-year Memorandum of Understanding. The intent is to commit to the time and human resources that such a collaborative undertaking will require. The Memorandum calls for the recruitment, in the pilot year, of a Partnership coordinator, which will be jointlya funded by the District and the University. The Partnership will be advised by a community committee, which will be chaired by the Superintendent and the University's Director of Teacher Education. Planning and operations will be directly overseen by the District's Administrator for Elementary Education and the University's Senior Lecturer in World Languages.

During the pilot year (2008-2009), several Working Groups will be formed to:

• Localize the Common European Framework by developing the appropriate level descriptors in Spanish. This becomes the map for curriculum/instructional planning.

• Collect and determine a set of core teaching practices for classroom instruction. These will be based on level outcomes, general third grade curriculum, and best practices in teaching new languages to young learners.

• Move forward on the assessment and documentation process. This will entail receiving training from the Council of Europe on the Language Portfolio and University of Cambridge on the ASSET Languages assessments, and meshing these with media resources in the schools.

• Defining and developing the mentoring activities at the school level.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION **M** UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

CONTACT
A2LP@umich.edu