

A Professional Development Plan for ACTFL's 5Cs: Practicing What We Preach

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Together, we have a combined 74 years of experience teaching languages. We're known as the "more experienced" teachers, so we're often called upon to mentor new teachers. Throughout the years we've co-presented many hands-on workshops at NYSAFLT, WAFLE, and ACTFL conferences. So, when our chairperson needed to coordinate a professional development program related to ACTFL's standards, we were the likely candidates to facilitate the sessions.

We found ourselves in a unique situation. We were to provide professional development for our peers, not for conference attendees. This was to be a mandatory workshop for the people we interacted with daily. Our colleagues were an eclectic group consisting of new and veteran teachers representing the LOTE areas of Spanish, French, Italian, Latin, and ESL. Some were active members of NYSAFLT and ACTFL; others had never attended a conference. We wanted to provide them with useful and practical information that aligned ACTFL's standards with the district's initiatives in differentiated instruction, literacy, and student-centered activities.

Teachers react differently to the prospect of professional development. Some embrace it, some abhor it, and some are indifferent. Most importantly, they don't want their time wasted. *Teacher Magazine's* online forum posed the question, "How would you improve professional development in your school?" The consensus of readers overwhelmingly agreed: Make it real and useful (Rebora, 2009). We decided to practice what we believe. Constructivists and Deweyans at heart, we developed a workshop that required the teachers to experience first-hand activities that incorporated differentiated instruction, literacy strategies, and student-centered teaching practices in the context of pedagogy and national standards. The paragraphs and tables below constitute the annotated outline of the workshop we facilitated.

Acting as role models and practicing what we preach, we began with an Anticipation-Reaction Guide based on what the teachers knew of the five national ACTFL standards: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities, and then posed questions for further investigation (or substitute a brainstorming KWLH chart).

The Anticipation-Reaction Guide is a pre-reading activity that assesses prior knowledge, requires students to make predictions, focuses the students' attention on the main idea, and finally, provides a post-assessment (Duffelmeyer & Baum, 1992; Herber, 1978).

Agree	Disagree	Statement	Agree	Disagree
		ACTFL and NYS have the same foreign language (LOTE) standards.		
		Differentiated instruction does not apply to foreign language teaching.		
		ACTFL has four basic Cs.		
		RAFTs are used to travel in water.		
		Of the ACTFL Cs, communication is the most important.		
		Cubing is related to Bloom's Taxonomy.		

Following this activity, we began a "jigsaw" for viewing the Annenberg Video (Video on Demand) using this link: www.learner.org/resources/series185.html and choosing #2 – *Standards and the Five Cs*. We used the following sequence to complete the activity:

1. Describe the jigsaw process: Explain the difference between home groups (containing at least one representative from each expert group) and expert groups (containing specialists who examine

specific content). For our purposes, the home group was composed of teachers of the same language and the expert groups had each language represented.

2. Explain the tasks: Each expert group addressed three questions and reached consensus on the best composite answer.

3. Assign groups: Teachers were grouped homogeneously for these expert groups based on the language, as well as the level, they taught.

4. Introduction of video: As a whole group, all viewed the video from 1:30 to 3:57.

5. Viewing of video: Breakout groups view, discuss, and answer questions with expert group members.

6. Conclusion of video: All the teachers reconvened for the end of the video from 55:43 to 58:28.

7. Home groups: At least one member from each expert group joins the home group to share out and assist the home group in completing the collective worksheet.

Annenberg 5 Cs: Expert Group Worksheet

1. Which “C” did you watch?
2. Name two activities used by teachers in the video to model and integrate the standard (the “C”) into a lesson.
3. What did you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the way the standards were addressed in these classroom examples?

Home Group (Collective) Worksheet

1. **Communication:** (Expert Group #1)
 - a. Describe one activity used in the video to integrate this standard into a lesson.
 - b. How could our department use this standard to enhance lesson delivery and student achievement?
2. **Cultures:** (Expert Group #2)
 - a. Describe one activity used in the video to integrate this standard into a lesson.
 - b. How could our department use this standard to enhance lesson delivery and student achievement?
3. **Connections:** (Expert Group #2)
 - a. Describe one activity used in the video to integrate this standard into a lesson.
 - b. How could our department use this standard

to enhance lesson delivery and student achievement?

4. **Comparisons:** (Expert Group #3)

- a. Describe one activity used in the video to integrate this standard into a lesson.
- b. How could our department use this standard to enhance lesson delivery and student achievement?

5. **Communities:** (Expert Group #3)

- a. Describe one activity used in the video to integrate this standard into a lesson.
- b. How could our department use this standard to enhance lesson delivery and student achievement?

8. Extension: After viewing the video and sharing information in the home groups, each individual brainstormed two activities he or she could use in class, employing any two of the ACTFL Standards/5 Cs.

The second activity was to create a differentiated RAFT.

1. Explain what RAFT means: A RAFT is a differentiated writing activity. R= Role, A= Audience, F= Format, and T= Topic. A matrix is created that allows the students to select a writing prompt.

2. Focus the curriculum: Know-Understand-Do (K-U-D): Create a RAFT task for your students. Begin with, “What do you want your students to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of the lesson?”

3. Show the example: Using the theme of food, examine the examples of K-U-D found below.

RAFT Planning

What the students should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of my lesson, lesson sequence, or unit.

Unit: Food - Spanish Level 1

Know (facts):

- 1. Food vocabulary
- 2. Definite articles
- 3. Gender of nouns
- 4. Present tense conjugation
- 5. Food groups

Understand (concepts):

- 1. Food is essential
- 2. Food reflects culture
- 3. Agreement
(noun/article,
subject/verb)
- 4. Classification

- 5. Principles of nutrition

Do (skills):

- 1. Write for a purpose
- 2. Write for an audience
- 3. Incorporate vocabulary in writing

Differentiation (Content /Process/Product by Readiness, Interest, or Learning Style):

The RAFT was designed to differentiate the product by readiness.

R	A	F	T
Role	Audience	Format	Topic
1. Mom	Kid	Grocery List	Pick groceries for your favorite balanced meal.

2. Restaurant Owner	Head Chef	Menu	What's for lunch/dinner tonight?
3. Restaurant Critic	Public	Newspaper Column	Want a delicious balanced meal?
4. Ad Agency	Public	Poster/Flyer	Why should you come to our restaurant?
5. Dietician	Overweight Patient	Poster	What are the basic food groups?
6. Individual Food Items	Store Manager	Map (labels)	Where do I belong?
7. Ice Cream	Store Manager	Letter	Why can't I be the cookies' neighbor?
8. Fruits	Self	Diary	I don't like to be squeezed.
9. Milk	Relatives	Family Tree	Look at all my cousins!
10. El plátano (masculine fruit)	"La"	List	Sorry, we can't hang out together, but here are some possible buddies in the produce section.
11. La lechuga (feminine vegetable)	"El"	List	Sorry, we can't hang out together, but here are some possible buddies in the produce section.

4. Participants "level" the RAFT. Because this RAFT is differentiated by product, teachers are asked to analyze the formats to discover which of the HALO (high - average - low - other) levels is the target for that assignment.

5. Choice: Students are motivated by having choices, and the RAFT activity provides that opportunity.

The final activity is called "cubing," a kinesthetic strategy that promotes high-level thinking skills and supports learner differences

1. Describe it: Similar to a contract, cubing allows the teacher to plan different activities for different students based on student readiness, learning style, and/or interest. The teacher creates a cube with a different prompt on each side of the cube.

2. Read a story: Share a story to have content in common. The story provides setting, plot, characterization, and conflict to use as the basis for the cubing activity. (We used the story "A Present for Peter" – source unknown.)

3. Tasks: Present the commands found on the six sides of each cube (Describe, Draw and Label, Change, Compare/Contrast, Play the Role, and Explain) and discuss the rules, i.e., a) take turns, b) record your answers, c) do x number of sides (1–6).

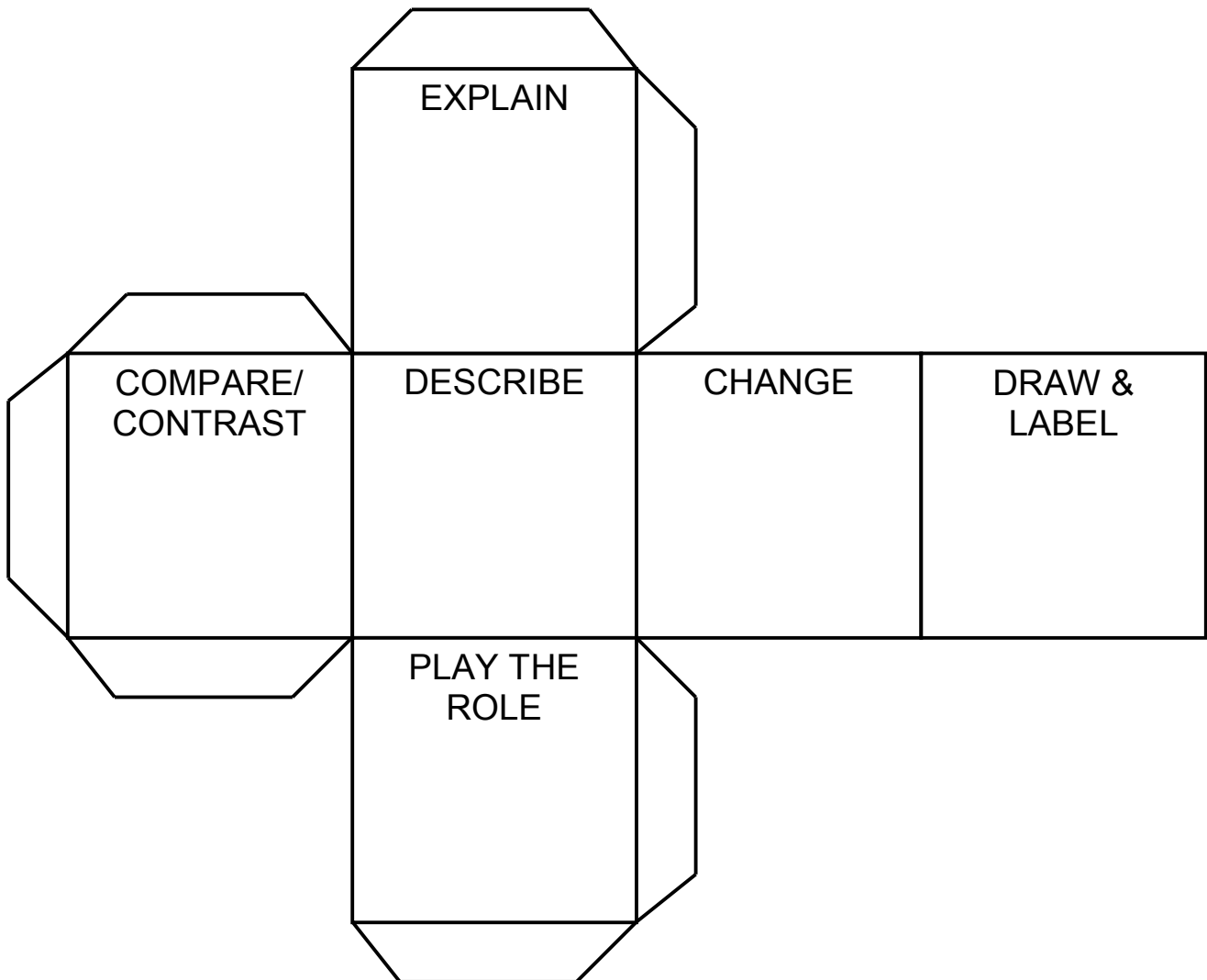
Prompt	High Cube	Average Cube	Low Cube
DESCRIBE	The Rock Shop	Anna's bus ride	Obsidian
DRAW AND LABEL	Jimmy's walk home from school	The painter at work	The bus
CHANGE	Paragraph 2 to: Peter shopping for Anna's birthday	Paragraph 3 to: past tense	Paragraph 12 to: two painters
COMPARE/CONTRAST	Peter's birthday to one	Jimmy's walk home from	Anna to a friend of

	of yours	school to yours	yours
PLAY THE ROLE	Of Peter when he returns with the jacket	Of Anna when she says, "Happy Birthday!"	Of the salesman in the Rock Shop
EXPLAIN	How the rock got into the pocket of Peter's jacket	How Anna feels	Why Anna went shopping

4. Groups: Use a cooperative learning strategy to divide students into homogeneous pairs. Keep in mind that flexible grouping is a hallmark of differentiated instruction.

5. Materials: Hand out cubes, task sheets that match each group's level, and the blank answer sheet for recording responses. Tip: Create cubes at various levels of difficulty and then color-code the cubes on cardstock for durability. Fold and connect the sides, using tape, glue, or rubber cement. Consider Bloom's Taxonomy for command prompts.

6. Activity: Allow teachers to experience the process by rolling the cube (template below) and recording answers.



CUBING ANSWER SHEET

Directions: Use this chart to plan or record your responses.

DESCRIBE	DRAW AND LABEL
CHANGE	COMPARE/CONTRAST
PLAY THE ROLE	EXPLAIN

7. Debrief: Ask participants to reflect on the cubing activity from a learner’s point of view to determine the levels for each set of commands/cubes.

8. Brainstorm: List the possible K-U-D factors that were used to design the cubing activity.

9. Application: Create a cubing exercise for a class of LOTE students that they teach.

10. Wrap-up: Share and publish results as a departmental resource.

At the end of the workshop, each participant got a “3-2-1 exit card.” Exit cards (a.k.a. “ticket out the door”) are a part of formative ongoing assessment. At the end of a lesson, students receive a slip of paper with questions pertaining to the objectives of the lesson. The exit cards give a quick snapshot of what the student has learned or doesn’t understand about the lesson and are not usually graded. They also provide an automatic closure to a lesson.

List 3 new things you learned today.	List 2 activities you would incorporate in your teaching.	List 1 activity shown today that you still have questions about.
▶ ▶ ▶	▶ ▶	▶

At the end of the workshop, we revisited the Anticipation-Reaction Guide to find that teachers had added to their understanding of the national ACTFL standards. The final products, lesson plans that they created, demonstrated their grasp of the standards and how easily and successfully they could combine them with the school’s initiatives. Their exit cards indicated they intended to add these strategies to their teaching repertoire and apply them to their classrooms. They remarked how quickly the time had passed and how much they enjoyed the cooperative interactive process. Turning the tables and experiencing how it felt to be in a student-centered classroom sensitized them, leading them to reflect on their own teaching practices. By modeling best practices, the workshop had turned even the most skeptical of attendees into engaged participants who enjoyed creating standards-based activities.

References

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