

# Differentiating Learning Through Can-Do Statements

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**ACTFL - Paul Sandrock**  
**[psandrock@actfl.org](mailto:psandrock@actfl.org)**

# SESSION OUTCOMES

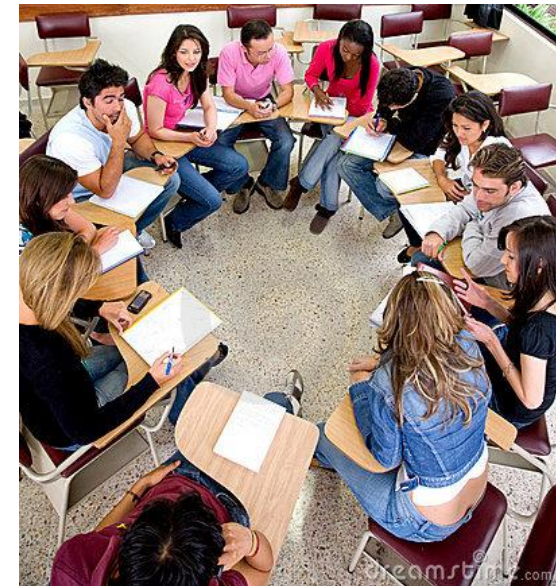
- I can **identify each learner's profile** of language performance and use that information **to design effective learning episodes** with consideration of learners' differences
- I can use the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements to **design activities and assessments targeting specific modes and proficiency levels**
- I can identify strategies to **engage all learners** in exploration of the same topics within my program's thematic focus, **while differentiating the outcomes based on each learner's profile**

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# Who are your learners? What can they do in the language?



**Beginners?**  
**Some prior learning?**  
**(Near) Native Speakers?**

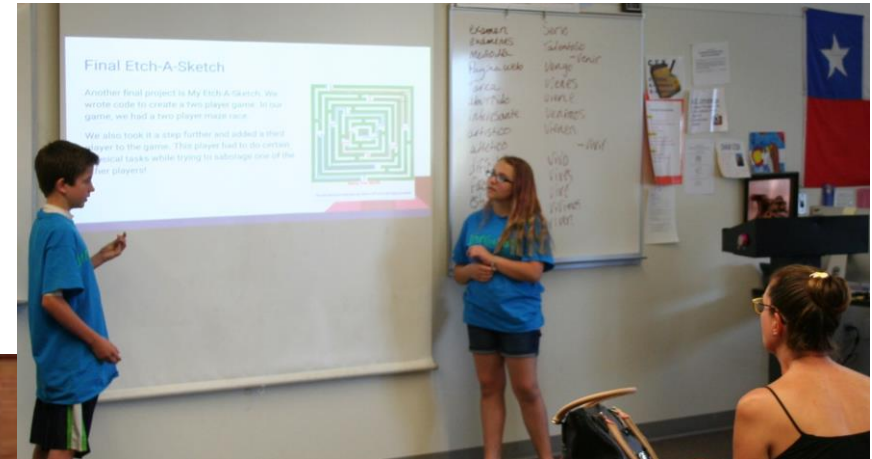


# What is each learner's profile?



**Interpersonal**

**Interpretive**

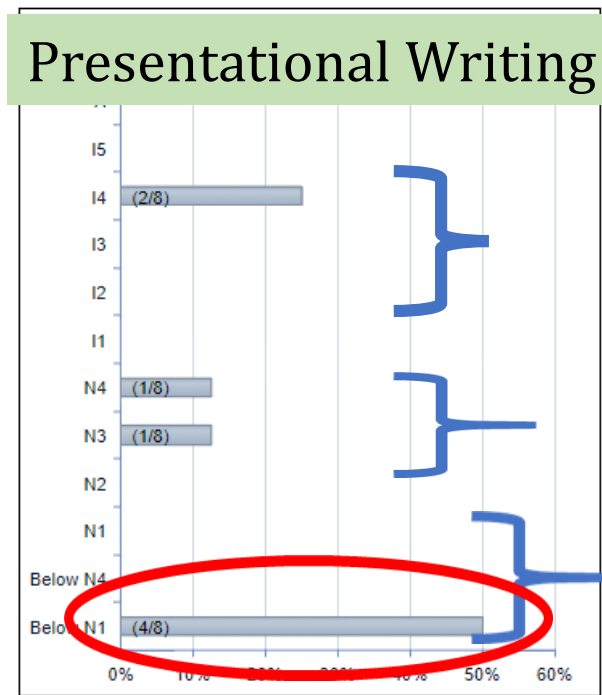
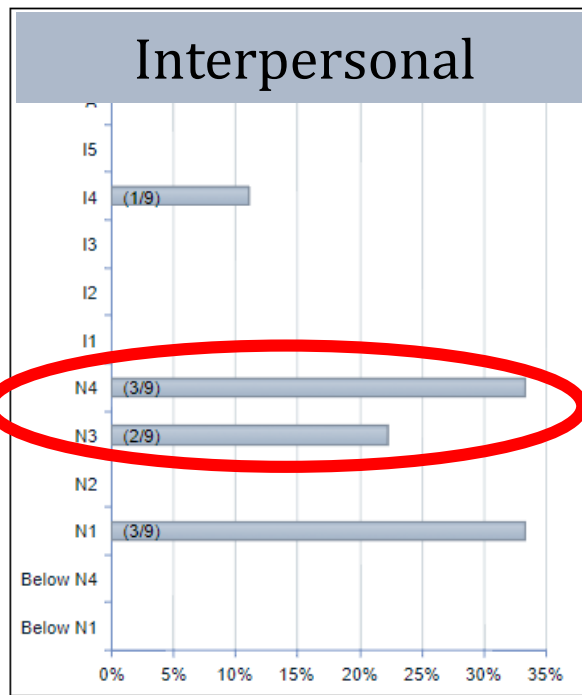


<http://www.weldre4.k12.co.us/>

**Presentational**

Determine each learner's profile:

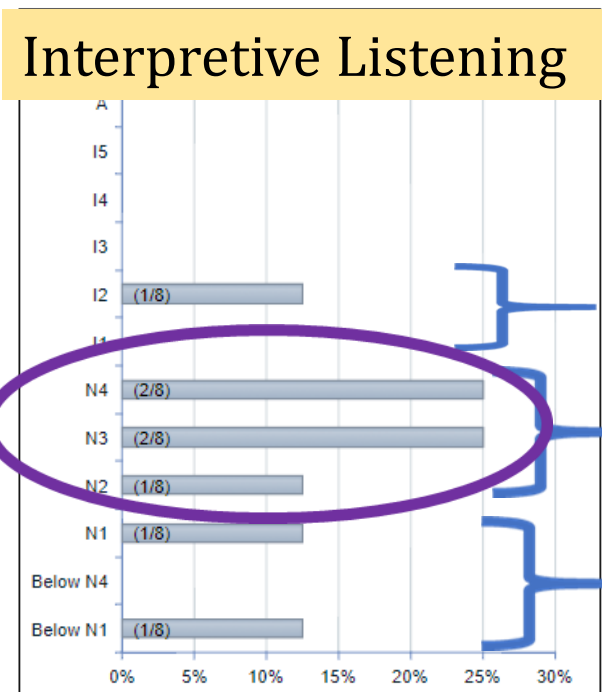
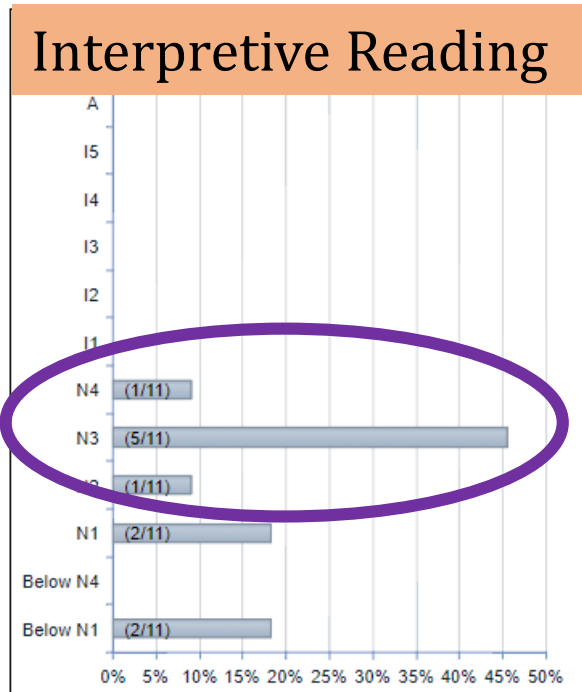
- ✓ External evaluation
- ✓ Informal check
- ✓ Compare performance to Can-Do Statements



INT MID

NOV MID/HIGH

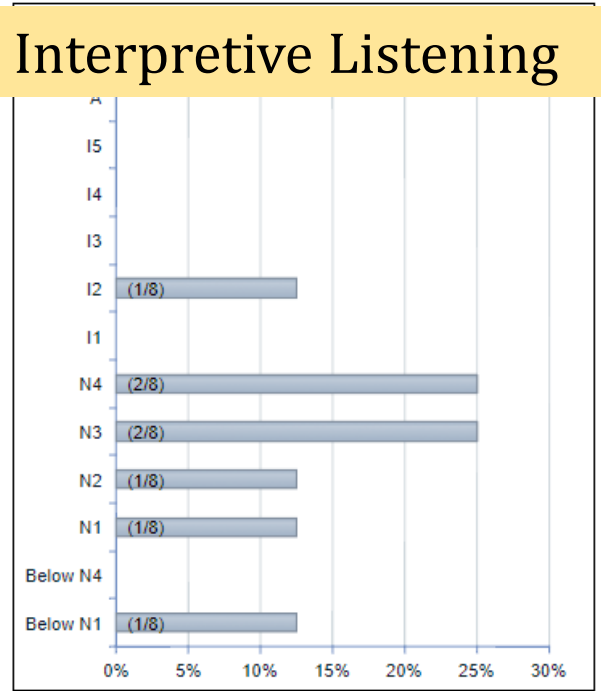
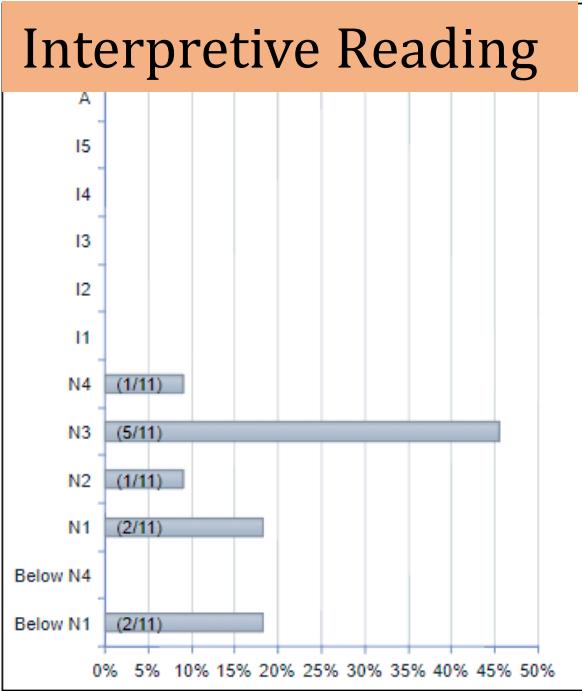
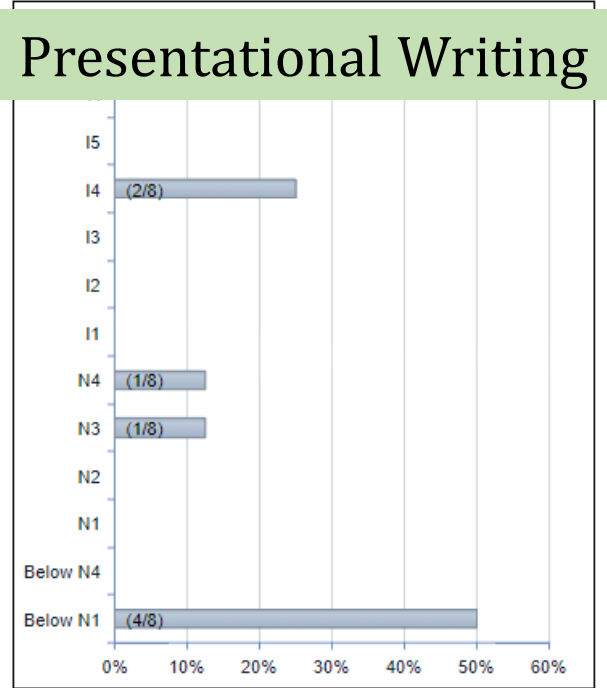
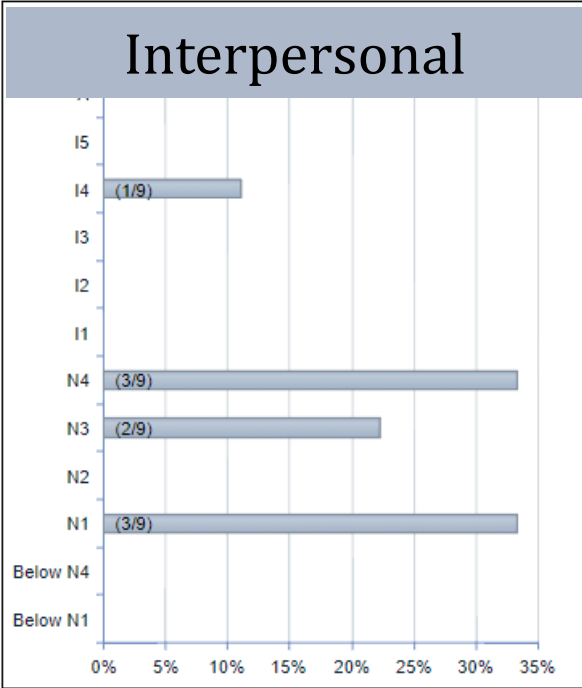
NOV LOW



INT LOW

NOV MID/HIGH

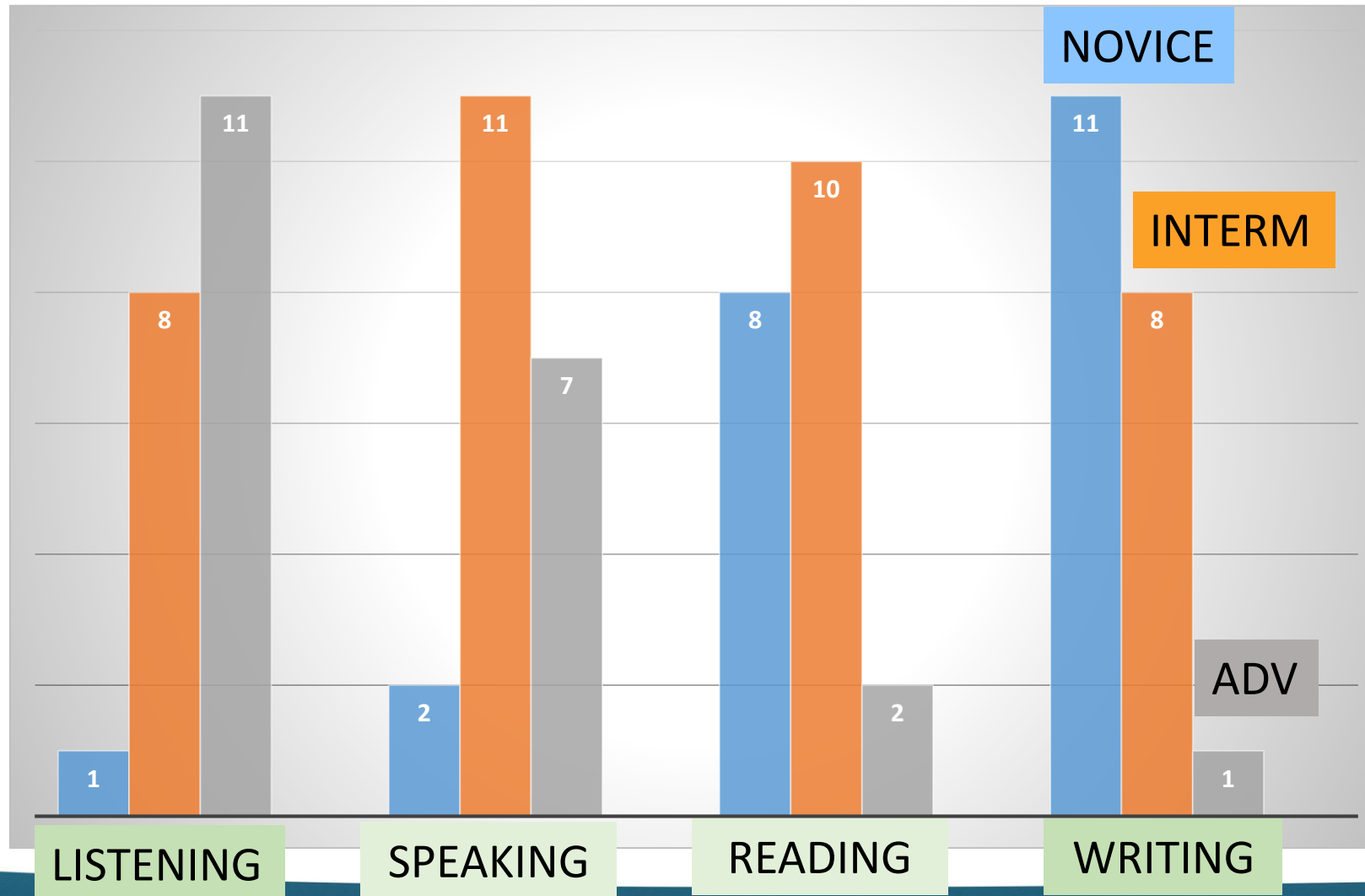
NOV LOW



- Determine each learner's profile:
- ✓ External evaluation
  - ✓ Informal check
  - ✓ Compare performance to Can-Do Statements

- ✓ Each learner has an individual profile
- ✓ Proficiency is **NOT** at the same level in each mode

# What Can My Heritage Learners Do?





# Targeting Tasks Using Can-Do Statements Proficiency Benchmarks: Interpersonal

NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
<p><i>I can communicate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations</i> on both very familiar and everyday topics using a variety of practiced or memorized words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions.</p>	<p><i>I can participate in spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations</i> on familiar topics, creating sentences and series of sentences to ask and answer a variety of questions.</p>	<p><i>I can maintain spontaneous spoken, written, or signed conversations and discussions</i> across various time frames on familiar as well as unfamiliar concrete topics, using series of connected sentences and probing questions.</p>





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# SESSION OUTCOMES

- I can identify each learner's profile of language performance and use that information to design effective learning episodes with consideration of learners' differences
- I can use the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements to **design activities and assessments targeting specific modes and proficiency levels**

What does it take to move to the next higher level?

[www.actfl.org/global\\_statements](http://www.actfl.org/global_statements)

NCSSFL/ACTFL Can-Do Statements

**Proficiency described from  
the learners' perspective:  
“I can ...”**



Proficiency Guidelines >>>> Can-Do Statements

## ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines Speaking: Intermediate

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to **create with the language** when talking about **familiar topics related to their daily life**. They are able to **recombine learned material** in order to **express personal meaning**. Intermediate-level speakers can **ask simple questions** and can handle a **straightforward survival situation**. They produce **sentence-level language, ranging from discrete sentences to strings of sentences**, typically in present time. Intermediate-level speakers are understood by interlocutors who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language.

## Can-Do Interpersonal Proficiency Benchmark: Intermediate

I can participate in **spontaneous** spoken, written, or signed **conversations** on **familiar topics**, **creating sentences and series of sentences** to **ask and answer a variety of questions**.

Task Design: What's the targeted level?

**What words from the Can-Do Proficiency Benchmarks describe the language that learners will need for this task?**

**Novice – Intermediate – or Advanced?**

- 1. INTERACT: I can** talk about similarities and differences between art and music festivals with a peer from another culture.
- 2. INTERACT: I can** share my interpretations of a piece of art or music with someone else while respecting theirs.
- 3. INTERACT: I can** recommend places to experience a variety of art and music styles.

Task Design: What's the targeted level?

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**Novice** – **Intermediate** – or **Advanced**?

**1. INTERACT: I can** talk about similarities and differences between art and music festivals with a peer from another culture.

- ✓ Familiar topics
- ✓ Creating sentences and series of sentences
- ✓ Ask and answer a variety of questions

**Intermediate**



Task Design: What's the targeted level?

**What words from the Can-Do Proficiency Benchmarks describe the language that learners will need for this task?**

**Novice – Intermediate – or Advanced?**

**2. INTERACT: I can** share my interpretations of a piece of art or music with someone else while respecting theirs.

- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Familiar, as well as unfamiliar, concrete topics
- ✓ Series of connected sentences
- ✓ Probing questions

**Advanced**

Task Design: What's the targeted level?

**What words from the Can-Do Proficiency Benchmarks describe the language that learners will need for this task?**

**Novice – Intermediate – or Advanced?**

**3. *INTERACT: I can*** recommend places to experience a variety of art and music styles.

**Novice**

- ✓ Very familiar and everyday topics
- ✓ Variety of practiced words
- ✓ Simple sentences and questions

ADVANCED: *I can* deliver presentations on some concrete academic, social and professional topics of interest, using paragraphs across major time frames

INTERMEDIATE: I *can* give straightforward presentations on a variety of familiar topics and some concrete topics I have researched, using sentences and series of connected sentences.

NOVICE: I *can* present on very familiar and everyday topics using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases and simple sentences.





## Differentiating Learning Targets in a Learning Episode PRESENTATIONAL MODE

**How can I present information to inform, describe, or explain?**

How is my life the same or different growing up in \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Proficiency Range	Customize Can-Dos
NOVICE learners will explore:	I can
	I can
INTERMEDIATE learners will explore:	I can
	I can
ADVANCED learners will explore:	I can
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Proficiency Range	Customize Can-Dos
NOVICE learners will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meals</li> </ul>	I can identify how dinner is the same or different in ____ and in my home.
INTERMEDIATE learners will explore:	NOVICE: I <b>can</b> present on very familiar and everyday topics using a mixture of practiced or memorized words, phrases and simple sentences.
ADVANCED learners will explore:	



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INTERMEDIATE learners will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily routines</li> </ul>	I can present a summary of similarities and differences in daily meals in _____ and my home.
ADVANCED learners will explore:	I can



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ADVANCED learners will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meal traditions</li> </ul>	I can compare how the tradition of family meals is changing in ____ and in my community.



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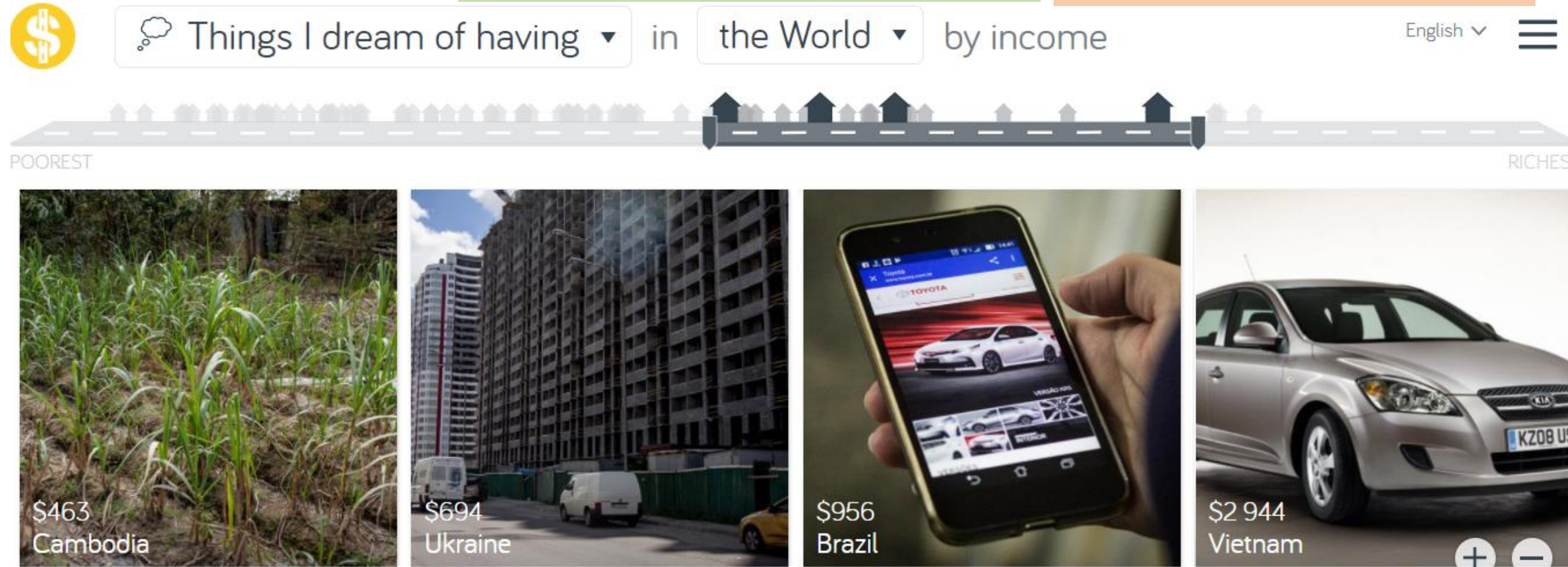
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Source: [www.gapminder.org/dollar-street](http://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street)



# Use Can-Do Statements to Design Tasks

## INTERPERSONAL MODE

**How can I express, react to, and support preferences and opinions in conversations?**

Novice Low	Novice Mid	Novice High	Interm Low	Interm Mid	Interm High	Advanced Low

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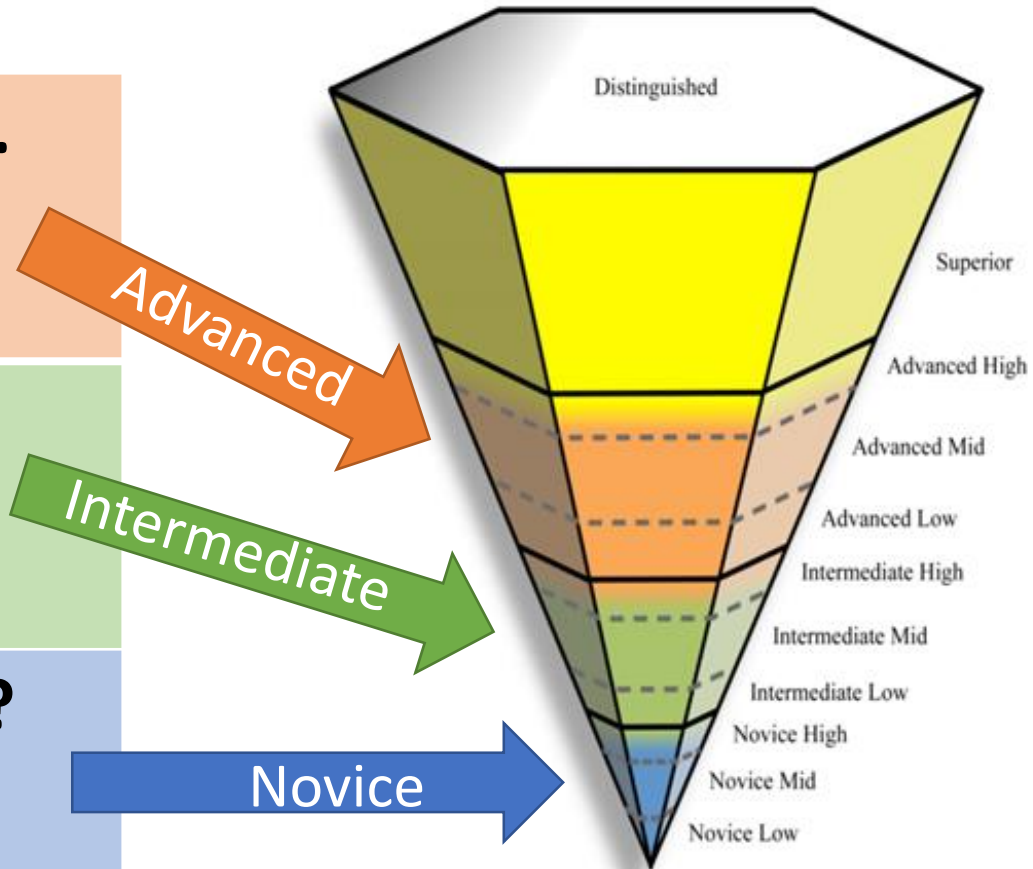
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# Hierarchy of questions

**Tell me about a time when....  
Can you explain/give an  
example**

**Tell me more...  
Describe...  
Why? How?**

**What? When? Where? Who?  
Either/or  
Yes/no**



Donna Clementi – Chicago Public Schools Project, 2016



How would you change this **Intermediate** task to target a lower or higher range?

- **Novice**
- **Advanced**

**INVESTIGATE:** In my own and other cultures I can compare how and why the options for sports and leisure activities vary depending on cultural attitudes.

You are looking for a partner to work with for a debate on whether or not schools should have sport teams.

Exchange ideas with another student about sports in schools in the US vs. in other countries.

Decide if you two are on the same side and have enough ideas in common to be debate partners.

**NOVICE**
**INTERMEDIATE**
**ADVANCED**
**SUPERIOR**
**DISTINGUISHED**

**Investigate**  
Products  
and Practices

**INVESTIGATE**  
Investigate Products And Practices  
To Understand Cultural Perspectives

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
In my own and other cultures *I can* identify products and practices to help me understand perspectives.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
In my own and other cultures *I can* make comparisons between products and practices to help me understand perspectives.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
In my own and other cultures *I can* explain some diversity among products and practices and how it relates to perspectives.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
In my own and other cultures *I can* suspend judgment while critically examining products, practices, and perspectives.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
In my own and other cultures *I can* objectively evaluate products and practices and mediate perspectives.



INVESTIGATE

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**PRODUCTS**

In my own and other cultures *I can* identify some typical products related to familiar everyday life.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

In my own and other cultures *I can* identify some typical products related to familiar everyday life.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

In my own and other cultures *I can* analyze how products of personal and public interest are related to perspectives.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

In my own and other cultures *I can* analyze how products of personal and public interest are related to perspectives.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

In my own and other cultures *I can* evaluate a wide range of concrete and abstract products from different viewpoints.

PRODUCTS

**PRACTICES**

In my own and other cultures *I can* identify some typical practices related to familiar everyday life.

In my own and other cultures *I can* identify some typical practices related to familiar everyday life.

In my own and other cultures *I can* analyze how practices within informal and formal situations are related to perspectives.

In my own and other cultures *I can* analyze how practices within informal and formal situations are related to perspectives.

In my own and other cultures *I can* evaluate a wide range of concrete and abstract practices from different viewpoints.

PRACTICES

In my own and other cultures I can identify some typical products related to familiar everyday life.


**Interact**  
with Language  
and Behavior

**INTERACT**  
Interact With Others In And From  
Another Culture

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
*I can* interact at a survival level in some familiar everyday contexts.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
*I can* interact at a functional level in some familiar contexts.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
*I can* interact at a competent level in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
*I can* interact in complex situations to ensure a shared understanding of culture.

**PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK**  
*I can* engage with complexity and pluricultural identities and serve as a mediator between and among cultures.



INTERACT

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

**LANGUAGE**

*I can* communicate with others from the target culture in familiar everyday situations, using memorized language and showing basic cultural awareness.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

*I can* communicate with others from the target culture in familiar everyday situations, using memorized language and showing basic cultural awareness.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

*I can* suspend judgement, adapt my language, and make appropriate cultural references when interacting with others from the target culture in social and professional situations.

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**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

*I can* show empathy and cultural sophistication in my language when interacting in social, academic or professional situations with others from the target culture.

LANGUAGE

**BEHAVIOR**

*I can* use appropriate rehearsed behaviors and recognize some obviously inappropriate behaviors in familiar everyday situations.

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*I can* adhere to basic social and professional norms and etiquette, read nonverbal cues and adjust my behavior in complicated situations.

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*I can* transition smoothly from formal to informal styles of behavior, respond effectively to nonverbal cues and mediate situations of cultural misunderstanding with empathy.

BEHAVIOR

I can use appropriate rehearsed behaviors and recognize some obviously inappropriate behaviors in familiar everyday situations.

NOVICE	
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify products and practices to help me understand perspectives.
Investigate Products And Practices To Understand Cultural Perspectives	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>PRODUCTS</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify some typical products related to familiar everyday life.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify some typical practices related to familiar everyday life.</p>
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> interact at a survival level in some familiar everyday contexts.
Interact With Others In And From Another Culture	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>LANGUAGE</b> <b>I can</b> communicate with others from the target culture in familiar everyday situations, using memorized language and showing basic cultural awareness.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOR</b> <b>I can</b> use appropriate rehearsed behaviors and recognize some obviously inappropriate behaviors in familiar everyday situations.</p>
<p><b>EXAMPLES: Linking Investigation and Interaction</b>  <i>I can... (customize with specific content).</i></p>	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify locations to buy something and how culture affects where people shop.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> identify familiar landmarks and monuments and what they represent to people.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> answer simple questions about my study abroad plans.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> schedule a call or video conference with a peer in the target culture with awareness of time differences and the other's schedules.

**INVESTIGATE**  
**INTERACT**

**INVESTIGATE:** In my own and other cultures I can **identify** whom people consider to be part of their family.

**INTERACT:** I can **appropriately address** members of a family who represent different generations and genders.

INTERMEDIATE	
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> make comparisons between products and practices to help me understand perspectives.
Investigate Products And Practices To Understand Cultural Perspectives	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>PRODUCTS</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare products related to everyday life and personal interests or studies.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare practices related to everyday life and personal interests or studies.</p>
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> interact at a functional level in some familiar contexts.
Interact With Others In And From Another Culture	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>LANGUAGE</b> <b>I can</b> converse with peers from the target culture in familiar situations at school, work, or play, and show interest in basic cultural similarities and differences.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOR</b> <b>I can</b> recognize that significant differences in behaviors exist among cultures, use appropriate learned behaviors and avoid major social blunders.</p>
<p><b>EXAMPLES: Linking Investigation and Interaction</b>  <i>I can... (customize with specific content).</i></p>	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare how and why houses, buildings, and towns affect lifestyles.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare events and beliefs that drive the creation of a monument or the popularity of a landmark.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> show respect when visiting an historical site by dressing appropriately, adjusting the volume of my voice, and acting with consideration for others.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> meet with an advisor in the target culture to select courses that match my preferences and academic goals.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare how people express time and think about it in similar and different ways.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> consider socially appropriate times and punctuality when inviting someone to go out informally.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> compare how traditions and events influence music and art.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> talk about similarities and differences between art and music festivals with a peer from another culture.

**INVESTIGATE:** In my own and other cultures I can **compare** the roles of family members.

**INTERACT:** I can **respond** in an **appropriate informal and formal manner** in familiar family situations.

ADVANCED	
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> explain some diversity among products and practices and how it relates to perspectives.
Investigate Products And Practices To Understand Cultural Perspectives	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>PRODUCTS</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> explain how a variety of products of public and personal interest are related to perspectives.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES</b> In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> explain how a variety of practices within familiar and social situations are related to perspectives.</p>
PROFICIENCY BENCHMARK	
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> interact at a competent level in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts.
Interact With Others In And From Another Culture	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
	<p><b>LANGUAGE</b> <b>I can</b> converse comfortably with others from the target culture in familiar and some unfamiliar situations and show some understanding of cultural differences.</p> <p><b>BEHAVIOR</b> <b>I can</b> demonstrate awareness of subtle differences among cultural behaviors and adjust my behavior accordingly in familiar and some unfamiliar situations.</p>
<p><b>EXAMPLES: Linking Investigation and Interaction</b>  <i>I can... (customize with specific content).</i></p>	
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> describe the cultural influences on the design of houses, buildings and towns.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> adjust my personal space and body language accordingly when interacting with others in a business, school or work environment.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> describe and explain how landmarks and monuments contribute to national identity.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> manage my non-verbal reactions and personal space when in a crowded environment such as standing in line.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> explain how behaviors and values are reflected in educational settings, ceremonies and traditions.
INTERACT	<b>I can</b> complete the requirements of an undergraduate course in the target culture.
INVESTIGATE	In my own and other cultures <b>I can</b> explain how a culture's concept of time influences decisions in business, education, and social scheduling.
INVESTIGATE	<b>I can</b> consider how events within a culture spread time when participating in a business event or event.

**INVESTIGATE:** In my own and other cultures I can **explain** the degree to which society supports the family and family values.

**INTERACT:** I can **interact appropriately** at a family event based on cultural norms and family dynamics.

# Performance Toward **Proficiency**

- **Proficiency** is **independent use of language** by learner
- Assessments of **performance reflect instruction** leading to the development of language proficiency
- Performance develops through **guided practice of language functions**
- Our goal is to provide learners with this independent use of language through **meaningful classroom practice**



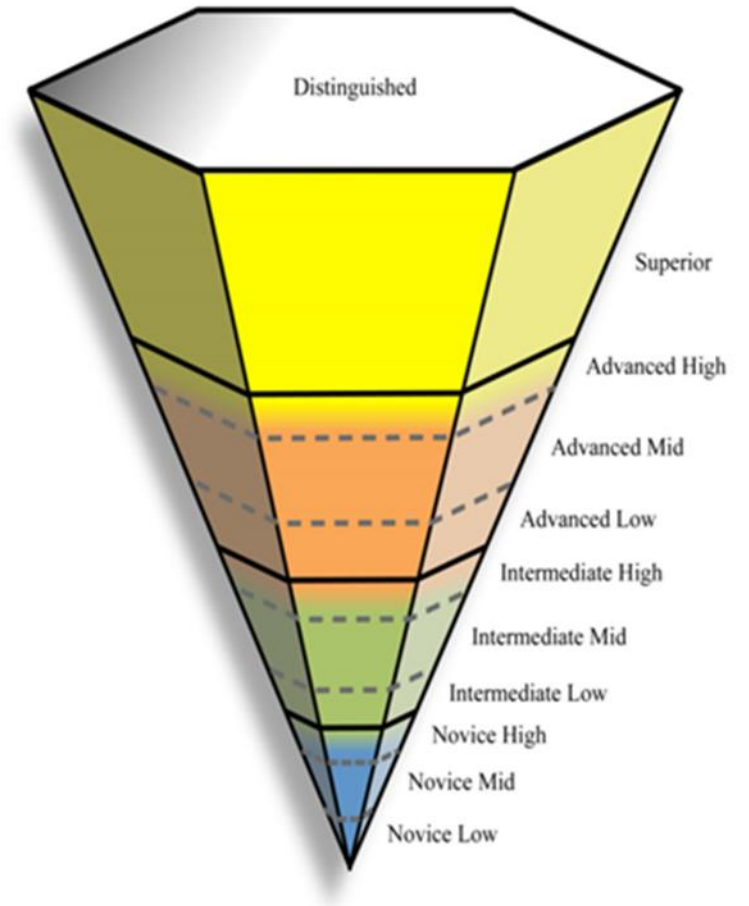
**Proficiency**





# Using Can-Do Statements in Your Program

- ✓ Identify ONE way that you plan to use the Can-Do Statements in your program
- ✓ Identify ONE way that you can differentiate tasks for the variety of learners in your program



# Differentiating Learning Through Can-Do Statements

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