# Textbook Evaluation Instrument Based on the ACTFL Standards

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning afford us the opportunity to review every aspect of our delivery of instruction. One such element to be considered is textbook selection. Based on the Standards, textbook evaluation has become expanded to include the 5 C's as well as the seven curricular elements. What follows is a sample textbook evaluation instrument that uses the Standards' organizing principles and elements as the points of comparison among different textbooks. Suggested numerical values have been given for each of the five organizing principles and curricular elements to assist in the selection process.

**This instrument will help you evaluate as many as four different programs. Each question in a section has been given a maximum point value which you can use to rate the program. If scores between programs run close, go back to the section(s) that mean the most to you and compare those scores.**

| EVALUATING ACCORDING TO THE 5 C'S | PROGRAM | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
| **Communication (Section total: 20 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are students introduced to essential vocabulary and grammatical structures? (4 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Do the activities move from controlled to transitional to communicative? Is there a balance between listening, speaking, reading, and writing? (4 pts.) | | | | |
| 3. Are there a variety of meaningful activities that provide opportunities for individual, paired, cooperative learning, and information gap activities? (4 pts.) | | | | |
| 4. Are the activities set in an age-appropriate context and are they level-appropriate? (4 pts.) | | | | |
| 5. Is there a spiraling presentation of concepts that builds in a perpetual review of vocabulary and grammar concepts? (4 pts.) | | | | |
| **Cultures (Section total: 10 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are there are wide variety of authentic, up-to-date visual images of the target culture? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Is the cultural information age-appropriate to stimulate interest? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 3. Is a broad range and diverse representation of countries presented? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 4. Does the teaching of the target culture incorporate the learners exploring their own culture? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 5. Are both "Little c" and "Big C" culture represented? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| **Connections (Section total: 10 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are the students afforded opportunities to utilize the target language in conjunction with other subject areas such as math and science? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Are there themes that encourage cross-disciplinary projects? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| **Comparisons (Section total: 10 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are students asked to look at their own native language and compare it linguistically to the target language? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Are students asked to compare their own culture and make comparisons with the target culture to discover similar and different cultural concepts and patterns? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| **Communities (Section total: 10 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are students provided with role models or individuals who use foreign languages in their lives for personal interest and enjoyment? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Are students given examples of ways they can use their foreign language in the future beyond the school experience? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| **Subtotal** | | | | |

| EVALUATING ACCORDING TO THE SEVEN CURRICULAR COMPONENTS | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Language Systems (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Is the vocabulary functional, thematic, authentic, and practical? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 2. Is the number of vocabulary words manageable? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 3. Is grammar presented in a logical way? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 4. Is there sufficient oral and written practice of the grammar concepts that lead from controlled to meaningful to communicative use of the language? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 5. Is the grammar presented clearly and easy to understand? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| **Communication Strategies (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural strategies (such as circumlocution, making and verifying hypotheses, making inferences, and predicting) presented and practiced? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| **Cultural Knowledge (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Is the cultural content accurate and current? (3 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Are the cultural notes/readings interesting, significant, and appropriate for the age level? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| **Learning Strategies (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Does the text provide the learners with strategies at point of use to help them be successful listeners, speakers, readers, and writers of the language? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 2. Are pair and cooperative learning activities plentiful and meaningful? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 3. Are the multiple intelligences (such as visual, musical, and kinesthetic) utilized so as to support the variety of learner types in the classroom? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| **Content from Other Subject Areas (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are there activities/projects in every chapter/unit that engage the students in meaningful activities that cross other disciplines where the students can use their emerging language skills and see the connection with other disciplines? (5 pts.) | | | | |
| **Critical Thinking Skills (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Are students asked to do more than rote memorization and recall? (2 pts.) | | | | |
| 2. Are the students asked to utilize the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in every chapter and are expectations reasonable? (3 pts.) | | | | |
| **Technology (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Does the program have listening activities in the pupil's edition? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 2. Does the program have a video that is integrated with the text? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 3. Does the program have a CD-ROM that provides meaningful and interactive practice? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 4. Does the program have a website? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 5. Does the program suggest engaging, worthwhile Internet activities? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| **Other Features (Section total: 5 points)** | | | | |
| 1. Is the general appearance of the text and accompanying ancillaries attractive and inviting? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 2. Are the chapters/units well organized and offer easy progression? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 3. Is the teacher's edition well organized with practical teaching suggestions at the point of need? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 4. Is the program easily adaptable to fit different teaching situations or schedule configurations? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| 5. Does the testing program assess all four skills plus culture? Does it offer native speaker exams, scantron, multiple forms of exams, and portfolio? (1 pt.) | | | | |
| **Subtotal** | | | | |
| **Subtotal from previous section** | | | | |
| **Total** | A | B | C | D |
| **Overall impression** | | | | |