

Quick Start Checklist for a Smooth and Successful Launch

Implementing a new curriculum or core instructional materials can feel overwhelming. But it doesn't have to be. This checklist offers practical steps and reflection points to help you start strong, stay focused, and align your teaching with your goals for student learning. Use it to guide your planning, spark conversations with your team, and support ongoing implementation.

1. CLARIFY VISION AND GOALS

Before jumping into logistics, take time to align your team around a shared vision. A strong foundation helps guide every decision you make during implementation and ensures everyone is working toward the same outcomes.

- We have revisited or created a shared vision for language learning that reflects our values and are ready to see how our new resources align with our vision.
- We've articulated what students should be able to do with the language in real-life contexts
- Our goals reflect ACTFL and state standards for proficiency and intercultural communication
- We've aligned curriculum goals with broader school or district instructional priorities
- Our vision has been communicated clearly to all stakeholders

Tip: Start meetings by reconnecting to your “vision.”

***Need support creating a vision statement? Use the [DIY Vision Planning Guide](#) or Contact Michelle at Proficiency Paths to facilitate a Vision facilitation workshop.*

2. “UNPACK” THE CURRICULUM OR RESOURCE

It's not enough to know what's in the curriculum—you need to understand how and why it's designed the way it is. Unpacking helps teams make sense of the materials and implement them with fidelity and flexibility.

- We've reviewed unit overviews, themes, and essential questions
- We understand how assessments are structured and aligned to proficiency targets
- We've identified essential vocabulary and communicative functions for each unit
- We've explored how culture and interculturality are embedded in each unit
- We are using a consistent protocol or template to collaboratively unpack units

Tip: Invite each teacher to present one unit overview to the team. This spreads insight and fosters collaboration.

***Need support “unpacking” your curriculum or resource? Use the [World Language Curriculum/Resource Unit Unpacking Template](#) or Contact Michelle at Proficiency Paths for an Unpacking Your New Curriculum workshop.*

3. ALIGN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Even the best curriculum can fall short without the right instructional strategies. Successful implementation means adjusting instruction so that it aligns with the curriculum's intent and supports language acquisition.

- Our classroom activities promote real-world communication, not just grammar drills
- We're planning backward from performance goals to daily learning experiences
- We're using authentic resources (texts, videos, images, audio) to model real-world language and culture
- We're providing feedback that focuses on what learners can do and how to move to the next level of proficiency
- Our routines (e.g., bell ringers, warm-ups) align with proficiency-based learning
- We are aiming for maximum use of target language instruction and have instructional strategies to support comprehension.
- We have communicative tasks that give learners authentic communicative experiences to use the language in real world contexts.
- We're adapting or phasing out practices that no longer serve our goals

Tip: As you are aligning Instructional practices with the new resources or curriculum, note any areas where more professional learning may be beneficial.

***Ready to add instructional strategies to your teaching toolkit? Sign up for the Proficiency Paths Email Newsletter for weekly tips, resources drops and announcements on upcoming events and eLearning opportunities at www.michelleolah.com.*

4. SUPPORT TEACHER LEARNING

Implementing a new curriculum is a professional learning journey. Teachers need structured time, meaningful support, and a safe environment to grow, take risks, and reflect.

- We've built in regular planning time for teams to meet and collaborate
- We've offered (or requested) PD sessions focused on curriculum features and proficiency focused instruction
- Teachers are encouraged to reflect and adjust based on student needs
- We've created structures for peer support, mentorship, or instructional coaching
- There is a culture of trust that allows for honest feedback and experimentation

Tip: Use short videos, micro-PD sessions, or peer walkthroughs to build confidence without overwhelm.

***Looking for PCL or Professional Development support? Proficiency Paths offers customized webinars, workshops, and coaching. Contact us for more information.*

5. PLAN FOR PACING AND FLEXIBILITY

A pacing guide is just that - a guide. Implementation works best when teachers can adjust based on their students, instructional minutes, and local context. Often the first year of a new curriculum or resource adoption is at a slower pace as teachers learn the resources and prioritize which activities and components to use, what to adapt, and what to skip.

- Our pacing maps reflect actual instructional time, not ideal conditions
- We've built in "flex weeks" for reteaching, cultural enrichment, or reflection
- We've prioritized essential tasks and learning targets rather than covering everything
- We've mapped out key assessments or checkpoints to anchor our timeline
- We are prepared to adapt as student needs evolve throughout the year

Tip: Use the end of each unit to reflect with students: What did we learn? Which activities or practices helped us learn better? Which didn't help us?

***Note: Don't let your beginning of the school year PD be the last opportunity to check in and reflect. Schedule monthly or quarterly webinars or Coaching Check-ins with Michelle to make sure your implementation stays on track.*

6. COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Change can raise questions. Proactive, clear, and student-centered communication builds understanding and buy-in from families, administrators, and the wider school community.

- We've communicated the purpose and benefits of the curriculum to leadership
- We've introduced the shift to proficiency-based learning to students and their families
- We've shared sample tasks, Can-Do Statements, or unit themes with stakeholders so they understand both the "why" of what we are doing and how what we do connects with the broader school vision and cross-curricular priorities.
- Our team speaks with one voice about the goals and benefits of implementation

Tip: Use visuals and non-educator friendly language when sharing curriculum updates (skip the acronyms and educational buzzwords) with parents and school boards.

***Note: Want a simple document to adapt to send to stakeholders? [Access Talking Points & sample email template and FAQ](#)*

Use this checklist as a living document. Review it monthly with your team and revise as needed. A thoughtful, teacher-supported implementation leads to stronger student learning and more joy in the classroom