

Moving from the WHAT to the HOW: Integrating Proficiency in a Language Classroom

SWCOLT, February 23rd

1:00-4:00 PM

Troy L. Cox <troyc@byu.edu>

Associate Professor, Linguistics Associate Director, Center for Language Studies

Brigham Young University, Provo UT

While people are settling in, please complete the ACTFL Proficiency Can-Do Statement

Introduction: Part 1

- Get out your phone.
- Stand up.
- Get in a circle based in alphabetical order based on the city where you were born.

Introduction: Part 2

- Get in groups of 3 and find out what phone apps are used most frequently.
- What do the people in your group typically do with their phone on a daily basis?
- You have one minute to discuss.

Introduction: Part 3

- Take out your smartphone and find a recent photo.
- Get into pairs and tell your partner the story behind the photo:
 - Setting
 - Sequence of Events Leading Up to Photo
 - What Happened Afterward
- You each have one minute

Introduction: Part 4

With your partner and discuss the following:

- The relative ease with which we can take an indefinite number of photos can be both a blessing and a curse. While it is now easy to “capture moments” that would have heretofore been impossible or impractical in times past, many find they have so many photos that storing and curating them is now the impossibility.
- Has the advent of easily accessible photography helped or hindered us as a society?
- What unintended consequences have arisen and how might they be mitigated?
- You have two minutes to explore this topic together

Group Formation

- Get into 5 groups
- Compare your ACTFL Proficiency Can-Do Statements
- What are your groups areas of strengths?
 - Weaknesses?

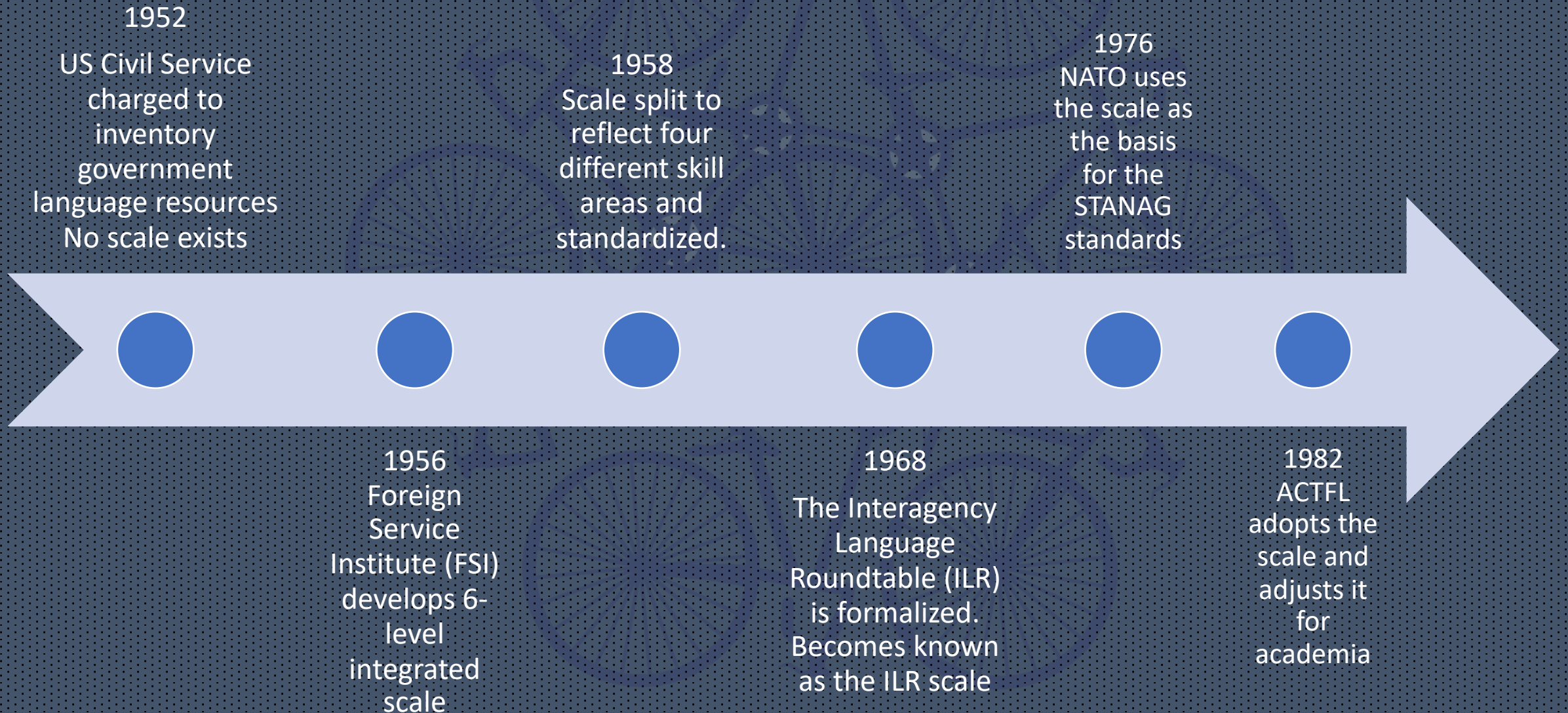
What would you do?

- **Setting**—It's the 1950's and World War II has ended with the United States emerging as a world leader.
- **Problem**—More conflicts are on the horizon (e.g. the Korean War, Iron Curtain, etc.), but there is no inventory of language ability among employees in the federal government other than self-reported, unverified labels such as *fluent*, *bilingual*, and *proficient*.
- **Challenge**—Create a classification system to describe language ability. It needs to be able to describe any language and simple enough that nonlinguists can understand and use it. Since current language teaching philosophies include Grammar-Translation, Audiolingualism and the Direct Method, this system needs to be agnostic to language method.

The Birth of the Proficiency Scale



A Brief History of Language Proficiency Scales in the US



Proficiency Scale based on Functional Language

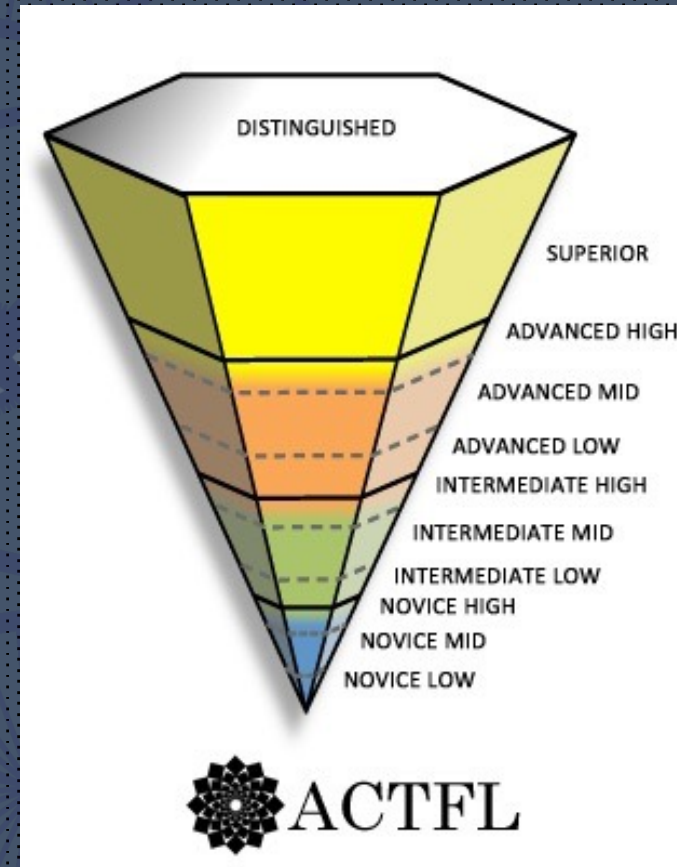
ILR/STANAG	ACTFL 2012
5	Distinguished
4	
3	Superior
2	Advanced
1	Intermediate
0	Novice

- Functional is defined by tasks speakers DO with language to communicate with each other in real world situations
- Each level contains unique tasks or functions that typically require a confluence of text type, content and accuracy expectations.
- What can speakers consistent DO at one level?
- What can they NOT do at the next level?

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012

- Not what you KNOW about the language, but what you can DO SPONTANEOUSLY in real world situations.
- Five major levels (each subsumes all lower levels) that describe a confluence of:
 - Function
 - Accuracy
 - Content/context
 - Text Type

*Keep your
FACTs straight
and you can
determine the
major level!*



Functions...

dictate the text-type, content and accuracy (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, sociopragmatic, etc.) needed to be successful.

ILR Level	ACTFL Level	Functions	ILR Level	ACTFL Level	Functions
0	Novice	• Communicate minimally • Use formulaic utterances • Produce words, lists and phrases	2	Advanced	• Narrate and Describe in all time frames • Past • Present • Future • Linguistically negotiate situations with complications
1	Intermediate	• Create with language • Participate in Simple Conversations • Ask and Answer Questions • Engage in simple transactions	3	Superior	• Discuss Abstract Topics Extensively • Support Opinions with Nuanced Language • Explore hypothetical realities vis-à-vis conjecture

Introduction: Part 1

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- Stand up.
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Introduction: Part 2

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How do these tasks differ from one another? What linguistic functions do each elicit? What text type is needed to minimally answer each question? What grammar is needed? Vocab knowledge?

Proficiency Model Selected: ACTFL

Level	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Superior
F unctions	- Communicate minimally - Use formulaic utterances - Produce words, lists and phrases	- Create with language - Participate in Simple Conversations - Ask and Answer Questions - Engage in simple transactions	- Narrate and Describe in all time frames - Past - Present - Future - Linguistically negotiate situations with complications	- Discuss Abstract Topics Extensively - Support Opinions with Nuanced Language - Explore hypothetical realities vis-à-vis conjecture
A ccuracy	Only understood by patient, sympathetic listeners accustomed to nonnative speakers	Understood by people accustomed to speaking to nonnative speakers	Can be understood without confusion by monolinguals not accustomed to speaking to nonnative speakers	No patterns of errors in basic structures. Errors virtually never distract or impede communication
C ontent	Self	Self Daily Life	Self Daily Life Non-autobiographical Topics Topics of General Interest	Self Daily Life Non-autobiographical Topics Topics of General Interest Abstract Topics Figurative Language Use
T ext Type	Words Lists	Sentences Strings of sentences	Oral paragraphs with a variety of text types including the use of complex sentences, transitions, and discourse markers	Extended Discourse

Keep your FACTs straight and you are at a major level.

Who is Troy Cox?

Associate Professor, Linguistics
TESOL MA Graduate Coordinator
Associate Director Research and Assessment
Center for Language Studies (2013-present)
Technology and Assessment Coordinator at the
English Language Center (1996-2013)

Brigham Young University



Introduction

Example 1

My name is Troy Cox. I am a professor at Brigham Young University. I have worked here for 26 years. I am in the Linguistics Department and am part of the Center for Language Studies. I am married to Heidi and we have three children. They are Cameron, Hannah and Millie. We have two dogs: a mother and her son. Her name is JoJo and his name is Remy. When I don't work, I like to ride my bike, take photos, cook, and practice and teach yoga.

Example 2

My name is Troy Cox, and I've been working full-time at Brigham Young University since 1996. While I am currently in the Center for Language Studies (CLS), the first 17 years of my work at the Y had me at the English Language Center where I worked concurrent with my pursuit of a PhD. After receiving my doctorate, I applied for a faculty position at the CLS as the research and assessment coordinator, was hired, and began working there in 2013. But while my assignment is to the CLS, my home department is Linguistics. As a scholar, I do research in second language learning, teaching and assessment. I've been married to the wonderful Heidi Cox for a few months longer than I've been at BYU, and we are the parents of three children: Cameron, Hannah and Millie. We've finally hit empty-nester status and are the owners of a Boston Terrier named JoJo who the kids call "the little angel" and claim is the new favorite child. We tried our hand at breeding and failed and kept her son that we named Remy. The byline from my social media account sums my life up fairly well: Disciple; Husband & Father; Amateur Cyclist, Yogi, Cook & Photographer; Professor (Applied Linguistics/Language Testing). I identify first and foremost as a man of faith and one who loves his family, but when I am not engaged in activities with my church or work, you'll find me road cycling, practicing or teaching yoga, cooking or working on my photography skills.

Example 1

My name **is** Troy Cox. I **am** a professor at Brigham Young University. I **have worked** here for 23 years. I **am** in the Linguistics Department **and** **am** part of the Center for Language Studies. I **am married** to Heidi **and** we **have** three children. They **are** Cameron, Hannah **and** Millie. We **have** a dog. Her name **is** Jojo. **When** I **don't work**, I like to **ride** my bike, **take** photos, **cook**, and **practice** yoga.

- Is this primarily present tense or does it span time frames?
- Can the sentences be reordered fairly easily without needing to make changes to the grammar?
- Are the transitions additive or do they contain subordination and show relationships?
- Is the content primarily daily life or does it include areas beyond the autobiographical?

Total word count :	36
Number of different words :	35
Complexity factor (Lexical Density) :	97.20%
Average Syllables per Word :	1.59
Sentence count :	10
Average sentence length (words) :	8.33
Max sentence length (words) :	17
Min sentence length (words) :	4

<http://textalyser.net/index.php?lang=en#analysis>

Example 2

My name **is** Troy Cox, **and** I've been working full-time at Brigham Young University **since** 1996. **While** I **am** currently in the Center for Language Studies (CLS), **the first** 17 years of my work at the Y **had** me at the English Language Center **where** I **worked** concurrent with my pursuit of a PhD. **After** **receiving** my doctorate, I **applied** for a faculty position at the CLS as the research and assessment coordinator, **was hired**, and **began** working there in 2013. **But while** my assignment **is** to the CLS, my home department **is** Linguistics. **As** a scholar, I **do** research in second language learning, teaching and assessment. **I've been married** to the wonderful Heidi Cox for a few months longer **than** I've been at BYU, **and** we are the parents of three children: Cameron, Hannah and Millie. We've finally **hit** empty-nester status and **are** the owners of a Boston Terrier **named** JoJo who the kids **call** "the little angel" and **claim is** the new favorite child. The byline from my social media account **sums** my life up fairly well: Disciple; Husband & Father; Amateur Cyclist, Yogi, Cook & Photographer; Professor (Applied Linguistics/Language Testing). I **identify first and foremost** as a man of faith **and** one **who** **loves** his family, **but** when I **am not engaged** in activities with my church or work, **you'll find** me road **cycling**, **practicing** yoga (power for the most part), **cooking** or **working** on my photography skills.

Total word count :	123
Number of different words :	105
Complexity factor (Lexical Density) :	85.40%
Average Syllables per Word :	1.65
Sentence count :	14
Average sentence length (words) :	17.62
Max sentence length (words) :	49
Min sentence length (words) :	1

<http://textalyser.net/index.php?lang=en#analysis>

Review

- Watch the video
- What are your top 3 takeaways?
- Discuss them in your group.



https://www.graniteschools.org/curriculuminstruction/dual-immersion/language_proficiency_assessment/

Reverse Engineering/ Backward Design

Backward Design:
Learning Outcomes (LOs)
Learning Outcomes
Assessments (LOAs)

Understanding By Design (UbD)



- After the video, be prepared to get in your groups and discuss:
 - Top 3 take-aways
 - Your one sentence mission statement for your course
 - How these principles apply to the language classroom
- You'll have 2 minutes to think about the topic at the end of the video
- You'll have 8 minutes in your groups to discuss

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/>

Backward Design Stages

Identify Desired Results

- What should participants hear, read, view, explore or otherwise encounter?
- What knowledge and skills should participants master?
- What are big ideas and important understandings participants should retain?



Determine Acceptable Evidence

- How will I know if students have achieved the desired results?
- What will I accept as evidence of student understanding and proficiency?



Plan learning experiences and instruction

- What enabling knowledge (facts, concepts, principles) and skills (processes, procedures, strategies) will students need in order to perform effectively and achieve desired results?
- What activities will equip students with the needed knowledge and skills?
- What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of performance goals?
- What materials and resources are best suited to accomplish these goals?

“If you don’t
know where
you are
going, you’ll
end up
someplace
else.”

—Yogi Berra



What is ACTFL definition of Language Proficiency?

- **Proficiency** is the ability to **use** a language to communicate **meaningful** information in a **spontaneous** interaction, and in a manner **acceptable** and **appropriate** to speakers of the language community.

Think “DO” not “KNOW”



THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF®



APPLY FOR
BAKE OFF

AS SEEN ON



NEWS

RECIPES

YOUR BAKES

THE BAKERS

SHOP

AN EXTRA SLICE

ABOUT

CONTACT US



ABOUT THE SHOW

The Great British Bake Off is the ultimate baking battle where passionate amateur baking fans compete to be crowned the UK's Best Amateur Baker. Over the course of 10 hour-long episodes, the series follows the trials and tribulations of the competitors, young and old, from every background and every corner of Britain, as they attempt to prove their baking prowess. Each week the bakers tackle a different baking skill, which become progressively more difficult as the competition unfolds.

Imagine a show in which the bakers sit down and answer the following questions on paper.

What are 3 leavening agents?

What is an enriched dough?

What is the difference between royal icing and buttercream?

THE CHALLENGES

SIGNATURE BAKE



Testing the bakers' personality, creative flair and baking ability, the main challenge here is to produce something cute, rustic and altogether home-made-looking. It's in this test that the Bakers get to show off their tried-and-tested handcooked treats.

TECHNICAL BAKE



This challenge separates the wheat from the chaff. Take one basic recipe, with the same ingredients and instructions, and ask our bakers to produce the finished product... sound easy? Well, any variation on the finished product will be a result of their own technical knowledge and experience – or lack of. Bakers are laid bare in this task and this is where the pressure's really on in the Bake Off.

SHOWSTOPPER BAKE



The oven gloves are off in this final challenge where the bakers are able to showcase their depth of skill and talent. The complexities of this task call for a professional standard in taste and appearance. Are they up to it? The judges will be looking for the most impressive and elaborate creations – that better taste first-class too.

Performance

Proficiency

Achievement can and should lead
to better performance
and

Performance can and should lead
to proficiency

What “bakes” do you want your students to be able to do after taking your class?

Write a one-sentence mission statement about on what your class is all about.

Think-Pair-Share

Discuss the mission statements.

How will you measure baking success?

- What evidence would you need to see to show that your students can do the bakes you want them to?
- Who would they be baking for?
- What are the circumstances?
 - family dinner
 - party
 - wedding
- What is motivating your students? A grade? Something more?

What would you like your students to DO in the following areas at the end of the semester/school year?

- 
- Interpersonal
 - Speaking
 - Writing
 - Presentational
 - Speaking
 - Writing
 - Interpretive
 - Reading
 - Listening
 - Who would they be interacting with?
 - In what circumstances would these communicative activities take place?
 - Do the ACTFL levels align with where your students are?

Whatever you choose
to test
becomes the
de facto learning
objectives
for a curriculum.

The way you choose
to assess
it becomes the
de facto teaching
and learning
philosophy.

-Paraphrase of McTighe & Wiggins

Troy's Teaching & Learning Philosophy

The best way to become a lifelong learner is through:

Principle 1: Self-assessing our abilities,

Principle 2: Engaging in problem-based learning,

Principle 3: Teaching ourselves,

Principle 4: Attempting things on our own

Principle 5: Learning from our own failures and the strength(s) of our peers,

Principle 6: Applying skills to new problems,

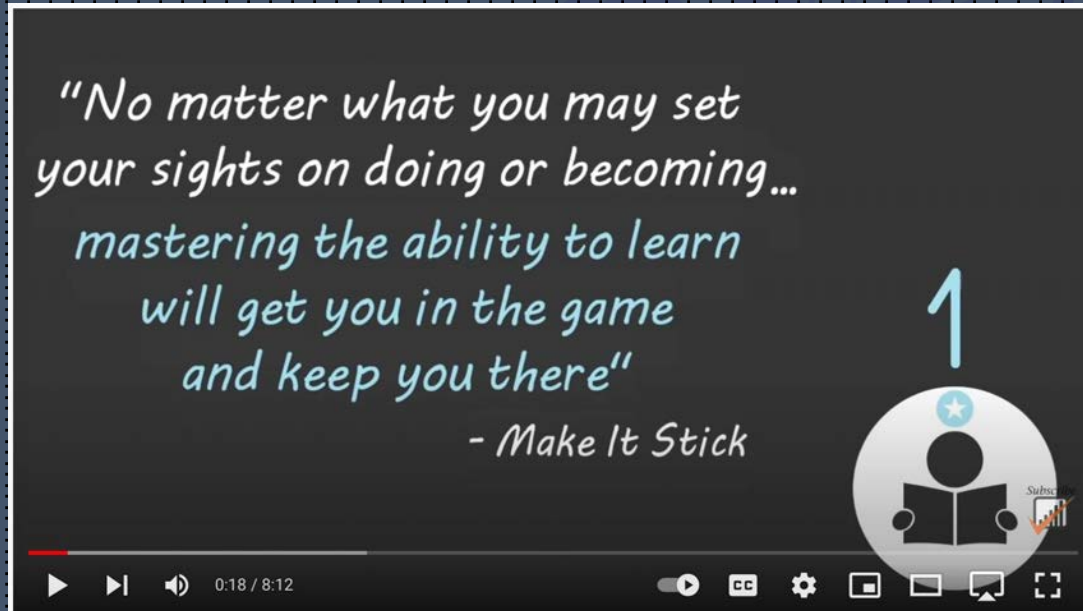
Principle 7: Self-reflecting on performance and

Principle 8: Making goals for continuous improvement.

To that end, we will be fellow travelers. I will present real-world problems to which I do not have the answer(s), but I will coach you as you follow this process to learn the principles and skills that are needed. We will try to increase our skills in initiative, autodidacticism, mentoring others, critical thinking, reasoning with data, and written & oral communication.

Break

Review



- Watch the video
- What are your top 3 takeaways?
- Discuss them in your group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfyllOWuuZU>

Target Language Use Domains

Novice

What settings do you expect learners to be successful in from your class?
What is the relationship between the setting and the linguistic function(s) needed to be successful?

Advanced

Intermediate

Superior

Target Language Use Domains

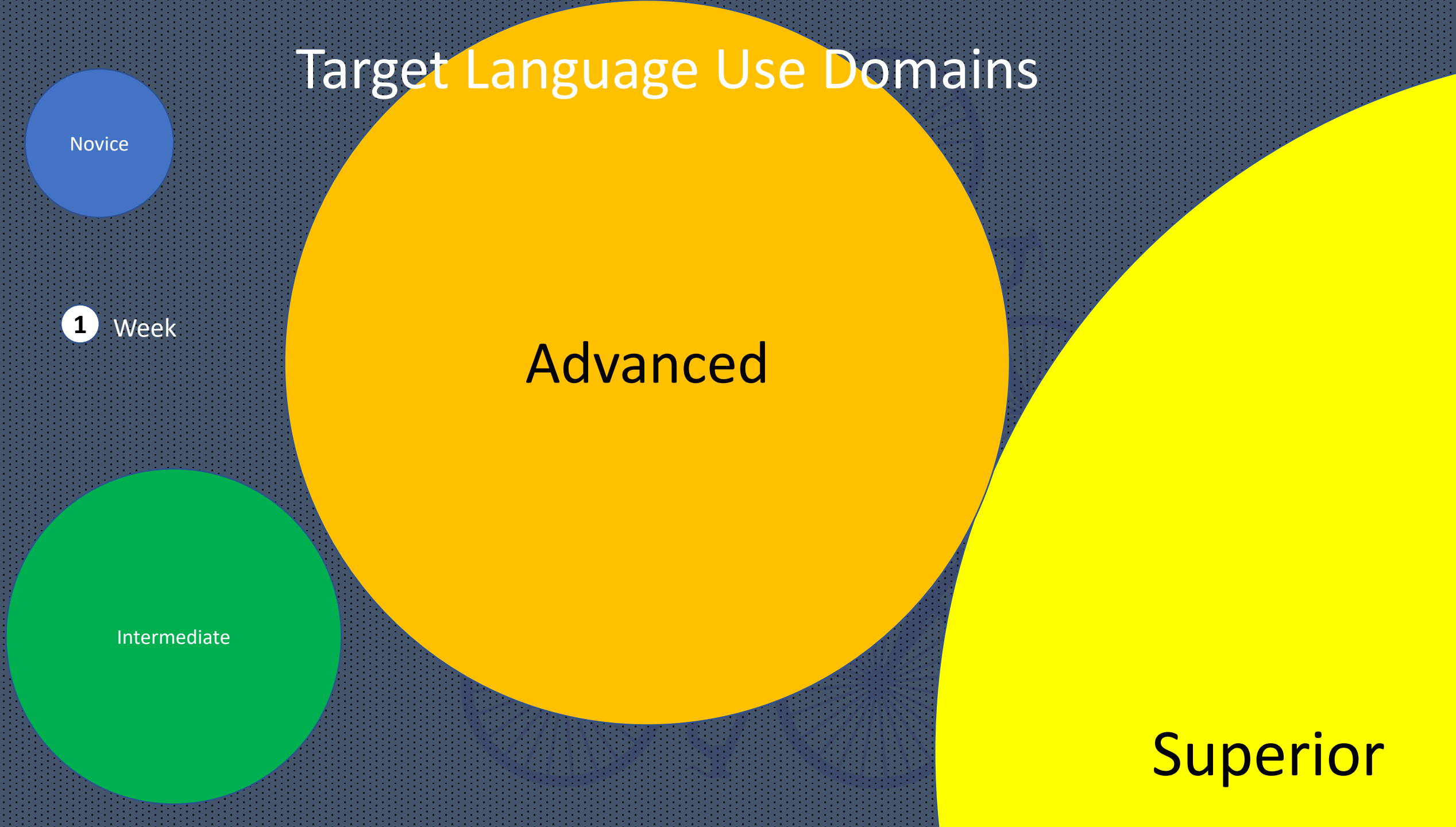
Novice

1 Week

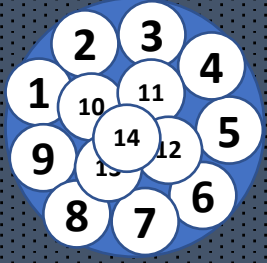
Advanced

Intermediate

Superior



Target Language Use Domains



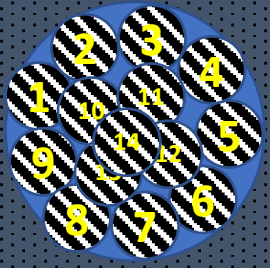
You only have 14 weeks in a semester. What should you teach? One level at a time?

Advanced

Intermediate

Superior

Target Language Use Domains



Two levels so there is
always growth
opportunities?

Advanced

Superior



Intermediate

Target Language Use Domains

Novice

If you don't teach students how to learn on their own, it will almost be impossible hard for them to reach higher levels of proficiency.

Intermediate

Advanced

Superior

There simply isn't enough class time.

Essential Skills Employers Want

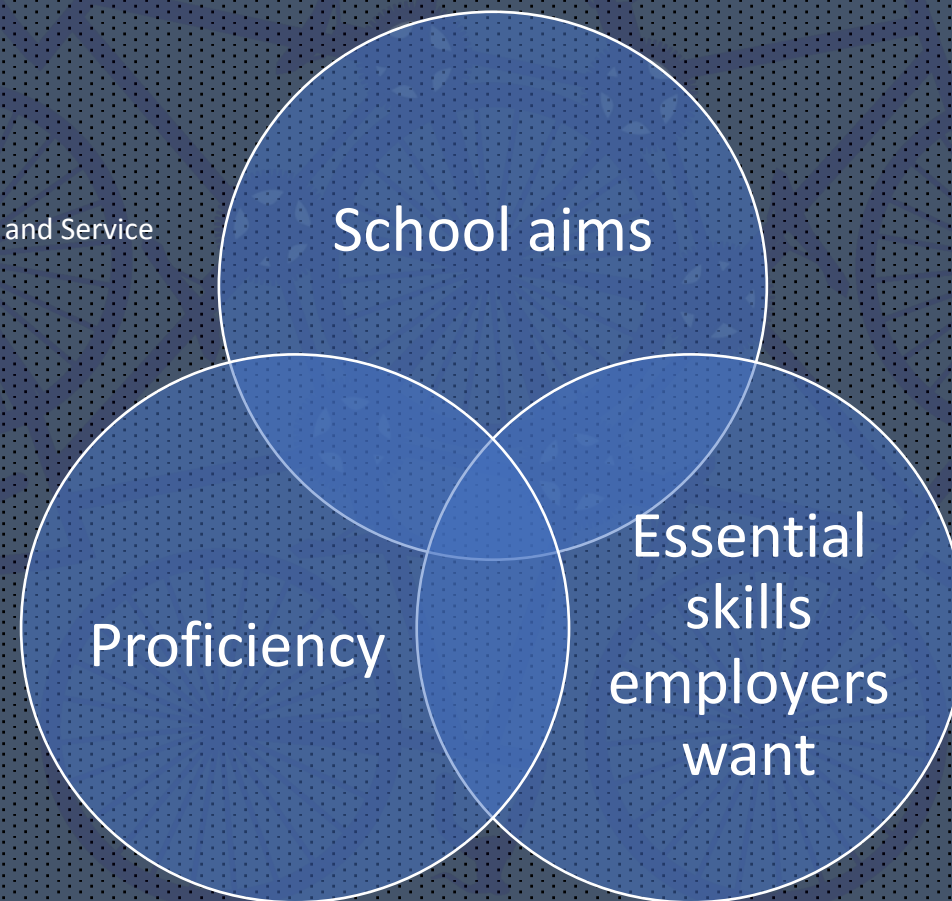
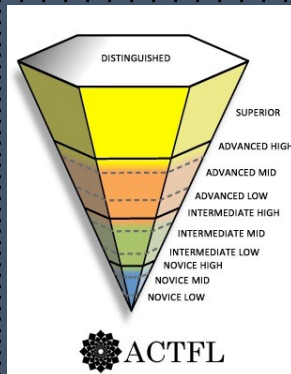
- Analyze, evaluate and interpret data
- Communicate persuasively using data and analysis
- Create new knowledge or process
- Build and sustain professional relationships
- Engage in continuous learning
- Plan and manage a project
- Mentor and develop others
- Initiative
- Understand impact in global settings



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZuH-IBYI9Q>
20:20–22:50

Which of the universe of possible readings, assignments and activities should I choose to maximize your school aims, essential skills for employment and the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines?

A BYU education should be:
Spiritually Strengthening
Intellectually Enlarging
Character Building
Leading to Lifelong Learning and Service



Analyze, evaluate and interpret data
Communicate persuasively using data and analysis
Create new knowledge or process
Build and sustain professional relationships
Engage in continuous learning
Plan and manage a project
Mentor and develop others
Initiative
Understand impact in global settings

What do you want students to DO each week through performance activities that will lead to proficiency?

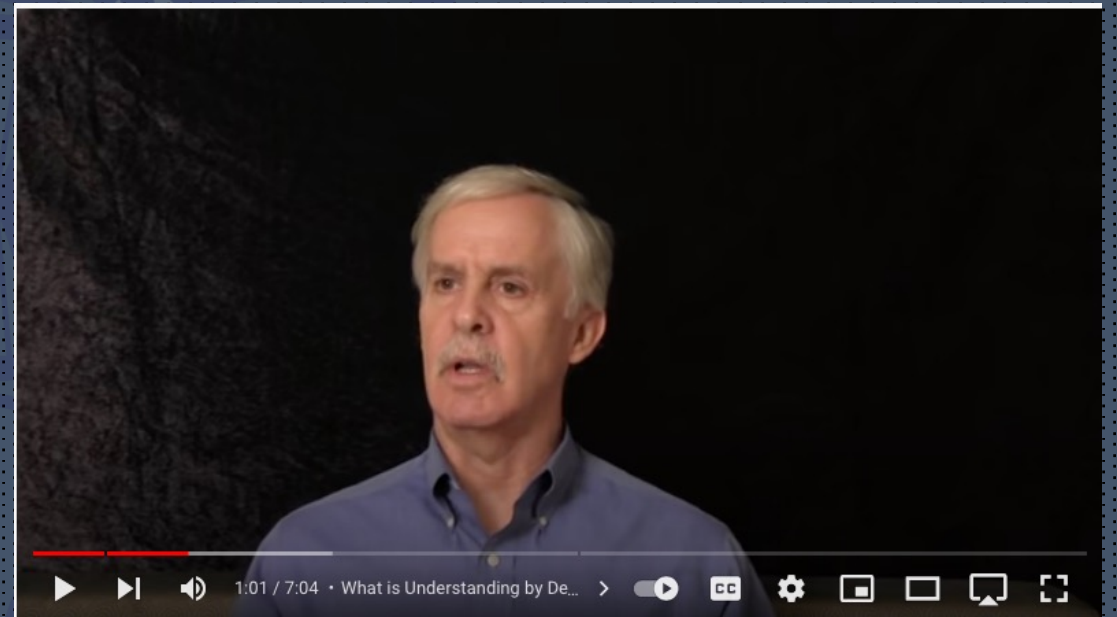
Week	Function	Content (TLU)	Accuracy	Text Type
1				
2				
3				
4				
...				

GRASPS Model

GRASPS Elements	Descriptions	Scenario prompt
G oal	What goals do I need to accomplish?	The goal (within this scenario) is...
R ole	What is my role in this task?	You are...
A udience	Who is involved in this task?	You are writing/speaking to...
S ituation	In what situation is this task taking place?	You are in a situation where...
P roduct, performance & purpose	Why am I performing this task?	Write an email/leave a voicemail in order to...
S tandards/criteria for task completion	What does it mean to successfully perform this task?	Your email/voicemail should include:

Strategy to implement changes

- Think Big
- Act Small
- Go for the Easy Wins

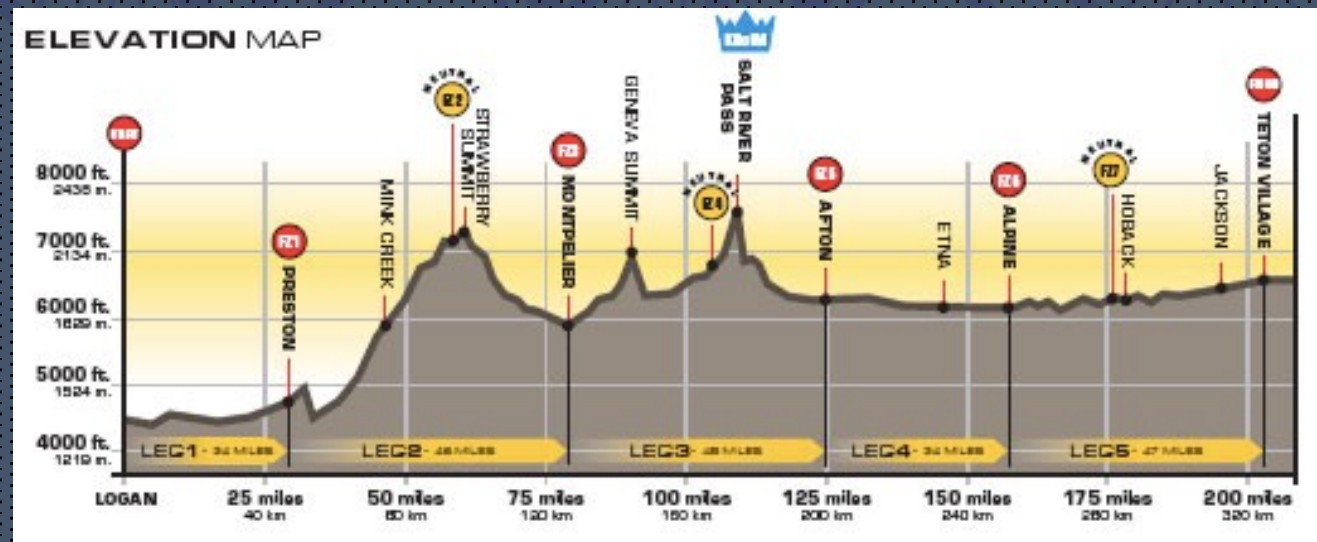


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8F1SnWalfE>

Language Learning: Destination or Journey?



- The LoToJa Bicycle Classic is a 207-mile (332 km), one-day amateur bicycle road race from **Logan**, UT to **Jackson Hole**, WY, USA.





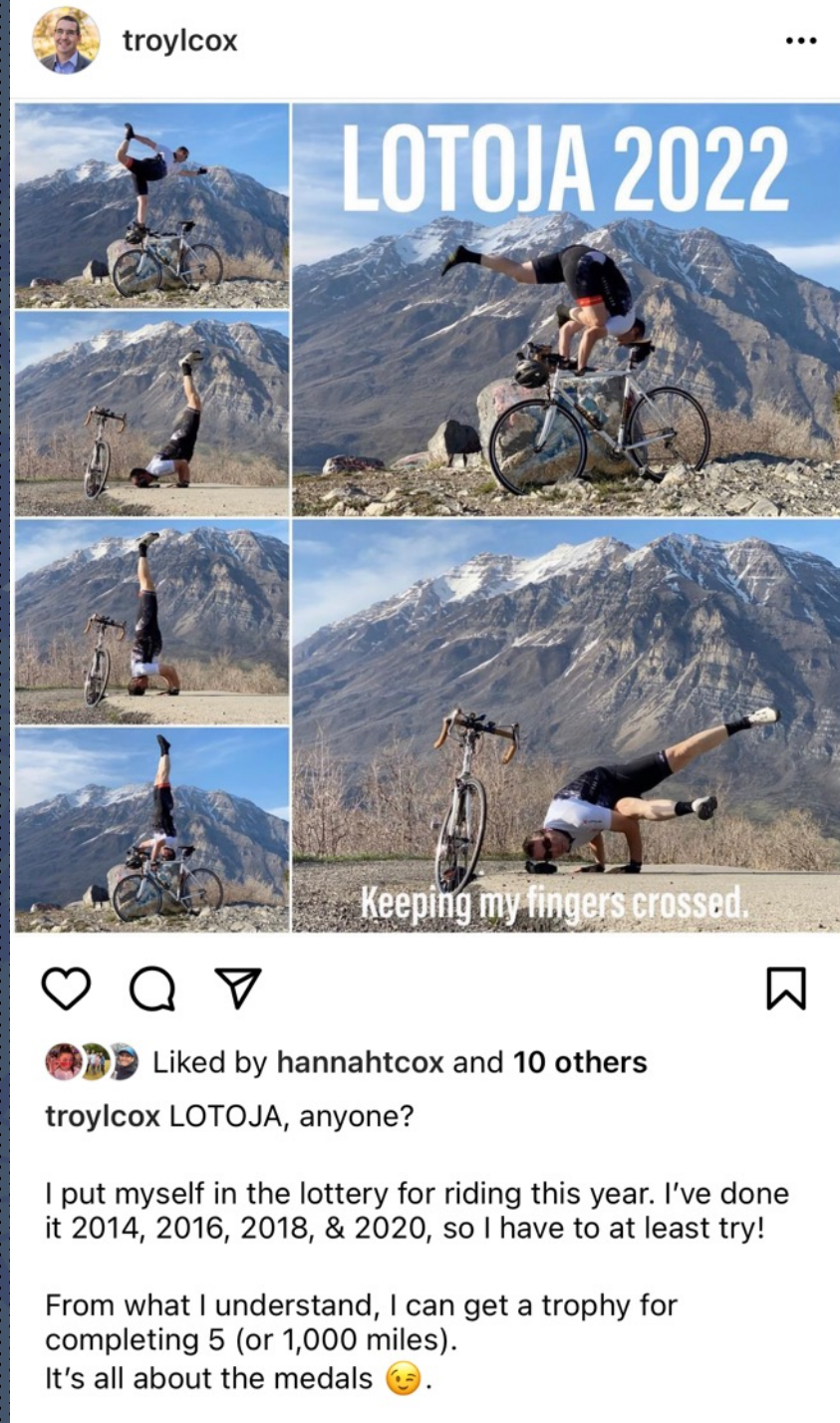
LOTOJA—2014

2016

2018

2020

Instagram Post April 18



LOTOJA—2022





SNAKE RIVER PHOTO



SNAKE RIVER PHOTO

ELEVATION MAP



- Salt River Pass
 - Cut-off Time: 3:00 PM
 - My Arrival Time: 3:24 PM
- Cut off time at Teton Village: 8:30 PM
- Needed Pace: 18 MPH but not many people to draft with
- What to do?
 - Ride to 8:30 PM?
 - Take the “L”?



We can learn more from our failures
than our successes.

Share them.
Normalize them.

Model how to learn from them to be
better calibrated



Itai Yanai

@ItaiYanai



If you don't feel stupid doing science you're not trying hard enough.

6:14 PM · 2022-09-02 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



amrita bansal

@amritabansal04



Before PhD - I am not that intelligent
After PhD - I know exactly how stupid I am and in what areas

[#phdlife](#) [@AcademicChatter](#)
[@PhDVoice](#)

11:44 AM · 2021-10-31 · [Twitter for Android](#)